

*Limitations of British Territorial Control in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1918–1953**

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This article argues that the Kalahari desert region of the Kwena tribal reserve quietly slipped out of the imperial command from 1930–1950, at a time when British colonial authorities achieved territorial control of the tribal areas of Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana) through the chiefs. The British had reluctantly colonised Bechuanaland and initially left the chiefs to their own devices. However, with a new generation of chiefs in office in the 1920s, numerous 'ugly' developments in the tribal areas, and lack of regulation of chiefly powers, forced the colonial government to tighten control. By the mid-1940s this appeared to have been achieved in most parts of the country. But the lack of resources and logistical difficulties, combined with weak tribal leadership at the Kwena tribal headquarters made the Kalahari desert impossible to police. Hence, it became a safe haven for alleged criminal elements, such as tax evaders and game poachers for example. The remote and isolated village of Tsetseng proved to be a particular problem for the colonial authorities and this 'lawless' area was only brought back into effective imperial control in 1953 after a difficult campaign. The article also argues that consultation and Tswana succession through primogeniture made indirect rule in Bechuanaland operate differently from other parts of British Africa.

Introduction

This article starts by providing a brief background to the colonisation of the land of the Tswana and the nature of the British colonial administration in Bechuanaland. It then recounts the difficulties of controlling the tribal areas, which led the colonial government to take measures to bring about effective rule. The focus then shifts to the Kwena tribal territory where control over some subordinate Kalahari tribes in the Kalahari desert was lost. Finally, the article provides a comprehensive account of the methods used by the Kalahari people in evading Kwena and British imperial control. The remoteness of Tsetseng and the heavy sand of the Kalahari desert contributed to the initial 'disconnection' of Tsetseng, before its 'rediscovery' renewed efforts to bring it under control (see Figure 1 on page 58). When Tsetseng people refused to give in to 'interference' this was perceived by the authorities as lawlessness. Indeed, the discourses of 'lawlessness' can be viewed as a colonial response to logistical problems in actually exercising any authority deep in the Kalahari desert.

Missionary John Mackenzie of the London Missionary Society, who was based at Shoshong (the former Ngwato capital) from 1862 to 1876, campaigned in Britain for British protection of the Tswana territories against Boer threats.¹ Although initially his plea

*This piece is dedicated to Professor Neil Parsons on his retirement from the University of Botswana in July 2009. The author greatly appreciates helpful comments made by Professor Jacqueline Solway and Professor Fred Morton.

¹ See A.J. Dachs, 'Missionary Imperialism – The Case of Bechuanaland', *Journal of African History*, 13 (1972), pp. 647–58.

was not heeded, in 1885 British protection was suddenly declared out of fear that the Germans in South West Africa might link up with the Transvaal Boers and block the 'Road to the North'.² Controlling this route was of immense economic value, as it served as a gateway from the South African mines through the land of the Tswana into central Africa, where cheap African labour, fuel in the form of wood, and livestock for food were procured.³

Satisfied to have secured their road to the north, the British were concerned primarily with maintaining peace and order, and left the chiefs ruling their people as they had done before. This meant that the colonial administration assumed the role of a central government with its headquarters at Mafikeng in South Africa where the resident commissioner was based. He was subordinate to the high commissioner who operated from Cape Town. The presence of the British colonial administration in Bechuanaland was minimal, and never consisted of more than 100 Europeans. Contact between the chiefs and colonial administration was limited to a small mounted border police. The Tawana reserve (Ngamiland) in the remote northwest did not fall under British colonial rule until the 1890s owing to logistical problems. Even thereafter contact between Ngamiland and Mafikeng remained the weakest places in the entire territory.

In 1919 and 1920 a Native Advisory Council (re-named the African Advisory Council in 1940) was formed. The NAC was established for tribal representatives to discuss issues of mutual concern with the Administration annually.⁴ Yet the inaccessibility of Ngamiland meant that the Tawana did not attend the meetings of the NAC in Mafikeng until the 1930s, at a time when the administration introduced the policy of indirect rule. Indirect rule spread through British African colonies after being successfully implemented in the Muslim Emirates of northern Nigeria by Frederick Lugard shortly after these states had been conquered in the early 1900s.⁵ With a personnel of no more than 100 Europeans, Lugard effectively established British colonial control in this vast northern Nigerian territory.⁶ Later, he disseminated the policy to other parts of Nigeria.⁷ The adoption of indirect rule was a result of the inadequate human and financial resources at his disposal, and was an act of administrative expediency.⁸ Indirect rule involved maintaining indigenous tribal administration⁹ and taking advantage of the traditional court system.¹⁰ The third feature of

2 D.M. Schreuder, *The Scramble For Southern Africa, 1877–1895: The Politics of Partition Reappraised* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 158–78.

3 N. Parsons, 'The Evolution of Modern Botswana: Historical Revisions', in L.A. Picard (ed.), *The Evolution of Modern Botswana* (London, Rex Collings, 1985), pp. 29–30.

4 M.M. Hulela, 'The Role of the European Advisory Council in the Administration of Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1920–1960' (BA research essay, University of Botswana and Swaziland, 1978), and K.R.D. Manungo, 'The Role of the 'Native' Advisory Council in the Administration of Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1919–1960' (BA research essay, University of Botswana and Swaziland, 1977).

5 M. Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority, 1898–1945* (London, Collins, 1960).

6 See C.N. Ubah, *Government and Administration of Kano Emirate, 1900–1930* (Nsukka, Nsukka University Press, 1985); M. Bull, 'Indirect Rule in Northern Nigeria, 1906–1911', in K. Robinson and F. Madden (eds), *Essays in Imperial Government: Presented to Margery Perham* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 47–87.

7 See J.A. Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria, 1894–1934* (London, Longman, 1973).

8 See K.A. Korsah, 'Indirect Rule – A Means to an End', *African Affairs*, 43, 173 (1944), pp. 177–82.

9 Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part 1* (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950); Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part 2* (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951); Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part 3* (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951); Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part 4* (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951) and Lord Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories, Part V* (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953).

