

Making Social Relations and Identities through Consumption:

A Botswana case study

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Abstract

This research utilises the concepts in Miller's anthropology of consumption (1987; 1988; 1994; 1995a; 1998a; 1998b) to enable an analysis of social relations, including gender, through looking at what and how people consume. Goods not only express individual identity and status, but are used as a means of objectifying personal and social systems of value, which, in the lives of people living in a central ward in the village of Mochudi, Botswana, signify the importance of social relationships. An analysis of social change since the 1920s and 1930s when Isaac Schapera (1940, 1971) spent a period of fieldwork in the same location and wrote extensively on married life here, is undertaken through familial and life-course events.

Informants took photographs of objects, the significance of which is explored through one-to-one enquiry. Generational and gendered differences in consumption choices point to the stage in life reached and lifestyle. An older woman is found to gain pleasure from the purchase of plastic chairs, ensuring she has enough for family or communal events, where all who turn up may expect to partake of a feast; it is through these chairs that social relations are objectified and her wish to be identified as a 'good' woman is fulfilled. Similar projections can be made with older men and desire for livestock – the ultimate signifier of masculinity and role of 'provider' - which are considered 'useful' as a means to sustain the social importance and inclusivity of communal gatherings.

Young, single men and women are found to conform more to the stereotypical view of consumption as the development of individual identity (Miller 1998b:35). Yet here, within courtship relationships, material things are utilised as a means of expressing and assessing love. This may have become out-of-kilter, with young men under pressure to compete with gifts for the affections of women who ultimately can decide to walk away. Marriage is constructed around consumption. Time slips the distinction between courtship and engagement, co-habitation and marriage, or even leads to indefinite delay. Marital relations replace courtship gifts with 'material acts of caring' (Miller 1998b) such as provisioning on behalf of husbands, and washing of clothes by wives.

The family home in the village draws people back for kinship events, such as weddings and funerals, which act to connect people together. White weddings, driven by the fantasy of the bride, are big consumptive events, and yet may be read as being less about conspicuous consumption than an objectification of love which carefully interweaves kinship, tradition and modernity. Through the crisis of AIDS, funerals have altered to reflect a sensitivity which places importance on sober and modest approaches, yet also combines this with a need to ensure the many people who attend are well fed. Large social gatherings reflect the Tswana value system in which consumption acts to reinforce social structure, gender identities and family and tribal belonging, and yet, over time, also acts to bring about change.

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Glossary

<i>Badimo</i>	ancestors
<i>Bakgatla</i>	One of the main Tswana tribes, often shortened to <i>Kgatla</i>
<i>Basarwa</i>	Khoisan-speaking peoples of Botswana, the San
<i>Batswana</i>	People of Botswana
<i>Bogadi</i>	bride price or bride wealth – cows or money offered to bride’s family on marriage of their daughter
<i>Bogosi</i>	a kingdom, chieftainship
<i>Bogwera</i>	traditional initiation school for boys
<i>Bojale</i>	traditional initiation school for girls
<i>Botho</i>	a recognised character trait meaning ‘graciousness’
<i>Chibuku</i>	commercially produced, traditional beer brewed from sorghum
<i>Dikgaba</i>	malevolent thoughts, usually caused by envy, inflicting injury on someone
<i>Kgatla</i>	shortened version of Bakgatla – see above
<i>Kgosi</i>	Tswana chief (<i>Dikgosi</i> - plural)
<i>Kgotla</i>	meeting place in wards, villages and towns; tribal court
<i>Kraal</i>	central animal corral
<i>Lapa</i>	shortened from <i>lelapa</i> meaning courtyard containing one or more residential buildings (also known as <i>lelwapa</i> and <i>lolwapa</i>); plural is <i>malapa</i>
<i>Lobola</i>	South African word for brideprice
<i>Malapa</i>	plural of <i>lapa</i> – see above
<i>Masimo</i>	lands, primarily for growing crops
<i>Mateitshe</i>	traditional women’s clothes – a uniform of German print cloth including a small shawl-like blanket and a head scarf in matching print
<i>Mephato</i>	age sets at initiation (singular – <i>mophato</i>)
<i>Merafe</i>	tribes, ethnic groups (singular – <i>morafe</i>)
<i>Meraka</i>	cattleposts (singular – <i>moraka</i>)

<i>Mma</i>	'mother' or Mrs
<i>Mokgatla</i>	a member of the <i>Bakgatla</i> tribe
<i>Moraka</i>	cattlepost (plural – <i>meraka</i>)
<i>Motswana</i>	a national of Botswana, singular of <i>Batswana</i>
<i>Patlo</i>	betrothal negotiations between two families
<i>Pula</i>	rain; the national cry meaning 'let there be rain'; also Botswana's unit of currency - at the time of this research, ten <i>pula</i> was roughly the equivalent of £1.00 sterling
<i>Samp</i>	an Afrikaans word meaning coarsely stamped maize
<i>Sangoma</i>	spiritual diviner and healer
<i>Seswaa</i>	boiled meat that has been salted and pounded until it has a shredded texture
<i>Shebeen</i>	neighbourhood bar in owner's <i>lapa</i> , where traditional beer is brewed and served
<i>Tswana</i>	a linguistically and genealogically defined sub-group of the Sotho peoples of southern Africa; roughly, one third of Tswana live in Botswana, two thirds in South Africa

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

‘Although Botswana has managed to sustain one of the more durable democracies on the continent, it has always lived in the shadows of its more newsworthy, noisy neighbours.... Happily so
And yet, beneath its surfaces, hiding in the light of everyday life, lies a world of enduring fascination, a world of quiet cultural depth.... in which indomitable people fashion coherent, meaningful lives, shoring up their meagre material resources by seeking to create social wealth’ (Comaroff 2002:1)

This research project is about the nature of familial and societal relations, and how they, and individual and collective identities, are reconstituted through material goods. It is also about the extent to which social relations in south eastern Botswana have changed since early in the twentieth century. This work evolved, initially from a curiosity as to how economic growth and consumption might bring about change, in particular, to gender relations, to more explicitly utilising consumption as a tool to gain insight into how people in this part of Botswana live their lives and express themselves through their possessions (Miller 2008). The research reflects on the way in which consumption and materiality has shaped people’s identities and social relations, and converse to this, how social relations have driven the relationship with material goods and consumption. Development studies as a discipline is concerned with people’s lack of well-being as a result of poverty which can be understood as material deprivation (see Douglas 1982:18) or inability to access functional services. Viewing consumption from a social and cultural aspect as demonstrated in this thesis can provide new insights into how to approach the intersection of economic and social relations as societies develop and change.

Botswana, a success story in terms of sustained economic growth and stable governance, fairly unique in Africa, is an interesting place in which to explore the effects of rapid social and economic progression. It is not possible to fully study or comprehend social relations without recourse to the histories that have created the nation state where they are located, and without recognition of the localised context. To help with such understanding, the research has followed, to the exact place, the work of Isaac Schapera¹ who wrote ‘Married Life in the African Tribe’ (1940, 1971) based on fieldwork in Mochudi, Botswana, in the 1920s and 1930s. Schapera mentions consumption briefly, commenting on how increases in variety and choice of commodities became available as a result of the presence of European Christian missionaries, and also exposure to South African markets via labour migration to the mines (ibid). He indicates that this created a new basis of wealth and differentiation in social status. On many aspects, direct comparison of life in the early twentieth century to today is possible, with a particular focus on kin and marital relations.

¹ Schapera, ‘the doyen of Tswana ethnography’ (Gulbrandsen 2012: xviii)

Mochudi, located thirty-five kilometres from Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, is the size of a small town (although its official designation is ‘village’)² – see Map of Botswana, Appendix 1 - and the specific location of fieldwork is in the centrally located Rampedi Ward³. Mochudi, a dormitory to Gaborone, is generally busy and bustling with people and vehicles, and reflects other urban or peri-urban places in Botswana in having a developing bourgeoisie which increasingly utilises English-medium education, saves up for foreign travel, and incorporates modernist material lifestyles. The part of the high street which borders the original site of Rampedi Ward (which has expanded since Schapera’s time) has a Barclays Bank, a furniture store, bar, and sports and clothing shops. There is a ‘restaurant and take-away’ – Nna’s - across the road, and the post office and library are further along.



Figure 1: View of Mochudi from Phutatikobo Hill

Photograph by Researcher

On entering Rampedi, the road changes from tarmac to sand and occasional potholes. Amongst the homesteads, one can sometimes find a business being run from a person’s yard, such as car maintenance, a children’s nursery or beer brewing - the latter usually less visible from the road - and there is a local driving school in a patch of land not far from the disused cemetery, with the ‘turning circles’ and ‘parking spaces’ marked out with vehicle

² Just two large settlements in Botswana have town or city status while the rest are referred to as villages, Mochudi being one, located in the Kgatleng District.

³ A ward is a collection of households occupying their own well-defined portion of a village under the authority of a hereditary headman (Schapera 1940, 1971: 25).

tyres (see map in Methods Chapter, Page 21). One enterprising young Rampedi man has set up a barber's salon at the side of the unmade road: a wooden structure covered with shade-netting, divided into two areas, for hair-cutting and a waiting area with wooden benches. Walking towards the Notwane River⁴, you will come across three churches fairly close to each other – the Twelve Apostolic Church of Africa, The Old Apostolic Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. On most days there is activity at one or other of the churches, and women, in particular, are noticeable in their church uniforms (see photograph on page 114). There is plenty of space around the houses and yards, and no sense of crowding or people living on top of each other. Wealthier houses are positioned next to very modest abodes, although the general standard of housing conforms to a 'modern' style and all have the possibility of water and electricity. At the far end of the ward, government houses have been built to accommodate council employees and their families or other public sector workers. These residences tend to be fairly small and positioned closer together.

The writing that follows in the subsequent chapters builds up a picture of the values and beliefs underlying the way people live their lives in this part of Botswana. The problematic which is pondered over, and which has been at the core of this research, is around the changes in society which occur as wealth increases and how this is highlighted through a consumption lens. The question asked is what impact can increased wealth on consumption choices tell us about the nature of social relations within a peri-urban community in Botswana. The 'increased wealth' part of the equation in relation to personal consumption is approached in the research through identifying the wealthier households in Rampedi and this is explained in the Methods Chapter. In addition, these same households provide most of the evidence of social consumption which is observable in key life course events, and in which, it can be argued, occupy a particularly significant and essential part of Mochudi society. The importance of such events only became apparent as the time spent in Mochudi progressed, through talking to acquaintances and observing daily happenings, and informants in Rampedi highlighted life course events, such as funerals and weddings, in interviews and discussions. A social and cultural approach to consumption is less commonly applied than an economic one, and yet provides a richness of detail of everyday life and potentially greater understanding of the main drivers of societal behaviour. Through this work, the aim is not only to research social and gender relations through the medium of consumption, but also, in the process, provide valuable insights into social change.

The extent of people's attachment to material goods is explored, and how these are appropriated to express personal and social identities. And, as stated above, the use of consumption as a means to develop and sustain social relations is especially important in Tswana society and evidenced in the various communal events taking place. The conceptual

⁴ During dry periods, the Notwane River dries up altogether, and contrary to this, during heavy rains, it fills the wide flood plain bordering Rampedi Ward.

basis for the research is taken from the extensive writings and theorising of Daniel Miller (1987; 1988; 1994; 1995a; 1998a; 1998b) (see Chapter Two) and, as mentioned earlier, historical perspectives, in the main, are gathered from the works of Isaac Schapera (1940, 1971; 1938, 1994). References to Schapera are made throughout the thesis at points appropriate to the topic under discussion - for example, with regard to the analyses of the historical and social processes which have profoundly influenced society, such as the incidence and nature of marriage in Botswana (see Chapter Six). These are necessary adjuncts to a fuller understanding of the societal and gendered characteristics of life today.

Chapter Three covers the methods of data gathering employed. A basic survey is conducted with households in Rampedi ward, and, having become familiar with the area and people who live there, particular attention is paid to the apparent wealthier households in order to explore the range and extent of personal consumption choices. This approach provides insights to the likely future direction and development of consumption as the country and its people become richer. Writing on consumption and the construction of relationships people have with things and each other is often formed around a specific commodity; however, this research project progresses from a different point with informants taking their own photographs of their personal consumption choices as a means of contributing to data gathered at a household level. This addresses the argument put forward by Daniel Miller (1998a) that so much of research is focused on a single object chosen by the researcher and does not meet the criteria of 'mattering' to the interviewee.

Chapters Four to Eight, which form Section One, highlight the way in which consumption is used in community events and celebrations as a means of creating and nurturing social relations. This is referred to as social consumption or the consumption of events within Tswana society, as opposed to personal or individual consumption. This divide between the two aspects of consumption is utilised as an organising technique within the thesis and often contrasts more historical perspectives and comparative research (Section One) with a greater emphasis on research findings from individuals' consumption choices (Section Two: Chapters Nine to Thirteen). An analysis of societal phenomena, including historical background, is undertaken, and the topics within Chapters Four to Eight follow the flow of life, from birth through to funerals. Schapera (1940, 1971) follows a similar organising plan in his book and states his purpose at the beginning:

'... while describing in considerable detail the life of the modern Kgatla family, I have tried wherever possible to record the ancient usages also, to indicate how far they survive or have been displaced, and to ascertain the reasons for the changes that have taken place' (1940, 1971:7).

Motherhood has taken over from marriage as the social signifier of adulthood (Van Allen 2007). Chapter Four explores this phenomenon and also the emergence of age-related

events in society, such as birthdays. Marriage in Botswana, as in most sub-Saharan African countries, is declining in frequency and occurring generally at a later stage in life (Harwood-Lejeune 2001). Of significance is the fact that over 46 percent of households here are headed by women, often widows or divorcees, yet an increasing proportion of never-married (Kiamba and Otugha 2003:1⁵; O’Laughlan 1998:3). There is huge social pressure for women to have children and the combination has resulted in many homesteads being female-led, comprising three or more generations. Such events as baby showers have become common as places where consumption is used as a means to instil personhood on the unborn child and the mother-to-be in turn is bestowed with the identity and status of ‘mother’ (Taylor 2000; Johnson-Hanks 2006). In addition, most importantly, baby showers provide the opportunity to meet, socialise and develop community relations.

Material goods in the form of gifts have become a significant part of courtship relationships. Chapter Five explores the basis of this development, delving into historical accounts, and assessing the impact on contemporary relations. Courtship leading to marriage can last a long time: the traditional process of bringing the two families together is still followed, and the benefits of giving *bogadi*⁶, involving close kin, particularly the maternal uncle, and in building a supportive family network, are still all believed to be important. This process towards marriage involving many opportunities for consumptive gatherings is explored in Chapter Six. The culmination of the marriage process is the ‘white’ wedding (see Chapter Seven). This surpasses other celebrations in terms of its organisation, stage management, visual displays, inclusivity, and incorporation of kinship, modernity and tradition. It is referred to as a ‘social cocktail’ (Van Dijk 2012).

Funerals, which are analysed in Chapter Eight and the material culture of graves and tombstones, are a significant aspect of social life in Botswana. At the height of the AIDS crisis, twelve years or more ago, funerals were so frequent that no one dared to plan any other event for a Saturday, and, contrary to tradition, funerals even started taking place during the week (Dow and Essex 2010). Such forced haste to bury one’s dead may well have diluted some of the fast-held customary practices, yet also may have helped cement a set pattern of procedure, and a mandatory sense of obligation to attend. Above all, there is, on behalf of the deceased close kin, an imperative to provide a large meal for all relatives, friends and neighbours present at the funeral, the basis of which is a slaughtered cow or goat. This ties in with the ‘useful’ practice of owning livestock.

Chapters Nine to Thirteen in Section Two contain data gathered on personal consumption. A number of household members participated in taking photographs of possessions which they deemed most important to them. Often these reveal an emphasis placed on traditional items: large black, three-legged cooking pots, for example, which are used outdoors to cook

⁵ The latest census figures available for female-headed households date back to 2001

⁶ Brideprice or bride-wealth

vast quantities of meat, maize and sorghum. This indicates not only a wish to carry on family and social tradition, but an adherence to the centrality of communal consumptive events in the social life of Rampedi. Large quantities of food are prepared in particular for weddings and funerals which are the ultimate examples of consumptive events in Botswana.

The photographs taken by respondents also show a desire to conform to a 'modernising' trend, most obviously seen in Rampedi through housing styles and contents, and also clothing. Homes are often subject to major renovations, with roofs being replaced, extensions being added, and separate dwellings being built to provide income through renting out. These building works are generally facilitating a move to more in-doors living, yet this is evolving happily alongside society's adherence to outdoor communal events. The extent to which one feels 'at home' comes to the surface in households where the sense of belonging or ownership is compromised. There are examples where this has a tangible and material element to it. With regard to contents, a television is found in most homes, with the stand on which it sits deemed almost as important. The fashion is for a designated TV cabinet which can accommodate associated equipment such as a DVD player and dstv decoder on another shelf, as well provide room for a few personal possessions, in particular, framed photographs. Such cabinets acquire a status as if they are the first items in the pecking order of value 'driven by domestic acquisition' (Weiss 2009:21). Items such as automatic washing machines are found in some homes, yet the general acceptability and use of these is still being negotiated. The challenge is complex and lingers on the identities of women, in particular married women, and the expression of love and caring given to their husbands and their families through the intimate act of washing clothes. Importance is placed on dressing well, and interest, most especially from young women, is shown in shopping for clothes and shoes, as well as perfume, jewellery and make-up. Material goods are about identity through outward appearance, but respondents' photographs also show an individual's desire to portray their identity through their industry which reflects their role in the household and their caring and love for others.

The nature of gender relations within households is often revealed through the way the finances and incomes of the husband and wife are managed (Pahl 2008). It was deemed a necessary aspect of data collection to find out from both partners how they handled personal and household finances, and also what were their approaches to purchasing goods. The findings reveal a widespread and dedicated approach to planning expenditure, with an emphasis on co-operation and consultation between partners. One could say this is an embedded Botswana characteristic that mirrors the national government's general approach to handling finances, evident over several decades – one of reserve and pragmatic planning (see Durham 1999). Within the household, occasional irritation is expressed by either a husband or wife over their partner's tendency to overspend, but on the whole, the attitude to personal consumption is cautious and modest. Men, over a certain age, are drawn to the purchase of livestock above everything else, which symbolises the aspiration of their

masculinity as 'providers' and 'breadwinners', and weaves a link to large scale consumptive gatherings. Younger men, concerned with personal appearance, hygiene and keeping fit, like to socialise and much time is spent in the various drinking establishments, consuming beer and 'being men' (Suggs 2002:52). It is a world where with increased opportunities for women to compete on a level footing with men, most particularly in the workplace, gender identities and ideologies are open to contestation and change. Points of tension can be seen in cases where a woman earns more than her husband, and where she chooses to utilise an automatic washing machine.

The final chapter (Chapter Fourteen) presents the conclusions from the research and reflections on such. In response to the question - as to the nature of social relations in Rampedi as seen through the lens of consumption, and facilitated by greater wealth - the analysis undertaken on the various aspects of society found in this part of Africa is assessed and the discussion extended to tease out the significance of the findings. It is hoped that the remarkable and affable nature of Tswana society is made apparent in these writings, and, taking Comaroff's (2002:1) words, succeed in revealing Botswana's 'world of enduring fascination' and 'quiet cultural depth' in which social wealth is fashioned and created.

Chapter 2 – Concepts and Contexts

The society that people live in is constituted through the domains of materiality – everyday objects become part of the make-up of the identity of individuals and groups. People's attachment to material possession is connected to their value systems, beliefs and emotions, and to their personal and social identities (Tilley et al 2006). Studies of consumption, as an aspect of material culture, have proved valuable as a means of enriching anthropological research. The impact of consumption on a society is various depending on the particular location, as articulated by Miller: 'The.... advantage of consumption is that it is a relatively autonomous and plural process of cultural self-construction. There is no single or proper way to consume. The imperatives of consumption may be as varied as the cultural contexts from which consumers act' (1995a:41). An observation of consumption can reveal much about the social fabric of a society and what is considered important in life by its citizens.

Without going into the history of material culture theories, I draw mainly upon the work of Daniel Miller (1987; 1988; 1994; 1995a; 1998a; 1998b; 2001a; 2008; 2010; 2012), who is critical of purely structural and semiotic approaches to material culture since he feels they do not fully recognise the significance of particular artefacts (1998a:10). He expresses the view that such theorising starts with a category, for example, gender, and seeks to reiterate it, and he labels this 'a kind of social reductionism' (ibid). Materiality is therefore not simply about objects signifying or representing us principally as signs or symbols (Campbell 1995:115-117; Carrier and Heyman 1997:358); Miller's contribution to material culture goes further, and is, in his own words, 'more sophisticated', in that he introduces his version of the concept of 'objectification' (Miller 1998a, 1995a:277; see also Storey 1999:168)⁷. He recognises that consumer goods are actively used in social and individual self-creation and are the means through which we build our understanding of ourselves and others (Miller 1987, 1998a, 2010). People appropriate goods and transform them into creative artefacts that reveal much about their own identity. In this way, social relations are 'objectified' or embodied in consumer goods or consumptive displays. Consumption is a process of objectification '.... by which people are enabled to construct themselves as social beings in the same process by which they construct their world' (Miller 1995a:55). What Miller was at pains to point out was that material things can exist almost unnoticed and yet exert enormous power to influence behaviour (2009:4). Materiality actually creates individuals in the first place (Miller 2010), for instance, in the home, one can observe 'the processes by which a home and its inhabitants transform each other' (Miller 2001a:2; see also Chapter Nine).

⁷ The first ideas of objectification can be traced back to Hegel's 'Phenomenology of the Spirit' (1807, 1977)(Tilley 2006:60)

In combating the view that some kind of 'hedonistic desire' (Campbell 1987) is the root of consumption, Miller points to his own research findings in which he found contradictions in the discourse⁸ of shopping and the actuality of the activity (1998b). What is commonly thought of as a materialistic basis to shopping is found to be an operation of thrift and concern for value (Miller 1998b:49). Acts of expenditure are hence turned into acts of saving (ibid). This concern to save money is contextualised amongst a range of values representing 'proper' behaviour, such as, modesty, sobriety and restraint (1998b:56); and so, acts of thrift are based on more than just a sense of saving, reflecting attributes of individual and household identity. Miller acknowledges that there are alternative approaches to the one of thrift and points more generally to the objectification of different values in the act of shopping (1998b:65).

The anthropology of consumption developed by Miller takes as its theoretical base the practice theory propounded by Giddens (1986)⁹. Using Giddens' theory of structuration, Miller is able to explore potential relationships between cultural and material worlds (Hicks and Beaudry 2010:50). Here it is understood that consumption happens and evolves within a model of the 'duality of structure' comprising the mutually constitutive relationship between agency and social structure. Also highly influential, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) contributed to the move from the traditional Marxist emphasis on processes of production and exchange to a social study of consumption. Through his concept of 'habitus', Bourdieu (ibid) shone a light on the way in which class and consumption become naturalised. And this is equally applicable to other social distinctions, such as gender. Through analysing consumptive practices carefully, all manner of social details can be potentially uncovered. Miller (2006:346) refers to the 'power of consumption, as a means to reproduce social patterning [that] was hidden by an ideology which viewed consumption as merely an expression of individual taste.' In other words, people do not consume certain things without reason, and the importance of consumption choices is in that they reveal the essential characteristics of a society, the values and beliefs held by that society and the nature of social relations.

Alfred Gell (1988) illustrates a striking picture of the Muria Gonds of central India in the way in which their desire for goods is culturally controlled. Here, a rapid increase in the wealth of some individuals has led to uncomfortable dilemmas in consumption where economic egalitarianism and social cohesion are valued above all else as symbols of their ethnic

⁸ Miller explains the term 'discourse' as follows: '.... [It] is used here for the manner in which language and practice become routinized and externalized beyond the expressions of particular individuals and become, therefore, a common location for the standard generation of normative ideals and sentiments' (Miller 2001d:15).

⁹ Giddens provided an explanation for social structure and patterning, and the relationship between 'agency' and 'structure' (1986). Dominant ideologies form and are formed by social structure, which is referred to by Giddens as continually moving through a process of *structuration*. The actions of individuals are seen to make and remake social structure, and this provides an explanation for how changes to aspects of social relations develop over time.

identity. As a result, 'traditional' goods, such as brass pots and ceremonial garments, which perpetuate their socially regulated lifestyle, are sought, as opposed to other commodities which may be freely available. Their 'obsessive conservatism' with regard to consumer goods does not apply to alcoholic drink or food in which they notoriously indulge at public feasts and celebrations (Gell 1988:115). Such culturally filtered attitudes to consumption are present in every society to a more or less obvious extent. Although the society found in Mochudi cannot be labelled 'obsessively conservative', it nevertheless does not generally indulge in flashy or flamboyant consumption. As will be discussed later on, at a communal celebration or event, much emphasis is placed on providing everyone present with a substantial meal, and this, in other cultures, could be considered immoderate consumption.

The development of global networks and commodity links which have risen inexorably in the past twenty years or so, have introduced a different perspective on both production and consumption. Far from being merely localised processes, they have moved rapidly to become globalising forces. It was once thought that mass consumption and globalisation would lead to a homogenisation of culture and we would all end up as 'autonomous, amoral and purely self-interested individuals' (Carrier and Miller 1999:37; Baudrillard 1988), yet this denies the complex and dynamic processes which are part of how and why people appropriate things in their lives. The way people tackle impersonal markets and multinational brands has everything to do with their endeavours to create social relations and to objectify moralities and this is by no means a blanket approach to inevitable materialism (Carrier and Miller 1999; Miller 1998a). This is not to deny the influence of marketing, advertising media, and the wider availability of goods (see Burke 1996). Commodities are viewed as having their own journeys in which they encounter different attitudes to their use and varied 'regimes of value' (Appadurai 1986). As pointed out by Banks (1997:159), Appadurai's approach emphasises that the value and meaning placed on commodities is as a result of power struggles which are always open to further contestation and transformation. Commodities are not socially neutral objects, but take on socially constructed 'lives' (Kopytoff 1986) as they are negotiated through different circuits of exchange. As such they are seen to generate particular meanings and values in different locations and times: '... the economies of complex and highly monetized societies exhibit a two-sided valuating system: on one side is the homogenous area of commodities, on the other, the extremely variegated area of private valuation' (ibid:88). However, Friedman (1991), in contrast, emphasises that it is not the movement of the commodities themselves, it is the practices applied to them that create 'the social life' – 'Things do not have social lives; rather, social lives have things' (ibid:161). This latter view is maybe a little too simplistic in that it does not take into account how people are influenced by the presence of material items and structures which drive certain behaviours. People may feel a lack of agency to change things, an example of which is given in Chapter Nine with regard to inherited housing.

There exists an anti-consumption sentiment as a global discourse (Miller 2006) which argues that there is a degree of consumption beyond which it is seen as morally corrupting. There is concern that with more goods and more choice, the world risks becoming materialistic and greedy to meet 'false' needs (Mackay 1997). The roots of this may be explained by looking at the history of religious tradition (ibid) in which consumption is seen as self-indulgent and decadent as opposed to being within a state of self-denial and modesty leading to spiritual enlightenment¹⁰. And additionally, the Marxist and dominant focus on production was that it was good and noble, as opposed to consumption which generally has the reputation of being frivolous (Mackay 1997:2). The consumer is seen as the antithesis of the producer. There is a gendered dimension to this, reflecting patriarchal sentiment that men worked, whereas women managed the domestic scene and consumed (ibid)¹¹. Aligned to this is the general assumption that people who own more possessions must in some way be more materialistic than those who do not have much (Miller 1998:71). This common discourse is seen as contradictory to what actually occurs in practice and is uncovered in Miller's research (ibid) – that attitudes to consumption are various and complex; that consumption is more often handled with integrity and used as a means of objectifying certain values.

Consumption in terms of spending is often argued to be related to choice, the practicality of which is well outlined by Miller (1998b:138):

‘...the largest measure of our consumption is not derived from a desire for more things or for more choice. It comes from the gradual expansion of a sense of what ordinary people may ordinarily expect as their standard of living combined with the growth in their incomes. Whether it is the speed with which a medical operation should be carried out, or the number of toilets in a family house, modern consumption has certainly demonstrated how hard it is to overestimate our capacity to need as opposed merely to want.’

However, the socialisation of consumption in that what one spends money on, and how much, is related to context, as in the story of the Muria Gonds (Gell 1988) mentioned earlier. The fact that Botswana has one of the highest gini coefficients in the world points to very large differences in individual wealth and spending power (CSO 2010¹²; African Development Bank 2012¹³), and yet in the peri-urban locality of Mochudi, significant distinguishing

¹⁰ Contrary to this, Pentecostal Churches many and various throughout sub-Saharan Africa today preach a 'prosperity Gospel' which embraces new forms of consumption (Martin 2005:146); however, fieldwork in Botswana did not find this type of religious approach to be widely followed.

¹¹ Another gendered aspect is pointed out by Belk (1999) who relates the biblical story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden where it is Woman who succumbs to temptation: 'Thereby is the innocence of fulfilled needs forever lost to a world of hunger, longing, and desire' (ibid:185), and indulgence in consumption is thus seen as sinful.

¹² Gini coefficient statistics date from 2003

¹³ Statistics for Botswana date back to 1994

variances of wealth are not apparent. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) highlight how cultural differences in attitude can exist:

‘...it is interesting to observe the very different values that different societies set on the ratio of consumption to income. Spending only a small proportion of income may in one place and time be called thrifty, wise and provident; in another it may be held to be miserly, mean and wrong. Conversely, a high ratio of consumption may be approved as generous, magnificent, and good in one culture, while in another the selfsame behaviour may be called spendthrift, feckless, and bad.’ (ibid 1979:26)

In many African societies, being miserly or stingy is a recognised character trait, yet is not obvious in the community under scrutiny in Botswana. Firstly, there is an expectation and obligation placed on individuals to give to other members of the family if they are in a position to do so, and, converse to this, if they do not have anything, they are likely to be recipients instead. This is usually on the basis of necessity, as opposed to desire or want. Durham (1999:198) refers to such requests ‘made in terms of kinship, which involve claims of dependency, responsibility and hierarchy’. There is a sense in Botswana that individual circumstances can change quickly and a recipient can become a person giving, or vice versa. Secondly, ‘the largeness of spirit’ is encompassed in the National understanding of *botho* – see pages 14 - 15 for discussion of *botho* - and as such, a generosity towards giving is encouraged so that no person will be left in need¹⁴.

Consumption, until recently, was not a topic for academic writing: it was not considered worthy of study, its potential unrecognised, and was deemed ‘culturally suppressed’ (Clunas 1999). This would have been the situation when Isaac Schapera (1940, 1971), my other main source of reference, conducted research in the 1920s and 1930s. This however does not detract from the very rich and detailed descriptions he produced, which are invaluable in placing a marker in time and enabling a comparison with society today. Schapera had gathered data for his classic ethnography and account of the lives and relations of men and women, entitled, *Married Life in an African Tribe* (1940, 1971). This book on the intimacies of Tswana life (together with his other prolific writings) is used as a reference point and basis for exploring fluctuations in social change since then. Schapera is described as ‘an encyclopedist of African culture and society’ (Comaroff, et al 2007:5) who spent a prolonged period of fieldwork (1929-34) with the Bakgatla¹⁵ situated in Rampedi ward¹⁶, Mochudi. It is

¹⁴ This generosity is helped by Government-funded social protection schemes such as the state old age pension and destitute programme

¹⁵ Mochudi is the tribal capital of the Bakgatla, one of more than twenty tribes in Botswana which are sufficiently homogenous to be classed a single group, Tswana, in relation to other peoples of Southern Africa. For further explanation, see Page 17

to this very same place that this research project is drawn and provides the locus for collection of data.

Schapera's anthropological work was written specifically to highlight the significant societal transformations taking place in the 1920s and 1930s in the way in which the Bakgatla lived their lives, taking historical baseline information and making comparisons to what he found at that time (Heald 2003). His work is described as having a 'no-nonsense commitment to transparency in the work of description and representation' (Comaroff, et al 2007:6), and he saw no value in 'trying to force his data into received paradigms or theoretical frames' (ibid: 5). References to Schapera's work are given throughout the thesis (1940, 1971; 1938, 1994; 1957). He provides invaluable insights into all aspects of social relations: the upbringing of children; the tribulations of courtship; the changes in gender relations found within marriage; the evolution of societal attitudes towards death, to name a few. Schapera was concerned to capture the significant changes occurring in society at the time of his residence there and provide a rationale as to why these changes were happening. He indicates that the future of indigenous African society was regarded with 'grave concern' since it was seen as disintegrating under economic, religious and political forces affecting the centrality of the family (1940, 1971:8). Huge economic changes – labour migration and the formation of a cash economy – disrupted the family and caused instability; yet, on the other hand, these same economic developments provided for the emancipation of women from a highly patriarchal system (ibid:320). Schapera somewhat backtracks on the destructiveness of the changes, and, in talking about the foundations needed for stable personal relationships, states:

'We cannot therefore regard 'disintegration' as synonymous with 'demoralization'; the process at work may perhaps be more accurately described as one of 'reconstruction' (ibid)

He then adds:

'But these constructive forces have as yet been imperfectly realized, and are less potent than the disintegrating tendencies. There is often a conflict between traditional social forms and new ideas, between modes of behaviour and legal and conventional rules. Christianity and education encourage concepts of equality between the sexes, while the law and the economy preserve the subordination of women, with limited exceptions, eg the right of women to inherit property, and the openings for wage-earning by females.... The *femme sole* has emerged,

¹⁶ A ward is a defined residential area which comes under the authority of a headman related to the Chief (Roberts 1979). There were 48 wards in Mochudi in 1979 (ibid)

but there is as yet no place for her in the legal system, or in the political life of the community' (ibid:321)

The Tswana family continues to socially mutate, modernising within the system of common law, and developing new gender practices, yet retaining some of the old traditions. The details of these changes, as well as historical background, that impact on social relations, are contained in the data chapters that follow in Sections One and Two.

As in other southern African communities, people in Mochudi participate in various consumptive events - weddings, funerals, house-warming parties, baby showers, wedding showers, birthday parties, church gatherings and so forth - and these are what bind the community together. It could be said that greater value is placed on the consumption of ritual group events compared to the consumption for personal or individual use. In the consumption of events in Mochudi, most particularly seen in weddings and funerals, the feeding of plentiful numbers of people constitutes a large part of the expenditure¹⁷ (see Chapters Seven and Eight). Maybe the cost of these events has always been large relative to the wealth of families and individuals – Schapera refers to wedding feasts as 'elaborate' (1940, 1971:64), and infers that the extravagance of a festivity is linked to the status and wealth of the family (ibid). That may be the case today, yet research has indicated an escalation of expenditure and expectation which affects all potential wedding couples. They may have the option to take out a loan from a bank or financial services company to cover the cost of the wedding, and research has shown that many couples do this. But to what extent is this hefty expenditure a case of 'Veblenesque' conspicuous consumption (Miller 2001b:232)?

One essential ingredient of Batswana character is summed up in the word '*botho*' which can be translated as 'graciousness'. This recognises a modesty in behaviour which stems from a dislike of overt boastfulness, '...Batswana culture [that] places a high value on humbleness and dignity' (Denbow and Thebe 2006:172). This characteristic can be found throughout Botswana as shown in an anthropological account from the Kalahari that reveals the rejection of a well intentioned gift was down to a reaction designed to prevent the giver from becoming too arrogant and boastful (Lee 1969)¹⁸. That *botho* is an important aspect of

¹⁷ The perceived need to own livestock is a way of coping with unforeseen events, such as a funeral, with the associated requirement to feed everyone.

¹⁸ The characteristics of modesty and deprecation of the !Kung San of the Kalahari Desert are mentioned by Giddens (1994:61) in his treatise on the Post-Traditional society. An interesting point he makes is how these characteristics enable the community to sustain egalitarianism – 'The ritualized disparagement is a counter to arrogance and therefore to the sort of stratification that might develop if the best hunters were honoured or rewarded' (1994:62). The ramifications for society in Mochudi are discussed more fully in subsequent chapters.

Batswana values is confirmed by the fact it is cited within the National document, Vision 2016¹⁹:

‘This refers to one of the tenets of African culture – the concept of a person who has a well-rounded character, who is well-mannered, courteous and disciplined, and realises his or her full potential both as an individual and as part of the community to which he or she belongs.

Botho defines a process for earning respect by first giving it, and to gain empowerment by empowering others. It encourages people to applaud rather than resent those who succeed. It disapproves of anti-social, disgraceful, inhuman and criminal behaviour, and encourages social justice for all.

Botho as a concept must stretch to its utmost limits the largeness of the spirit of all Batswana. It must permeate every aspect of our lives, like the air we breathe, so that no Motswana will rest easy knowing that another is in need’ (Vision 2016, 1997)

As shall be shown in the subsequent chapters, the drive for communal events and festivities is not so much through the desire for conspicuous consumption, and any extravagance displayed is perceived to be within the bounds of *botho*. Consumptive events take place in Mochudi for the very reason that first and foremost they are social and an important part of building and maintaining community relations. This reflection is backed up by the findings of Durham and Klaitz (2002), in particular looking at funerals as public spaces, where ‘processes of belonging, of sharing identity with others, and of debating the nature of social relationships are carried out...’ (ibid: 794). Durham emphasises the ‘fundamental premises of sociality’ in how people relate to one another, of which funerals, being large gatherings, are a prime example (2001:162).

Within the individual appropriation of goods, social relations are objectified (Miller 1995a), and the very process of obtaining goods, that is, the act of shopping, is referred to as a ‘material act of love’ (Miller 1998b). This is because it is rarely an activity that is individualised or performed for oneself, but one carried out with a particular relationship in mind (ibid). Shopping is essentially about social relations (ibid). The centrality of love and care as the ideology behind shopping is obvious in other mundane domestic activities, such as clothes washing and cooking. Klaitz (2010: 6) also relates the sentiment of love to caring, in this case focusing within the context of AIDS, and says, ‘A person is said to ‘have love’ (go

¹⁹ *Botho* is cited as the fifth principle within the development plans of Botswana; the other four are democracy, development, self-reliance and unity.

na le lerato) because of what he or she *does* in order to enhance the well-being of others – giving, building, feeding, dressing, washing, nursing.’

The proposition (Miller 1998:116) that the rise of the romantic ideal of love has acted as substitution for religious devotion, alongside the rise of contemporary consumerism, is based on the work of Campbell (1987). Miller goes further in saying that it was not just ‘romantic love’, but ‘love as devotion’ such as one might find in the ‘simple devotional duty expected within family life’ (Miller 1998:117), although, as mentioned earlier, he dismisses the idea supported by Campbell (1987) that ‘hedonistic desire’ is the basis of modern day provisioning. This thesis embraces the concept that an element of self-sacrifice is present within ‘material acts of love’ or ‘making love’ as expressions of caring and a means to sustain social relationships (Miller 1998b:35).

A discussion on the nature of love contrasting Miller’s (1998b) ‘material acts of love’ with Giddens’ (1992) concept of ‘the pure relationship’ takes place in Chapter Five on Courtship. There is a sense that a new kind of ‘provider’ love has emerged in societies in southern Africa which brings together material goods and romantic love, creating a particular understanding of love and caring (Hunter 2010; Cole and Thomas 2009; Durham 2001). This is contrary to the assumption that global development in relationships is towards a more self-concerned expression of love where the relationship itself is the subject of discussion and negotiation (Giddens 1992). This minimises the expression of love in any form of material giving, whether by gifts or acts. Miller clearly argues that the utilisation of material culture is a means to enhance rather than detract from the capacity to objectify social relations (1998b).

The evolving of love and materiality as seen in courtship relationships through the giving of gifts (see Chapter Five) is seen as part of a modernising world. And it is a world that has changed significantly over the past decades, economically and socially (ref Schapera 1940, 1971:311-321), and continues to do so. The concern within this thesis is with what opportunities, manifested through consumption, emerge within a modernising community through rising incomes and increased levels of wealth. In analysing the current situation, general data on Botswana, including economic, statistical, and gender representation²⁰ is detailed in Appendix 2. This provides useful background and contextual information. The focus of the research, in contrast to most of development studies, is directed towards more prosperous and financially better-off households and higher level consumption, since it is here that the role of consumption is likely to be most clearly revealed. And in choosing to target wealthier people, this study is projecting forward and anticipating what likely courses

²⁰ Botswana is historically a patriarchal society which Hoyt Alverson (1978:49) describes as follows: ‘The Tswana are typical of southern Bantu-speaking peoples in having a rigidly segregated and hierarchically stratified society in terms of sex. Traditionally women were the legal minors of either their parents or their husbands. The man is the head of the household (the ‘root’ of the household, as the Tswana say)’ See also Wylie (1990: 126).

of action people, currently in poverty, may take in the future when greater disposable income is available to them. This argues that broader patterns of consumption can be predicted; however, this is done with the caveat that any analysis of consumption should be made on the understanding that it is always contingent on the particulars of place and time.

As stated, the locus of research is Mochudi. This place is both the tribal capital of the Bakgatla, one of the eight largest Tswana chiefdoms of Botswana²¹ and an administrative centre for Kgatleng District. Briefly, to share Mochudi's recent origins, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Bakgatla were living in the Rustenburg district in South Africa, where many still reside today (Makgala 2009). In 1871, a significant body of the tribe trekked across the border as a means of escaping being dominated by more powerful groups, and established themselves at Mochudi²². It is reckoned²³ that today only forty per cent of residents in the Kgatleng District are Bakgatla, most people having moved into the area over the past fifty years from other parts of Botswana.

Schapera describes Mochudi of the 1930s as follows:

'Mochudi itself is so big a settlement²⁴ that many of its inhabitants do not even know one another by sight.... In the smaller villages contacts between the inhabitants are more intimate. They know one another and, either directly or through gossip, what goes on in most homes, and they come together fairly often, not only at public meetings or at church, but at work, at feasts and at funerals.... Most markedly still in Mochudi, most of a man's interests and activities are linked up primarily with the members of his own ward' (Schapera 1940, 1971:95)

Schapera emphasises the importance of kinship. Many near relatives lived close by within the same ward and were connected by 'special rights and privileges, duties and obligations' (1940, 1971:97):

'The importance of close relatives is reflected particularly in the system of 'linked' relationships featuring so prominently in Kgatla society. In almost every family of any size the parents usually pair the children together – elder brother with younger brother, brother with sister, elder

²¹ Tswana was one of the three major divisions of the Sotho group of Bantu-speaking peoples of central South Africa. There are just as many (although related) languages as tribes, although today, English and Setswana are widely spoken.

²² For full historical background to Mochudi, see Morton (2009); also, more recent history of the Bakgatla: Makgala (2009)

²³ Information gathered from local informants

²⁴ Mochudi's population is recorded as 8,600 in the 1934 Census; Rampedi Ward's population increased from 106 inhabitants (1934 Census) to 1,513 (2001 Census)

sister with younger sister. Those of the same sex are paired together alternatively (first and third, second and fourth, and so on), those of opposite sex go in relative order of birth (eldest brother with eldest sister, second brother with second sister, and so on). Moreover, a man's linked sister is also the linked paternal aunt of his children, just as he is the linked maternal uncle of hers, while linked brothers are the linked senior and junior paternal uncles respectively of each other's children. Among his immediate relatives, therefore, every man may have one of each class to whom he is specially attached, and with whom he is said 'to work together for life' (Schapera 1940, 1971:97)

The impression given is that close relatives were very much an integral part and presence within married couples' lives (ibid:89). Much has changed which puts a strain on these special relationships and obligations which go alongside them, not least, smaller family size, marriage outside family, and greater travel away from family location. Such special relationships as exist today, in particular, the role of uncle, are explored in Chapters Five and Six.

At the time of fieldwork, 2010-2011, there was a revival of interest in the culture of the Bakgatla, mainly driven by the newly installed Chief Kgosi Kgafela II, who sought 'the restoration of Setswana culture and respect for *bogosi*'²⁵ which was positioned as oppositional to a Westernised and modern lifestyle. Initiation schools which had been absent for a period of twenty-five years, were brought back for both boys and girls on alternate years (see Chapter Four). Cultural exhibitions and events for the public were staged at the Phutatikobo Museum and main Mochudi *kgotla*²⁶. For most people encountered through fieldwork in Mochudi, this was a sideshow, yet there was no doubting a general strong sense of pride and solidity in terms of people knowing their birth roots and links to their home village, whether that was Mochudi or another location in Botswana²⁷.

There is evidence that Mochudi was a comparatively prosperous community from the early 1930s (Grant and Grant 1995; Schapera 1940, 1971), with the Bakgatla regarded as the most progressive tribe in the Protectorate²⁸. In contrast to other tribes, the Bakgatla produced grain surpluses which were evident in their clay granaries, and they were the first tribe in the country to organise an agricultural show. In 1935, the Bakgatla Chief, Isang Pilane, became

²⁵ The Mirror, Calitus Bosaletswe, 'Kgafela the Freedom Fighter', 11th-18th November 2010, Vol 01:22

²⁶ *Kgotla*: the community meeting place; also acts as a community court of law (Grant and Grant 1995:127).

²⁷ Other than Batswana, a few Zimbabweans were found to be living in Rampedi, as well as people who had strong family links to South Africa.

²⁸ Bechuanaland, as Botswana was once called, came under British protection and control in 1885 until it gained Independence in 1966.

the first Motswana²⁹ to own a tractor. There is also evidence that the Bakgatla were the first people to build 'modernised' houses (Grant and Grant 1995), the influence for which came from their connections to the Transvaal from whence they migrated. Former President Masire in his autobiography refers to the character of the Bakgatla:

'When I raised the issue of HIV and AIDS and the reasons for its spread in *kgotla* meetings, the reactions were very hostile to the idea that I would talk about such personal and moral issues publicly. Only the Bakgatla, who are more candid about most things than other Batswana, seemed to be interested in hearing and talking about the matter' (Masire 2006:239)

Today, Mochudi, with a population of over 44,000 (2011 census) appears a little less progressive and shows evidence of having missing out on economic development compared with other 'villages' in Botswana. In the centre, is a very large empty building, intended as a shopping mall, yet falling foul of planning regulations, it remains unused since 2003. The given explanation for Mochudi's lack of investment is political in that its people invariably go against the ruling BDP³⁰ party in favour of voting for the opposition - the BCP - and consequently Mochudi suffers from government disinterest (Makgala 2009). However, Mochudi is deemed an ideal location in which to carry out this research, in particular because of the social mobility of its inhabitants, its progressive economic and social track record, and the fact that Schapera's detailed work provides the basis of understanding of the transformations experienced by its people from the early twentieth century to today.

This chapter has outlined the conceptual background to the research project and the concepts to be followed. The theories of Daniel Miller and the historical writings of Isaac Schapera provide a guiding thread throughout, and the focus is on the utilisation of consumption and consumptive acts as the lens through which to understand the nature of social relations found in Mochudi, Botswana. The following chapter details the methods applied to gathering research data.

