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CHANGING ATTITUDES TO
IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE
POLICY IN BOTSWANA

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IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE
POLICY IN BOTSWANA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the last two decades, Botswana has had the reputation as a “country of immigration,” based on the large-scale import of skilled expatriates from Africa, Asia and the West. This policy has been accompanied by a general acceptance, and even openness, on the part of Botswana towards non-citizens. In the late 1990s, however, these attitudes began to change, with intolerance towards non-citizens growing in a country where it was unknown only a few years earlier. Against this background, the University of Botswana mounted the SAMP National Immigration Policy Survey (NIPS) in Botswana in 2001. This survey delved into two basic areas: (a) citizen perceptions of immigrants, migrants and refugees groups and (b) attitudes towards Botswana’s own national immigration policy. The research is important for a number of practical reasons:

- Anecdotal reports of growing xenophobia need to be systematically assessed through rigorous survey methods. In other words, how widespread is the reported intolerance and is it more common amongst some groups?
- Assuming that no government wishes to condone xenophobia, a survey of this nature can provide important insights into the causes and dimensions of intolerance and assist government in formulating appropriate responses, including public education campaigns;
- A survey of citizen attitudes shows exactly how well-informed people actually are. Xenophobia is often based on misinformation and stereotyping. What images do Botswana hold of immigrants, migrants and refugees? How aware are they of the ideal of refugee protection and the government’s international human rights commitments?
- The survey seeks to provide government with up-to-date information on the attitudes of citizens towards current immigration policy and possible future options.

While the actual effects of legal and unauthorized immigration on Botswana’s economy and society are unknown, this does not stop Botswana from believing that immigration has negative effects. The consistency of the responses throughout this survey indicates that Botswana are becoming less tolerant towards in-migration and displaying an attitude profile that is increasingly in line with countries such as South Africa and Namibia which are generally considered to be highly intolerant of outsiders. This is surprising for a country that has, since independence, adopted one of the most open policies in the region towards immigration.

Batswana now tend to feel that there are too many immigrants in the country, that they are losing jobs to foreigners (although few could cite an instance of this actually happening) and that foreign citizens were transferring too much money out of the country. The majority oppose permanent residence for immigrants. On the other hand, immigrants who bring skills that are in short supply locally or who are willing to invest and create jobs are still very welcome.

The greatest shift in attitudes is in favour of much tighter controls over borders and greater internal enforcement. A very high percentage favour electrification of borders with neighbouring states. Most also want non-citizens to carry ID's with them at all times. Employers who hire people illegally should be prosecuted. At the same time, people feel that the rights of temporary residents and, especially, unauthorized migrants should be severely curtailed.

The underlying reason for the growth in intolerance seems to be related to actual changes in migration patterns to Botswana. The economic and political problems of Zimbabwe in particular have clearly led to a significant increase in unauthorized migration to and through Botswana. The Botswana authorities have become considerably more active in arresting and deporting unauthorized migrants. Further adding to the public visibility of the issue, the media and politicians have begun to identify the presence of "illegal immigrants" as a problem.

Once an "enemy" is identified in this way, attitudes towards all people from the region and all non-citizens are in danger of deteriorating, as they have in South Africa. A clear danger is that people begin to exaggerate the negative, and forget about the positive, impact of the presence of non-citizens in the country. In South Africa, for example, people are hostile towards all non-citizens, whether they are in the country legally or not.

In terms of policy recommendations, there is no room for complacency. If the Botswana government wants to continue to pursue its forward-looking policy on immigration, then citizens (and voters) need to be reminded of why this policy is good for the country in the first place. Second, it is clear from this survey that people are becoming increasingly alarmed about the presence of people illegally in the country. In South Africa, this has resulted in systematic abuses of basic human rights, in wild exaggerations of the numbers of unauthorized migrants, in stereotyping about their impacts, and in physical attacks on innocent people. Botswana presumably does not want to go down this particular road. There is still time to avoid the descent into the kind of xenophobia one witnesses in South Africa. But opinion-makers need to speak up on the issue before it is too late.

INTRODUCTION

For the last two decades, Botswana has had the reputation as a “country of immigration,” based on the large-scale import of skilled expatriates from Africa, Asia and the West. Successive census reports and immigration data, as well as previous SAMP surveys undertaken in the late 1990s, confirm the appropriateness of the designation. The SAMP surveys concentrated on three themes: (a) the attitudes and migration behaviour of skilled foreigners in the country; (b) the attitudes of Botswana towards cross-border migration to South Africa; and (c) the emigration potential of skilled Botswana. The surveys highlighted the tolerant and generally welcoming attitude prevailing in Botswana towards outsiders.¹

Since those studies, however, the migration scene has changed considerably, with intolerance towards non-citizens growing in a country where it was unknown only a few years earlier. Against this background, the University of Botswana mounted the SAMP National Immigration Policy Survey (NIPS) in Botswana in 2001. This survey delved into areas not systematically considered in the earlier surveys: (a) citizen perceptions of immigrants, migrants and refugees groups and (b) attitudes towards Botswana’s own national immigration policy. The survey results are important for a number of reasons:

- Media reports of growing xenophobia need to be systematically assessed through rigorous survey methods. In other words, how widespread is the reported intolerance and is it more pervasive amongst some groups than others? Internationally, people with more conservative attitudes, little travel experience, limited personal contact with foreigners, and lower socio-economic status tend to be more intolerant than others. The question is whether this is also true in Botswana;
- Assuming that no government wishes to promote or condone xenophobia, a survey of this nature can provide important insights into the causes and dimensions of intolerance and assist government in formulating appropriate responses, including public education campaigns;
- A survey of citizen attitudes shows exactly how well-informed people actually are. Xenophobia is often based on misinformation and stereotyping. What images do Botswana hold of immigrants, migrants and refugees? How aware are they of the ideal of refugee protection and the government’s international commitments to the UN and OAU conventions?
- Skilled foreign nationals who come legally to the country for periods of time need to feel that they are welcome. If they are

not, as in South Africa, then they will cease to come which could have negative consequences for the national economy;

- The survey seeks to provide government with up-to-date information on the attitudes of their constituency towards current immigration policy and possible future options. How responsive, for example, are the citizens of Botswana to SADC proposals for softer borders within the region?

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was collected through a sample survey conducted in July and August 2001. Costing constraints confined the sample population to Botswana urban dwellers only. Three urban centres were selected because their combined populations is more or less representative, demographically and socio-economically, of Botswana's urban population as a whole. The total population of Gaborone (133 468) and Francistown (65 244) and Kanye (31 354) was almost half (49.8%) of the total urban population at the time of the 1991 census.

The total sample size was 781 (347 males and 434 females). The sample populations in Gaborone (432) and Francistown (199) constituted 81% of all respondents. Gaborone was divided into five areas, namely: Old Naledi, Extensions 10 and 12, Broadhurst, Gaborone West Phase 1 and Gaborone West Phase 2. Francistown was divided into two areas.