10 I.M. Okafor, *Indirect Rule: The Development of Central Legislation in Nigeria* (London, Longman, 1981), and J. Lewin, 'Native Courts and British Justice in Africa', *Africa*, 14, (1943–1944), pp. 448–53.

indirect rule was taxation.¹¹ So central to indirect rule were the chiefs and tribal administration that where these did not exist the British invented them and gave them warrant of office.¹²

The policy of indirect rule differed from its original form as it spread from Nigeria to Uganda¹³ and Tanganyika¹⁴ (Tanzania) in east Africa, and then British central Africa.¹⁵ But it retained some important features that were identifiable everywhere, namely tribal administration,¹⁶ tribal courts and taxation. In its spread to other colonies different local political conditions had to be taken into account because experience had shown that failure to do so led to serious difficulties. As indirect rule spread to southern Africa (principally the high commission territories of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland), it was implemented first in Bechuanaland. The major difference in the operation of indirect rule in Bechuanaland and other territories is that in Bechuanaland it involved a great deal of consultation between the British colonial officials and the chiefs. Unlike other places, the Tswana succession system by primogeniture made it difficult for chiefs to relate to the British as collaborators.¹⁷ The chiefs were able to influence and shape the policy to suit their own ends, and the consultative nature of indirect rule in Bechuanaland ensured co-operation between the colonial agents and the local people. In other British territories where consultation was absent, uprisings and revolts were common, particularly when efforts were made to implement taxation.¹⁸

Indirect rule was first introduced in Bechuanaland in 1935 but the chiefs disputed this process, arguing that they were not consulted. As a result, the policy had to be reintroduced in 1944 following their participation in formulating the laws that underpinned it. Not only had they been involved in drafting the laws, but they were also able to manipulate the situation to serve their own interests.¹⁹ Partly due to this dynamic and the symbiotic relations between the British officials and Tswana chiefs, the ineffective Kwena tribal leadership was recognised by officials in the post-1931 period.

11 F. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London, Frank Cass, 1926); A. Abraham, 'Nyagua, The British and the Hut Tax War', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 5, 1 (1972), pp. 95–94; J.A. Knoll, 'Taxation in the Gold Coast Colony and in Togo: A Study in Early Administration', in P. Gifford and W.R. Louis (eds), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 417–53.

12 A.E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891–1929* (London, Longman, 1972).

13 D.A. Low and R.C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule, 1900–1955* (London, Oxford University Press, 1960).

14 Sir Donald Cameron, *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria* (Washington, DC, University Press of America, 1962); J. Liffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979); R.A. Austen, *Northwest Tanzania under German and British Rule* (New Haven, CT and London, National Gallery Publications, 1968); R.A. Austen, 'The Official Mind of Indirect Rule: British Policy in Tanganyika, 1916–1939', in Gifford and Louis, *Britain and Germany in Africa*, pp. 577–606; M. Perham, 'The System of Native Administration in Tanganyika', *Africa*, 4 (1931), pp. 303–12.

15 S.M. Chipungu, 'African Leadership under Indirect Rule in Colonial Zambia', in S.M. Chipungu (ed.), *Guardians in their Time: Experiences of Zambians under Colonial Rule, 1890–1964* (London, Macmillan, 1992), and K. Datta, 'The Policy of Indirect Rule in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), 1924–1953' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1976); J. Power, '“Individualism is the Antithesis of Indirect Rule”: Co-operative Development and Indirect Rule in Malawi', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 2 (1992), pp. 317–47.

16 A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (ed.), *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria* (London, Oxford University Press, 1965), and M. Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1937).

17 The working of indirect rule in Sudan was a good example of collaboration by the chiefs (see G.M.A. Bakheit, 'British Administration and Sudanese Nationalism, 1919–1939' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1965)).

18 See C.J. Makgala, 'Taxation in the Tribal Areas of Colonial Botswana, 1899–1957', *Journal of African History*, 45 (2004), pp. 279–303 and I.N. Kimambo, *Mbiru: Popular Protest in Colonial Tanzania* (Nairobi, Historical Association of Tanzania, 1971).

19 See C.J. Makgala, 'The Policy of Indirect Rule in Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1926–1957' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2001).

The following section examines the problems faced by the colonial government authorities in the tribal areas and measures taken to regulate the powers of the chiefs with a view to bringing them under tighter control.

The Need for Tightening Territorial Control, 1929–1940

From about 1910 through to the 1920s, a new generation of chiefs replaced the first generation who had witnessed the imposition of British colonial rule. Thereafter, in the 1920s and 1930s, there were a myriad of what the British saw as unsavoury incidents in the tribal areas, which compelled the colonial government to rethink its policy towards tribal authorities.²⁰ In addition to the lack of definition of chiefly powers, which was viewed as 'a constant embarrassment to all concerned',²¹ Schapera asserts that:

As the old chiefs died, they were succeeded by young men educated for the most part in schools outside the Protectorate, and so cut off from adequate first-hand experience of tribal government and jurisdiction. Instances multiplied of drunkenness and irresponsibility, neglect of duty, misappropriation of hut-tax and other tribal moneys, and of serious internal disputes, all calling for stronger Administrative control; while increasing educational, veterinary, and agricultural development made it still more desirable to define the relations between the Administration and the tribes.²²

Leopold Amery, Secretary of State, who visited Bechuanaland in October 1927, was disturbed by the territory's lack of development and backwardness:

I had no idea what a backwater they were until I saw them myself. All the new stir and life in the Colonial Empire has hardly touched them at all. The same officials have occupied the same posts in the same little Protectorates for 20 years or so on end. As for administration our main idea has been that of the game reserve, a mere negative keeping of European civilisation out of the country and the maintenance of the existing tribal system without any real attempt to reform or to see what can be made out of the natives.²³