²⁹ Singular of Batswana: in one sense can describe the people of Botswana; in another it applies to the family and people in Botswana and South Africa whose language is Setswana (Grant and Grant 1995).

³⁰ BDP stands for Botswana Democratic Party; BCP is the Botswana Congress Party

Chapter 3 - Methods

3.1 Location and Timing

The location of fieldwork in the ward of Rampedi is bordering the main street through Mochudi and forms one of the central wards with easy access to shops and amenities. A plan of the ward indicating individual homesteads is given in Figure 2. The period of fieldwork is September 2010 to July 2011, with a follow-up visit in April-May 2013.

In 1973, Simon Roberts had carried out a survey of Rampedi at Schapera's suggestion, with a view to seeing how the structure of the ward had changed over a period of nearly forty years. He found little different in that three core families (central descent groups) still lived in the main part of the ward (Schapera and Roberts 1975). He reported that the pattern of residence in which a woman moves to a man's homestead on marriage was still maintained, and that temporary movement out of the ward for reasons of employment for both sexes was limited (ibid). At the time of my own fieldwork, the same three families and their descendants occupy residences in their original location in the ward. However, the number of *malapa*³¹ in the ward has grown since then and residential plots of land have been allocated by the Land Board up to the boundaries of the ward (the flood plain of the River Notwane and a feeder stream). This area I have called 'Incomers' in the thesis. A third area to the eastern side of Rampedi, is where a number of government houses have been built, together with a health clinic and small business units. Rampedi is not a particularly affluent ward, and moderately well-off families are seen to live side by side with very poor people.

On first arriving in Mochudi, a visit to the Tribal Administration was made and a meeting secured with the deputy Kgosi, Sekai Linchwe, in which the purpose of the research was explained and permission sought (a Research Permit had already been obtained from the Government of Botswana). It was important to do this to gain the cooperation not only of the Tribal Administration, but also of the local tribesman, the Ward Headman, to whom the deputy Kgosi enabled an introduction, and who subsequently provided assistance and embraced the project.

My residence for the period of fieldwork was outside of Mochudi, halfway to the capital, Gaborone, yet Mochudi was visited nearly every day, and, even if not specifically meeting with anyone, a walk around Rampedi was usually undertaken, acknowledging familiar faces and seeing what was happening.

³¹ *Malapa*, plural of *Lapa* or *lelapa*: homesteads comprising one or more houses linked by or within a courtyard (see Grant and Grant 1995:14)



Figure 2: Map of Rampedi Ward indicating households involved in initial survey (numbers in black and yellow) and second stage interviewing (numbers in yellow). Source: Kgatleng Land Board

3.2 Data Collection

The methodological approach adopted is qualitative and interpretive, utilising ethnographic techniques commonly applied in anthropological studies which ‘seek explanations of phenomena through their local context’ (Miller 1994:3), such as observation, questioning, listening and interpretation. It was deemed essential to secure the services of an appropriate research assistant who could pave the way to enable successful data gathering to take

place³². My 'outsider' status was counterbalanced by my research assistant as an 'insider' (Merriam et al 2001; Kondo 1986). All educated people and elites in Botswana speak fluent English, yet many households in Rampedi spoke only limited English and often chose to talk in the local language, Setswana. Consequently, there was a high dependency on my research assistant to act as translator. Attempts were made to learn some basic phrases in Setswana to help with my acceptance into the community, and, in following the practice of Miller (1994:4), efforts were made to become a 'kitchen-sink' ethnographer, getting to know, and be known, by local people.

The first stage of fieldwork (September – December 2010) started with a funnelled approach to data collection. Attempts were made to contact every household to establish a basic understanding of who lived in the area and their circumstances, with a view then to determine which households and informants were likely to be the main data providers. This activity was not as straight-forward as initially thought: people in Botswana usually have not only a home in the village, but also live some of the time at their *masimo* or cattlepost³³ some distance from their main home³⁴. Initial fieldwork coincided with Botswana's summer and rainy season, which meant that a number of people were absent from their Mochudi home, spending time at the *masimo*. A survey was achieved of approximately 65 per cent of the households in Rampedi Ward (as many as could be gained entry to, which came to 80 in total), the basis of which was a general questionnaire which was also translated into Setswana. The questionnaire covered the following areas: biographical and ethnic data of all household members (permanent and temporary), marital status, duration of marriage, brideprice given, education levels reached, religious affiliation, occupational details, length of time in property and whether owned or not, income levels and social benefits, expenditure, consumption and possessions, and leisure time activities. Although not intended to be left with any residents, the questionnaire had an accompanying letter from the Rampedi Headman expressing support for the project, asking for residents' cooperation, and giving brief details of the purpose and remit of the research. Agreement to participate in the project was documented through a consent form (see Appendix 3), again translated into Setswana.

³² My research assistant proved ideal for the following reasons: she was a mature woman (essential to gain respect in a society where age matters); had grown up in Mochudi and ethnically was half Mokgatla (as a local, indigenous person, could more readily empathise with interviewees); was educated and experienced as a training consultant (thus easily understood research objectives; had the necessary interpersonal skills to communicate with informants; could transcribe and had access to computing equipment); and now lived in a nearby village (not too close to be of concern to informants over confidential matters). A student at the University of Botswana was also employed to transcribe a number of recorded interviews of key informants.

³³ A *masimo* is the allocated lands for growing crops, and the cattlepost is often used by many members of a family for keeping cattle, the focal point of which is the borehole or water supply. Usually the *masimo* and cattlepost are in different locations.

³⁴ In addition, some people have a residence in the city although Mochudi is generally regarded close enough to be a commuter town.

The second stage involved a more in-depth process with selected households. Twenty-five households were chosen on the following criteria: evidence of higher household income, either through conspicuous wealth in house, garden, possessions, or stated income; location of homestead; potential willingness of individuals to participate; and sensible mix of demographics: old and young, married and single, and so forth. Following the initial survey, the three distinct residential areas within Rampedi became obvious: the core of the original ward and surrounding *malapa* ('Old' Rampedi); outlying plots up to the Notwane River flood plain and along towards the main road on the east of the ward ('Incomers'); and the government housing in a block to the east (Government Housing); and so it was important to ensure representation in the three locations. The households chosen are shown on the plan of Rampedi (Figure 2) as the yellow numbers (the black numbers are households that participated only in the initial survey).



Figure 3: The *Kgotla* at centre of 'Old' Rampedi

Photograph by Researcher

The chosen twenty-five households were visited a number of times (January – May 2011) in order to elicit more in-depth information, in particular, on aspects of consumption choice. The basis of interviews was a questionnaire adapted for use with couples (married or cohabiting) and with single (including widowed and divorced) residents. Areas covered in the questionnaires were: employment status, financial management in terms of who controls the money and who spends it (Pahl 2008), saving, overspending, consumption choices and constraints, household roles and task allocation. Each member of these households was interviewed in turn.

A key part of data collection at this stage, in addition to the above interviews, was the entrustment of an easy-to-use digital camera for the taking of pictures by household participants. After a thorough briefing, residents were encouraged, over a period of a few days, to take photographs of possessions which they deemed important to them and significant in their lives. This approach is unlike Collier's 'cultural inventory', in which it is the researcher who takes photographs as a listing or record of material goods (Collier and Collier 1967, 1986)³⁵. Both methods deliver details of people's lives, but it is argued that the approach adopted in this project has the potential to be more meaningful – as pointed out by Pink (2005), whoever takes the photograph, it is their reality. This method also has the advantage of providing individuals with greater ownership and control over what, when and how pictures are captured. Preservation of anonymity is very difficult when film is used as a research method (Pink 2007) and so giving informants ample opportunity to amend or withdraw any visual representation is important. The end result is that much more of a collaborative approach (ibid) is achieved which helps the process of knowledge transfer. Briefing notes on the purpose of research activity and how to use the camera were left with the household member responsible for the camera (see Appendix 4) and all household participants were required to sign a consent form (Appendix 5).

When the camera (of which there were two in circulation) was collected, the participants' photographs were downloaded to a laptop. These then formed a visual focus to a discussion, seeking to find out why a particular item was photographed and the significance of it to the individual. In this way, meanings, significance, social relations, identity and motivations were teased out within an interview, which was generally one-to-one, free-form and in-depth. This proved a creative and productive means of participants sharing how they chose to express themselves and how their lives are objectified in the things they photographed.

My positionality as a middle-aged, white woman did not pose any perceived difficulties - most people encountered were friendly and cooperative, and only a couple of households refused to talk at all. My maturity was deemed a positive since there is a tradition in Botswana to respect older people³⁶, and being married with children was definitely viewed favourably. Only on two occasions was progress in collecting data hampered: the first, a husband intervened during an interview with his wife and asked that she stop talking to us. This appears to have been around sensitivity to questions being asked about personal finances, the household in question being less well off than its neighbours. The second occasion was with another household at the second stage of data collection where the husband refused to give a second interview, claiming lack of time. His behaviour was markedly different from the initial conversations with him. However, it was pointed out by my research assistant that the man was embarrassed since we had already found out from

³⁵ It is recognised that new technology has played a significant role in enabling different approaches to visual anthropology

³⁶ Age is equated with experience and wisdom (Denbow and Thebe 2006:169)

his wife that he earned less money than her. This attitude is discussed later on in the thesis – see Chapter Four.

Meetings were held with a number of key informants over the period of fieldwork, ranging from the head of Emang Basadi, women’s action group; Ntombi Setshwaelo, feminist commentator and public speaker; Unity Dow, High Court Judge and lawyer; Sandy and Elinah Grant, writers and historians; the Director of Women’s Affairs and the Research Officer; editor of a National newspaper; a USAID executive; a financial advisor; academics at the University of Botswana, and a wedding services company, through to locally: a restaurant owner, hairdresser, leader of the Old Apostolic Church, Barclays Bank manager, loan company manager, children’s AIDS charity, and a 100 year old man living in another ward in Mochudi. A funeral and a birthday party were attended, as well as various public events, such as a Mochudi *Kgotla* meeting, a Mochudi cultural event, and an International Women’s Day celebration organised by the Botswana Government. Each of these events was valuable in contributing to my knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of Botswana society.

Focus group discussions, ranging from six to fifteen participants, were held on seven occasions in 2011. These explored broad themes, such as, money and wealth, perceptions of femininities and masculinities, changes in gender relations and consumption patterns (see Appendix 7):

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 17 February | Boys, aged 18 – 30, met at Rampedi <i>kgotla</i> ³⁷ |
| 24 February | Girls, aged 18 – 30, met at <i>kgotla</i> |
| 13 April | Women’s bead jewellery making group |
| 14 April | Men at Rampedi shebeen |
| 14 May | MA students at University of Botswana |
| 4 June | Mixed group at Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) in Rampedi |
| 4 June | The Elders at SDA Church |

A briefing document was produced (Appendix 6) as a guide to introducing the focus group activity, and this, plus consent form, was translated into Setswana. All but two of the focus groups were conducted mainly in Setswana.

Throughout the fieldwork period, a diary was kept for timings of meetings, interviews and so forth, but also most importantly to record observations, thoughts and reflections as and when they occurred. Thus, using a variety of different research methods ensures that the

³⁷ In Rampedi, the *kgotla* is located on a piece of open land with a large tree (see Figure 3); the headman collected money from residents to go towards building a structure here. He wanted this as concrete evidence of the *kgotla*, and by association, his position as Headman. Plastic chairs were borrowed from a nearby household for the focus groups.

data collected and inferences made are triangulated. Grey literature from local publications, newspapers and magazines is gathered and digested; also valuable archive material, including photographs taken by Schapera in 1920s – 1940s and letters written at that time, much of which is located in the Phutatikobo Museum in Mochudi. The services of Statistics Botswana were also of benefit in locating information on population demographics, marriage statistics, housing and so forth³⁸.

Pseudonyms are used in the presentation of data as well as in reference to photographs of people incorporated into the thesis. I share with Isaac Schapera (1940, 1971) regret that certain informants are kept in anonymity since I would have liked to thank them more publically for the valuable evidence and photographs given. However, I concord with Schapera's final deliberation on this point:

'While it does not much matter to the outsider whether Modise, Rathipa, or Makgantane was the name of the man who said or did this or that, it may make some difference to the latter himself, if it becomes generally known in the tribe. Past experience has shown me that this precaution is not an unnecessary affectation' (1940, 1971:9)

³⁸ The National Census, which takes place every ten years, was carried out in the autumn of 2011.

Section One – Consumption of Events

This section consists of Chapters Four - Eight which are about social consumption, most especially seen within the rituals and celebrations of life course events. In following the temporal progress of life, we start off with birth in Chapter Four, and explore the historical background and social meaning to having children; how consumption is used to confer the status of 'mother'; and how it is a focal point in the shifting attitudes towards birthdays. Chapter Five is about courtship and how gifts are an integral part of intimate relationships. The historical background to this is explored through the profound social and economic transformations that have taken place. The following chapter (Chapter Six) considers marriage, detailing the constraints which prevent people from getting married, and yet revealing, once they have embarked on the path to matrimony, the adherence to a traditional process which brings families and people together at different points along the way. The successful outcome of marriage negotiations is celebrated in a white wedding (Chapter Seven) in which consumption acts to draw everybody together. It is a visual feast of entertainment, manifested through the bridal dresses, dancing and singing, eating and drinking. The last chapter in this section (Chapter Eight) is about funerals and the materiality of graves. People are obliged to attend funerals and often travel long distances to be present. On the other hand, they are local affairs, drawing in the community to both help and participate. The consumption surrounding the burial practices objectifies community solidarity and respect for the deceased.

Chapter 4 - The rite of babies and materiality of growing up

'My mother changed a whole lot of traditions – my father wanted me and my brother to go to the cattlepost, and she said if they go there, then the next week they are going to be in the kitchen learning to cook. She thought that if we did not learn these things, we could be disadvantaged in later life.

Grandmother (father's mother) worked as a teacher for 30 years. Women were not allowed to wear trousers or ride bicycles. She bought a bicycle to get to work. The Chief said, I'm going to talk to your father about your behaviour. When she bought her first car, she could not drive it – her older brother had to.

Her father had a lot of cows when he died, and she and her sister were only given one cow to share between them. She started on her own from nothing, built her own home, masimo and cattlepost'

Young male respondent in Rampedi

The above is part of a discussion with a young man who was keen to express the social change he saw within his own family. It is illustrative of changing attitudes towards gender roles and ideologies. It highlights Bagkatla women's strength of character, and also reveals a change in the upbringing of children. This chapter is about the social change and aspects of consumption associated with mothers, the birth of children and their growing up. It explores how motherhood has taken over from marriage as the social signifier of adulthood for women (Van Allen 2007), and how consumption is used to objectify love and caring within parent-child relationships. It is not about rites of passage in the usual sense of the term (Turner 1969), rather it is about the insights a concern with consumption brings to the changing role of women in Tswana society. This chapter also flags up how the modernisation of society has brought about new material practices to the concepts of age.

In Botswana society, children are celebrated; they provide meaning to life. 'Botswana is an extremely pro-natalist country, where childbearing is intrinsic to the development of personhood and identity' (Upton 2010:516). Historically this has always been so, and Hoyt Alverson researching in Botswana in the 1970s declares that 'Children are the only asset whose value and prestige exceed that of the herd in the Tswana conception of wealth: the young infant is truly cherished' (1978:67). That children are deeply loved is in no doubt and it is a type of love described by Durham (2004) as 'deeply imbricated with the idea of caring for or taking care of another, especially as it touches on providing material and spiritual good.... Love is conceptualised in terms of obligations and of responsibilities that extend both ways' (ibid: 595).

It is recorded by Schapera that it is considered the duty of a husband to ensure that his wife becomes a mother (1940, 1971:187). Children, at the time of Schapera's writing, in economic terms meant additional labour to help with tasks and increased self-sufficiency in production, as well as security in old age and prospects of extending familial connections, thereby consolidating their standing in the tribe (ibid). Yet more than this, Schapera describes a rite of passage:

'With the birth of their first child, married people acquire a new dignity. The husband has proved his manhood and become the founder of a line that will perpetuate his name and memory; the wife has fulfilled her supreme destiny, and freed herself from the most humiliating reproach that can be made against a married woman' (1940, 1971:191).

For a woman, having a child was of utmost importance: 'For women, wealth and pride are children' (Alverson 1978:165). Further, for social and economic reasons, not least the absence of men at the South African mines (see Chapter Six), Botswana saw the development of matrifocality³⁹ (Izzard 1985; Parkin and Nyamwaya 1989). The absence of paternal presence in the upbringing of children contributed to the strengthening of the mother-child bond (ibid). And today, motherhood is constructed as a compulsory and indispensable aspect of feminine identity, for single women as well as being a crucial element for success in marriage (Ellece 2012).

According to respondents in Mochudi, there is a set pattern of help given when a couple has their first child after marrying: the wife goes to her parents' home for confinement and usually stays for at least three months. For the second child, her mother-in-law comes to their home to help with the new born baby. For the third baby it is up to the couple to decide which one of the mothers should come and help with the baby, and thereafter it is the mother-in-law who has the role of helping with new babies. It is very much a female domain. Schapera records that even following the birth, the father is a distant figure:

'The father has comparatively little to do for his children during their early youth. In any case his personal dealings with them never involve such intimate services as are required of the mother. His duties lie rather in the spheres of household management and public life' (1940, 1971:219)

³⁹ This refers to the situation whereby, in the absence of the father, children are increasingly brought up in predominantly female and maternal kin environments. See Izzard 1985:266 for explanatory notes. Botswana reportedly has the highest proportion of female-headed households at 47 percent (Momsen 2002)

The desire to have a child is not just innate or biological, but formed through social conditioning (Rothman 2000). Parents, particularly young ones, are today not necessarily married or cohabiting at the time of giving birth, yet this does not attract social condemnation and has become so common as to be almost expected. This marks an historical change from marriage to motherhood as the social indicator of adulthood, and often women will give birth to children of different fathers before entering marriage or not marrying at all. This has been labelled as 'polyandrous motherhood' by Jane Guyer (1994) in commenting on the Yoruba, in which she emphasises the strategies used by women to tap into different kinship resources⁴⁰. In Botswana, there have been large numbers of children who have grown up not knowing who their father is (Gulbrandsen 1986:11; Fako 1983:10). The government has taken steps to address this⁴¹ and thus to reduce the likelihood of the socialisation of expectations of father absenteeism and behaviours which perpetuate this social situation. In the absence of initiation schools in most of Botswana today, Durham (1999:208) argues that it is only marriage that confirms for men the passage into full adulthood, before that, men are not seen to have fully grown-up. This, as shown later, for various reasons has become both a lifestyle choice and necessary.

Pregnancy can be used by girls as a means of securing an offer of marriage, yet pregnancy is often sought in the belief that a girl should produce a baby by a certain age irrespective of her conjugal status: her identity as a woman is not determined until she has a child (Oppong 1983:447). This is sustained by an older generation, the 'grandmothers' who gain social standing through the expansion of their families; and indeed, the girl herself may gain in status because of it. As Van Allen attests, 'Motherhood, not marriage, indicates social adulthood; and the identity of "women" as "mothers" is reflected in the term of polite address for adult women, "Mma" – that is, "Mother"' (2007:102). For couples who are unable to beget children for whatever reason, it is usually the woman who is blamed and who suffers the social stigma accompanying barrenness.

In the past, it was common for a child to go for a period of time and live with another relative, especially a maternal aunt or uncle (Schapera 1940, 1971:220). The responsibility for the up-bringing of a child is viewed as a shared project among the various relatives, especially the maternal uncle, who is seen to have the right to intervene in the case of conflict between the parents (ibid). More than a brief visit, a child could be given permanently to a relative who is unable to give birth, or who only has children of one sex (to provide the opposite sex) and Schapera refers to this as 'adoption' (ibid). This does not always work out so well for the children as gathered from evidence in Rampedi: a woman in her forties, by the name of Nemo, describes how she had been given to her aunt and was

⁴⁰ It is worth pointing out here that in Botswana women have been able to legally gain rights to land ownership since 1993 (Kalabamu 2006b). This is a significant advantage for women here compared to many other African countries, for example Zambia, where land is allocated on a customary basis (IIED 2012:14)

⁴¹ See p126 on the introduction of a new law to ensure father's name is on a child's birth certificate

never taken to school, but, from the age of six, was made to look after the other children in the family. She was never given the opportunity to become educated and is emotional and angry about it to this day⁴². This story reflects the view that children were regarded as a resource and to some extent this attitude prevails today, particularly among the less wealthy families. Nemo, not wealthy and unmarried, has managed to provide a house for herself through her employment as a cleaner. She has one son who gives her money when she needs it⁴³. Her philosophy is that it is 'better to have children because they can help you later in life'. Durham's description of love as being in terms of 'obligations' and 'responsibilities' comes to mind (2004:595).

It was a critical feature of the patrilineal way society was organised that lineage managed to gain control over women's fertility through marriage (Helle-Valle 2002). It enabled the husband to claim children as his own and so rely upon them in his old age⁴⁴ (Schapera 1940, 1971:223). Children today are not always so reliably productive. Once maturity is reached, contributions to parents, grandparents⁴⁵ or other relatives closely involved with their upbringing, are not always forthcoming from the younger generation, yet this is not clear cut, as findings in Rampedi show – some parents praise the financial support given to them by their offspring, others complain that they never see any help from their children. Usually, adult members in a household – sisters, brothers, aunts, and so forth - will contribute financially what they can, but it is observed that often the income of a whole household is supplemented by one key financially successful and securely employed member of the family who may or may not live permanently within the household. A top priority in terms of consumption for a number of households interviewed as part of this research project is the education of their children and investment in private schooling (English-medium education). The obvious aim is to give their children the best start in life so that they will be successful financially, and as Alverson states, 'Education affects the life chances of the children and the family as a whole' (1978: 133). He goes further, to say that it is women more than men who indicated that they wanted their children educated for the sake of knowledge itself. Education was viewed by men as purely economic, whereas women sought to provide children with "the light" to "understand" the changed times' (ibid).

⁴² 'In the labour market, lack of education is a drawback. An educated person stands a better chance of getting secure and well-paid work than an uneducated one' (Wikan 2004:7)

⁴³ Although accepting money on occasions from her son, Nemo has created an independent lifestyle for herself which contradicts Kuper's findings in which 'only women with large salaries (mainly nurses and teachers) have achieved a genuine independence' (1987:147)

⁴⁴ The concept of a man's right to a child was very strong, not solely as a means to carry on the family line, but also as resource for working the land and a means of income.

⁴⁵ Botswana has a universal old age pension, first introduced in October 1996 (Devereux et al 2010) and pays out P220 per month (circa £22)

Within common law, an unmarried woman is able to claim maintenance⁴⁶ for one or more children from one or more fathers, and findings in Rampedi show that whilst some women claim, others don't, often for reasons of personal circumstances⁴⁷. The approach by courts granting maintenance payments to a parent or guardian is child-centred in that the protection and best interests of the child are foremost in decisions taken⁴⁸. Whereas a woman who became pregnant outside of marriage was once regarded as 'soiled goods' and therefore undesirable, there is evidence today that men willingly seek marriage knowing they take responsibility for children begot by other men. The significance of this is that support for a child is centred on a social not biological basis (Garey and Townsend 1996)⁴⁹. Interestingly, evidence from research in a South African township found that men here categorically refused to take responsibility for another man's child (Bank 1997) and this was linked to an overall gender struggle for income, with men resisting the seepage of their earnings to a partner. The contrast to Botswana may be explained by the historically high value placed on children which still prevails in society today.

Recently, a first in Botswana's legal history, a case brought to court of a young unmarried man who sought custody of his two daughters aged six and three, who had been left by the mother - the court ruled in his favour, awarding him maintenance from the mother⁵⁰. This represents social change on more than one front: a mother abandoning her children dents the ideology of women as mothers⁵¹ – traditionally seen as one of the most important

⁴⁶ The law governing maintenance payments to unmarried women with children from the biological fathers came into effect in Botswana in 1970; known as the Affiliation Proceedings Act (Garey and Townsend 1996); since amended in 1999 (Quansah 2000). Maintenance can be claimed from either parent who is related to the child by blood or by adoption.

⁴⁷ The arguments given as to why women don't claim child maintenance from the biological father are various: fear of reprisal from father; seeking to marry the father and therefore no wish to deter him; seen as disadvantageous for the future, maybe a future prospective husband may not approve; most of all, it is viewed as culturally alien (see Garey and Townsend 1996). The Botswana Government makes efforts to publish information on how to claim child maintenance through any magistrate court, in, for example, the Water Utilities Corporation Newsletter, Issue 1: June-July 2011

⁴⁸ This reflects the concern of the Government over children growing up in a socially turbulent and unsupportive society: low marriage rate, high percentage of female-headed households, and families struggling post the AIDS crisis

⁴⁹ Historically and culturally, by marrying (giving bridewealth), a man gains rights to a woman 'as genetrix', in other words, rights to her procreative capacity which means 'all who are born of her womb are children of her husband and therefore paternal kin, by whomsoever they may have been begotten' (Tambiah et al 1989, quoting Gough 1971:111)

⁵⁰ See article: The Voice, 'A victory for all men', 18th March 2011

⁵¹ Abortion is illegal in Botswana and, through the dominant discourse of evangelical Christian churches, is equated with murder. Gruesome findings of dead newly born babies and fetuses (see report on infanticide by Modie-Moroka 2011) have recently prompted members of the Government to speak out in favour of abortion to enable 'safer, legal and decent abortions' for desperate women: (See news item in iBotswana posted 23 February 2012, 'Church rejects legalizing abortion in Botswana', www.ibotswana.co.bw). Back in the 1930s, Schapera records the incidence of abortion in Rampedi: eight out of forty four single women had had the operation (1940, 1971:207), in an attempt to avoid the opprobrium associated with unmarried pregnancy. Botswana has a comparatively low rate of contraception use: data from the Botswana Central Statistics Office cites 42.5 per cent usage of modern contraception among all women (See Botswana Family Health Survey III 1996: <http://botswana.unfpa.org/drive/SRHPolicyGuidelinesandServiceStandards.pdf>). A visit to the local youth

means of enhancing a woman's status (Izzard 1985) - and at the same time promotes men as active fathers – a change from before, see Schapera above. The traditional stereotype of the man as provider is contested with the recognition and acceptance of a woman's financial contribution.

A consumptive event, the baby shower is held in anticipation of new birth, and usually a large exchange of goods takes place. It is through the accumulation of goods and gifts that a mother and baby-to-be are socially constructed (Layne 2003). The material things do not just signify preparation for the birth, but are a means to instil personhood on the unborn baby, and in turn, a mother-to-be is developed and bestowed with the status afforded that of a mother. However, more than this, the baby shower is a means of maintaining and building community relations, providing the opportunity for female friends and family to gather together. The event is highly gendered, reinforcing a normative mothering role, in which through the appropriate material gifts 'mothers are made in relation to each other, as much as individuals in relation to their infants' (Clarke 2004:71). Here, a mother-to-be is on the way to being transformed to take on another role, another persona, and the type of role and persona is shaped and determined by the material goods available to her. In time, her offspring will be part of that development of the new persona and social category of 'mother' (Johnson-Hanks 2006).



Figure 4: A baby shower

clinic in Mochudi confirms modern contraceptive methods freely available to young people aged 16 and over, although parental consent is required up to age 18.

Following the birth and required confinement period⁵², a naming ceremony and celebration takes place (Amanze 2005). Families and friends are brought together for this special occasion when the newborn is introduced to the community and there is the inevitable feast. As recorded by Schapera (1940, 1971:214) 'People seem genuinely fond of very young children, caressing them frequently and lavishing upon them other demonstrations of affection, and taking a keen interest in their development.' Schapera provides much detail regarding the taboos and processes surrounding the birth of a child (see Schapera 1940, 1971:207-213), and describes the gathering of close relatives and friends for 'a small feast' once the child leaves 'the hut'. If this takes place at the mother's parental home, another small feast may be consumed once back at the husband's *lapa*. Schapera does not however refer to these events as 'naming' or 'coming out' ceremonies and it would appear that such celebrations have developed over time. Denbow and Thebe classify 'naming' alongside 'marriage' and 'death' when it comes to ceremonial and celebratory costs (2006:181), which indicates an escalation in the social importance placed on such an event. Schapera talks about the influence of the Church⁵³ on young people in terms of regulating their behaviour, and how 'its confirmation ceremonies are eagerly anticipated and made the occasion of feasts' (1940, 1971:237).



Figure 5: Celebration of Nursery School progression

⁵² The confinement post-partum for a woman is like a ritual where she is to be totally focused on the baby, on growing fat and refraining from any form of activity (Van Binsbergen 1999:187). Evidence from fieldwork reveals that confinement is taken seriously - the woman either goes to stay with mother or mother-in-law, or another relative if not possible with the former, for a period of around six weeks, or alternatively, for an older woman, a relative will move into her home to assist her over this period and strictly no visitors are allowed.

⁵³ Dutch Reformed Church

Significant moments in children's lives are often celebrated in public and elaborate ways, for example, children's progression from nursery school to the next level of schooling. At such events, speeches, photographs, food and drink are all consumed and care is taken to display the children in the best possible light. New clothes are the order of the day, and even though the average age for leaving nursery school is six, most of the children will be dressed in expensive outfits, many modelled on adult fashion – suit and tie for the boys, fancy dresses and footwear for the girls. This is an event in which material goods are used to illustrate and create the child as a key element of Botswana society, and through which social relations are objectified. Such events indicate the importance placed on education, yet it is the consumption of these events that emphasise the relational process of having a child (Clarke 2004).

Celebration of a birthday is a relatively new phenomenon, and arguably for the majority of people living in Mochudi today there is no thought of remembering theirs, but evidence shows that for children there is a growing expectation of some kind of material observance. Social institutions such as schools and churches have helped spread the practice of commemorating birthdays, and today it is often the child who will remind a parent that their birthday is approaching. There are expectations of a cake to share with family, and parties to celebrate birthdays are becoming increasingly common: children, encouraged to join a party of a friend, wish to have such an event themselves.

Alison Clarke, in writing about British childhood and consumption, suggests that the most prominent expression of stages of childhood and children in the UK is through birthdays and birthday parties (2008: 261), and it is this 'attention to age as an ordering principle' that is not merely reflective of children's biological age, but a key ingredient of the social construction of children (ibid). This is seen in the gendered and age specific consumption surrounding birthdays and contributes to what is considered the successful upbringing of a child. This attention to birthdays in Botswana is new and yet is catching on fast as part of the modern world of consumption and another means, just like school progression mentioned above, to showcase and monitor the future success of a child.

Alverson (1978) finds that age is little correlated to natal age in Tswana society, but more to the achievement of certain social positions: 'control of cultural resources, life experiences, and place within social structure all meld in the Tswana conception of age. Unless a person is experiencing events, time does not exist; likewise with age. One cannot age except through experience' (ibid:48). Deborah Durham (2004:592) suggests that one 'must explore the pragmatic dimensions through which age is invoked'. What is implied here is that maturity and seniority are as much an achieved status as one that is reached through biological processes (Durham 1999). If a man does not attain financial independence through his own work, based on employment or cattle, he may not become a 'head of household' or be recognised in elders circles in the *kgotla* or carry out duties in marriage negotiations or other

kinship privileges. He would remain a 'social juvenile' or fall directly into dependent 'old age' (Durham 1999:207).

A resident of Rampedi claims he doesn't remember his birthday, not because he is unaware of the date, but because it is not something that he was brought up to take notice of, and he is surprised when other people do remember it. Birthdays in the past were not marked in any way, not solely for reasons of financial constraint, but because such anniversaries were not deemed important:

'Sometimes we can feel [you can see] the change, the real change because once we make a party for that [birthday] you see the family and everyone will be happy, and sometimes we take photos, just to remember that day – that was the party for one of our children, for our daughter, our son, this and that. But during our times, even when August comes we do not know if it is our day, we cannot even remember.'

Rampedi informant, May 2011



Figure 6: Birthday cake for Rampedi resident

Again, the opportunity for a social gathering is seen as important in the fabric of family and community, and consumption, such as a birthday cake, works within those core relationships as a means of expressing love and caring (Miller 2012). Material wealth has developed such occasions to the stage where they are placed in the record book, remembered, and through which social relations are objectified. Birthday parties to celebrate recognised landmark

birthdays, such as 18th, 21st, 30th and so forth, are becoming increasingly popular: it is a chance to invite family and friends to gather together and enjoy a communal feast. Certain procedures will be followed which help make it a proper occasion – in particular, aunts and uncles will be expected to contribute and participate in usual fashion by giving a personalised speech.

A walk through a Mochudi cemetery will show graves where the year of birth of the deceased is known but not the actual date; sometimes even the year is unknown. The younger the deceased, the more likely the exact birth date is stated. Legal requirements to record births⁵⁴ placed a greater significance on dates, as did the development of state requirements, such as voting and licensing to drive (Durham 2004). These in turn may have paved the way for material changes in social attitudes to age commemoration.

It should be noted however, that historically age always held significance in Tswana society as a means of denoting social status and of ranking, in that generally a person of the same sex, older than oneself was regarded as socially superior, one younger, inferior (Alverson 1978). This is commented upon by Durham (1999) who points out that age is seen by some people as overriding even such status distinctions as that between chief and commoner: 'For age, after all, can be seen as an equal-opportunity accomplishment' (1999:207). Traditionally, status through age was manifested in the tribally based age regiments or *mephato*⁵⁵ formed through initiation ceremonies. Even if the absolute age of an individual was unknown, his or her relative age was based on their *mephato* which they belonged to for life (ibid).

⁵⁴ The registration of births and deaths started in 1966, initially only compulsory in towns and major villages. The Registration Act was amended in 1998 to make registration compulsory in all parts of Botswana (Central Statistics Office, Gaborone). *Oman* cards – national identity cards – were first issued in 1989 (Durham 1999)

⁵⁵ These were groups formed roughly every 4 – 7 years when older adolescent boys were subjected to an elaborate initiation ceremony and circumcision ('*bogwera*'); and girls aged 16 – 20 also underwent an initiation ceremony and formed a regiment ('*bojale*'). The purpose of such initiation as a means of denoting the passage from childhood to adulthood was historically a common ritual in most African societies and following such rites, the young people were clearly differentiated by gender (Eriksen 2001; Moore et al 1999; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993). In Mochudi, historically, a selection of boys underwent a period of hardship in a wilderness area, and girls, staying close to home, undertook physical punishments and instruction on domestic, sexual and behavioural matters. No one was considered an adult until they belonged to a regiment, and this rite of passage acted as a bond for the members of a group, encouraging tribal unity, and emphasising moral values and the legitimacy of authority (Mosothwane 2001; Eriksen 2001). It was at this point that individuals were burdened with obligations to the chief, and both male and female regiments could be called upon to undertake work within the tribal area. See Mosothwane (2001) for an account of the history and changing styles and practices of *bojale* and *bogwera*



Figure 7: Boys on their way to *bogwera*⁵⁶ on a cold morning in June 2011

Chief Kgosi Kgafela II reintroduced initiation ceremonies back into Mochudi in 2009, where none had taken place since the 1980s. His aim was to resuscitate the Bakgatla culture, and thereby regain some of the diminished power of the chief⁵⁷. It was claimed a number of social problems were caused by lack of guidance for young men in particular⁵⁸. The words of Kgosi Linchwe II (the father of the current Chief), in spelling out the perceived threats to the Bakgatla, are illuminating as to the values inherent in Tswana society: '[it was a matter of] loose morals and lack of discipline; disappearance of the spirit of self-help and self-reliance; diminishing culture of hard work, as well as self-incapacitating consumerism and extravagance'⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The boys carry long thin sticks which have been cut from the *moretlwa* tree which are later used to thrash the boys 'for any disrespect they had committed in the past' (Livingston 2005:94)

⁵⁷ The 'tribal' system is administered by the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, with chiefs effectively under the minister. Chief Kgosi Kgafela sought to remove this control by central government.

⁵⁸ Schapera refers to complaints that people made about changes in behaviour of young people in that they thought they had become ill-mannered, disrespectful to elders, unhelpful in the household and showing no morals with regard to matters of sex; they had become hedonistic and lost all discipline (1940, 1971:239). This was mainly attributed to the changed nature of the initiation ceremonies (ibid).

⁵⁹ These words, written in November 2006, are found in the foreword of Makgala's book (2009) on the history of the Bakgatla tribe

With regard to age, the initiation schools bring back the social sense of age as a means of indicating rank and status, with the emphasis on the group or community⁶⁰. This is in stark contrast to the celebration of age through a focus on individual birthdays, which is seen as evidence of a modernising society. Consumption here is utilised to objectify this individualised display of social relationship (Miller 2012). In the next chapter, we move on from the social significance of children and age to the complexities of gender relations and courtship.

⁶⁰ The basis of respect for older people, which often Batswana complain is being diminished by young people, is embedded in this social dimension of age

Chapter 5 – Courting with gifts

*'My name is Thabo:
Kwik Charge is called Nancy, she takes care of my needs in bed;
My Sugars is Miss Grace – she gives me what I need in terms of cash
People say Miss Grace has got HIV
I hope that 'The One' (Lerato is her name) doesn't get to know'*

*'My name is Lerato:
I had an ATM whose name was Uncle Sol – he used to call me Princess
Thabo, my No. 1, used to call me Babes
My mother feels pain about my father's mistress to this day
At the end of the day I feel she is speaking about me'*

Public Health (HIV and AIDS) promotion, May 2011⁶¹
(Translated from Setswana)

Much has been written about the changing landscape of intimate relationships and the decline in the institution of marriage across southern Africa, fuelled over the years by socially disruptive forces such as migration and unemployment (Gulbrandsen 1986; Townsend 1997), and there is evidence that change is continuing at a pace. Brown (1983) purports that male migration has had a profound impact on women in that marriage and family relations have shifted to leave women isolated and financially worse off. Izzard (1985) recognises the *femme sole*⁶², yet argues that women are themselves often migrants, and the main reason for this 'isolation' is because of widowhood. What is significant, and which was pointed out in the previous chapter, is that matrifocality emerged with the rise of absent fathers, most probably due in the main to male migration to the mines in South Africa (ibid). Harwood-Lejeune (2001) confirms the trend for a later age of marrying across southern and eastern Africa, and Hunter (2010), in focusing on South Africa, points to structural unemployment and reduced welfare support as reasons for the decline in rates of marriage and the rise of 'provider love'. This is where money and materiality form the basis of intimate relationships, and the traditional 'head of household' as part of marriage declines (ibid).

⁶¹ The campaign words are translated from two separate public health advertisements in a national Government newspaper (The Daily News, 27th May 2011 and 25th May 2011 respectively) to raise HIV and AIDS awareness – see Appendix 8. They reflect the often complex set of intimate relationships that young people in particular may have. As Thomas and Cole (2011:1) purport, '...from billboards sponsored by HIV and AIDS education and prevention campaigns to call-in radio talk shows, discussion of sexual intimacy, trust, and personal feelings seems to be everywhere'. Further discussion is on p45-46.

⁶² Ref: Schapera (1940, 1971:321)

Boyfriend-girlfriend 'gift' relationships have become a social norm (ibid) with gifts forming an important and embedded element in the development of social and sexual relations (Kaufman and Stavrou 2004; Zelizer 2005). Throughout many areas of sub-Saharan Africa, gifts have come to constitute the value placed on a girl (from a girl's perspective) and the measure of a boy's interest in her (Moore et al 2007), and have become part of routine courtship behaviour (ibid). Courtship takes place with monetary and gift expectations placed on the boy which are so strong that a common view from a girl's perspective is that she should not have to ask. And this is not for items given as romantic gifts, such as bouquets of flowers, but money for everyday goods deemed necessary for living, such as 'toiletries'. Such means of consumption could be a survival mechanism, or maybe desire for certain goods has driven such behaviour. One possibility is that this embedded expectation of men's provisioning could be a natural progression from a highly patriarchal and role specific society, where men are regarded as breadwinners and women look after everything domestic (Young et al 1984), and where the concept of *bogadi* remains strong.

Exploring the historical background in Botswana for a moment, back to the early 1900s, marriages were arranged by the parents (Schapera 1940, 1971:33). Boys and girls once they approached puberty were mainly kept apart – the boys at the cattle post and girls under the supervision of their mothers - so there was little opportunity for them to meet until the boy returned from the cattle post. In this scenario, little by way of courtship took place. Roles and tasks were strongly delineated along lines of sex:

'Daughters in time learn to cook, mend and wash clothes, and clean out the huts, but sons until married remain dependent upon their mother or sister for these and similar domestic attentions'

(Schapera 1940, 1971:219)

This segregation of tasks continued into married life: 'The father has comparatively little to do for his children during their early youth.... His duties lie rather in the spheres of household management and public life' (ibid). In what Schapera describes as 'the old Kgatla family', which was often polygamous, the father was the supreme patriarch:

'They [women] were regarded as socially inferior to men, and in Kgatla law were always treated as minors. Before marriage a woman was under the authority of her father or guardian, while after it she came under the control of her husband, and, on his death, of some other male member of his family..... At feasts and on other public occasions when both sexes met, men and women always sat in separate groups, while in ordinary social life they had little in common.' (1940, 1971:302)

Putting aside the legal status of women in the narrative above, the societal changes which Schapera found in the 1930s in contrast to the above is then recorded by him. The most obvious general differences he saw were: practice of religion, changing from ancestor worship to Christianity⁶³; schools, now attended by half the children⁶⁴; economic changes from self-sufficiency to increasing dependence on outside markets; and wage-labour sought to pay for goods and taxes. The impact on gender defined roles was marked. Men travelled further afield to find work and were often away from home for long periods of time⁶⁵, whereas women tended mainly to continue to run their homes and cultivate the fields, although a few did seek paid jobs locally in occupations such as teaching, nursing and domestic service (with European residents) (ibid)⁶⁶.

The social revolution brought about by such economic changes is described by Schapera as consisting of the following: a steep increase in unmarried mothers⁶⁷; parents of illegitimate children not so severely punished by the tribe⁶⁸; polygamy almost non-existent; extra-marital affairs on both sides; later age of marriage; and reduction in size of family⁶⁹ (1940, 1971: 304). All of these changes have continued today to the point that an unmarried woman becoming pregnant is expected, not condemned, so no repercussions from the tribe (or state) to either the mother or father of an illegitimate child⁷⁰. And Schapera points to 'the greater role played nowadays by personal attraction in the choice of mate' (ibid), which brings to mind Hunter's propositions that 'the critical study of romantic love also brings into sharp relief how social change can reconstitute selfhood – the very notion of individualism that permeates the concept of marital "choice"' (2010:15). Reference here is made to characteristics of a modernising society which will be discussed more fully later, but the point to be made here is that Hunter distinguishes between pre-colonial practical forms of love and romantic love of today which he argues are both valid bases for relationships, and the emergence of new forms of 'provider love' (ibid).

⁶³ Early conversion to Christianity typically involved women; Schapera reports, 'The scarcity of male communicants, in particular, is troubling the Mission authorities greatly, and a Church conference in 1932 gloomily visualized a time when the elders, the evangelists and ultimately even the minister would all be women!' (1940, 1971:238). Even today, at least two thirds of a typical congregation is made up of women.

⁶⁴ School attendance deprived families of labour resources, yet half the children did not go to school at all and those that did were usually only there for 2 – 3 years (Schapera 1940, 1971:303). Schapera later affirms that four times as many girls as boys attend school (ibid:305)

⁶⁵ Schapera states that 'About 40 per cent of the men are away at work every year' (1940, 1971:23)

⁶⁶ Women too, at a later stage, migrated for economic reasons, mainly from rural to urban areas (Izzard 1985)

⁶⁷ In 1934, in Rampedi, 12% of children born were to unmarried women, which increased to 40% by 1973 (Schapera and Roberts 1975:267); 23% of marriageable age women were not married in 1934, and this increased more by 1973 to 55% (ibid)

⁶⁸ At one time, a boy who impregnated a girl outside of any formal marriage negotiations was made to pay a fine to the parents of the girl and could even be thrashed publicly for his misdemeanour (Comaroff and Roberts 1977; Schapera 1938, 1994).

⁶⁹ Schapera himself admits to lack of statistical data to support this assertion; however, census data has continued to show a decrease in the number of children born per woman, from 6.5 in 1971 to 3.2 in 2001 (CSO 2010)

⁷⁰ There is little social stigma, but by law a man fathering a child is required to pay maintenance to the unmarried mother

By way of illustrating the transformations taking place at that time⁷¹ in Kgatla society, Schapera starts his book, 'Married life in the African Tribe', with a transcript of a letter from a young man who has migrated for work to South Africa, and who recounts how he has terminated a relationship with a young South African woman because '..... she was very expensive to marry, hark, where ever we went we should buy sweets or chocolates at 4s. 6d. lb. And we should always travel by taxi instead of by tram or bus.... oh, no, I had to cut it off' (1940, 1971:11). Notwithstanding the interesting fact that handwritten letters had become a communication medium⁷², this extract reveals an expectation by the girl that her boyfriend will buy things for her.

Hunter's research (2010) shows that in South Africa, in a rural rather than urban setting, in the 1960s, expectations on men were more directed towards paying brideprice and building a home rather than 'courting' gifts, and that such presents would more likely have been regarded with suspicion as indicative of a bribe. Gifts at that time in anticipation of a marriage were generally on a family to family basis (ibid) which follows the traditional inter-familial rather than individualistic basis of African marriage. Indeed Schapera's writings corroborate this view, but he does mention once how gifts are used to capture a girl's affections:

'If the girl shows no sign of responding favourably to the boy's advances, he will try to win her over by means of little gifts, like the decorated spoons and porridge-stirrers made at the cattle-posts.' (1940, 1971:42)

This is by no means the picture of resigned acceptance of the necessity of providing goods to one's sought-after partner, and it suggests the 'gifts' are individualistic home-made gestures.

To take stock of the above and review the social change that has occurred, it would appear that patterns of change, such as increased education, later age of marrying, and so forth, are part of a modernising trend which is apparent in other parts of the world (see Giddens 1998⁷³; Jackson 2012). Botswana has evolved from a strong, family and kin-based, patriarchal system, to one that has transmuted to fit the modern, urbanised world. And it is from this historical background to where it is today that goes some way to explain the social phenomenon of 'gift' relationships. Such strongly delineated divisions of labour between the sexes, in particular, the male as provider and protector to his wife and family, and perceived as 'breadwinner', has continued to influence social behaviour – this, together with a

⁷¹ Late 1930s

⁷² High levels of economic migration increased communication in letters, often love letters to absent partners (Schapera 1940, 1971:237) which Hunter (2010:14) refers to as part of a modernising force helping to undermine traditional kinship bonds.

