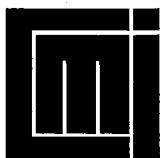


# **Development Planning and the Importance of Democratic Institutions in Botswana**

Andreas Danevad

R 1993: 7  
November 1993



**Report**  
Chr. Michelsen Institute  
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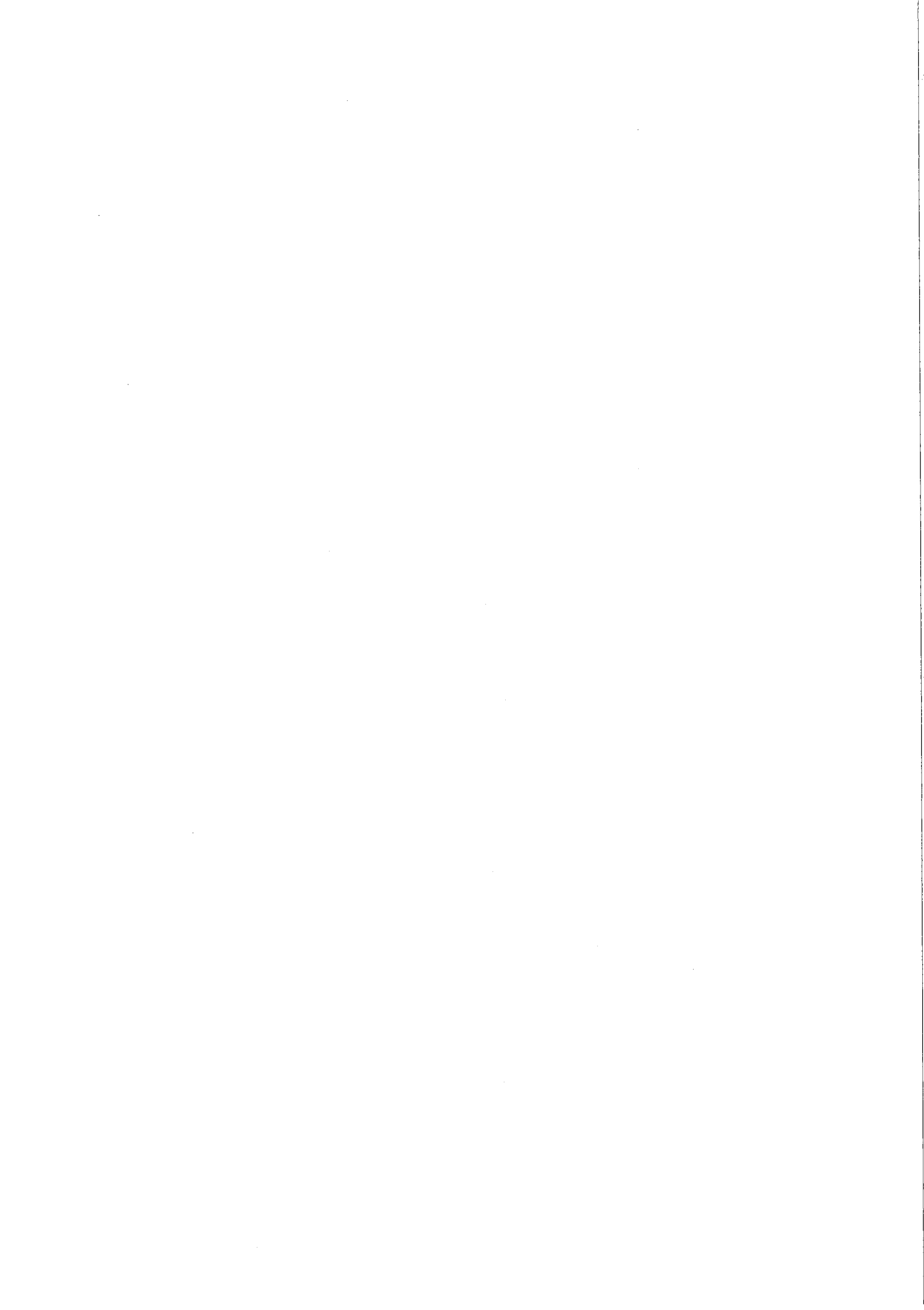
This study takes an extended look at Botswana, a country which is found to depart from the common pattern of African states and therefore may be considered as something of a special case. By using a state-centred approach, the study is able to isolate some of the factors explaining the defining features of Botswana's development strategy; relative insulation from societal pressures, institutional and organisational coherence and the availability of policy instruments. These factors are contrasted with those of other African states and serve to draw an analytical distinction between strong and weak states.

Using the concept of a strong state and the state-centred approach, the study proceeds to review the economic and political trajectories of Botswana after independence and to investigate in detail the policy process as it relates to the formulation of the Income Policy and to the allocation of public funds and the control of public expenditure, in particular for district development.

While using the state-centred approach, the alternative society-centred approach is also explored to explain the low level and fragmented nature of political opposition to the executive inside and outside parliament. The study concludes that, judging from the Botswana case, democracy is compatible with economic development even under conditions of relative state autonomy.

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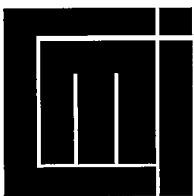
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## **Indexing terms**

Democracy

Development planning

Economic policy

Botswana

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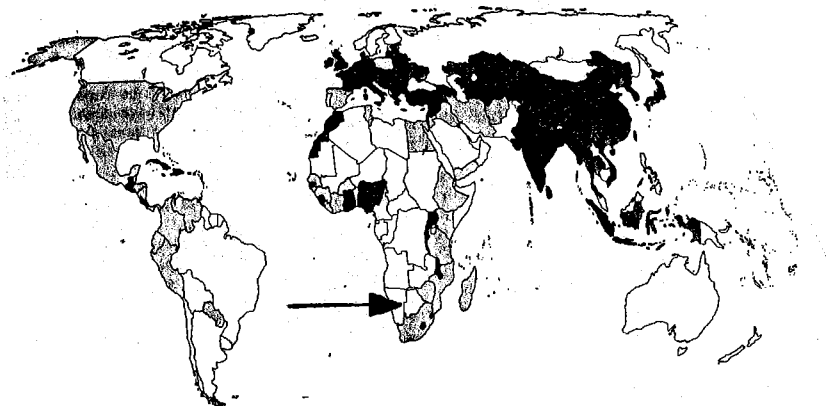
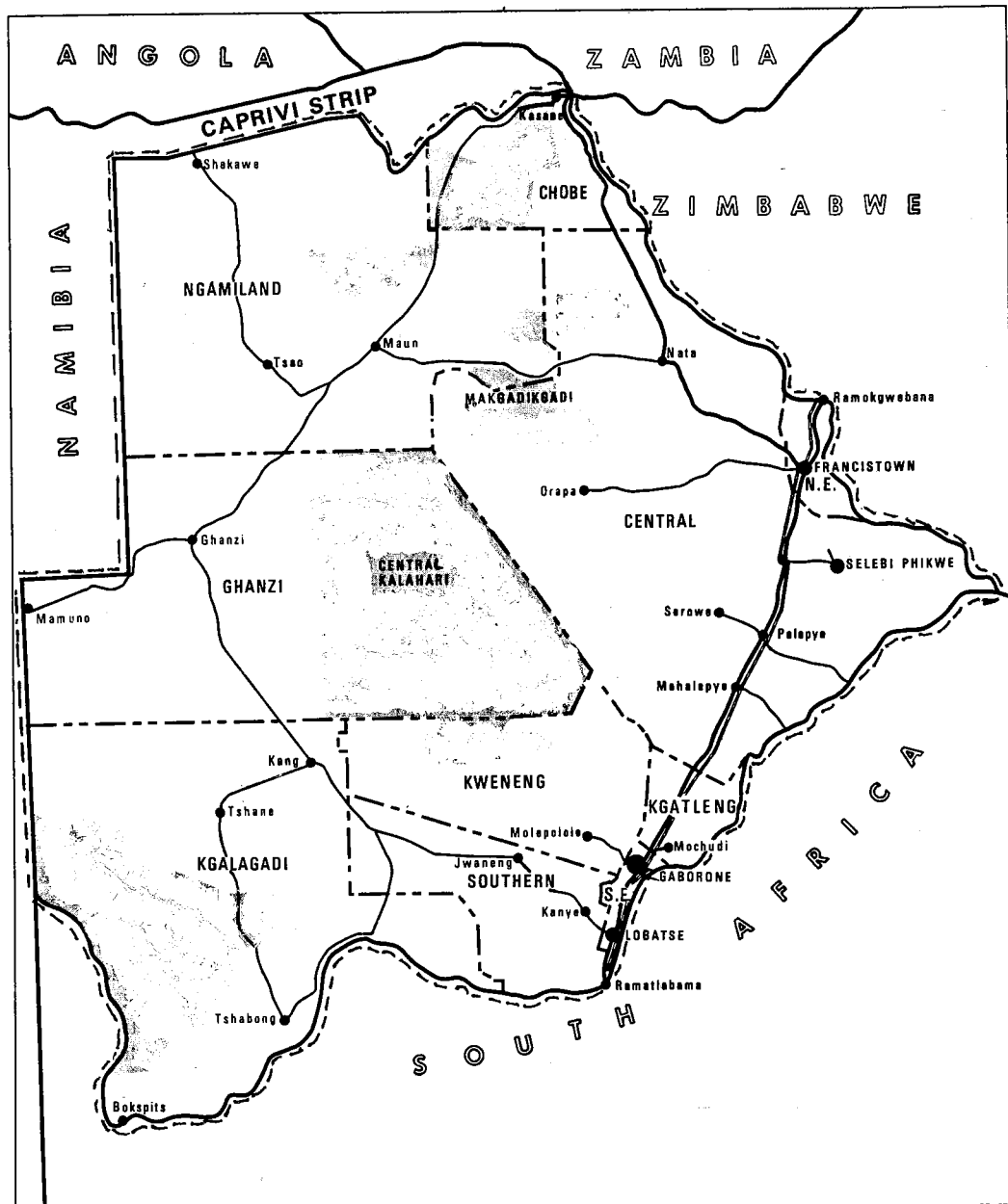
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# Botswana