Within each area, households were selected using cluster sampling. The number of respondents in each area was proportionate to its total population size. For instance, 28% of sample households were enumerated in Broadhurst because its population size is 28% of the sample area's population. When a household was selected, the eligible sample population was determined by age and sex. The eligible population was 16 years of age and over, and each respondent was selected alternately from the following age groups, 16-24, 25-34, 35-49 and 50+. Where only one person was eligible for enumeration, he/she was selected if the age was closest to the mid-point of the age group to which the person belonged.

Enumerators were selected from students in the final year of their studies at the University of Botswana (UB). Though the initial plan was to have an equal number of male and female enumerators, logistical factors forced the selection of eight females and two males. Notwithstanding frequent comments that the questionnaire was too long, the response rate was very good.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROFILE

A basic social and demographic profile of the sample population is extremely important as a starting-point because attitudes towards immigrants, refugees and immigration policy might be expected to vary between different groups. For example, younger, educated people may be less conservative and more accepting of outsiders than older, less educated people. Or again, those with secure jobs might be less bothered by the presence of non-citizens than the unskilled or unemployed.

The vast majority of survey respondents were black. Most were also under the age of 40, reflecting the relative youthfulness of the urban population in the country (Table 1). The decision to sample only the urban areas therefore had the unanticipated result of biasing the sample in favour of younger Tswana. Although the survey is slanted towards the views of younger urban dwellers, there was considerable variation in educational background. Just over half of the respondents had completed secondary school, over one-fifth had primary education and about 10% had university degrees. The small percent (5.6%) of those without any education attests to the low literacy rate in Botswana.

The respondents were also differentiated from one another by a number of economic criteria: (a) perceptions of economic class; (b) employment status; (c) occupation; and (d) income. While 37.3% of the sample considered themselves poor, slightly more than one-quarter said they were working class and nearly one-third, middle class. Only 37%, however, were employed full time with about 30% unemployed. For purposes of interpretation of attitudes, this is useful information since it is often assumed that unemployment and intolerance towards outsiders go hand-in-hand.²

Table 2 shows considerable occupational diversity within the sample, with domestic workers, teachers/lecturers, unskilled manual workers and non-manual office workers all constituting between 5-10% of the total.

Finally, in terms of monthly household income, about one-third of the sample earned less than P1 000; 25.9% between P1 000 and P2 999, and 22.8% between P3 000 and P4 999 (Table 3). Only 14.3% earned over P5 000 per month.

Other variables which might be expected to influence Batswana attitudes towards outsiders in the country include (a) travel experience; (b) amount of interaction with foreigners; and (c) sense of personal and national identity.

The amount of travel experience outside one's country is often a useful indicator of how a citizen views immigration and immigrant groups.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents		
Racial Group	Number	Percent
Black	768	98.3
White	5	0.6
Coloured	7	0.9
Asian/Indian	1	0.1
All groups	781	100.0
Age Distribution (in years)		
15-19	98	12.5
20-24	184	23.6
25-29	158	20.2
30-34	119	15.2
35-39	86	11.0
40-44	49	6.3
45-49	22	2.8
50-54	26	3.3
55-59	14	1.8
60+	25	3.2
Total	781	100.0
Educational Attainment		
None	44	5.6
Primary 1-8	164	21.0
Secondary 1-4	399	51.1
Post-matric diploma	96	12.3
University degree	75	9.6
Not Stated	3	0.4
Total	781	100.0
Self-identified Economic Class		
Poor	291	37.3
Working	203	26.0
Middle	243	31.0
Upper-middle	10	1.3
Upper	4	0.4
Don't Know	30	3.8
Total	781	100.0
Employment Status		
Employment part-time	56	7.2
Employment full-time	285	36.5
Unemployed	233	29.9
Housewife	15	1.9
Student	116	14.9
Self-employed	49	6.3
Employed in the informal sector	7	0.9
Other	20	2.7
Total	781	100.0

Table 2: Occupational Status		
Occupational Status	Number	Percent
Domestic worker	58	8.8
Teacher/Lecturer	46	7.0
Unskilled manual worker	40	6.1
Non-manual office worker	33	5.0
Service worker	28	4.2
Security personnel	24	3.6
Trader, hawker, vendor	23	3.5
Skilled manual worker	20	3.0
Semi-skilled manual worker	18	2.7
Police/military personnel	16	2.4
Nurse/medical technician	15	2.3
Supervisory office worker	14	2.1
Farmer	13	2.0
Accountant	12	1.8
Professional worker	12	1.8
Engineer	10	1.5
Miner	7	1.1
Agricultural worker	6	0.9
Foreman	6	0.9
Managerial office worker	5	0.8
Informal sector producer	3	0.5
Employer/manager of firm	1	0.2
Lawyer	1	0.2
Medical doctor/practitioner	1	0.2
Other	248	37.6
Total	660	100.0

Are those who have themselves been “strangers” in another country more tolerant of strangers living in their own? As Table 4 shows, a relatively high percentage of the survey respondents had been outside Botswana, mainly to other countries in the SADC region. Nearly half (45.3%) had been to South Africa, followed by Zimbabwe (29.4%). Surprisingly few had been anywhere else in Africa (1.3%) and only 5% had been to Europe or North America.

What might these patterns of travel imply? First, the sampled population breaks relatively evenly into those who have and have not travelled.

Income (in Pula)	Number	Percent
<500	70	13.3
500-999	100	19.0
1 000-1 999	63	12.0
2 000-2 999	73	13.9
3 000-3 999	82	15.6
4 000-4 999	38	7.2
5 000-5 999	28	5.3
6 000-6 999	13	2.5
7 000-7 999	7	1.3
8 000-8 999	6	1.1
9 000-9 999	5	0.9
10 000+	17	3.2
Total	526	100.0

Place Travelled To	Number	Percent
South Africa	354	45.3
Namibia	45	5.8
Zimbabwe	230	29.4
Mozambique	10	1.3
Angola	2	0.3
Malawi	7	0.9
Zambia	32	4.2
Swaziland	41	5.4
Lesotho	43	5.6
Elsewhere in Africa	10	1.3
Europe and North America	39	5.0
Asia	7	0.9

It is therefore of interest to ask whether the two groups hold different attitudes.

Second, the vast majority of those who have travelled outside Botswana went to neighbouring countries. They have thus not been personally exposed to dramatically different peoples and cultures. However, their treatment in neighbouring countries might affect the way that they view citizens of those countries in Botswana. One might hypothesize, for example, that there would be residual dislike of white

South Africans dating from the apartheid period. The post-apartheid South African government is itself not noted for positive treatment of other Africans in the country. If Batswana have had negative experiences in South Africa, they are hardly likely to be as welcoming of white or black South Africans. In other words, it is certainly possible that growing intolerance in Botswana could be a spin-off of the way in which Batswana have been treated by xenophobic South Africans.