⁷³ Giddens recognises the emergence of modernity as firstly the creation of a modern capitalist economy, globalising in nature

broadening material culture carrying shifting ideologies of identity. Bhana and Pattman refer to 'a ubiquitous braiding of love, sexuality, materiality and gender inequalities' (2011: 964).

In Cole and Thomas's book, *Love in Africa* (2009), in response to claims that 'love' is a modern Western emotion⁷⁴, Western observers are deemed blind to the 'subtle and ubiquitous intertwining of emotions and materiality' found in Africa. It is argued that the combination of intimacy and money is a reflection of a 'material caring and emotional' package (ibid): this is described by Durham (2001: 167): 'love is deeply experienced as a form of caring about the well-being of others, a care and concern that motivates all sorts of actions to promote the well-being of the other/others.' The emotion of love has always been there, but historically has not been a popular subject of discussion or research in Africa (Cole and Thomas 2009).

Schapera writes about courtship in the 1920s and 1930s, and notes a significant change in that both boys and girls are active in having a much greater say in who they should marry, although he observes it was still 'fairly common' for parents to arrange marriages (1940, 1971:36). A constant theme is the change in young people's behaviour, inability of parents to control them and the subsequent indulgence in sexual relations and cries of lax morals (ibid). The reasons for this are explained as the introduction of schools and subsequent mingling of young people of both sexes, and also the abandonment of the initiation ceremonies. Interestingly, young men make distinctions between a woman as lover and a woman as potential wife, the former being sought for her physical looks⁷⁵, and the latter for additional qualities such as industriousness, modesty, and obvious respect and obedience to her parents (ibid). 'Chastity is not considered important, but a girl should be temperate and discreet in her love-affairs' (Schapera 1940, 1971:41). Likewise, a girl seeks certain qualities in a prospective husband: 'Bodily cleanliness, good manners and dress, and moderation in speech and drink.... industry and ability at work.... a father rich in cattle or prominent in tribal life is a decided asset' (ibid). Courtship does not always take place with marriage in mind, and a boy may wish for a particular woman as his concubine. It is recognised that many boys have 'several mistresses simultaneously' (Schapera 1940, 1971:45). So, in going back to the beginning of the chapter, it is not a new phenomenon that young people often have a number of concurrent intimate relationships.

Courtship, according to Schapera, follows a simple pattern: boy is attracted to girl (may be relatives or neighbours or known to each other through chance meetings) (ibid); he asks if he may visit her; initially he visits in the afternoons, chatting to the girl and her family in the *lapa*; signs that he is being successful with her are firstly that she is at home on every

⁷⁴ Love and its transmutation is seen by Giddens (1992) not so much as 'Western' as a phenomenon of modernity in any society

⁷⁵ 'The generally admired type is a light-skinned girl of somewhat heavy build, with prominent breasts and large, firm buttocks.... Girls with slim backsides are seldom considered attractive' (Schapera 1940, 1971:39)

occasion, secondly that he is offered a chair to sit on; he then starts coming at night (ibid). If a girl shows reluctance to a boy's advances, he may try and make her jealous by diverting his attention to other girls, although it is expected that a girl will decline sexual relations at least once before succumbing (ibid). A further illumination of courtship is given by Gulbrandsen, albeit some fifty years later:

'Furthermore, a long time usually passes between a boy starts approaching girls until he takes the question of marriage seriously. It is generally accepted that boys and girls engage in love-relations, including cohabitation, from their teens onwards. Young people display considerable fluidity, becoming involved in numerous unions, some simultaneously, during a short time span. Among the boys it is important to give the impression of being involved with a girl 'in every hamlet' (1986:9)

In describing the basis of intimacy in Kgatla marital relationships, Schapera recognises that newly married couples are 'often very much in love with each other' (1940, 1971:189). Even if not all marriages were love matches, some were. However, he goes on to say that this 'love' seldom lasted:

'...the polygamous ideal still prevails and the virtually enforced monogamy of today has not been accompanied by the true companionship upon which a successful union should rest' (ibid: 190)⁷⁶

And it is polygamy that is seen as the root of the emergence of extra-marital sexual relations (Comaroff and Roberts 1977; Caldwell et al 1991), and the present day incidence of multiple concurrent partners since they follow the same logic in social structure. It is indeed an historical prerogative for men to have more than one sexual partner, and women, increasingly independent, are recognised as actively following a similar line.

Today, a distinction is made between a partner for sex and 'the one' - a partner for a long-term relationship - and concurrency is common. And a third category of partner exists primarily to provide financial security. Evidence from informants interviewed in Rampedi shows a common practice of brothers⁷⁷ providing younger sisters with regular amounts of money, in particular so these girls would not be obligated to date someone to achieve financial gain:

⁷⁶ See also Schapera (1940, 1971:250)

⁷⁷ 'The brother-sister relationship is culturally recognised as close and supportive' (Gulbrandsen 1986:20), the basis of which is the 'linked' system of relationships related by Schapera (1940, 1971:97)

‘We have taught her to be independent, and financially independent. That is why I send her money nearly every month. I have seen how men treat women who do not have independent financial means – they say, I have given you this, now you give me this. It can be easy to get caught in that trap. So she can eat and pay for her plate of food’

In the absence of a generous brother a young girl may seek a ‘sugar daddy’ or more than one, to cover ‘the three c’s – cash, car and cell phone’ (referred to as “triple C” by Pattman 2005:232; Giddings and Hovorka 2010), or more colourfully called, ‘the Minister for Finance, Transport and Communications’. The ‘sugar daddy’⁷⁸ (or ‘sugar mummy’ - can be male or female in Botswana society – see Maundeni 2004:49) concept incorporates that of a financial provider, usually with a significant age difference between the two people, and articulates the ongoing production of new social relations and practices of consumption. The existence of such relationships has led to resentment by young men in particular who feel acutely the inadequacy of their situation in trying to compete with older, wealthier and more powerful males for their age-group females (Durham 2004).

A relationship which involves the giving of money or gifts with the expectation of sex in return is often referred to as ‘transactional’ and the term has emerged in the deluge of research on HIV and AIDS (Jewkes et al 2012; Caldwell et al 1989). This ‘consumer driven love’ or commoditisation of relationships appears in research documents as something explicable in light of current extreme poverty, yet this is to simplify the basis of why such practices exist (Iversen 2005). The argument against calling all ‘gift’ relationships ‘transactional’ is articulated by Mark Hunter (2010) who makes a distinction between prostitute and client, and girlfriend and boyfriend relationships, arguing that ‘romantic love’ and ‘provider love’ are deeply interwoven (ibid: 16). The juxtaposition of love and materiality is illustrated in Durham’s writing:

‘When a woman worries about the loss of love, she doesn’t bring up ‘feelings’ with her lover, or ask directly about his sentiments (do you love me?), but instead asks him for money for food, a dress, a trip to cattle post, or for a water bill or paraffin. To fulfil these requests signals the kind of concern that is equated with love. In his turn, a man may ask his lover to wash and iron his clothes, prepare food, or otherwise cater to his physical comfort’ (Durham 2001:167)

⁷⁸ The stereotype of a ‘sugar daddy’, more fully articulated with the emergence of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, is of ‘a wealthy middle-age man who provides gifts or money - especially for school fees or hygiene products – to adolescent girls in exchange for steady and reliable sexual favors’ (Parikh 2004)

This indicates the extent to which social relations are objectified through materiality shown in the giving of money and also in the performance of tasks. It is by the act of giving that love is shown (Miller 1998b).

Whilst dwelling on evidence that shows a tendency in relationships for 'feelings' not to be openly discussed, it is worth exploring the further significance of this. Giddens has written extensively about the element of 'active trust'⁷⁹ in society including close relationships and pinpoints it as a sign of 'reflexive modernisation'⁸⁰ (1994; 1992; 1991). He talks about 'the pure relationship'⁸¹ in which 'trust has no external supports' and 'has to be developed on the basis of intimacy' (1992:138). With regard to personal relationships, he argues that profound transformations have taken place, and that intimacy is achieved through the disclosure of emotions and actions (ibid). It is purported that the 'pure relationship' is a characteristic of modern society in that it is not dictated by traditional institutions or normative expectations (1994), unlike pre-modern relationships that are governed by societal norms and institutions as to how things should be⁸².

If Giddens' proposition is to be concurred with, the relationship as described above by Durham belongs more in a pre-modern community than that described as modern or late modern, which is typically more equal, less patriarchal (see Giddens 1994:105-6 and 1992:46-47). The concept of 'the pure relationship' is challenged by Lynn Jamieson (1999) who contends that intimacy remains multi-dimensional and that equality in heterosexual relations is sustained on the basis of practical caring and love rather than 'a constant dynamic of mutual exploration of each other's selves' (1999:477). Whilst recognising the thrust of Giddens argument that modernising tendencies in society lead to a democratising of gender relationships generally, the view raised by Jamieson illustrates the nature of relationships in Botswana in that caring as the basis of relationships, is shown by the male partner providing money and goods, and the female partner providing acts of love such as washing (once married) and cooking. However, as Jamieson admits, 'couples' carefully constructed sense of each other as good, mutually caring partners can involve 'unequal sacrifice for their common good' (1999:484).

What can probably be applied to an understanding of Botswana society is a mixture of both pre-modern tendencies and modernity, the latter more likely to exist in larger towns and cities (Giddings and Hovorka 2010). Although this project does not venture specifically into the intimacy of relationships, there is evidence that expectations from both sexes, as

⁷⁹ 'Active trust' refers to the questioning, critiquing and contesting nature of individuals which develops in modern societies as a result of greater reflexive human knowledge.

⁸⁰ 'Reflexive modernisation' is the term given to the emergence of the period of high modernity, characterised by increased individual agency and less social structure (Beck 1994).

⁸¹ 'Pure relationship' defined as a relationship of sexual and emotional equality (Giddens 1992:2). The rise of romantic love is seen as 'the harbinger of the pure relationship' (ibid).

⁸² The modernising of courtship relationships is seen as a global phenomenon – see, for example, Yan 2002

outlined in Durham's narrative above, is changing. One small example encountered in field work was of an independent, unmarried, middle-aged woman – we shall call her Lenna - who had worked hard to provide a modest home for herself and her son, and that son, having reached the age of 23 found he had made a girl pregnant. The father of the girl paid a visit to Lenna, as is customary in Botswana, to inform her of the pregnancy, and there would follow another visit once the baby was born. This was the prelude to marriage negotiations. Lenna declared she was happy for the union to take place since the girl was from the Kalahari area and a relative of 'the Bush people'. When questioned further she said the girl was not from 'round here', meaning Mochudi or more especially Gaborone, and as such would be a suitable wife for her son since 'she would look after him properly'. In other words, the girl would submissively cater for all his physical and emotional needs, whereas in contrast, the girls from 'the town' are 'too clever' and 'would make him suffer'. What is also interesting about this example of partnership is that it is contrary to customary attitudes to Tswana courting and marrying a person with Basarwa⁸³ roots. How much attitudes have changed is in contrast to those illustrated by Schapera: 'It is not actually forbidden, but a man who married such a woman would be greatly despised' (1938, 1994:127). A focus group at the University thought taboos to marrying into a different ethnic group still existed. Yet, nowadays, migration and movement of people has resulted in more partnerships of mixed tribe and ethnicity, and the customary kinship approach of marrying within the family - for Bakgatla, favouring first cousins - is much less likely.

Before leaving this point of discussion, the distinction made between a 'town' or 'city' woman and a 'traditional'⁸⁴ (not necessarily 'rural') woman was made on a number of occasions by Rampedi respondents, mainly distinguishing themselves and their relationships as different from those to be found in Gaborone, with the implication that 'city' girls, being more educated, would not be happy to look after their husband or partner to the extent that a more 'traditional' woman would. And this theme is often age-related in that generally the older the woman, the more 'traditional' she is likely to be (Ingstad 2004), and this is not only seen in the domesticity of her lifestyle and relationships but also materially in, for instance, her mode of dress (Johnson 1998).

Returning to the work of Giddens, such social distinctions as described above are evidence of social change, with traditional gendered identities existing in close proximity to, yet separate from, new gender ideologies (Giddings and Hovorka 2010):

'Tradition.... is a medium of identity. Whether personal or collective, identity presumes meaning; but it also presumes the constant process of recapitulation and reinterpretation.... Identity is the creation of

⁸³ Basarwa is the Botswana term for the Bushmen or San of Southern Africa

⁸⁴ The term 'traditional' was used by residents of Rampedi in juxtaposition to what they saw as 'modern' influences and ways

constancy over time, that very bringing of the past into conjunction with an anticipated future. In all societies the maintenance of personal identity, and its connection to wider social identities, is a prime requisite of ontological security. This psychological concern is one of the main forces allowing traditions to create such strong emotional attachments on the part of the 'believer'. Threats to the integrity of traditions are very often, if by no means universally, experienced as threats to the integrity of the self.' (Giddens 1994:80)

This frames the background to the traditional ideologies of male and female roles and expectations, and gives potential reasons as to why certain ways of being are tenaciously defended.

In a society expectant of multiple partners and with a seriously declining marriage rate, a woman may choose to become a 'small house', that is, the mistress who is 'kept'. Statistics on female-headed households reveal Botswana to have one of the highest percentages in the world at 46% according to the 2001 Census, even when taking into account the differences between *de jure* and *de facto* statuses (O'Laughlin 1998)⁸⁵. Since Schapera's time of writing, there has been a dramatic transformation in the social location of women into the public arena, resulting in a significant rise in the independence of women, blossoming out of growing economic independence and higher levels of education which has enabled a greater freedom for women to choose how they might live. The high incidence of female-headed households shows that women often make the choice to live without a husband or live-in partner, a situation which is described as women 'voting with their feet' (Kabeer 1994: 127, 135; Helle-Valle 2002). As is evident in Rampedi, there are a number of older women living by themselves in comparatively wealthy circumstances which has been of their own making.

Meanwhile men are struggling to live up to the ideals and expectations placed on them as men; they do not want to appear weak and have to pretend things are alright, whereas the situation could be far from this. And they are often measured up by the opposite sex according to what they can provide. By contrast, such expectations are not placed on the woman. Men's role is still aligned to the old structure, and the fiction of the male provider is maintained, yet women can walk away.

Evidence gathered from focus groups conducted in Rampedi in early 2011 - in particular, one held with a group of young men and another with young women⁸⁶, throws light on the current nature of courtship in this part of Botswana. It is apparent that young people socialise together, work together and often have many friends of both sexes. However, from

⁸⁵ See also Griffiths 1998:46-48 for discussion on the recognition of female-headed households and controversy surrounding them; also Peters 1983; Kerven 1984; Izzard 1985; Molokomme 1991

⁸⁶ 'Young' here means roughly between the ages 18 – 30

a young man's perspective, women are quite often seen as 'dangerous' – untrustworthy and objects of suspicion – to whom they feel pressurised to give money and buy presents for because if they don't they may lose their partner to a man who has more to give. This reveals the anxieties that young men encounter about being rejected by women (see Pattman 2005), which are shown to be on a materialistic basis. On the whole, there is a perception that relationships between young men and women are out of kilter in that instead of a balanced give and take, there exists more 'demand' on behalf of women. Notwithstanding this, young men have an idealised view of a future wife as someone with whom to 'share ideas and their life'. It was also stated that different things at different times are wanted from a relationship, not always one to lead to marriage, and although the incidence of concurrent partners was deemed undesirable, it was thought inevitable. A survey carried out in 2007 on concurrent sexual partnerships confirms this, indicating that although concurrency is not uncommon, it is nevertheless not yet generally acceptable (Carter et al 2007).

From a girl's point of view, the evidence gathered says what they are looking for in a relationship is love, respect and support (financial and emotional), and they are entitled to expect this since when a man has a girlfriend, 'it is his duty to support her'. There were mixed views on whether a girl should buy her boyfriend gifts: some saw it as open to misinterpretation as a way to 'buy' his love, others saw no harm in it since they would be taking his own money to buy him a present! There appeared to be a distinction made between money and gifts: the former was to be expected as part of the boyfriend and girlfriend contract, and the latter encompassed romantic and surprise presents, a sign of love and by which one could assess the depth of love. The size and frequency of gifts was deemed all-important and examples given of desirable offerings were 'perfume, jewellery, a pair of jeans, a top and a cell phone'. It is by way of gifts and money that social relations are objectified among this younger generation. The gift may be seen in the future and in wealthier times to evolve to take on that of 'experiences', such as tickets to a pop concert or enrolment on a photography course.

Young women are most likely to have a 'main' partner with whom they have expectations of money or gifts, and sometimes a secondary, secret partner, likewise transactional in nature. There will often be one-off liaisons (Jewkes et al 2012), or what is sometimes referred to as 'the booty call'⁸⁷ when two people come together occasionally for sexual satisfaction with no strings attached. Batswana men regard this as 'low investment sex' whilst women supposedly use it as a means for searching for long-term relationships.

Whilst wishing to be the sole partner in a 'main' relationship, at times both men and women run the gambit of whether their partner is cheating on them. When a relationship turns sour, things can go badly wrong. The incidence of intimate partner murder-suicides or 'passion killings' is reportedly growing (Exner and Thurston 2009; Mberengwa 2007) which occur

⁸⁷ Booty call - an invitation to lure or entice a late night amorous encounter

when a relationship ends and one of the partners (usually the man) kills the other, often then committing suicide⁸⁸. Informants proffered the two most likely causes: jealousy, usually over a 'third party'; and the rejection and ending of a relationship by a girl, leading to the realisation by the boyfriend as to how much he has spent on her (and often her family).

On returning to the questions raised at the beginning of the chapter on the nature of courtship and the gift relationship, it is apparent that materiality plays an important part. Goods are appropriated as a means not only to develop intimate social relations, but also to measure depth of feeling. Strong male identities and ideologies as 'goods provider' have been transformed into a modern equivalent and resulted in a partnership contract dominated by male provisioning. This element of anticipated male bounty shows no sign of diminishing, and an inability to provide creates gender struggles between men and women (Hunter 2009). The anxiety of this from a man's perspective is captured in an amusing piece of writing in the Botswana Gazette⁸⁹:

'Pardon my ignorance but has anybody here ever heard of something called girlfriend allowance?

No wonder I have been struggling to get a girlfriend, I did not know a thing about this allowance. I stand corrected....

Well, I came to know about this girlfriend allowance just last week when I was trying to "counting myself colours of the guinea fowl" on one lady. After telling her how hot like chillies and fresh like spinach she was everything moved seamlessly smooth. For a moment it looked like 'yes' was hovering on my peripheral vision until she interjected in my "fairytale" to enquire about girlfriend allowance. Though I was startled by the question, I smiled and pretended I was familiar with that form of allowance; the way politicians smile and pretend to be familiar with your problems.

Now as it stands, friends and foes, there is just one thing between me and fairytale love and that is girlfriend allowance. With true love growing scarce every day, I better pay it. The only favour I am requesting from you guys is to help me with the prices, lest I pay little and lose out.'

⁸⁸ The term 'passion killing' is widely used in the media, however, Exner and Thurston (2009), researching the issue, call for a halt to the use of this label since they believe it positions it as a 'love crime' – heat of the moment madness - rather than as a serious element of Botswana's widespread prevalence of violence against women.

See also Mberengwa 2007:35-36 "Due to the culture of patriarchal upbringing some men who still believe that they can determine the initiation and termination of a relationship may end up killing when they feel used and jilted." Article in the Daily News indicates that out of 95 people who have died in 'passion killings' in 2010, 93 were women (Gaoswediwe: '93 fall prey to 'passion killings'', Daily News 6.12.10)

⁸⁹ iBotswana, posted 6 June 2012, 'Girlfriend Allowance', www.ibotswana.co.bw

Girls' ideals of love are tied to their aspirations towards middle-class consumerism. It would appear that this commoditisation of relationships leaves women with a greater share of power – or does it? What is expected in return? Young people's courtship takes place alongside relationships of convenience, often intergenerational in nature, and often providing financial relief.

What is significant in Botswana is that there exists, to use Giddens words, 'a combination of imbalanced gender power and engrained psychological dispositions [that] keeps dualistic sex divisions quite firmly in place; but in principle matters could be organised quite differently' (1992:199). The 'pure relationship' according to Giddens (ibid) is the path to true equality between the sexes but this denies the role of materiality and how social relations are objectified through material goods. Here the expression of love through giving, whether in terms of things or embedded in acts of caring is the bedrock of relationships.

Chapter 6 – Processing tradition in marriage negotiations

'My name is Moselekatsi Molefe and I was born in 1935 and I remember that I said to the woman who is my wife, when she was still a little girl who used to go around wearing the traditional skirt made out of threads and beads with nothing on top, that I was going to marry her (she was born in 1932) and she said then that 'I don't want you to marry me and I won't marry you'. Time passed as we were growing up and in 1955 she wrote me a letter while I was at the cattle post and said that 'I am now ready; can we meet and talk about marriage?' By that time I had not had any relationship with any woman and definitely had no sex because I was waiting for her. So we got married and had ten children; so it is not difficult to understand a woman when you know what you want.'

(Men's focus group)

Marriage, as a social institution is known throughout the world, and acts to legitimise both a union between two people and the basis for procreation. Marriage patterns in Botswana have been following a similar pattern to that in most of sub-Saharan Africa, of decline in frequency, and incidence at a later point in life for both men and women (Mookodi 2004a; Mokomane 2006; Izzard 1985; Hosegood et al 2009). Schapera described marriage as an 'essential step for every normal person to take' (1940, 1971: 32), and yet today evidence points to less than fifty per cent of the population marrying (Mookodi 2004a).

The economic and livelihood changes, as described in the previous chapter on courtship, with the emergence of the cash economy and subsequent labour migration and all myriad other societal changes, have had a profound effect on marriage in Botswana. To quote Schapera (1940, 1971:321), 'the prospects of creating stable, well-adjusted marriages upon a new basis are considerably discounted by the complications resulting from the absence of husband and father from home.' It is a common belief in Botswana that women themselves have been instrumental in bringing about significant change. When large numbers of men⁹⁰ went to work in the South African mines, the women were left at home and learnt to fend for themselves. It was this period of forced independence that led to women's empowerment and realisation that they could manage on their own⁹¹ (Timaeus and Graham 1989:389). From an historical basis of lives dominated by their individual contribution to subsistence farming and subservience to men (ibid), to a situation where women can earn a living, have access to land tenure and set up their own home, it is understandable that there

⁹⁰ For statistics on migration to the mines, see Alverson (1978:56), and Schapera (1940, 1971:128 and 134), the latter which reports 106 out of 126 men from Rampedi and Makgophana wards had worked abroad at some stage. The total number of Botswana working in the mines reached a peak in 1985 of 18,079; by 2006 this number had reduced to 2,992 (Campbell 2010:12)

⁹¹ An additional factor is that women had received more education – boys, for most of their youth, were sent away to the cattle post (Schapera 1938, 1994:29)

exists today a high percentage of female headed households (Van Driel 1994; Izzard 1985; Van Allen 2000). Frequently these households contain three or more generations of women. This gives testament to the fact that women are often happier without a husband or rather, the wrong kind of husband, and maybe they prefer men on a less than permanent basis (Jackson 1996; Helle-Valle 2002; Gulbrandsen 1986; Parkin and Nyamwaya 1989; Fako 1983).

It also has to be recognised that up until fairly recently, legally women were disadvantaged in marriage: the World Bank (2001, cited in Gordon and Gordon 2007:303) reports that 'in countries such as Botswana.... married women are under the permanent guardianship of their husbands and have no right to manage property on their own'. This was against the background of 'legislation introduced after independence in 1966, granting unmarried women the same legal rights to property, land, credit, and business as men' (Mokomane 2008). So why would women choose to be married (unless to access the man's resources)? The Abolition of Marital Power Act 2004 changed this and removed the legal principle of the husband as head of the family and provided women with equal rights in relation to decision making on family property management, including upon the death of a husband, and equal rights to choose domicile. The Act also provided both mothers and fathers equal guardianship of their children, whereas previously the husband was sole guardian. A woman's ownership of property is determined by the type of marriage contract she enters into - in or out of community of property. All marriages are automatically out of community of property (unless specified otherwise by both of them in writing), which means that each person keeps their separate property, allowing the woman to legally administer that which is hers. The alternative, in community of property, allows that the property acquired by either spouse upon marriage and during marriage is held jointly. This is under common law, and, in Botswana's dual legal system, customary marriages do not provide women with the same rights. Yet, the point to be made is that from a legal perspective, since 1st May 2005, marriage for women has become a much more attractive option.

Alongside a decline in marriage, there has been a diminution of marriage as a social marker of adulthood. It was once seen as a natural occurrence immediately following the initiation of adolescents (Timaeus and Graham 1989), in which girls in particular were taught how to prepare for married life⁹². At one time, marriage could not take place until the individuals had been through the initiation ceremony (Schapera 1938, 1994:127). The redefining of marriage has taken place alongside an increase in values associated with motherhood and around bringing up a family (Helle-Valle 2002) - see Chapter Four. It is reiterated time and again by respondents in Mochudi how 'women are naturally mothers'. Unmarried mothers, once despised (Schapera 1940, 1971:38; Mokomane 2008), are now almost universally

⁹² Within *bojale*, girls were given instruction on their future responsibilities as wives and mothers (Mosothwane 2001); whereas for the boys, within *bogwera*, the emphasis appears to have been more on transition to authority and decision making associated with public office (ibid:156)

socially accepted⁹³, which for women removes the necessity to marry in order to have children. This is deemed a fairly recent development (Timaeus and Graham 1989) and points to the nascence of a more matrifocal based society (Izzard 1985). The corollary of the rise in status of women as mothers is the decline in importance of the role of the father (ibid), although as noted earlier, Schapera records that men had little contact with their children in the early years (1940, 1971:219), but here we are also talking about legal rights over children that a man used to receive through marrying a woman.

An example of significant social change is in the case of women becoming pregnant outside of marriage. In the late nineteenth century, in the strict understanding that women were once treated as minors and were under the authority of their father or closest male relative until they married when they came under the control of their husband, premarital pregnancy was regarded as a 'profound disgrace', and the boy who impregnated a girl was 'regarded with revulsion' (Comaroff and Roberts 1977:98). The child born as a result was often killed to avoid 'bringing evil upon the community' (ibid). By the 1930s, pregnancy outside marriage was becoming increasingly common, although still strongly disapproved of (Schapera 1940, 1971)⁹⁴. Labour migration had increased and unmarried females were not being watched or protected as previously and therefore sexual access became more difficult to monitor by the parents. What evolved in the incidence of pregnancy was the practise of giving compensation to the father or guardian of the girl by the boy (or his family), if he failed to agree to marry her (ibid: 38). Following this, recognition was given to the fact that pregnancy constituted a wrong against the girl and not her guardian (Comaroff and Roberts 1977). Mid 1940s, the Bakgatla chief introduced measures to help women in that they relaxed the rules that meant a woman could now appear at the *kgotla* on their own behalf to put their case to argue for compensation from the man who impregnated them (ibid). The heavily debated purpose of the compensation – was it given in respect of the girl's spoiled marriage prospects, or to help educate and raise the child?⁹⁵ – moved the destination of the compensation to the woman herself rather than to her parents or guardian. Following this development, the chief then decided it was only fair to recognise claims for multiple pregnancies. Today, when a woman marries, it is expected that a cow will be given by the

⁹³ Izzard refers to 'a milder attitude towards unmarried mothers' (1985:268)

⁹⁴ Sexual relations between boys and girls had always been tolerated as long as they were discreet, yet pregnancy was another matter: 'Of forty-four single women, old enough to be married, who figured in them, fifteen had one or more living children each, and eight others had procured abortions (Schapera 1940, 1971:207). One Rampedi informant told how unmarried girls who became pregnant in the 1930s ran away to South Africa.

⁹⁵ The men's focus group confirmed the following: 'According to Tswana tradition if an unmarried mother has a child and instead of marrying her, the father of the child decides to pay damages to the parents of the young mother, the child is entitled to inherit that payment of damages (mostly the payment was cattle)'.

husband-to-be for each of his children already born⁹⁶ and this is added to the brideprice or *bogadi*⁹⁷.

The most obvious historical transformation of marriage in Botswana is the disappearance of polygamy, brought about in the main through the introduction of Christian churches by the missionaries (Schapera and Roberts 1975), and within the Bakgatla tribe was probably hastened by Chief Lentswe converting to Christianity in 1892 (Schapera 1940, 1971:17). It is also argued that the introduction of the plough and more focus on livestock production (both considered male activities) lessened the necessity for wives' labour and hence multiple wives were seen as less economically viable (Timaeus and Graham 1989:374). This change to monogamy, operating in a society accustomed to polygamous marriages, led to pre-marital and extra-marital relations (Comaroff and Roberts 1977)⁹⁸. And there is a link here to a rise in liaisons between married men and widowed or older unmarried women, described as 'long-term and open relationship[s] in which the man provides a measure of support for his mistress' (Timaeus and Graham 1989:383). These apparently in the early 1900s were the only form of concubinage that was tolerated, since the women were deemed past marriageable age (Comaroff and Roberts 1977:99; Schapera 1938, 1994:126). Today these unions are referred to locally as 'small houses'⁹⁹.

Did the disappearance of polygamy lead to a surplus of unmarried women? And should this be added to the explanation of such a high percentage of female headed households? Headline 2011 census figures recently released reveal that there are more females in Botswana than males: 1,035,608 versus 989,179 (95.5%)¹⁰⁰, but this differential has been narrowing since the census of 1971 when it was 84%. Looking back, Gulbrandsen (1986:24) contends that there was a 'large surplus of marriageable women' both as a result of polygamy declining and male migration to South African mines and urban centres in Botswana. The implication was that the women were left in the rural areas, yet women too often moved to towns and cities (see Van Binsbergen 1999). It is pointed out that the mines had high mortality rates which compounded the comparatively low life-expectancy of men (Izzard 1985:265; O'Laughlin 1998:24), and the fact was that women were living longer and this is reflected in the demographics¹⁰¹. Izzard concludes that 'widowhood emerges as one of

⁹⁶ 'Compensatory payments for seduction' (Zelizer 2005)

⁹⁷ A standard modern day definition of brideprice: Cows or money offered to the bride's parents or uncle as a token of appreciation for the loss of their daughter (Denbow and Thebe 2006). As a concept, *bogadi* gives a man legal rights to sexual relations with a woman and the transfer of her children to his lineage.

⁹⁸ Seeley (2012), through her research in Uganda, found even though polygyny was only legal under Islamic or customary law, men who were married monogamously went on to 'marry' additional wives.

⁹⁹ See: <http://www.thevoicebw.com/2012/04/27/being-the-smaller-small-house/>

¹⁰⁰ In Mochudi, the difference is more pronounced than the national figure: 24,717 women against 22,197 men (90%).

¹⁰¹ It is worth noting the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic which in 9 countries, Botswana included, reduced life expectancy to below forty years (UNAIDS 2005, cited in Gordon and Gordon 2007:230), escalated infant and child mortality – one third of babies born to HIV-infected mothers were HIV positive and few survived beyond the age of six (Walker et al 2004, cited in Gordon and Gordon 2007:230). Since then, in

the most common reasons for a woman becoming a permanent household head' (ibid: 163). This assumes marriage has taken place at some stage.

The statistics gleaned from the census in 2001 provide the percentage of never-married people over the age of 60 as 9.6% for men, and 16.7% for women which implies a sizeable surplus of unmarried women. The analysis carried out by Mookodi (2004a) indicates an increasing trend of both unmarried men and women, yet a closer look at her figures reveals a levelling out or even decrease in the numbers of 'never-married' between 1991 and 2001 (ibid). Is there an age reached at which it is deemed socially unacceptable for either a man or a woman to marry? The term 'marriageable age' once applied to a woman's fertility, yet with so many children now being born out of wedlock, this appears irrelevant. Records of marriage at the Tribal Administration in Mochudi show two extreme examples of men in their 80s marrying women of 52 and 49, and another man marrying at 94.

The ideologies around age and marriage impose social constraints, particularly for women. It is seen as a problem if a woman looks older than her husband, and so women are advised to marry when still young, whilst the man can be a lot older. This is compounded by the belief that 'women age faster'¹⁰². Statistics gathered at the Tribal Administration's office in Mochudi show that out of 150 marriage records, there are only 4 examples of the woman being older than the man, the difference being only 1 or 2 years, whereas the usual age gap is at least 10 years. An academic paper on the Ekiti society in southwest Nigeria, points to the age difference in couples as stemming from the practice of polygyny which necessitated in law a later time of marrying for men in order for older polygynous men to have at least more than two wives (Caldwell et al 1991:233). There was obviously a shortage of suitable young wives to go round! Such a regulated approach did not happen in Botswana, and although polygyny may have forced a normative age difference, a more obvious reason would have been the effect of labour migration. The more recent trend is for a later age at time of marrying for both sexes (Mookodi 2004a). In further analysis of the censuses, the mean age of marriage for men is significantly higher than that for women, and yet there is a trend developing that shows this gap to be narrowing (Mookodi 2004a). It is detailed by Schapera that, back in the 1930s, women mostly married between the ages of 21-25; men, 26-30 (1940, 1971:62). Today, this has slipped by at least ten years. Which begs the question, what is leading to the delay in marriage or postponement altogether?

Reportedly Botswana has one of the highest levels of cohabitation in sub Saharan Africa¹⁰³ (Mokomane 2006), and it is questioned whether this is a situation where couples have

Botswana, AIDS-related deaths have been cut by 71% and the rate of new HIV infections has dropped by 71% 2001-2011 (UNAIDS 2012). Botswana has more than 80% coverage of HIV treatment (ibid).

¹⁰² This comment refers to the physical appearance of women, yet there is a popular Setswana saying, '*Mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo*', meaning, a woman is considered worthy not for what she looks like, but for what she is able to do with her hands, in other words, how industrious she is.

¹⁰³ The 2001 census records 17 per cent of the population over the age of 15 are cohabiting (Mookodi 2004a)

abandoned or delayed marriage. Cohabitation can exist as an alternative to marriage, a prelude to marriage or an alternative to being single (ibid), and Mokomane's findings show that in Botswana it is usually a temporary situation before marriage, which rather than diluting the incidence of marriage, acts to delay the timing of it. One key informant at the University in Gaborone volunteered that people are 'comfortable with cohabitation', and that there is 'turning a blind eye' to couples having children outside of wedlock because there is the assumption that they will eventually get married. This indicates a relaxation of the social necessity to marry in order for two people to form a union and live together. However, from evidence gathered in Rampedi, the urban-rural divide talked about in the previous chapter, creates a different picture here. Taking an example of one of the households in Old Rampedi, a thirty year old woman called Tabea is living with her four children (ranging in ages from 10 years to 6 months) together with her grandmother, younger sister and aunt (also her mother and older sister live in the same household part of the week). She has always lived in this *lapa* and refers to her grandmother as the head of the household (since her grandfather died). She describes how she and her partner would like to be married and managing their own *lapa*, yet her partner, aged 32, and father of her children, who lives in a neighbouring ward with his parents, is unable to finance this. He comes to visit her and to see the children but is unable to stay the night 'unless undetected' by the grandmother. The grandmother, according to Tabea, would also like her to get married, but there is no pressure from her to do so, in fact it could be the opposite since Tabea provides daily care for her grandmother. They are a poor family with the grandmother receiving a destitute food basket from the government, amounting to P450 (£45) per month, as well as her pension of P220 (£22). Tabea spends her time looking after her grandmother and the children; the other adults in the household contributing to the finances have low paid work¹⁰⁴. The reason for mentioning the financial situation is that poorer members of the community seem more likely to be living with older relatives, and hence more likely to be constrained by the social dictates of elders. In this instance, Tabea and her partner might like to consider cohabitation, yet this is viewed as socially unacceptable. Another informant in Rampedi, a 42 year old bachelor who still lives with his mother, expressed his views:

'Co-habiting is not good, not good. Supposing one of them passes away, people will get to know.....the parents will say they do not know why they lived like that – why did you let your daughter stay with that man? Did he pay you? Did he do anything? Nothing, and now it's a problem. Even your family members will say it is your problem.'

And so, a couple will continue to live separately, when unmarried, even when children are involved. However, it is ventured that cohabitation among the 17+ per cent of the population recorded in the census, is in the main taking place away from the home village

¹⁰⁴ See O'Laughlin 1998 regarding the importance of regular wage-employment for livelihoods in urban and rural villages

and family and kin, and backs up the findings of Mokomane (2006) that population mobility is a key factor in effecting cohabitation.

If a couple has lived together for a while and have gathered together property and possessions, there is a desire to marry if only to protect their goods from going to other relatives in the event of one of them dying. An example of this was found in Old Rampedi where a *lapa* had recently been inherited by a man in his early sixties. In talking to his partner of ten or more years, a widow in her early fifties, it transpired that they intended to marry and to move here from a house they had built together in another village, since 'it was expected of her to move to the husband's place'. Their property would be rented out. She explained that 'if you die before getting married, the relatives take everything'. In her case, the house she and her partner had built together and the accumulation of goods from over ten years would all go to his relatives in the event of his death, if she had not married him. Likewise, any children from such a relationship would be in competition with other relatives to inherit their parents' property and possessions.

Returning to Botswana's history, the departure of polygamy also saw a move away from arranged marriages and infant betrothal to a freer choice of partner (Schapera 1940, 1971). The Tswana were considered unique in Africa in permitting marriage with a wide range of close kin (Schapera 1957; Radcliffe Brown 1950:69) and operated a patrilineal lineage. The preferred union by 'agnatic descendants of chiefs', was with the father's brother's daughter (Kuper 1987:80), and for the 'commoners', with the mother's brother's daughter (ibid; Griffiths 1997:41)¹⁰⁵. This brought the families closer together, with the prospect of greater co-operation, and the added bonus that the cattle given as *bogadi* to the bride's relatives by the groom's would remain within the family circle. An old proverb cited by Schapera says, 'Child of my paternal uncle, marry me, so that the cattle may return to our kraal' (1940, 1971:35). The significance of the traditional giving of brideprice has been well debated in kinship theories and is summed up by Kuper (1982:159), 'specifically, all invoke the debt a brother is felt to owe to his cattle-linked sister or to his father' and debt is discharged by the return of a daughter to marry a sister's son¹⁰⁶. Kuper, in studying the Southern Bantu traditions, is of the opinion that 'women are in a real sense exchanged for cattle' (1987:110). The modern significance of *bogadi* and evidence gathered from within the research area are discussed later on.

In the past, seldom did a marriage take place with an unrelated family and usually the union was within the ward or at least the village (Schapera 1940, 1971). The situation is much less rigid today as a result of the greater movement of people, meeting often by chance through

¹⁰⁵ The distinction can be explained in political terms – see Kuper 1987:78-82

¹⁰⁶ This assumes the groom has assistance with brideprice from his father or other relatives, who in turn have a claim on the 'house', that is, a daughter as a future wife or payments from brideprice as a result of a daughter marrying (Kuper 1987). See also Tambiah et al 1989:426.

education or employment, choosing to marry, not only outside the family, but outside the tribe, and the foundation of marriage has shifted towards a union based more on mutual attraction: '.... the construction of desire increasingly operates on interpersonal relationships outside the lineage of traditional family context: it becomes an expression of the self' (Castells 2009:299). In the past, the physical looks of a prospective wife were not considered as important as in today's society - as well as the 'standing and reputation' of the family, the makeup of a good wife used to be judged as 'industry, modesty, chastity, obedience and amiability' (Schapera 1940, 1971:248). Any feelings of individual desire were subsumed by family and community interests (Cole and Thomas 2009).

The rise of pre-marital relations, following the disappearance of polygamy, were analysed by Comaroff and Roberts as being a natural progression for wealthy and ambitious men in order to maintain 'affinal alliances' and resources (1977:97). They were looking at marriage in the 1970s from a legal perspective, and most probably observed cases brought to the *kgotla*. Their conclusions were no doubt especially applicable in a time when women and children were productive and useful at the *masimo* and cattle post, and whom men sought to control for their own means, yet it is more difficult to see how these sexual relations acted as a means to augment political and social standing in the community (ibid) particularly since *bogadi* had not been exchanged. Comaroff and Roberts (1977:114) state that marriage is 'ambiguous' and as such men use to their advantage to operate a series of alliances in a state of 'serial monogamy', in other words, they dip in and out of relationships without being tied down to the final stage towards marriage and thereby, so it is alleged, benefit from these relationships in progressing their careers. Gulbrandsen (1986) challenges these findings, alleging that affinal relations were more a source of potential tension than support, and concludes that men indulged in pre-marital and extra-marital relationships not as a means of securing affinal links, but simply for the enjoyment of many sexual exploits. Comaroff and Roberts' description assumes the transaction of a business or political deal in which love and attraction has no place, although they do concede some unions may be on the basis of 'emotional satisfaction' which had 'increasingly become an end in itself' (1977:118). Alverson, writing around the same time, comments similarly, 'In town the sentiments of love and compatibility are becoming conscious motives for marriage' (1978: 161). From a woman's perspective, this is a welcome glimmer of change in that there is a chance for them to exert some influence: 'The capacity to inspire emotional attachment confers power' (Jackson 2012:8) or as expressed by Miller, 'Love is essential because it asserts the ideal of agency within any given relationship' (1998:35).

Extra-marital relations were a source of conflict, and Schapera expresses in stark terms how difficult relationships could be within marriage:

'If we now review generally the sexual relationship between husband and wife, it is, I think, evident that there is a good deal of

maladjustment, to which labour migration has obviously contributed greatly. If I appear to have stressed the unhappy marriages too much, and to have paid little attention to the happy ones that do also exist, it is because the latter, so far as I could judge, are comparatively rare. Few of the women I got to know well enough to talk to on this topic pretended to be living harmoniously with their husbands. Almost always there were complaints of sexual ill-treatment or of infidelity, and the characteristic female attitude was one of resignation rather than of happiness.' (1940, 1971:189)

Gulbrandsen's research too finds little 'peace in the home' (1986:15), in the main as a result of the husband's reluctance to give up his bachelorhood lifestyle of drinking and womanising. There is evidence that this manifests itself as physical abuse in the form of assaults and beatings inflicted on wives (ibid).

It was once the case that anyone who showed reluctance to marry was seen as being disloyal to the Bakgatla in that it was considered one's duty to contribute to the 'increase of the tribe' (Schapera 1940, 1971:32). In addition, unmarried persons were subject to the authority of their father and were less highly regarded than husbands and wives (ibid): marriage was given high status and was anticipated and accepted as a matter of course by all. To a certain extent, the same distinction is made today between married and unmarried persons, in that there are certain public and familial duties at ceremonies and celebrations, at which a person who has not gone through the marriage process, is sidelined and in effect receives a personal slight. Generally, socialisation to marriage is such that anyone who fails to marry is deemed not to be man or woman enough. It is argued that for many women, marriage is seen as 'a crucial means of securing.... community respect and social identity' (Mokomane 2006:35). In gender terms, the boy marries the girl, not the other way round, and not marrying each other. This stands today in that a woman must wait to be asked to marry, and the practice of *bogadi* enforces this.

The act of marriage in Botswana and most of Africa is processual and goes through various stages which are negotiated at every point (Bledsoe and Pison 1994). This is referred to as a 'state of *becoming* rather than as a state of *being*' (Comaroff and Roberts 1977:114). It is a bringing together of families, and in doing so, provides a support function and structure for the couple for the future. Under the 1970 Marriage Act, couples may register with the District Commissioner and legally be married following a period of notice in which their intention is publically displayed. The alternative is a customary marriage in which the couple register at the *kgotla* (a breakdown of the number of marriages registered in both locations since 1995, albeit with gaps for some years, is given in Appendix 9).



Figure 8: A gathering for *patlo*

The markers along the way which are recognised milestones in the quest for marriage may vary somewhat within the different *merafe* in Botswana (Griffiths 1997); however, the process has little changed from Schapera's time. The following sequence of events is recognisable by Bakgatla living in Mochudi today: firstly, the parents of the boy go and make themselves known to the parents of the girl and state their intentions¹⁰⁷. This is called 'knocking'. Its purpose is to avoid the embarrassment of a situation whereby the family is rejected by the girl's parents. If all goes well, they proceed to *patlo*¹⁰⁸ - to seek the girl's hand in marriage and 'beg for a calabash of water' (Schapera 1940, 1971:52; Ellece 2011). This entails a delegation from the boy's family¹⁰⁹, usually a paternal uncle or some other close relative, plus another member of the family, to the girl's home to meet with her father, who, in turn, then discusses the proposal with his wife and other family members, including the girl's maternal uncles.

¹⁰⁷ Schapera records that it is the boy's father who informally consults with the father of the girl (1938, 1994:131) and subsequently discusses with close relatives, particularly the maternal uncles. Today, the involvement of the mothers marks a degree of gender equality

¹⁰⁸ Known as 'the seeking' (Schapera 1940, 1971:51), a very important aspect of the marriage procedure which precedes cohabitation.

¹⁰⁹ Only members of the family who are married themselves are permitted to partake in *patlo*



Figure 9: The final stage of *patlo*

There follows a number of meetings between the girl's father and groom's relatives in which they talk about the suitability of the couple and the amount of *bogadi* that is needed and whether this is in cattle or some other form: 'It is good etiquette to prolong the discussions, and several months may elapse before a definite answer is given' (Schapera 1940, 1971:52). If the process is successful, the groom's delegation will be asked to come along at a certain time to be given the final response, and they will be met not only by the girl's father but especially by her maternal uncles 'whose presence is essential' (ibid) (Figures 8 and 12). Prior to this, the boy's paternal aunt, plus another close relative, may visit the girl's mother and a similar string of meetings may take place, although in Schapera's narrative, this was considered a recent change to traditional practice (ibid). Today, quite often women are involved in the *patlo* discussions from the beginning when the uncle or relevant relative has died or when the girl's father is deceased or not known. This is an interesting point of social change, since the traditional practice as related by Schapera did not give women a role apart from confirming the proposal after the meetings and thanking the girl's mother for her consent:

'This is done to show that the girl is being taken not to the council-place (where men habitually sit), but to the compound (which is a woman's proper domain)' (1940, 1971:53)

This reflects the clear demarcation of the spaces of men and women, and shows how the defining and gendering of roles is also significant within the *patlo* process. These are still observed today and when women are involved, as noted above, they are 'honorary uncles or males'. At a final meeting, known as 'the judgement' (Figures 9 and 10), most close relatives from both sides, including members of the delegation, gather to hear formally: 'Here is the child, you can take her, take her living, and if you return her, return her while she is still

alive' (Schapera 1938, 1994:131), to which the response comes, 'We cause it to rain (for you)'¹¹⁰, in other words, 'we thank you' (ibid). Importance is placed on the union receiving social and public recognition, which is achieved through the series of meetings. It is noticeable that the male relatives are separate from the female family members, some of whom are required to sit upon blankets on the ground, whereas the men are given seats - the ubiquitous plastic chairs¹¹¹.