Source: Republic of Botswana (1991f) and World Bank (1992)

## Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
ALDEP	Arable Land Development Programme
ARAP	Accelerated Rainfed Arable Programme
ARDP	Accelerated Rural Development Programme
BCSA	Botswana Federation of Secondary School Teachers
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BEF	Botswana Employers Federation
BFTU	Botswana Federation of Trade Unions
BIP	Botswana Independence Party
BMWU	Botswana Mining Workers Union
BNF	Botswana National Front
BFPF	Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party
BPP	Botswana People's Party
DC	District Commissioner
DDC	District Development Committee
DDP	District Development Plan
DLSS	Department of Labour and Social Security
ECC	Economic Committee of the Cabinet
EEC	European Economic Community
FAP	Financial Assistance Policy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
IDP	Industrial Development Policy
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KPP	Keynote Policy Paper
MCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MEMBOT	Macroeconomic Model of Botswana
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MLGL	Ministry of Local Government and Lands
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MP	Member of Parliament
NDDC	National District Development Conference
NDP	National Development Plan
NEMIC	National Employment, Manpower and Incomes Council
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
PO	Planning Officer

PPF	People's Progressive Front
RoB	Republic of Botswana
TEC	Total Estimated Cost
TGLP	Tribal Grazing Land Policy
ULGS	Unified Local Government Service
WPC	Wages Policy Committee



# 1. Introduction: Democracy and economic development

The prospects for democracy in sub-Saharan African countries figure prominently on the agenda and in the current public debate within individual countries.<sup>1</sup> While the effects of integration in the world economy were a focal issue in the 1970s, there is today a tendency to emphasise domestic factors when explaining the economic crises in African countries. Attention has been devoted to factors such as economic policy, planning, public administration and implementation of development activities. But the focus has been shifted towards the political systems themselves. Key-elements to which attention is paid today by both researchers and politicians include: a less interventionist and more accountable state, political pluralism and popular participation in the development process. A pertinent issue is the relationship between political system and economic development — especially to what extent democracy may impede or facilitate economic development.

Reference is often made to Botswana as *the* African country which has succeeded in accomplishing economic development in a context of multi-party democracy. This country has for more than 25 years experienced economic growth rates which are unique on the African continent. The resilience of democracy in Botswana, together with Gambia and Mauritius, is in a recent comparative study contrasted to the general failure and breakdown of democratic rule in Africa (Diamond, Linz & Lipset 1988). The main objective in this study is to analyse how democracy works in Botswana, and how the political institutions have had an impact on development planning and the choice of economic strategy. *Democracy* refers in this analysis to the governmental structure of a polity.<sup>2</sup> In terms

<sup>1</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa will for the sake of simplicity henceforth be designated as *Africa* in this report.

<sup>2</sup> The concept “polyarchy” as defined by Dahl (1989:233) underlies my understanding of democracy, in which the most important criteria are: elected officials having control over governmental decisions; election of officials in relatively frequent, fair, and free elections; a general right to vote and run for public office; and presence of civil and political liberties (e.g. freedom of expression and the right to form and join autonomous organisations).



of economic policy-making, the overall issue under scrutiny, three dimensions make Botswana especially interesting: First, the sustainability of the formal democratic institutions, second, the abundance of financial means provided by the diamond industry in the post-independence period, and third, the continuity in the economic strategy pursued. The second implies that the government's room for manoeuvre is under less constraint than most other developing countries, but also that there has been a functional need for development planning — as a tool to manage the wealth. One of the main objectives in this analysis is to link the three dimensions, by discussing how and to what extent the democratic institutions affect the use of public funds and economic policy decisions. Outlines of Botswana's economic and political post-independence history will be presented, and I will analyse two policy-making processes: one closely related to the substantive aspect of Botswana's development strategy (the income policy), the other concerning the allocation of public funds (the policy-making behind the current seventh National Development Plan and the annual budget). This implies that democracy is conceptualised in an instrumental mode, as I will neither address the normative issue of democracy as a good in itself, nor directly discuss which pre-conditions may be necessary for democracy to survive.

## **1.1 Is there a relationship between political system and economic development?**

By focusing on the role of the Botswana political institutions in economic policy-making, I address the question of the relationship between political system and economic development. This issue has directly and indirectly been analysed in various areas of development research concerned with political and socio-economic development. Political scientists and historians have dealt in particular with the socio-economic prerequisites for various paths of political development (e.g., Lipset 1959; Moore 1966). However, in the current debate on democracy in Africa, emphasis is often put on the reverse causal direction of this relationship: how can the economic crisis be explained by the operation of existing political systems, and what can be expected from democracy in terms of socio-economic improvement in the future.

It has been argued that democracy may impede the economic development process in poor countries. Not only do authoritarian rulers themselves justify repression by the need for "law and order" for their countries to prosper. The same arguments have also been put forward by

respected scholars, especially in the 1970s when “bureaucratic authoritarianism” was a term frequently found in the academic debate. O’Donnell (1973) and Huntington and Nelson (1976) are widely cited proponents of the argument that democracy and popular demands may frustrate economic development, and that suppression of civil rights is thus justified. In the African context, similar arguments have been presented by Mugenyi (1988:182) who, for example, writes: “development leads with democracy in tow.” The supportive arguments will not be discussed in detail here, but they centre on the limited capacity of the state to cope with popular demands, and on growth-related macro-economic variables; e.g. wage levels, savings and investment rates and public spending. Political freedom, as manifested *inter alia* by elections and trade unionism, is expected to have detrimental effects on those variables. An underlying presumption seems to be that because financial resources usually are scarce in a developing country, these have to be used frugally in a long-term perspective to obtain optimal developmental effect, a requirement which cannot be met if excessive short-term popular demands are allowed to influence policy.

Attempts have been made by cross-national quantitative studies to validate that democracy tends to retard economic growth. In his review of such approaches, Wede (1983) argues that these fail to take into account other economic and political conditions (e.g., the size of the military or the degree of state involvement in the economy). Although democracy is found to have a weak negative effect on economic growth in his own multiple regression analysis, Wede concludes that overlooking other factors makes it impossible to support unambiguously the claims that economic growth is incompatible with democracy. Although there seems apparently to be a link between authoritarianism and economic growth in some East Asian countries, i.e. Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, the particularities of these cases do not justify a generalisation that an authoritarian regime is necessary for economic development (Haggard 1990). Leong (1991), for example, argues that Malaysia has in a democratic context been able to pursue the same economic strategy as her East Asian neighbours mentioned above.

The limited experiences with competitive democracy in Africa makes a quantitative comparative approach problematic. However, in a comparative analysis of various African countries, Sandbrook (1988) observed that African authoritarian regimes have in general worked against economic development. As Sandbrook argues, the historical and cultural background which explains the authoritarian developmental regimes in East Asia may not be found in Africa. This may support Donnelly’s (1989) argument that

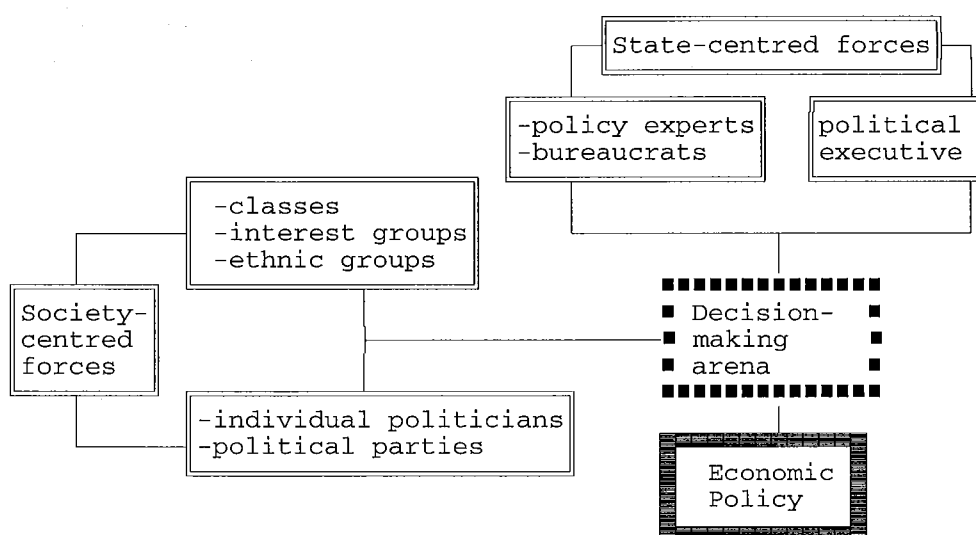
the “rationale” behind authoritarianism and violation of civil and political rights has in general not been the economic imperative of development, but should be seen as a matter of political choice and character of the rulers. With reference to African authoritarian regimes, Anyang’ Nyong’o (1987) similarly argues that participation is controlled mainly because the governing elites are driven by their private interests rather than the common good.

