

Understanding Government and Opposition Parties in Botswana

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This paper discusses the relationship between the ruling party and opposition parties in the struggle to capture political power in Botswana. It demonstrates the resilience of the multi-party framework that is founded on the basic principles of political freedom and civil liberty. Moreover, it explains how the poverty of ideology has presented a political landscape without any clear political alternatives. More concretely, it outlines the weaknesses of opposition parties, that they do not pose any serious challenge to the ruling party. However, in spite of their weaknesses, opposition parties have played a more constructive role in shaping the democratic process than has commonly been recognised. They have provided important checks and balances to make government more accountable and responsive to peoples' needs, yet they have not projected themselves as alternative governments.

This article begins with the basic premise that the multi-party democracy that exists in Botswana is enshrined in the constitution and allows for free political activity on the part of political parties irrespective of their ideological position. However, with the demise of the cold war, there has been a movement internationally and in Botswana away from 'left extremism ... towards a consensus on liberal capitalism and liberal democracy'.¹ This ideological convergence conforms to Herbert Marcuse's assertion of the one-dimensional rationality where 'culture, politics and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives'.² In another formulation, Mengisteab quotes Sartori as having said, as we approach the new millennium, 'liberal democracy suddenly finds itself without an enemy'.³ Trends towards the lack of alternative ideologies came about because countries of the world now

adhere to the liberal democratic framework and accept it as a universal ideal of the democratic model.

Discussing these concerns, this article focuses first on the relationship between government and the opposition in Botswana in the post-cold war period. It seeks to explain why Botswana succeeded in maintaining a multi-party system when most of Africa adopted the one-party system, and also the dialectical relationship between the ruling and opposition parties. Second, it takes issue with the phenomenon of a multi-party system that manifests electoral competition dominated by one political party. While the article concedes that regular elections are important determinants of democracy, it submits that democracy needs to reflect the broad consensus of the electorate measured by meaningful competition between political parties. Furthermore, the consolidation of democracy is further measured by a smooth turnover of government. The fact that this has not yet happened in Botswana demonstrates the fragility of the democratic system. Third, it seeks to demonstrate that the lack of coherent ideologies of opposition parties, manifesting clear policy alternatives, has assisted the ruling party to assert its rule and hegemonic influence. Finally, it discusses factionalism within political parties and how, especially for opposition parties, it has undermined their ability to project themselves as alternative governments. The paper proceeds to address these concerns, and begins by setting the contextual framework.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The development of political parties in Botswana cannot be understood outside the context and nature of the state in development.⁴ It is the state that defines the parameters for interactions for both civil and political society. However, the discussion of the post-colonial state in Africa is problematic given the many forms that it takes and the purposes for which it is used. It is therefore imperative that any discussion of how the state facilitates or inhibits political party activity must not only be anchored on the theoretical analysis, but also its empirical existence. To be sure, it is within this framework that the process of governance and accountability within the mould of a multi-party democracy can be understood. Parties manifest their differences in the manner in which they conceive of the state.

When political parties were formed during the nationalist period, that action was a result of lack of integration of Africans in the colonial bureaucracy, and was a profound expression of the desire and need for self-determination and independence. Although, in some cases, the colonial administrations encouraged the formation of some political parties, as was the case with the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). However, such a

collusion of interest should not be misconstrued to mean 'colonial generosity', but an attempt to create a neo-colonial state.⁵ Put differently, such political parties 'reflected the values of European powers and their desire to create [conditions that] would foster continued economic and political ties'.⁶

By contrast, the new leadership of the post-colonial state had a different mandate from its predecessors. The challenges of the post-colonial state ruptured the artificial cohesion that African countries achieved as a result of their opposition to colonialism. The severe strain that the state experienced led most African governments to adopt the one-party system, and, worse still, military take-overs. However, in the wake of these experiences, Botswana remained resilient in its practice of multi-party democracy.

Political parties, by their very nature, seek to capture state power and form governments. In the event that they fail to win elections they are expected to remain loyal opposition parties participating in the process of governance and attempting to 'modify the policies and actions of government (or lack of action)'.⁷ For a government to be fully institutionalised it has to put in place structures and practices that allow for effective governance and constructive opposition. The basic tenets of democratic practice are that government should legitimise its rule and ensure that it tests or refreshes its mandate to rule by periodic 'free and fair' elections, through an open competition where opposition parties are able to contest elections. Yet, despite consistently holding elections every five years, as provided by the constitution, only one party has been returned to power. In this regard, Botswana projects an exceptional case of a multi-party one-party dominant system. Nevertheless, such a contest in Botswana has not led to a turn-over of government.⁸ This in part reflects the fragility of the democratic system.

In spite of the limited electoral challenge that the ruling party faced from opposition parties, as illustrated by its landslide victories, government was not tempted, as was the case in Malawi and Zambia under the Banda and Kaunda regimes to declare *de jure* one-party states.⁹ The opposition political parties in Botswana continue to propagate opposing views, despite their poor showing at the polls. In the past, the leader of the opposition Botswana National Front (BNF), Kenneth Koma, alleged that government only allowed it to thrive because it was weak, but would muzzle it if it posed a serious threat to BDP rule. However, in light of the level of political tolerance the BDP government has demonstrated over the years, it is doubtful that it would refuse to hand over power to the opposition in the event that it won elections. Nevertheless, that turn-over of power remains the greatest test case for the institutionalisation of multi-party democracy in Botswana.

Liberal democracy has placed demands and constraints on both government and opposition parties in Botswana. It projects a particular vision about society. First, in politics it demands a certain level of openness in which all political parties feel that they have a stake in the system. The ruling party has to contend with the demands of opposition parties as well as civil society. Furthermore, in line with the larger project of advancing democracy at the national level, they themselves have to be seen to be practising internal democracy. However, the conduct of primary elections both by the ruling and opposition parties is far from satisfactory and has resulted in expulsions, resignation and splits.

The splits and proliferation of political parties in Botswana make it difficult for opposition parties to coalesce and form an alternative vision to that of the ruling BDP. However, in the wake of a weak civil society, political parties play an even more concerted role because they have to address areas that would otherwise be considered by organs of civil society.¹⁰ In this regard, political parties play an important role and articulate the diverse interests in society, and create a platform for political action. They play a countervailing role to government and make it more transparent, accountable and responsive to the people. Perhaps the greatest challenge that opposition parties face is that they should present clear ideological and policy alternatives to the ruling party. They must project themselves as credible opposition parties with the capacity to form an alternative government.

Second, liberal democracy places the provision of economic goods beyond the political realm and leaves it to market forces.¹¹ Based on the neo-liberal paradigm, the state advocates a *laissez-faire* type of economic system that manifests minimal state intervention and involvement in the distribution of goods and services. The approach believes firmly in the regulatory role of the market forces. In a nutshell, the essentials of liberal democracy are that it places economic decisions mainly outside the realm of public decisions. Under this framework, private property is viewed as an embodiment of rights and freedoms of the individual that cannot be intruded upon by the state. In this regard, democracy is coterminous with the desired goal of a free market system.¹²

PARTY POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY

Much has been written about political parties in Botswana, but the literature has largely been on their formation and evolution, and not their ideologies.¹³ In social science discourse, ideology is a commonly used term without specifying its precise meaning. Ideology as a theoretical construct plays an important role in politics. Ideology defines the space between government

and opposition parties in the struggle to attain state power. The framework for analysis in this article is anchored on the assumption that political party competition is based on or generated by political ideas and policy alternatives. However, a defining characteristic of political parties in Botswana is that they do not present clear ideological differences. Of course, ideologies are rife with controversies. Based on the basic maxims of political science, ideology is understood to mean the vision or the world-view that political parties develop for and about society with a view to shaping its future. It is a guide to action or non-action. However, if by ideology we mean, as this article suggests, a set of theoretical assumptions that represent a guiding philosophy for political parties, then its lack of rigour raises important questions for the Botswana situation. That is, does ideology play an important role in politics in Botswana?