Figure 10: 'The Judgement'

Dow and Kidd refer to 'the *parallel* co-existence of women and men [which] manifests itself in separate role assignments for women and men as well as actual physical separation at public gatherings. Women and men can still be observed seated separately at funerals, weddings, churches, dikgotla (tribal meeting places) and other public gatherings' (1994:1). It is not only gender which is significant, but also age. Senior men are given due deference by younger men, seen most obviously in the men's circle at weddings and funerals (Durham 2004) where the senior men with more status sit in the inner circle, the younger ones on the outside (see analysis on age, Chapter Four).

Far from the wedding being the next stage, there typically follows a lengthy engagement. Schapera tells how several days after *patlo*, gifts will be brought 'to seal the betrothal' (1940, 1971:53). 'The goods bought', commonly known as such, have changed over the years

¹¹⁰ The Setswana word for rain is *pula*. The national cry of *pula* is heard at the conclusion of *kgotla* meetings, public gatherings and celebrations, meaning 'let there be rain'. This has particular resonance for the people of Botswana since it is such a dry country. It is also Botswana's unit of currency, and said when giving a toast (Denbow and Thebe 2006)

¹¹¹ Schapera refers to a wife's inferior status in everyday life and how 'she sits on the floor, whereas he [the husband] has his stool or chair' (1940, 1971:95)

initially from animal skins, beads and other ornaments, and later to dress material, blankets and shawls for the bride-to-be (ibid). These small gifts placed an obligation on the girl to abide by the decision to marry, and these were reciprocated through the hospitality and warmth of welcome of the girl's family to the prospective husband and his family (Schapera 1940, 1971:73). Today, the gifts have escalated in value and, as well as presents of clothing for the girl¹¹², the family often asks for clothing for the parents, uncles and aunts, and other items such as 'beds and gas lamps' (Mokomane 2008). The cost of all this can add up to a daunting amount of money for a young man.



Figure 11: Typical gift of German print material for the bride-to-be

Schapera describes a further couple of events, the first when the prospective husband is formally accepted by the girl's parents and they entertain him and his uncle; and the second when a celebration of freshly brewed beer¹¹³ is organised by the girl's parents to entertain members of his family (Schapera 1940, 1971:54). This ensures the engagement of the couple is formally recognised, and it may be at least five years before the wedding itself takes place. During this time the two families cultivate friendships, exchanging small presents of food

¹¹² A girl is likely to receive German print material (Figure 11) to be made into a wedding dress, together with matching headscarf, blanket shawl and large pin. These represent a traditional marriage outfit.

¹¹³ Beer is brewed specially for celebratory purposes such as the handing over of *bogadi*, and is an important part of Setswana culture

and drink and ensuring invitations are given to any feasts and family celebrations taking place. The opportunity today for such social events is eagerly awaited¹¹⁴.

Since marriage is a process not an event (Comaroff and Roberts 1977:112), there is a blurring around the edges, which has probably contributed to the stretching of the understanding of 'marriage', 'concubinage' and 'cohabitation' (Mookodi 2004a). As in other parts of Africa, 'It is a protracted process that can take longer than a lifetime, and one can be more married or less, depending on where one is in the process' (Shipton 2007:120). Schapera relates how, by this stage, the boy and girl are referred to as 'husband' and 'wife' and the families call each other 'relatives-in-laws', even though the marriage process has not been completed (1938, 1994:132). During the engagement, the couple are allowed to cohabit at the girl's family home: this is known as '*go ralala*' (Schapera 1940, 1971). Bearing in mind that pre-marital pregnancy was socially unacceptable in the early twentieth century, it was at this point that the girl was likely to become pregnant¹¹⁵, often more than once, before she and her husband moved to the conjugal household in his natal ward (ibid).



Figure 12: Further pictures of *patlo*

The key factor which determines the legitimacy of the traditional marriage is the giving of *bogadi* to the girl's family¹¹⁶. This is measured in numbers of cattle (or sometimes sheep as well) which varies depending on different *merafe* custom, but is usually between 2 – 8 head

¹¹⁴ A fairly recent consumptive gathering, like the baby shower, is the 'kitchen top-up' which, as explained by Thera Rasing, is now a common aspect of getting married in south-central African countries. Friends and relatives are invited to a party at which the bride-to-be receives gifts of kitchen utensils. The 'kitchen top up', like the baby shower, 'contributes to the construction of contemporary individual and collective female identities' (1999:228)

¹¹⁵ There was an expectation from the boy's family that a girl would prove her fertility before the marriage process was complete. This has transmuted today to a prevalence and social expectation of pregnancy among young unmarried women, one of the highest rates in Africa (MacDonald 1996)

¹¹⁶ During the time of Lentswe's chieftom, circa 1896, the giving of *bogadi* was suspended for a while as a result of missionary pressure. Schapera indicates that the fact that an epidemic of rinderpest was decimating the herds at the time was a contributing factor (1938, 1994:146). After a period of around ten years, the practice of *bogadi* was reinstated, once the cattle numbers were swelling again (ibid).

of cattle¹¹⁷. The amount and timing of the *bogadi* is not subject to bargaining according to Schapera (1940, 1971:74)¹¹⁸. This view probably stems from a time when there was a regular amount for *bogadi*, recognised and accepted by members of the tribe which for the Bakgatla, was two head of cattle¹¹⁹. Brideprice in Botswana has been considered 'traditionally low' (Kuper 1987:144). A female informant in Rampedi explains, 'Two cows is enough; it is just a gift, a thank you gift. It was suspected if someone gave more, say, six, eight or ten cows, then they were *selling* their child to be abused.' However, there is undoubtedly social pressure to do the right thing, such that if you are a wealthy person, you would not wish to be seen as miserly. A participant in the men's focus group in Rampedi described how *bogadi* is taken by the uncle for the purpose of safekeeping for the future of his sister's children:

'The *bogadi* is accepted by the brother of the woman's mother; he looks after these cattle and makes sure that whenever his sister's children need anything, one of the cattle can be sold and the need met. Also at the time when his nephew marries, he gives one of the cattle as part of the brideprice, and when his niece gets married he kills one beast, cooks some food and takes the meat and head of the cow to his sister's place as contribution to the wedding. Then he is also given the head of the beast that would have been killed for the wedding together with other foodstuffs and that is why in Setswana it is said that the 'uncle is the eater of the heads' of his sister's children.'

Historically, within the Bakgatla, the transferring of *bogadi* could be at any stage, even many years later¹²⁰, yet for most traditional marriages, the presentation of the cattle is a key visual

¹¹⁷ The number of cattle given should be even: 'each with its mate, to show that two people are being bound to each other' (Schapera 1938, 1994:140). Usual number of cows given nowadays is eight (Ellece 2011)

¹¹⁸ 'The husband's parents give as many [cattle] as they like and can' (Schapera 1938, 1994:138). See also Comaroff (1980:168) and Comaroff and Roberts (1977). The acceptance of the situation of giving *what they like and can* is characteristic of the Batswana culture of *botho*.

¹¹⁹ The men's focus group confirmed that in Kgatleng it used to be two cattle male and female: the male cow was supposed to be used for ploughing and the female one was to be milked for the children of the newly wedded couple.

¹²⁰ Simon Roberts carried out a survey in Rampedi in 1973 in which he found that there had been sixty marriages celebrated since Schapera had been there in the 1930s and of these, *bogadi* had been given in forty-three, no *bogadi* in ten, and the other seven he was unable to establish the situation.

During fieldwork in 2010 in Old Rampedi, an elderly woman was interviewed whose 'husband' had died before *bogadi* was given, even though they had lived together for very many years and had eight children. She said financial constraint prevented them marrying, and so *bogadi* was given by his people after his death, according to customary protocol. This then allowed the family to receive *bogadi* in the event of one of the daughters marrying. The following account was taken from a participant of the bead jewellery-making focus group:

'According to Kgatla custom, there are cases where some people have gone through *patlo* when I was still a little girl but have not given *bogadi* up to now; some have even died without giving *bogadi* therefore not marrying. In Kgatla custom a woman whose

stage, regarded with excitement by the older generation: ‘... [cattle] by their very publicity they portray and give expression to the legality of the new relationship’ (Schapera 1938, 1994:125). A young informant proffered: ‘She [the bride] also feels pride that she is the wife for whom cattle have been given in broad daylight, with people witnessing that and she has pride of place in the society.... the cows demand that there be a celebration’.



parents have gone through *patlo* on her behalf is given some form of respect in that she is seen as a person whom ‘shoes have been put-on on her behalf’ and when the worst comes to worst and no *lobola* is given she may be regarded as married. *Patlo* would have taken place in her favour, and while there would have been no wedding, her partner and she would have been having children and her mother’s home would be filled with their children. While still staying at her mother’s home their children would go school, finish school, work and eventually get married themselves while their mother still awaits her own wedding. Sometimes the couple could find their own plot and build a home for themselves and their children even when no wedding has taken place.

At other times if a man dies without giving *bogadi* his relatives may go the woman’s relatives to ask them to allow their daughter to come to their home to ‘lie down’ for their dead son and she would just stay there and never come back to her home again. Her children would be sent for and they would also stay at their father’s home. The children would still use their mother’s surname until sometimes when the children start working they may give *bogadi* for their mother and so access the use of their father’s surname.’



Figure 13: The arrival of the *bogadi*

And so, the giving of *bogadi* is of symbolic significance as the final act determining the status of marriage. Today, since people from different tribes are marrying each other, there is no single tribal guidance and no standardised figure for *bogadi* across Botswana¹²¹. This has probably contributed to the more ‘negotiated’ stance, and there is recognition that the nature of *bogadi* is changing as everything is given monetary value and inflation sets in.

As the approach to *bogadi* has changed, the main purpose and meaning of *patlo* appears to have shifted from being a gentle bringing together of two families, to what now amounts to a financial agreement and transaction. The change is recent and there are obvious sensitivities around it. Most informants referred to *bogadi* in the past as being ‘given’, not ‘negotiated’ or ‘paid out’. In contrast, there is recognition that marriage today has become a business and that the amount asked for in *bogadi* by a girl’s relatives - in particular, the uncles - creates a financial struggle for many young men, especially nowadays since it is seen more as an individual effort in contrast to the past when other family members usually contributed. This particular point reflects today’s society in which the family unit is changing from an interdependent extended family structure to one that is more individualistic. This is affirmed by a comment made by an older woman in one of the focus groups:

‘*Patlo* has changed a lot nowadays. As soon as the parents have agreed on the *bogadi* the man is immediately told that ‘we do not have a house’ and this implies that the man must immediately make means of getting

¹²¹ In June 2012, Members of the House of Chiefs unanimously agreed that *bogadi* should be regulated and standardised. It was stated that the high brideprice required of men had led to a high prevalence of cohabitation and a decline in the rate of marriage. Out of every four women in Botswana, one is married, one lives in a ‘stable cohabitation’ while two live in ‘visiting cohabitation’ (see: Mmegi online, ‘Dikgosi call for regulation of *Bogadi*’, 13th June 2012, Issue: Vol 29, No 8)

together *bogadi*, marrying as soon as possible thereby taking away his wife and children.'

More recently arguments have surfaced to increase the level of *bogadi* such as the wife-to-be being more highly educated – the more educated, the higher the price demanded¹²². The greed of relatives in seeking higher and higher levels of *bogadi* is seen to have a direct impact on the frequency of marriage and responsible for its decline. As pointed out by Shipton (2007:121), every man is potentially a giver and a taker in the social scheme of brideprice. It is a self-perpetuating system of social reciprocities in that no one is going to willingly give up the opportunity of receiving *bogadi*, especially if they have been in the position to deliver it. Yet, as shown earlier, the giving of *bogadi* is much more than this and is deeply embedded in cultural pride and significance. In defence of the practice of *bogadi*, Dr Unity Dow, giving a lecture in Mochudi in June 2010, said,

'... *bogadi* or *lobola* is the transfer of wealth from the male's family to the female's family: family to family.... the giving of the engagement ring [in Western societies] represents the giving of wealth by a man to the woman: individual to individual.'

Here, Dow, although emphasising the importance of family in Batswana marriages, places the significance of *bogadi* as a love token, variances of which are used across the world to mark such unions.

In emphasising the role of family in the process and life of a marriage, it is a common belief that if *patlo* is not followed, a marriage is more likely to fail and end in divorce. Any couple that marries without *patlo* are said to marry without the blessings of their parents, which indicates the social pressure to follow a traditional route to marriage. Families are consulted over any problems occurring in the marital relationship; usually the uncles are involved, and it can be regarding quite trivial matters. Even before the marriage ceremony is over, the bride and groom are given counselling by married female and male relatives, called '*go laya*' (Ellece 2011). The timing of this 'tutoring' varies, but in Bakgatla custom, usually occurs during the wedding when the bride and groom are in their traditional outfits (see Chapter Seven). Essentially, the bride is told to be tolerant, meek and turn a blind eye to any infidelities of her husband; the groom meanwhile, is advised against physically abusing his wife and to ensure he consults with her. Similar gendered themes run through songs chanted at celebrations post-*patlo* and during weddings (ibid). There are obvious

¹²² See also Johnson 1998:226 on women in the southern Philippines where '... education is now not only considered to be 'pusaka' (an inheritance), but also is often related to the inflationary amounts of bride-wealth now being demanded for women.'

contradictions to a gender equal relationship and it is thought such advice rituals act to perpetrate a patriarchal approach to married life (ibid; Griffiths 1997).

Schapera describes a situation, similar to today, where matrimonial disputes are 'dealt with first at a gathering of the two families concerned' (1940, 1971:263). However, failing a satisfactory resolution, the case used to be taken to the chief (previously, this was the ward head) (ibid) and again reconciliation would be attempted, and any punishment and fines metered out. Divorce was a last resort. This process was usually so successful at bringing the couple back together, that very rarely did a union end in divorce, however, Schapera details some specific cases (ibid: 264-5), and *bogadi* was specifically ordered to be given back to the man's family in cases where the woman did not fulfil her duty to provide children (ibid).

Many informants mentioned the rising divorce rate in Botswana today¹²³ and how it was a disincentive to marry. The participants in focus groups thought there was still a stigma attached to being divorced. According to Schapera, divorced women were viewed as 'undesirable', and consequently were less likely to marry again than men (1940, 1971). The background to this is not only based on the fact that balance of blame for failed marriage tipped towards women, but that marriage represented the marriage of families, such that if *bogadi* had not been taken back, there was always the possibility of the man and woman getting back together again. There is a Setswana saying, 'Relationship-in-law does not rot' (ibid: 271).

Men, from focus group discussions, seemed to think that women benefitted more financially from divorce and remarriage than men, which could be the case if typically women married 'in community of property' and took more from the relationship than they put in. There were the following comments:

'It is a real struggle to raise *bogadi*, and while men are giving *bogadi* women are divorcing and going back to their families.'

'Women are remarrying a lot and sometimes you'll find that a woman is on to her third marriage and every time she divorces, she acquires property from the husband.'

¹²³ From 2006 – 2010 divorce cases registered at the High Court were: 2006:715; 2007: 893; 2008:955; 2009:966; 2010: 1172 (Botswana Guardian, 3rd February 2012). In comparison, the divorce rates in other developing countries, such as Vietnam and China, have increased by almost 50%, 2005-2010 (FT, 'Vietnamese women start to break divorce taboo', 6th September 2011)

A separate property regime used to be more usual¹²⁴, as mentioned by Schapera, in which the couples' possessions were regarded separately (1940, 1971), and all the goods a woman owned could be taken away by her in the event of divorce, except any cattle she might have, since these had to be left to be eventually inherited by the children (if there were any) (ibid: 268):

'Any property a woman [thus] possesses at marriage, or subsequently acquires, is never looked upon as part of her husband's estate; he cannot use it without her authority, it cannot be attached to pay his debts, and, in case of divorce, she takes it away with her' (ibid: 94)

In recent times, the main reason for divorce¹²⁵ has been cited as the abuse women suffer in a relationship (Maundeni 2002). Respondents in Rampedi believed an increasing number of divorces were as a result of pressure placed on a young couple arising from financial problems from loans taken out to pay for the cost of marriage and wedding celebrations, but I could find no evidence of this.



Figure 14: Beer brewed for guests gathered for *patlo*

¹²⁴ The alternative, 'in community of property', prior to the Marital Power Act 2004, was that the husband assumed control of the assets (Griffiths 197:185); after 2004, following divorce, property is now divided equally

¹²⁵ Legislation provides for grounds for divorce as 'irretrievable breakdown in marriage' (Griffiths 1997:184)

Returning to *patlo* and betrothal, with such a very long drawn out marriage process, it is hardly surprising that a relaxing of former social taboos, such as pregnancy before marriage, has occurred, since, as one informant confirms, 'Negotiations and plans take forever – wedlock may not happen for twenty years!' However, it is also acknowledged that too many children are being born out of wedlock, with fathers often failing to take parental responsibility. A law was introduced in 2011, against fierce resistance from the House of Chiefs, to ensure that a father's name is placed on a child's birth certificate. The opposition to this bill centred on a view that men would be publically humiliated by women claiming them as fathers of their children! It may be that forcing men to face up to their parental responsibilities will also lead them to face up to their responsibilities to get married, and thereby reduce the numbers of men unwilling to commit. There is an expectation from young people of both sexes that once married they, and their partner, will remain faithful. The recognition of this by some men leads to reluctance to give up their pre-marital freedom to live and act as they please, as confirmed by the boys' focus group:

'Before marriage you would have had unlimited freedom, you could go out almost three or four times a week since you do not have anyone to consult regarding your time. But once married the first thing to go is freedom, you can no longer go to bars or visit friends without consulting your wife.'

Yet, an age is reached whereby men's priorities change. A middle-aged and married woman in Rampedi described her understanding of this:

'According to our tradition, a woman cannot force her husband to marry, he has to feel ready, and he says "I am ready" – men are like, "I was still studying her" – before getting married, you have to know one another. It's not traditional, but there is that factor. These days it has changed a lot – younger people getting married – in 20s – and after 2 or 3 years – unlike before.

[*Why marry so late when everything seems to be in place?*] Maybe they [men] have to be prepared emotionally. "It's a man's thing", linked to tradition – a woman is always ready to marry, yet a man will always come up with excuses, like, we need to do this first and that first.

Men feel that women only look at a man for what they can get – materialistic. This is probably why men say they are studying her. Women have to prove themselves before they get married – how she

cope under pressure – family events and whether she can cook for large numbers.

Men are under pressure to show that they have married the right woman. Used to have arranged marriages, but now a wife can come from anywhere.'

One of the commonly cited reasons for the decline in marriage in Botswana is the exorbitant cost of it all, which nowadays mainly falls on the man's shoulders (Mokomane 2006). There appears to be an escalation of expectation and competition, a tendency to conspicuous consumption and the greed of relatives. Within Rampedi, a man talked about the situation with his own family:

'Regarding my sons, they are not marrying now because they do not have the means – it is too expensive. The cost of *bogadi* is not necessarily too high; it is the wedding, food, clothes, etc that is very expensive.'

Another informant expressed outrage at the demands made by one family¹²⁶: firstly, *bogadi*, then clothes for all aunts of the young man, and on the girl's side, for her mother, father, both maternal and paternal aunts and uncles, and then, all the expenses for the grand wedding – at both his place and hers, and the magistrate's office signing ceremony. The clothing for the relatives was going to cost P70,000 (£7,000) alone, and so the young couple declined to go through with the marriage. Rather than taking the alternate course and quietly getting married at the magistrate's office, they found themselves in limbo. It is purported that couples often find themselves living together, yet unable to finalise these discussions.

An informant in Mochudi told her story:

'I would have liked a big wedding, but negotiations took too long and we wanted to get married in the December in that year, three years ago. In the end we went to the District Commissioner. We cancelled the tent, caterers, etc. Maybe in a few years time we will celebrate properly. The negotiations involved the uncles and my uncle was too busy and so it never got sorted.'

The individual cited here came from a fairly wealthy and educated family; a less well-off couple may not have been so determined since they would probably have more to lose in 'going it alone'. The involvement of family is a key feature throughout the process of

¹²⁶ This aspect of the marriage, the goods given to the girl's family, is framed by the customs of where the girl comes from, not by those of the boy's natal home.

marriage in Botswana. Schapera expounds, 'the passage of *bogadi*, and various other features of marriage, confer certain rights upon the husband's people and impose certain obligations upon the wife's' (1940, 1971:273). Families can be very controlling and utilise their power over the couple to either make demands or, before the marriage process begins, to reject the proposed partner for such reasons as ethnicity, culture, and so forth. It was thought that one family could reject another because it was not seen to be wealthy enough to make any provision to the other family. Often in reality it is families that prevent marriage taking place.

Another aspect which is an important part of Tswana life and may be instrumental in delaying marriage is the necessity for a home, which the man, in his traditional 'breadwinner' role, feels an obligation to provide. Miller (2008:77), in describing Caribbean family life, highlights the connection between building a life and a home: 'Despite all the pressure from the church, it wasn't having children that usually led people to marry. It was only when one could demonstrate one's ability to have some sort of house of one's own that marriage was seen as proper.' And if a man is in line to inherit a *lapa*, he may be waiting a long time before becoming the head of that household and be comfortable with bringing a wife home. A distinction is made between wealthier families and those less well-off. Klaitz (2005) rightly identifies gender inequalities as exacerbating the delay of marriage, in that women are often dependent on men materially and when those same men are providing for their parents and other members of the family, in particular, unmarried sisters, they are reluctant to marry – usually financially unable to meet costs of the marriage and wedding. Likewise, his family may wish to deter him from marrying in case his support for them diminishes. Klaitz also cites the case of difficult relations between a woman and her mother-in-law, and how she might wish to remain single to avoid family conflict, relying instead on 'visiting partners' and her own children (ibid).

By way of concluding the chapter, it can be stated that marriage is still viewed as socially desirable and yet is experiencing many obstacles and resistance. We have already established in Chapter Four, that the social indicator of adulthood for women is through motherhood which has taken over from marriage. This minimises the social imperative to marry by a certain time. However, as pointed out by Van Dijk (2013), adulthood through marriage is different and related to authority - for instance, being able to participate in family affairs. Both these social indicators of adulthood are regarded as valid. The traditional marriage process is proving durable and immutable in the face of modernising influences, and unwilling to adapt to changing economic and social circumstances. The following are reflections on observations gained through fieldwork:

Firstly, attitudes to marriage in Rampedi are not homogeneous. There appears to be a significant incidence of young couples of similar age (mid 20s – mid 30s) deciding to marry and for reasons of love. Mostly these modern couples are living in the government housing

part of Rampedi, and manage their finances and households together. In contrast, more traditionally orientated men, often older, appear shy of marrying in that they feel the need to 'take time to study' a prospective wife. Here, there exists a gap between the sexes which seems to provide grounds for suspicion and uncertainty. The more 'traditional' a man is, the less likely he is to marry unless he finds a similarly 'traditional' woman. The repercussions for gender relations point to the 'forcing of a new female-male social relationship' (Dow and Kidd 1994:1).

Secondly, the biggest impact on the decline in frequency of marriage seems to be economic: the wealthier the couple, the easier it is for them to marry. Poorer couples, or more precisely, poorer men, struggle to find the resources to fund a marriage: building a home, paying *bogadi*, and all the expense of wedding celebrations. Even though legally, marriage can be executed with a minimum of cost, society demands an established process is followed, and if a certain standard cannot be attained, it is deemed best not to attempt it. Thirdly, marriage is constructed around consumption. *Bogadi* is out of the reach of many poor men, yet the main expense is in the wedding celebrations, driven by the greed of relatives and competition of consumption felt most acutely by the bride-to-be. Men in particular are burdened with the expectation of providing the finances for a celebration and feast which will not only receive family and public approval, but compare with or surpass other wedding events. Young couples newly married in Rampedi revealed a sharing of this financial burden. However, the desire for a 'white' wedding comes mainly from women – their empowerment has translated itself into an escalating expectation and demand for material consumption, underlying of which is the understanding that this is a measure of love shown for them.

Chapter 7 – The social mix of nuptial celebrations

Young people of both sexes aspire to an idealised model of marriage and family life, and the wedding is an important signifier of this. The wedding ceremony itself usually takes the form of an exchange of vows at the District Commissioner's Office or at church followed by eating, drinking and entertainment at the homes of both sets of parents. The timing for each of these elements can be several months apart or over a period of a few days. If a long time apart, the registry of the marriage will be a standalone event, followed by a small celebratory feast with family and friends. Schapera (1940, 1971:63) reports that 'Unlike betrothal ceremonies, which appear to have suffered little change, wedding ceremonies have altered greatly, for the introduction of Christianity brought with it European marriage rites and observances'. An elderly participant in one of the focus groups purported that wedding ceremonies were previously not commonly seen:

'... *patlo* of olden days was really problematic. In those days the Kgatla custom believed that *patlo* was actually marriage because at that time wedding ceremonies were not held; it was such that when *bogadi* was given it was seen as the conclusion of the marriage ritual. Marriage was then conducted at the *Kgotla* by the Chief and there were no marriage certificates.'



Figure 15: Marriage of Chief Khama III, Old Palapye in 1896: photograph courtesy of Sandy Grant

Schapera (1940, 1971:72) talks of two types of wedding, the 'proper' white one, and the more common one undertaken by poorer families in which a couple co-habit at the girl's

home, and once fertility is proved, move to the boy's home and are then declared married as long as *bogadi* has been given. As can be seen in the photograph (Figure 15), dating back to 1896, Chief Khama III of the Bangwato tribe married his bride, Sefhakwanein, at a church in Old Palapye in a 'white' wedding. Nowadays it would seem that most weddings are a version of the 'proper' white one and that if a couple cannot afford the cost of it, or are unable to take out a loan, they usually defer getting married¹²⁷. The wedding celebration is seen as part of 'the rising consumerist style' which is being harnessed by young people (Van Dijk 2012:193). A young man in Old Rampedi describes his situation:

'Marriage is too expensive, and so needs a lot of planning – 2 to 3 years. We, Tswana, believe in *bogadi*. We have to have a celebration – I was helped by my brothers. If I was alone, it would have been a very big problem. I told them I wanted to get married but I didn't have a lot of money, so brothers came together to see if they could help me. At the beginning I was not planning for a white marriage, I was going to pay *bogadi* and go to the District Commissioner's office and get the certificate and leave it at that, but my family said, you can't do that, because all of us in our family have had a white wedding, so why can't you do as well as us? They came together and contributed.'

The wedding celebration takes place on two days which can be consecutive or up to a week apart (depending on distance to be travelled). The first day is spent at the bride's home and the second at the bridegroom's which follows the process of the traditional and historic marriage rite of the woman's departure from her family home to go and live at that of her husband's. Today this is largely symbolic yet the two-centre celebration persists – although in the case of the man's home being deemed too far away, the celebration is held solely in one location¹²⁸. The significance of the celebration in two places is also recognition of both families and a bringing together not only of immediate and distant family, but the local communities as well.

The wedding is a big consumptive event. In the words of Douglas and Isherwood (1979:43),

'Rituals are conventions that set up visible public definitions.... To manage without rituals is to manage without clear meanings.... More effective rituals use material things, and the more costly the ritual

¹²⁷ More modest weddings do take place, prosaically called "Lenyalo la mosoko" which means 'the lower class wedding where you cannot get nice food'. Most Batswana would strive to avoid being in this category – they take great pride in not appearing poor.

¹²⁸ There is also a growing trend in Gaborone to hold a wedding in one central venue, and hotels now offer wedding packages. In these instances, wedding invitations are being issued to a chosen number of relatives and friends, whereas previously, any number of neighbours and friends would automatically have been welcome to attend.

trappings, the stronger we can assume the intention to fix the meanings to be’.

It appears that this is what is happening here: a wedding is an occasion for the whole community to take notice of, not only to enjoy, but to participate in the marking of a significant life-course event. Neighbours, friends and relatives are invited to learn about the other partner in the marriage and about the couple together: what statement is being made about what sort of person he or she is, and how they interact together. Consumption is used as a means to display the couple’s credentials, and, through the course of the activities of the wedding, social relations are rejoined and sustained, and acceptance of the new link to another family is cemented.

Schapera talks of the traditional practice of much feasting which lasts all day and on subsequent days (1940, 1971:65). However, it is a different consumption which is highlighted when he is describing the contemporary ‘proper’ wedding - that of clothing purchased (ibid). He says the groom would have ‘a dark suit, hat, shirt, shoes, and gloves’ and for the bride, a dress would be made together with a veil and other items to make up her costume (ibid). Today the bride and groom wear more than one outfit, often more than three changes in a day; some couples have been known to have five changes of outfit.



Figure 16: Changes of wedding outfit

The bride starts out (the first day at her home, the second at the groom’s) in her white dress and veil and subsequently changes to alternative forms of dress. Quite often one or more of the outfits will be presents from uncles or aunts (as in the red dress in Figure 16). The

maternal uncle holds a special and respected position in the family as parent, arbiter and conciliator¹²⁹, and ideally, *bogadi* should go to the uncle which he is supposed to hold in custody for the children of his sister. When his niece gets married, he is 'very proud' to buy her a dress and it is a 'great honour' for her to wear it, especially since she is seen by all attending as having many changes of outfit.

Another dress will be a 'traditional' one that is created from German print material made in South Africa (shown in Figure 16 as the blue outfit)¹³⁰. Usually this dress is made from the material given as a betrothal gift, following *patlo*, from the husband's family to the girl, as detailed in the previous chapter. The bride usually has a matching head scarf, a blanket shawl and a large safety pin which all constitute the traditional outfit. Across Botswana, 'tradition' is usually demonstrated by materials and styles imported from elsewhere, usually Europe¹³¹, which is as the name 'German print' suggests¹³². The traditional dress is the last one the bride will wear and this is deliberate so that she is wearing it when she receives her 'counselling session' at sunset – this is discussed further on. The Bakgatla bride wears special earrings called '*Nkitseng*' which means 'know that I am married' and when she subsequently takes part in *patlo* discussions as a married relative, she is expected to wear them.

The nature of the fabric used, such as silk or cotton, adds to the distinctiveness of the individual dresses. The groom will have corresponding changes of outfit which follow the chosen colour scheme; so too will the maid of honour, bridesmaids and groomsmen (and flower girls and boys). Sometimes the bridesmaids dresses are the same style, other times they display a creative individualistic interpretation of 'modern' and 'traditional', often mixing the two to create a contemporary styled outfit in German print materials. The white wedding dress is sometimes hired as a means of keeping costs down¹³³. The significance of it being white symbolising 'virginity' holds no relevance here and there is no evidence that it ever did; so too the symbolism of 'modesty and purity' linked to the veil; the white dress has increasingly become a must-have bridal fashion item. As pointed out by Otnes and Pleck (2003), 'white' has been redefined globally to be a symbol of tradition rather than purity.

¹²⁹ If an uncle is deceased, an aunt would often assume his familial duties.

¹³⁰ The use of this particular cotton material is symbolic of the Bakgatla tribe. Although it is available today in different colours, the Bakgatla still prefer the original colour of blue.

¹³¹ It is only the Basarwa or San who will probably claim animal skins as their traditional clothing (Grant 2012), yet 'cultural dance', often entertainment at public commemorative events, will invariably consist of a troop of young men and women dressed in animal skins. 'The use of leather for these groups, so long rejected as an acceptable form of dress for anyone, is particularly interesting' (ibid:96). For comments on historical background of dress in Botswana, see Grant (2012:94-101), in which he states that the avant-garde clothing of the chiefs revealed the desire to 'fit in' (with the Europeans) and a Batswana trait to be forward thinking, rather than looking back.

¹³² The origins of German print material date back to nineteenth century European textile manufacturers. The researcher had a dress made in this traditional material and style by a local dressmaker in Rampedi for the cost of P450 (£45)

¹³³ A respondent in Rampedi said she had paid P1,900 (£190) to hire a wedding dress for two weeks in 2008. A wedding planning company promoting themselves in a major shopping centre in Gaborone cited the purchase price of a white dress at around P4,000 (£400) and that hiring one would be half that price.

Denbow and Thebe (2006:159.25) are somewhat contradictory in saying that if the bride has been married before or has 'a number of' children with someone other than the groom, then she will not wear a white dress 'as she is not considered 'pure'', which, in relation to findings in Rampedi, leads to the conclusion that if a woman has just one child with another man, she can still get to wear the white dress¹³⁴. It is more likely, in line with Denbow and Thebe's assertions, that to be married for the first time warrants the wearing of a white dress as an indication of the significance and social importance placed on the occasion¹³⁵.

The subsequent bridal outfits, following the white dress, are exquisitely and individually designed and made up using different materials to produce a unique effect. The outfits, both bride and groom's, transform them into an expression of love, a couple that complement each other, yet more than this, through the different changes, they express their respect for tradition (and their tribal roots), and a means of producing and maintaining kinship relations. Also, they show their desire to appear fashionable, embracing a variety of modern styles. The outfits have symbolic meaning, representing modernity, kinship and tradition, and, since clothing is so 'eminently malleable' (Hansen 2004:373) materials are chosen, manipulated and appropriated to reveal individualistic and innovative self-expression. Where there used to be prestige attached to European style dress in the early days of introduction (Comaroff 1996), now it is the traditional outfit which is just as highly regarded and the focus of innovation and creativity.



Figure 17: The Praise Poet

The guests are generally dressed in the following manner: older men wear suits and tie, the younger ones, more casual attire, and the women, particularly the older ones, wear dresses,

¹³⁴ It is interesting that Schapera, in reference to the bride becoming pregnant, says 'the wedding ceremonies are then less elaborate than where she is still 'unspoilt'' (1938, 1994:137)

¹³⁵ It may be noticed that the bride in the pictures is expecting a child within three months.

or skirts and tops, and headscarves made from German print material, and, if cold enough, traditional blankets¹³⁶.

Another element of tradition is the inclusion of a praise poet who stops at the gate to the *lapa* of the bride's family, before the wedding party processes through, and recites verses praising the wedding couple. This is apparently done to invite the ancestors into the lives of the couple and to relate to everyone present, their lineage. Much gesturing takes place and pointing of the knobkerrie (stick). Botswana has strong aural traditions in verse, stories, songs and proverbs (Nitza et al 2010) which are used to communicate and educate. Proverbs are used as part of the 'counselling session', called '*go laya*', which is given separately to both bride and groom before the wedding day is over. Married female and male relatives (usually maternal aunts and uncles who have been involved in the *patlo* process), retell proverbs (to the bride and groom respectively), often related to cattle, which instruct on marital and sexual relations and behaviour (ibid). The advice given is purported to be based on traditional gender roles in which the wife is expected to look after her husband in performing domestic duties and to show tolerance, ignoring any infidelities he may indulge in, whereas the husband is lectured on the importance of providing protection and financial resource for his wife and family. He is also advised to consult with her and encouraged to create a partnership, albeit a rather unbalanced one (Ellece 2011). Evidence is given that some young people regard the 'counselling' as unnecessary and outdated (Nhlekisana 2007b).



Figure 18: The choirs

Traditional wedding songs are popular and most of these focus on the bride and her feminine values (ibid). They often carry messages of advice for the bride and groom as well as being entertaining, and, the fact that everyone can join in, there exists a communal participation in the giving of guidance to the couple (Nhlekisana 2007b). Through song and dance, the new couple are socialised into their new roles as husband and wife (ibid). There is

¹³⁶ Traditional clothes like this are called *mateitshe*

usually a choir consisting of men and women who can be distinguished by their 'uniform'. They do not stand still to sing, rather, they dance in unison. Schapera refers to 'specially rehearsed choirs of girls' (1938, 1994:137), implying a gendered approach to such singing back in the 1930s.

The wedding couple along with their entourage of bridesmaids and groomsmen are expected to perform a special sequence of dances around the open yard (see Figure 19), and for this, popular music is often provided by a DJ or band, or piped through from a sound system in the house. The wedding group will have taken dance lessons for several months beforehand to ensure they can perfect the dance steps. Their movements have to be uniform. After each change of outfit, more dancing takes place. This form of dancing has developed into a more formal and stage-managed performance over the years in contrast to Schapera's accounts from the 1930s in which entertainment is more ad hoc: 'In the evening the girls rehearse songs and dances for the coming celebrations, many of the songs having European tunes and even English words' (1940,1971:66), and 'She [the bride] joins the gathering in the courtyard, where the younger people continue to sing, dance, and make merry, until it is late' (ibid:70).



Figure 19: Dancing: an important component of the wedding

The visual display of dancing and costume has become a polished performance for both men and women. Schapera implied it was once girls who initiated and took a lead in dancing. Nowadays, an accomplished dancer, usually the dance teacher who at this particular wedding is male, heads the wedding line and leads them round the yard swinging in all directions in time to the music. The wedding party has a large audience, swelled with people from the local community, and when they move into the marquee for the meal, guests, both men and women of all ages, then join together in dancing and singing traditional African songs. As is common across Africa, there is no 'systematic rule' as to when people can or can not sing and dance (Nhlekisana 2007b); it is done spontaneously when the individual is inspired to do so. And so, it is argued that such stage-managed pre-arranged dancing on behalf of the wedding party goes against the spirit of communality and solidarity, and their

dancing invites comments, complementary or adverse, from the spectators (ibid). Also, such dancing from a bride is not always considered appropriate; some think she should be more demure in her behaviour (ibid).



Figure 20: Inside the marquee: the top table and decorated place settings

The marquee is one of the ‘most visible elements in the ‘middle-classization’ of weddings’ according to Van Dijk (2012:197). His argument is that such consumptive displays are evidence of class aspiration in young people. There is certainly rising prosperity and informants in Rampedi point to a sense of competition amongst young people when it comes to wedding festivities. The detail and sheer volume of material and ribbon used, as well as flower and table decorations, is impressive, and this follows a style that can be seen elsewhere – public commemorations such as the opening of a new public building, or public celebration of some kind¹³⁷, will have a tent decorated with similar swirling white material and covered chairs, which are reserved for dignitaries and the main players at the event. At the wedding, the top table is reserved for the wedding ‘dignitaries’ – the bride and groom, best man and matron of honour. There is a second tent, open at the sides, which is not laid up with tables, but has many plastic chairs and is used by members of the community, since by tradition, a wedding is open and anyone is welcome to attend (Nhlekisana 2007b), of which there could be up to a few hundred. Here people can be shaded from the sun and enjoy eating and drinking.

¹³⁷ Such as President’s Day or International Women’s Day celebrations



Figure 21: Preparing the feast

Food is of utmost importance and has always been a core element of wedding festivities. A respondent at one of the focus groups commented: ‘It is avoided at all costs that people who come to the wedding could leave without having eaten’. And so there are copious quantities of food and soft drinks, as well as bottled and traditional brewed beer, and there is a specially designed and made ‘bridal cake’ which is recognised as being of modern or traditional design¹³⁸. The maternal uncle is expected to provide an ox for the feast, and there may be more animals slaughtered. The preparation of meat is carried out by a team of men who are friends of the family. It is cooked in large iron pots for several hours, then the bones removed and the meat pounded to produce *seswaa* (shredded meat). This is a Setswana delicacy which is eaten on special occasions and served with a variety of salads, such as coleslaw and beetroot.



Figure 22: A traditional bridal cake (photographed by researcher)

¹³⁸ To purchase a bridal cake is P4,200 - 4,000 (£420-400) according to a wedding planning company in Gaborone. A modern designed cake usually has tiers and flowers in icing, whereas a traditional cake will illustrate certain tribal elements, such as a replicate earthenware pot (see Figure 22).



Figure 23: Traditional *seswaa* with salad; bridal cake at Rampedi wedding

Since the cost of the wedding is so large¹³⁹, loans are often taken out. The whole wedding process has the potential to become more commercialised with the availability of wedding organisers to plan, contract and orchestrate the events and feasts. As mentioned earlier, there is a growing trend in urban areas to celebrate a wedding in one neutral location in which guests are invited through an invitation system. This transforms the underlying meaning of the Tswana marriage, not only the physical sense of a woman leaving her natal family home to take her place within the husband's family, but also the open participation of the whole community, the communal giving of advice through singing traditional wedding songs, and the social relations and feeling of belonging to that community.

Some wedding guests bring presents, but not many, and these are noted down; wedding lists do not exist, but this might change along with developments as detailed above.

¹³⁹ Focus groups put the cost of a white wedding at P50,000-60,000 (£5-6k) for clothes, food, entertainment, marquee and settings. Van Dijk's research in Kanye cites the figure as 'anything up to P200,000' (£20k) which is three times the salary of some of his interviewees (2012). Such extravagant consumption is not unique to Botswana or even Africa – Cynthia Werner (1997) describes a society in Kazakstan in which it has become so expensive to marry that the majority of young couples elope. For other examples, see Otnes and Pleck (2003).



Figure 24: Keeping a record of wedding presents given

Some young couples getting married today hire professional photographers to take pictures at a place of their choosing. The wedding couple in Rampedi relate how they travelled forty kilometres to a recognised picture venue called 'the Garden of Eden'. Here, the wedding party chose to be photographed against the backdrop of 'traditional' scenes such as piles of firewood, old farm implements and a nomadic style hut.



Figure 25: 'Traditional' wedding photographs

Again, the concern with tradition and tribal roots is revealed. What is also interesting in the photographs is the separation of two groups of people: firstly the wedding party, comprising the best man, matron of honour and various bridesmaids and groomsmen, and secondly, the principle relatives, the parents, uncles and aunts (see Figure 26). The two sets of people are not photographed together either here or later on, implying a significant social divide: the young from old, global from local, modern from traditional. It points to a background of rapid social change and difference.



Figure 26: Group wedding photographs

A white wedding is very much a woman's dream, and desire for such is driven by the bride in particular. This is not unique to Botswana, and it is argued that women have more need of 'ritual recognition' (Otnes and Pleck 2003). Whether this is the case or not, there is a definite yearning for a big consumptive celebration from the girl's point of view which objectifies the couple's romantic love, and marks the significant transition to a different social status. Within the Rampedi wedding, small details point to a focus on the bride, such as the wedding cake being called 'bridal', and the fact that it is the bride who leads, with her different dresses, the changes to the outfits of the rest of the wedding party – the colour scheme, material fabric and style is set by her dress. Yet so much of the wedding process demonstrates the bride and groom operating as a couple and this can be seen so clearly in the elaborate dancing performed together.

A wedding in any society is illustrative of different strands of history and culture (Johnson 1998; Otnes and Pleck 2003) which are often difficult to interpret. Van Dijk (2012) describes the Tswana wedding as a 'social cocktail' and points to the complexities which the young people encounter in organising such an event, with 'a new mixture of sources that are local and global, traditional and modern, and part of a civil system as well as part of the rising consumerist style' (ibid:191). The white wedding is paid for and organized by the young couple, albeit with help from their friends and family, and there is a sense that this is very much their show. Through the wedding celebrations, the young couple are not so much seeking to demonstrate social status or wealth as to express themselves as a couple, being careful to use their abilities to pick up the various strands of their culture, bringing both their communities, families and kin together. The lavish wedding consumption is an objectification of the couple's love for each other and a bold statement about the kind of relationship sought.

In concluding the chapter, one has to marvel at the exciting material displays, which all contribute to making 'inflationary institutions of conspicuous consumption' (Gewald et al 2012:11). It is indeed a flamboyant display of consumption, yet is more complex than a mere show; it is the utilisation and manipulation of consumption which aims to combine traditional and contemporary elements, displaying creativity in representing and bringing together various strands of family and community, and personalised self-expression, to celebrate in style. The social mix achieved by this younger generation is clearly illustrated in the various wedding outfits. Materials are chosen, styled and appropriated to express the vital links of modernity and global style, kinship and family, and tradition and ethnicity. Yet, all this is under threat of change if and when the event ceases to openly involve the community, and witnesses and participants in this consumptive banquet are limited. Consumption may be the catalyst which drives a symbolic change in the style of nuptial celebrations and breaks the link to communal belonging.

Chapter 8 – Obligations and communality in funerals

'Wealth is not possessions; wealth is a person's heart. You can have so many worldly possessions and others would call you wealthy, but if you do not love people and people do not love you, then you are poor. On the other hand you can have no possessions at all but have wealth in the sense that you love and are loved by a lot of people, many people can love you for just who you are, and, by the time you die, people will be amazed at the turn out for your funeral'

Informant in Men's Focus Group

The historic and cultural belief in death held by the Bakgatla was that there was another world, somewhere underground, where a person's spirit went when they died (Schapera 1940, 1971: 274). They believed 'in the survival of the dead' and that a person's soul when they died became a spirit which exerted a powerful influence on close relatives alive on earth (ibid). The world of the dead was very similar to that of the earthly world and people's spirits continued to do what they did when alive, such as farming, cattle ranching and so forth, yet dictated the fortunes of living descendants. Hence, 'In orderto retain their favour, no opportunity was lost of propitiating them. The worship of the dead was in fact the outstanding feature of Kgatla religion' (ibid). '....in the old days the spirits of its deceased paternal ancestors were the main gods of a family' (Schapera 1940, 1971: 98). Although huge changes in religious conviction had occurred by the 1930s (ibid), this belief system of *badimo*¹⁴⁰ is still an active part of the cosmology of life of some Bakgatla as can be seen in the examples of the inheritance of the powers of the traditional healer (see Katlego Segare in chapter 10) and inheritance of the family home (see Mothusi household), even though most individuals align themselves to Christianity as their practising religion¹⁴¹ (Amanze 2003; Werbner 2004). Dreams are often the vehicle through which dead relatives illuminate a required course of action and this takes precedence over everything else. Interviews conducted in Rampedi show that this can lead to family disputes over land and property, and often the *kgotla*¹⁴² is called upon to intervene. The original practise of routine offerings and sacrifices to the ancestors ceased long ago (Schapera 1940, 1971) and *badimo* 'religion' equates now to more of a latent belief or superstition. Werbner's words, even though referring to the Kalanga¹⁴³ of Botswana, are relevant to the community in Mochudi:

'The dead, left undisturbed in their rightful graves, are meant to leave the living undisturbed. However, having found a way to forget the dead,

¹⁴⁰ *Badimo* is a term meaning ancestral spirits

¹⁴¹ According to the 2001 census, almost 72% of the population declared Christianity as religious affiliation

¹⁴² *Kgotla* - local customary court and meeting place

¹⁴³ The Kalanga tribe is the largest of the minority non-Tswana ethnic groups in Botswana (Tswana make up 79% of population, Kalanga approximately 11% (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bc.html>, accessed on 5th November 2012))

the living eventually become concerned to remember them, when feeling weighed down by affliction and by the intractables of social life'

Werbner 2004: 139

Current burial practises are very different from the old customs prior to the introduction of Christianity and other European influences¹⁴⁴, and have evolved further in recent years influenced by practises from South Africa. What has remained the same is the necessity for the community to gather, observe proceedings and partake of a feast. Attendance at a funeral of a relative, work colleague, friend or neighbour is required of every Batswana and results in significant investment in time, travel and money. 'No other event — a wedding or choral competition or public celebration in the *kgotla* or visit of national politicians — provokes a similar sense of obligation and expectation' (Durham 2002: 161). 'For the individual to opt out of this process is an act of selfishness which may later be repaid in kind' (Grant 1987: 141). This obligation is also recorded by Schapera (1940, 1971: 157). The higher the numbers of people attending a funeral, the more likely the deceased is regarded as 'well buried' (Molobi 2006), and conversely, if fewer people turn up than expected and, in particular if food is left over, this is deemed a bad situation¹⁴⁵.