Finally, Batswana have done little travelling within the rest of Africa. What might this imply? We might hypothesize that Batswana have become increasingly antagonistic towards other Africans because they rely almost exclusively on the negative media coverage of the rest of the continent. For instance, radio and television stations report more on drought, famine, economic crisis and political problems than on the positive developments in many Eastern and Western African countries.

CONTACT WITH NON-CITIZENS

Logically, those who have more social interaction with non-nationals in a country are less likely to hold negative or stereotypical attitudes towards them, although the opposite is also sometimes true.³ Personal interaction assists in informing local people about non-citizens and their countries of origin and breaking down stereotypes.

The survey suggests that urban Batswana have high levels of interaction with non-citizens, although there is no significant gender difference. After fellow-citizens, interaction is greatest with South Africans (Table 5). This is not surprising considering the close ties that the two populations have geographically, historically and culturally. South Africa is the original home of Setswana-speaking people in Botswana, Setswana is a major language in the two countries and the distance between the two capital cities, Gaborone and Pretoria, is only 300 kilometres.⁴ Interaction is lowest with foreign whites, with 44% of males and 59% of females having hardly any or no interaction at all.

Paradoxically, urban Batswana appear to favour the foreigners that they personally interact with the least (see Table 5). Again, this is true of both male and female Batswana.

The type of interaction citizens have with non-citizens is often an important determinant of their attitudes. As Table 6 shows, there is a marked difference between social interaction (columns 2 to 4) and economic interaction (columns 1 and 5). In the main, urban Batswana do not have high levels of social interaction with non-citizens. Generally, less than 10% count them as their neighbours or send their children to the same schools. More have non-Batswana friends; a high of 29%

Object of Interaction	Level of Interaction			
	Great Deal	Some	Hardly Any	None
Male				
Batswana who speak another language	41.5	42.1	7.2	9.2
Batswana of other race	37.5	33.6	14.2	14.7
Europeans and North Americans	11.7	44.6	11.4	32.3
South Africans	26.2	51.1	6.1	16.6
Southern Africans	24.8	49.1	9.4	16.7
Other Africans	14.2	48.8	12.1	24.9
Asians	14.0	45.5	12.2	28.3
N=347				
Female				
Batswana who speak another language	40.6	34.0	12.3	13.1
Batswana of other race	34.0	35.2	14.1	16.7
Europeans and North Americans	12.2	31.5	14.7	41.6
South Africans	17.8	55.4	7.7	19.1
Southern Africans	22.3	46.6	10.2	20.9
Other Africans	12.8	46.2	12.4	28.6
Asians	13.0	45.1	12.1	29.8
N=434				

number South Africans as friends.

Contact with foreigners in Botswana is thus primarily of an economic nature, with approximately one third working with or for non-citizens or buying things from them. As many as 60% purchase goods from Asians. However, as Table 7 suggests, Asians are the least liked, despite the fact that some people of Asian origin in Botswana are Batswana by birth or descent. But the effect of stereotyping groups of people by race often makes it difficult for nationals to distinguish between citizens with foreign origins and non-citizens.

A potentially positive aspect of personal interaction with non-citizens is that it provides the citizen with opportunities to obtain objective first-hand information about people from other countries. But less than a quarter (22%) of Batswana seem to obtain information about foreigners by talking to them. Other sources include radio (21%), television (14%), newspapers (12%) and the workplace (10%). The danger here is that those who rely on media to obtain information about immigrants (i.e. radio, television and newspaper) are more likely to be fed a diet of negative or stereotypical images.⁵

IDENTITY AND ATTITUDES

Several studies in other contexts have pointed to a connection between national identity and attitudes to foreigners; in general, the more

Gender	Work for/ with them	Live next to them	Friends with them	Children go to school with them	Buy things from them
Europeans/North Americans					
Male	38.1	10.0	17.8	7.5	26.6
Female	31.1	14.9	20.8	7.3	25.9
South Africans					
Male	26.6	13.9	28.5	4.2	26.8
Female	21.7	12.9	28.8	4.9	31.7
Southern Africans					
Male	31.7	15.0	19.3	7.2	26.8
Female	27.5	15.0	17.9	8.9	30.7
Other Africans					
Male	34.5	12.4	17.9	7.6	27.6
Female	27.7	12.8	17.1	11.5	30.9
Asians					
Male	26.9	4.0	8.1	3.4	57.6
Female	18.7	6.4	6.1	4.2	64.6
N=781					

Opinion	Median Level of Opinion								
	Blacks	Whites	Coloureds	Asians/ Indians	Europe North Americans	South Africans	Southern Africans	Other Africans	N
Male									
Favourable/ unfavourable	8	6	5	4	6	-	5	5	342
Intelligent	7	9	6	7	9	7	6	7	344
Hardworking	7	8	5	6.5	8	7	7	7	345
Honest	6	7	5	2	6	4	5	5	345
Female									
Favourable/ unfavourable	8	6	5	4	6	-	6	6	422
Intelligent	7	9	6	8	9	7	7	7	425
Hardworking	8	8	5	7	8	7	8	7	427
Honest	6	8	5	2	7	4	5	5	427

Note: Respondents were asked to rate each quality on a scale of 1 to 10.

nationalistic a population, the less tolerant it is likely to be.⁶ It is therefore important to see what Batswana understand by national identity.

The respondents were first asked about their definition of Motswana identity. Interestingly, about three-quarters did not consider being black or possessing an ability to speak an African language as a pre-condition for being accepted as a “true” Motswana. Less than half felt it was important for “true” Motswana to be loyal to Africa (Table 8).

Table 8: Perceptions of Conditions for Motswana Identity				
Condition	Level of Importance			
	Essential	Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important
Male				
Being black	12.5	17.9	27.2	42.4
Owe loyalty to Africa	23.8	21.9	26.2	28.1
Speak an African language	11.4	18.9	26.1	43.6
Speak a language of Botswana	33.0	31.0	16.1	19.9
Born in Botswana	39.6	25.8	15.2	19.4
Parents were born in Botswana	36.4	27.0	20.8	15.8
Grandparents were born in Botswana	33.8	26.2	22.1	17.9
Willing to renounce other citizenship	15.6	27.0	25.1	32.3
Willing to fight in war for Botswana	35.5	27.7	18.7	18.1
Support the constitution of Botswana	45.5	25.8	11.7	17.0
Working to enhance Botswana's economy	44.6	32.6	7.6	15.2
N=347				
Female				
Being black	11.2	18.1	23.5	47.2
Owe loyalty to Africa	23.6	20.0	29.6	26.8
Speak an African language	7.2	18.7	28.7	45.4
Speak a language of Botswana	30.3	27.5	19.1	23.1
Born in Botswana	40.8	26.2	14.6	18.4
Parents were born in Botswana	47.9	23.9	15.6	12.6
Grandparents were born in Botswana	40.4	24.8	19.2	15.6
Willing to renounce other citizenship	13.9	28.9	27.8	29.4
Willing to fight in war for Botswana	35.0	24.5	22.1	18.4
Support the constitution of Botswana	43.9	27.6	10.1	18.4
Working to enhance Botswana's economy	44.5	29.3	8.4	17.8
N=434				

However, they do think that it is important that a “true” citizen of Botswana should speak at least one of the languages of Botswana; an opinion stronger among males (64%) than females (58%). The importance of a language as a marker of national identity is well-established in Botswana. The ability to speak Setswana (the lingua franca) was previously a requirement for anyone who wanted to become a citizen of Botswana and is still a requirement for election as a councillor.