As defined by Nnoli, ideology guides, supports, restrains and rationalises political action. Debates on ideology often take a normative stand of prescribing a given course of action. Ideology is often used to justify one political position and present it as the correct one, thereby projecting alternative ones as irrelevant and unworkable.¹⁴ In a more substantive way, Nnoli defined ideology as a 'Systematised and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organisation of society as a whole. It contains ideals, ends and purposes that the society should pursue. On the basis of an interpretation of the past, it explains the present and offers a vision for the future'.¹⁵

Democracy defines both ideology and structure of government. As a fundamental principle, democracy as ideology implies government through the consent of the people. Its structures involve the right to vote and turn out governments, an independent judiciary, and basic freedoms of speech, assembly and association.¹⁶ When a party enjoys overwhelming support of the electorate over time, we say that it enjoys hegemonic influence. Just like ideology, the concept of hegemony is equally important to define. Hegemony is best understood by making reference to Antonio Gramsci, who maintains that a regime enjoys hegemonic influence if it enjoys consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.¹⁷

The struggle for hegemony has manifested itself over time in Botswana's political process. Political battles, at least at the verbal level, manifesting ideological differences between government and opposition parties, have been fought since the mid-1970s. These struggles manifested themselves largely between the BDP and BNF. Over the years, the ruling BDP painted a negative picture of the opposition, especially the BNF, labelling it as 'an insidious threat to democracy'.¹⁸ This was clearly an attempt on the part of the ruling party to undermine the legitimacy of the

BNF. The BNF leader also in the past charged that his party 'was perceived as an illegal thing and that he was followed by the special branch' of the police.¹⁹ Of course at the time the BNF was clearly a radical organisation and sometimes made statements that it would resort, if need be, to means other than the ballot box to attain state power. Sir Seretse Khama, the first President of Botswana, once remarked, speaking of the BNF, 'for every bullet they throw at us, so we shall shell them to counter'.²⁰ He once described the opposition, especially the BNF, as a 'band of social malcontents', who had no positive contribution to offer the development of the country, 'but wanted political power at all costs'. Further castigating them, he charged that any support for them would be tantamount to: 'Throwing the country to the wolves. The BNF in their desperate struggle for political power would only be too happy to confirm that there is no democracy in this country and that the country was ripe for a bloody revolution, which is their aim, but we must frustrate.'²¹

The second President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, for his part, addressing residents of Gaborone South during the re-run of that election in 1984, made scathing attacks on the BNF. He told the residents that if they wanted 'peace and stability' and wanted to walk the streets of Gaborone freely without 'fear', 'intimidation' and 'abuse' they should not vote for the BNF.²² All these statements were attempts by the BDP to discredit the BNF, that it was bent on bringing about lawlessness and anarchy to the country.

The ruling party has on many occasions made statements about circumstances under which the opposition parties might be banned. These involved statements like: 'if they endanger the lives (and property) of the people in one way or the other, it would be irresponsible to leave the parties in existence'.²³ During the campaign for the by-election in Kanye in 1986, the BDP candidate, Archie Mogwe, said the 'BDP had the power to declare a one party state'.²⁴ During the same by-election, much to the distaste of Bangwaketse, after they exercised their democratic right by voting for a candidate of their choice – Leach Tlhomelang of the BNF (now deputy leader of the IFP) – President Masire rebuked them, saying they 'were not serious with their votes'.²⁵ In yet another unprecedented event, the General Secretary of the BDP, Daniel Kwelagobe, took issue with the manner in which *Radio Botswana* reported the same by-election and said, 'it had already turned into Radio Front'.²⁶

The neo-liberal agenda that the BDP government pursues is based on the assumption that the private sector is an engine of economic growth with minimal state intervention in economic activity. Through this economic strategy, the BDP has in its three decades of rule recorded substantial economic growth which nevertheless has not trickled down to benefit the

majority of the population as almost half of them live below the poverty datum line.²⁷ However, it has not absolved itself of the social responsibility of providing services where private business is not prepared to venture.

Following the demise of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the BNF changed its earlier socialist-inclined policy and adopted a Social Democratic Programme (SDP). Clearly the SDP is a more moderate policy that recognises the role of the private sector in economic development in contrast to its earlier position that was based on state centralism. The success of the BDP over the BNF during the three decades of political independence was due, in part, to its ability to label the BNF as a communist organisation bent on nationalising private property. It said communism under the BNF included sharing property, including cattle. This matter was not taken lightly by the peasants and had the effect of starving the BNF of the support it could get from the rural areas. Private foreign investors were also wary of a BNF take-over for fear of nationalisation of their property. Drawing from the SDP, the BNF subscribes to an economy based on a strong public sector and private ownership of the means of production. It recognises that although the market is an important tool of modern economic management, it is limited in terms of being a fair distributor of economic resources. Therefore, it strives for a balance between a planned economy and the free enterprise system.²⁸

The Botswana Congress Party (BCP), on the other hand, does not project a different economic programme from that of the BNF. It considers its Democratic and Development Programme (DDP) as the document that outlines its ideology, principles and vision. Just like the BNF, the BCP espouses the broad social democratic movement that seeks to maintain a balance between free-market and public sector/state involvement in the economy. To this effect it argues that:

The economic predicament of [Botswana] requires state intervention; first, in those sectors of the economy that require redistributive justice and equalising opportunities to redress social and economic inequalities; and second, in those areas where enabling and empowering instruments are needed for the private sector to operate and create wealth.²⁹

The BCP, while it recognises that the neo-liberal agenda has attained a hegemonic position underscores the fact that 'unbridled capitalism self-destructs' in that the 'surge in the relative power of capital over other economic classes tends to lead to growing inequalities and declining purchasing power of the general population'.³⁰ It concedes that for Botswana to be meaningfully integrated in international capital markets, it needs to be productive and have a competitive edge.³¹ Attributes which, as

one assesses the situation on the ground, are absent in Botswana. Nevertheless, based on its pronouncements in the DDP the BCP is not oblivious of the negative consequences that globalisation can bring to emergent economies, such as that of Botswana. The inevitable outcome of this development strategy, the DDP argues, is that it tends to widen the gap between the rich and poor both at national and international levels.³³ This is so because the market distributes resources on the basis of demand and not need, and in Botswana, where only a few have the purchasing power, there tends to be a disproportionate allocation of resources.

The BDP believes in the free enterprise system wherein the private sector and foreign investors are regarded as the engines of economic growth. By contrast, the BCP and BNF believe in social democracy and that economic growth must be matched by an equitable distribution of resources reflecting a large measure of social justice. Both parties have defined a niche for themselves for defending the interests of the unemployed and poor, largely those who stand on the losing side of rapid economic development.³⁴

Dr Koma, leader of the BNF, noted similarities in the ideological positions of the BNF and BDP. He observed that 'since 1994 the BDP has been moving closer and closer to the BNF'.³⁵ He further noted that the only difference between the two parties is in the ordering of priorities in poverty eradication and job creation, as well as implementation of development programmes.³⁶ Koma concluded that foreign investors could not be relied on to drive economic development because they would not invest their money where they will not profit. Instead, government should invest in areas of the economy that foreign investors do not find lucrative.³⁶

Explaining the position of the BCP, Paul Rantao, one of its founder members, said: 'the formation of the new party [was] a break-through in our struggle for intra-party democracy, discipline and membership unity.'³⁷ Commenting on the political direction of the new party, he said: 'the party's ideology will not be that different from [that] of the BNF.'³⁸ Its focus will be to try to articulate the interests of 'workers and the youth'.³⁹ For all intents and purposes, it would appear that, at least for now, the BCP is the BNF in a different cloak. Emanating from the public statements of the BCP, an attempt to differentiate the BNF and BCP is a hair-splitting exercise. At pains to make an ideological distinction between the BCP and BNF, Dingake, leader of the BCP, said, 'the BCP and the BNF espouse social democracy' and goes on to say that BCP is 'pragmatist' while BNF is 'theorist'.⁴⁰ Whatever that assertion was supposed to mean, it is clear that the distinction between the BCP and BNF, at least ideologically, is still blurred.