Figure 27: People gathered in a *lapa* in the early morning of a winter funeral

A typical funeral programme is shown in Appendix 10. Relatives, close friends, work colleagues and other people representative of some part of the life of the deceased, are invited to speak about the person who has passed away. Far from a uniformly kindly view of the deceased, these speeches will strive to be truthful even if that means a less than flattering account of the individual.

At the height of the HIV and AIDS epidemic from the mid-nineties until around 2007, before the widespread use of anti-retroviral drugs, funerals were taking place all over Botswana

¹⁴⁴ See Schapera's description of historic burial practises (1940; 1971:273-276)

¹⁴⁵ Van Gennep refers to 'persons for whom funeral rites are not performed are condemned to a pitiable existence, since they are never able to enter the world of the dead or to become incorporated in the society established there' (1991:218)

every Saturday and during the week. The demand for burials was so great that traditions long practised such as the required timing of the digging of the grave at night were relaxed (Dow and Essex 2010). The high level of burials not only shifted practises, but also attitudes and sensitivities to death were reshaped.

Traditionally, the Bakgatla view death philosophically in that it is a logical progression and no one can change that (Alverson 1978:15). This is reflected in the manner in which funerals are conducted, although the atmosphere can understandably vary as to what extent death has cheated life, 'Proper respect will be shown but there may be no overwhelming sense of sorrow' (Grant 1987: 141). Schapera refers to the 'very loud wailing' of the women (1940; 1971: 276), but such demonstrable and gendered sentiment of grief is nowadays more likely to be channelled into hymn singing during the different stages of the funeral. An informative and descriptive account of proceedings of burials in Mochudi exists, written by Sandy Grant in 1987, and, although there are some obvious changes since this was written¹⁴⁶, the pattern followed is the same: the preparations, the community gathering at the *lapa*, prayers and tributes, procession to the graveyard, the graveside rites and back to the *lapa* for the feast. In an analysis of Asante funerals, de Witte (2003) emphasises that funerals have always been an important part of the social structure in this part of Ghana, as indeed across Africa (Jindra and Noret 2011). Ancestor worship forms the basis of belief, and death, viewed as inevitable, is a route to becoming a powerful ancestor. There is a recognition that Asante funerals are becoming increasingly commercialised and competitive, which de Witte argues does not detract from the significance of the event, but rather plays to the flamboyant social and cultural side of Asante life (ibid). Funerals are as much about life as death (ibid; Bonsu and Belk 2003), and are used here as opportunities for establishing individual and collective identities through extravagant consumption (Bonsu and DeBerry-Spence 2008).

With regard to Tswana funerals in Mochudi, Grant refers to changes reflecting increased wealth and a tendency to ostentation, which acts as a marker to differences in social status (1987: 141). These changes, facilitated by augmented wealth, can be partly explained by modernisation through technological advances (Jindra and Noret 2011), such as the use of more vehicles, and the ease of consumption with, for example, readily available printing services for the production of funeral programmes. No doubt some funerals were deemed showier than others, which in light of the Batswana modesty or *botho*, may be explained as reflecting the eminence of the deceased person. An interesting insight has developed as a result of interviews with residents of Mochudi which reveals that at one stage a certain

¹⁴⁶ Mobile phones (and internet) now used as a means of communicating news of death, rather than telegram and radio. Expenses documented have increased – a typical funeral in Rampedi with 300 people attending costs P7,000 – P12,000 plus a cow (valued at P3-7,000). 500 – 1,000 people attending a funeral requires 2 cows or 4 goats, plus a few chickens (Mochudi informant). A number of details in the document are unverified as customary practice today, for instance, the removal of curtains and smearing windows with ash (Grant 1987: 138). Some customs are partially practised, for example, the shaving of heads by close relatives as a sign of mourning.

amount of 'ostentation' was desirable, if affordable, and this was most marked and remembered by informants by the serving of a variety of non-traditional, fancy food¹⁴⁷. However, over the years, informants said, this tendency had disappeared. Nowadays pride is taken in following a set pattern of procedure, a simple ceremony carried out with due decorum, with the feast for the community of people likewise established in its expectations: traditional food with no salt added since this is understood as 'food for grieving, not for making one happy'.

It is believed that the heavy toll of deaths as a result of the AIDS pandemic and subsequent burials which peaked around the mid 2000s in Botswana placed a sombre and sensitive hand on the manner of burial rites. The impact of AIDS affected many regions in various ways - in Uganda there appears to have been a scaling back in expenditure on some funerals in order to reduce costs related to AIDS deaths (Jindra and Noret 2011: 25). In other places, increased mortality has made it more difficult for communities to dignify death, and as a result death has come to be viewed more casually (Ranger 2011). Funerals, in Botswana, as major community gatherings became aligned to the needs of society which reacted against anything which counteracted the Tswana humanism or *botho*, deeply embedded in the fabric of society. People abided by the maxim *motho ke motho ka batho*, meaning 'a person is a person through other persons' (Ngwenya 2004: 21) which 'is key to understanding the Tswana sense of spirituality that accords basic respect, human dignity, dialogue and compassion to others' (ibid).

In addition, society was careful not to invoke jealousy or envy, called *dikgaba*¹⁴⁸ (see Klaits 2010: 5). Although the belief in *dikgaba* - that a person's malevolent thoughts, usually stirred by envy, can inflict injury on its subject - diminished as education and Christianity became more widespread, it undoubtedly still exists today (Lambek and Solway 2001; Durham and Klaits 2002). And in a period of much illness and increasing numbers of deaths, Tswana were careful to manage their sentiments so as not to invite further misfortune (Durham 2002). It is argued that funerals became simpler not solely to keep costs down in the onslaught of multiple burials, but as a result of a combination of Tswana *botho* and *dikgaba* in reaction to this crisis of death.

Most people dress well for funerals, but not too smartly so as to offend or stand out (Werbner 2004): men will often wear suits and women outfits with the obligatory headscarf¹⁴⁹ and in winter, the ubiquitous blanket¹⁵⁰. Younger women eschew the traditional

¹⁴⁷ Salads were mentioned as an 'exotic' serving

¹⁴⁸ Schapera describes *dikgaba* as a curse that can be placed on individuals by ancestors by way of punishment for moral misdeeds (1940, 1971: 228 and 278). Discussions and other interpretations of *dikgaba* are well documented (Alverson 1978: 70; Durham 2002; Durham and Klaits 2002; Lambek and Solway 2001; Bar-On 2002:36)

¹⁴⁹ Traditionally headscarves worn at funerals were black, nowadays they are various colours and patterned, or some other head covering altogether is worn such as a beret

blanket for a modern coat or jacket. There is disapproval, particularly from the older generation, of anyone who does not abide by the social norms of funeral dress. Ngwenya (2004) writes about the ‘uniform’ of women who organise and run the activities of burial societies¹⁵¹ which provides visual recognition of their role in caring for the social, spiritual and economic needs of the community at time of death. The clothing provides a reminder to people of the need for ‘order, discipline, sobriety, dignity, coordination, and respect’ (Ngwenya 2004: 20). Burial societies reportedly maintained a high membership during the crisis of AIDS (ibid) and through such institutions social norms were established which contributed to the moral guidance which assisted in combating the allure of ‘ostentation’.



Figure 28: Food being prepared in large pots; men and women separately waiting for a meal

The typical Mochudi funeral has, for the time being, turned its back on ostentation in contrast to the Asante funeral which presents a picture of conspicuous consumption – ‘They

¹⁵⁰ Comaroff (1996:25) writes about the distinctive Tswana ‘folk’ style and how it lived on ‘in the form of a store-bought blanket, as a crucial element of ‘tribal’ costume.’

¹⁵¹ Burial societies are local mutual aid institutions which provide social and material relief to members at times of death in the family. They are usually run by women, although men participate too, and are regarded as: ‘...models of communal trust, discipline and support’ (Molobi 2006:2). Members in Rampedi pay P20 – P30 per month to belong to a burial society, which then provides a coffin, iron grid, hearse for funeral and P800 towards food on death of family member. ‘Nowadays societies appear to be functioning concurrently with funeral cover of insurance policies administered by professional insurance companies and undertakers’ (Makgala 2009:41)

are great public events, where families compete for prestige and respect by showing off wealth....' (de Witte 2003). The funerals in Mochudi are 'expressions of communal solidarity' (Grant 1987) and opportunities for becoming 'mutually engaged' (Durham 2002). The social obligation to attend funerals channels large numbers of people to participate in such occasions, and they are by nature an opportunity to socialise. And from the point of view of the family of the deceased, there is pressure to manage a 'good' funeral as part of the obligation of close kin¹⁵². Following the funeral service and burial, and return to the *lapa*, the emphasis seems to be in feeding everybody: men on one side of the *lapa*, women on the other, served by their respective young men and women from the family who form lines to pass down plates of food. Trestle tables strain under the weight of stacks of plates which are individually piled up with meat and accompaniments from huge metal bowls which in turn are filled from the large black cooking pots. Meat from a cow slaughtered the day before and cooked overnight, is served shredded, as in traditional Botswana fashion, with samp (maize and beans), sorghum porridge and gravy, and one or two potato pieces. The sorghum porridge is prepared without it being sour, just plain. There is an urgency to get a plate of hot food to everyone present. Many people help produce and distribute the food and the operation runs like a well-oiled machine. A little later, a representative of the family announces to everyone the reason for the person's death.

Schapera's account states that all people present at a funeral would be given unleavened and unseasoned porridge, then the following day, or soon after, only relatives and close friends would be invited to partake of a feast of ox or goat (1940, 1971: 276). The two meals appear to have amalgamated over time to provide one big feast for all on the day of the funeral. However, there exist post-burial rituals such as 'unveiling' of the gravestone (Ngwenya 2004) and intimate gathering for the 'washing clothes'¹⁵³ of the deceased (ibid), not open to the public. A subsequent ceremony, called *mogoga*, takes place sometime later¹⁵⁴ as remembrance of the deceased person (Grant 1987) which informants in Rampedi describe as an opportunity to invite neighbours and friends to partake in another feast: traditional beer is brewed and a cow slaughtered.

In the week in which the person dies, the home is set up for prayers and to receive visitors of friends and family who carry the expectation of refreshments of food and drink. If they have

¹⁵² Noret (2009), researching death in southern Benin, goes further and describes a transactional relationship. He refers to the considerable financial outlay shouldered by children of a deceased man as 'a necessary step towards settling the debt' owed to their father. If the debt is not repaid by arranging a 'proper' funeral, then an element of grief management is undone.

¹⁵³ The clothes are washed, ironed and stored away and, after a year, they are distributed amongst relatives, according to their perceived needs (Grant 1987). Schapera makes no mention of this, yet states that a married women's clothes go to the family of her maternal uncle (1940, 1971:296), and likewise, a married man's clothes go to his maternal uncle and family (295).

¹⁵⁴ *Mogoga* occurs usually a year after the death and marks the end of the mourning period according to Amanze (2005), yet other commentators say *mogoga* takes place a few days after the burial (Makgala 2009:38).

travelled far, they will be accommodated overnight, and for the purposes of this, the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) freely loan large green tents. Often a pending funeral is realised through glimpsing such a canvas pitched in a *lapa*. Schapera relates in detail ‘mourning observances’ or rites which at the time of writing in the 1930s he claims had changed very little unlike the beliefs and practises surrounding a person’s death (1940, 1971: 279). The basis of mourning is that it is a transitional period for the survivors which leads from rites of separation through to rites of reintegration into society (Van Gennep 1960). The mourning practises to which Schapera refers are on the premise that those closely related to the deceased have to be purified, and related to this, is the notion of ‘hot or cool blood’. No evidence was found in Rampedi regarding the expectations placed on a widow or widower regarding behaviour following the death of a spouse, but it is likely vestiges of practises Schapera describes exist today (see Amanze 2005: 212-223).



Figure 29: Cemetery in Mochudi

The consumption surrounding burial rites objectifies the meaning of death. Through the ritual of feasting, including communal preparation of food, funerals reflect the solidarity of community - respectful, supportive and participative. Food is provided for all who attend and ‘mutuality’ is created, and yet, on the other hand, there is a danger of consumption being overreached, not through expense directly lavished on self aggrandisement, but through expectations of provisioning the whole community. Evidence of this was gathered from informants in Mochudi¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵⁵ A chicken farmer whose father had died was most concerned as to how he would pay for the funeral costs. He commented that ‘this is the bad side of Botswana, because it impoverishes the relatives who have to feed as many as turn up.....and they could stay for lunch, dinner and breakfast next day.’ He said that the reason for

Part of the funerary procedure is the move from the *lapa* to the cemetery for the burial. The cemetery in Rampedi Ward has long ceased to be used and now consists of a number of heaps of stones overgrown and reclaimed by nature (Grant 1987). Before even such time as the formation of the cemetery in Rampedi, people were buried in different places according to their sex: ‘.... children were put inside pots and buried in the house, women were also buried inside houses while men were often buried inside cattle byres or fields’ (Mosothwane 2001:156). This reflects the historically segregated working lives of men and women and the belief in afterlife in which ancestors would continue in their labour – a woman in looking after the home, and likewise, a man tending to his animals or crops. Burials nowadays take place in cemeteries on the outskirts of Mochudi and burial plots, since outside Gaborone, are given freely.



Figure 30: Rampedi graves

A significant expense as part of the burial ritual is the coffin (Christiaans et al 2009). Funerals taking place in Rampedi during the period of fieldwork alleged costs for the coffin or casket of P3,000 - P10,000, (the latter for a distant member of the Bakgatla royal family) with the iron grid and shade around P800 (see Figure 31).

At a funeral, the coffin is placed in a prominent position in the *lapa*, having been moved from the mortuary the day before and residing in the house overnight, usually with an all-night vigil. It is on display for all who gather for the funeral, and is processed to the cemetery before being buried. An apparent contradiction in Christiaans’ research findings into coffin

the high turnout to his father’s funeral was that there were no other funerals in Mochudi that day - usually there are 2 or 3 and the locals ‘spread themselves about’.

design is that respondents favoured a cheaper looking coffin since they were concerned about the cost, yet 'status' was cited as the most important value 'when choosing a coffin and holding a funeral service and is often in contrast to their status throughout their lives' (ibid: 2887). The tradition of belonging to a burial society or to a church with a similar scheme develops the practise of a funerary 'package' which includes the casket, hire of the hearse and contribution towards food: this may have led towards a standardisation of coffin and one which most people could afford. Yet this does not fully explain the lack of 'ostentation' with regard to the casket. It is argued that indeed status is important as a means of honouring the dead and paying due respect, and that this is shown most particularly in the gathering of people, in the sheer numbers, the eulogies given by select individuals representing the community, and by the feast provided, not by the extravagance of the coffin or any other material funerary object.

Schapera (1940, 1971) describes how traditionally the body of the deceased was wrapped in animal skins, equipped with artefacts needed for their new life, and buried standing up, and how this changed to ensuring that the person was buried horizontally, in their best clothes generally with no other objects, and in a coffin 'made of wooden planks covered with black print' (ibid: 275). It was observed at a funeral in Mochudi, during the time of fieldwork, that the coffin was covered in a black cloth which may indicate the continuing tradition cited by Schapera. This would certainly remove the 'ostentation' of an expensive coffin.

The material culture of burial reflects not only the cultural values of the time, but also consumption choices which can be seen in the style of gravestones:

'Spaces for the dead and dying are a reflection of the changing conditions of the living, as well as shifting meanings and discourses about life, for these spaces have cultural and symbolic meaning invested by the living, representing microcosms of the society within which they are established'

(Maddrell and Sidaway 2010: xv)

The fashion in graves has moved from an anonymous pile of stones, to one with a concrete base, metal structure and canvas roof with inscription (on varying materials), through to a Western-looking grave in polished granite and matching gravel, and many variations and combinations in-between¹⁵⁶. Most graves are equipped with an iron grid and green netted roof which is believed to provide the body with shelter from the sun. This style of grave has its origins in the Tswana 'dressing of the dead' which entails the making of a domicile to provide the deceased with comforts on their journey to another world (Ngwenya 2004)¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁶ Dramatic changes in Africa in the manner of disposal and burial of bodies has, according to Jindra and Noret (2011:7) been little commented on by academics.

¹⁵⁷ 'It is presumed that some parts of the soul remain in the cadaver' (Ngwenya 2004:23 footnote 5)

Often a plastic bottle of water is seen on the grave which is for the dead person's spirit to prevent thirst. Material goods here are used as a means of acknowledging and establishing the deceased as an ancestral presence (Miller and Parrott 2007: 160).



Figure 31: Different styles of grave

All graves face in the same direction following the east-west burial tradition (Christiaans et al 2009), with the head to the west and the feet to the east (Grant 1987; Schapera 1940, 1971). Christian symbolism has appeared on some of the graves in the form of crosses. Also flowers, usually plastic or silk, are present on a number of graves not just the very recent ones. The different styles of grave reflect an interesting mixture of religious beliefs – some overtly Christian, others through touches such as the water bottle, state a traditional belief in ancestor worship. The spectrum of styles also reveals the span of appropriation of modern materials and styles of grave which is not chronological. The significance of this is how it reflects the various attitudes to life and combinations of belief, revealing the quest for modernity and experimentation, yet experiencing the pull back to tradition.



Figure 32: Further graves in Mochudi cemetery

In talking to informants in Rampedi, there are no specific times at which people visit graves, but if someone lives in the city, they may choose to visit their home village at holiday times, such as Christmas, Easter or during the school holidays, and it is at this time that they may choose to visit a grave. The usual ritual would be to clean the grave and put some flowers on it. If the family is unable to afford the desired headstone at the time of burying a loved one, this will be bought at a later date. They will then have a ceremony for the unveiling of the tombstone (as mentioned earlier) and much feasting will take place, again involving the slaughtering of a cow.

On a subsequent visit to Mochudi in May 2013, a new business had appeared on the main road out of the village selling tombstones and providing a repair service for such. The owner being absent, a relative from a neighbouring *lapa* handed over a marketing leaflet (see Figure 33). The styles of tombstone shown, and glimpsed through the window of the small 'office' (Figure 33), were markedly different from the common iron structure and green netting design of most graves in the cemetery, although conceivably an iron frame and green roof could, and probably would, be added as a combination choice, as can be seen in Figure 32.

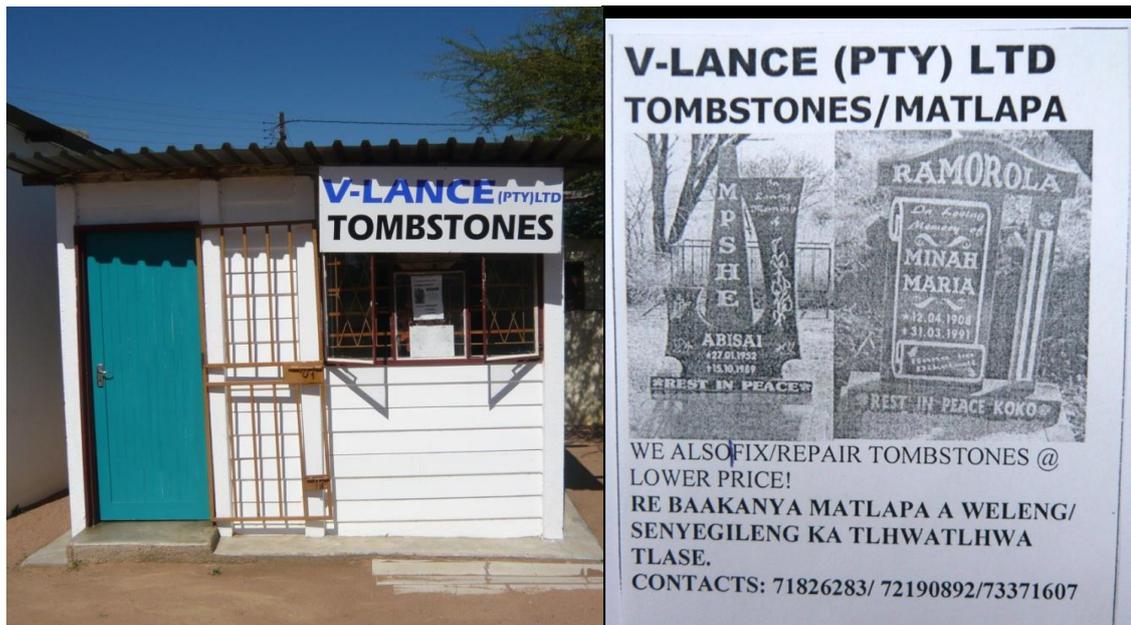


Figure 33: The new business in Tombstones and marketing leaflet

The tombstones in the pictures on the leaflet appear to be made of granite or marble which is carved into bold shapes, holding the name of the deceased, dates of birth and death, and message, such as 'Rest in Peace'. What is intriguing is the fact that the dates of the deceased' death on each tombstone are 1989 and 1991, implying that this is a style of tombstone that has been around for some time, and most probably originates from South Africa. The ways of relating to the dead keep changing and it is questioned whether this will be the style of tombstone commonly appropriated in the future. What is clear is that a material commemoration and memorial of a deceased person is given considerable importance in Tswana society.

By way of concluding the chapter, one can reflect on how Tswana funerals and graves have evolved over time and changed in reaction to increased wealth, together with the impact of the AIDS crisis and influences from South Africa. Funerals here differ from other African funerals (de Witte 2003; Bonsu and DeBerry-Spence 2008; Jindra and Noret 2011) in that they are not occasions for extravagant displays of consumption acting to represent individual and collective identities. The emphasis is more on community solidarity to show respect for the dead. Consumption is most obviously used as a variable means of expression, as evidenced by the shifting emphasis on plainer food. Obligations to attend are reciprocated with obligations to feed everyone. It is a social occasion, and yet, not to lose sight of the purpose of the gathering, due respect is given to the deceased by dressing soberly, eating plainly and showing courtesy to others. It is important to show conformity. The change to simpler funerals, through the crisis of AIDS, is not solely to reduce consumption and keep expenditure down, but through Tswana *botho* and *dikgaba* is a 'tribal' means of responding to death and a demonstration of communal belonging.

Section Two – Portraits of Consumption

This section is about the consumption choices of individuals who live in different parts of Rampedi Ward in Mochudi. Chapter Nine explores the positioning of the home: how 'home' can be in different places, at different times and with different meanings and purposes. The dynamic changes in the materiality of buildings are discussed and how inherited properties can provide opportunities for rental income, yet are often contested places of sharing and belonging. The following four chapters (Chapters Ten – Thirteen) identify twelve households living in the three main locations in Rampedi – 'Old' Rampedi, 'Incomers' and Government housing. Each adult in these households is invited to share their consumption choices through the photographs which they have taken. The value of using consumption as the lens for uncovering the nature of social relations is revealed most powerfully in the variances and combinations of items picked. At times, the tensions and emotions present in a household come to the fore through the chosen commodity, or sometimes because of the lack of it. Most significantly, the shifts occurring in moving to and from traditional ways of life and modernising ones are clearly shown. The adherence to community social events is strong and yet the signs of social change are always present.

Chapter 9 - Home and the bare swept yard

'She had been in a room once, a single room lived in by a family struggling to survive financially, and had seen, pinned on the wall, a grubby photograph of a cow. She had known immediately that this was the family's most precious possession – the thing that transformed that mean room into a home.'

(Taken from 'The Big Tent Wedding' by Alexander McCall Smith)

Families in Botswana usually have more than one residence: typically their main residence will be in their home village or town, a second at the lands (*masimo*) and a third at the cattlepost (*moraka*), sometimes even a fourth place in the city or town where their employment may be located (Masire 2006; Giddings and Hovorka 2010:222). This has been complicated by the movement of people around Botswana due to employment, particularly in the public sector¹⁵⁸, and the availability of government and council housing. In the historic and typical combination of village, *masimo* and cattlepost, as pointed out by Hoyt Alverson (1978:11), only the residence located in the village can officially be called 'home', by which he implies legal status¹⁵⁹, however, for Botswana it also has important emotional attachment in that it signifies their tribal and kinship roots. The multiple residences reflect a pattern of movement, livelihood and activity, which accords to the seasons and weather; they also reflect deep-rooted values and beliefs common to most Botswana of the importance of a lifestyle that incorporates these different locations. Employment may have a disruptive influence in terms of displacement, yet, as can be seen in research data, a person will look forward to (and plan for) a time in their lives when they or their partner will have their home in the village, a place to grow things, and access to a cattle post.

A recent phenomenon has been the recognition of housing as a source of income. In a study on inheritance in a peri-urban village (2006), Faustin Kalabamu found that residential properties were unanimously the preferred asset: 'Whenever somebody dies, children [who inherit the *lapa*] think of building rooms for rent so that they can get money' (2006:24). The gendered practice of leaving assets (such as cattle, as well as property) to sons to the exclusion of daughters has disappeared, even to the point of daughters in certain instances being the favoured recipients, being viewed as more economically vulnerable (*ibid*) or because they have been more caring towards their parents. Kalabamu also states that the last-born son is not now automatically considered the heir of the family home and that sometimes an unmarried daughter (or even married daughter if living there with husband) will lay claim to the property (2006:49). Evidence of this was given in the focus groups,

¹⁵⁸ The Botswana Government has a policy which encourages labour migration in order to ensure the availability of skills and experience throughout the country, and often husbands and wives, both working for the public sector, are sent to different locations in order to minimise nepotism and corruption. This results in the habitation (and separation) of people from different tribes (Masire 2006)

¹⁵⁹ Houses at the *masimo* are not legally authorised by the Land Board but are widespread

although opinion varied as to how obsolete the practice of leaving the family home to the youngest son is:

‘According to the Kgatla tradition all the children are entitled to benefit equally from their parents’ property and the worrying contention is the issue of the last born son because he is supposed to inherit the *lapa*. It is worrying because if he is an inconsiderate person he could chase away other siblings who may not have places to stay having not built their own homes.’

‘[However] the inheritance of the *lapa* by the last son is an olden day’s custom, it is no longer that way at all. If the parents pass away without having stated who will stay in the *lapa*, all the children will have a meeting to decide who will remain in the *lapa*. It will not be automatic that the *lapa* will be given to the last son; only if they all agree.... if all the children agree and sign an agreement to that effect. Mostly the children will look at individual situations and decide to give the *lapa* to someone who is financially struggling.’ (Kalabamu 2006:49)

What appears to be unchanged is an understanding that an unmarried or divorced daughter has a perpetual birth right to live within the parents’ homestead (ibid). This has its origins in the tradition, where women, if they failed to marry, continued to live in the parental home; but with the expectation and usual outcome that a woman was to leave their family home, relocate to the husband’s community, and rely on the man to provide for them (Schapera 1940; 1971). This idea that the man provides for his wife and family, is the breadwinner and head of household, still resonates strongly in some areas, as evidenced by research findings which will be discussed later. A home is an important arena for consumption and medium through which to express one’s identity; ‘...the defining features of home is that it is both material and imaginative, a site *and* set of meanings/emotions’ (Blunt and Dowling 2006:22)¹⁶⁰. The creation of a home is through a process not solely material, but an investment in social relations (ibid; Buchli 2010). The home reflects the nature of social relations and what Daniel Miller describes as ‘making love’ (1998b). Although not always a site of harmony, most home-making is expressive of the social relations being created and maintained, whether on an individual or community basis. As a means of showing identity, the picture can be complex, revealing multiple identities, intersected by social categories such as gender and age.¹⁶¹ An iconic study of the house as a key influence in the development of generational ‘*habitus*’ is produced by Bourdieu regarding the Kabyle society in Algeria (1977). His analysis focuses on the space and places within and outside the house

¹⁶⁰ Emphasis on the ‘and’ is in the original text

¹⁶¹ Class (omitted here), as a social category, does not feature strongly in Batswana consciousness (see Van Allen 2007:106)

which reflect light and darkness, public and private, and male and female domains in a complex set of oppositions (Moore 2012). The Kabyle house becomes a model of their world (ibid).

The beginning of Daniel Miller's chapter in 'Home possessions' (2001a) is stark – 'In industrialized societies, most of what matters to people is happening behind the closed doors of the private sphere.' This statement is too definitive to fit with society in Mochudi¹⁶² - more accurately, life appears to be going on outside, rather more than inside. This is a recognised trait of African lifestyle, and what Larsson (1990) refers to as 'outdoor living'. Certainly the climate in Botswana encourages this¹⁶³, but there is more to it than that. It comes back to a way of life that both historically and currently places an emphasis on community relations and use of communal consumptive events to build and maintain social relations. Houses with a traditional layout encourage 'outdoor living' with all doors opening to the outside, often onto a porch or veranda, instead of connecting to an internal room. Activities such as washing, sweeping the yard, socialising, drinking beer, gardening, children playing, and occasionally cooking (more for mass catering events such as funerals) still take place outside. Yet Botswana is in transition and there are signs that the locus of life is changing. As stated by Grant and Grant, since the early 1980s, the focus of the home has begun to shift from the outdoors to the indoors (1995:39).



Figure 34: Houses with all doors opening to the yard

The 'bare swept yard' (Singleton 1992), which is common in climates with long dry seasons, is a source of pride to many households in Rampedi Ward. This practice is essentially practical as a means of keeping insects and snakes at bay (Westmacott 1992) and provides an obvious place for children to play and elders to congregate socially (ibid). Yet there is

¹⁶² It could be argued that Botswana is not an 'industrialized' society, even though it is classified as 'middle-income'. To support this view, Hillbom (2008: 191) articulates Botswana's successful economic growth as 'pre-modern growth without development'.

¹⁶³ In winter, the 'outdoor living' is demonstrated by bonfires outside houses for warmth in which neighbours can sit communally. Air pollution from wood burning can be significant at this time of year. This is often at houses where electricity is available and thus electric heating would be available within the house.

more to understand: Schapera states 'the front yard, facing the street, is kept scrupulously clean and free from unnecessary encumbrances; it is the place where all visitors are received, and if untidy is sure to arouse adverse comment' (1940; 1971:85).



Figure 35: Sweeping the yard

Today, the task of tidying the yard is undertaken by both men and women, yet there is controversy surrounding this. Evidence gathered from fieldwork shows that it is a recognised duty within the household and yet at times is deemed undesirable to be done by men and other times, undesirable to be done by women¹⁶⁴. There is a definite gendered aspect: for men it is deemed acceptable only if it is framed as a gardening task as opposed to a domestic cleaning job, and the traditional 'sweeping' is more a 'gathering up' of debris. The end result is the same – a bare swept yard – yet the tools used to achieve this are different for men and women. The latter will often apply a short handled bundle of grasses, and the former, an assortment of tools, but never the short grasses for this is seen as a female implement. Further, evidence shows that in some households, a man or a woman will make it their priority above all other household chores, and when questioned about it, claim it is really important to how they live because it is 'how they have been brought up'. Here, a 'bare swept yard' is objectified and reveals much about the individual, how they see themselves and wish to be seen by others. Their own identity is intimately wrapped up in the appearance of the yard, and, how it looks is an expression of the degree of caring for one's family¹⁶⁵. Furthermore, not only is the end result important, but the very act of working on the yard is part of being such a 'caring' person and demonstrating characteristics of a 'good' and 'hard-working' individual. And how one goes about this, and the tools used, is another element of creating the persona, not just the end result of a well-swept yard.

¹⁶⁴ The custom for a newly married woman to sweep the yard is recorded by Schapera: the broom was said to be a symbol of the start of home-making for a newly wed couple (Nhlekisana 2007a)

¹⁶⁵ This relates to the concept of the 'material culture of love', how consumptive acts are 'to do with obligation, duty and a set of pre-dispositions' (Miller 1998: 138). See also Strathern on the embodiment of work being representative of the value husband and wife have for one another (1990:160).



Figure 36: Examples of well swept yards: first in 'Old Rampedi', second in 'Incomers'

What has emerged is that the priority to sweep the yard, as opposed to other work inside the house, is shifting – once it was imperative that the yard was swept on a daily basis, but this is now lapsing, and part of this is that materially, yards now are often concreted or paved which removes the necessity for sweeping to keep weeds or grass at bay. Materiality is seen to be actively shaping and transforming the lives of individuals (Miller 2010). It is interesting to note that the appearance of a yard 'swept bare', clear of any grass or weeds, is a desired look whether achieved via sweeping or paving stones and concrete. The equivalent in Britain to the well-swept yard is the mown grass lawn: 'On even the most modest properties, a good, well-cut lawn became the ideal' (Bryson 2010:305).

To return to the gendered nature of keeping a yard well-swept, this aspect could have had a further bearing on the outcome of yards being materially changed. Firstly, with men taking over the building of houses from women (see further details of this on page 108/9), the building up of a paved yard would only be a step further in a building project, and encouraged through the availability of new forms of building materials, such as the paving slab. Secondly, the task of sweeping the yard most probably was always regarded as the woman's, and only when she became part of the workforce, did the possibility of the task falling to men occur.

In one or two *malapa* or yards in Rampedi, a small traditional round or rectangular thatched building¹⁶⁶ exists (alongside other buildings in the yard), yet the majority of the buildings are rectangular, comprising concrete blocks and brick. The former type of build was the norm at the time of Schapera's study in the 1930s, and has gradually been phased out: it is

¹⁶⁶ For a description of the Tswana dwelling, see Larsson (1997:2148). She indicates that housing changed and modernised as a result of South African Boer influence, yet 'the use of space, strongly linked to Tswana customs, has not been influenced to the same extent' (ibid).

considered a poor person's home and is associated with poverty¹⁶⁷ (Grant and Grant 1995:13). There is a desire among Batswana not to appear poor (ibid), a characteristic which came up in comments made in a variety of contexts and interviews, and manifests itself in different aspects of life. This has its roots in the fact that Botswana was an extremely poor country only forty years ago and has experienced very rapid growth. Individuals are keen to be associated with the new transformed Botswana, not the backward country it once was. The home is an obvious indicator of how 'modern' a person is (Larsson 1990). As previously alluded to, there is a modesty in the nature of Batswana, and the expression of 'modernity' does not equate to an overt display of wealth. Not appearing 'poor' is not a matter of appearing 'wealthy'. However, great importance is placed on building and re-building or renovating a home, so as to make it more 'modern'.



Figure 37: Newly renovated house and roof; Building materials

The building of a home is seen as a process that can last a lifetime, and which is done in stages as and when resources and time are available. It is regarded as a personal lifetime achievement for both men and women. Many photographs were taken by researched households of stacks of breeze blocks or other building materials, seen within the *lapa*, and this highlights them as being of particular personal importance. These materials act like staging posts, signifying the promise of success. Often a house being newly built follows a plan which invariably reflects a modern design layout, with equipped kitchen, and bathroom with flush toilet. These plans can be bought 'off the shelf' and, although choice is limited, it enables wealthier families or individuals to build their own properties relatively easily. The dynamics of the house are changed as a result of floor plans with new rooms created inside, which encourage more time to be spent indoors by its owners.

In a study of housing in Botswana, Larsson (1990) detailed the transformation in homes from 'traditional' to 'modern', and from female to male. Historically, it was women who carried

¹⁶⁷ In other parts of Botswana, thatch is seen as an upmarket choice for luxury building and popular as representative of culture. This influence, in certain areas, is seen to place a premium on original thatched buildings still in existence: 'A renaissance of indigenous culture' (Miller 1995b:136).

out most of the work in building houses¹⁶⁸, that is, the traditional thatched rondavels, but a change in the gender of construction roles has taken place. Nowadays, the ubiquitous concrete block or brick structures are constructed by men, and this occurred as paid labour replaced unpaid labour (ibid; Grant and Grant 1995:39), and urban building standards were enforced, demanding more specialist, male-dominated skills (Kalabamu 2005:257). In addition, the transformation in the gender of construction was linked to the materials used and the physicality of building: as the physical strength needed to manoeuvre construction materials grew, so women would have turned to men to help. Hence the 'domestic domain' (Harris 1981, 1984) in which women were responsible for everything domestic, including the building of the home, shifted in substance and recognition. Again, just like the 'bare swept yard', materiality is seen to exert an influence on social relations and force a change in social practices (Miller 2010).

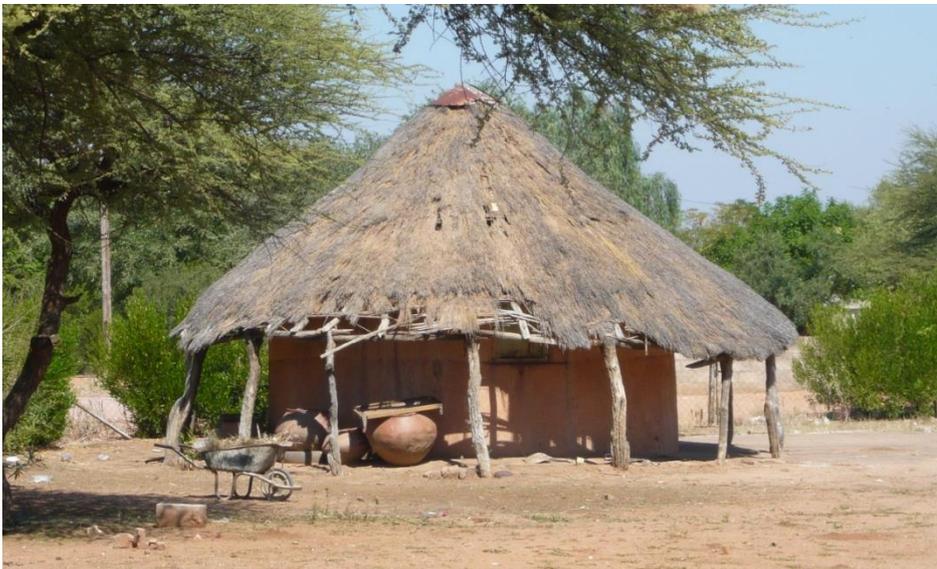


Figure 38: Rondavel in Rampedi Ward

However, materiality may have been given a helping hand by the gender attitudes of Christian missionaries:

'Above all else, it struck the evangelists as unnatural that, while Tswana women built houses, sowed and reaped, men made dresses for themselves and the female. Refashioning this division of labour was integral to reforming 'primitive' production in all its dimensions; and this, in turn, required the creation of a distinct - feminine - domestic world centred on reproduction and consumption' Comaroff (1996:25)

¹⁶⁸ For an historical account of house building in Botswana, see Schapera 1940; 1971:83-85 and Grant and Grant 1995. See also Morton 2004:351. Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga indicate that less durable dwellings are amenable to construction by women, which occurs in many parts of Africa (1999:9).

In summary, construction of new buildings taking place in much of Mochudi utilises different materials, such as tiling replacing corrugated iron for roofs, and the designs of houses are being transformed. A discernable shift of focus from the outdoors to indoors has begun (Grant and Grant 1995), driven by material changes in house construction, availability of services (electricity and water), and new ways of doing things which have accentuated indoor activity. Fitted kitchens encourage cooking indoors; washing machines mean washing clothes inside; televisions provide entertainment indoors; and internal doors mean not having to go outside. This is making private so much of social life which would once have been undertaken in the public gaze. Even the 'bare swept yard' is being concreted over and requires less attention. Such physical change has the ability to influence domestic behaviours (Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga 1999:28; Boivin 2008) and we see casual opportunities for social interaction and for relationships to develop curtailed. Already differences may be apparent from the 1970s when Alverson (1978:140) described in detail the importance of face-to-face exchange in the maintenance of communal life. 'Greeting' and 'taking-the-news' were seen as necessary social activities, and there existed a network of ongoing reciprocal hospitalities¹⁶⁹. To not participate in such sociability was deemed 'not simply a violation of etiquette or decorum' but 'an attack on the very basis of communal solidarity' (ibid).

The growing desire to build walls around one's *lapa*, often replacing wire mesh fencing, has the effect of making a visual statement regarding the difference between public and private spaces. The permanence of the solid wall stands against the temporality of the wire fence. May be this is a likely outcome, perpetrated through greater wealth and consumption of needing to protect oneself and belongings from a perceived threat of theft, although the motivation in Rampedi seems to be more to do with creating personal space (see Boitumelo's account in Chapter Ten). All too often the end result is the ostracism of the person or family living there from what is going on in the neighbourhood. This is an expression of the discrepancy between aspiration - the desire to progress and be 'modern' - and the essential underlying feature of Tswana life which is communal sociability. That the latter has found greater voice outside this aspect of the *lapa* and home is evidenced in the prominence in everyday life of communal rituals and consumptive events, such as funerals and weddings, and baby showers and kitchen top-ups.

¹⁶⁹ Schapera, observing society forty years earlier, remarks that 'village life has few entertainments to offer....Visiting is actually the main relaxation that most people have' (1940, 1971:151)

Chapter 10 - Pots, plastic chairs and cattle

A distinction is made between three different areas of housing in Rampedi ward: the original site ('old' Rampedi: see Schapera and Roberts 1975), 'incomers' and government housing. There are approximately 28 households¹⁷⁰ in 'old' Rampedi out of around 120 in the ward in total, and the central area retains the ward *kgotla*.

Here, new *malapa* have been created since the original survey by Schapera in 1934, when there were only 16 homesteads, and since the census conducted by Roberts in 1973, which recorded 24. At that time, there was not a shortage of land, and new *malapa* were marked out as and when needed, usually next to that of the husband's parents or brothers (Schapera 1940; 1971:83) or, when this was not possible, elsewhere in the ward under the authority of the headman, often infilling between plots (Schapera and Roberts 1975:259). There may also have been a subdivision of plots – one or two respondents living in large *malapa* indicated they would subdivide their plot in the future to enable more than one of their children to live there. What is visually obvious today in Rampedi is that generally the plots in 'old' Rampedi compared to those with government housing, are more generous in terms of land mass, indicative of a time when land was there to be freely taken. The ward, understandably as a central part of Mochudi and close to the main street with all its shops and amenities, is a desirable place to live and all residential plots have been allocated¹⁷¹.

Three households within 'old' Rampedi have been chosen to look more closely at the gendered nature of consumptive practices. Each has inherited the property they live in, and they distinguish themselves by age: the first household comprises a young couple with a small child; the second middle-aged whose children are teenagers; and the third is of a retired couple whose daughter and grand-daughter live with them. In keeping with methodological aims, all are considered fairly well-off, although modest – they live in an area of predominantly low incomes.

¹⁷⁰ Household here refers to the family and others who live in the buildings within a *lapa* (or compound as Schapera called it (1940; 1971:83)). The number of buildings in a *lapa* varies from one to four or more.

¹⁷¹ Roughly 5 percent of Botswana's land is freehold, 25 percent is state land in the form of national parks and reserves, and the rest is communal or 'tribal' land. The Land Board is responsible for allocating plots of 'tribal' land free to Botswana citizens. The Kgatleng Land Board covering the area of Mochudi reportedly had a waiting list of 140,000 requests (April 2011).

The Segare Family¹⁷²

The first household, the Segare family, has roots back to the founders of Rampedi ward. The adults, in their early 30s, and young children live here: husband, Katlego, and wife, Naledi, who have been married for three years; their son, husband's sister, sister's son, and two temporary members of the household: maid and nephew.

Katlego is the youngest born son and hence, according to tradition, inherited the *lapa* with three buildings in it¹⁷³. His sister lives with them since she, again according to tradition, has the right to live in the parental home if she is unmarried. Originally, the *lapa* was their grandmother's (father's mother) who was the last born and did not marry, and because of this, she was given the *lapa* by her parents, and her brother was accommodated elsewhere ("it was at a time when a woman was dependent on a man"). Katlego is employed in a shift job, sometimes working late at night, and Naledi works part-time in a retail shop. They bring in a modest income. Their stated spending priority is private education for their son.

Property is important to both husband and wife but for different reasons. The inherited *lapa* is important to Katlego since he has lived here all his life and has a strong sense of belonging. He is responsible for the 'family' home and as such is guardian of the family's tradition, history and identity. Of particular importance to him, is a small square building which holds all the tools and artefacts for his role as a traditional healer (an occasional occupation). His father, who passed away several years ago, had been a traditional healer and Katlego learnt all the skills from him and inherited his equipment. He feels a special responsibility since he believes he is looking after his ancestors' spirits, *badimo*, through keeping and practising the family art¹⁷⁴. The possession which he declares he could least live without is his mobile phone since it contains the contact details of all his clients for traditional healing.

His photographs show the *lapa* and the buildings, but more than this, traditional items such as a row of large black cooking pots¹⁷⁵ and a pile of firewood at one end of the yard, used to make fires to cook food in the pots. Again, this is related to his sense of carrying on family traditions, and through this, pleasing his ancestors, but further, these items, symbolic of feasts, represent the importance of community consumptive events. One photograph shows

¹⁷² Pseudonyms are used for all names. As an aside, informants wanted to discuss their names, the meanings and how they came about; often names represent what historically occurred at the time of birth, for example, 'small drought', 'hailstones'. Names form an important part of a person's identity, as evidenced by the importance placed on 'naming' ceremonies.

¹⁷³ An interesting comparison to the Bakgatla last-born son inheritance is Bloch's research of the Zafimaniry of Madagascar where 'marriage' is synonymous with 'house' and this becomes a ritual site for descendants – 'holy' house (1995:79-81).

¹⁷⁴ For an account of the significance of *badimo* and Tswana beliefs in such, see Kuper 1982:15-18 and Schapera and Comaroff 1991:53-57, and, specifically regarding traditional healers, see page 57.

¹⁷⁵ Most households in 'old' Rampedi had a number of size 20 three-legged pots stored in their yards. These are used to prepare food for large gatherings: one pot holds 80 – 100 servings (von Rudloff 2007).

a stack of building bricks which signifies the importance Katlego places on construction. He and his wife intend to erect a further building within the yard boundary which they will rent out. The main building, the 'family' home, has special status and could never be let out: they are obliged to maintain it for the family (that is, Katlego's relatives) to come and stay whenever they want to.



Figure 39: Traditional cooking pots

Only three out of the sixteen photographs taken, are inside the house. The significance shown here is, on balance, the greater importance placed by Katlego on the 'traditional' elements in his life, which are present outside. The 'inside' photographs are of the television and home theatre system, the latter of which he recently bought for his wife since "she enjoys watching films and listening to music". This reflects the use of material goods to express caring and love in a relationship.