The responses also suggest that people feel that it is very important for a “true” Motswana to have been born in Botswana, with two-thirds feeling this way. Many feel that it is essential that the parents of a “true” Motswana should have been born in Botswana as well. To a lesser extent, it also helps if a person’s grandparents were Batswana by birth.

When asked if Europeans and North Americans who wished to migrate to Botswana could be accepted as nationals, 67% said that they could. The corresponding proportions for other Southern Africans, other Africans and Asians were 62%, 62% and 52% respectively. In Botswana, there is therefore remarkable openness to immigrants becoming citizens.

Table 8 also shows that Batswana do not consider a willingness to renounce other citizenships important enough for a person to be a “true” Motswana. Before granting Botswana citizenship to successful applicants, the government of Botswana requires that all such persons renounce their current citizenship in writing. This is a final expression of one’s commitment to Botswana as it erases the possibility that naturalized citizens could hold dual citizenship, as is the case with some Batswana who hold South African passports.⁷ The relatively low priority given by the public to renunciation of other citizenships is noteworthy given the government’s naturalization policy.

For almost ten years, Batswana women were the victims of a sexist and discriminatory Citizenship Act that restricted their offspring’s claim to Botswana citizenship. Interestingly, therefore, female respondents tended to rate citizenship by birth and descent as more important to the definition of Batswana identity than did males.⁸ The vast majority of both males and females (over 90%) wanted their offspring to consider themselves as Batswana, however.

The survey revealed that the most important qualifications for acceptance in Botswana are: (a) commitment to the Constitution; (b) ensuring that the country’s healthy economy is sustained. The overwhelming importance of the Constitution as an index of belonging is highlighted again in Table 9. Nearly 50% of both males and females indicated that anyone desiring acceptance should behave like a good citizen and obey the laws of the country. The second most important consideration is the willingness on the immigrant’s part to make a significant

contribution to Botswana's economic development. Language, which is embedded in culture and society, ranks a distant third. Education and health status are seen as relatively unimportant.

Requirement	Male	Female
Adapt culturally and socially	12.1	10.6
Be a good citizen	16.8	17.1
Always obey the law	30.1	32.3
Engage in no illegal activity	13.5	15.2
Contribute to economic development	18.2	17.3
Be educated or literate	4.1	3.6
Be of good health	5.2	3.9
Total	100	100
N=	555	671

Note: Respondents could choose more than one answer.

Table 10 lists the factors that might make a person unacceptable in Botswana. Criminality, unsurprisingly, ranks most highly, followed by negative economic impact and "causing overpopulation."

Requirement	Male	Female
Unable to adapt culturally and socially	5.7	8.8
Engage in illegal activity	26.6	27.9
Harm the economy	25.7	18.9
Contribute to housing shortage	9.9	9.0
Cause overpopulation	19.5	23.3
Transfer diseases to our country	8.7	8.5
They have no place in our country	3.9	3.6
Total	100	100
N=	334	387

While it is quite unlikely that current immigration levels would ever contribute to overpopulation in Botswana, there is clearly a fear that this could happen. This fear is rooted in concerns about competition for very limited economic, social and environmental resources.

Considering that Botswana place very high priority on an immigrant's potential contribution to the national economy, it is noteworthy,

as Table 11 shows, that about three quarters of the respondents feel that citizens of Asian origin could never be accepted as Batswana (compared to around 40% who thought the same of whites and only 10% who thought the same of blacks). Despite considerable economic investment by the Asian community in Botswana, and provision of invaluable services in areas such as motor vehicle sales and repairs, grocery, food, clothing, medicines and other forms of general merchandise, Asians are regarded as having a low ability to assimilate. Female Batswana are marginally more tolerant than males in this regard (Table 11).

Gender	Completely	Mostly	Somewhat	Not at All
Citizens Who Are White				
Male	6.0	8.3	43.0	42.7
Female	7.6	9.3	45.2	37.9
Citizens Who Are Black				
Male	14.0	51.3	24.5	10.2
Female	15.9	49.3	24.4	9.9
Citizens Who Are Indian/ Asian/Chinese				
Male	3.7	2.8	16.9	76.6
Female	6.1	5.1	18.3	70.5
N=781				

Are Batswana more favourably disposed towards outsiders who wish to settle in the country or those who come temporarily? The survey respondents were split on the question (Table 12). Forty-four percent have more favourable attitudes towards immigrants seeking citizenship while 40% would not change the opinions they already held. Even among those whose opinions of immigrants would improve, only 24% appear to be convinced. While 24% of respondents felt that immigrants intending to become citizens of Botswana should use their native language and culture freely, about half (50%) thought these immigrants should abandon their languages and cultures or use them only in their homes.

Europeans and North Americans appear to be the most favoured immigrants, with 67% of respondents convinced that they would be accepted as Batswana. Second on the preference scale were Africans (62%), with Asians (52%) a distant third.

Table 12: Attitude Towards Immigrants Who Intend to Become Botswana Citizens

Age of Respondent (Year)	Positive	Indifferent	Negative
16-24	32.3	41.0	39.3
25-34	35.7	31.6	36.0
35-49	21.8	19.7	6.7
50+	10.2	7.7	8.0
Total	100	100	100
N=695			

IMMIGRATION AND THE ECONOMY

Economic factors and prospects are often seen as exercising a powerful influence on attitudes towards outsiders. In South Africa, for example, those who claim that South Africans are not xenophobic maintain that hostility towards foreigners is rooted in material deprivation and high rates of unemployment. The problem is that this does not explain why affluent South Africans are just as hostile as the poor and unemployed.⁹ Elsewhere, however, the connection seems to hold. We might therefore hypothesize that the apparent growth in intolerance towards outsiders in Botswana is, in part, a function of economic circumstances.

Sustainable national economic growth is a goal that the government has religiously pursued since independence. Botswana has risen from being one of the poorest countries to becoming one of the most vibrant economies in Africa. Yet less than half (39%) of the respondents were satisfied with the country’s economy; and even less (29%) were happy with their personal economic conditions. Slightly more (44%) felt that the national economy would improve within the next year. Almost half anticipated an improvement in their personal economic condition. Table 13 reveals that perceptions of current and future personal and national economic conditions are associated. As expected, those who expect their economic conditions to improve within a year are already satisfied with their economic status. Still, a fairly high percentage of those that are currently dissatisfied with their economic conditions anticipate a better future. Among those that are currently satisfied with the national economy, relatively more females than males expect it to improve within a year. Table 13 reflects the subjectivity in expressions of satisfaction; and considering that Botswana’s economy is strong, its citizens are proud of it and wish to see it kept at that level.