The penury he witnessed in Bechuanaland led him to appoint Charles Rey as resident commissioner in 1929 in an effort to ameliorate the situation. In Charles Rey, Amery was confident that he had found an administrator who would be capable to go 'all out to put the Bechuana [Tswana] on their feet economically'.²⁴ Rey himself had no experience of working in British colonial Africa, his only African experience had been as general manager of the 'Abyssinian Corporation' in Addis Ababa, where he worked for only one year.²⁵ In appointing Rey, Amery argued that he wanted 'someone who was enterprising, keen on development... a fresh and vigorous personality who will look at the situation with new eyes'.²⁶ On his arrival in Bechuanaland Rey's impression of the situation was that 'unless things are dealt with drastically and promptly, I foresee an upheaval in the next few years'. Full of energy for his new work he noted, 'so I'm going out with both hands to reform, develop, discipline and organise'.²⁷ Writing to Lord Lugard about the chiefs and colonial

20 Hailey, *Native Administration in British Tropical Africa Part V*, p. 212.

21 E.H. Ashton, 'Democracy and Indirect Rule', *Africa*, 13 (1947), p. 238.

22 I. Schapera, 'Political Organisation of the Ngwato of Bechuanaland Protectorate', in M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard (eds), *African Political Systems* (London, Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 67.

23 L.S. Amery to Billy (W.A. Edgecumbe, Amery's private secretary), 24 Sep. 1927, D.O. 9/7/D.10443, London, Public Records Office, (P.R.O.).

24 L.S. Amery, *My Political Life: 'War and Peace' 1914–1929* (London, Hutchinson, 1953), p. 409.

25 C. Rey, in N. Parsons and M. Crowder (eds), *Monarch of All I Survey: Bechuanaland Diaries, 1929–1937* (Gaborone, Botswana Society, 1988), p. xx.

26 Rey, *Monarch*, p. xx.

27 *Ibid.*, entry for Sunday 20 October to Sunday 17 November 1929, p. 4.

government officials in Bechuanaland, Rey could not hide his disgust with the nature of tribal administration:

in various Departments of State, I have never (even during our war-time Administration) come across a state of affairs such as I found on arrival here. Worst of all is the position of the Native Question. The great Chiefs Khama, Sebele the first and Bathoen the first etc, have gone. They have been succeeded by very inferior men – some drunken, some dishonest, all incompetent with the exception of Tshekedi, Chief of Bamangwato ... and Isang Chief of the Bakgatla. They have been handled in the most extraordinarily stupid way, a combination of weakness, vacillation and empty hectoring. They are thoroughly out of hand. They treat their people pretty badly, and need bringing into line firmly with realisation of their difficulties.²⁸

The remoteness of the Tawana reserve and the colonial government's lack of human and material resources made control very weak. Therefore, the accession of Mathiba to the *bogosi* (chieftaincy) brought about decay in relation to his predecessor Sekgoma's achievements. Mathiba was accused of never meeting his people. Contact between the tribal headquarters and the people in the outposts was limited to tax collectors, who were described by Resident Magistrate Nettelton as 'regular brigands'.²⁹ Mathiba's poor leadership led to calls for autonomy by the Herero and Hambukushu subject tribes.

Yet government officials reported that the people were happy under the ailing Mathiba's 'mis-rule', and his relations with the colonial regime were discussed in favourable terms. Even the determined and hardworking Rey had to accept the status quo, and wrote that 'owing to drink and disease this chief is practically crippled and though educated, is weak and unintelligent, exercising little or no authority over his tribe. He is, in spite of his many faults and short comings, an amiable personality, well disposed to the Administration, and does his best'.³⁰ It was also difficult for the Tawana Tribal Administration to recruit qualified and experienced personnel in the form of teachers and tribal treasurers.

In 1932, Charles Rey introduced the chiefs in the NAC to two draft laws, called Native Administration Proclamation and Native Tribunal Proclamation. These were meant to regulate chiefly powers. The chiefs led by the fiery Tshekedi Khama of the Ngwato were outraged by the draft legislation which curtailed their powers and privileges. According to the draft laws the colonial government had the authority to approve of a chief being installed, suspended or deposed, if the need arose. This was a drastic departure with tradition and the chiefs did not hide their strong disapproval. They argued that they had not been consulted during the drafting of the proclamations. Rey went on to implement the laws in 1935 but Tshekedi and his comrades petitioned the colonial government and when this failed they took the high commission to court in 1936.³¹ After the failure of their court case, the chiefs co-operated with Rey's administration but merely to demonstrate to him that the laws were unworkable.

In 1937 Rey retired and was replaced by Charles Arden-Clarke as resident commissioner. Arden-Clarke had worked in Nigeria for more than 16 years and was quite experienced in dealing with chiefs.³² He quickly established rapport with Tshekedi and the two became good friends. In 1939, Arden-Clarke set up a committee consisting of the chiefs and colonial government officials to draft new laws regulating chiefs' powers. The chiefs accepted this arrangement with alacrity. The new laws were implemented in 1944 and replaced Charles Rey's unpopular legislation.

28 Rey to Lugard, 5 March 1930, Lugard Papers, 52/5, Oxford, Rhodes House Library (R.H.L.).

29 '1929, Bechuanaland: Background Material', Native Administration – Batawana, Resident Magistrate's despatch, 30 Aug. 1924, MSS Brit. Emp. s.384, Box 5, Sir Charles Rey Papers, R.H.L.

30 'Resident Commissioner's Tour of Bechuanaland', Resident Commissioner to High Commissioner, 8 Nov. 1930, D.O. 116/4 20261/1, P.R.O.