There are many reasons for arguing that a qualitative case study approach will be more feasible than a quantitative comparative analysis to illuminate the relevance of various dimensions of a political system to economic development. In his case-oriented comparative analyses Sørensen (1991; 1992) repudiates any deterministic causal relationship between authoritarianism and economic development, and argues that the dichotomy between “democracy” and “authoritarian system” obscures important differences between the particular cases; i.e. some authoritarian regimes perform better than others, and some democracies are more responsive than others to demands from the masses. One of Sørensen’s main arguments is that what really matters is the orientation of the ruling elites, and the relationship between the political rulers and economic elites, although the latter do not constitute any clear pattern. Elite dominance characterises, for example, both the democracies in India and Costa Rica, but the rulers in the latter have been more oriented towards improving the welfare of the masses than in the former. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Haggard and Kaufman (1989) in their analysis of structural adjustment programmes in various developing countries. These scholars argue that authoritarian regimes differ in their implementation of structural adjustment policies according to the “strength” of the regime. Similarly, they found differences among the democratic regimes with regard to the durability of democracy as the prevailing political system; and they concluded that “the macroeconomic policy stances of the continuous democratic regimes are virtually indistinguishable from those of authoritarian regimes” (1989:61).

The inconclusive findings of analysis linking regime type to economic development suggest that one has to look beyond the dichotomy democratic vs authoritarian. Common features of the states, both authoritarian and democratic, which have been successful in their development should be sought. One recurring issue which, explicitly or implicitly, underlies the “political system — economic development” question, is how differences in political system are variants of the way in which the relationship between the state and societal actors is organised. In addition to uncovering the presence and capabilities of various societal actors, a relevant point of departure for a study of this relationship seems to be the political

institutions and to what extent they allow participation in decision-making. However, to reach a comprehensive picture of a state's development capability is certainly not sufficient to analyse state-society relationships. As Haggard (1990:45) argues, "internal organizational characteristics of the state" and "the range of policy instruments the state commands" should also be considered.

Figure 1.1  
Possible domestic actors in economic policy-making



Underlying this discussion is a supposition that economic policies pursued by the state are important in the economic development process. Economic policies both include the framework defined by the state concerning the division of labour between the private and the public sectors in the economy (e.g. the conditions for private entrepreneurs), and how the state allocates public funds. In the schematic figure above, it is suggested that economic policies may be the outcome of a process involving actors both within and outside the institutions of the state. The responsiveness of the decision-makers to the interests of society-centred forces becomes one variable behind the choice of economic policy. One dividing line between democratic and authoritarian systems may thus be conceived theoretically as differences in the accessibility of society-centred forces to the decision-making arena. For example, the presence of parties, elections and a representative assembly in a democracy may be perceived as possibilities for societal actors to channel interests and demands into the decision-making process — the “electoral channel of decision-making” in the terms of Stein Rokkan. I will in this study analyse the influence and role of the

elected politicians in Botswana, but also discuss to what extent political freedom has given other societal actors access to the policy-making process, for example, through the “organizational channel” (Rokkan 1966:105-110). Before elaborating the theoretical and analytical approach further, I will briefly introduce the empirical case.

## **1.2 Some broad lines in the history of Botswana**

The area of present-day Botswana has traditionally been dominated by various Tswana tribes, with the Ngwato state as a powerful centre.<sup>3</sup> The population is ethnically less divided than what is the case in most other African countries. However, as Parsons (1985) points out, a diversity of ethnic identities has been present, but expansion of the Tswana dynasties succeeded in spreading their domination over what today constitutes Botswana — during the colonial period named Bechuanaland. Seemingly giving some support to the argument that the area inhabited by the Tswana tribes has resemblances to the Western nation-state, Parsons (1990:95) writes:

The Ngwato state had achieved the incorporation of a diversity of ethnic minorities within a common political structure, under the cultural-linguistic hegemony of a successful ruling minority. In that way, maybe the Botswana of today is merely yesterday's Ngwato state writ large.

A protectorate under British rule was established after 1885, covering the Tswana dominated area. An important motive behind the creation of the Bechuanaland protectorate was to protect British interests against expansion of the German colonialists to the west and the Boers to the south-east. No permanent colonial administration was established within the protectorate. The British High Commissioner, based in Cape Town (later in Pretoria), issued laws by proclamation. The administrative headquarters and the “Resident” Commissioner was (after 1895) located in Mafikeng, just outside the southern border of the protectorate. Within Bechuanaland the colonial ruler was represented by a resident magistrate and District Commissioners. However, colonial presence did initially not disrupt the distribution of power between the various Tswana tribes and the position of the traditional rulers, the chiefs and their headmen. Generally, scholars

<sup>3</sup> If not otherwise stated, this historical outline is based on Picard (1985); Parsons (1990) and Tlou & Campbell (1984).

seem to agree that British rule, although certainly not without impact, was less imposing in the Bechuanaland protectorate than in the colonies.

As Parsons (1985:37) warns, one should be careful about dating the appearance of opposition to British rule and claims for nationalism too strictly to the initiatives just prior to independence in 1966. However, the crucial events leading up to independence occurred mainly after the Second World War. One point of departure may be the marriage of Seretse Khama, the heir to the chieftainship of the most powerful tribe, to a British woman in 1948. The marriage led to turbulence within the tribe, but, after the elder notables backed down, Seretse was acclaimed chief of the tribe in 1949. The alliance, however, was not fully accepted by the British rulers, allegedly through fear of damaging British relations with South Africa (Parsons 1990:79-84). The couple was exiled to London from 1950 to 1956. Seretse finally abdicated the right to the chieftainship and returned to Bechuanaland. The incident, according to Parsons (1990:94), enabled Seretse Khama "to translate himself from tribal leader to national leader." While Seretse represented a moderate movement for independence, another historical accident had generated a more radical nationalist wave. The banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in the powerful southern neighbour had an impact on the political climate in the protectorate — manifested by the presence of ANC and PAC exiles. However, the developments leading to independence were peaceful, and dominated by the moderate Seretse fraction. A Legislative Council with representatives from the various tribes, districts and the European settlers was established in the early 1960s. In the first general election held in 1965, three parties had been established, although one split into two factions. Seretse Khama became Prime Minister, and headed the negotiations with the British rulers which led to a peaceful inauguration of the independence period on 30 September 1966.

The introduction of democratic institutions and the setting up of a national government with jurisdiction across tribal boundaries, represented a novel system of governance in the Tswana dominated area. Although a hierarchical structure had existed to a certain degree among the various tribes, this "acknowledgement of genealogical seniority" had not implied that one single tribe had carried authority over the others (Parson 1990:142). Consequently, parallel to the process of establishing and transferring decision-making authority to modern political institutions, both at the national and district levels, the power of the chiefs and their headmen had to be neutralised.

At the first post-independence election in 1969, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) obtained two-thirds of the vote and 24 of the 31 contested

seats in the National Assembly. Three other parties also became represented in the parliament. Support for the majority governments headed by President Khama was reconfirmed in the two elections held in the 1970s. This initial continuity was also signified by Vice President Quett Masire accompanying the President since the early 1960s. Masire was in a powerful position in his own right as head of his own creation, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

The importance of the traditional power-structure came to the fore after the death of Seretse Khama in 1980. Masire was affiliated to a less powerful tribe than Khama, and his succession to the presidency might have been challenged if legal-rational principles had not been established in Botswana politics previously. The large turnout at the elections both in 1984 and 1989, and the persistence of support given to the BDP by the majority of the electorate, suggest that the democratic institutions genuinely were on their way to becoming institutionalised. Although with limited success, the opposition has continued to participate in the elections. The election in 1989 indicated that the support for the ruling party, the BDP, had stagnated, and the largest opposition party, the Botswana National Front, was gaining strength.