Naledi, Katlego's wife, views the property as a means of realising rent to augment their income. They have two other residential plots elsewhere in Botswana which they plan to build on in due course. She recognises, however, that it is this *lapa* that is very close to the town centre and as such can command a good price in rent. She did not take any photographs, due to a declared lack of confidence in using the camera; however, she did say which items she would have photographed if she had overcome her anxiety. Firstly, clothes, which, like many women in the survey, Naledi gave significance to. Secondly, chickens which they owned because she said they represented food¹⁷⁶; and lastly, she would have taken pictures of buildings since she saw these as a key means of bringing in income and as something to leave to their son.

Naledi's choice of photographic subjects reveal, firstly, a gendered predilection for clothes, and secondly, through her concern for household income, a strong sense of caring for her family. Clothing as an outcome of consumption is rich in economic and cultural relevance,

¹⁷⁶ "A Motswana woman must keep chickens: that is our culture" There was reportedly a government scheme which encouraged the keeping of chickens.

responsible for crafting personal appearances, and ‘...is not just any commodity but one that mediates between self and society’ (Hansen 2000:4). It is women particularly, and usually within a certain age range that regard clothes as a vital part of them. To qualify this, women in general highlight clothes as important, but this importance diminishes, or more specifically, changes, as women get older. A young woman, like Naledi, typically would place great emphasis on the type, style and colouring of clothing, yet an older woman may be more concerned with a ‘church’ outfit (Figure 40). In Naledi’s case, without her photographs, interpreting and further analysing her particular choice of clothing is not possible, yet in general young people choose to wear globalised styles which have little connection to a localised fashion or production.



Figure 40: Resident of Rampedi wearing the uniform of St John’s Apostolic Church of Prophecy; Church outfits hanging on outside of wardrobe

The Mothusi family

Again, this family can be traced back to the origins of the ward and is closely related to the headman. The household consists of husband and wife, Lebang and Margaret, and their teenage daughter and son, and Lebang’s nephew. The *lapa* has been inherited since Lebang is the last born son alive¹⁷⁷. They have been married for two years, but known each other for sixteen, and, prior to marriage, Margaret lived with her parents in another part of Botswana. They built a house in another ward in Mochudi eight years ago which is now rented out. This is a contentious issue since Margaret would rather live there. Not only is the house more modern than their current home with an inside bathroom, but Margaret oversaw the building of it and feels a sense of ownership. The inherited buildings by comparison are smaller and less spacious, traditionally laid out, and include a single-roomed thatched building (Figure 41) which they use as their bedroom, and an outside toilet. There is a disconnect between Margaret’s aspirations and the reality of the material condition of the

¹⁷⁷ Lebang’s younger brother died with no dependents, so, as is customary, and with the consensus of all members of the family, Lebang as the next youngest son, inherited the *lapa*.

property. The significance of this is echoed in Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga's words, 'Much of what family and household members experience as the physical structure of the house is in fact the collective outcome of the agency of others, especially in the past, even the remote past' (1999:9)¹⁷⁸. It can appear that buildings take on a kind of agency all of their own, which seems to increase as time passes, little affected by the transience of their current occupants or owners (Miller 2001a). The more durable the material conditions, the less likely to be adaptable to current needs and desires (ibid). Margaret is clearly unhappy about the situation, but states stoically, "we have to live in this house because it is our tradition".



Figure 41: Lebang and Margaret's bedroom

The circumstances are made more difficult for Margaret since close members of her husband's family have even left clothes and belongings in the buildings which she feels unable to ask to be removed or to do so herself. As Miller (1988) suggests, the ability to feel a sense of 'ownership' of the place in which one lives often depends on how one relates to the traces left by the previous occupants and to their modes of material culture. Her husband acknowledges her feelings, but refers to the situation as "a slight difference in point of view" which he hopes will be resolved through further building on the plot.

The issue is complex since Lebang is compelled to preserve the old buildings, not purely for sentimental value, but for the reason that previous generations of siblings and relatives, came together and pooled resources to enable the building of these structures. These buildings embody the effort made by past relations and as such they have to be preserved for that recognition to be maintained. So, there is a fine balance between modernising and preserving what previous generations have achieved. A sentiment that is frequently echoed is 'we are looking afterfor our ancestors'. And it is this sense of family members coming together, working together and forming consensus which is still strong in parts of Botswana society today.

¹⁷⁸ Of relevance here is Gell's argument that artefacts, including houses 'embody the "distributed personhood" of their makers, and thus truly exercise agency in their own right and serve as vehicles of social relations' (1998, cited in Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga 1999:8; see also Tilley et al 2006: 75-76)

Lebang has a well-paid job in the capital, Gaborone which he commutes to on a daily basis; Margaret, before her marriage, worked in the public sector, and now runs a part-time enterprise in her backyard, raising chickens on a 6 week cycle. Last year they went on their first foreign holiday travelling to neighbouring countries and staying in tourist lodges: they now plan to save up and go away every two years. Based on evidence from other respondents, the idea of foreign holidays is novel and indicates the emergence of a new kind of consumption – that of purchasing ‘experiences’ (Blaszczyk 2009). Tourism can be regarded as ‘a consumption practice built around imaginative pleasure-seeking’, an experience that is anticipated and fantasised (see Campbell 1995: 117-119; Urry 1990, 2002). Most Batswana are prepared to travel extensively within Botswana and often into South Africa, fulfilling obligations, such as, visiting relatives, or attending funerals or weddings, and this becomes more of a financial burden the further away one lives from the home village; but the expenditure involved with foreign travel and holidaying demands a much higher level of wealth¹⁷⁹. Notwithstanding saving up for holidays, Lebang and Margaret, like the Segare family, state that their spending priority is to pay private school fees¹⁸⁰.

Margaret submitted thirteen photographs of which three had been taken by her husband – these three were of cattle at the family cattle post. Of the ten remaining, two were of the family car which Margaret was proud to say she had chosen; two were of ‘her business’ – 3 week old chicks and then the chicks again 2 weeks later; two were of the outside of the inherited house – the larger building and the thatched building; 1 was of the computer they had recently bought for the children to use for their school projects; and the last three photographs were of the outside of the modern house they had built, and where Margaret would prefer to live.

Margaret’s photographs are personally reflective: they show things she regards as achievements – the modern house and her chicken business, even the car, which she chose, and the computer. The inclusion of pictures of the inherited house where they live permanently is indicative of her resignation and acceptance of the situation, and also the significance she places on her ‘home’ and particularly her bedroom.

Lebang’s photographs reflect his deep seated belief in cattle. He relates how he registered his brand three years ago and was looking to purchase a number of animals to start his own herd. He refers to cattle as ‘the Botswana Bank’ and how Tswana society has a number of traditional rituals, foremost of which are funerals and marriages which require cattle. And some people insist on the giving of *bogadi* in cattle.

¹⁷⁹ New found wealth is often used as a means of financing a particular lifestyle: Giddens highlights ‘lifestyle’ as a theme of modern living in post-modernist societies (1991)

¹⁸⁰ Kalabamu notes ‘Monetary expenditure on children’s educationmay be construed as a form of investment and inheritance’ (2006a:25)

“Why cattle? It is a way of life, and I cannot be in the office forever! One day I will retire and need something to retire to. I should be having something to follow. When looking at this closely, the price of cattle is becoming higher and higher, not like 20 years ago. If we have a funeral, talking about paying P6,000 for an ox, so much better if can use one’s own animals. So, firstly, important you have something to retire on, and secondly you can assist yourself in whatever comes your way, by having animals of your own.” (Lebang)

Lebang regards the purchasing or buying of any item as ‘providing for the family’. This view illustrates the heavy sense of responsibility and duty that Lebang – and men like him, typically middle-aged - feel towards their family. He relates that when the children declared they wanted a computer to help with their school work, he sat down with his wife and worked out a plan to buy one. Any disagreements over spending money, he said, were likely to come from Margaret wishing to buy things for the house to ‘make it look beautiful’: he declared he was not interested in ‘fancy’ things. Both of them confirmed that any disagreements over household consumption were likely to be based on ‘aesthetics’.

The Sakeng Family

This family lives in the heart of ‘old’ Rampedi. Thabang and Boitumelo Sakeng are both retired, and declared ‘farmers’, yet are active in different spheres – Thabang in raising and managing his herd of cattle, and Boitumelo in selling produce grown at the *masimo*, as well as running a small bakery business from home and a tuck-shop¹⁸¹. Their youngest daughter, Kabo, and granddaughter, aged 12, live with them.

Boitumelo is Thabang’s second wife – his first wife died (they used to live in his mother’s house across the road, where he was born, but when his wife died, he left the house to his youngest son). Thabang and Boitumelo married and lived in Gaborone for a few years, and, some time later, they decided to build a house on the site of the kraal which was attached to the original family *lapa* (“I did not have to search for a plot”).

Boitumelo was employed for 20 years as chief cashier for a large retail company, and is clearly in control of the household finances. On retirement, she was given a financial package with which she bought her husband a van, paid for a new screen wall and a fence for the *masimo*. The house in Rampedi is large and substantial.

Thabang, unlike most other respondents, did not speak any English and it transpired that he had never been to school: “Since I am not educated, I feel the way to manage my life, is to

¹⁸¹ Boitumelo also takes an active interest in cattle when she is at the cattle post and has her own herd.

manage cattle and provide a livelihood.” He has done this successfully and owns a large herd.

Kabo, in her early 30s, works as a self-employed computer technician. She hopes to marry in the not-too-distant future and is looking forward to establishing her own home.

All three adults in the household took photographs of items of personal significance, altogether over 200! There are clear gendered and generational differences in choice of objects photographed.





Figure 42: Selection of photographs taken by Kabo Sakeng

Kabo's photographs mostly link to her personal appearance and image. She admitted that she loves to buy clothes, magazines, jewellery and perfume. On a day to day basis she likes wearing jeans and t-shirt, but she would not go out (to the shops or visiting friends or relatives) without a dab of her favourite perfume: "I have to wear it - it's my signature, I would feel very uncomfortable not wearing it!" On occasions, such as her birthday, she says she would buy a new outfit and go out with friends and buy drinks.

Kabo's photographs contain a variety of items that she regards as important to her, such as sunglasses and nail varnish. Her desired 'look' is that of a modern young woman and the items she photographed all play a part in her achieving this persona. Additionally, an important part of this image is Kabo's livelihood and her photographs of computer equipment reveal this. There are photographs of her personal computer and other computers that she is working on, in particular, the inside of a system unit. Her hand pointing to different elements indicates her active involvement and pride in her skill in repairing such equipment.



Figure 43: Kabo's computer work

A marked difference in Kabo's photographs to those of her parents is the portability of the items, reflecting the fact that Kabo has not yet set up her own home, a circumstance which she indicated would change when she marries her boyfriend.

Boitumelo, now in her mid sixties, admitted that she and her husband rely on their ten children (three of whom are from her husband's first marriage) to contribute to the household income. She had recently called a family meeting to gain commitment from the children to give financially on a regular basis. Of the small amount of money she makes through her bakery business, tuck shop, and any produce she grows and sells¹⁸², the Church¹⁸³ receives ten per cent.

Boitumelo's photographs are taken in two locations – the Rampedi home and the cattle post with *masimo*¹⁸⁴. Of the former, a number are of the outside of the house, the yard – front and back – and particularly plants which she refers to as 'her garden'. Here, she shows the establishment and maintenance of what she regards as her private space: the attractive wall marking the edge of the property was funded through a portion of her retirement money, and she likes to sit in the corner of the yard, next to 'her garden', usually with one or two of her grandchildren. She is in control; this is her space to keep as she wishes.



Figure 44: Boitumelo's garden, and her baking products

Growing plants to make a garden is just one aspect of a bundle of activities in which Boitumelo can express herself and in which she takes responsibility. Baking various breads, buns and fat cakes; selling snacks and sweets from the house; weeding and growing fields of produce at the *masimo*; looking after cows¹⁸⁵ – these are all activities which are shown in her photographs. They are significant: one could say that Boitumelo keeps busy as a means

¹⁸² Ten years ago, Boitumelo had grown and sold 135 bags of maize, which enabled her to buy tiles for a new roof.

¹⁸³ New Revelation Church, Mochudi, a Christian denomination

¹⁸⁴ Unusually, the *masimo* and cattle post were located in the same place, some 35km distance from Mochudi

¹⁸⁵ Schapera highlights the changing roles of women, particularly that they are seen to handle cattle, previously solely the domain of men (1940; 1971:118).

to contribute financially to the household, which is obviously of some concern to her, yet, more than this, she demonstrates through her activities, love and caring for herself and for the family (Tilley 2009), and is enabled to express her identity as a loving person. Boitumelo can see her work objectified in the plants, breads and cakes, fields and cattle. They are a source of pride in what she has achieved.

Boitumelo photographed a very large earthenware pot which she used to make beer, but has ceased to do so because ‘her belief in the Bible prevents her’¹⁸⁶. Her religion is very important to her, and when asked about a favourite gift received, she replies that the Word of God is a gift. However, she is a person who likes ‘things’ and admitted that a shawl she had received from the Reverend was a ‘lovely surprise’. Boitumelo’s son had become a Minister with a congregational church in Gaborone and she had her photograph taken ‘blessing the Reverend’s new car’ (Figure 45).



Figure 45: Boitumelo’s field of maize, and with her cattle; list of snacks for sale at house, and her son’s Toyota¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Schapera mentions the spread of Christianity as a reason for the decline in beer being brewed (1940, 1971:118). However, there is still plenty of evidence of beer-making going on elsewhere in ‘old’ Rampedi.

¹⁸⁷ Botswana is called ‘Toyota country’ by local people and this make is a popular choice

Unlike many respondents in the survey, Boitumelo shows overt signs of sentimentality¹⁸⁸ through her photographs. This is revealed particularly in a picture of her and her husband on their wedding day, and a clock made by a grandson (see Figure 47). The nature of her attachment to these items is very personal and reflects the warmth of her family relations. Another item photographed which arguably holds sentimental value above other meanings, is her washing machine¹⁸⁹ which was given by their children as a present for their 25th wedding anniversary in 2002. An essentially practical object, is it a surprise that its worth to Boitumelo is that of sentimentality? There could well be generational differences in attitude to new technology and, in this case, it was the children gifting their mother with a labour-saving machine, which implies a younger generation willing to embrace modern appliances. However, generational differences are not obvious in this household. Kabo in an earlier conversation revealed that they do not always use the washing machine, but sometimes wash by hand, and the reason given for this was 'to prevent them becoming lazy'. This has gendered connotations since research reveals that it is the wife, children and maid who do the family washing: it is considered socially unacceptable for married men to engage in this activity, and washing machines have not entered the equation here.

New technologies are seen to go through stages of acceptance before they are successful or perceived as needed (Lehtonen 2003; Hollows 2008). The process of change relates to the item's image, its utility and how it can be accommodated into everyday practices and relationships. It can even be regarded as a moral issue. Acceptance is not simply about what can be achieved with the device, but, as seen, limitations are imposed by the users (Lehtonen 2003:364). The issue of time saved and how the time could be put to better use is unconsidered.... maybe it is a matter of not losing time when the machine goes wrong and time is wasted trying to repair it.

Research by Meintjes (2001) in Soweto reveals similar attitudes to the washing machine and how it is used to construct and negotiate gender relations and identities. Here it is viewed as a 'powerful symbol of laziness' and a means of undermining the status and position of women as 'good' and 'proper' (ibid). The washing machine undermines 'proper' womanhood, as well as the masculinity of men living domestically with such women (ibid). As acknowledged by Wajcman (2009:7), individuals demonstrate their gender identity by the use (or non-use) of objects, and it is this identity that is performed according to social norms. Meintjes' findings in Soweto point to an imbalance in gender power relations in painting a picture of husbands and fathers asserting their masculinity by their 'association with women who know their 'place'' (2001:350). However, she goes on to reveal a dynamic and

¹⁸⁸ The meaning of 'sentimental value' used here corresponds to the SOED definition: '*value of a thing to a particular person because of its associations rather than its material worth*' (2002).

See Wallendorf and Arnould (1988:538) on 'treasured possessions' comparing Niger to the US; interestingly few of the 'favourite objects' in Niger were based on sentimental value through association with loved ones.

¹⁸⁹ Referred to as Boitumelo's washing machine since Thabang never does washing apart from when he is alone at the cattle post.

transforming situation where the washing machine is changing the behaviour of women, even if its use is justified only by feigning poor health or claiming that one's levels of domestic toil are un-diminished (ibid).

Within the Sakeng household, the gendered identities and roles of the women, expressing the material love of caring through the act of washing clothes (Miller 1998b), is challenged by this new technology. An advertising hoarding (Figure 46) on a major road into Gaborone carried a gendered theme by putting together desirable masculine traits, such as hairiness, with ownership of a washing machine, possibly with the aim of making washing machines appear attractive and desirable to women, and additionally, one could read into this the social norm of women doing men's washing and men as 'providers'. More likely, the intention was to promote the automatic washing machine primarily to men, as purchasers and providers, conflating its positive qualities, such as load capacity, with the attractiveness of men to the opposite sex. The backdrop of the busy metropolis places washing machines at the centre of modern, city lifestyles, an aspiration for most young people.



Figure 46: Advertising board, Gaborone

Photograph by Researcher

Boitumelo took several photographs of her bedroom, and although a couple included the wardrobe and dressing table with various toiletries, it is her bed that is featured prominently¹⁹⁰, and in particular showing a patchwork quilt, 'dibata' (Figure 47). Also in the picture is Boitumelo's radio which she claims she would not wish to live without. She enjoys listening to choral music and relates when she participated in church choir competitions in South Africa.

¹⁹⁰ In a history of private life in Britain, the writer Bill Bryson claims 'For much of history a bed was, for most homeowners, the most valuable thing they owned' (2010:346)



Figure 47: Boitumelo's photographs: wedding picture and grandson's clock, her bed, washing machine, chairs, firewood and cooking pots

Again, there are pictures of firewood and a collection of large black pots, even one over an open fire in the backyard. The adherence to a traditional method of cooking is apparent, and symbolic of the importance to Boitumelo of communal events and gatherings. In addition, Boitumelo took a photograph of a stack of plastic chairs and said she would like to buy more to negate the necessity to hire them when they had a wedding or some other big occasion. She expressed pleasure in the fact that when they first moved into their house they had no items for community or family events, but that now they have them and they don't have to

borrow. This tendency for older women to wish to buy plastic chairs, as well as plates and cups is confirmed in respondent interviews.

Another area where Boitumelo reveals her sentimentality is with regard to cattle. Thabang had registered and given her her own cattle brand and she was building up her own herd. She proudly relates how she has long studied the life of cattle and knows ‘when the time is right to put the cow to the bull’, and at what point the calf should wear a ‘ring of thorns’ to prevent it drinking from its mother. She gives the cows names and her favourite is called ‘*Bontle*’ meaning ‘beauty’.¹⁹¹

The Tswana custom of keeping cattle is embedded in history and culture¹⁹². ‘Tswana men admire and adore cattle to the point of almost veneration..... [They] are a significant source of pride’ (Rantao 2006:36). Essentially the domain of men¹⁹³, it is, however, recorded that within the Ngwato and Kgatla tribes, women commonly received cattle, either from their father, husband or lover (Schapera 1938, 1994). Cattle represented wealth and bestowed status. The desire to own cattle today is expressed in simple terms by a respondent, ‘they are useful’. Time and again this was reiterated in terms of how cattle provide food for community events such as weddings and funerals; how they can be exchanged for money; how they are needed to provide bride wealth (*bogadi*); how they grow and multiply in value; and so much more.

Thabang’s photographs are predominantly of cattle, an indication of the central role they play in his life. “All I do these days is buy cattle, grow them and sell them; all other purchases are up to Boitumelo,” he admits. He finds that cattle provide him with a lifestyle and purpose: additionally they are economically satisfying. His car features in his pictures as vital to pursue his chosen lifestyle.

Reflecting on the variety of photographs from the three households, there is an obvious mix of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’, some items or situations of which are deemed more readily acceptable than others. Underlying the portrayal of items, is the story of lives being pulled first in one direction to conform to how things have been done in the past through generations, and in another to conform to the latest fashion or gadget. The former is related to community socialisation and ritual which is a strong and vital structure in Bakgatla everyday life. The ‘two apparently contradictory contexts’ in which people live is like that observed by Thera Rasing in her work on Zambian kitchen parties: she states there is ‘a desire to take part in today’s world without entirely turning a back on the past’ (1999:243).

¹⁹¹ Pet names for cattle and other animals were reportedly used as a means of controlling their behaviour (Rantao 2006:39)

¹⁹² For a full description, see Schapera (1938, 1994: 214-221).

¹⁹³ Historically, boys stayed at the cattle post, whereas girls remained at home – this explains a previous higher attendance of girls at school and as a result they were better educated (Schapera 1938, 1994: 29).

To highlight briefly two consumption choices, firstly, the desire to purchase plastic chairs. These were not stated by Boitumelo Sakeng as 'nice to have' items – she would not presume such extravagance - but ones that were 'needed', especially when 'all the children were present'. Her personal consumption is a matter of meeting family needs, as opposed to indulging in luxury items which are considered 'unnecessary'. Of course it is possible to imagine that the purchase of large numbers of plastic chairs could be considered an extravagance in another context or a different time, but here they emphasize the essentially social character of demand (Douglas and Isherwood 1979). Boitumelo's choice of consumption in plastic chairs places value on family and community events, and reflects her role in hosting such occasions. As such, she is fulfilling her identity as a 'good' woman, wife and mother. Moreover, Boitumelo is a sociable person, and accumulating plastic chairs in readiness for large social gatherings gives her particular pleasure. Her tuck shop notice on the wall outside the *lapa* invites people in, and one could speculate the activity is more to do with this than any economic reasoning. Miller's analysis (1988) on household consumption and his concept of different social relations of consumption is relevant here: 'Constructing an objectification of the household and its relationships through creative activity appear[s] a strong signifier of an active social involvement' (1988:368); and so too with Boitumelo, all her activities (her 'achievements'), including the purchasing of plastic chairs, become integral to the processes that are constructive of social relations and expressive of her positive sociability.

The second area of consumption to elaborate on is that of purchasing livestock. Cattle have always held a special position in southern African societies, becoming the chosen 'regime of value' as wealth was accumulated (Appadurai 1986) and thereby providing status through ownership. They were useful on so many fronts - food, transport, clothing, and housing material – and became integral to the creation of a total social framework with all its social meanings and relations – 'a representation of value in a material economy of persons and a social economy of things' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1990:195). Throughout Botswana, the 'consumption' of cattle is a highly gendered activity and an integral part of the social construction of being a man, as evidenced by the strong and uniform response which was elicited from male respondents - usually over the age of forty and with dependent responsibilities. However, even if the buying (and selling) of cattle is carried out by men, Boitumelo provides an example of active female management of cattle, not solely ownership on paper. This is probably fairly unusual since cattleposts are notoriously male domains and any cattle attributed to a woman are generally looked after by a male relative¹⁹⁴. Boitumelo's love of her herd is made special since the cattle brand was given to her by her husband, Thabang, and cattle are used here as a mutual language, expressive of the love and respect between them (Douglas 1982:24). From Thabang's point of view, all his knowledge is centred with his herd; they provide purpose to his life in so many ways, and so he expresses

¹⁹⁴ Usually the male relative will keep the woman's cows with his own herd (Kalabamu 2006), often employing a herdboy, like Boitumelo and her husband, to look after the herd on a daily basis

his love for Boitumelo through the best way he can which is sharing the experience of cattle. In addition, through managing cattle, Thabang is providing the family with household income and living up to the socially acceptable norm of male 'provider'. The use of goods to express feelings is an important aspect of relationships, and emotional and material caring are closely intertwined (Cole and Thomas 2009).

Most of the photographs from all three families are intensely personal, constructing and crafting self-image and identity, and items, such as clothes, shoes, mobile phone and so forth, are used as a means of objectifying personal and social systems of value (Miller 2001c). There is a generational and gendered pattern emerging which elaborates on the responsibilities and priorities of one generation compared with another, and the pursuit of a lifestyle appropriate to a particular stage in one's life. Starkly, interests and motivations of the sexes are very different, and these are seen to transmute with age. Yet all examples of expenditure conform to an underlying social acceptability of gender and generational norms which relate to the Tswana system of value.

Chapter 11 - Smart suits and beautiful things

The area of Rampedi which I have called 'incomers' covers plots which, although within the boundaries of Rampedi Ward, are not part of the original kinship group and are pieces of land allocated by the Land Board as residential plots¹⁹⁵. As cited by Grant and Grant (1995:41),

'The result is that neighbours, instead of being immediate relatives, may be total strangers to each other. Since the basis of the old system was the physical grouping of complete family networks, the breakup of the one has inevitably meant the disintegration of the other.'

As in the previous chapter, three households have been chosen to examine more closely the nature of consumption practices. They comprise a family with young children; a middle-aged couple with teenage son living at home; and a retired woman whose mother is living in the same house. Again, these households are comparatively well off financially which is in line with the methods as set out in Chapter Three.

The Rumsey household

Philip Rumsey is a local councillor, in his late fifties and married to Yolenda, at least twenty five years younger than him. They have a young child and a baby and have been married five years. Yolenda is his second wife, although it would appear he had lived a 'bachelor' life for some time. Philip's mother, whose husband¹⁹⁶, now dead, was British, lives with them, or rather, they live with her, since this has been her home for over 50 years; however, she has apparently legally handed over the property to Philip, her only son. There are also two paying tenants living in a separate building in the same yard, who are students at the University of Botswana.

Philip, like his mother, is retired from the teaching profession, and Yolenda has never been in paid employment. As councillor, Philip receives a salary and 'sitting' allowance, on top of his generous teacher's pension.

Many of the photographs taken are of poor quality, with a number being blurred. Allegedly, they were taken by Yolenda, but it is believed that her young daughter captured some of them. Philip had intended to take the camera to his new *masimo*, yet this did not materialise. He did, however, spend time participating in an interview in which he claimed that the possessions he could least live without would be his goats and sheep which he had recently bought and were the start of a big new interest. He indicated that he was late in

¹⁹⁵ Residential plots can be applied for once an individual reaches the age of 18 (see UN-HABITAT 2010:13)

¹⁹⁶ He apparently was not Philip's biological father, although he was presumably brought up by him

entering the world of livestock ownership, but that now he was living the experience, he found it a source of immense pride and satisfaction.

Yolenda talked about the photographs and the significance of the contents of them. There was a sense that she had wanted to photograph all aspects of her life – the good and not so good – not just possessions of particular significance to her. Every room in the house was photographed and certain items in each, together with a few outside in the *lapa* and some of members of the family, particularly her 9 month old baby. Firstly, the impression given is of an essentially comfortable home in a materialistic sense, yet one that is not ‘owned’ or ‘belongs’ to Yolenda. There was little personal connection to the majority of the items pictured, apart from a few as detailed below.

Yolenda had taken pictures of her plentiful footwear, kept together in rows: shoes, sandals and boots. These photographs reveal an affinity to footwear as an important component of clothing which contributes to the shaping of the Yolenda’s identity. Shoes are an interesting commodity with connotations of individual transformation and metaphorical transportation – a symbol of ‘finding your feet’ and going somewhere. They are seen to be capable of transcending the functional to instil a new sense of self (Hockey et al 2013). One of the pairs of Yolenda’s shoes had been bought by her husband when she was not present. She related a superstition which foretold that if a person, man or woman, buys their spouse a pair of shoes, then that individual will eventually leave. Was this going to be her story? The photograph shown (Figure 48) is of her ‘favourite’ shoes which are sitting on their own and ready to wear. These she likes particularly because they are ‘black and formal’ and she can ‘wear them to funerals, weddings and to church’. Again, there is an interesting emphasis on community events and what points to the importance in Yolenda’s life of attending such occasions. What was not clear was to what extent Yolenda willingly participated in such events, or did she regard it as a duty, part and parcel of being a councillor’s wife?

The photograph of jars of herbs and spices was referred to by Yolenda as ‘*my spice rack*’. This is indicative of Yolenda’s love of cooking and something she is personally attached to. She had been given a new set of saucepans by her husband for her birthday, which she mentioned as a gift she had been pleased to receive. Her love of cooking could be interpreted as an act of loving whereby she is able to show how much she cares for her family - one way in which she can contribute to the household.

She had also taken photographs of all kinds of electrical equipment: fridge-freezer, kettle, microwave oven, chest freezer and new cooker stove, as well as non-kitchen items such as water heater, air conditioning unit, two televisions and dvd players: ‘we have a lot of things that use electricity’.

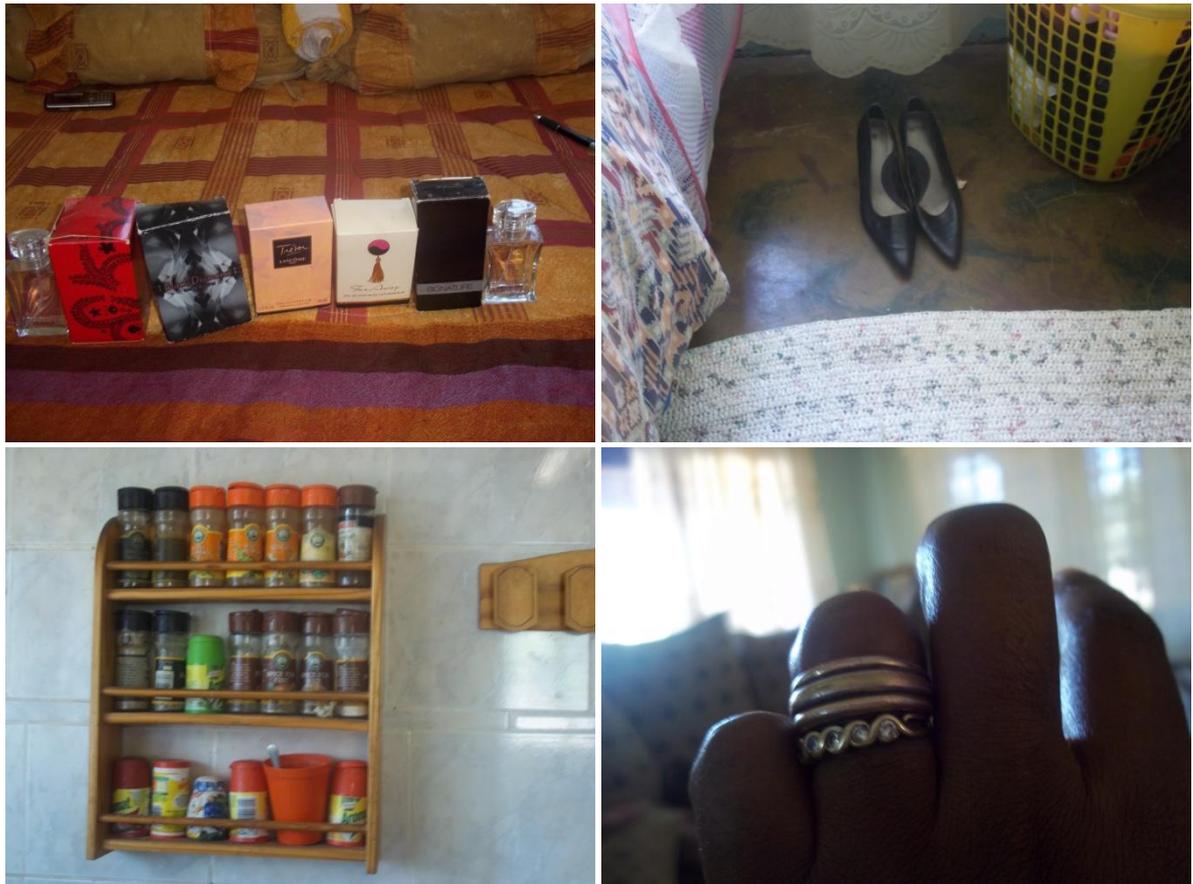


Figure 48: Yolenda's perfumes, shoes, spice rack and wedding rings

Yolenda had positioned a line of packaged perfume bottles to photograph. She confesses that she likes 'smelling good' and that she bought the perfumes for herself – 'I wear perfume for me'- and that when she is going out, she will bathe and wear some then. She also mentioned that her husband likes to wear 'male' perfume. Timothy Burke in his book on Zimbabwean consumption (1996:11) poses the question, '... is the body in any way a uniquely powerful site in the process of commodification?' Apparently yes; the pleasures of modern day consumption are 'increasingly and explicitly tied to the satisfaction of the body' (ibid:12). Judith Butler (1990) points out that the body surface is used as a means of configuring and reconfiguring identity, sexuality and gender. The wearing of perfume for Yolenda is part of her identity as a young woman and imitates the behaviour with regard to perfume shown by Kabo in the previous set of households. Both men and women wear perfume yet particularly for some women it is deemed a crucial part of them, a critical element of their identity. Both Yolenda and Kabo stated that they wore perfume when they were going out. As Comaroff remarks, 'the relationship between the human body and the social collectivity is a critical dimension of consciousness in all societies' (1985:6); in other words, how one presents oneself, such as through clothing and wearing perfume, is a vital part of social acceptability and belonging.

Yolenda's rings are for her symbolic of her status as a well-married woman; moreover she chose them herself¹⁹⁷. She is proud of the fact that she has managed to marry a man who is financially well-off and now she lives in a comfortable and beautiful home. He has elevated her status, not only through monetary means, but in particular because of his role as a local councillor. However, there is tension in the household which is revealed in her other photographs.

There are many framed pictures of Philip, mainly taken when he was graduating from university; photographs of Yolenda are conspicuous by their absence. Also Philip's name is seen in large letters on the wall of their bedroom, possibly something to do with his council role. Prominent in the living room is a poster of representatives of the council and two large pictures of the President of Botswana¹⁹⁸. Dominant projections of Philip's life are seen throughout the house.

A source of tension between husband and wife is the invasiveness of Philip's habit of collecting CDs (see Figure 49). Not only does Yolenda object to the music played, but also the amount of storage space used, in particular in their bedroom. His CDs are seen to be 'taking over' and limiting space for her own personal belongings. Yolenda regards the sheer number of CDs as excessive. Another point of contention is over Philip's purchase of a laptop computer which Yolenda sees as unnecessary since they already have a desktop machine, and in addition to this, they have acquired a printer as part of the retail package. There was a hint from Yolenda that an objection to space invasion and, in her eyes, excessive spending, was coupled with temporal frustration that Philip was spending so much time downloading music from the computer and playing it on the laptop.

A picture of a pastoral scene hanging in their living room (see Figure 49) was chosen and bought by Philip without Yolenda being there. This did not seem to bother her since she stated that they had decided together that they needed a picture (and another one on the opposite wall) and it seemed that this was fulfilling a contract already determined¹⁹⁹. What seems to upset Yolenda more is when things are bought in which she is not party to the decision-making: the purchasing of CDs and a laptop are purchases in which she did not participate and of which she did not approve.

Interestingly, even though the house shows no framed pictures of Yolenda, she held up a photograph of herself and another of her holding her first baby and took pictures. It was as if

¹⁹⁷ The fact Yolenda chose her wedding rings, significant personal items to wear, was important to her as a means of expressing her own identity and image.

¹⁹⁸ Philip is a BDP councillor, belonging to the same political party as President Ian Khama; however, pictures of the President were commonly seen in people's homes as a mark of respect.

¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, pictures for the wall may be a cultural anathema to Yolenda. Houses in Rampedi revealed very few hung pictures, and those observed were kitsch reproductions rather than original art.

she wanted to project herself and correct the imbalance of presence noticeable in the house.



Figure 49: Philip's CDs, computer and office equipment; picture in living room

As mentioned, the house has been handed over by Philip's mother to her son, and although she still lives there²⁰⁰, the house has been renovated and extended to include a new wing which is where Philip and Yolenda have their bedroom and en-suite bathroom. This part of the house was the most photographed. To enter their side of the house, one has to exit the main house, into the yard and through a door to the side of the main porch (see Figure 50). It is an interesting separation, and although arguably possibly built as the easiest means of adding new rooms to the original building, it serves to highlight different elements of 'belonging'. To what extent does Yolenda feel 'at home' here?

Philip's desire to build his own house 'of which he could be proud' was combined practically with the need to look after his mother, who was suffering from diminished health, and the fact that as the only child, he would one day inherit the property. Yolenda did participate in choosing the renovations, changing the face of the building with new windows, roof and

²⁰⁰ Yolenda, by her own admission, relates well to her mother-in-law

extension. She was keen to carry out some of the work herself, such as the decorating, rather than bring in workmen. This was an act, not solely to save money, but to stamp her mark, and transform it into her own home. However, she still faces difficulties feeling she truly belongs whilst there are elements of the house that are not hers.



Figure 50: Yolenda and Philip's house: porch and yard taken from their 'wing'

In addition to this, there is a sense that Yolenda has little control over household expenditure, and not just over the consumption of CDs and computer equipment. This is amply illustrated in Philip's tendency to carry out grocery shopping, a task in which he inevitably overspends, buying items which they do not really need, even if Yolenda has produced a shopping list for him to follow. The issue here is cited as lack of a formal household budget, to which most Rampedi households in the survey stated they worked. Quite often, in his role as councillor, Philip visits families at difficult times, such as funerals, and, if struggling financially, may lack the necessary food to feed visitors. In this situation, Philip feels the need to help out and buy goods for the household, since, as Yolenda says, he is kind-hearted.

There is a frustration on the part of Yolenda who would like to have more control over the household money and expenditure. She is constrained since she is not in paid employment and, being reliant on her husband's income, is reduced to asking for money when she wishes to purchase something. She admits that she tries to put aside some money in a savings account on a regular basis as her 'emergency fund'.

The Lekabe household

This household consists of husband and wife, Modise and Pelonomi, and youngest son (out of five children), Otsi, aged 18, and Modise's mother, in failing health, lives in another building within the *lapa*. Modise is in his mid-sixties and retired, and Pelonomi is eight years younger and in full-time paid employment. Modise is the youngest and only son alive and in line to inherit the property where he claims he was born and grew up. He lived in Gaborone

for many years but felt he needed to come back home to look after his mother and so, seven years ago, he built the house they now live in alongside his mother's property.

Modise worked for the same housing company for thirty years as a painter and his retirement package paid for the building of their house. He refers to himself as a 'farmer' and visits his *masimo* and cattlepost where he has a dwelling and keeps five cattle as part of a syndicate; however it appears he does not spend much time there. Pelonomi is related to one of the original families of Rampedi. She not only works full time for a hotel chain, but sells mobile phone airtime which pays for her travel to and from Gaborone. They own two properties in Gaborone which are rented out.

A modest number of photographs were taken which, under the direction of his father and mother, Otsi transacted. Most of the photographs are of Modise; in one he is wearing an elaborate shirt and suit, another shows him in a different embroidered shirt. He relates how he started work in a men's retail store and that is where his interest in clothing comes from. His favourite purchases are tailored suits and he is proud to say that he currently has fifteen of them! Modise's enjoyment of dressing smartly is linked to his membership of the Twelve Apostles Church, an evangelical church headquartered in South Africa. As well as regularly attending the local church, he travels to the annual gathering in Johannesburg and likes to dress 'so people notice him'. Rampedi has a number of churches in a small area lining the edge of the ward and bordering the River Notwane: Seventh Day Adventist, the Old Apostolic Church, the Twelve Apostles Church of Africa and a fourth unidentified church which congregates in a large tent. It was observed that men attending services or other ecclesiastical events, particularly the elders of these churches, wore suits and ties even in very high temperatures.

The appeal of wearing a suit has been adopted from its Western origin so long ago into local attire that the meaning is now localised (Hansen 2000; Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). Photographs taken by Schapera in the 1930s show the popularity at formal occasions of the suit for men at that time. Nowadays, a man will likewise wear a suit to a funeral or wedding, or to the *kgotla* or to church, or it reflects his profession, perhaps as bank manager or government official. The concept of 'Sunday best' is well recognised and practiced. A suit speaks the language of an important person, modern and successful, morally decent and respectable, a man probably in his middle to later years. Here is seen the objectification of what Modise is or aspires to be (Miller 1987). Moreover, the emphasis on smart suits and fancy shirts relates to an urban lifestyle which is more the image Modise conveys (or wishes to), and goes some way to explain his ambivalence to following wholeheartedly the social norm for men of his age of cattle ownership and management. His wife may be an influence here in that she declares cattle are a 'headache' and, additionally, that Modise 'rarely goes to the cattle post because he is concerned about his mother'.



Figure 51: Wedding clothing: the white dress, smart suit with label on sleeve, traditional outfit with blanket and matching headscarf

As highlighted by Hansen (2004) predominantly there is a desire amongst Africans to ‘dress well’. The picture (Figure 51) illustrates how labels are often kept overtly in place on the sleeve of a suit. This demonstrates for the wearer that the suit is not only new and of good quality, but is branded, which as a symbol of globalisation, creates exotic and sophisticated qualities²⁰¹. The utilitarian aspect of the suit is transcended and it becomes a personal statement: the wearer can be seen as ‘modern’ with wealth enough to afford a quality branded suit. The interesting fact is that the wearer feels the need to keep the label situated, so the message cannot be misunderstood. There is a contrast here with the younger man who is more at ease without the need of a label to demonstrate his worth. Taken with his traditionally dressed wife, the father (or possibly uncle) is a ‘traditional’ man entering the ‘modern world’, maybe a world in which he is not totally comfortable. What comes to mind is the historic basis of the consumption ethos of the Muria (Gell 1986) where the market system saw very rapid growth over a relatively short period of 50 years which created unusual attitudes to consumption, and likewise, in Botswana, rapid growth has delivered anachronistic consumption patterns.

²⁰¹ Botswana generally look to South Africa for examples of good style in dress

Whilst the suits Modise wears are like a uniform in what they symbolically represent, the elaborate shirts shown in the photographs provide Modise with more opportunity to demonstrate a degree of individuality and his own personality. The diversity and availability of goods, often imported from South Africa, provide choice for individuals to show 'uniqueness' which is, according to Hansen (2000:199), what both men and women often seek. As argued by Ferguson (2002:555), it is not a matter of imitating Western or other styles, but by choosing such modes of dress, an individual is claiming their rights, political and social, to full membership of a wider society, which in Modise's case is beyond the boundaries of Rampedi and Mochudi.

Modise admits to enjoying window shopping when he will identify items he wishes to purchase, usually clothing, and will seek to discuss with his wife and gain agreement to buy. Pelonomi manages all the household finances apart from a small amount which is Modise's personal spending money – 'she keeps all the money and does all the buying'. As is typical of most Rampedi households, whoever is in paid employment has a bank account which in this case is Pelonomi; if an individual is not employed, they invariably don't have a bank account, although sometimes they will keep a Post Office savings account. The concept of a joint bank account does not exist. However, the management of finances in the majority of married couple households in Rampedi follows a 'partial pool' or 'independent management' system (Pahl 2008:580).

Modise was at pains to point out that even though his wife works full time, he 'earns' more than her through the rents from the two Gaborone houses; yet, Pelonomi refers to these properties as 'theirs'. In most societies where money is an issue, it gets played out in different ways.²⁰² The sensitivity in Botswana society relates to the concept of the male 'breadwinner' or provider. There are men in the survey who claim they would have no problem with their wives earning more than them, but, in a round-about way, there are just as many men who deflect the question and are obviously uncomfortable with the prospect. The issue here is about social identity and masculinity in particular. Could a *proper* man allow his wife to earn more than him? This is a contested area which is being challenged and redefined to allow new social norms to develop.

Although Pelonomi features in three other photographs: one when she is just back from work, and the others standing with Modise against a plain wall, her clothing is not as elaborate as her husband's. She admits that 'now she's older, she doesn't have the urge to buy new clothes, although if she was going to a wedding, she would buy a new outfit, which would be a 'traditional' one'. This reveals a tangible generational difference in attitudes to

²⁰² Couples tend to know instinctively if the contribution made by each partner, financial or otherwise, is in balance according to the particular social norms of gender equality. This leads to couples working out the 'give and take' in relationships. (Smith R. 'Should couples have joint bank accounts?' Sunday Times Magazine, 17 June 2012)

dress which contrasts strongly with expressions from both Yolenda and Kabo. Pelonomi feels she has reached an age where new clothes are not desired or needed and possibly even frowned upon by society, and furthermore, an outfit made out of 'traditional' material²⁰³ is deemed most appropriate for her to wear to a community celebration such as a wedding. Age is seen to form the basis of social distinctions which are often made more obvious through the use of dress.

The rest of the photographs are of the *lapa* and their house which was designed from a plan of a house in Gaborone. Modise articulated that it was built exactly how he wanted it and as such is very special to him.



Figure 52: Modise's house

In 2003 when the house was built, Modise installed a septic tank, now he wishes to connect to mains sewerage and has paid his connection fee to the Council and bought pipes ready for a plumber to carry out the work. This, as far as Modise is concerned, is about being 'modern' and taking advantage of new developments related to his property.

It is important to Modise that his yard looks neat and tidy at all times, and he enjoys spending his spare time sweeping and cleaning the yard and trimming the hedges and bushes. This is all part of his self image revealing that the house and *lapa* is integral to his own identity. Not only is looking good in a smart suit and fancy shirt a reflection of Modise's character, but also his house as part of him must project a certain image. He muses that 'the house should dress just like a person dresses'.

Modise claims that the one thing he could not be without is 'love in the house between two people'. He is obviously fond of his wife and relies on her emotionally, and his statement confirms the role his home has in nurturing family and social relations. Their relationship is complimentary: she is conforming to tradition, whereas he is permitted the freedom to not

²⁰³ See Chapter Seven, Page 80, for explanation of traditional material

conform; she in effect takes the role of 'breadwinner', yet he is given due deference as 'head of family'; she works independently and controls the finances, he manages the home-front.

Statistics point to difference in the mean age of marrying between the sexes which has been decreasing in recent years (Mookodi 2004a), however Modise and Pelonomi are representative of couples married for 30+ years where the husband is somewhat older than the wife. Hence, the situation arises where the husband has retired and the wife is still working.

The photographs are of the outside of the house, not the inside, which implies that what is deemed important is to ensure the right image on the outside for people to see, and, maybe dictated by an historical perspective, that the heart of living in Botswana goes on *outside*, and, for those, mainly men, who may have spent a large part of their childhood living out in the open at the cattle post. Interestingly, there is no evidence of traditional cooking pots or piles of firewood, which together with Modise's apparent lack of interest in rearing cattle²⁰⁴, and obvious desire to project himself in formal, suited attire, indicates a break with the stereotype of the older Mokgatla man. He shows a different aspiration, one that is influenced by his church and reaching towards urban South Africa. There is less consumption on display for 'traditional' community events; moreover, Modise reveals he 'does not believe in inheritance'²⁰⁵ in that no one was going to inherit his property and he expects his children to 'make their own way in life, just as he has done'. This contrasts strongly with the description of 'home' given at the beginning of this chapter in which historically there is an intergenerational and emotional tie to one's property which is embedded in tribal and kinship roots. Modise appears to be breaking away from this and its associated lifestyle.