Much as ideology reflects certain fundamental principles, it also implies a certain measure of rigidity that relates particular views to certain

political parties. However, empirical evidence reveals the paucity of ideology among political parties in Botswana. To demonstrate the unimportance of ideology in Botswana, politicians find it easy to move from one party to another without much difficulty. There are numerous examples, especially at council level, where councillors 'crossed the floor' to join the ruling or opposition parties.⁴¹ This phenomenon seems to suggest that ideology is not an important factor in political alignments. However, this assertion is not oblivious of the fact that factors other than ideology influence electoral politics and party preferences. In fact, some politicians are simply political opportunists who use political office for personal gain.

In an attempt to redress the situation, parliament, in its August 1998 sitting, debated a motion calling for MPs to lose their seats if they defected or crossed the floor to join other parties. Arguments in favour of that motion were that crossing the floor was tantamount to political betrayal because such a person would have joined parliament or council through the mandate of the electorate. So a change of parties, the argument concluded, should be sanctioned by the electorate through the ballot. The BDP, whose MP tabled the motion, supported it and stated that the movement of BNF MPs *en masse* to form the BCP was an important lesson for Botswana, because if such a practice was not circumscribed by law it could lead to political instability in future. The BNF, for its part, as the party embattled by the 'crossing of the floor', supported the motion and felt that it was long overdue. The BCP, the party whose formation provoked that reaction, supported the motion but lamented that the timing was not right as it appeared the motion was targeted at it. In support of the motion it further moved that the voters should also have the right to recall ineffective MPs. However, after lengthy discussions the motion was referred to the electorate.⁴²

Party Manifestos and Political Campaigns

Political parties in Botswana, both ruling and opposition, have enhanced democracy by creating a forum for the flow of information about democracy and good governance. Needless to say, such information is often distorted, but it provides an avenue through which people can make up their minds regarding various policy options about the political direction of the country. Political parties represent different views and ideological positions in society.⁴³ It is expected that political campaigns should be issue-orientated to propagate their policies and programmes. Similarly, when people cast their vote on polling day, they would have had the chance to read the various party manifestoes, attended political rallies, talked among themselves about the elections and pretty much decided which party they would vote for.

However, in practice it has become evident that election campaigns in themselves have a limited impact. Most voters have party preferences or loyalty before a campaign begins and will stick to them. At best, what election campaigns do is mobilise the party faithful and ensure that they are registered and vote on poll day. Besides, political campaigns concentrate on how the opposing party is unfit to govern rather than offer concrete political alternatives. The greatest achievement of political campaigns is that they identify and try to enlist the support of the undecided voters.⁴⁴

What seems to beset Botswana's campaign trail is that it is not based on issues but differences in personalities. In some cases the electorate choose a candidate who does not have the capacity to deliver over one who would effectively articulate their interests in council or parliament. In elections, candidates who would otherwise be considered best placed, in whatever attributes, often do not make it because they belong to an opposing party. As explained above, party allegiance and support constitute the basis of electoral support. In voting preferences the electorate also considers other attributes such as personality and social status.

Political parties across the political spectrum, both ruling and opposition, play an important role in that they not only canvass for political support, but are also agents of political change and education. Political change, on the one hand, has to do with removing from power, through the ballot, a government that does not serve the interests of the electorate. Political education, on the other hand, ranges from basic voter education to setting out ideological positions that would determine the political direction of the polity once they are voted into power. Voter education for our purposes is understood to mean an interactive process through which the public gains an understanding of key concepts of democratic governance, structures and relationships within government, the responsibilities of elected officials and public accountability. In a more direct sense, it involves developing democratic values among the populace so as to inculcate a sense of openness and tolerance of opposing political views. Through this exercise, the voter gains a comprehensive understanding of the election management process.⁴⁵ Ironically, power politics by its very nature is based on a zero-sum game, and, as a result, voter education, in many instances, entails misinformation. Unfortunately, voter education that is part of a political campaign is often used to discredit the opposing party. Regrettably, such misinformation is often given unscrupulously, without regard to its lasting negative impact on the electorate.

Electoral Competition

Political parties (and consequently elections) were powerful instruments for mobilising mass support for political independence as well as legitimising

the 'new political elite' in place of traditional leaders in their opposition to colonial rule. The legitimacy of a regime is enhanced by the regular free and fair elections in the sense that they 'give the populace some sense of having access to the government and force the elite to take some concern for public opinion in formulating its policies'.⁴⁶ Furthermore, they give the electorate a chance to appraise and control those who govern, which in turn legitimises those elected'.⁴⁷ In addition, the respect for democratic norms has resulted in political stability and earned the country great respect and recognition internationally.

Since the attainment of political independence in 1966, Botswana has had seven general elections, an exercise that has seen the application of the democratic norms.⁴⁸ Politics is about choice as well as electoral competition. The periodic and regular elections in Botswana have convinced several political analysts that the country is a 'promising example of a political system committed to orderly and rational process, democratic participation and regard for fundamental human rights'.⁴⁹

Table 1 shows that since the independence elections of 1965, only in 1994 was the BDP given a serious challenge at the polls, when the BNF polled 13 out of the 40 parliamentary seats. The table lists all the political parties in Botswana, though many of them merely exist in name, with limited impact on the political field. Yet their mention is important because

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS, 1965-94

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994
BDP	28	24	27	29	29	31	27
BPP	03	03	02	01	01	00	00
BIP	00	01	01	00	00	00	00
BNF	—	03	02	02	04	03	13
BPU	—	—	—	—	00	00	00
FP	—	—	—	—	—	00	—
BLP	—	—	—	—	—	00	00
IFP	—	—	—	—	—	—	00
UDF	—	—	—	—	—	—	00
USP	—	—	—	—	—	—	00
LP	—	—	—	—	—	00	00
LLB	—	—	—	—	—	—	00
Total	31	31	32	32	34	34	40

Source: R. Vengroff, 'Central Local Linkages: The Party System', in R. Vengroff, *Local-Central Linkages and Political Development in Botswana* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1972), 153-203; J. Parson, 'A Note on the 1974 General Election in Botswana and the UBLS Election Study', *Botswana Notes and Records* 7 (1995), 73-81; J. Polhemus, 'Botswana Votes: Parties and Elections in an African Democracy', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21/3 (1983); N. Mmona, *Report to the Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration on the General Election* (Gaborone: Government Printer, 1989, 1994).

it underscores the fact that the law allows for free political activity. The Botswana Progressive Union (BPU) and the Freedom Party (FP), which merged with the BIP to form the Independence Freedom Party (IFP), remain regional parties with limited national appeal, but command some council seats. The United Democratic Front (UDF), United Socialist Party (USP), Labour Party (LP) and Lesedi La Botswana (LLB) have never really made an impact in Botswana politics in terms of either winning a council or parliamentary seat. The Botswana Liberal Party (BLP) and LLB have since been struck off the list of political parties in Botswana due to inactivity.