31 See Makgala, 'Policy of Indirect Rule', pp. 51–153.

32 D. Rooney, *Sir Charles Arden-Clarke* (London, Rex Collings, 1982), pp. 1–39.

Loss of Control over Tsetseng, 1917–1940

This section goes back in time to examine the peopling of the Kalahari desert, the relationships between Kwena and Kgalagadi, and between the Kwena leadership and British officials, focusing on a dispute in which Rey intervened to try to strengthen administrative control. The Kgalagadi refers to a number of inhabitants of the Kalahari desert some of whom are Bolaongwe, Shaga, Kgwatheng and Ngologa. These groups became part of the Kwena under imperial control in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but they were incorporated as servants to Kwena masters who derived tribute from them. The tribute was in the form of desert products such as ostrich feathers and various animal skins among other things – commodities that were also used in trade dominated by Europeans from the Cape Colony.³³ In addition, the Kgalagadi provided free labour for tribal projects in the Kwena capital of Molepolole. The Kwena chiefs posted their representatives to rule over the Kgalagadi villages in order to ensure effective control. However, in 1917, Sebele II was installed as Kwena chief. It seems that soon after his installation, trade in the Kalahari and control over Tseteng village by the Kwena district governors began to weaken considerably.³⁴

The relations between Sebele II and the colonial government and its Christian allies were deteriorating at this time. Sebele openly flouted government orders as he felt they comprised unnecessary meddling in his *morafe's* (tribe's) affairs. On several occasions his Christian headmen unsuccessfully tried to oust him by making complaints to the colonial government of Sebele II's misrule. Yet official enquiries held in 1921, 1923, 1926, 1928 and 1929 showed that Sebele enjoyed the commoners' enthusiastic support.³⁵ The government's reports on him, however, read like a litany of despair.

Sebele II seemed scarcely concerned that his accession to *bogosi* (chiefship) was not formally confirmed by the secretary of state in London, pending the 'reforms' to chiefly rule. In May 1920 he was said to have refused Resident Commissioner McGregor's order to relocate from Ntsweng to Borakalalo where his enemies stayed.³⁶ In May 1921 Sebele's enemies delivered a petition to McGregor and a request for the formation of a tribal council to check Sebele's alleged mis-rule. However, with most Kwena supporting Sebele, in July 1921 McGregor withdrew the order requiring him to relocate. Sebele had also cemented his position by courting European traders.³⁷ So strong was his position that the tribal council became defunct soon after its formation. Between 1921 and 1925 he was accused of criminal and civil offences ranging from stealing hut-tax monies to wife battering.³⁸

Successive resident commissioners tried to revive the defunct Kwena tribal council following petitions against Sebele by his detractors in 1926, 1928 and 1929, but it perished again soon after being established.³⁹ However, in 1929 the government set up the 'Kwena tribal

33 F. Nangati, 'Early Capitalist Penetration: The Impact of Precolonial Trade in Kweneng (1840–1876)', in R.R. Hitchcock and M.R. Smith (eds), *Proceedings of a Symposium on Settlement in Botswana: The Historical Development of a Human Landscape* (Gaborone, Heinemann and Botswana Society, 1980), p. 141.

34 G.Y. Okihiro, *A Social History of the Bakwena & Peoples of the Kalahari of Southern Africa, 19th Century* (New York, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), p. 110.

35 'Kwena Tribal Affairs: Sebele II', correspondence between successive Resident Commissioners and High Commissioners respectively on Kwena Affairs between 12 February 1918 and 17 December 1929, Sillery Papers, 1611/20, R.H.L. This file is a good catalogue of the grievances levelled against Sebele by various Government officials and Sebele's opponents in Molepolole.

36 'Indictment [of Sebele II]', 17 May 1920, Dominions Office (D.O.) 35 337/3 10125/3, P.R.O.

37 J. Ramsey, 'The Neo-Traditionalist: Sebele II of the Bakwena', in F. Morton and J. Ramsey, *Birth of Botswana: A History of Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910–1966* (Gaborone, Longman, 1987), p. 34. His debt to traders was reported to be close to £2000 ('Decree of Civil Imprisonment granted in Gaborone [Gaborone] Court', 26 June 1921, D.O. 35 337/3 10125/3, P.R.O.).

38 'Indictment', 1925, D.O. 35 337/3 10125/3, P.R.O.

39 For more details and some positive deeds attributed to Sebele's rule see Ramsay, 'Neo-Traditionalist', pp. 30–9.

fund' which was supervised by the resident magistrate after reports that Sebele was misusing tribal revenue.⁴⁰ In 1931, Charles Rey decided to depose Sebele and banished him to the far away Crown land of Ghanzi, deep in the Kalahari. He replaced him with his cousin Kgari Sechele II as chief of the Kwena. The Kwena refused to pay tax until Sebele's death in 1939.

Kgari Sechele did not impress as chief because he acted no differently to the deposed Sebele, but the government turned a blind eye. These developments in the Kwena reserve led to laxity in tax collection and a complete collapse of control over the satellite villages such as Tsetseng until it was 'rediscovered' in July 1940. However, it should be pointed out that the period of the Second World War (1939–1945) saw co-operation between the colonial government and the chiefs reaching a high point. The chiefs did everything they could to assist Britain in her war effort. This included forceful recruitment of men for the war front.⁴¹ Some chiefs such as Kgari Sechele of the Kwena and Molefi Pilane of the Kgatla even went to the extent of serving at the war front themselves. It was during this period of unprecedented co-operation between the new generation of chiefs and the colonial government that Tsetseng was 'rediscovered' by chance. This was when a government agent had undertaken a very difficult trip into the area to pay a wife of a migrant labourer who had worked in the South African mines but had died from tuberculosis in Molepolole.

The 'Rediscovery' of Tsetseng, July 1940

This section details the great difficulty presented by the sandy and harsh Kalahari terrain to the colonial authorities and Tsetseng's isolation, which was key to the limited territorial control. The link between Tsetseng and Tsabong, which was the headquarters of the Crown land of Kalahari district, became crucial in the rediscovery of Tsetseng in July 1940. Infrastructure and communication facilities in Bechuanaland were very bad, particularly in this remote region; indeed, there was no passable through-road inside Bechuanaland from Tsetseng to Mafikeng, the capital of Bechuanaland. As a result, one 'had to drive along the Cape Province side of the Molopo river which marked the border'.⁴² Nor was there a usable road between Molepolole and Tsetseng, as the route previously used by traders had long been abandoned and had deteriorated. 'Travelling in the Kgalagadi has certain limitations', wrote former Kweneng and Kalahari district commissioner, Michael Fairlie in his memoirs. 'It is wiser, for instance, to travel at night when the engine runs cooler. The speed of travel is seldom more than twenty m.p.h. for the road is a deep, sandy track and the lorry seldom gets out of third gear, so that the radiator will boil every five miles or so'.⁴³

Despite or perhaps because of these transport and administrative difficulties, the Kalahari desert was teeming with a variety of wild animals. These included springbok, wildebeest, hartebeest, gemsbok, zebra and eland among others.⁴⁴ The people of Tsetseng subsisted on this fauna which they were said to be slaughtering recklessly and with impunity.