Table 13: Perceptions of Future Economic Conditions						
Opinion on Personal Economic Condition						
Male			Female			
	Satisfied	In-between	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	In-between	Dissatisfied
Expected Personal Economic Condition One Year Later						
Better	73.6	57.9	37.3	66.7	40.0	41.1
Same	20.7	39.5	39.2	27.5	52.5	34.7
Worse	5.7	2.6	23.5	5.8	7.5	24.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Expected National Condition One Year Later						
Better	63.2	31.9	19.8	75.9	29.3	23.4
Same	30.8	48.9	31.5	17.0	43.9	37.2
Worse	6.0	19.1	48.6	7.1	26.8	39.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

PERCEPTIONS OF IMMIGRANTS

Citizens of economically prosperous countries often believe that migrants intend to live in their countries permanently.¹⁰ In Botswana, this is certainly not the case; only 2% of the respondents felt this way. A majority of Batswana interviewed (68%) feel that migrants in the country do not have any intention of becoming citizens of Botswana. In their opinion, migrants simply want to accumulate money in the country and then return home.

Asked about the reasons why migrants come to Botswana, over half (51%) cited the country's healthy economy. An additional 19% considered political conditions at home as the major determinant of migration to Botswana. There is no significant difference between the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents and their opinions on these issues.

When migrants are viewed as people whose sole interest is to amass wealth and leave when satisfied, the apparent selfishness of migrants can build resentment. Another dimension to the problem is a general awareness that international migrants, like internal migrants, frequently postpone return migration. Every opportunity is taken by skilled migrants to maximize the chances of contract renewal. Persistent delays of return migration contribute substantially to the belief that migrants wish to make money in the country on a continuous basis without any intention of becoming Batswana.

Table 14 addresses the question of whether Batswana are deprived of jobs by non-citizens. While about 50% have heard about such an occur-

rence, less than 35% are personally aware of citizens who have been cheated out of jobs opportunities by the immigration effect. Even less (11%) have personally lost jobs because employers preferred migrants.

The clear implication is that much of the resentment that Batswana have on this issue is based on speculation rather than personal knowledge. However, it is fair to note that these figures are certainly much higher than their South African equivalents where fear of job loss seems to be based almost exclusively on hearsay.¹¹

Table 14: Knowledge and Experience of Job Loss Due to Immigration (%)

Condition and Gender	Frequency of Knowledge of Experience		
	More than Once	Once	Never
Male			
Heard of it	42.2	14.3	43.5
Know Someone	21.6	17.	60.7
Personal Experience	8.3	5.3	86.4
Female			
Heard of it	31.7	13.3	55.0
Know Someone	17.6	11.7	70.7
Personal Experience	5.2	4.3	90.5

Respondents were then asked what they felt about the volume of migrants that the government allows legally into Botswana. It was anticipated that there would be significant association between responses to this question and responses about knowledge and experience of losing jobs to a migrant. For instance, we expected those who had lost jobs to be less accommodating. In fact, there was no significant statistical association between the two. Despite this, Batswana perceive a threat to jobs from migrants. Over 90% of males and females who had heard about, knew someone who lost a job, or had personally lost a job to a non-citizen, felt that the government was allowing too many immigrants into Botswana. The corresponding proportion among those who have never heard, known or personally had such an experience was over 85%.

Further analysis indicated that differential knowledge about (or experience of) losing jobs to migrants had no significant effect on the popular feeling among Batswana about restricting or prohibiting migration to Botswana. Most Batswana do not favour an open immigration policy. For example, only 3% support an unrestricted number of non-citizens being offered entry visas for Botswana. An additional 18% would favour such a situation only where jobs were available for the immigrants

ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION CONTROL

Batswana believe that the country's immigration policy should prioritise economic investment and education. Table 15 clearly shows that Batswana prefer that foreigners who come to the country work for a specific time period and then return home. Over 55% of Batswana interviewed favour period-specific immigration while the support for immigrants seeking permanent residence is less than 35%.

In terms of country of origin, immigrants who wish to stay for a specific period are not likely to be that different from those who would apply for permanent residence in a country. Apparently, the perception of the respondents is that permanent residents would do more harm to the country's economy than those who reside for fixed, hopefully short, periods.

Table 15: Attitudes to Categories of Potential Immigrants to Botswana					
Gender	Strongly Support	Support	Indifferent	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Come here legally and work as permanent residents					
Male	3.6	27.4	14.6	25.9	28.5
Female	4.7	29.6	10.7	22.3	32.7
Work here for a specific period and return home					
Male	14.4	43.2	12.9	17.1	12.4
Female	19.3	37.2	11.2	14.4	17.9
Citizens of European and North American countries					
Male	5.2	39.1	22.0	18.4	15.3
Female	7.6	29.6	24.5	19.4	18.9
Citizens of Southern African countries					
Male	4.9	29.0	29.0	18.9	18.3
Female	3.8	29.9	26.1	21.1	19.1
Possess skills that Batswana do not have					
Male	48.7	38.8	2.6	5.5	4.4
Female	45.7	40.3	3.7	4.9	5.4
Wish to invest in Botswana's economy and create jobs					
Male	58.6	30.3	2.9	5.2	2.9
Female	52.3	35.8	2.8	4.7	4.4
N=481					

The vast majority of Batswana would support a policy that gave preference to immigrants who intended to invest in Botswana's economy, especially where prospects of substantial employment creation existed. Batswana do not particularly care where those investors come from, although they exhibit a marginal preference for immigrants from Europe and North America.

On the question of specific immigration control measures, the survey suggests that Batswana would support the government if it were to implement stringent measures in order to control legal and unauthorized immigration. One of the preferred measures is activation of an electrified border fence. Table 16 indicates majority (63%) support for this action. The response is surprising given that Botswana has never had electric border fences. Indeed, only apartheid South Africa has ever electrified its borders. Fences were erected on the borders with Mozambique and Zimbabwe in the 1980s by the apartheid government primarily to keep out refugees from neighbouring countries. The enthusiasm for such a costly and probably ineffectual measure indicates the extent to which Batswana fear that their borders are not protecting them from outsiders.

Consistent with this conclusion, a high proportion (69%) would also be happy if there was an increase in the funds allocated to the Department of Immigration for border protection. Expectations of improved border control through increased salary, human resource and personnel morale would inevitably be dashed when it is realized, as in the case of USA, that illegal border crossing would persist even after improvement to the immigration department's budget. Less than half (45%) who favoured increased funding for border control are personally prepared to assist the process through tax increases. The overall proportion of those who may assist border protection through increased taxes is consistent with an earlier observation of unwillingness among Batswana to have real income affected by increased taxes.¹²

Table 16 indicates overwhelming support (95%) for the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) being deployed along the borders of the country in order to reinforce immigration control. The public may consider the BDF under-utilized because the government's foreign policy has successfully achieved a state of peaceful co-existence with foreign countries since independence in 1966. This condition probably creates the illusion that the BDF is more or less redundant. Given a perceived "invasion" of Botswana by "illegal immigrants," especially from Zimbabwe, the response suggests a strong feeling that the borders are not adequately protected. A large majority (82%) also favour a policy that requires all non-citizens in the country to carry identification cards with them at all times.