Agnes Bogatsu

Agnes is one of a number of financially well-off retired women living in Rampedi ('incomers') who have either never married or been widowed many years ago. Agnes is in her mid 70s and her mother, aged 92, lives with her but is confined to bed. Agnes is an only child, yet she herself has seven children, born in the period between 1950 and 1972. A retired businesswoman, Agnes previously worked as a tailor, and owned a bar, restaurant and shop in Mochudi: these are now leased out and she benefits from regular rental income. She has lived in her current house since 1986, previously living in her mother's house which is now rented out: she also receives rent from at least three other properties.

²⁰⁴ Kalabamu states that from the mid 1980s men's interest in land started to shift from rural pastures to urban and peri-urban areas for two main reasons: riskiness of livestock farming and Government's drive to diversify the economy (2006b:243)

²⁰⁵ Modise recognises that his children have the socially prescribed 'right of access' to his home, yet he does not want them to rely on inheriting the property in either the traditional patriarchal sense or more recent equitable manner of passing on property (see Kalabamu 2006a).

Agnes had taken over 100 photographs or rather she had directed her grandson in what to photograph. The first half features the house, both inside and out, and Agnes is in every picture; the second half contains some without Agnes. Although photography is not new to her - she has photographs of her children and grandchildren in the house - what seems to be novel are pictures of herself. Her commentary on the photographs consists of firstly how she thought she looked, and secondarily the appearance of her house and garden. This reflects the enjoyment experienced by Agnes in having the focus on her in what is possibly a rather isolated and lonely existence.



Figure 53: Agnes' house with satellite dish and air conditioning unit, and her garden

The layout of Agnes' property follows the traditional design recorded by Schapera of a 'compound' with an inner courtyard (1940, 1971:85; Grant and Grant 1995:14), although the similarity stops there. The entrance from the road is through an electric gate into the main *lapa* and through to a house at the back which Agnes rents out to a family. Security is a prominent feature with electric fencing mounted on top of the high perimeter wall. The main house where Agnes lives is reached through a central gate amidst decorative railings and pillars leading into the inner *lapa* which provides privacy and seclusion.



Figure 54: Outer and inner *lapa*

Compared to almost all other Rampedi interiors, everything about Agnes' house is ornate and elaborate, from the intricately carved plant pot holder to the wooden and leather three-piece suite.



Figure 55: Inside Agnes' house

Agnes comments that her house looks very beautiful in the photographs, yet she rarely picks out a particular object or ornament as worthy of special mention, preferring to highlight the overall pleasing effect. Maybe this is because she has so many items²⁰⁶; she points out that she likes things to be matching, for example, her fancy bed coverings²⁰⁷.

Only one sixth of the photographs are of the inside of the house, the rest being of outside the house, rented house, gardens, surroundings and several posed pictures of Agnes herself in the garden. In the photograph shown (Figure 55), the television is the item being pointed out and it is this that Agnes cites as her favourite recent purchase. It was very expensive to buy and she paid cash for it and the stand²⁰⁸. She says, 'it makes me feel good ...because it is so large and conspicuously good'. In the top left-hand corner of the television screen, various labels have been left on from when first purchased, which can be compared to the practice of leaving labels on suit sleeves: both want to give the message that the owner is able to afford quality goods. In Agnes' case, she is proud of the fact that she paid a lot of money for the television and stand, and it represents her success in establishing such a comfortable lifestyle. The other item picked out by Agnes as special to her is the dining room suite. She actually bought this in 1994, yet she still referred to it when questioned about recent favourite purchases. She simply 'loves it' because it is 'beautiful' and she 'loves beautiful

²⁰⁶ In the initial survey of Rampedi, Agnes was one of only three households out of eighty who stated they had 'many' possessions, as opposed to 'few'.

²⁰⁷ The bed and coverings feature frequently in female interviews as being important as a place of comfort and display of individual taste.

²⁰⁸ It was observed in many households that the piece of furniture on which the television stands is just as important as the purchase of the television: the two items go together. Often the 'stand' is tall with several shelves and used to display items such as photographs and china dogs, as well as other electrical goods.

things'. The further meaning in Agnes' dining furniture is that it signifies the existence of a separate room. A separate dining room is an aspiration that as an individual becomes wealthier and is able to afford a bigger house, wishes to create²⁰⁹. This aspiration is corroborated in other household interviews where the dining room and associated furniture is seen as a conspicuous sign of 'having made it'.



Figure 56: Agnes' garden and pots

Worthy of mention is the photograph of the black cooking pots stacked and unused, and as Agnes acknowledged, 'very dirty' – symbolic of a previous lifestyle, now not practiced. Her garden, tended by a gardener, consists of different paved paths and borders, topiary trees and bushes, various flowering plants and lawns. Her flowers are a particular pleasure to her.

Agnes' photographs reveal a person who is seeking recognition for her achievements: this can be seen in the way she appears in most of the photographs, framing the material riches which are so much a part of her. And she is seeking approval too: aside, she tells of her mother's jealousy and refusal to acknowledge her success. Agnes wearing one of her best dresses, together with matching headscarf, and bold jewellery, poses in the garden (Figure 57): this is an elaborate personal display, demanding attention. She presents herself in some of the photographs with a young man, one of her grandsons, and assumes an almost coquettish attitude, wishing to be thought of as young. Her display is sexual, may be in a way she has behaved most of her life. Her dress is not of the type described in Mochudi as 'traditional', made of German print, but yet it is African and not Western in appearance: she refers to it as 'special'. Agnes' jewellery is mainly from South Africa and bought in a shop in Gaborone, although her choker she bought in Mozambique. She tells of her wish to travel and how when she visited the Victoria Falls, 'she was so amazed that she cried and wondered what God was doing'. This is evidence of Agnes moving into new areas of pleasure-seeking and consumption, that of purchasing 'experiences' (Błaszczuk 2009; Urry 1990, 2002) as mentioned earlier with regard to the Mothusi family.

²⁰⁹ Other examples of such aspiration gathered from other respondents are fitted wardrobes, fitted kitchen, and tiles on the floor.



Figure 57: Agnes Bogatsu

Agnes intends to leave her house to whichever of her children best looks after her well-being which is likely to be her second-to-last daughter. She dismisses the tradition of leaving the family home to the youngest son as ‘something only old people follow’! She condemns the traditional funeral for the large numbers of people that are catered for, people who just live in the neighbourhood yet hardly know the deceased. Also she dislikes the way the house is taken over, becoming everyone’s space as people come and go, risking things being stolen. She declares that when she dies she wants her body to be put in a coffin at the mortuary and for the staff there to organize the burying of it. She thinks that maybe a few people could come back to the house for some tea, but nothing more! Agnes then adds that because of where she lives, lacking close neighbours, and only Government housing across the road, she is not informed when someone dies and consequently does not get the opportunity to go to many funerals.

Agnes’ wealth and goods have given her a comfortable lifestyle, and she has been driven to work hard to achieve material wealth. Yet this materiality has somehow cut her off from community life and she is enclosed in a security bubble, unaware of what is going on outside the electric gates. Materiality is seen to have changed her outlook on life in which traditional ways of doing things and social conformity have become less important. An aspect of this is seen in the manner in which she is contesting the social norms of dress of elderly Rampedi women.

In reflecting on the three households in the ‘incomer’ category of Rampedi homesteads, there is a sense that they are less constrained by ‘tradition’ than the ‘old Rampedi’ families in that they appear more willing or able to do their own thing, for example, in attitudes and approach to inheritance and lifestyle. The push and pull of tradition and modernity is present, yet less marked. Is this an obvious outcome of being an ‘incomer’²¹⁰ to a ward community, where the importance of certain rituals diminishes when you are not at the

²¹⁰ And yet still belonging to the same tribe - Bakgatla

centre of them? Arguably this is the case, and furthermore, consumption practices and materiality are seen to be integral to transforming a way of life.

Most household informants stated they had *few* possessions and this was not due to Tswana modesty, but, by Western benchmarks, they probably did not own a lot of domestic goods. However, the house of Agnes Bogatsu, stands out way above all others as being full of fancy and decorative commodities. When analysing what was going on with regard to consumption choices, it became apparent that rarely did one item take on particular significance, and it was more a case of an overall 'aesthetic' (Miller 2008). Agnes was concerned to express herself through 'beautiful' things which provided an overall sense of comfort and achievement, and this approach was extended through to her garden. These elements are the means by which she communicates who she has become, and her relationship to these objects becomes central to her relationships with people – her family and friends (ibid). That the decor in the house was so welcoming reflects a high level of sociability, and indicates a desire for more socialisation. Objects are Agnes's 'companions' and expressive of her sociable personality (ibid). On the other hand, Agnes' consumption choices have led to a detachment from 'traditional' ward life; 'the nature of the social relations of consumption' is seen to lead to unintended consequences (Miller 1988:368). This demonstrates the constraints of the material home which brings about a dynamic shaping of the lives of individuals.

Similar themes emerge which tell of a struggle to belong and exert one's identity, as in the case of Yolenda who, like Margaret Mothusi (Chapter Ten), experiences feelings of alienation with regard her home. Both are 'passive recipients' of what they would have liked to have had more control over (Miller 1988:357). Again, the materiality of the buildings is seen to take on an agency all of its own which only seems to increase with time (Miller 2001a), and, bluntly, act as an 'instrument in the hegemony of gender [and] generation' (Birdwell-Pheasant and Lawrence-Zuniga 1999:10). Yet the person here who does have more 'control' finds difficulty in being complete. Consumption can help owners find their own identity, and sometimes this is successful, other times not.

Chapter 12 - Working, loving, and more cattle

The Government housing section of Rampedi Ward takes up about one sixth of the residential area, yet because the plots of land are smaller than in 'old' Rampedi or 'incomers', the number of households here is about one third of the total. The housing is provided by the government for public sector workers, and, in Rampedi, taken up by Brigade²¹¹ and school employees, workers at the Rampedi Health Clinic and those employed generally at the Council.



Figure 58: Public sector housing

Photographs by Researcher

The housing is clustered for diverse categories of employee, and most noticeably 'colour-coded', for instance, differentiation is made between housing for Brigade and Council workers: the housing for the former has red paint work, and for the latter, yellow. The rent paid for any of the houses is very minimal, a fraction of the price paid for renting in the private sector.

Twenty-two first stage interviews were conducted and eleven second stage; of these, in line with previous categories, three households are picked out for analysis focusing on consumption practices. Each of the households chosen comprises married couples²¹² with children, who by nature of living there, are of working age. In addition, in Chapter Thirteen, analysis is undertaken looking at the consumption patterns of single young men, of which there are a number renting alone or with a colleague.

²¹¹ The Brigade, started in Mochudi in 1967, provides skills training in building, mechanics and farming

²¹² The third couple chosen actually live apart during the week with the wife living separately in the government house Monday to Friday. The couple spend weekends together at their family home about 50km away. Although rare, this was not an isolated incidence of separation uncovered during fieldwork in Rampedi, which implies that the situation exists whereby couples are prepared to split up temporarily for economic purposes.

The Morole household

Pitse and Game Morole both work full time and share their home with their only son, Winston, nineteen years of age, who has just completed education at the local high school. The couple are in their mid-to-late forties and it is through Pitse's work as a Teacher at the Brigade that they live in the state provided house. Game works as an accountant within a regional public organisation located in Gaborone. Neither Pitse nor Game originates from Mochudi: Pitse is from Serowe in the Central District, 232 kilometres (144 miles) north of Mochudi, one of eleven children; and Game is from Tonata, a further 120 kilometres north, one of six children; and they first met in Gaborone.

Their photographs are modest, which indicates a restrained approach to buying goods. A comment by Winston implied that things are only bought when there is a *need* for them. And in response to the question asking if his partner overspends, Pitse declares, 'No, she is *traditional*'. Like so many couples, Pitse and Game share and manage the household finances jointly. They each understand what they are responsible for, and when it comes to large purchases, they will discuss and reach a consensus on a way forward. Game earns more than her husband, yet this is not an issue for either of them: Pitse appears to be given due deference as 'head of the household'²¹³ and Game appears happy to fit into the role of home-maker.



Figure 59: Television within wall cabinet, containing DVD and music system; Pitse's vehicle

Each member of the family wanted a photograph of themselves included, and Game appears on two other photographs presenting artwork – a painting of the President and another of a lion – created by Winston²¹⁴. She displays pride in her son's achievements. Other than the television and display cabinet, there is one other photograph of the house which shows a

²¹³ The first member of the household to be interviewed was the son, Winston, who without hesitation referred to his father as 'head of the household', and, following traditional patriliney, declared he was from Serowe, his father's home village.

²¹⁴ He is planning to go to art college

black leather sofa and matching arm chairs in their small living room. This is undoubtedly an important place for the family to relax and be together, and, as Game remarks, watching television is important for her as a means of resting outside of work. The picture also shows a coffee table and an electric fan.

Another photograph is of the family car (Figure 59). This is referred to as Pitse's since he seems to be the only person to drive and look after it. It is interesting to note that Pitse is within walking distance of his workplace and still drives there, and yet Game relies on public transport²¹⁵ to get her to and from work, a round-trip of about 70 kilometres; furthermore, she is the person who undertakes to buy all the grocery shopping. The picture being painted is one of unfairness, yet not all the underlying circumstances are known. However, what is strongly evident is that the car is an important part of Pitse's identity²¹⁶. Game refers to the cleaning and care of the car as Pitse's since she claims this helps to balance out the allocation of tasks within the household. Game admits that her husband does very little in the house and so maintaining the car goes some way to redress this. As is often seen in the variety of Mochudi households, young, unmarried men undertake their own clothes washing, yet no man who is married performs this domestic job, it is up to their wives to do it, and so is the case in this household. There is no automatic washing machine here. Likewise, cleaning the house is Game's domain.



Figure 60: The Morole retirement house

The last two photographs show a new house that Pitse and Game are building in Serowe (Pitse's natal home). They are photographs of photographs since the opportunity for them to travel to Serowe did not transpire during the period of researcher contact (Figure 60). One photograph was taken from inside, showing a large empty room with French windows leading into an open space; the other pictured the outside of the residence. This is to be

²¹⁵ The usual public transport available is provided by privately owned minibuses which often become overcrowded at peak times.

²¹⁶ The car is representative of economic power and in this instance acts as an important foil to the fact that Game is the dominant 'breadwinner'. In addition, the car, as in most societies, is highly gendered, and, in Botswana, provides an opportunity for expression of masculinity (see Miller 2001c).

Pitse and Game's retirement home. Both confirm that ownership of one's own property is of paramount importance to them. Currently, any money they save goes towards the property, for instance, as mentioned by Game, they are saving to be able to install a modern, fitted kitchen. They are under no financial or time pressure since they intend to stay in Mochudi at least until Pitse's retirement in seven years time. Game says she would additionally like to buy a house in Gaborone for them to go and stay in when they move to Serowe. Could this have something to do with Game's job being based in Gaborone and a desire to keep the option of continuing her employment there?

Game's favourite items to buy are perfume, and matching clothes, shoes and bags. Perfume is important to her because she 'likes to smell nice' and be presentable for work and church – she regularly attends a Congregational church in Gaborone. Perfume is part of Game's identity as a respectable, financially secure woman (see earlier discussion).

Pitse admitted to a desire to own livestock which he thought would come about once he retired [and moved to Serowe]. He mentioned that they had access to a *masimo* in Serowe which was his mother's but they were not active in developing this, due to location and time restraints. Being based in Mochudi, he declares he derives pleasure from buying clothes and electronic items, although he did not take photographs of these and the impression given was that this was not a regular activity.

The Bokowe household

Othusitse and Mosire Bokowe are a married couple, aged around forty and with three children, aged eighteen, twelve and six. Both work full-time, Othusitse as an auditor for a large government organisation based in Gaborone, and Mosire as an Accounts Officer at Kgatleng District Council, and hence the reason for their eligibility to live in the Mochudi state-funded property²¹⁷. They employ a live-in maid whose main task is to look after the children.

Mosire grew up in a village near Mochudi with her aunt, and Othusitse comes from Mahalapye, about 165 kilometres north-east of Mochudi. Mosire inherited her aunt's house when she died the previous year which she now rents out. They are building a property in Gaborone and one in Mahalapye, both of which will either be privately rented out or leased to the government in order to augment their income. The property in Mahalapye, on which they are directing much of their finances, will eventually become their retirement home.

Ten photographs were taken by Mosire, which are very personal to her. Five of these are of the children, highlighting their importance to her, and more broadly revealing the pre-eminence placed by her on social and family relations. Of the other photographs, one is of

²¹⁷ Rent paid is minimal, approximately P200 per month (equivalent of £20)

the television within an entertainment unit, together with DVD player, CD player and multi-channel digital satellite TV box. Mosire relates how the unit was bought by her and her husband, the television came from her late aunt, and she used her first salary at the Council to buy the DVD player. The television is important for her enjoyment of soaps²¹⁸ and films, and it holds sentimental value since it was her aunt's. The purchasing of the DVD player with 'her first salary' is significant because it is representative of a change of circumstance in her life. Two years ago, Mosire was not working and she retrained to secure her current job. In contributing to the household income, she feels justified in having more of a say in how the money coming into the household is spent. The following is a transcript of part of the interview with Mosire:

'Does your partner earn more than you?'

'Yes, a lot more. I don't know if there would be a problem if I earned more than him – he may feel that I am not respecting him somehow. He's going to demand more and I'm going to say, no, we can't do this - he's going to feel that I am in control. He will say you don't respect me; he will feel threatened. I cannot say 'no' to him, if I say we are not doing that, we are doing this, he will get angry. Two years ago, I was not working – I was a housewife – and he was in control of everything – head of the family [household]. But now he is not because I am contributing. Two years ago he just gave me enough money to buy things for the children, for the maid, et cetera – very difficult at that time. He would say, 'what have you done with that money?'

The term 'head of household' is widely recognised in Botswana, in the main because it is used in government documents, in particular, the census. Mosire conflates the term with earning power, which is how she views the change in her household - she declares that she can now say she and her husband are joint 'heads of household'; yet the meaning of 'head of household' is 'loaded with implicit assumptions about decision-making processes and resource provision within households' (Mookodi 2004b). In Mosire's dialogue, there is a sense that she can only go so far in taking a more authoritative role. What emerges is that in changing provider identities, a crisis of masculinity is created. For further discussion and analysis see Chapter Six on marriage.

Another photograph shows Mosire's diamond ring which her husband gave her on their wedding day and 'means a lot to her' (see Figure 61). The next photograph is of Mosire's perfume bottles, together with face cream and roll-on deodorant, in which she is keen to point out a tall perfume phial given to her by her husband, entitled 'Especially for you'. She relates how she had a conversation with her husband – who she refers to as 'very

²¹⁸ South African soaps – 'Generations' and 'Rhythm City', and American soaps – 'Scandal' and 'The bold and the beautiful'

traditional' - in which she encouraged him to buy her small things to 'spice up their relationship'.

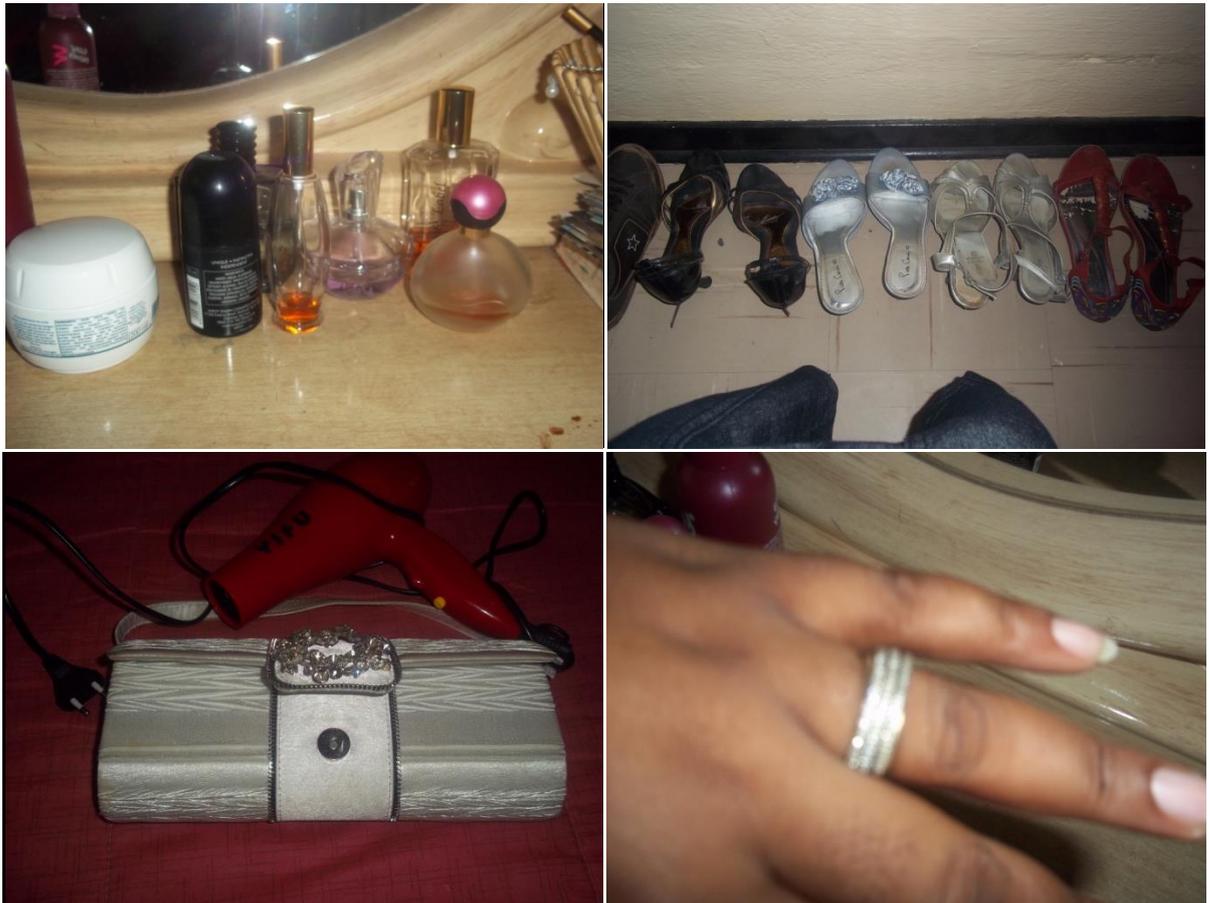


Figure 61: Mosire's perfumes, sandals, clutch bag and wedding ring

Mosire enjoys buying clothes, so she can look smart in the office – she does not want 'to look like an unemployed person'. She feels justified in being able to purchase new clothing since she is now earning. The last two photographs are of Mosire's footwear and an evening bag which she bought when she was 'the best lady' at a friend's wedding (background shows hair dryer used for daughters' hair). These items reveal not only the feminine side of Mosire's character, but also, emphasise through the sentimentality expressed, the interweaving of social relations and objects. Following their appropriation, they are 'objectified', as illustrative of Miller's theory (1995a). Possessions are cherished as representative of personal relationships, and more than this, actively assist in creating the desired associations. The items are part of Mosire, they make up her personality and persona, and through them she reinforces the social relations which are such a vital part of her. Miller's words come to mind:

'It is those persons who found they were best able to express their relationships through their manipulation of their material worlds who formed the closest social networks, while those who felt unvalorised in

their social relations also felt impotent with respect to any manipulation of their material culture.' (Miller 1995a:24)

The significance of clothing as a means of expressing caring for others is recognised by Durham (2001) as part of belonging to a community, not just as an act of love towards one's family, such as the purchase of children's clothing:

'One's physical appearance.... had direct effect on other people's being.... Out of concern for others one should dress well — in a kind of spiralling circle of the sentiment, one's caring should motivate one to look to the physical well-being of others, but at the same time one's own physical condition produces particular sentimental states in others' hearts. To dress well and be beautiful is a double act of caring....'
(Durham 2001: 173)

Othusitse did not take any photographs, yet willingly gave an interview. Mosire reckons if her husband had taken pictures they would have been of the house in Mahalapye, cattle and his car, which certainly fits with the traditional image of a Batswana man. Currently Othusitse owns around ten cattle, maybe more, and he would like to own a lot more. He explains that the rearing of cattle in Botswana is 'more of pride than business' and that it is 'just how we are brought up'. His intention is to go one step further and create a commercialised cattle business; having bought land the equivalent of five *masimo*, he wishes to fence these to make a ranch. He recognises that he can ill afford to keep a lot of animals that do not provide him with income. He describes the satisfaction that most Batswana get from seeing their cattle multiply and hence rarely do they sell, even though the Botswana Meat Corporation frequently comes up with incentives to encourage this.

Othusitse's driver is to ensure security for the children since he worries that the children's future employment prospects are becoming more uncertain. A spending priority that he and his wife have is to pay school fees to enable education for their daughters in the English Medium school system. In addition he financially supports his extended family – his four siblings are all unemployed²¹⁹. Othusitse is investing in property with the prospect of income from rent. He refers to their current government house as 'temporary' and 'not up to [their] standards', but that they are constrained by work to live there. When questioned about tasks he undertakes in the household, he says he sometimes helps his wife with the cooking, but is 'lazy at washing clothes' and would rather 'iron shirts'.

²¹⁹ Othusitse admitted that they did not have the same educational opportunities that he had, for which they blame their mother

As in most households, the finances are 'managed jointly', yet 'kept separately'²²⁰, and they have an agreement as to who pays for what, and how much 'pocket money' each is allowed to spend. Both Othusitse and Mosire admit to having disagreements over how money is spent. He feels she overspends on clothes for the kids and the hair salon. Mosire comments that 'He thinks it's more important to buy cattle than my hair' and she admits to sometimes hiding items when first buying them and then bringing them out at a much later date when she can argue she has had them for a long time and not be lying. Othusitse too has been known to overspend, mainly in buying drinks with his friends. He comments generally on spending priorities that 'sometimes for men it's long term; for women it's short term which leads to unnecessary expenditure'. The significance of this comment may have its basis in the understanding of the normative role of husbands as 'providers', and also the familiar discourse around the gendered nature of consumption and its corrupting influence.

The Kedimotse Household

Opelo and Mpho Kedimotse are both in their forties and have been together for twenty-six years, fourteen years of which they have been married. They have four children, aged twenty-five, seventeen, sixteen²²¹ and ten. The government house is provided through Mpho's work as Office Manager at the Brigade and she lives here during the week (Monday – Friday) with the two youngest children. They have a family home in Gabane, 49 kilometres south-west of Mochudi, which is where the two older children live permanently, along with her husband when not away on duty as a member of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF).

The photographs, all taken by Mpho, are located at the property in Gabane. Opelo unavailable to take pictures or give an interview in either Gabane or Mochudi, leaves a gap in the research; however, the decision is made to focus on this particular family since in terms of income, they are in the upper bracket, alongside the Bokowe and Morole households, and no others in the State housing area come anywhere close to this level of income²²². The analysis rests on the interviews and commentaries gathered from Mpho and her photographs.

Even though husband and wife are apart during the week, the impression was of a close family. Neither Mpho nor her husband is from Mochudi and not members of the Bakgatla tribe. They are building their 'dream house' in Kopong, a small village located around 25 km north of Gaborone, which Mpho says will have 'two gym rooms, a study and nice garden

²²⁰ It appears that no bank in Botswana offers joint accounts – the account is in one person's name, yet that person can allow a named individual access to the account. Most husbands and wives have their own bank accounts, either current or savings, or post office accounts.

²²¹ The sixteen year old is her late sister's daughter

²²² Other households considered were of young couples recently married with young children, generally earning a lot less, but whose recent consumption was wedding related and this is picked up and analysed in Chapter Seven.

with trees and a lawn'. Their major expenditure over the past 12 months has gone on building this house and buying furniture, with the intention that when completed, they will move home and rent out the Gabane property.

Opelo is soon to retire from the BDF and intends to become a full-time farmer. The family has a cattle post and two *masimo*. In true modest and Batswana style, Mpho says they 'have a few cattle' when questioned on livestock ownership. Priorities for spending that are mentioned first are the employment of a herd boy to look after their cattle, and dermatological cream for the youngest child, born with a congenital skin complaint. These are deemed essential.

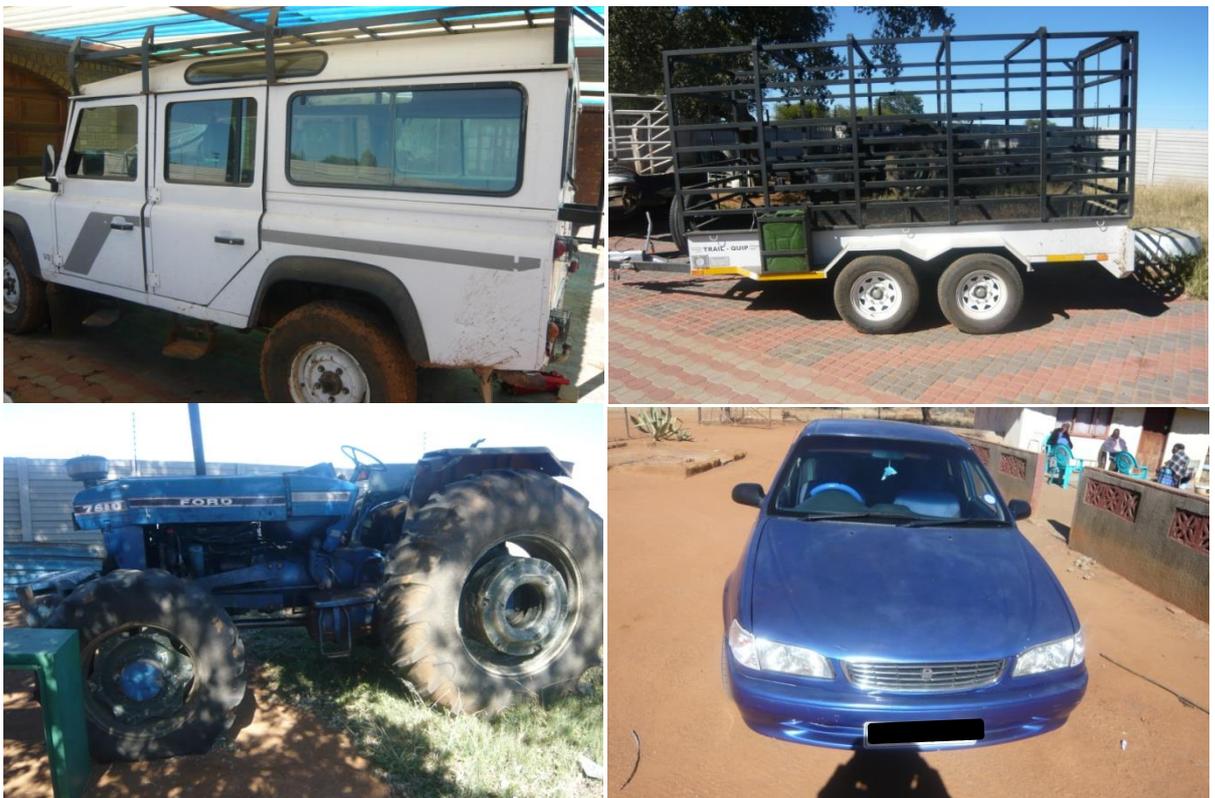


Figure 62: Farming equipment – SUV vehicle, tractor and trailer for transporting livestock; Mpho's car

Mpho's photographs are not so much a lens turned to personal items of her own, as support for her husband's lifestyle as a cattle farmer, and, the locus of family life, their home. She has taken pictures of her husband's Land Rover, trailer and tractor, as well as her own car²²³ and the house in Gabone. Additionally, she has taken pictures of her son, daughter, daughter's baby and her husband. The scope of her photography may have been limited by her location when in possession of the camera, that is, mainly around the Gabone house, and so there are no pictures of the property in Kopong for instance. Firstly, the photographs

²²³ Mpho's husband bought her a car, a Toyota Corolla, as a surprise – she thought he was going to buy cattle with money he had in his savings account. The children call the car 'Twenty cattle'!

reveal a closeness to family members and the importance of family in Mpho's life. The response of 'Can I not take pictures of my children?' to the request to photograph possessions of value to the individual, is illustrative of the strength of social relations, an integral part of her life, as opposed to the lesser importance placed on her own personal material goods. Opelo's SUV, tractor and trailers are chosen by Mpho to be photographed as important possessions to her which is interesting since they are not hers but her husband's: in effect these are objectified as symbolic of Mpho's love and support for her husband and for his chosen lifestyle.

During an interview with Mpho, the possessions she lists as having are the same as found in most Rampedi households: fridge and freezer, television, DVD player, music system, and, slightly less common, microwave and personal computer. She denies having a washing machine, saying that 'they are for lazy people', and, as is usually the case, she carries out the washing for her husband and her young son – 'because I want them to be thoroughly clean'. Her youngest daughter is described as 'very good at washing', as if it is a difficult and particularly worthwhile skill to attain.

Mpho claims a dislike of cooking, which she put down to a lack of knowledge and experience – 'I was the youngest child and everything was done for me' - so she never learnt first-hand how to cook. However, she recently bought, through membership of a *metshelo*²²⁴ group, three large traditional 3-legged pots. Her declared favourite purchases are clothing for the children, and for her mother (when she was still alive) and mother-in-law, such as warm slippers and socks for the winter. In dressing her children, Mpho wants to ensure that they looked presentable, so that they can have pride in the way they appear. She claims she was not so much concerned for her own appearance as for the children's, and she goes on to explain that Batswana are apt to judge people on their appearance. Again, Mpho is showing how important caring for her family is to her – the act of purchasing goods for valued members of her family objectifies her loving familial relations.

Mpho confirms that her husband earns more than her and she believes this is important, but the reason for this appears to be no more than if she is short of money, she can ask him for help, and, on the other hand, she does not earn so much, so is unlikely to be able to help out her husband when he is short of money; in other words, having Opelo as the breadwinner is a practical means of managing the finances in the household at this moment in time. That household provisioning might hold more significance, such as a sense of entitlement to equality in terms of decision-making, does not come into Mpho's thinking, or if it does, she does not regard it as an issue in her relationship. Planning, as in almost all households, is held key to how they manage their finances together.

²²⁴ Community based savings group – typically members save on a monthly basis and at the end of the year, the pot of money is divided up equally.

Mpho had taken a number of pictures of their house in Gabane (Figure 63) which she declares is very special since she and her husband built it together after they got married. She did not take any photographs of the interior of the house, which may place the inside as less important to Mpho and is reflective of the historic and cultural tradition of 'outdoor living' (Larsson 1990).



Figure 63: The Gabane house

When questioned about inheritance, Mpho mentions three items which have been left to her by her sister who died in 2004; these are a glass table, large mirror and video cassette machine – 'I have a smile on my face when I see the table thinking that she left it for me'. Again this sentiment reveals how special relationships are objectified or embodied in material objects.

In summary, each of the three households regard the government house as temporary, some more so than others: for one family it is treated as home, albeit for a planned number of years; for another, circumstances dictate residence; and for the last household it is very much a temporary base. Only in the first household did the photographs reveal the inside of the property and in doing so, help corroborate the opinion that for them, this is 'home'. Each couple has, or is in the process of building, a special property which they plan to move to when the time is right or when they retire. This is invariably in the location of the husband's home village. Big expenditure is channelled in this direction by all three couples.

Each adult is working full time which for all of them is a key means of caring for their family. Only one woman earns more than her husband and yet this is treated as incidental; here, the allocation of household tasks is divided along traditional gendered lines, and superiority in male positionality goes unchallenged. So too in each of the other households, a similar gendered division of labour exists (although in one a maid is employed to help out), yet earning power in one creates more of a sense of entitlement to challenge the traditional household hierarchy. Consumption can cause friction, particularly when deemed unnecessary by the other partner. This was seen within one household in particular which clearly illustrates how consumption is divided along gendered lines: a case of feminine

fripperies versus male bovine power. However, underlying this is the patriarchal understanding of men as 'providers' and women as the consumers, in danger of succumbing to the evils of indulgence.

As previously mentioned, cattle are highly gendered. They are integral to the Tswana way of life in providing food for significant cultural events and are the social currency of *bogadi*²²⁵. Most men in Botswana will have spent some time in their childhood at the cattlepost and the experience is embedded in their 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977). Moreover, much male bonding takes place through discussion of livestock and at the cattlepost (Alverson 1978). It is through the medium of cattle that men establish their identity and thus the association with traditional values which are often at odds with the modernisation of gender relations. Often these traditional relationships and behaviours are captured in proverbs relating to cattle²²⁶, again reinforcing the centrality of cattle to life itself²²⁷. There is a sense, metaphorically, that men seek refuge in the 'cattlepost' and all its connotations at a time of much social change, since they can feel safe here in their masculinity, and without the risk of misunderstanding to their roles. The consumption of livestock is a source of pride, dignity and status to them, and has become a distinctive social marker of masculine identity. This is the case in at least ninety percent of men of a certain age, yet alternative male identities were discovered as in Modise Lekabe (see Chapter Eleven), whose membership of an evangelical church and liking for dressing smartly framed a different kind of masculinity. Yet even he was compelled to call himself a 'farmer' and admit to ownership of cattle, maybe out of embarrassment of being seen as different, or simply the recognition that most households own some livestock which are needed as an important component of Tswana life-course and social events, and representative of communal belonging.

Children's clothing is a priority for mothers, motivated to respond to children's needs and desires. It is through dressing her children well that Mpho contributes to her designation as a 'good' mother and forms an important part of her maternal identity. Children are highly valued, and consumption is an integral part of the love a mother expresses for her children. As Miller (2012:ix) states, 'One of the main reasons we may consume a huge range of quite similar goods such as clothes and food is that these become a kind of vocabulary that allow us richly to express these core relationships – for example, with our children'.

²²⁵ Comaroff and Comaroff (2005) express the relationship the Tswana historically had with cattle: 'To Tswana, it will be recalled, beasts were the prime means of storing and conveying wealth in people and things; also of embodying value in social relations. In fact, control over these relations was one of the objects of owning animals'.

²²⁶ For example, '*monna poo gaa agelwe lesaka*' translated as 'a man, like a bull, cannot be confined to a kraal' (Maundeni 2004), and '*ga dinke di etelelwa pele ke manamagadi*': 'the herd is never led by the cows'.

²²⁷ The significance of cattle can also be seen in the fact that chiefs were once buried anonymously in the kraal alongside the *kgotla*, examples in Mochudi are Kgosi Linchwe I in 1924 and Kgosi Molefi in 1958 (Grant 2012)

The approach to consumption generally, as seen in these households, is cautious, carefully planned and rarely exceeded: there is no obvious desire for excess, and even in the more flamboyant spenders, the cultural restraint on purchasing is apparent. One could argue that these people do not have spare money to spend, yet there is usually choice and the pattern is nearly always the same – investment in housing, in particular as security for the children; paying for children’s education; male desire for cattle and associated lifestyle; female purchases of children’s clothing, perfume, clothes, shoes and bags; TV and unit, plus associated entertainment equipment.

Chapter 13 - Cars, camping and socialising

A similar approach to looking at the nature of consumption practices is extended to three single young men, since they form a part of a very definite category of resident²²⁸. These young men are living in government properties either renting alone or sharing with a colleague, and it is observed that no young, professional women are living in a similar fashion, either alone or in shared accommodation. This would presuppose that single young women are not allocated government housing or given the jobs which go with such accommodation. More likely is the fact that it is more socially acceptable for young women to stay living with their parents (or guardians or other relatives) until they are ready to form a permanent relationship at which point they will co-habit or get married and move away. If an employment or educational opportunity arises which takes them away from their natal home, evidence shows that another relative is likely to be found to provide somewhere to live.

The three young men are asked to take photographs in the same way as previous respondents. Two of these work for the Council, and one for the Brigade; each comes from a different part of Botswana; and two are graduates of the University of Botswana.

Tumelo

It was observed that there are different constraints on consumption depending on family background even though each of the men is earning roughly the same amount. Tumelo, 34, a lecturer at the Brigade, comes from a poor family in a rural area, and is expected to provide for his mother, younger brother and sister. Even though he is one of seven children, since he is the most educated (degree-level), with the best paid job, the burden of financially helping out poorer members of the family falls to him. With regard to future purchases, he says:

‘I am going to buy a bed in the next 2-3 months because my old one is too small. It’s a necessity and I need it a lot. I currently have a bed that does not make me feel like a man. It has to be big and strong and very comfortable.’

And, yes, he does have a girlfriend who comes to stay with him! Tumelo reflects the importance of his consumption being in line with the desired image of himself. What he buys adds to the creation of his identity. He values his second-hand car (although currently out of action awaiting costly repairs), cell phone and cattle – he has a few of these at the family

²²⁸ There were a number of single, young men living in government properties who formed a prominent and appealing category in which to research; the rest of the properties were all inhabited by families. The term ‘young’ is used loosely and covers ages ranging from 27 to 40.

cattle post and reckons they are a good investment – and he saves up every year to go to the Toyota Kalahari Botswana 1,000 km Desert Race²²⁹. The latter has a special place in his consumption priorities: it provides an anticipation of excitement and pleasure, and opportunity for socialising.

To focus briefly on the preferred choice of car, Botswana, as stated earlier, is often referred to by informants as ‘Toyota country’ and it is true that Toyotas are very popular. When questioned further, young men in particular, will express a belief in the total desirability of Toyotas as the car of choice. Part of this may relate to the association of Toyota with the Desert Race. Toyotas were probably one of the first makes of car to be sold in Botswana and have a long history here, and so there seems to be a particular loyalty to the brand²³⁰. The lifestyle of Botswana usually entails a fair amount of travelling, whether to an off-road cattle post or back to one’s village in a rural part of Botswana if only to attend a funeral, and so a car takes on an important utility. On a practical basis, Toyotas can cope with rugged terrain, and have inexpensive and interchangeable parts. Above all, these cars represent a part of Botswana which most people relate to and are familiar with. Tumelo declares, ‘I grew up seeing Toyotas. Botswana is Toyota country. It is not easy for us to go with other makes’. He further states that ‘Toyotas cater for all’. As a reflection of Tswana culture, there is no particular desire to stand out from the crowd, in fact almost the opposite, in that conformity to a group identity is considered more important.

Tumelo’s photographs are of various locations: the inside of his tiny Brigade house (or rather ‘room’ – he shares a kitchen and bathroom); the bar where he likes to go drinking and socialising; his friend’s backyard with ducks; another bar, together with numerous pictures of his friends – men and women, including a baby – and of himself. Tumelo’s commentary with his photographs reveals a frustration with how constrained his style of living is which links back to his comments on buying a new bed. He wants to show how small his wardrobe is and consequently why he has boxes piled up on top of it; his chest of drawers is again small because the house is so small, and so he has problems as to where to keep his clothes and toiletries; and he referred to the TV stand again as ‘small’. He does however proudly display his degree certificate and picture of himself at the Graduation Prom.

²²⁹ The Desert Race, a four-wheel vehicle, cross-country race, which takes place every winter, is probably the biggest sporting and social event in Botswana.

²³⁰ The ‘biography’ of Toyota is not attempted which may throw further light on such attachments to the brand (Appadurai 1986)



Figure 64: Inside Tumelo's small dwelling

The following photograph (Figure 65) is a sample of those taken, representative of Tumelo's leisure time: drinking with friends and listening to jazz, and where he can be happy 'as a man'. This is a young person's scene where social relations are cultivated. Although a few women are observed in the public bars of Mochudi, these drinking establishments are generally regarded as male territory (Suggs 2002: 49), in particular, for young, single men: this is how they like to spend their spare time – drinking and socialising. From my research, there is evidence that alcohol consumption is primarily a male pastime, and whether at home or elsewhere, particularly for women, it is considered 'shameful' to drink in front of one's children. As Suggs attests in his Mochudi-based research, 'Even at parties, women tend to drink soft drinks rather than alcohol, particularly if children are still awake' (2002:51).



Figure 65: Local bar and jazz club

There is a marked difference between the clientele at one of these bars, and the unregulated, shebeen hidden away in a backyard. The latter, location for one of my focus groups, is a gathering place for mainly older and elderly men. David Suggs points to the extent of the social divide between the two as 'stark and engenders feelings of resentment' (2002: 56), which may exaggerate the situation. There is a noticeable generational divide and an economic dimension in that locally brewed beer at a shebeen is a lot cheaper than bottled beer. It is as Suggs states, '.... where [a man] he drinks, what he drinks, how much and how frequently he drinks, are all tied to his status in the cash economy' (2002: 54). And yet more than that, there is a social dimension, the shebeen attracts a very local clientele who are part of the fabric of that community; and this is not a comfortable place for outsiders. Evidence would suggest that the 'divide' is not so much economic as social. Suggs argues that it is the development of a capitalist economy that has changed the nature of alcohol consumption from a traditional community-building pastime and reward for agricultural co-operation, to one of competition and individualism; the only aspect that hasn't changed is how gendered it is (Suggs 1996). The explanation has some validity yet appears all-encompassing and fails to highlight the social dimensions of labour movement ('incomers') which have created a parallel existence to the original tight communities and provided an opportunity for bars to flourish; and on the other hand, the shebeen, run by women, still draws the local male community together even if it is not post-agricultural production.

Suggs' emphasis on the drinking in bars as 'conspicuous consumption' (2002:56) is not recognised as the primary motivation, although one could argue over the definition: first and foremost a lack of social entertainment²³¹ in Mochudi for salaried, mainly young, people

²³¹ It appears this was recognised by Schapera in Mochudi in the 1930s where he refers to the 'monotony of what at best is hardly a colourful existence, even to the people themselves' and how 'times have become dull' (1940, 1971:154-155)

feeds the attraction of the bar where they are able to meet and build relationships with like-minded individuals.



Figure 66: Liquor Association hoarding promoting responsible drinking
(Photograph by Researcher)

A third drinking option has been developed commercially, that of 'Chibuku', an opaque African beer in a carton²³², which is available at roadside 'bars' or depots, and provides an alternative to backyard brewing. Historically, beer brewing has not had an unopposed passage: Schapera refers to the impact of Christianity as curtailing such women's work which had the effect of making it a 'more specialised occupation' (1940, 1971:118). He also cites a time when women, particularly widows, as beer makers were affected by the chief's temporary banning of the drinking of beer in 1932 (1940, 1971:124), and similarly, forty-four years earlier, laws against drinking were attempted (Suggs 2002:48). And recently, the Government introduced a hefty increase in tax on alcohol and subsequent regulation of shebeens and bars, aimed at reducing the level of drinking in the population²³³. However, this does not diminish the fact that beer consumption for men is an intrinsic part of being a man and significant as a means of constructing masculinity – 'In a very real sense, men drink *to be men*' (Suggs 2002:52).