In fact, in the first parliamentary elections held in 1965 the BDP won 28 of the 31 seats and formed the government. After those elections, the Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) became the main opposition party with three seats in parliament. During the 1969 elections the combined opposition – BPP, BNF and Botswana Independence Party (BIP) – increased their number to seven seats, only to slide down to five and four seats in 1974 and 1979, respectively. In 1984, the BIP lost its single seat to the BDP, the BNF increased its seats and the combined opposition won six seats. 1989 was a bad year for the opposition; they were reduced yet again to a nominal three seats. It was only in 1994 that the opposition made a mark in electoral politics when the BNF won 13 out of 40 parliamentary seats.

Botswana's constitution allows for free political activity, yet it circumscribes eligibility for political participation. Any citizen over the age of 18 years who is sane and has not served a jail term of six months or more is eligible to run for office as either a councillor or member of Parliament. For the presidency, the person has to be at least 30 years old. However, the electoral law disqualifies civil servants from running for political office. According to Mayo, referred to by Holm, the fundamental principles of liberal democracy – opportunity to run for office, equality of franchise, free and honest election procedures and majority rule – cannot be said to be working if such groups are denied the right to contest.⁵⁰

Civil servants are the most notable group disqualified from contesting political office.⁵¹ They comprise all members of the bureaucracy, including teachers, army, police and traditional chiefs or *diKgosi*.⁵² We briefly isolate and discuss the position of *diKgosi* because their institution by its very nature is political. Historically, *diKgosi* have occupied a central position in the governance of their polities. Their jurisdiction was circumscribed by the colonial administration and their powers were further curtailed by the independence constitution. The Tribal Land Act of 1968, which established the Land Boards, stripped them of their remaining powers of allocating land.⁵³

In the parliamentary system of government under which Botswana operates, the House of Chiefs advises the government on custom and

tradition. It was probably self-preservation on the part of politicians, in recognising the authority that *diKgosi* enjoy, that made them insist *diKgosi* who have been members of the House of Chiefs must resign their positions before they can take part in active politics. *Kgosi* Bathoen II pioneered the ground by resigning his position as *Kgosi* in 1969 to join the BNF. Recently, Ian Khama resigned his position of commander of the Botswana Defence Force to join politics on the BDP ticket. However, Khama did not renounce chieftainship because he never served in the House of Chiefs. Khama has since been elected MP for Serowe North and confirmed as Vice-President and Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration. He is the only serving politician who is also a paramount chief, a precedent that may sway Botswana politics in a different direction. For some time the institution of chieftainship was untainted by political overtures, but this observation cannot be made any more. In recent years, government has appointed former politicians, in clear political patronage, as chief representatives and or headmen. By any measure, this practice has compromised the neutrality of the public service.

On the whole, the restriction that disqualifies civil servants from running for political office has had the net effect of excluding a sizeable portion of the better educated and more articulate portion of the population from taking part in active politics. While this practice deprives political parties of the chance to field educated and experienced candidates, it nonetheless reinforces the demarcation between the state and government. It adds to the autonomy of the state because it insulates the state bureaucracy from party politics.

Botswana provides enough political space for political parties, particularly opposition parties, to publicise their view without fear of intimidation and arrest. However, it insists that such campaigns must be made within the confines of the law. In some instances, government has prosecuted opposition politicians who, in the course of political debate, at political rallies, used offensive language directed at their opponents. At times, such verbal abuse was directed at the state president. Nevertheless, most of these offences that led to convictions ended with fines, and no one to date has served a prison term.

By way of monitoring political events, the police issue permits for political rallies and also video record their proceedings. Opposition parties perceive these recordings as undue regulation and intimidation. It would appear, however, that government, as the custodian of the law, makes such procedures not as such to harass politicians, but to make them accountable for their statements. Otherwise, if these checks and balances were not effected, political rallies would become arenas for abuse, insults and lawlessness. In fact, the 'freedom square', as political rallies are commonly

referred to, are already characterised by abusive language and character assassinations and are therefore discredited fora for political discourse.⁵⁴

Electoral party competition is also influenced by the availability of physical and financial resources. These impact on organisational capacity and outreach programmes of political parties. In a vast and varied country like Botswana, encompassing difficult terrain such as the Kalahari sand velds and the Okavango swamps, effective political mobilisation requires an abundance of resources. Opposition parties, which are largely underfunded, often face financial difficulties in trying to reach some of the remote areas. At the same time, over the years the BDP has had unfair advantage by receiving funding from external sources.⁵⁵ In the run-up to the 1999 election, the BDP received P2.4 million⁵⁶ from an undisclosed international source.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, investigations have revealed that the money was transferred from an account at Guyerzeller Bank AG in Zurich, Switzerland. In typical 'Mafia' style, the source of the money was only identified as 'Client' under code name MRMDUS 33XXX in the bank telegraphic transfer transcript.⁵⁸ Opposition parties have come out strongly against this clandestine foreign funding on the grounds that 'it could expose the country to external manipulation by external powers'.⁵⁹ For his part, Dr Koma said, 'foreign funders' idea is not to enhance democracy' but to 'sponsor a party they want to see winning at the polls and later serve their own interests'.⁶⁰ This funding comes at a time when the BDP government is refusing to accede to the requests by opposition parties that all parties should receive government funding.

Incumbency in office also plays a key role in determining the outcomes of elections. The party that was in power has a track record to refer to when canvassing for support, while opposition parties suffer the disadvantage of being untested. The BDP boasts of having masterminded one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. Opposition parties, for their part, have fallen into the trap of just being critical of the government without clearly spelling out their alternative programmes.

The electoral reforms that have been instituted as a result of the 1997 referendum widened the space for political competition. These reforms include lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years, the creation of an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the creation of the absentee ballot. Yet, despite these concessions, youths remain apathetic. They argue that lowering the voting age did not qualify them as youths to be voted into council and parliamentary positions. Youths, they further observe, have special needs which can only be effectively articulated by them. However, as predicted in opinion polls conducted by the Democracy Research Project (DRP) of the University of Botswana, the BDP is set to sweep the 1999 general elections.⁶¹

Factionalism and Party Splits

In recent years, political parties, both ruling and opposition, have been beset by serious factional fights. These have been motivated by personality clashes as well as struggles for strategic position within parties. In short, they have been struggles for hegemony. The BDP and BNF have been the hardest hit in this regard. We first consider factionalism within the BDP. The BDP has since 1992 been a party polarised by factional fights. These factions manifested themselves in two major camps, popularly known as the Kwelagobe and Merafhe factions. On account of factionalism, the BDP failed to democratically elect a Central Committee during the 27th Congress in 1997.⁶² To this end, the party president, Festus Mogae, said, it will 'forever remain an indictment to the party'.⁶³ The 1999 Congress, which apparently went smoothly, was a test of the unity and cohesion of the party. At that congress, it appeared that the two factions had buried the hatchet with a view to entering the elections a united party. The number of candidates returned unopposed reflected the dearth of factionalism, and where voting took place it transcended divisive politics.⁶⁴

As one expression aptly put it, BDP leaders are 'like ducks in a pond: calm on the surface but peddling furiously underneath'.⁶⁵ Probably, it is this image that sets the BDP apart from the opposition BNF. Despite internal differences, it maintains internal cohesion and does not lose sight of the fact that its ultimate objective is to retain state power. Besides, by and large, its differences are more personality clashes and jostling for positions in the party than ideological. While the unity of the BDP remains fragile, its leadership made every effort to contest the 1999 elections a united party.