In July 1940, the Tsabong acting district commissioner, A. Germond, made a difficult trip to Tsetseng where he 'interviewed a certain woman Namasube and paid her compensation

40 I. Schapeira, *Tribal Innovators: Tswana Chiefs and Social Change, 1795–1940* (London, Athlone Press, 1970), p. 77.

41 A. Jackson, 'Bad Chiefs and Sub-Tribes: Aspects of Recruitment for the British Army in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1941–42', *Botswana Notes and Records*, 28 (1996), pp. 87–96, and A. Jackson, *Botswana 1939–1945: An African Country at War* (New York, Clarendon Press, 1999).

42 M. Fairlie, *No Time Like the Past* (Durham, NC, Eclinburgh & Cambridge, The Pentland Press, 1992), p. 117.

43 Fairlie, *No Time Like the Past*, p. 123.

44 A. Merriweather, *Desert Doctor Remembers: The Autobiography of Alfred Merriweather* (Gaborone, Pula Press, 1999), p. 69.

for [the] death of her husband at the mines'.⁴⁵ Germond's trip to Tsetseng was an eye-opener to the authorities:

There are two fairly large settlements at Tsetseng. These people are mostly Makgalagadi with a sprinkling of the worst type of Kwena tribesmen, who have moved to this isolated spot to evade Tax and to trade with the local inhabitants . . . I know that natives in this area shoot game without restriction. Situated as they are on the border of the Kgalagadi District, they poach. Giraffe, Eland and Gemsbok are plentiful in this area. Trade in game meat, reims [leather straps] and hides is carried on with the Makgalagadi of the Letlhakeng area or directly with such firms as M.J. Kablay and A. Hirschfeldt.

Germond reported that there must be approximately 80 huts in Tsetseng and was 'doubtful whether a quarter of these people have ever paid tax'. Writing to the Molepolole district commissioner he said that 'Tsetseng is known by Natives at Kang as "Legodimong" [Heaven]. The inference is obvious'.⁴⁶

The 'heavenly' status of Tsetseng is interesting because it refers to freedom from colonial and Kwena subjugation and hardship. The phrase suggests harmonious existence in Tsetseng and easy access to wildlife meat and products which were needed for trade. As Germond mentioned above, Tsetseng was also a safe haven for Kwena who could not bear the brunt of taxation in Molepolole. Before long it was also reported that some inhabitants of Kang (also Kgalagadi), among them eligible tax payers, in the Kalahari district were also removing to Tsetseng without first seeking permission from their headman in Kang.⁴⁷

Naturally, the rediscovery of Tsetseng meant that the colonial government would be determined to crack down on what it regarded as lawlessness there, i.e. tax evasion and poaching. In pursuit of tax defaulters from Kang, the Tsabong district commissioner gave his counterpart in Molepolole a list of five known defaulters who had sought sanctuary in Tsetseng. These five, and probably many others, were in arrears varying from two to five years.⁴⁸ They were also said to have removed cattle without permits and engaged in shooting many eland. The slaughter of the latter was prohibited on the grounds that it was royal game. The Molepolole district commissioner requested the Kwena tribal authorities to have the Tsetseng matter investigated, and also stated that 'there appears to be no Bakwena headman [sic] at Tsetseng'.⁴⁹

The lack of a Kwena headman in Tsetseng was seen by the colonial authorities as contributing to 'people . . . just running wild and doing as they like', and the absence of Kwena authority was also viewed as being the pull factor for migration to that village. 'Because they are in the Bakwena country, they imagine our Police cannot touch them and it seems the time has come to make an example of these people'.⁵⁰ The authorities in Tsabong promised to arrange for the Tshane cattle guard to go to Tsetseng and investigate the cattle removal situation, and suggested that the Bakwena tribal leadership should contribute by

45 D.C. Mol. 6/16, Botswana National Archives (B.N.A.). Germond (Tsabong) to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 10 July 1940. 'Bakgalagadi' is the polite designation while 'Makgalagadi' is derogatory. According to Solway 'in relation to their Tswana neighbours who predominate in Botswana they are "Makgalagadi" a nomenclature in which the prefix "ma" denotes sub-human and servile origins' (J. Solway, 'Taking Stock in the Kalahari: Accumulation and Resistance on the Southern African Periphery', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24 (1998), p. 438), also see J. Solway, 'From Shame to Pride: Politicized Ethnicity in the Kalahari, Botswana', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 24, 2 (1994), pp. 254-74.

46 Germond to District Commissioner, 10 July 1940, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

47 District Commissioner to Bakwena Regents, 15 Dec. 1944, D.C. Mol 6/16, B.N.A.

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Ibid.*

50 Midgley (Acting District Commissioner, Tsabong) to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 27 Nov. 1944, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

appointing a 'Headman for Tsetseng and bring[ing] order to the place'. According to the authorities 'Tsetseng's chief attraction is Eland, and these are shot *ad lib*'.⁵¹

The 'Excessive Liberty of Tsetseng': An Attempt to Restore Law and Order, 1945–1949

According to the Kwena leadership, the appointment of a Kwena headman or chief's representative (district governor) was made difficult by the fact that 'Tsetseng is far out in the desert and the water there is saulty (sic) and so, people who have never lived there before are afraid of staying there permanently'.⁵² For a long time the official link between Tsetseng and the 'outside world' was an Evangelist called Dithogo Baatweng. The Kwena tribal authorities considered appointing him as the chief's representative in Tsetseng. They believed that because he had been an evangelist in Tsetseng for a long time, he would meet the requirements.⁵³ For his part, the resident commissioner in Mafikeng tried to address the problem by appointing Midgely, the district commissioner for Tsabong, as an additional district commissioner for the Kwena reserve. Midgely was to be responsible for dealing with cases arising in Tsetseng, and to be assisted in his duties by the government police camel patrol.⁵⁴