The economic history of Botswana is in one respect strikingly parallel to its political history: While almost no economic modernisation had taken place until the 1960s, the post-independence period has been characterised by dramatic changes. This does not imply that the colonial period had no impact on Tswana society. Trade, taxation, the proximity to South Africa, and presence of foreigners certainly had a bearing on the economy of the protectorate and its inhabitants. However, the British rulers made nearly no efforts to industrialise, modernise agriculture, or develop infrastructure. The Batswana majority based their livelihood on subsistence agriculture, hunting and gathering, small-scale cattle rearing, and temporary migration to South African mines.<sup>4</sup> There was also a small economic elite of Batswana and European settlers, prospering on arable farming and large herds of cattle.

The physical conditions have certainly been one determining factor in shaping the economic structure and the development pattern in Botswana. The country covers a territory about the size of France. However, the small population (1.3 mill. in 1990) places Botswana among those countries in the world with the lowest population density, 23 persons per 1,000 ha. In comparison, the population densities in neighbouring Zambia is 114, and 251 in Zimbabwe (UNDP 1992:table 22). Botswana is landlocked, flat, and

<sup>4</sup> While the name of the country after independence is named *Botswana* and *Setswana* as her language, *Batswana* is the plural form of the citizens, and *Motswana* the singular.

about two-thirds of the country are semi-desert. The Okavango delta in the north-west, and fertile soils in the eastern region, are green spots in the otherwise harsh physical environment.

When Botswana became independent it was regarded as one of the ten poorest countries in the world (Murray & Parson 1990:167). The lack of infrastructural development, the physical disadvantages, and the virtual absence of industries made the future look bleak. However, prospecting operations soon after independence revealed a potential for diamond and copper-nickel mining. During the first decade large investments were made in developing the mining industry. This undertaking has paid large dividends. Botswana is today one of the most prosperous developing countries, a “middle-income economy” in the terms of the World Bank, and ranks above countries like Poland and Turkey in per capita income (World Bank 1992:table 1). However, according to the same source (table 30), the distribution of income is among the most uneven in the developing world. As will be elaborated later in this study, the Botswana government has given itself a limited and indirect role in the economic development process in terms of involvement in employment creation and the welfare of the individual citizen. On the other hand, the government has at its disposal a large share of the revenues generated by the mining industry, and the relative size of public expenditures compared to the gross national product is among the largest in Africa (World Bank 1989:table 25).

Regardless of weaknesses found in the development strategy (e.g. the skewed income distribution), Botswana is a positive exception on the African continent. Such prosperity might not have been possible without the diamond wealth, but it is not difficult to imagine that this asset might have been wasted if the political power had been in the hands of an arbitrary ruler. In other words, the largely successful utilisation of the diamond wealth seems to reflect consciously chosen policies and diligent political management.

### **1.3 Analytical approach**

Development planning seems to have been an important tool used by the Botswana government in the management of the diamond wealth — in the sense that planning may simply be understood as applying a time horizon in policy-making beyond making day-to-day decisions. Planning in its most plain modality may be perceived as attempts made by a government to balance the growth of public expenditures with the forecasted amount of funds available. A step further may be to coordinate public policies with the objective to pursue a coherent development strategy. Development



planning in its most ultimate form may be illustrated by the comprehensive experiments undertaken in centrally planned economies to direct economic policies towards ideological goals; e.g. self-reliance, de-privatisation, and nationalisation of enterprises. In this study I will mainly be concerned with planning in its plain form: budgeting and policy-making within a mixed-economy. In such a setting, private entrepreneurs will need a predictable environment to make decisions concerning long-term investments. A government may facilitate such conditions by applying indicative planning, in which it presents economic forecasts and information about the activities the government intends to undertake in the future.

The recent economic crisis in Africa suggests that the various governments have not become more effective in their planning efforts since Killick (1976:163) reached the following conclusions in the mid-1970s:

...there would probably be little disagreement today that the practice of planning has generally failed to bring many of the benefits expected from it (...) I know of no African state which is currently engaged in a serious planning effort, in the sense of using a plan as a guide to day-to-day decisions and the preparation of its budgets.

There are several factors which may frustrate effective development planning. To achieve long-term balances in public revenues and expenditures one needs reliable information about the economic situation and projections about future developments. Wildavsky and Caiden (1989:149) claim that developing countries are facing an especially high level of uncertainty which makes forecasts about the future economy unreliable: technical capacity to estimate the real costs of projects is often insufficient; the revenue situation is unpredictable and vulnerable to fluctuations in foreign aid and international prices; and the real value of the domestic currency is often unstable. Killick (1976) emphasises the problem of planners having adopted a too technocratic approach. By overlooking crucial non-economic considerations, the final plan documents end up not being implemented. Concretely, Killick points to the problems caused by the institutional distance which often exists between the planning agency and the finance ministry which is closer to the arena where decisions are made. The planning efforts fail because the plans are without *de facto* government support. Sagasti (1988:431) similarly argues that "most planning exercises appear to be rather isolated from the main concern of policy and decision-makers in developing countries." A dilemma, however, may emerge if the planners attempt to make the planning efforts more "realistic" by adapting to short-term political concerns. The critical long-term issues may thus become secondary, and the planning efforts less

relevant to “concerns that are crucial for the future development of a country”, Sagasti (1988:434) argues.

The achievements in Botswana seem to reflect a certain balance between politics and technocratic considerations in the country’s policy-making — or between short-term and long-term considerations. In other words (recalling figure 1), although the decision-makers may be responsive to society-centred forces, the government seems somehow to have been in a position to make autonomous decisions concerning the use of public funds. This presumption, or hypothesis, directs our attention to a key issue in research concerned with economic policy-making and political economy. The literature distinguishes broadly between two approaches (e.g. Grindle and Thomas 1989; Haggard 1990; Hall 1989; Meier 1991; Nordlinger 1987; and Skocpol 1985); one ascribing society-centred forces much influence concerning policy choices, the other assigning the state substantial capacity to make autonomous decisions.

In this study I will focus on the institutions of the Botswana state at the central level. Migdal (1988:19) offers the following, Weberian inspired, ideal-type definition of the state:

...it is an organization, composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the state’s leadership (executive authority) that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all the people as well as the parameters of rule making for other social organizations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way.

Migdal (1988) underscores that the extent to which the state institutions constitute a coherent entity is an important variable that makes states differ from the ideal-type. It may further be problematic to define specifically which actors or institutions are part of the state. Nordlinger (1987:362-64), for example, applies a very broad definition of the state, which is taken to include most individuals involved in public policy-making, including members of legislatures. Skocpol (1985:fn.9) questions the analytical value of such an all-inclusive definition; an objection which I find justifiable as the elected representatives who make up the legislature are in this study perceived as intermediaries between the state and society. I will in chapter 2 further clarify how *the state* concept may analytically be applied.

In *state-centred* approaches it is to some extent assumed that actors within the state reach decisions about public policies without being directly guided by society-centred forces. The institutional arrangements linking state and society represent one important set of variables which regulates the ability of society-centred forces to exercise leverage. As Haggard

(1990:43) writes: "the very power of societal forces is a function of the legal and institutional setting in which they operate." The approach includes also an awareness that competing interests may be present among state-centred forces. For example, senior civil servants within the bureaucracy may be powerful actors, both as individuals and as a group (Grindle & Thomas 1989; Haggard 1990); the distribution of power between various public institutions (e.g. ministries) may be hierarchically ordered, and has to be uncovered; and the relationships between the political executive and the administrative apparatus may be an important explanatory variable (Olsen 1983).

*Society-centred* approaches include both the *marxist* and *neo-marxist* focus on the power and influence of social classes and external forces, and *pluralist* perspectives which emphasise that economic policies may have to accommodate several societal interests. A point of departure for marxists when it comes to explain economic policies, is to analyse the class configuration in society. A prevailing presumption is that the state will adapt its policy choices to the interests of the dominant economic elites. Scholars associated with the *dependency school* do not only emphasise the power of domestic elites, but argue that the capitalist world economy by itself represents a constraint and a source of influence on the governments of developing countries. The marxist approach is certainly not uniform, and a focus on the institutions of the state is not necessarily precluded in studies within this tradition (Skocpol 1985). The pluralist approach is no less inclusive, and may be seen as overlapping with marxist approaches in the sense that both may view a particular economic policy decision as reflecting a dominant society-based coalition. Studying economic policy-making from a pluralist angle, however, seems to imply an openness for various society-centred forces to exercise leverage on the policy-making, not only economic elites (Dahl 1971). According to Grindle and Thomas (1989:218): "groups also form around shared concerns for neighbourhood, ethnicity, religion, values, or other issues." A point of departure for the pluralist approach is that coalitions may emerge with the objective to make public policies accommodate their interests. The state may thus be seen "as an arena through which coalitional battles are waged (Haggard 1990:34)." A problem of a society-centred approach may be to explain exactly *how* societal actors exercise leverage on the policy-making process. It is not sufficient to argue that a societal group is influential simply because it is favoured by a public policy.