The *Schlemmer Report* identified factionalism as one of the factors that affected the BDP's performance in the 1994 elections, and concluded if this problem was not addressed it would cost the party the 1999 election.⁶⁶ The report recommended bringing into the ranks of the party a person with 'sufficient dynamism', untainted by factionalism with a view to bringing the party together.⁶⁷ It also recommended not only the honourable retirement of the 'old guard' of the party but also the infusion of new blood, especially youth and women with a proven track record in their areas.⁶⁸

Of late, though not manifesting factionalism, *per se*, the BDP has been inundated with protests regarding the conduct of primary elections and in some cases expelled some party activists. Despite the semblance of unity, BDP primary elections were not without incident. The Member of Parliament (MP) for Shoshong, Modibedi Robi, lodged complaints with the party over what he felt were schemes and intrigues to unseat him from his constituency. He saw the plot in two ways. First, he accused the Secretary General of the BDP, Daniel Kwelagobe, of mentoring his brother-in-law, Philip Makgalemele, who was also Secretary of Youth in the Shoshong

constituency, to snatch the constituency from him. Second, he complained about the transfer of Duke Lefhoko, a nominated councillor, from the Central District Council to the Shoshong constituency. Suspecting foul play, Robi said, 'it [was] the first time a sitting councillor [was] transferred between constituencies'.⁶⁹ Robi subsequently lost the Shoshong Constituency primary election to Lefhoko.

Following the primary elections in Moshupa, some contestants who lost decided to register as 'independent candidates' on the grounds that the primaries were not free and fair. For its part, the BDP expelled them, citing 'indiscipline' and 'disloyalty' to the party.⁷⁰ A similar fate befell Calvin Batsile, who also, after losing in the primary elections, registered as an independent candidate. Amidst charges by Batsile that the BDP lacks 'transparency' and 'democracy', his case merits some further discussion.⁷¹ In 1989, Batsile contested and won primary elections with Archie Mogwe, but as is its prerogative, based on the party constitution, the Central Committee decided that Mogwe was a better candidate to run in the Kanye constituency. However, contrary to reports that Batsile was expelled, he maintains that he actually resigned from the party.

The split within the BNF in 1998 as a result of factionalism was something of a double tragedy. First, it undermined the efforts of the opposition to keep the ruling party in check and accountable to the electorate. Second, it cast doubt over the institutionalisation of the liberal democratic framework that should be anchored on a vibrant opposition. The split in the BNF represented a clash of personalities and leadership styles, as well as ideological struggles. At the level of personalities, Koma was not only regarded as the 'embodiment of what the BNF stands for but also the personification of the ideals of the party'.⁷² According to Moupo, a BNF activist, factors that explain Koma's personality cult are 'his lack of vanity, his unshakeable devotion to the party's cause, resilience and perseverance against overwhelming odds (the formidable strength of the BDP and its vicious campaign of personal slander and political intimidation against him)'.⁷³ Moupo continued that, despite his strong leftist theoretical grounding, Koma has failed to train 'politically sophisticated cadres' and this has elevated him to the level of 'supreme ideologist of the party'.⁷⁴ As a result, Koma has 'overwhelming authority, charisma, popularity and the personality cult within the party'.⁷⁵ The personification of the party was expressed by Johnson Motshwarakgole, a party stalwart and trade union activist, in an apparent contest for hegemony between the two warring factions of the BNF, the Parliamentary Caucus Group and the Concerned Group, when he said, *Party ke Koma* (Koma is the Party).⁷⁶ Party insiders say 'no one dares differ with Koma, lest they are discredited'.⁷⁷ In a further display of his arrogance as the unshakeable leader of the BNF, Koma told

members of the Central Committee of the party during its crisis to 'form [their] own party' if they did not want him as leader of the party.²⁸

The retirement of President Masire sparked the whole debate in Botswana as to when other political leaders would retire from active politics. Kenneth Koma, leader of the BNF, who is in his late 70s, said: 'I definitely want to retire after the 1999 general elections.' Asked when he planned to retire from active politics, Koma said: 'retirement in my case would only mean changing the level of my participation from politics. I can not be indifferent to what is taking place in Botswana as long as I am alive. I am a political animal and politics is a part of my nature.'²⁹ The intransigence of Koma in seeking to remain the leader of the BNF despite his old age is probably explained by an inherent tendency among political leaders that Robert Michels refers to as 'iron law of oligarchy'.³⁰ Just as Michels intimated, internal democracy is constrained in Botswana's political parties by these oligarchies. The issue of Koma's successor is still uncertain.

Ideologically, the struggle within the BNF was between socialists and social democrats.³¹ The ideological rupture of the BNF was probably due to the broadening of its mass base to include intellectuals who read Koma's writings with critical minds and led them to challenge views that were initially considered to be sacrosanct. The Ledumang Congress in 1997 was probably the watershed of BNF politics. The Central Committee members who were elected at the congress, the majority of whom were also sitting MPs, professed social democracy. At that congress most of the party veterans³² (the likes of Klass Motshidisi and Mareledi Giddie, to mention just two) lost their positions in the Central Committee. Evidently, this marked an ideological shift in the BNF, with the socialist camp losing ground and the social democrats gaining hegemonic influence.

A special congress was convened at Palapye on 11 April 1998 with a view to resolving the differences in the party. However, the congress degenerated into a bloody fight that left positions hardened more than ever before. In July 1998, 11 MPs and 68 Councillors from 33 constituencies, probably emulating the Lesotho experience, resigned from the BNF to form the Botswana Congress Party (BCP).³³ In the case of Lesotho, due to internal squabbles within the party, Ntsu Mokhehle resigned from the ruling Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) to form the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). Mokhehle was able to continue as Prime Minister because a majority of BCP MPs crossed the floor to join the new party.³⁴ With respect to the BNF crisis, it was not the leader who moved to form a different party, but MPs and Councillors. Although the Lesotho case was somewhat different in that the Basotholand Congress Party constituted government, the BNF case mirrors it because the new party also maintained its position as the official opposition. Koma lost his position as leader of the opposition to his erstwhile Vice-President, Michael Dingake.

The strength of a united opposition was acknowledged by the Secretary General of the BDP, Daniel Kwelagobe, when he said: 'a united and cohesive [BNF] would have proven formidable in the general elections on account of the constant growth in popularity it has been experiencing.'⁸⁵

UNITY OF OPPOSITION PARTIES

The drive to the unity of opposition parties in Botswana was doubtless informed by lessons drawn from the region. In Zimbabwe, the Patriotic Front was mooted at the insistence of the Frontline States, that the two major liberation movements, the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African People's Union, should unite in order to present one voice at the negotiating table. The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 is living proof of that joint effort. In South Africa the success of the United Democratic Front (UDF) to convince Indians and Coloureds that the Tricameral Parliamentary election of 1984 that was meant to divide the oppressed majority is also well documented.⁸⁶ Following in the footsteps of the UDF, the Mass Democratic Movement in South Africa was instrumental in winning concessions that led to the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, and subsequently held the all-race elections in 1994. Similarly, the creation of the UDF in Malawi led to the collapse of the rule of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the autocratic rule of Kamuzu Banda.

Needless to say, these regional developments influenced Botswana's drive to a united opposition, but it needs to be pointed out from the start that the circumstances that obtained in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Malawi were different from those in Botswana. Zimbabwe and South Africa were under white minority rule and, because of white settler intransigence, the African nationalists resorted to armed struggle. Invariably, the success of armed struggle depended on a high level of political mobilisation, which is absent in Botswana. In Malawi, the call for a united opposition came in the wake of economic underdevelopment and political repression.⁸⁷ To the contrary, despite acute income inequalities, Botswana stands out as one of the economic success stories of Africa, and also operates an open political system that allows for democratic choice and participation. However, this is not to deny that the objective and subjective conditions exist in Botswana to support the unity of opposition parties. Nevertheless, we need to evaluate carefully the trajectories that underlie its formation.

Just like in South Africa, the opposition in Botswana is faced with the problem of a one-party dominant system. The African National Congress swept the first all-race elections in 1994 and repeated its success during the 2 June 1999 elections. The BDP for its part won by a landslide victory every

election since 1965, except for 1994, when the opposition BNF won 13 of the 40 parliamentary seats. The split of the BNF in 1998 ensured further electoral defeat for the opposition in the 1999 elections.