Table 16: Attitudes to Immigration Control Policy Measures					
Gender	Strongly Support	Support	Indifferent	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Turn on the electrified fence					
Male	36.3	25.6	8.0	15.5	14.6
Female	41.5	21.9	8.0	15.3	13.3
Allocate more money from national budget to border protection					
Male	17.9	48.5	11.0	15.2	7.4
Female	18.6	52.0	11.0	14.1	4.3
Use army to patrol Botswana's borders					
Male	44.8	50.3	1.4	2.3	1.2
Female	46.6	48.0	2.3	1.4	1.6
Increase taxes to cover the cost of increased border patrols					
Male	7.6	28.4	15.8	22.0	26.1
Female	11.6	27.8	15.3	19.1	26.2
Foreign immigrants should carry personal identification always					
Male	54.7	27.6	7.6	5.5	4.7
Female	53.3	28.4	9.0	5.0	4.3
Police should have the right to detain suspected illegal immigrants					
Male	54.9	35.0	5.5	3.2	1.4
Female	54.7	30.6	8.4	4.2	2.1
Penalise businesses or persons who employ illegal immigrants					
Male	76.9	19.1	1.7	1.4	0.9
Female	76.6	18.1	4.2	0.7	0.5
Make it easier for contract workers to attain permanent residence					
Male	3.5	18.2	9.8	26.3	42.2
Female	1.9	17.3	10.2	22.5	48.2
Make it easier for Southern Africans to start small business here					
Male	6.8	21.7	11.9	19.0	40.5
Female	3.8	19.9	11.8	23.6	40.9
N=781					

Some 87% of Botswana feel that Botswana's immigration policy should give the police the right to detain suspected undocumented migrants. Though human rights groups may view it as unfair to associate unauthorized immigration with criminal activity, the process of staying or attempting to stay in Botswana without legal travel and residence documents contravenes the law and therefore amounts to a crime like any other, in the eyes of most Botswana.

Section 6 of the 1980 Immigration Act of Botswana makes it an offence for a non-citizen or non-resident of Botswana to enter the country without a valid travel document that was issued to that person. Similarly, according to Section 17 of the Act, it is an offence for a visitor to remain in the country beyond the maximum of 90 days that is allowed. Even aiding and abetting unlawful entry into Botswana is, according to the Act, an offence that is punishable by law.¹³ Almost all Botswana interviewed (96%) are in favour of an immigration policy that provides for penalties for persons and organizations that employ undocumented migrants.

Research elsewhere indicates that unauthorized immigration may contribute positively to the economies of host countries especially through the willingness of migrants to accept lower wages than employers would have to pay locals. But their preparedness to accept low wages tends to undermine the ability of citizens to negotiate appropriate wages for vacant positions. Employment of unauthorized immigrants can contribute to unemployment among qualified citizens who appreciate better the real value of the skills that they possess. These are clearly the fears of Botswana. Their faith in the power of employer sanctions also contradicts international experience, which generally finds them ineffectual in stopping unauthorized migration.

The support of small business is a major enabling strategy of the Botswana government. This tends to produce the impression that small businesses in Botswana are the domain of its citizens. Not surprisingly, therefore, Table 16 reveals majority (63%) opposition to a policy that would make it easier for Southern Africans to start small business in the country.

ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION POLICY

Over twenty percent of Botswana interviewees support a policy that would lead to the ultimate expulsion of all immigrants regardless of their legal status in the country (Table 17). While this is certainly not a majority opinion, it is very high by international and regional standards and is significant enough to send a chilling warning about the lengths to which people might be prepared to go in order to rid Botswana of non-citizens.

The correlation between economic development and the presence of non-citizens also emerged strongly in this set of questions. Seventy one percent of respondents said they would support an immigration policy that would allow the government to deport immigrants who failed to contribute to the Botswana economy. The difficulties that would be encountered in the measurement of individuals' contributions to a

Table 17: Attitudes towards Immigration Policy Options (%)					
Gender	Strongly Support	Support	Indifferent	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Government should deport all legal and illegal immigrants					
Male	12.5	10.5	5.3	36.7	35.0
Female	14.2	10.5	4.4	40.8	30.1
Government should deport immigrants not contributing to economy					
Male	37.8	34.0	7.9	11.9	8.4
Female	31.5	38.6	6.8	16.8	6.3
Government should deport illegal immigrants					
Male	80.0	15.1	1.4	1.2	2.3
Female	75.8	16.8	1.6	2.1	3.7
Government should offer amnesty to illegal immigrants					
Male	12.0	22.1	13.5	18.9	33.5
Female	12.1	24.0	15.1	16.3	32.5
Government should restrict personal money transfers from Botswana					
Male	19.0	33.1	10.8	22.3	14.8
Female	21.6	29.5	9.2	28.3	11.4
Government should offer tax incentives to skilled Batswana who stay					
Male	27.6	47.1	10.3	8.2	6.8
Female	30.1	46.7	8.1	11.4	3.8
N=781					

country's economy would make such a policy very difficult to implement fairly. As expected, most (94%) support deportation of "illegal immigrants." The level of intolerance is similar to that in South Africa (90%) and Namibia (97%), but varies considerably from that in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Botswana's government is already empowered by the constitution and the Immigration Act to deport "illegal immigrants." Apprehension, detention and deportation are basic policy measures already in place. This survey simply indicates that the policy enjoys widespread support. At the same time, there is a certain wavering amongst a significant minority of the population with 35% in favour of offering amnesty to "illegal immigrants" (something that the Botswana government has never done).

One of the fears of citizens about immigrants is their potential to remit substantial parts of their incomes home. Legal immigrants in Botswana could, in theory, remit all of their income out of the country. The level of opposition to personal money transfers from Botswana is 48% which does not indicate overwhelming national resistance to such transfers. However, it is clear that many Batswana would like to see

restrictions on remittance behaviour.

In 1998 it seemed that Botswana was at risk of losing as much as 40% of its skilled labour force to other countries, especially South Africa, Europe and America.¹⁴ This observation is supported by the current survey that indicates 43% of Batswana have given some consideration to emigrating from Botswana in the foreseeable future. Fearful about the impact of a brain drain from the country, over three quarters (76%) of respondents are favourably disposed towards a policy that would offer skilled Batswana tax incentives to stay in the country.

Batswana disquiet about the actual or potential presence of unauthorized migrants in the country is active rather than passive. Table 18 indicates that only 14% of those who knew of the presence of such a person would do nothing about it (with females more likely to do nothing than males). Almost three quarters (75%) said they would report them to the police or the Immigration Department. An additional 11% would report them to a local community association or, where appropriate, an employer. Only 1% of Batswana said they would actually use or incite violence to force out “illegal immigrants”, suggesting that the risk of violent expressions of xenophobia is still low in Botswana.