By suggesting that institutions at the core of the Botswana state have to some extent been able to make autonomous decisions, I expect a state-centred approach to have explanatory power. However, I do not *a priori*

reject the explanatory power of society-centred approaches. To explain the substance of Botswana's development strategy, i.e. the ideological dimension, it seems required to focus explicitly on the configuration of various societal groups. However, when focusing on the coherence in policy and choice of policy instruments, as in this study, I expect the state-centred approach to be more feasible. It is unfortunately beyond the scope of the study to analyse in depth the presence and influence of various society-centred forces — to fully test the society-centred approach — but some departures into the alternative approach will be made. To incorporate the impact of state-society relationships in the analysis, I will first discuss the capabilities of identifiable and organised society-centred institutions, especially the nature of the political parties and elections, but also the capabilities of other organisations in civil society. Policy-making processes will thereafter be analysed to uncover policy elites within the state institutions, and to assess how institutional arrangements regulate the ability of society-centred actors to exercise leverage.

#### **1.4 Some methodological aspects**

This analysis is primarily a case study of development planning and political processes in one particular country — Botswana. However, a comparative perspective is also incorporated in the analysis. To use a term from Bradshaw and Wallace (1991), it is my ambition that the case study may somehow *inform* relevant theories within the field; in other words, contribute to the theory-building concerning the relationship between political system and economic development.

I pointed above to weaknesses inherent in a cross-national quantitative approach when studying the relationship between political system and economic development. Such an approach may easily ignore factors beyond the variables directly linked to the political system differences which are put forward to explain the economic conditions in a particular case. A case study implies that a more *holistic* approach is undertaken. As Bradshaw and Wallace (1991:165) state: “the purpose of comparative case studies is to examine the historical, economic, political, and cultural features of individual cases.”

Can a single case study contribute to theory-building? It is certainly not possible to reach theoretical generalisations based on one individual case study only. As Ragin (1989:61) writes: “a single case *ensures* an univocal answer.” However, a recurring argument in the article of Bradshaw and Wallace (1991) is a claim for case studies in general being able to *inform*

aspects of various theories. They claim that single case studies may also be comparative by viewing the individual study in the perspective of other studies, and, as Ragin (1987:4) similarly argue:

Many area specialists are thoroughly comparative because they implicitly compare their chosen case to their own country or to an imaginary but theoretically decisive ideal-typic case.

The theoretical framework in this study is based on various theoretical and empirical works discussing the relationship between political system and economic development. Some of these are specifically related to African experiences, while others are based on case studies of countries in other regions. Based on recent literature I will present an "ideal type" of the crisis-ridden African state, and some of the dimensions put forward to explain the decay in this model will be applied in the study of Botswana. The particularities of the Botswana case have made me abstain from being too ambitious about reaching innovative theoretical findings. However, a less ambitious goal for this analysis has been to create a better understanding of which dimensions are of most relevance in studies of relationships between political system and economic development.

The empirical analysis is based on historical data concerning the economic and political developments after independence, and more current information about policy-making processes between 1989 and 1991. The data material is by and large of a qualitative nature, although the discussions concerning economic changes (e.g. employment structure and urbanisation) and the political context (e.g. election results) to some extent rely on statistical information and quantitative analysis of changes during the post-independence period. As the summary below reveals, information has both been collected from secondary sources and primary sources (i.e. interviews, policy documents and statistics).

Sources of information:

- (a) Monographs, anthologies, periodical articles, unpublished papers, party programmes, and newspapers.
- (b) Semi-official documents (e.g. reports of studies undertaken on request from the government, manuals for the bureaucracy, internal planning documents, *Notice-* and *Order Papers* of the parliament).

- (c) Official documents (e.g. development plans, budgets, policy white-papers, parliamentary reports, published speeches, legal documents).
- (d) Statistical material (e.g. annual budgets, development plans, election reports, international statistics).
- (e) Qualitative interviews undertaken in Botswana.

The interview material consists of thirty qualitative interviews with representatives of parliament — MPs (11), civil servants at the ministerial level (9), and other informants (10) knowledgeable about politics and/or the economic situation in Botswana (see appendix A). In addition I was able to present my ideas and preliminary findings to scholars at the University of Botswana.

Some of the questions needed to be asked were associated with some sensitivity as they related to how politicians and civil servants perceived their own and others ability to wield influence on economic policy-making. It was thus explicitly stated that “this is off the record,” or I tacitly understood that the informants expected me not to compromise their personal judgments. Although a large share of the oral information has been of a technical nature (e.g. how the policy-making proceeded), and as such non-controversial, I consequently do not refer to specific informants when interview data are used in the analysis, especially in chapters 6 and 7. This certainly does not facilitate reliability testing of the interview data by others than myself; the assessments and conclusions made in the analysis thus have to be ascribed in entirety to the author.

## **1.5 The structure of the study**

*Chapter 2* introduces further a theoretical framework focused on how to conceptualise *the state*, and how its relationship to society-centred forces may affect policy choices. Some of the main arguments found in the literature about how the economic crises in African countries are related to the nature of the state will be presented. To facilitate an analysis of the importance of the Botswana democratic institutions, I will discuss various dimensions relevant for the analysis of the distribution of power between the political executive and the legislature in parliamentary democracies.

In *Chapter 3* I analyse the economic history after independence. The objective is to uncover critical aspects of the development strategy pursued, to be explained in the subsequent chapters of the study. The initial approach of the Botswana government to economic development will be compared

with the recent strategy as expressed in the seventh National Development Plan (introduced in 1991). The role of development planning in the economic development process will be dealt with in particular.

The nature of the Botswana state will be introduced *chapter 4*, and some preliminary explanations of its distinctive features will be presented.

The objective in *chapter 5* is to reach an understanding about the nature of the political context. The emergence of the various parties and their present position will be analysed in a historical perspective. I will especially discuss whether or not ideological and functional cleavages are present in Botswana politics, and the importance of elections. The capabilities of civil society will also be analysed.

In *chapter 6 and 7* I will analyse policy-making processes more closely. The capacity of the society-centred forces, which was discussed in the preceding chapter, to exercise leverage on the qualitative aspect of the development strategy and the allocation of public funds will be discussed. A state-centred approach prevails in these chapters, and the main objective is to analyse how procedures and the institutional framework regulate access to the decision-making arena, and the distribution of influence within the state. An important issue will in this regard be the role of elected politicians. The decentralised aspect of development planning will also be discussed.

The *final chapter* summarises the main findings, and some broad lines linking the Botswana case to theories of policy-making, state-society relations, and economic development will be drawn.

## **2. The weak African state: A basis for comparison**

A general hypothesis in this study is that the Botswana state is strong compared to the general crisis-ridden "African state". Its strength, I will argue, is signified by the capacity to carry out development planning and to adhere to a coherent economic strategy. Seen from a neo-classically oriented economist's point of view, the approach to development in Botswana may be characterised as rational in terms of the efforts to pursue a sound macro economic policy. However, the focus in the rest of this study will be less on the substance of the strategy, than on the Botswana government's adherence to a planned approach in its use of public funds. Although I will argue that the capability to adjust the level of expenditures to the revenue situation reflects a policy-making process insulated from direct influence by society-centred forces, I will not maintain that the state in general has autonomy vis-à-vis the Botswana economic elite.

The primary objective of this chapter is to identify critical dimensions for the subsequent empirical analysis. A further objective is to present some aspects of the relationship between politics and economic development which recently have been presented in the literature dealing with African countries. The intention is to discuss the Botswana case in the light of that outline, and thus incorporate a comparative perspective in the analysis. However, the comparative ambition is limited and mainly intended to further expose the particularity of the Botswana case.

### **2.1 Analytical concepts: Insulation, organisation and policy instruments**

*The state* as a concept and its relations to society is an important issue on the recent research agenda of political scientists — as the title of Skocpol's (1985) essay suggests: "Bringing the State back in", or "Taking the State seriously", by Nordlinger (1987). In recent analyses of African politics and economics by authors like Anyang'Nyong'o (1987), Callaghy (1990), Hyden & Bratton (1992), Jackson & Rosberg (1982), Oyugi et al. (1988), Sandbrook (1986), and Sklar & Whitaker (1991) the nature of the state is



an important analytical dimension. Some of the best known works on Botswana politics devote special thought to the state (e.g. Gunderson 1970 and Picard 1987). Although the economy in Botswana for a long time has been characterised by an expanding private sector, the preceding chapter revealed that the state has played a crucial role in the development process. Nothing suggests that the state will be a less important actor in the future.