Unity talks by the opposition were mooted as far back as 1991. At first the idea of unity was conceived under the framework of the People's Progressive Front (PPF). This initiative drew support from three opposition parties, the BPP, the BPU and the BNF. The idea was to dissolve the individual parties and merge into one 'Front' that would present a united opposition to BDP's electoral strength. Nevertheless, because of different perceptions of how the 'Front' should be operationalised the talks collapsed. In its wake, the UDF was formed in 1994.⁹⁸ Under the auspices of the UDF, political parties and civic organisations, while retaining their individual identities, would affiliate with the larger body. The central idea of UDF was that opposition parties would contest the elections under one 'disc' to avoid splitting the opposition vote. The UDF drew its inspiration from the success of a similar organisation in Malawi to remove Banda and the MCP from power. In a similar vein, the UDF in Botswana was geared to remove the BDP from power.⁹⁹ The affiliates of UDF contested the 1994 elections under one ticket, but performed poorly, in part because they failed to enlist the support of all opposition parties. The UDF remains a registered but ineffective umbrella for opposition parties.

Still in pursuit of unity, opposition parties in January 1999 converged in Palapye to discuss the idea of an alliance of opposition parties. After two days of deliberation, the parties issued a joint communiqué calling for the formation of the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM). The communiqué stated that:

We the opposition parties of Botswana have after sober and deep reflection on the current political situation in Botswana resolved to co-operate in order to take over political power and transform our society for the better ... The arrogance and intolerance and insensitivity of the ruling party and its manifest unwillingness and/or inability to seriously address the socio-economic problems which beset our society such as mass poverty and unemployment necessitate an urgent change of government in this country.⁹⁹

The BAM comprised of the BNF and its group members (Labour Party (LP), United Socialist Party (USP) and Botswana Workers Front (BWF)), the Botswana People's Party (BPP), the Independence Freedom Party (IFP), the United Action Party (UAP) – popularly known as Bosele – and the Botswana Progressive Union (BPU). While agreeing to 'retain their separate political and organisational independence and identity', the alliance partners maintained that they would 'pool their resources and

formulate joint strategies for the attainment of state power'.⁹¹ The assumption was that once the opposition came together under the banner of an alliance they would 'offer a credible alternative government'.⁹²

Indicating that opposition parties do not differ ideologically, Koma said: 'a united opposition is a necessity' since 'most of our policies are the same'.⁹³ Corroborating Koma's view, Lepetu Setshwaelo, leader of the United Action Party (UAP) and the Secretary General of BAM, said 'our members are keen, our policies are similar. Virtually nothing is separating us'.⁹⁴ The two leaders concurred that unless they buried their private ambitions and contested the elections as a robust group to face the BDP they will never 'make it'.⁹⁵

However, right from its inception, BAM was beset by problems at two levels. First was the conception of BAM within the BNF. Second was its conception among the other co-operating partners. Within the BNF, it appears that Koma and his Central Committee had different views about it, but one thing that the two seemed to agree on was that BAM was not a merger but an alliance. A BNF Central Committee member and Director of Elections, Robert Molefhabangwe, said some of the parties in the alliance required his party to accommodate their interests at great disadvantage to itself. For instance, some of them are said to have demanded to be given a chance to contest constituencies that are known to be strongholds of the BNF.⁹⁶ The implication that they remained strong in those constituencies in the wake of the BCP split was unsustainable. Koma did not seem to share Molefhabangwe's view. He said: 'in all the BAM structures, the co-operating parties in the alliance should be represented on the basis of equality regardless of what is supposed to be their relative numerical strength or popular support'.⁹⁷ Other parties, in particular the United Action Party (UAP), concurred with the view that candidates should be judged on merit and not the perceived strength of their parties. The feeling was that even though it appeared that the BNF enjoyed more support than its co-operating partners did, its leadership was depleted by the split and formation of BCP. At the same time, smaller parties such as the UAP had members with high credentials to be fielded as candidates.

It would appear that over time the Central Committee of the BNF prevailed over Koma and his position regarding BAM changed. The BNF took the position that since their respective parties did not elect the leadership of BAM, they should only be treated as delegates and their decisions should be taken as proposals for further discussion.⁹⁸ It became evident that the BNF was going to withdraw from BAM when it began to insist that it would field candidates in all constituencies they were interested in. The Secretary General of BAM, Lepetu Setshwaelo, said the BNF withdrew because it wanted to 'assess its performance after the elections'

and that it would find it difficult to market the 'new BAM disk'.⁹⁹ Also, feeling somewhat arrogant about their mass support that was also confirmed by the DRP opinion poll, the BNF pulled out of BAM, together with its group members.

Needless to say, the success of an alliance can only be achieved if built around a strong political formation, but for it to be led by the BNF, which was at the time in the middle of an internal crisis, threw doubt on its prospects. The chances of BAM in the next elections were further undermined by the fact that not all opposition parties, especially the BNF and BCP, were signatories to the alliance. As for the BNF and BCP, it would appear that the real race was for second position, and not to win the elections as such. In effect, the opposition was its own opposition.

Table 2 illustrates that had there been no split in the opposition vote, the opposition would have won five and six more seats in the 1989 and 1994 elections, respectively. By the same logic, many more constituencies would become marginal constituencies in the face of a united opposition. Plausible as these arguments sound, they are oblivious of the fact that the electorate does not simply vote to oust the BDP from power. Furthermore, winning an election is not just a matter of simple arithmetic. It involves more fundamental things such as the electorate agreeing on the terms of unity. The fact that the electorate votes against the BDP does not mean that it would vote for any party simply because it is in the opposition. The electorate votes on a number of issues that involve, *inter alia*, party allegiances, family ties, personalities and status of candidates. As has been demonstrated by previous attempts, unity is an elusive phenomenon that must be carefully conceptualised and nurtured in order to succeed.

AN ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing opposition parties in Botswana is that they should be perceived by the majority of the people as a 'credible democratic alternative' to BDP rule. The landslide victories that the BDP has scored since independence makes plausible the view that the BDP enjoys hegemonic rule in Botswana's polity. Based on these results, the BDP over the years portrayed a self-justification that it was indispensable and the only party capable of ruling the country. However, the opposition BNF during the 1994 elections made significant victories and electoral gains in the urban and peri-urban areas, by winning 13 (gaining 37.07 per cent of the popular vote) of the 40 parliamentary seats. Based on its share of the popular vote, the BNF defined a position for itself as a serious contender for political power.

TABLE 2
SELECT CONSTITUENCIES WHERE COMBINED POLL OF OPPOSITION WAS GREATER THAN THAT OF BDP

Constituencies	Party Performance in 1989				Total Opp. Vote	Party Performance in 1994						Total Opp. Vote
	BDP	BNF	BPP	IFP		BDP	BNF	BPP	IFP	BPU	UDF	
Maun-Chobe						4,804	2,912	175	3,142			6,229
North East						4,901	296	4,638				4,935
Sebina Gweta						3,488	1,149	1,392				3,541
Ngwaketse W						4,024	3,622		91		427	4,140
Ngwaketse S	3,628	3,464		161	3,636							
Francistown	5,258	2,735	3,732		6,467							
Francistown E						2,873	2,568	2,010				4,578
Mochudi	2,680	2,651	173		2,824							
Kanye	4,659	4,178		1,202	5,480							
Selibe Phikwe	4,416	4,329	170		4,499							
Nkange						3,694	465			3,016		3,481

Source: Report to the Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration on the General Election, 1989, 1994 (Gaborone: Government Printer).