Table 18: Action Against Illegal Immigrants (%)

Gender	Do Nothing	Report to Police/ Immigration	Report to Local Community/Employer	Use Violence to Force Them Out
Male	11.6	73.2	13.4	1.8
Female	17.5	71.7	9.7	1.1
N=781				

The extent to which all immigrants in Botswana (legal or illegal) are vulnerable to harassment is evidenced by the fact that 47% of those surveyed said they were prepared to participate in action that would prevent Southern Africans from moving into their neighbourhood (see Table 19).

The table also indicates that almost the same proportion (46%) are likely to participate in actions that would prevent Southern Africans from operating any kind of business in their neighbourhood. Meanwhile, more than a third (38%) seem prepared to participate in action that would prevent these immigrants’ children from sitting in the same classroom as their children. Similarly, 39% would participate in actions that were designed to keep immigrants from Southern African countries from becoming their co-workers.

Table 19: Likelihood of Acting Against Southern Africans				
Gender	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Prevent Southern Africans from moving to your neighbourhood				
Male	23.9	20.2	27.5	28.4
Female	30.4	19.0	22.4	28.2
Prevent Southern Africans from owning businesses in your neighbourhood				
Male	21.3	21.9	29.3	27.5
Female	27.3	21.1	23.5	28.1
Prevent Southern African child from sitting in same classroom as your child				
Male	13.3	26.3	30.4	30.1
Female	14.1	23.5	32.5	29.9
Prevent Southern Africans from becoming your co-worker				
Male	16.9	20.8	30.4	31.9
Female	18.2	21.9	28.1	31.8
N=781				

RIGHTS FOR ALL?

The constitution stipulates that “every person in Botswana is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual ... (regardless of) place of origin, ... subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for public interest...”.¹⁵ But, as Table 20 shows, Botswana perceptions of how this guarantee should be interpreted are influenced (a) by the perception of difference between citizens and non-citizens, and (b) by the belief that different categories of migrants should be treated differently when in the country.

Notwithstanding the constitution’s explicit reference to freedom of speech for all persons living in Botswana, almost all of the citizens interviewed (93%) feel that only Botswana should have unlimited right to free speech. They believe that this right should be considerably curtailed for temporary workers, visitors, refugees and “illegal immigrants.” A similar profile emerges with respect to voting rights, which is less surprising given that the constitution does not extend voting rights to non-citizens of Botswana.

Only in the case of legal protection, is there some concession to outsiders with the majority feeling that refugees are entitled to legal protection. Interestingly, “illegal immigrants” are accorded more legal protection than temporary workers and visitors. Ninety percent of Botswana prefer that temporary workers and visitors in the country be denied rights to legal protection, a finding that suggests that Botswana are hos-

Table 20: Batswana Perceptions about Civic Participation and Legal Protection (%)			
	Should always be granted	Depends on circumstances	Should never be granted
Citizen having right to freedom of speech			
Male	94.8	4.0	1.2
Female	91.9	6.7	1.4
Temporary worker and visitor having right to freedom of speech			
Male	15.6	27.4	57.0
Female	11.8	24.3	63.9
Refugee having right to freedom of speech			
Male	9.8	21.9	68.3
Female	7.6	15.8	76.6
Illegal immigrant having right to freedom of speech			
Male	2.9	3.2	93.9
Female	2.1	2.3	95.6
Citizen having right to vote in Botswana			
Male	99.4	0.0	0.6
Female	99.8	0.0	0.2
Temporary worker and visitor having right to vote in Botswana			
Male	4.0	6.4	89.6
Female	3.7	6.0	90.3
Refugee having right to vote in Botswana			
Male	2.0	4.3	93.7
Female	1.8	5.1	93.1
Illegal immigrant having right to vote Botswana			
Male	0.6	0.3	99.1
Female	1.8	1.8	97.7
Citizen having right to legal protection in Botswana			
Male	96.5	2.9	0.6
Female	96.3	3.0	0.7
Temporary worker and visitor having right to legal protection			
Male	4.0	6.4	89.6
Female	3.7	6.0	90.3
Refugee having right to legal protection in Botswana			
Male	49.7	23.7	26.6
Female	53.7	18.8	27.5
Illegal immigrant having right to legal protection in Botswana			
Male	23.6	13.3	63.1
Female	29.6	13.7	56.7
N=780			

tile to visitors in their country. The warm welcome that Botswana usually extend to visitors is inconsistent with this response. On the other hand, 62% of respondents indicated that temporary workers and visitors should always have a right to police protection when only 20% wanted such rights extended to “illegal immigrants.” The data also indicated that while practically all (99%) feel that they should always have rights to social services, the proportion that felt the same about temporary workers/visitors, refugees and “illegal immigrants” were 56%, 51% and 16%, respectively.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES AND REFUGEE POLICY

In the past, Botswana has hosted refugees from Namibia, South Africa and Angola. At the moment it hosts refugees from Namibia and Zimbabwe, the latter a major source over the last few months. Botswana’s past experiences have certainly not soured their openness to refugees. About three-quarters of respondents felt that the Botswana government should continue to offer asylum with less than 10% in complete disagreement (Table 21). At the same time, only a third felt that the country could host more refugees. Still less (around 20%) felt that refugees should be offered permanent residence. Botswana, like citizens of most other SADC countries, are prepared to afford protection but only on a temporary basis.

	Strongly Support	Support	Indifferent	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Government should offer asylum to people escaping war and persecution					
Male	25.0	50.9	9.1	9.4	5.6
Female	26.5	46.7	9.4	9.4	8.0
Government should increase number of refugees entering Botswana					
Male	1.7	6.1	9.3	31.3	51.6
Female	1.4	6.5	6.9	25.7	59.5
Government should offer permanent residence to all refugees					
Male	3.5	17.2	15.5	22.7	41.1
Female	2.8	19.6	11.4	25.9	40.3
N=777					

Asked whether they had a favourable or unfavourable opinion of refugees fleeing war and political oppression in their country, the respondents were split: 17.4 % were neutral, 17 % had a completely

unfavourable opinion and nearly one-quarter (24.7 %) had a completely favourable opinion.

Most Batswana certainly feel that refugees should enjoy legal protection: only 27% felt that they should never be entitled to protection. However, Batswana were also adamant that refugees should be thankful for the protection and not participate in any way in the life of the country. Asked, for example, whether refugees had the right to freedom of speech, the vast majority (73%) felt that refugees should never be granted the right to say what they wanted. This response certainly dashes any hope that refugees' grievances would be sympathetically received while in Botswana. In addition, 46.5 % strongly supported having refugees live in special camps.