A definition of the *state* was introduced in the preceding chapter. It was announced that the core institutions of the state will especially be focused on. The state as an organisation in which economic policy-making takes place, includes in Botswana the executive (i.e. the president and the cabinet), the legislature (the National Assembly) as a collective unit, the civil service, the political institutions and public administration at the district level, members of permanent advisory bodies, and appointed members of *ad hoc* committees on specific policy issues. The problem of drawing boundaries for the state organisation is demonstrated by including members of the two last mentioned forums into the state, in their role as private citizens, trade union representatives, and foreign experts. *The government* will therefore be used as an analytical concept to make possible an analysis of the relative influence of various groups, both within and outside the state, on economic policy-making. The government refers mainly to the executive, but also includes representatives of the ruling party in the National Assembly who are not members of the cabinet — the backbenchers. The bureaucracy will be given special attention, because, as Gunderson (1970) observed, civil servants seem right from the start of independence to have been influential actors in the policy-making process.

To fully understand the nature of the state one must consider its relationship to society at large. The society is, however, an all-embracing concept, which ultimately also includes the state. Analytically, to make a demarcation between state and society, it is therefore convenient to use the concept *civil society*, although this may be problematic as well. As Bayart (1986) emphasises, civil society is a plural concept; it should be viewed beyond a structured set of institutions, and it includes different practices and modes of political action. The constitution of civil society is often perceived as crucial for a democratic political system; as Tostensen (1992:11) writes: "Civil society constitutes a terrain in which democratic struggles take place." In this study I will conceptualise civil society as the aggregate of groups or actors, above the individual households, and outside the formal set-up of the political institutions (i.e. the District Councils, the legislature and the executive), which may attempt to influence economic policy-making (e.g. the media, trade unions, business groups, cattle-

owners).<sup>5</sup> Although analysed separately in this study, political parties may also be perceived as part of civil society. As will be discussed in chapter 5, traditional community based decision-making forums, dating back to the pre-colonial period, have survived as institutions of some importance in Botswana, and remind us that attention has to be given to the particular historical and cultural setting.

When characterising civil society, for example by its relative strength, one may focus on dimensions like: the multitude of organisations representing various occupational groups, membership, internal organisation, and financial capacity. The latter may be closely linked to the autonomy of organised groups in civil society towards the state. In Botswana, for example, according to Holm and Molutsi (1990a), civil society organisations are largely dependent on funding from the state — and consequently, to some extent, controlled by the state. On the other hand, as emphasised in *society-centred* approaches, societal groups may have substantial influence on public policy-making. The latter is a question which may also be analysed by a *state-centred* approach. For example, Apter (1991:473) conceives the *new institutionalism* as a response to the traditional institutionalist narrow focus on state institutions, and claims that institutionalists today are concerned with how various sectors and groups in society strive for allocations of public funds. Olsen (1983:7), for example, argues that public policies are neither produced autonomously by the state and its institutions, nor are they the outcome of “environmental factors” like economic, technological, demographic and cultural constraints. Policy-making, he writes, “takes place within complicated networks of organized, public and private actors,” and he calls for a “new institutionalism” which addresses “how, and to what degree, behaviour and outcomes are molded by political institutions.” As Olsen argues, the relationship between state and society should be seen as reciprocal, and March and Olsen later write (1989:17):

Without denying the importance of both the social context of politics and the motives of individual actors, therefore, institutional analysis posits a more independent role for political institutions. The state is not only affected by the society but also affects it.

Skocpol (1985:85) also emphasises the possibilities of the state to “influence the formation of groups and the political capacities, ideas, and

<sup>5</sup> “Society” and “civil society” will henceforth be used interchangeably, although the latter will, when used, refer to identifiable actors.

demands of various sectors of society". The focus here, however, is on economic policy-making and planning, and the ambition is limited to looking more narrowly at how actors both within and outside the state are involved in policy-making, and not the state's relationships with the civil society *per se*.

Approaches which emphasise the state or its institutions as independent actors in policy-making suggest a degree of *state autonomy* (March & Olsen 1989; Skocpol 1985). State autonomy, as an *analytical* concept, may be seen as a question of whether the policy-makers are manipulated and constrained in their room for manoeuvre, or whether they are able to act autonomously — considering the preferences and demands in the civil society, but in the end translating their own preferences into authoritative actions (see, for example, Nordlinger 1987; Skocpol 1985). One approach emphasises the antagonistic aspect of state autonomy, and autonomy is seen as the ability of the state to suppress the actual or potential opposition of powerful groups regarding specific policy issues. Skocpol (1985:14), for example, writes that state autonomy "can come and go." Others ascribe to the state a substantial degree of autonomy, and assert that the state may also be seen to act autonomously even if divergence in state-society preferences is absent (Nordlinger 1987). Haggard (1990:34), however, suggests that the latter also may account for absence of state autonomy: "...social structure can operate as a constraint on government action through the 'law of anticipated consequences' even in the absence of overt attempts to wield influence." This underscores the difficulty of identifying which societal actors have exercised leverage on a particular policy. Haggard, for example, points to the mistake of inferring that a given social configuration was the source of a policy, only because it is favoured by the policy, and writes (1990:34):

A much more stringent criterion for demonstrating societal influence involves showing how groups overcome dilemmas of collective action, gain access to centres of decision making, and exercise influence.

Without excluding a focus on societal actors outside the state, Haggard (1990) thus put emphasis on how the legal setting and the state's institutions regulates access to the decision-making process — one of the main issues in the present study.

The concept *insulation* seems, analytically, to be more manageable than state autonomy in empirical analysis of how societal actors exercise leverage on policy-making. However, I do not argue that the substance of the concepts differs, but insulation refers to more identifiable constraints

and possibilities for access to decision-making centres. Insulation “is a function of the institutional arrangements linking state and society,” Haggard (1990:43) writes. The lesson from the fast growing East Asian countries seems to be that insulation of the policy makers from narrow societal interests, both dominant and subordinate social groups, has been crucial for their progress (Haggard 1990). However, as Leong (1991) argues, insulation may not only be facilitated by authoritarian political systems, but also in democracies — as his case study of Malaysia allegedly demonstrates.

Insulation may be facilitated by legislation and other means which regulate the organisation of occupational groups and their access to policy-making processes. Independently of whether politicians are elected or selected — as in many authoritarian regimes — insulation may further be determined by the boundaries within the state between the politicians and the administrative apparatus. Another important organisational condition for insulation seems to be the coherence of the state’s institutions. Institutional coherence may not only be seen as a precondition for a collectivity to act coherently (March & Olsen 1989), but lack of coherence may also make the state vulnerable vis-à-vis societal forces. Nordlinger (1987:377), for example, writes:

In a cohesive state any one set of officials has the resources of others to rely on freeing itself from a dependence upon societal actors. In the case of divided states, public officials find it difficult to circumvent or mitigate the impact of societal support and opposition since private actors are advantageously situated to play them off against one another.

Haggard (1990) emphasises both the importance of cohesiveness and centralisation of decision-making, and claims that the low level of intra-bureaucratic conflict in East Asian NICs, compared to those of Latin America, has been an important aspect of the former’s success.

An important aspect of a state-centred approach is to analyse how the institutional framework affects the distribution of power within the state, for example, between the civil servants, the military, the legislature, the cabinet and policy experts (March & Olsen 1989; Nordlinger 1987). Collectives of state elites (e.g. bureaucratic, political, and military) may be seen as powerful actors with coherent or divergent interests which affect the choice of policies (Haggard 1990; Skocpol 1985). With reference to Weber, Nordlinger (1987), however, questions the possibility of “collective personalities”, and puts more emphasis on the individual actors within the state’s institutions — and his/her capability to act autonomously.

In addition to the insulation of the decision-makers from societal forces and the organisational framework of the state, an important dimension when addressing the issue of the capability of the state to make autonomous decisions may be to ask which policy instruments are available. This is not only of relevance in a study about implementation of policies, but constitutes constraints to which the policy-makers have to adjust (Haggard 1990; Skocpol 1985). Policy instruments may be concrete factors (e.g. available funds, technology for information processing and skilled officials), or more complex instruments for intervention in the economy (e.g. financial institutions). The capacity to appraise various policy alternatives is dependent on several factors, but may in itself be looked upon as a policy instrument.

The ultimate ability of a political ruler to realise own interests may, according to Haggard (1990:43), be seen as the aggregate of the above mentioned state-focus dimensions: insulation, organisational characteristics and policy instruments. However, as Haggard (1990:264) himself hesitates, one should be careful of applying too generally the distinction “strong-weak” when comparing the development capacity of states. Such a distinction may conceal variations within a country. State capacity may, for example, vary across issue areas or a state may be insulated from pressures from one social group but not others.

As will be elaborated in the next section, the “African state” differs substantially from the successful East Asian countries. While the economic success in the latter may be explained by a state-centred approach, Healey and Robinson (1992) conclude in a review of relevant literature that the same approach may explain the failure in the former. Although organised groups in African societies and legislatures have exercised insignificant leverage on the choice of economic policies, this insulation has not supported a developmental state in African countries. Healey and Robinson emphasise the weakness of the African bureaucracies, especially vis-à-vis the single autocrat or the small oligarchy which has dominated economic policy-making. The weakness of the “African state” is apparently explained by a further dimension which makes state autonomy irrelevant: *patron-client relationships*.