However, following the internal crisis of the BNF leading to its split and the subsequent formation of the BCP, its chance to assert itself as an alternative government has been undermined. The BCP, for its part, now the official opposition by virtue of controlling the majority of opposition seats in parliament, cannot regard it as a government in waiting because it has not been tested at the polls. The 1999 elections therefore remain an important test for opposition parties to project themselves as an alternative government.¹⁰⁰

CONCLUSION

This article provides the political context of understanding party politics in Botswana. The overall conclusion that emerges is that all political parties agree on the common position that in order to capture state power, they need to compete on the basis of electoral politics. By the same logic, the party that wins elections forms the government and those that lose resort to being a loyal opposition. All this was on the basis of the liberal democratic framework.

Opposition parties contend that market-driven economies, as solutions to socio-economic problems in developing economies, are not sustainable, and continue to emphasise the centrality of the state. They argue that even within the neo-liberal framework the central role of the state is very much evident as an institution that can bridge the gap between the rich and poor. However, the ruling party subscribes to an economy that is driven by the private sector with limited state intervention.

The BDP enjoys the advantages of incumbency and, as such, opposition parties find it difficult to dislodge it from power. In addition, the ruling party enjoys an unfair advantage over opposition parties due to financial assistance it receives from external agencies while others are not able to do the same. Government also remains adamant in its insistence that political parties should not receive government funding. As a result, opposition parties remain weak administratively and their activities are beset by lack of resources, especially financial. The BDP has attained a hegemonic influence, and its ideology has come to be shared by the majority of the electorate. The opposition present very little chance of ousting the BDP from power unless they coalesce into a united front, but their narrow sectional interests preclude the possibility of uniting into a strong opposition, as witnessed by their failed attempts. Political opportunism is the greatest setback that opposition parties suffer and it leads to the proliferation of these parties. Yet the mushrooming of political parties does not present alternative ideologies and programmes, but only a split in the opposition vote.

The intervention in politics by *diKgosi*, whose powers were curtailed by the post-colonial state, has not been at variance with the state, but has been channelled through formal structures of governance. This, more than anything, helped to consolidate rather than weaken the political system because their intervention legitimised the new political order. The decision of Ian Khama to join politics further illustrates the fusion of traditional authority with modern political institutions.

Finally, factionalism and party splits are real factors in Botswana politics which parties must transcend in order to maintain internal cohesion. Opposition parties go to the elections divided and fragmented as ever. The only semblance of unity is through BAM, that is a conglomeration of smaller opposition parties. Based on the consensus that emerged at their 1999 Congress, the BDP appears set to contest the elections a united party and destined for a landslide victory.

POSTSCRIPT

Since this article was written, general elections were held on 16 October 1999 in which the ruling BDP once again swept the polls, winning 33 seats to the six for the BNF and one for the BCP. Predictably, BAM failed to win any seats.

NOTES

1. S. Booysen, 'Trends in Party-Political Opposition in South Africa – Ideological Constraints on Policy and Strategy', *Politeia* 17/2 (1998), 32.
2. H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1966), xvi.
3. K. Mengisteab, 'Democratization and State Building in Africa: How Compatible are They?', in K. Mengisteab and C. Daddiesh (eds.), *State Building and Democratization in Africa: Faith, Hope and Realities* (London: Praeger 1999), 23.
4. A. Leftwich, 'Bringing Politics Back in: Toward a Model of the Developmental State', *Journal of Development Studies* 31/3 (1995), 401.
5. F. Hayward, 'Introduction', in F. Hayward (ed.), *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 7.
6. *Ibid.*, 8.
7. Booysen, 'Trends in Party-Political', 31.
8. The most cogent examples, among others, are those of Malawi and Zambia, where after decades of *de jure* one-party rule, upon the re-introduction of multi-partyism opposition parties won elections and formed government. For detail refer to J. Kaunda, 'The State and Society in Malawi', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 36/1 (March 1998), 48–67.
9. *Ibid.*
10. For detail refer to J. Holm, P. Molutsi and G. Somolekae, 'The Development of Civil Society in a Democratic State: The Botswana Model', *African Studies Review* 39/2 (Sept. 1996), 43–69; P. Molutsi and J. Holm, 'Developing Democracy when Civil Society is Weak: The Case of Botswana', *African Affairs* 89 (July 1991), 323–40.
11. B. Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 212–14.
12. Mengisteab, 'Democratization and State Building in Africa', 23.

13. For details refer to H. Nengwekhulu, 'Some Findings on the Origins of Political Parties in Botswana', *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies* 1 (1979), 47-76.
14. O. Nnoli, *Introduction to Politics* (Ibadan, 1986), 148.
15. *Ibid.*, 148-9.
16. J. Bhagwati, *Journal of Democracy* 6/4 (1995), 54.
17. Q. Hoare and G.N. Smith (ed.), *Selection from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 12.
18. L. Picard, *The Politics of Development in Botswana: A Model for Success?* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987), 164-5.
19. *Ibid.*, 165.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, 166.
22. President Masire's campaign speech to residents of Gaborone South Constituency, Gaborone, 22 Oct. 1984, 1-4.
23. L. Picard, *The Politics of Development in Botswana: A Model for Success?* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987), 166.
24. *The Botswana Guardian* (Gaborone), 11 April 1986.
25. *Botswana Daily News* (Gaborone), 7 April 1996. Despite appeals by the President to his 'tribesmen' in Kanye the electorate, in a by-election, elected the opposition candidate, Leach Tlhomelang, instead of Archie Mogwe of the BDP.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Botswana Institute for Development and Policy Analysis, *Study of Poverty and Poverty Alleviation in Botswana* (Gaborone, February 1997), 6-31.
28. *Election Manifesto of the Botswana National Front* (Gaborone: Party Secretariat, 1994), 6.
29. Botswana Congress Party, *Democratic and Development Programme: Programme and Statement of Principles* (Gaborone, 1999), 10.
30. K. Mengistead and C. Daddieh, 'Why State Building is still relevant in Africa and how it relates to Democratization', in K. Mengistead and C. Daddieh (ed.), *State Building and Democratization in Africa: Faith, Hope and Realities* (London: Praeger, 1999), 6.
31. Botswana Congress Party, *Democratic and Development Programme: Programme and Statement of Principles* (Gaborone, 1999), 16. BCP cautions that BDP economic programmes are not consistent with the basic principles of globalisation. This, it argues is reflected in government readiness to bail out inefficient business undertakings - largely based on kindred, personal friendships and membership of the BDP.
32. *Ibid.*
33. P. du Toit, *State Building and Democracy in Southern Africa: Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), 38.
34. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 17-23 July 1998.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 24-30 July 1998.
37. *The Midweek Sun* (Gaborone), 24 June 1998.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 24-30 July 1998.
41. To cite just a few examples, the specially elected councillor in Gaborone, Gabriel Komboni, defected from the BDP to join the BNF; in Mochudi, Isaac Davids defected from the BNF to join the BDP, and in Francistown, after Peter Ngoma was expelled from the BPP he joined the BDP.
42. *The Midweek Sun* (Gaborone), 12 Aug. 1998; *The Gazette* (Gaborone), 12 Aug. 1998; *Botswana Daily News* (Gaborone), 11 Aug. 1998.
43. To date, Botswana has a total of 14 political parties. They are: Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM), Botswana Congress Party (BCP), Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Botswana Peoples Party (BPP), Botswana National Front (BNF), Independence Freedom Party (IFP), Botswana Progressive Union (BPU), United Democratic Front (UDF), United Socialist Party (USP), Botswana Labour Party (BLP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Botswana Workers Front (BWF), Marx Lenin Engels Movement (MELS) and United Action Party (UAP).