CONCLUSION

While the actual effects of legal and unauthorized immigration on Botswana's economy and society are unknown, this does not stop Batswana from believing that immigration has negative effects. The consistency of the responses throughout this survey indicates that Batswana are becoming less tolerant towards in-migration and displaying an attitude profile that is increasingly in line with countries such as South Africa and Namibia which are generally considered to be highly intolerant of outsiders.¹⁶ This is a surprising finding for a country that has, since independence, adopted one of the most open policies in the region towards immigration. In addition, many Batswana have family ties with people resident in other countries.

Batswana now tend to feel that there are too many immigrants in the country, that they are losing jobs to foreigners (although very few could cite an instance of this actually happening) and that foreign citizens were transferring too much money out of the country. The majority oppose permanent residence for immigrants. On the other hand, immigrants who bring skills that are in short supply locally or who are willing to invest and create jobs are still very welcome. In other words, Batswana favour a policy of temporary residence which adds value to the country's economic growth.

The greatest shift in attitudes is in favour of much tighter controls over borders and greater internal enforcement. An astonishingly high percentage favour border electrification. Most also wish non-citizens to carry ID's with them at all times. Employers who hire people illegally should be prosecuted. At the same time, people feel that the rights of temporary residents and, especially, unauthorized migrants should be severely curtailed. The question though is whether these attitudes

amount to “xenophobia” and whether government should be considering public education campaigns to counter this unfortunate phenomenon. The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes xenophobia as a “morbid dislike of foreigners”,¹⁷ indicating that xenophobic attitudes are unhealthy. This dislike is actually borne out of fear of people from foreign countries. The history of the formation and development of Batswana tribes does not indicate previous existence of xenophobic attitude or behaviour among Batswana.¹⁸ Has post-independence in-migration led to a new attitude towards the foreigner?

In our view, there is insufficient evidence to say that the attitudes recorded derive from a dislike of foreigners simply because they are not Batswana. Rather, there are other material and cultural factors which could easily explain the apparently negative attitudes. Immigration control measures, such as visa requirements and rights of governments to deport immigrants, as well as non-legislated rules distinguishing between the rights of citizens and rights of immigrants, are simply the function of a well-developed sense of national identity and a desire to protect the national inheritance. This does not necessarily reflect xenophobia, even where the reaction of citizens may seem unfriendly to immigrants.

Similarly, Botswana, unlike other countries in the region, has pursued a relatively open immigration policy during the post-independence years. The reasoning has been that imported skills will further the development of the Botswana economy, and hence the economic welfare of Batswana themselves. This strategy, wherever it is pursued, generates an inevitable counter-reaction from citizens, particularly the poor and unemployed, who may resent the fact that immigrants are demonstrably better-off than they are in economic terms.

The underlying reason for the growth in intolerance seems however to be related to actual changes in migration patterns to Botswana. The economic and political problems of Zimbabwe in particular have clearly led to a significant increase in unauthorized migration to and through Botswana. The Botswana authorities have become considerably more active in arresting and deporting unauthorized migrants. Further adding to the public visibility of the issue, the media and politicians have begun to identify the presence of “illegal immigrants” as a problem.

However, once an “enemy” is identified in this way, attitudes towards all people from the region and all non-citizens are in danger of deteriorating, as they have in South Africa. An example of this is the willingness of some Batswana to use personal resources to ensure that immigrants from Southern Africa are kept out of their neighbourhood and that the children of these immigrants be excluded from the classes their children attend. Few Batswana are so far prepared to use or

encourage violence to keep “illegal immigrants” out of Botswana. Another danger is that people begin to exaggerate the negative, and forget about the positive, impact of the presence of non-citizens in the country. In South Africa, for example, people are hostile towards all non-citizens, whether they are in the country legally or not.

In policy terms, therefore, there is no room for complacency. If the Botswana government wants to continue to pursue its forward-looking policy on immigration, then citizens (and voters) need to be reminded of why this policy is good for the country in the first place. Second, it is clear from this survey that people are becoming increasingly alarmed about the presence of people illegally in the country. In South Africa, this has resulted in systematic abuses of basic human rights, in wild exaggerations of the numbers of unauthorized migrants, in stereotyping about their impacts, and in physical attacks on innocent people. Botswana presumably does not want to go down this particular road. There is still time to avoid the descent into the kind of real xenophobia one witnesses in South Africa. But opinion-makers need to speak up on the issue before it is too late.

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ENDNOTES

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- 2 Joel Fetzer, *Public Attitudes Towards Immigration in the United States, France and Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp.15-20.
- 4 N. Parsons, *A New History of Southern Africa*. London: MacMillan Education

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- 5 Ransford Danso and David McDonald, *Writing Xenophobia: Immigration and the Press in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 17, Cape Town, 2000.
- 6 Fetzer, *Public Attitudes*; Thomas Epenshade and Katherine Hempstead, "Contemporary American Attitudes Towards US Immigration" *International Migration Review* 30 (1996): 535-70; Jonathan Crush, *Immigration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa*. SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 22, Cape Town, 2001; Sally Peberdy, "Imagining Immigration: Inclusive Identities and Exclusive Policies in Post-1994 South Africa" *Africa Today* 48 (3) (2001): 15-34.
- 7 Campbell, "Preferences for Emigration."
- 8 Section 21 of the Constitution of Botswana provided that every child born in Botswana from the date of the country's independence (September 30 1966) to parents, one or both being Motswana, would be a citizen of Botswana. This section of the constitution became Section 25 of the Citizenship Act of 1982. This was rephrased in 1984 by the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Sections 4 and 5, which stipulated that a child would be a citizen by birth and descent only where the father or unmarried mother of the offspring was a Motswana; Danso and McDonald, *Writing Xenophobia*.
- 8 Section 21 of the Constitution of Botswana provided that every child born in Botswana from the date of the country's independence (September 30 1966) to parents, one or both being Motswana, would be a citizen of Botswana. This section of the constitution became Section 25 of the Citizenship Act (Botswana, "Dow v. Attorney-General" *The Botswana Law Reports 1991*. Gaborone: Government Printers, 1998). In effect, where the mother was Motswana and married, but the father was a national of another country, the offspring would adopt the father's nationality. A married female lawyer, Unity Dow, who was personally affected by Sections 4 and 5 of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, subsequently appealed the Act in Botswana's High Court (E.K.Quansah, "Unity Dow v. A-G of Botswana: One More Relic of a Woman's Servitude Removed?" *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* 4 (1992):195-204; E.K. Quansah, "Unity Dow v. A-G of Botswana - The Sequel" *African Journal of International and Comparative Law* 5(1993):189-207; Botswana, "Dow v. Attorney-General" *The Botswana Law Reports 1991*. Gaborone: Government Printers, 1998). She won her case at the Appeals Court of Botswana in 1991 when Sections 4 and 5 of the Act were repealed
- 9 Crush, *Immigration, Xenophobia and Human Rights*.
- 10 David McDonald, John Gay, Lovemore Zinyama, Robert Mattes, Fion de Vletter, *Challenging Xenophobia: Myths and Realities about Cross-Border Migration in Southern Africa*, SAMP Migration Policy Series No.7, Cape

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 - 17 H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.
 - 18 See I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*. Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1994.

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