## **2.2 The “African state”**

Despite historical, geopolitical, economic and social differences, African countries seem to share certain basic characteristics of political and economic institutions. In the literature on Africa, a certain model of the “African state” has emerged. This model may serve as a point of reference

for my discussion of Botswana — which differs in many respects from the other countries in Africa. One should keep in mind the differences between diagnosis, causes, and cures. In studies of current African politics, the first, diagnosis, seems to be less associated with different normative positions than the others. In other words, there seems to be less disagreement in various analyses on how the “African state” has operated in the post-independence period, than on the reasons for this pattern or on the cures.

The strength of the state is central in the discussion of the political and economic development in post-independence Africa. The size of the “African state” and its involvement in the economy has in general not been less extensive than in other developing countries. State-directed development seems after independence to have been a ruling paradigm in many African countries (Gulhati 1990b). However, various authors seem to agree that it has been less effectively developmental — a view expressed, for example by Jackson and Rosberg:

In African countries governance is more a matter of seamanship and less of navigation — that is, staying afloat rather than going somewhere. This is a source of considerable dismay to planners, economists, and policy-makers (among others) who want African governments to initiate a rational and concerted assault on poverty, ignorance, disease, and other problems of underdevelopment (1982:18).

Bratton and Rothchild similarly write:

The use by African elites of arbitrary and repressive measures and their inability to apply governmental regulations throughout the national territory is a sign of state weakness or “softness”. Paradoxically, the independent African state consolidates power at the political centre and extracts considerable economic resources from society; yet it spends much of what it obtains on itself and lacks the capacity to spur the country’s development as a whole (1992:263).

The crisis facing perhaps the majority of countries in Africa is dual, as it relates to both the political and economic spheres. It is commonly accepted that these are interrelated, and that the nature of the “African state” is one important *domestic* factor behind the economic adversity. The weakness of the “African state” to act as an agent for development is a result of its relations with the society. As the literature reveals, this factor seems to be complemented by organisational factors and the availability of policy instruments.

## *The colonial legacy*

A point of departure for analyses of the current “African state” is often the colonial structure inherited at independence, and the subsequent transformation of the state. With support from the popular masses, nationalist leaders gained power through the struggle for independence. The western democratic institutions introduced in many of the newly independent countries were, for various reasons, soon replaced by more authoritarian and centralised state structures usually headed by a president. Legitimacy based on popular support through elections was replaced, in some cases complemented, by coercive authority and social control, often through the structure of one-party systems. Pervasive clientelism bought the rulers apparent support. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine deeply the reasons for this development pattern. However, the roots in the colonial executive system are often referred to. Colonial bureaucracies had been established in most colonised African countries. As Oyugi (1988:101) writes, the “administration was the government” — an autonomous actor free from social controls, and (p.102):

Colonialism promoted the growth and development of the civil bureaucracy at the expense of competitive politics. Thus in Africa, the bureaucracy developed before competitive politics through which it could be controlled...

Kennedy (1988) accordingly characterises the state inherited by the new African rulers after independence as overdeveloped, because its size has been disproportionately large compared to other organised groups outside the state. However, seen in the light of development needs, the capacity of the state has been insufficient (Gulhati 1990), as witnessed by the low level of economic development and insignificant economic diversification. As Goulbourne writes (1987:37):

...there can be little doubt that the underdevelopment of social classes in Africa has been an inhibiting factor on many aspects of development, including politics and the state.

The general validity of this argument has, however, been questioned. Kennedy (1988:87), for example, writes that one should be careful of exaggerating “the extent to which indigenous business activity was inhibited during the colonial period.” Some authors, for example, have argued that indigenous entrepreneurs in Kenya held some influence at independence (e.g. Swainson 1980). However, nobody seems to repudiate that the role of

the “African state” became after independence decisive in the economic development process — sometimes with positive, sometimes with negative effects. The post-colonial state somehow became involved in most sectors of the economy, and the development of the private sector has in many cases been constrained by state intervention (Iliffe 1983; Kennedy 1988). Access to the state became after independence an important determinant of individual prosperity in most African countries, partly because of the low level of economic development and the numerical insignificance and organisational weakness of societal groups outside the state. As Callaghy writes (1990:258):

[After independence a] new political class began to emerge that used the state as its arena of action and source of power, status, rents, and other forms of wealth. The state was used to begin to build an economic base for itself. All groups concentrated on the weak, but newly autonomous, state as the major avenue to power, status, and wealth because other avenues of upward mobility, such as private capitalist activity, were much more difficult, constrained, time consuming, and uncertain.

### *Patrimonialism*

One of Callaghy’s (1987;1988;1990) main arguments is that the state after independence has become patrimonialised. This concept is certainly multidimensional, but personalisation of government and weakening of bureaucratic legal-rational principles are important aspects that have been emphasised by several other authors (e.g. Hyden 1983; Jackson & Rosberg 1982; Sandbrook 1986). As will be elaborated below, patrimonialism may be seen as a threat to the insulation of the policy-making process.

In their analyses, both Callaghy and Sandbrook make reference to Weber’s writings on the development of capitalism in European countries, and his emphasis on the developmental role of the state, not least through its bureaucratisation. Callaghy observes similarities between precapitalist Europe and the current situation in large parts of Africa, and focuses on internal obstacles for (capitalist) economic development — the role of the state is crucial because it may both “foster or hinder the development of capitalism”, he writes (1988:73). The African patrimonial state is seen as authoritarian as it is neither constrained by legal-rational principles, nor by traditional authority. The state is, however, looked upon as weak, partly because it lacks the political and procedural predictability necessary for economic development, but also because it is penetrated by society-centred forces through patron-client networks intended to build support. Clientelism



may be recognised in various practices, such as corruption and patronage. As an aspect of state-society relationships, corruption may be related to the necessity of societal actors to pay for state favours; for example, in order to obtain an import licence or a permit to open a shop. Patronage, on the other hand, is a prevalent means used by the state to obtain political support. Political loyalty may be rewarded by recruitment into the civil service. In Nigeria, according to Sandbrook (1986), this practice has led to overstaffing and administrative inefficiency.

Patronage in the form of subsidising various goods and services (e.g. food, fuel, housing and health) is also frequently applied to obtain political adherence (Bates 1988; Callaghy 1990). Both Bates and Callaghy argue that such politically motivated allocations of public funds are often biased towards the urban sector. It should be noticed that Botswana, with her small urban population, apparently differs from this pattern. Urban bias is, according to Callaghy (1990), partly rooted in the multiparty electoral systems which existed in the early independence period. Even after political freedoms became suppressed, the need to maintain political control of the urban masses has made the new rulers extract resources from the agricultural sector to finance parastatals, urban-based welfare services and various subsidies. This has been detrimental to the agricultural sector. Bates (1981;1988) has elaborated how the agricultural marketing boards that were established by the colonial rulers have facilitated monopolistic control by the post-colonial state over trading in agricultural products. As he writes (1988:334):

They could purchase export crops at an administratively set, low domestic price; they could then market these crops at the prevailing world price; and they could accumulate the revenues generated by the difference between the domestic price at which the goods were purchased and the world price at which they were sold.

According to Bates, marketing board revenues have not been used to modernise the agricultural sector, but have been transferred to other sectors of the economy. Investment in industry has largely been insufficient, however. Agriculture has consequently deteriorated because farmers have responded negatively to low producer prices. Food prices have been used as a political means to hold down wage levels, because the urban consumers are seen as a potent political force:

When urban unrest begins among food consumers, the political discontent often spreads rapidly to upper echelons of the polity; to those whose income come from profits, not wages, and to those in charge of major

bureaucracies. Political regimes that are unable to supply low-cost food are seen as dangerously incompetent and as failing to protect the key elements of the social order (Bates 1988:347).

The main point to make is the *political rationale* behind the decision to lower the prices paid to the agricultural producers and the retail prices on food. An important dimension is the political power of the producers. In cases of an agricultural sector dominated by a poor peasantry, the producers are likely to be exploited. On the other hand, if the agricultural producers constitute a political elite, the agricultural sector may even be subsidised by the state. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the latter is the case in Botswana. This may not only be explained by the initial strength of the Botswana cattle owners, but also by the small urban population, and the diamond industry as an alternative source of revenue for the state. Bates' reasoning is similar to what Callaghy (1990:263) refers to as the "political logic", and to Gulhati's (1990b:1152) conclusion: "The central motivation behind economic policy was regime survival."

Clientelism may not only have an adverse effect on agricultural development; it may also lead to overstaffing of the bureaucracies. Of relevance for the issue in this study is the impediment of the long-term horizon needed for efficient development planning caused by penetration of society-centred forces (see chapter 1). A multitude of other negative effects are revealed in current literature ( See Gulhati 1990a/b and Healey & Robinson 1992).