44. *Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), 30 April to 6 May 1999.
45. P. Camay and A. Gordon, *There will be Elections...: An Evaluation of the Local Government Elections in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Co-operative for Research and Education, 1996), 109.
46. Hayward, 'Introduction', 13.
47. L. Picard, 'Bureaucrats, Elections and Political Control: National Politics: The District Administration and the Multi-Party System in Botswana', in L. Picard (ed.), *The Evolution of Modern Botswana* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 197-9.
48. *Ibid.*, 177.
49. *Ibid.*
50. J. Holm, 'Elections in Botswana: Institutionalization of a New System of Legitimacy', in F. Hayward (ed.), *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), 132.
51. That the civil service is politicised is without doubt. The BDP government openly poaches candidates for political office from the civil service. Opposition parties have also recruited from the public service, but their case is not as dramatic as that of the ruling party. In the present cabinet such candidates include President Festus Mogae, Vice-President and Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration, Lieutenant-General Ian Khama, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lieutenant-General Mompoti Merafhe, Minister of Education, Gaositwe Chiepe, Minister of Energy and Water Affairs, Dr Magret Nasha, and Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Ponatshego Kedikilwe.
52. *Kgosi* singular and *diKgosi* plural. *DiKgosi* are traditional leaders who preside over the traditional jurisdiction of the tribal entities in Botswana and over customary law.
53. Botswana Government, *The Tribal Land Act of 1968* (Gaborone: Government Printer, 1969).
54. In Kgatlang West constituency, Thomas Lekoko, at a political rally, insinuated that his opponent, Isaac Davids, was party to the ritual murder of Segametsi Mogomotsi in Mochudi. Following an indictment of defamation of character, Lekoko had to pay Davids a large sum of money.
55. B. Othhogile, 'How Free and Fair', in M.G. Molomo and B.T. Mokopakgosi (eds.), *Multi-Party Democracy in Botswana* (Harare: Bardwells, 1991), 26.
56. Pula is Botswana currency. 1Pula = US\$ 0.2145. Based on this rate, P2.4 m translates to about US\$ 500,000.
57. In another turn of events, an employee of West Bank, Dumelang Saleshando, executive member of the BCP youth wing and son of BCP MP for Selibe Phikwe, Gil Saleshando, was fired from Westbank, a division of First National Bank of Botswana, after he was accused of leaking details of the clandestine funding of the BDP by an external source. However, it was later discovered that the money came from a subsidiary of De Beers, the South Africa diamond mining giant which owns 50 per cent of the Debswana Mining Company. For details see *The Botswana Gazette* (Gaborone), 26 May 1999.
58. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 1-8 April 1999.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. Opinion Polls held in March 1999 by the DRP in 15 parliamentary constituencies. In a sense these polls confirmed the results of the July 1998 council by-elections - Lobatse, Francistown, Letlhakane and Medie - which were all swept by the BDP. The BDP won all the council by-elections, including Peleng Central Ward in Lobatse considered to be the stronghold of the BNF. For details see *Botswana Daily News* (Gaborone), 28 July 1998.
62. For detail see M. Molomo, 'The Implications of the October 1997 Referendum for Botswana', *Democratization* 5/4 (1998), 163-4. In an unprecedented event, Sir Ketumile Masire, working behind the scenes, brokered an uneasy peace between the Kwelagobe and Merafhe factions in an effort to avert a party split. The Merafhe faction, fearing defeat, had threatened to boycott Central Committee elections because the Kwelagobe faction had reneged on an earlier deal that they would not challenge Mogae (who was then Vice-President) for the chairmanship of the party. Traditionally, the BDP has reserved the chairmanship of the party to the Vice-President to facilitate smooth succession. Clearly flaunting democratic procedures, in a balancing act, delegates at the BDP congress were asked to endorse a compromise Central Committee list presented to them by the party leadership.

63. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 20–26 Nov. 1998.
64. In the elections for the Central Committee that were held on 19 July 1999, conducted by the Democracy Research Project of the University of Botswana, the results were as follows: President – unopposed; Chairman – unopposed; Secretary General – unopposed; Treasurer – unopposed; and Deputy Treasurer – unopposed. Only one position among the office bearers, that of Deputy Secretary General, was contested in an election and was won by P. Venson. The five additional positions were won by M. Merafhe, J. Nkate, B. Sebetela, G.U.S. Matlabaphiri and D.S. Pholo. The outcome of this election reflects a consensus between the two factions.
65. *The Botswana Guardian* (Gaborone), 9 Oct. 1998.
66. R. Schlemmer *et al.*, *Present Realities and Strategies for the Future: Training Workshop for the Botswana Democratic Party* (Gaborone, Aug. 1997), 13.
67. The appointment of Ian Khama as Vice-President and Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration was made in this regard.
68. *The Botswana Guardian* (Gaborone), 3 Nov. 1998.
69. *The Gazette* (Gaborone), 14 Oct. 1998.
70. *The Botswana Gazette* (Gaborone), 23 June 1999 and *The Midweek Sun* (Gaborone), 23 June 1999.
71. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 13 Feb. 1998.
72. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 24–29 April 1998.
73. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 29 May–4 June 1998.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 13 Feb. 1998.
77. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 23–29 Jan. 1998.
78. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 1–7 May 1998.
79. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 30 Jan.–5 Feb. 1998.
80. R. Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), 32.
81. The Concerned Group, by and large, represents the old guard of the party that was losing ground within the party as a result of the surge of social democracy as a hegemonic ideological position. This group was defeated and lost control of the Central Committee at the Ledumang Congress in 1997. They alleged that the elections were irregular and threatened a court action against the party. The Central Committee subsequently expelled them from the party. All these struggles culminated in a riotous situation at the Palapye Congress in 1998 between supporters of the Concerned Group and the Central Committee. The end result of all this was the split of the BNF and formation of the BCP.
82. The veterans coalesced into what they called the 'concerned group' and challenged the results of the elections, saying that they were not constitutional.
83. *The Botswana Gazette* (Gaborone), 24 June 1998.
84. P. Sekatle, 'The Establishment of Lesotho Congress for Democracy: Implications for the 1998 General election', *Lesotho Social Science Review* 3/2 (1998), 69.
85. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 20–26 Nov. 1998.
86. For details, see J.A. du Pisan, M. Broodryk and P.W. Coetzer, 'Protest Marches in South Africa', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 28/4 (1990), 586.
87. J. Kaunda, 'The Transition to a Multi-Party System and the Consolidation of democracy in Malawi', *IL Politico* 62/3 (1998), 430.
88. The UDF was sponsored by the Social Democratic Party (SDP), then led by Mareledi Giddie (he has since re-joined the BNF), the Botswana Workers' Front (BWF), led by Shawn Nthabile (a breakaway from the BNF), and the Marxist-Leninist, Engels and Stalinist Movement (MELS), led by Themba Joina.
89. The slogan of the UDF said it all: *Tsela Tsheu!*. Reply: *Ya go tsaya puso!* The translation goes something like, the clear path to take over state power.
90. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 29 Jan.–4 Feb. 1999.
91. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 29 Jan.–4 Feb. 1999.
92. *Ibid.*

93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*
95. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 24–30 July 1998.
96. As per their own proposal, the BPP requested to be given a chance to contest and be supported in the following constituencies: Francistown East, Francistown West, NorthEast, Tonota, Nkange and Sebina Gweta. In addition, they expected to be allocated other constituencies like SouthEast, Lobatse, Kgatleng East, Selibe-Phikwe Serowe North, Gaborone North and Ghanzi. For details, see a paper issued by the National Executive Council, 'Botswana Peoples Party: Towards Patriotic Alliance', a paper presented at the *National Unity Preparatory Seminar* (Palapye, 23–24 Jan. 1999), 2.
97. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 23–29 April 1999.
98. *Mmegi* (Gaborone), 23–29 April 1999.
99. *Botswana Daily News* (Gaborone), 24 May 1999.
100. The general elections took place on 16 Oct. 1999. As predicted, the BDP won an overwhelming majority of seats – 33 to the BNF's six and the BCP's one.