After further discussion regarding the appointment of a chief's representative for Tsetseng area, a certain Kehemile Kgosidintsi was appointed, while Dithogo Baatweng was designated his 'helper'. Kgosidintsi, who duly accepted the posting, was considered to have experience of the conditions of Tsetseng; in addition he was a member of the Kwena royalty. It was arranged that he would commence duty in January 1945.⁵⁵

By October 1945 there were reports that conditions in both Kang and Tsetseng were severe owing to scarcity of water and the lack of trading stores where local people could sell their produce.⁵⁶ Government officials wondered why people shifted from Kang to Tsetseng and continued staying there when conditions in both villages were equally severe. 'To all intents and purposes they are all Bakgalagadi, they intermarry and are related in other ways and if the people at Kang are lazy and lawless, which is true, the same can be said of the Tsetseng crowd', wrote the Tsabong district commissioner, Michael Fairlie.⁵⁷ As far as Fairlie was concerned there were two major attractions in Tsetseng: the presence of eland in large numbers, and the almost complete absence of supervision. He also claimed that 'to avoid the tax collector the Tsetseng people cross to Kgalagadi and the Kang people to Tsetseng'.⁵⁸

When Kang experienced a severe water shortage, requests were made to allow Kang residents to take their livestock to Tsetseng for water for a short period annually without paying a levy. However, in Tsetseng, there was conflict between the local people and the police. 'The Tshane police recently went to Tsetseng in pursuit of people who had been hunting eland in this district. Although the story is not clear, it seems that a fracas took place and the police were ejected'.⁵⁹ Fairlie suspected that the chief's representative, Kgosidintsi [referred to as a headman by colonial officials], was the source of this problem

51 Midgely to District Commissioner, 27 Nov. 1944, DC Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

52 M. Seboni (Bakwena Tribal Administration) to District Commissioner, 23 May 1945, *ibid.*

53 Seboni to District Commissioner, 23 May 1945, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

54 Government Secretary to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 6 June 1945, *ibid.*

55 M. Seboni (Bakwena Tribal Administration) to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 2 July 1945, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

56 M. Fairlie (District Commissioner, Tsabong) to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 25 Oct. 1947, *ibid.*

57 Fairlie to District Commissioner, 25 Oct. 1947, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*

and he recommended that 'Chief Kgari might remind him of his responsibility to render all possible assistance to the police' in their investigation of the matter. On the alleged difficulty in tax collection, Fairlie saw 'no reason why collection is difficult as a continuous traffic of eland reims, skins and fat is said to pass down from Tsetseng to Molepolole'.⁶⁰

The severe shortage of water in Kang forced inhabitants to take their livestock to Tsetseng for water in the wells they had dug there (with permission from the district commissioner). This was something they had been doing in the past. Tsetseng was fortunate in that it had a supply of water all year round.⁶¹ However, Kgosidintsi was reported to have refused Kang people permission to water their animals in Tsetseng, and this was suspected to have led to a fracas between the people of Tsetseng and those of Kang with the support of their headman.⁶² Fairlie also suggested to the Molepolole district commissioner that he (Fairlie) pay occasional visits to Tsetseng in order to keep an eye on things. His reasoning was that Tsetseng was more accessible to him than to someone from Molepolole.⁶³

In his report to Kgari Sechele in Molepolole, Kgosidintsi stated that he tried to collect tax from the people in Tsetseng but his efforts were frustrated by the lack of hawking businesses or a trading store in the village, which meant that it was difficult for inhabitants of the village to obtain cash.⁶⁴ The little he was able to raise, £26.19/-, was taken to Molepolole by the evangelist, Dithogo Baatweeng. Kgosidintsi also reported that the school which the Tsetseng people had promised to build was not being built, and that people had not been able to plough, and were thus living off animal meat. 'The cattle posts of the Kang people are here at Tsetseng, these people have also brought their horses into Tsetseng which they use in killing the animals. They have passes and they have brought their cattle for pasture and water and they will not return to Kang until the first rains', he stated.⁶⁵ Although he had agreed to the Kang people coming to Tsetseng, he confessed that he was worried that there was not enough water even for the local Tsetseng people. 'I am afraid they will kill one another', he wrote. Kgosidintsi requested permission to collect a special levy from the Kang for using water in Tsetseng. He also requested Kgari to provide him with a rifle and ammunition because the area had 'become uninhabitable owing to numerous lions which have almost finished the cattle and the horses ... The people are just being eaten by lions'.⁶⁶

After Kgari discussed the suggestion of a special levy with the government officials, however, it was agreed that the Kang people be allowed to water their cattle at Tsetseng for humanitarian reasons.⁶⁷ 'It is rumoured that they are a lazy lot and do not worry about making wells for themselves. Another report says that they cross the border to avoid the Tax Collectors'.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Kgari did not wish to exact a levy from them if their reasons were genuine and they only proceeded to Tsetseng for a short period each year.

60 *Ibid.*

61 M. Osaki, 'Reconstructing the Recent History of the G'ui and G'wana Bushmen', *African Study Monographs*, Suppl. 28 (2001), pp. 27–30. <http://www.atypon-link.com/WDG/doi/abs/10.1515/IABI.2001.217>

62 Fairlie to District Commissioner, 9 July 1947, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A. On sharing resources see K. Ichikawa, 'Food Sharing and Ownership among Central African Hunter-Gathers: An Evolutionary Perspective', in T. Widlock and W.G. Tadesse (eds), *Property and Equality: Ritualization, Sharing, Egalitarianism, Volume 1* (Vancouver, Berghahn Books, 2005), pp. 151–64.