The photograph of a public address board (Figure 66) located in the suburbs of Gaborone urging young people to drink responsibly is part of campaign by the Botswana Alcohol

²³² Chibuku is brewed locally in Gaborone and has a limited shelf life

²³³ This was reportedly driven by a personal crusade of President Khama as set out in his inaugural address (Lucas 2008)

Industry Association (BAIA)²³⁴. This particular hoarding shows young women and is part of a series. If the analysis above is correct, men are socially under more pressure to consume alcohol which would assume a higher percentage of men at risk of being harmed, however, in the era of HIV and AIDS and heightened awareness of the dangers of unprotected sex, it is girls that are seen as particularly vulnerable (Underwood et al 2011). It is interesting to note that three out of the five girls pictured are white which would indicate that the predominant or more socially acceptable image of a Tswana girl compared to a white Western woman is one that does not generally drink alcohol or at least over-indulge. However, research shows that adolescent girls are desirous of a modern social identity which includes such behaviour as drinking alcohol (ibid) and renders them more vulnerable as a result.

Tefo

From a well-off family in the Southern District of Botswana, Tefo, 29, shares a house with a work colleague at the Council, Moemedi, 27. They have lived in the same house together for around two years, and for Moemedi two years previously, and 'through understanding their differences and dislikes, have learnt to share everything'. Tefo obliges in taking twelve photographs, all of them situated inside the house, apart from one which features his car. There are the usual pictures of television and entertainment unit, microwave oven, and bed. An automatic washing machine and a superior fridge freezer with drink dispenser, both belonging to Moemedi, are photographed, also the latest in fitness equipment – a fitness chair; these they share. More personal belongings shown are of Tefo's guitar, which he bought three years ago when 'searching for a hobby'; and a 'sacza', batik wall hanging of huge personal significance²³⁵.

Other photographs show a sofa and two bean-bag type chairs, which belong to Tefo:

'I needed to bring a bit of ownership into the house, something which can just say, this is me. And that is why they are colourful – I don't think I show a lot of people my colourful side. The houses are too small to accommodate all that you want. And my couch - again a sense of ownership – at least I have something that is 'me' in the house.'

This is a revealing description of the need to have one's possessions present to have a sense of belonging to a place and to make it feel like a home²³⁶. Goods which are appropriated and objectified say something about the individual, and are those which are most valued – they

²³⁴ BAIA was launched in 2010 as a means of showing industry concern regarding the harmful effects of overindulgence in alcoholic drinking.

²³⁵ His own handiwork: representative of the activities undertaken when working as a professional teacher in which first prize in a National competition was achieved

²³⁶ '....things are at the heart of the creation of a sense of place and of its recreation' (Marcoux 2001:74)

are the identity markers. And as Tefo articulates, since the houses are small, they do not provide sufficient space to fully express one's personality. This reflects the frustration of Tumelo with regard the lack of space in his abode, which in turn translates to a lack of choice in how to express one's identity through material goods.

The last two photographs are of a barbeque or braai stand and camping chairs which reflect Tefo's love of outdoor entertaining, camping and socialising. The grill he borrowed from a friend when recently entertaining work colleagues which would normally be outside, but was kept indoors to prevent rust forming. This item Tefo described as something every young man has, since 'it's a very common social custom, particularly for a young man like me: we just buy meat, buy drinks and your friends come around.'

The camping chairs, folded up against a wall, waiting for their next outing, go with Tefo 'everywhere'. Like Tumelo, he goes camping every winter for the Desert Race 'with the boys' and 'the fun part is the camping – braaiing meat, drinking beer and socialising'. The late age of marrying of most men could be partly explained by the lack of enthusiasm of young men to give up this lifestyle to get married with the perceived restrictions on their freedom. And historically and culturally, young Tswana boys were socialised to spending long periods of time at the cattle post in rural areas, lacking modern amenities and absent from female company (Schapera 1940, 1971:33).

Moses

Older than the other two single men, Moses, 40, is contemplating getting married to Maina, 35, his girlfriend of 8 years who lives nearby with her parents. He, like his girlfriend, works for the Council and at the time of the interview had been on strike²³⁷.

Moses took a modest six photographs and, like Tefo, they are all located inside apart from one of his van. The first shows a large armchair, one of Moses' 'favourite assets' and one that represents comfort. The next is of an exercise machine, a recent purchase and needed as a means to keep fit: Moses enjoys going out to the bars, drinking and socialising, which is not conducive to staying lean and healthy. A set of photographs would not be complete without one or two pictures of a television together with DVD, radio and music system, and decoder – this is Moses' window on the world where he gathers news, sports events and action movies. An electric fan to keep the house cool is also shown in the same picture.

Moses has a Nissan van which he bought with a loan 4 years ago. He chose this particular model for essentially practical reasons, to help at his mother's home with transporting things such as firewood and building materials. He admits that he is required to help his mother and brother financially. The van objectifies Moses' personal and social system of value

²³⁷ The mass public strike lasted 8 weeks, April – June 2011

(Miller 2001c). A picture of the kitchen shows a large fridge-freezer, microwave (new), kettle, a lidded pot on the gas-fired stove and basket of spices. Moses' only comment was that he needed the fridge in which to keep food and drink.



Figure 67: Moses' van; view of kitchen

All these photographs add up to a comfortable yet practical style of living, revealing no sentiment or decoration, and no excess. Currently, Moses is saving 'a bit' for getting married and intends to buy some more cattle (he will need these for *bogadi*) to add to the few kept at the family cattle post. He appears in no hurry to change his current way of living; as Alverson (1978:49) observes, 'unless a person is experiencing events, time does not exist; likewise with age.' The expectations of society for a person to achieve certain milestones by a certain age is very broad; 'one cannot age except through experience' (ibid). This is the cultural backdrop to the sense that Moses feels little pressure to get married by a certain time.

In summary, looking at the category of salaried single men, their consumption patterns are very similar. They all encounter constraints by the physical limitations of space which causes varying degrees of annoyance. Where they do not differ from other categories of people is in their desire to have a television and associated entertainment equipment, and kitchen appliances such as fridge freezer and microwave, where they have responsibility for kitting out the kitchen.

There appears to be more emphasis on consumption of a vehicle which is needed to help facilitate a lifestyle of getting out and about. Maybe because it represents a significant financial outlay, this is a prominent asset, however, the vehicle is chosen carefully and has to reflect the right image within monetary constraints. It becomes an extension of themselves and part of their own identity. The type of vehicle also reflects the values held by its owner, in that a pick-up van would talk of transporting goods, essentially a work-horse, which would place its practicability above other values. In the case of Moses, his van represents the supportive relationship he provides his family. Another area which is prominent for the

young men is the attention paid to the comfort of places to sit or lie down – the couch, armchair or bed.

Elements of consumption which appear to be more part of this generation are the desire to own fitness equipment and items to assist the outdoor socialising lifestyle, such as camping chairs and a braai stand. The former is another aspect of self-image, the desire to retain one's fitness and body shape; the latter, material goods that facilitate the belonging of this particular social group – a place where young single men can be happy as males together. Both exercise equipment and camping gear have distinct gendered dimensions – few Tswana women participate in such activities.

Chapter 14 – Conclusions

A key message from my research centres on combating the widely held view that the relationship between consumption and modernisation leads to a homogenised consumer culture. This ethnographic study, following up the work of Isaac Schapera (1940, 1971) and studying the nature of social relationships in Rampedi Ward, provides an illustration of the dynamics of development towards a consumer society which could be applicable to other developing and emerging economies. Botswana offers an important and pre-eminent example of a country which has developed rapidly from meagre beginnings to achieve the status of a middle income country. It has exhibited a determined drive to modernise, and is successful in striving for a basic modern living standard for most people: this can be seen in the modest neighbourhood of Rampedi in which all homesteads have access to electricity and the availability of clean water piped into the home. Incomes are low for many people living in this neighbourhood, however, with virtually free healthcare and education, the quality of life is potentially good.

My research reveals the nature of modern day Botswana, a society which strongly adheres to communal and familial modes of socialisation. What is particularly noteworthy is the development of 'modern' Botswana lifestyles, encompassing modern consumer goods, yet with the centrality of communal activity. This invites the comparison to many social and economic studies which point to the development of a modern consumer society leading to more individualistic behaviour. Increased opportunity to consume is commonly thought to encourage individualism, based on concepts of self-reflexivity (Giddens 1991, 1997), that is, freedom to choose what to buy and when, and to promote certain lifestyles. Individualistic behaviour is seen as the opposite of communal activity, and this dichotomy is central to theories of progression from traditional to modern societies (Goody 2004). As stated by O'Brien et al (1999):

'The reason for this preoccupation with the modern and modernity is simply stated. It is, at one and the same time, a question about the implications of social change for each and every individual person and the very trajectory of the societies in which we live; about what possibilities exist or remain, if any, for inducing collective social progress, for controlling what Giddens calls the 'juggernaut' of contemporary global society' (1999:1)

Arguably, Botswana demonstrates 'collective social progress', in which a nation state can modernise alongside societal values of communal responsibility and obligation. Furthermore, Botswana does not conform to the idea that all 'modern' states develop a so-called consumer society. Giddens (1991, 1997) claimed that in 'late modernity' the self becomes a reflexive project and is created and recreated through a plurality of consumer choices which augment the sense of individuality. The element of choice is about the ability to decide what to consume within societal restrictions. This 'choice' is buffeted by

intermediaries of various kinds: advertisers, market researchers, lobbyists, business marketers and so forth (Malpass et al 2007). However, the success of such influences in directing individual choice in a certain direction is dependent on the values and belief systems in that society and how well embedded they are. For example, marketing faculties are seen to thrive in North America where consumerist, wealth accumulating and materialist values are very strong (Woodward 2007). A consumer culture and society is commonly thought of as coming into existence when huge strides are made from subsistence living to abundance (McCrosen 2009; Dugger and Peach 2009). However, it does not automatically follow that a society that has experienced very little materially will seek to consume excessively when it is enabled to do so.

In looking more closely at the nature of consumption found in Rampedi, I have used an organising technique within the thesis which emphasises the distinction between social and individual consumption. It is recognised that by combining evidence obtained from different sources, Section Two, in effect, could have been subsumed into Section One. For example, the expression of desire for more plastic chairs on behalf of Mrs Sakeng to more readily accommodate people at communal events could easily have been included in the chapters pertaining to funerals or weddings; or Yolenda Rumsey's choice of black formal shoes singled out as important to 'wear [them] to funerals, weddings and to church', likewise could have been placed within these chapters. Often the individual choice of consumption is evidence of a lifestyle based on communal activity; at other times, choices of consumption more obviously relate to the self, such as clothing, reflecting the stage of life reached, but the lines are blurred, since, as explored in the body of the thesis, even the purchase of plastic chairs is a reflection of the self (see Boitumelo Sakeng, Page 126). The message conveyed is that consumption, importantly, is a means of connecting to other people, whether on a one to one basis or communally, and it is the value base of that society which places varying weights on one or the other. In emphasising the argument that increased wealth does not automatically lead to a homogenised consumer culture, it is the sociality found in Rampedi, based on deeply rooted values and morality privileging communal belonging, which provides an alternate view.

Far from only analysing communal events, much of the thesis is about dyadic relationships, explored through the home environment as seen in Section Two. It is argued that a better understanding of relational mechanisms is obtained through looking intimately at families and relationships within this setting. Sections on single people have been included as a means to more fully understand the nature of society in Rampedi, in particular, young men, as well as wealthy older women who form a unique segment of society. The effects of social change are observable through the different approaches to consumption and in contrasting the three main research areas, from more established and traditional households to more transient and 'modern' households.

One of the key mediums used in capturing the essence of consumption in Rampedi is photography, yet this is a highly contested area (Prosser 1998). The method employed in which respondents take photographs themselves, is known as 'autophotography' (Clancy & Dollinger 1993; Ziller 1990; Felstead et al 2004), and this is combined with exploratory interviewing. It is recognised that when faced with taking photographs, a taken-for-granted object may be overlooked in the respondent's identification of significant personal consumption, and yet that object may form a vital element of the Botswana lifestyle. And conversely, undue attention may be paid to another object, possibly one which the respondent believes should be highlighted either to satisfy the perceived needs of the researcher or to put themselves in a favourable light vis-a-vis the researcher, which could have the effect of skewing the research findings. Closely linked to this, there is the ontological aspect to the person taking the photograph as to what is 'worthy' of being photographed (Harrison 2004), which points to the fact that photography is socially regulated and therefore constrained by societal values and norms of the person taking photographs. As indicated, the researcher's positionality can have a bearing on results, and for this method of data collection to be successful a high level of reflexive awareness has to exist on behalf of the researcher (Felstead et al 2004). It was deemed necessary to gain a good level of trust and empathy with respondents which was helped by the interventions of my research assistant. The age and gender of the respondent, as well as other characteristics, define the researcher-informant relationship, and it is with an understanding of the importance of openness to how these pictures are created that informs the project, together with a consistent application of the underlying theoretic approach. It is a collaborative relationship which rewards with rich data.

Most households participating had experience of taking their own photographs, either using a camera or mobile phone, and keeping photo albums, as well as displaying photographs in their homes. Some respondents wished to share photographs taken previously, mostly of significant events in their lives such as weddings or holidays, the importance of which was discussed with them. Botswana is no exception to a global phenomenon in which contemporary photography is being transformed by new technology where digital cameras, the rise of the smart phone facility and connection to social media sites encourage young people in particular to experiment. The photographic image becomes a means of instant communication, of maintaining group solidarity and identity, not so much a repository to remember an event, person or object (Harrison 2004). And it is the cell phone which has become a prized 'gift' – one of the three 'c's - cash, car and cell phone – in transactional relationships.

It is highlighted in this research, that gifts, an obvious aspect of consumption, form an important dynamic in relationships, in that goods are appropriated as a means to develop intimacy. The courting couple rely on the giving of gifts to signify the nature of the relationship and the stage reached. Here a distinction is made between routine

contributions and romantic and surprise gifts in which the former is regarded as part of the boyfriend and girlfriend contract, and the latter, depending on size and frequency, an indication of depth of love and seriousness of the relationship. Gifts keep a relationship alive and may be necessary even in marital relationships to reassure and maintain an emotional attachment. In Giddens' (1992) portrayal of the 'pure relationship' as a globalised norm within modern societies, no consideration is given to the role of material goods and gifting which are so embedded in the social structure of relationships in this part of the world. It is argued that a modern dyadic relationship here relies on the intertwining of emotion and materiality, and its basis may be seen to extend from a history of male provisioning and the Tswana humanistic approach of *botho*.

As a means of objectifying social relations, gifts are used to cement relationships between families within the *patlo* process, and in contributing at kitchen top-ups and baby showers. More than this, in evoking Miller's (1998b) concept of 'making love', giving is not solely in the material form of gifts, but also through material acts. This is important since, within the concept of *botho*, the element of giving to another is a fundamental basis of the functioning of society in Botswana, where the approach is that no person should be left in need. Neves and du Toit (2013:108) point to the system of social reciprocity in their research in South Africa in which 'material and monetary exchanges of gifts.... are one medium of exchange in relationships of social reciprocity; favours, gifts and other forms of value such as unremunerated care work are another'. In echoing Durham's (2001) findings, Neves and du Toit (ibid) describe the 'interplay of entitlement and obligation', which they make plain is not limited to kinship relations. The implications of this are seen very clearly in Mochudi in the inclusiveness of the communal events such as funerals and weddings, where the provision of a hot meal for all is an accepted *modus operandi*.

An important aspect of any marital relationship, and revealing as to the reification of gender relations, is the handling of household finances which, as indicated in the thesis, is found most often to be the subject of deliberate planning and consensus-seeking from both parties. A picture of the relationship in question is built up through understanding the constraints and influences on the couple's lives, for example, in terms of their employment, where they come from, and whether they have child responsibilities. Gender roles, although slowly breaking away from patriarchal roots, still experience traditionally based attitudes, as seen for example in cases where a wife earns more than her husband. Men in later life usually establish their identity through the medium of livestock which is an alternate regime of value. Here, the association is with traditional ideals which are often at odds with the modernisation of gender relations. In looking closely at the handling of money within marital relationships, parallels are drawn at a national level with how the Government approaches budget management, which shows a level of caution, consensus building through talking through issues, and planning. Such characteristics are embedded in the Botswana national psyche and captured in the spirit of *botho* (Ngwenya 2004).

Botswana is not unique in exhibiting societal characteristics at variance to stated projections of Western global modernity: the subjectivities of modernity, for instance, in Asia have been researched and written about and comparisons made with Western cultures (Sen and Stivens 1998; Clammer 1997 and 1995, 2013). Yet other studies specifically highlight the effects of the modernising 'juggernaut' (Giddens 1990, 2012): Brad Weiss (2009) portrays the effects of neoliberalism in Arusha, Tanzania, where processes of hyper-individualism 'have made it increasingly difficult to experience a sense of mutual belonging essential to an orientation toward reproducing social forms' (2009:22). Here Weiss is particularly relating to young men whose lives and futures are felt to be increasingly uncertain in a globalised market place. The sense of living on the cusp of either success or failure is palpable in his narrative (ibid). The social milieu he portrays may not be unique to Arusha, yet it is not readily identifiable in Mochudi – in fact, almost the opposite: the society that is evident in present day Mochudi, founded on the concept of *botho*, places importance on communal belonging where people have a strong sense of their roots and their obligations and responsibilities towards each other, and this is in the face of globalisation and neoliberal influences.

The implications of these findings on debates around sustainable consumption are profound: not every society will develop a Western-style approach to consumption, entailing at times excess and the escalation of conspicuous consumption, as forecast by some commentators (Schor 1999). Furthermore, arguments around well-being claim that an increase in material wealth does not always lead to greater happiness, and that a point is reached whereby more goods, or aspiration for them, does not deliver improvements in conditions for well-being, and can lead to the opposite (Jackson 2006). There is widespread concern that rising consumption – which is encouraged as a means of driving economic growth – is exacerbating global warming and breaching planetary boundaries (Jackson 2009). Global development today is continuing at an even faster pace, with projections of rising numbers of middle class consumers pointing to major shifts in spending power from developed nations to emerging economies (Ferreira et al 2013; Kharas 2010). What my research findings show is that the underlying values within a society are key to predicting likely consumerist tendencies and these do not always reflect the norms of a global homogenised consumer culture.

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Appendix 1

Map of Botswana indicating location of Mochudi



Mochudi

Appendix 2

Background information to Botswana, including gender statistics

Botswana is a drought-stricken landlocked nation in southern Africa, roughly the size of France or Kenya, in which most of its small population (2m) inhabits the narrow eastern and northern corridors of the country. There are two main seasons: winter (May to July) and summer (August to April); the rains usually coming in the latter part of summer and this constitutes the main period for growing crops. At independence in 1966, Botswana was considered one of the poorest countries of the world (Maipose 2008). However, a year later diamonds were discovered at Orapa, one of the largest known kimberlites in the world, and later at Letlhakane and Jwaneng. Copper and nickel were also discovered at Selibe-Phikwe. Mining has transformed the economy, which had the reputation as one of the fastest growing in the world, averaging an annual rate of about 9% (World Bank 2008), for thirty years until the mid-1990s.

Botswana's success in growing to an upper middle-income country, with a per capita income of US\$8,000 (UNDP 2010), is in part because it has had a stable and effective government²³⁸ (Robinson 2009). The traditional governance structures of the dominant Tswana tribes which have remained largely in place²³⁹ emphasise 'broad consultation and consensus-building, a system described.... as 'gentle authoritarianism'' (Green 2008:193). The government set up state-owned companies and nationalised all mineral rights (ibid). The approach to running the country has been based on planning, with six-year National Development Plans (ibid). Botswana was a British Protectorate, a status that was sought by three prominent chiefs in 1885 from Britain at a time when they feared being overrun by the Boers. The period lasted until 1966 and was 'light-touch' colonialism or seen as 'colonial neglect' (Selolwane 2012:4); mainly it could be argued because Botswana offered very little to the 'colonial' power. At the time of gaining Independence in 1966, Botswana was ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world (ibid), with a per capita income of US\$80, and the majority dependent on agriculture (Ntseane and Solo 2007:129). There was a mere 10kms of tarmac road, less than 50 university graduates and little access to healthcare, sanitation, water, electricity and other services. A programme of widespread investment in infrastructure in the country was initiated using revenues from diamonds. Today, the government owns 51 percent of Debswana, the biggest diamond mining company in Botswana, which generates roughly half of all government revenues. State education through to and including tertiary level is almost cost-free to Botswana citizens, likewise healthcare, where 84 percent of the population is within five kilometres of a health facility²⁴⁰, and water and electricity are subsidised.

²³⁸ Botswana is governed by a democratically elected multi-party parliamentary system in which executive power is exercised by the Cabinet, with a President dependent on always keeping a majority of support in the National Assembly.

²³⁹ Botswana operates a dual legal system in which customary law exists alongside common law.

²⁴⁰ SADC Gender Protocol 2012 Barometer published by Gender Links

The Botswana of today is not on such an upward curve with the high rate of economic growth waning, in part due to the recent global downturn. Even though beef exports and high expenditure tourism have continued, significant headway in diversifying wealth generation away from diamonds has been difficult. As is common in resource-based economies that fail to diversify, Botswana is suffering from high unemployment (average 17.5% with significantly higher levels for women than men) (World Bank 2009) and huge inequality in terms of wealth distribution²⁴¹, although this is now reducing (Statistics Botswana 2011). Even so, Botswana has persistent poverty and the challenge has been how to spread wealth more evenly across the population. Rural populations²⁴², through lack of investment by the government, have been particularly affected: 20.7% of the population lives below the national poverty line (ibid:1)²⁴³.

Significantly, the HIV and AIDS pandemic has had huge social and economic repercussions, with Botswana being one of the worst hit countries. HIV infection runs at 24.6% of the population (Gender Links 2012:219), 57 per cent of which is female and 43 per cent male (ibid). HIV and AIDS awareness is high, although, according to the government, behaviour change is lagging behind. Behaviours identified as fuelling the spread of HIV are: multiple concurrent sexual partners, sexual abuse and unsafe sexual practices - indicative of women's lack of power in negotiating sexual relationships (McDonald 1996; McIlwaine and Datta 2004) - and alcohol and substance abuse (Weiser et al 2006). The government has set a target of no new infections by 2016, included in Botswana's strategic vision for its future, Vision 2016. Every person who needs ARVs has access to them free of charge, yet there are still concerns over levels of new HIV infection, particularly with respect to young women.

The Botswana government is committed to the effective implementation of international instruments, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and CEDAW, to remove discrimination against women and promote gender equality (Gender Links 2012). Within the labour market, women feature strongly and the numbers at a professional and managerial level are increasing. Botswana has a history of educating girls more than boys since the latter were sent away in their early years to spend long periods of time at the cattle post (Van Allen 2009). During fieldwork for this research 2010-11, it was noticeable that there were a number of prominent women in senior positions: the Attorney General, the Governor of the Bank of Botswana, the CEO of Orange Botswana, MD of the Botswana Development

²⁴¹ However, wealth inequality is purported to be an inevitable product of capitalist activity (Muller 2013)

²⁴² About 47% of the population live in rural areas (UN Habitat 2010)

²⁴³ Statistics taken from the 2009/10 Botswana Core Welfare Indicators Survey (BCWIS) indicate a decline in the proportion of persons living below the poverty datum line at the national level, from 30.6 percent in 2002/2003 to 20.7 percent in 2009/10 (Statistics Botswana 2011:1)

Hillbom (2008: 191) articulates Botswana's successful economic growth as 'pre-modern growth without development' in reference to Kuznets, who argued that for any society the end goal was to reach 'modern economic growth' (MEG) which exceeds the 'pre-modern growth' phase. Botswana has yet to reach this stage, and Hillbom states that more economic, social and political changes are needed.

Corporation, the CEO of Botswana Tourism Organisation, and the Minister of Education, to name a few. The women's movement in Botswana hit a peak in the 1980s and 1990s with the formation of Emang Basadi²⁴⁴ originally a research group at the University of Botswana (Molokomme 1991). They achieved a high profile in their victories, such as the case for equal citizenship (Citizenship Act²⁴⁵ 1995), and orchestrated a review of laws which affected women's rights, and published the first women's manifesto, leading to workshops for political parties and female candidates. However, since the early 2000s, there has been little activity from the women's movement in Botswana (Bauer 2011). Even so, there have been acts introduced or amended to facilitate greater gender equality, such as the Abolition of the Marital Power Act 2004 and the Domestic Violence Act 2008. In Botswana's dual legal system, customary law is applied alongside common law. Many traditional practices which are prejudicial to women are supported within customary law (which has variances depending on the approach of the tribal administration in the locality), and customary law often contradicts the equality measures established in common law (SADC 2009).

The gender pay gap, estimated to stand at 23.2% in 2007, widened considerably 1998 - 2005 (Chubb et al 2008). This has been exacerbated by a history of occupational segregation which has discriminated against women (Schapera 1940, 1971). Research into the gendering of schooling (Dunne 2007: 499) reports 'pervasive and inequitable gender/sexual practices' which lead to early stereotyping of gender and sexual identities. Of students enrolled at university, 53 per cent are female, yet only 28 per cent of students studying science subjects are women; this percentage reverses to 64 in Humanities subjects (Gender Links 2012:111). Adult literacy for both men and women is around 84 per cent (ibid:99). Political representation by women remains low: 8.0 per cent of parliamentary seats held by women²⁴⁶; 21 per cent have Cabinet positions²⁴⁷; and women hold 19 per cent of local government seats (ibid:72). Women form 48 per cent of the workforce (ibid) and have equal access to land ownership (Griffiths 2012).

²⁴⁴ A Setswana phase meaning 'stand up, women' (Molokomme 1991)

²⁴⁵ Unity Dow, a Botswana citizen and professional lawyer, claimed, on constitutional and international human rights grounds, that the constitution of Botswana discriminated against women since children could only take the father's citizenship (Dow was married to an American). The government, appealing to customary law, argued that the constitution was premised on 'the traditional view' in that a child born to a married couple belonged to the father in all ways. The government did not convince the judges in the High Court and the law was eventually amended in 1995 (Geisler 2006)

²⁴⁶ Botswana is one of two (out of 15) countries that has not signed the Southern African Development Community Gender and Development Protocol (SADC 2012) which states a target of 30% of women in political representation, and 50% of decision-making positions in public and private sectors to be held by women.

²⁴⁷ Botswana is going backwards in terms of women's political representation to an even weaker position. The political structures and processes are male-gendered and are the legacy of '*Kgotla* democracy' (Van Allen 2009). Yet, within the political parties (which have more female than male members), women themselves exacerbate women's political marginalisation, through actively supporting the election of men and husbands (Geisler 1995). There is a lack of a broad-based women's movement to push for political change (Bauer 2011).

Appendix 3

Consent Form – for interviews and focus groups

This form is available in both English and Setswana
Mokwalo o o kwadilwe ka Setswana le Sekgowa

Introduction – Madume

Hello, I am Juliet Colman, doing research in Botswana as part of a PhD in the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom.

Dumelang, leina lame ke Juliet Colman. Ke moithuti ko unibesithing ya East Anglia ko Enyelane.

Nature of Study – Maikaelelo a ditshekatsheko tsame

This research project is looking at social change, and in particular, what changes increased wealth has brought. We are interested in consumption choices and patterns and how these differ for men and women.

The research is purely of an academic nature. It is being carried out under a research permit from the Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs.

Ka tsela ya go ikitsise, patlisiso e, e itebaganya le diphetogo tsa setho, go re go fetogile eng bogolo jang diphetogo tse di tsisitsweng ke kgolo ya itsholelo. Re kgalhegela go itse ka ditshwetso tsa mokgwa wa theko le tiriso ya dithoto le ka fa di farologanang ka teng mo go borre le bomme. Ditshekatsheko tsame ke tiro ya sekolo eseng gape. Di dirwa jaana ka tseletso go tsawa mo lephateng la pereko le selegae.

Right to refuse or end participation in the study – Tetla ya go gana go tsaya karolo kana go emisa potsoloko

If you want to, you can decide not to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, at any time you have the right to refuse to answer any question that you do not want to discuss, and you can stop an interview at any time.

Itse fa o na le tetla ya go gana go tsaya karolo mo puisanong e. Le fa o na le kgalhego ya go tsaya karolo, itse fa o na le tetla ya go gana go araba dipotso tse o sa batleng go di araba. O ka emisa puisano e ka nako nngwe le nngwe e o batlang puisano e e ema.

Study procedures – Tsamaiso ya puisano ya rona

If you have any queries about the interview or my study in general, either now or afterwards, I can be contacted on the telephone number written on the bottom of this form.

Fa o na le dipotso ka puisano ya rona kgotsa sepe fela se se amanang le ditshekatsheko tsame, o ka nteletsa ko mogaleng o o ko bofelong jwa foromo e.

The interview will be conducted in English or through a Setswana speaking interpreter. The questions can be sent to you in advance if you request it. It would greatly assist my research if I could tape record the interview for accuracy purposes. The tapes will subsequently be destroyed. Should you object to the recording, responses will be recorded in note format?

Puisano ya rona e tla nna ka Sekgowa, kana ka Setswana, ka thuso ya moranodi. Ke ka go romelela dipotso tse re tla buang ka tsone, pele fa re kopana, fa o batla ke dira jalo. Ke kopa go dirisa sekapamantswe go nthusa go tsaya dikgang jaaka o ne o di bua. Fa ke sena go kwalolola mafoko

gotswa mo sekapamantsweng, sekapamantswe seo se tla a tshubiwa. Le gale, fa o sa battle ke dirisa sekapamantswe, le gone go siame ka ke tla kwala dintlhakgolo tsa pisano ya rona fa re ntse re bua.

Focus Groups

Anonymity – Leina la gago le sephiri

The answers you give as part of this focus group will be anonymised and will not be attributable to you and will be fully confidential. All members of the group should show respect for each other's views. The views you share together with me and yourselves should be regarded as confidential by all members of this group.

Itse fa leina la gago le sena go supywa gope kana ka tsela epe mo batho ba ka bonang gore dikarabo tsa gago e ne ele dife. Re kopa gore batsayakarolo botlhe ba fane tlotlo, ka mmualebe o bua la gagwe. Re kopa gape gore rotlhe re itlame gore se re se buang fa, se tla itsiwe fela ke rona, ebile ga gona ope yo o tla tlotlelang ope gape gore maikutlo a batsayakarolo ba bangwe mo dikgangnyeng tsa rona e ne e le afe.

Agree to participate – Tumalano ya go tsaya karolo

The project information was read and explained to me clearly. Anything I did not understand was explained to me and all my questions were answered.

Ke baletswe ka bo ka tthalosetswa sengwe le sengwe se se mo mokwalong o. Dipotso tsame tsotlhe mabapi le puisano e di ne tsa arabiwa.

Signature of Interviewee: _____ Date: _____
Monwana wa motsaakarolo

Juliet Colman
Postgraduate Researcher, University of East Anglia, UK

Tel: 72962519

Appendix 4

Briefing for use of camera

We will leave a digital camera with you for a period of 3 – 7 days, for your use. **We would like you to take photographs of possessions which you have bought or been given, which are important to you.** We will arrange with you when the camera will be collected. It is your responsibility to make sure that the camera does not get mistreated or damaged.

Ke tla tlogela khamera le wena sebaka sa malatsi a mararo (3) go ya go a supa (7) go re o e dirise. Re eletsa go re o tsee dinepe tsa dithoto tse o di rekileng kgotsa tse o di filweng tse di leng botlhokwa mo go wena. Re tla rulaganya le wena go re khamera e tla tsewa leng. Ke maikarabelo a gago go netefatsa go re khamera e babalesegile mme ga e tsene mo bodiphatseng ba go ka senyega.

See photocopied sheet A for explanation of parts of the camera.

1. To **turn on** the camera – press the Power button (1); to turn it off – press power button again
2. On the ‘mode’ button (2), make sure you are on ‘Smart capture’ – KEEP IT SIMPLE - Take **still** pictures only
3. To take a picture, press the shutter button (3)
4. To **review** a picture taken, press the review button (4); to go back to taking pictures, press the review button again. Whilst in Review mode, use directional arrows (4a) to review other photos.
5. To **delete** a picture, press delete button (5). You will be given options – to delete current picture, scroll up using directional arrows (4a) to ‘picture’ and press OK (5b). If you wish to delete ALL pictures, scroll up to ‘All’ and again press OK.
6. Try not to use **Flash**, but if you do need to, press the Flash button (6) repeatedly until the LCD displays the desired flash mode.

Use the camera only during the day

Switch off camera immediately after using to preserve the battery life

Solve camera problems:

Camera does not turn on or off	Return to Researcher
Camera buttons/controls don't function	Return to Researcher
Flash does not fire	Reset the flash setting on the camera
When looking at Picture taken, a blue or black screen is displayed instead of a picture	Take another picture
You cannot take a picture	Turn the camera off, then on again If it still does not work, return to Researcher

Appendix 5

Consent Form – for second stage interviewing and film use

Introduction – Madume

Hello, I am Juliet Colman, doing research in Botswana as part of a PhD in the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, United Kingdom.

Dumelang, leina lame ke Juliet Colman. Ke moithuti ko unibesithing ya East Anglia ko Enyelane.

Nature of Study – Maikaelelo a ditshekatsheko tsame

This research project is looking at social change, and in particular, what changes increased wealth has brought. We are interested in consumption choices and patterns and how these differ for men and women. The research is purely of an academic nature. It is being carried out under a research permit from the Government of Botswana, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs.

Ka tsela ya go ikitsise, patlisiso e, e itebaganya le diphetogo tsa setho, go re go fetogile eng bogolo jang diphetogo tse di tsitsweng ke kgolo ya itsholelo. Re kgatlhegela go itse ka ditshwetso tsa mokgwa wa theko le tiriso ya dithoto le ka fa di farologanang ka teng mo go borre le bomme. Ditshekatsheko tsame ke tiro ya sekolo eseng gape. Di dirwa jaana ka tseletso go tswa mo lephateng la pereko le selegae.

Study procedures – Tsamaiso ya puisano ya rona

In this second stage of my research, we would like to briefly interview all adult members of the household, and permission to interview is sought from all concerned. Interviews can be conducted in English or Setswana through my interpreter, and also using a voice recorder, a camera and possibly, video camera. If you have any objections to any of these, please let me know (see bottom of page for contact details).

Mo legatong la bobedi la patlisiso ya me, re eletsa go buisana ka bokhutshwane le bagolo botlhe mo lapeng, mme re kopa tetla ya go dira jalo mo go ba ba amegang. Puisano ya rona e tla nna ka Sekgowa, kana ka Setswana, ka thuso ya moranodi mme sekamantswe se tlaa dirisiwa ga mmogo le khamera gongwe le video khamera. Fa o sa dumelane le nngwe ya tse, ke kopa gore ka tsweetswee o inkitsise. (Leba mo bofelong jwa lekwalo go bona megala ya me)

Right to refuse or end participation in the study – Tetla ya go gana go tsaya karolo kana go emisa potsoloko

If you want to, you can decide not to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, at any time you have the right to refuse to answer any question that you do not want to discuss, and you can stop an interview at any time.

Itse fa o na le tetla ya go gana go tsaya karolo mo puisanong e. Le fa o na le kgatlhego ya go tsaya karolo, itse fa o na le tetla ya go gana go araba dipotso tse o sa batleng go di araba. O ka emisa puisano e ka nako nngwe le nngwe e o batlang puisano e e ema.

Additionally, I will leave a digital camera with you for a period of 3 – 7 days, for your use. We would like you to take photographs of possessions which you have bought or been given, which are important to you. We will arrange with you when the camera will be collected. It is your responsibility to make sure that the camera does not get mistreated or damaged.

Ke tla tlogela khamera le wena sebaka sa malatsi a mararo (3) go ya go a supa (7) go re o e dirise. Re eletsa go re o tsee dinepe tsa dithoto tse o di rekileng kgotsa tse o di filweng tse di leng botlhokwa mo go wena. Re tla rulaganya le wena go re khamera e tla tsewa leng. Ke maikarabelo a gago go netefatsa go re khamera e babalesegile mme ga e tsene mo bodiphatseng ba go ka senyega.

I agree to the above

Name..... Signature..... Date.....

Other members of household:

Name..... Signature.....

Name..... Signature.....

Name..... Signature.....

Juliet Colman
Postgraduate Researcher, University of East Anglia, UK

Tel: 72962519

Appendix 6

Briefing for focus group participants

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this focus group.

This research project is looking at social change, and in particular, what changes increased wealth has brought since the early part of the last century. We are interested in consumption choices and patterns and how these differ for men and women.

Ka tsela ya go ikitsise, patlisiso e, e itebaganya le diphetogo tsa setho, go re go fetogile eng bogolo jang diphetogo tse di tsisitsweng ke kgolo ya itsholelo. Re kgatlhegela go itse ka ditshwetso tsa mokgwa wa theko le tiriso ya dithoto le ka fa di farologanang ka teng mo go borre le bomme.

We are interested in hearing your views on a range of themes, from the roles of men and women to what money means to you and how your life is affected by it.

These are the ground rules:

- Anything said within this group is confidential and is not to be repeated outside of here
- Anything you do say will not be attributed to you personally, and comments or opinions of all participants will remain anonymous
- Please don't talk over other people – only one person to speak at a time

We have set aside an hour for this discussion. Does anyone have any questions?

Could you please sign the consent form which is being passed around which indicates your agreement to participate.

Now, let's introduce ourselves.....

Appendix 7

Focus group themes

Changes in gender roles, identities, responsibilities and traditions:

- Courtship** – expectations from the girl, and from the boy;
Is it difficult to understand the opposite sex;
role of gifts – what gifts, and how important;
sex – what are the taboos
is it ok for someone to have more than one sexual partner
how would you feel if you were the 'other'
why do 'passion killings' occur
is it difficult to meet suitable girls (boys)
do you have many friends of the opposite sex who are just friends.....
- Marriage negotiations** – what is the purpose of marriage;
who is involved,
what happens,
what is the time scale
has this process changed much
- Brideprice** – what form does it take;
why is it important;
who benefits
can people afford it
who contributes to it
- Weddings** – what happens;
what is most desired, and why
- Marriage** – what is the basis of marriage and has this changed
why not so popular these days;
do men seek a certain type of wife, and vice versa, do women seek a certain type of husband – describe;
how does life change once married – roles within the household;
what expectations are placed on a) the wife, b) the husband;
is a husband entitled to chastise his wife physically
is marital infidelity expected, tolerated, cause of marriage breakup
is there a stigma attached to divorce
- Family** – how important are relatives – both his and hers;
do they have 'roles'
what are the rules around inheritance
Is the last born boy lazy because he inherits everything?
- Children** – how important is it to have children;
how many;
what pressure is placed on a young girl to have a child
what is a 'good' mother;
what is a 'good' father;

what expectations are placed on children and youth

Age regiments how important are these;
what is their main purpose;
what emotions do the initiation ceremonies evoke

Work and livelihoods:

Employment – what expectations are placed on a) women b) men, to work;
are there differences in the type of work men and women do;
are there differences in what men and women are paid
do men feel threatened by the rise of the 'empowered' woman

Money and wealth:

Money - how important is money to you;
what priorities do you have in buying things;
are the goods you want to buy available to you, ie are they on sale here
what goods give one status
If you had more money, what would you spend it on;
what expectations are placed on wealthy people by a) their family, b) society
can you be wealthy without owning cattle

Use of time:

Leisure - what do people do to entertain themselves;
how does this vary depending on how old you are;
If you had an automatic washing machine, what would you do with the time saved

what does '*botho*' mean to you

Appendix 8

Public Health HIV and AIDS Campaign Advertisements in the Botswana Daily News, 27 and 25 May 2011 (translation in Chapter 5.2 on Courtship)

"Leina lame ke Thabo;
Kwik Recharge yame Nancy, o ne a kgotsofatsa
dikeletso tsame tsa tlhakanelo dikobo
Sugarss wame Miss G, Grace, o ne a nneela tse ke di tlhokang.
Batho bare Miss G, Grace o na le mogare wa HIV. Ke rapela gore Lerato
a seka a itse ka se."

**KGOLAGANO YA TLHAKANELO DIKOBO E NA LE
DITLA MORAGO**



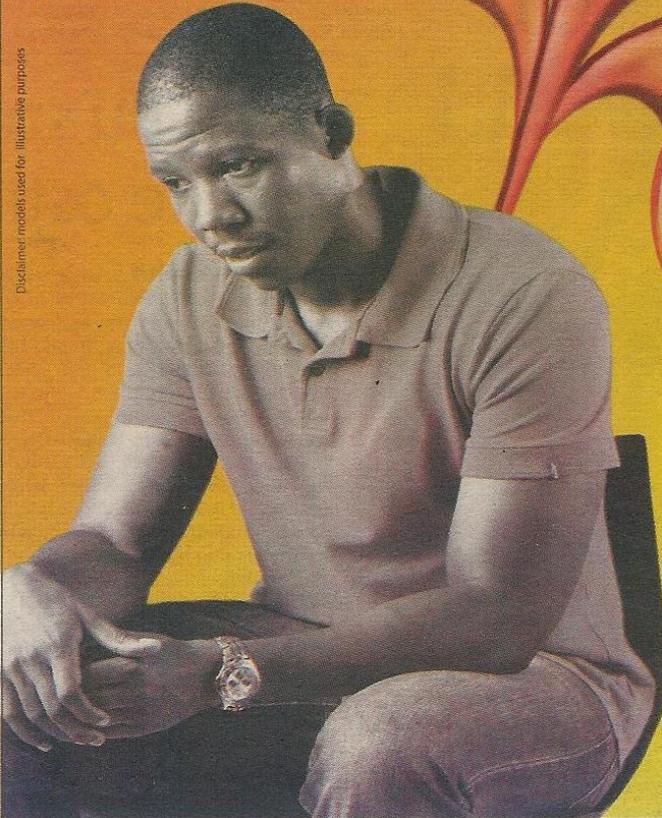
[THE ONE]



[SUGAR MUMMY]



[KWIK RECHARGE]



Disclaimer: models used for illustrative purposes

ICHEKE
**KGOLA
CHENE**
ya bakapelo le kanano ya mogare wa HIV

Leina lame ke **Lerato**;
ke ne ke rata ka fa, **ATM** yame, **Uncle Sol**, a neng a mpoka ka teng,
a mpitsa princess. **Thabo** mokapelo wame o ne a mpitsa **Babes**.
Letsatsi le nnile lengwe fela mama a utlwisiwa botlhoko ke kgang ya
Nyatsi ya ga **Papa**. Ga ntlhaba pelo, ka utlwa o kare o bua ka nna.

KGOLAGANO YA TLHAKANELO DIKOBO E NA LE
DI TLA MORAGO

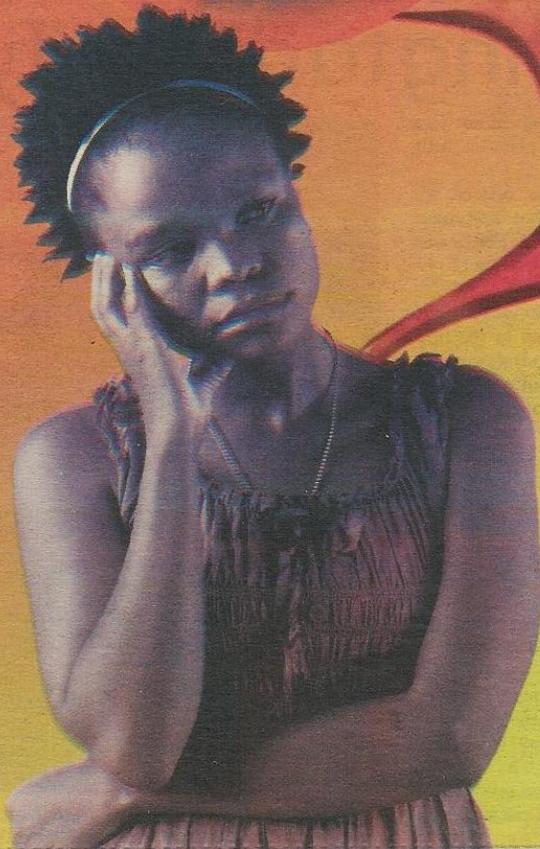
Disclaimer: models used for illustrative purposes



[THE ONE]



[ATM]



OTCHEKEFE
KGOLA CHA ENE
ya bakapelo le kanamo ya mogare wa HIV

Appendix 9

Available records of the Number of Marriages registered with the District Commissioner's Office and the Tribal Administration in Mochudi

Year	Marriages recorded at District Commissioner's Office	Customary marriages recorded at Tribal Administration Office
1974	95	
1984	105	
1990	34	
1991	33	
1994	66	
1995		38
1996		63
1997	106	10
2001	157	
2002	174	
2003	191	
2004	192	
2005	176	
2006	216	36
2007	218	18
2008	214	11
2009	167	24
2010	175	35

Appendix 10: A funeral Programme

BATSAMAISA TIRO:
1. Pheto Mokotedi
2. Tebo Makgatlhe

Masters of Ceremony

THAPELO KA BARUTI MO NTLUNG
TIRELO YA PHITLHO: 05:30
SEFELA: Ke se ke utlwile (308 Sione)

Prayers by Ministers
Viewing of the body
Hymn

BATSEI BA MOSWI GOTSWA MO NTLUNG:
1. Baleseng John Phiri
2. Ishiamo Phiri
3. Tebo Ramathape
4. Tladi Modise
5. Solomon Ruele
6. Dikupe Ramathape

People who carry the coffin outside from inside the house

DIBUI KA BOTSHELO JWA MOSWI
1. Malome gotswa kwa Ralebotsa:
2. Motsadi
3. Mogwagwadi: Sane Phiri / Mompe Segwati / Morake Morake
4. Ntsalae: Moremi Moremi
5. Moemedi wa Farmers Committee (Marapong)
6. Moemedi wa bana mo lapeng: Stanley Mokotedi
7. Moagi ka ene: Modise Tshose
8. Tsala
9. Mokhanselara
10. Kgosi / Kgosana

People giving eulogies to the deceased

BABADI BA MELAETS
1. Talita Phiri
2. Modiane Segwati
3. Neo Phiri

Reading messages of sympathy

BATSEI BA MOSWI GOYA KO KOLING:
1. Mophato wa Mangope

The Age Regiment - carriers of coffin to the hearse

SEFELA: Ke se ke utlwile (308 Sione)
TIRELO KA BARUTI

Hymn
Sermon

BAFOLOSI BA MOSWI KO MABITLENG
1. Morafe
TIRELO KA BARUTI

Carriers of coffin from hearse to graveside
Sermon

SEFELA: Ke sekiwe ke Jeso (323 Sione)
BABEI BA DITHUNYA

Hymn
People who put reeds on the grave

1. Marea Pheto
2. Edith Segwati
3. Boi Makgatlhe

TSHEGOFATSO KA BARUTI
TATOLO MO LAPENG

The blessing
Representative of family at the house says what the deceased died from