63 Fairlie to District Commissioner, 25 October 1947, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

64 K.L. Kgosidintsi (Tsetseng) to Kgari Sechele, 10 July 1947, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

65 Kgosidintsi to Kgari Sechele, *ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*

67 District Commissioner (Tsabong) to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 2 Oct. 1947, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

68 *Ibid.*

Yet difficult travel conditions hindered progress in maintaining law and order in Tsetseng. In 1947 it was stated that the last trip made by a motor vehicle to Tsetseng from Tsabong was during the census in 1946. 'According to the driver the going was so heavy that he wouldn't be prepared to attempt it again'.⁶⁹ In 1948, Michael Fairlie wrote to his counterpart in Molepolole: 'On May 11 I was able to at last to make a trip to Tsetseng in your district. The village lies 20 miles from Kang in Kalahari District. The road is very bad and was a cause of two blowouts on my subsequent journey home'.⁷⁰ To Fairlie the tax problems in Tsetseng could be eased by granting a hawker permit to a certain Indian trader by the name N.M. Kara, who was opening a business in Lehututu and had expressed interest in covering Kang and Tsetseng.⁷¹ Kgari was approached in this regard.⁷²

Meanwhile the shooting of the so-called royal game by Tsetseng people was reported to be continuing unabated, and instructions from Kgari to cease this went unheeded. Legal arrangements were made in order to ensure that the new district commissioner in Tsabong, D.A.T. Atkins, like his predecessor, became additional district commissioner for Kweneng in order to handle cases arising at Tsetseng. The absence of a licensed trader in Tsetseng resulted in an environment that encouraged the proliferation of unscrupulous illegal European and Indian traders.⁷³ 'I have on two occasions travelled with the above named Hawker [Mr Osman S. Rassool], an Indian granted licence at Kang. As the result of collecting hut tax when he buys stock, I go with him. I reported the problem of people at Tsetseng and Kang selling [large] quantities of Elands reims to him', reported Tshane-based African Policeman, Sergeant Kalabeng.⁷⁴ He continued his lament, 'I did not want to interfere with the above named when doing business but under the present conditions I feel I cannot tolerate the excessive liberty of Tsetseng and Kang people selling [large] quantities of Eland reims'. According to police reports, the problems in Tsetseng were exacerbated by the unwillingness of Kgari in Molepolole to assist Kgosidintsi:

By assistance of Headman K. Kgosidintsi at Tsetseng to assist on tax collection, I request your strong, immediate recommendation for him to be allowed small payment. The man himself is isolated amongst Bakgalagadi, without help whatsoever from Chief Kgari, whom he is representing at Tsetseng, at the same time Kgosidintsi is in failing health. Furthermore, Sir, it is very essential for a Hawker [to be] granted licence at Tsetseng, as this would help in getting tax collection, at the same time [this would] help [lift] the inhabitants of Tsetseng from their destitution life as in a whole, their living is not very bad in the line of food, but they are terribly in need of tobacco, tea, sugar etc., as they cannot do without.⁷⁵

Lack of support from Molepolole to Kgosidintsi in Tsetseng was exacerbated by the Kwena tribal treasury's failure to pay his salary for seven months. On appointment in 1947 (not 1945 as originally planned) his salary was £36 per annum; he was owed £21.⁷⁶

New Approach by the Authorities, 1949–1953

The continued difficulty in Tsetseng led to recommendations to establish a police post either at Tsetseng or Kang. However, an acute shortage of human, financial and camel resources

69 Fairlie to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 18 May 1948, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid.*

72 N.B. Rutherford (District Commissioner, Molepolole) to Kgosi Kgari II, 28 June 1948, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

73 Rutherford to the Commissioner of Police (Mafikeng), 6 Dec. 1948, *ibid.*

74 Sergeant Kalabeng (Post Commander, Tshane) to the Commissioner of Police, 1 Dec. 1948, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

75 Kalabeng to District Commissioner (Molepolole), 30 Oct. 1948, *ibid.*

76 M. Nwako (Treasurer, Bakwena Tribal Administration) to the Commissioner of Police, 25 August 1949, *ibid.*

impeded progress.⁷⁷ An alternative suggestion was to station two African policemen for a couple of months at Kang to attend to outstanding cases, apprehend tax defaulters and generally ensure close contact with the people in the area. According to government reports, tax evasion was beginning to be eclipsed through money raised by poaching and brewing *khadi* (a potent alcoholic drink made from wild tubers and honey or berries). *Khadi* had devastating effects in Bechuanaland because some men impoverished themselves and their families by selling their cattle in order to acquire it.⁷⁸ In some tribal areas chiefs established tribal police forces in order to crack down on the brewing and selling of *khadi*.⁷⁹

Poaching was said to be encouraged by licensed European traders in Tsetseng who bought large numbers of eland reims from the local people. Lack of support from Molepolole obviously demoralised and discouraged Kgosidintsi. By the same token, the non-issuing of hunting permits by Kgari also left the Tsetseng people with no choice but to poach in order to get money for tax and family provisions, and perhaps also for purchasing *khadi*. As a way of dealing with the Tsetseng situation, it was suggested that the immigrants be ordered to return to their respective villages. It was also suggested that an arrangement be made for Kgari to visit Tsetseng as soon as possible in order to address the issue of eland hunting and immigrants. It was believed that such a visit would go a long way in establishing the authority of Kgosidintsi as well as being helpful to the people and government generally. There was a suggestion that the police from Tshane should also meet Kgari in Tsetseng and assist him in any way possible.⁸⁰ The police at Tshane were also instructed to visit Tsetseng once a month in order to assist Kgosidintsi. The district commissioner, who promised to visit Tsetseng, was 'of the opinion that a visit from a European official will do much to restore the prestige of the law'.⁸¹

Government officials confessed, however, that trying to bring Tsetseng under their control was a tall order. 'In the past, three main expedients were tried out. The gazetting of the District Commissioner Kweneng Reserve, the placing of a Chief's Representative at Tsetseng and the attempt to start a school. I do not know what effect the former expedient had but the latter two are failure as the Chief's Representative has no authority through no fault of his own and the school has never been completed'.⁸²

The failure to bring Tsetseng under control led to another approach being adopted. The first step suggested was that Kgari should deploy at least two tribal policemen at Tsetseng but this was put off until a later date due to lack of transport. The European policeman, Inspector Webb, was expected to back the tribal policemen with more frequent police patrols from Tshane. Interestingly, these measures were perceived to be an exercise in futility: 'I am not, however, very confident of any good result as the Makgalagadi are a tough lot and even the police are, I am afraid, scared of them'.⁸³ It was suggested that Kgosidintsi be recalled since his presence in Tsetseng served no purpose. The Molepolole

77 G. Taylor (Acting Commissioner of Police) to Station Commander (Werda), 7 July 1949, *ibid.* On the introduction and utilisation of camels by the Police in the Kalahari desert see R. Molefi, 'All Day Over Sand and Stone: History of the Camel in Bechuanaland Protectorate' (paper in preparation).

78 I. Schapera, *The Political Annals of a Tswana Tribe: Minutes of Ngwaketse Public Assemblies, 1910-1917* (Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 1947), p. 28.

79 C.J. Makgala, 'The Development & Role of Tribal Police in Botswana, 1926-1973' (BA research essay, University of Botswana, 1997), pp. 8-16, or C.J. Makgala, 'The Role and Development of the Tribal Police', in Botswana', *Crime & Justice International*, 20 (2004), pp. 11-19.

80 District Commissioner to Government Secretary, 1 Nov. 1950, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

81 'These people appear to me to think that they are alone and are forgotten and this has been the cause of the lawlessness. They are not in my opinion really lawless and tough, only they are far away from European officials whom they very seldom see. And I say again frequent visits of a European will be all that is necessary at present.' (District Commissioner (Tsabong) to Government Secretary (Mafikeng), 1 Nov. 1950, *ibid.*)

82 District Commissioner to Government Secretary, 2 Nov. 1950, *ibid.*

83 *ibid.*

district commissioner felt that should everything else fail then one of the following desperate or extreme measures would provide a solution:

- (a) The stationing of a permanent Police Post in the Kang-Tsetseng area. This has been suggested previously but has not been adopted owing to lack of funds and personnel.
- (b) The closing down of Tsetseng and the removal of all the people to the Lethakeng area.
- (c) The handing-over of that area to the Crown Lands and thus including it in the Crown Lands.⁸⁴

Police patrols and raids on Tsetseng became frequent. In October 1953, for instance, a group of five policemen left Gaborone through Molepolole to Tsetseng. In Tsetseng, the patrol learned that the people of Tsetseng were no longer taking their eland reims to the local store but instead took them to Kokong in the neighbouring Ngwaketse tribal area.⁸⁵ The colonial police and the Kwena tribal authorities joined hands in an attempt to solve the perceived problems of Tsetseng. The first joint visit by the colonial police and the Kwena tribal authorities to Tsetseng was in June 1953. The team included the deputy chief, new chief's representative for Tsetseng (Dipitse Sebonego), tribal policemen and a tax collector. It was reported that the team found a lot of *khadi* drinking and eland hunting in the village and summarily dealt with the problems on the spot.⁸⁶ The tribal and colonial policemen split into four patrols, which went in four different directions into Tsetseng's satellite settlements. The first patrol returned with some 20 unlicensed rifles of different calibres and various types most of which were said to be obsolete weapons. Civil and criminal cases were also tried in Tsetseng by the patrol.⁸⁷

It appears that these joint tribal and colonial law enforcement endeavours began to bear fruit. So much so that by July 1953 tax collection in Tsetseng was reported to be better than in most other places in the Kwena reserve.⁸⁸ John Lonsdale has pointed out that payment of tax is a form of submission,⁸⁹ therefore by paying their taxes according to the law the people of Tsetseng had now surrendered to British colonial and Kwena tribal control. Previously this control had been severely limited or made impossible by the harsh desert terrain and poor leadership on the part of the Kwena tribal administration.

Conclusion

Whereas indirect rule functioned through collaboration of the chiefs elsewhere in British Africa, in Botswana more effort was made to please the chiefs who were able to manipulate the situation to their advantage. The colonial government maintained a spurious confidence in some of the weak chiefs, in the hope of gaining their co-operation. This article has demonstrated how the Kgalagadi in Tsetseng took advantage of the weak tribal administration in Molepolole to break away from their past exploitation. Their ability to do so was helped by the colonial government's lack of resources and logistical difficulties. Interestingly, this development took place at a time when the colonial government thought it had won concessions from the chiefs and had the tribal territories of Bechuanaland under effective control.

84 *Ibid.*

85 Sergeant Kalabeng to the Officer Commanding (Gaborone), 25 Oct. 1952, D.C. Mol. 6/16, B.N.A.

86 District Commissioner (Molepolole) to SV Lawrenson (DC Lobatse), 29 June 1953, *ibid.*

87 Kalabeng to The Officer Commanding (Gaborone), 26 June 1953, *ibid.*

88 District Commissioner (Molepolole) to Lawrenson, 6 July 1953, *ibid.*

89 J. Lonsdale, 'Scramble and Conquest in African History', in R. Oliver and G.N. Sanderson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Africa, 1870-1905*, 6 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 754.

The Kgalagadi's reaction to subservience in the Kwena territory was not an isolated incident, and in other parts of Bechuanaland there were numerous and more dramatic incidents of objection to subservience to Tswana rule.⁹⁰ Yet these other instances were unsuccessful as the colonial regime joined hands with local Tswana overlords to suppress such uprisings. At independence in 1966 the postcolonial government subordinated all minority languages to Setswana, which became the national language (English being the official language).⁹¹ The government argued that by so doing it was engaged in nation-building. However, the turn of the 21st century saw the ethnic minorities adopting a more vocal and confrontational position on the marginalisation of their languages and demanding the same constitutional recognition as Tswana-speaking tribes.⁹² Some even argued that the name Botswana reflected only the Tswana-speaking citizenry and should be changed to a neutral name.⁹³ The culture of consultation that characterised the operation of indirect rule in Bechuanaland was also a feature of the early 21st century 'ethnic minority question', which has ensured peaceful resolution of otherwise explosive issues in Botswana.

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