### *Organisational and administrative factors behind state weakness*

The post-colonial states had from the outset weak capacity to face their multitude of developmental tasks. The quality and nature of the administrative systems inherited at independence certainly varied, but a recurring observation seems to be that the departure of the colonial rulers left a "capacity-gap" in many administrative structures, not least in terms of skilled officials. The higher ranks in the administrations had often been dominated by expatriates, and indigenous civil servants had insufficient experience from senior positions. According to Hyden (1988:19), "the introduction of the African to modern organizational principles was never complete."

Today, three decades after the liberation era, administrative inefficacy is a key aspect of the general weakness of the "African state". This may not only be verified by "administrative variables" (e.g. technical skills and organisational structure), but also seems to be strongly linked to the nature

of the relationships between the administrations and the politicians, and the level of administrative "insulation" vis-à-vis the society in general. Again, the multiplicity of cases should be kept in mind. Some African countries have more effective administrative structures than others.

Attempts to improve public administration in African states have, according to Hyden (1988), in general been obstructed by the "supremacy of politics" which has worked against bureaucratic norms and principles. Callaghy (1990) argues that there is a dualism between the political and administrative spheres in the economic policy-making of the current "African state". The technocratic half of this structure has been the weaker side, partly because it has been subject to the political logic of the patrimonial state; especially in terms of how public funds are decided to be used. As Gulhati (1990a:30) writes: "There is little appreciation of how technical policy analysis can feed into the decision-making process." One effect of this subordination of the administrative side has been that the flow of communication and feedback from implemented policies has been constrained. Politicians have not been receptive to "negative" information from the civil-servants, and the latter has thus withheld such information. This lack of two-way communication underlines the absence of accountability amongst the individual political rulers, as mistakes are not taken into account (Gulhati 1990a; Healey & Robinson 1992).

As bureaucratic norms and principles in general have been undermined, Callaghy (1987:96) concludes that "African states do not have true bureaucracies" in the Weberian sense. Support for such a claim is provided by Hyden (1988) who claims that communication is often oral, not written, and laws are applied in an arbitrary fashion. This pattern may not only be related to the "opportunism" bred by personal rule, and the need to please the political leaders, but is also related to patron-client relationships. The administrative apparatus is penetrated by various social groups to which the individual office holders have obligations (Healey & Robinson 1992). Hyden (1983:37) labels this phenomenon "clan politics", which may be described as "the ability to take advantage of public resources for purposes other than those officially prescribed." "Clan politics" is a phenomenon beyond socio-economic cleavages, but is ordered by various affective criteria, like, for example, religion, kinship or ethnic ties. This penetration may lead to fragmentation of the administration as the individual office holder obliges various ethnic groups (Healey & Robinson 1992).

## 2.3 The structuring of democracy

As discussed in chapter 1, various authors have pointed to possible costs of democracy. Of relevance to the issue under scrutiny in this study are the arguments by Callaghy (1990:264), who claims that elections will weaken the capacity of the rulers to undertake economic reforms, and Haggard and Moon (1990:212) who relate the freedom of manoeuvre of a government to the strength of the legislature. A strong legislature with political parties playing a representative role, will in their view make it problematic for a government to pursue "sensitive economic policies." In terms of the possibility of pursuing a consistent development strategy in a liberal democracy, Haggard (1990:45) appears to be rather pessimistic, as he claims that economic policies "are less likely to be consistent and internally coherent" in such a political context.

However, it is far from unrefutable that the effects of democracy, understood as more openness and transparency in decision making, will mainly be negative — on the contrary. In the recent debate it is frequently argued that democracy may induce political rulers to become more accountable. Anyang Nyong'o (1988a:74), for example, writes that:

Democracy requires that people participate openly in the process of government, that their preferences for public policies be taken into account by those who govern, that those who govern derive their power from the governed, that they maintain a system of communication with the governed and that they be periodically ready to account for their activities and either be recalled from office or be returned depending on the verdict of the governed.

Incorporating the mechanism of accountability into decision-making includes, according to Keech (1992:260), two elements. First, the political rulers are required to "explain, report, or justify." In a democratic setting this implies that a government should keep the citizenry informed about its activities, *inter alia* through participation in policy-making by elected representatives. Second, accountability implies that politicians are "subject to sanction." Democratic mechanisms should, ideally, remove politicians in the event of inadequate performance, e.g. the legislature may declare a vote of no confidence in the government, or individual representatives may not be reelected in the forthcoming election if the electorate is dissatisfied with their performance. The first element, transparency, may be seen as an unambiguous advantage in policy-making, in that corruption becomes less easy to hide. The second element, however, seems to be at the core of the debate about the effects of democracy on economic policy-making. Critics

claim that fear of not being reelected, will induce politicians to make populist economic policy priorities without grounding them on technocratic efficiency criteria — democracy may force a government to overspend.

It is too simplistic, however, to assume that democracy will inevitably become a seedbed for populism. In a situation of extremely scarce resources, as in most of contemporary Africa, there may simply not be much scope for expansionist policies. As emphasised by Hyden in his outline of the governance approach, legitimacy may be grounded in factors beyond the distribution of patronage — *responsible* leadership may be a feature of similar importance as *responsiveness* for the existence of an atmosphere of *trust* and *reciprocity* between state and society (Hyden 1992:12). As this analysis of the Botswana case will demonstrate, regularly held elections do not necessarily impel a government to loosen control of public spending even if ample resources are available.

Apter (1991:476) underscores the importance of democracy facilitating two-way communication, constituting an “information system”, and argues that one of the advantages of democracy compared to the coercive state is that people pass on information which may not be agreeable to their superiors — information that in the end may be crucial for innovation and growth. As such it is the task of the elected politicians to feed this information from society into the policy-making process. The presence of a legislature may for example improve the development efforts of a government by making development programmes become closer to real needs (Smith & Musolf 1979).

It was argued above that an important aspect of understanding how the particular political system affects economic development is to find out how the policy-making process is organised. Haggard (1990:43), for example, perceives the degree of insulation from societal pressures as “a function of the institutional arrangements linking state and society.” Democracy gives the civil society freedom and opportunity for organisation and expression of the interests of various society-centred forces. This aspect of democracy raises important questions: Is it possible for the state in a democratic context to be strong — in terms of capability to insulate itself from the influence of particular groups? To what extent does the access to the decision-making process by elected representatives itself constitute a threat to the autonomy of the state? Even between democratic regimes with similar formal institutional frameworks, great differences may exist in the daily functioning of the political systems. One should thus not be too ambitious about seeking general answers to these questions. The position and strength of the political parties, and the vitality of civil society are seemingly important variables. One further aspect is the relationship

between the legislature and the executive. Haggard and Moon (1990:212) see the relative strength of the legislature as an important factor for the developmental strength of the state, and “weak legislatures that limit the representative role of parties” is in their view seen as an advantage.

### *The relative strength of the executive vs the legislature*

The executive-legislature relation in the parliamentary system may, theoretically, be conceived through the “parliamentary chain of government” (Olsen 1983:77). The legislators’ actions are here expected to reflect the public’s preferences. The cabinet is seen as the top of an electoral hierarchy, whereby the executive derives its authority from the representatives of the people. One important determinant for the distribution of power between the legislature and the executive is how dependent the latter is on support by the former.

Internal characteristics of the organisation of the executive have to be analysed when discussing its strength. An important dimension to study is the relation between the political rulers (i.e. the Botswana President, the ministers and assistant ministers), and the civil service. An important question, according to Olsen (1983:78), becomes “the *degree* to which politically appointed leaders are able to give direction to a large administrative apparatus acting in their name and *how* they give this direction.” This may be a question of the capabilities of the politicians: their educational background, experience, length of tenure in the cabinet and in the individual ministry, and their political support in general. In Botswana the development planning has increasingly become more sophisticated, the portfolio of the development programme has expanded, and the state has somehow become involved in most spheres of the economy. Although the political rulers may have become more experienced and capable of exercising political leadership, it is reasonable to assume that increased workload and the need for specialised administrative units make it increasingly difficult for the politicians to control the administrative side of the executive. As Olsen (1983:45) writes: “The more decisions made on the behalf of the state, the smaller the share of those decisions can be attended to and given thorough consideration by a single institution.”

Mezey (1979) classifies the strength of a legislature in accordance with its general support in the population and its policy-making strength. The latter dimension will here be emphasised. An illustrative example is how bills are dealt with. In a compliant (weak) legislature, according to Mezey, bills pass easily and quick, while in a free (strong) legislature, much time is spent on discussing bills and amendments may be made by the

representatives. Wildavsky and Caiden (1989) illustrate the power of the legislature by the extent to which it is able to amend the level of public spending. The constitutional constraints on the ability of the Botswana legislature to raise public spending, thus places the legislature in a weak position in this respect.

The existence of an efficient committee system may be indicative of the strength of the legislature. By concentrating skills in various committees, the legislators may become more prepared to raise issues and amend proposals presented by the cabinet (Smith & Musolf 1979). As Hopkins' (1979) study of the legislatures in Kenya and Tanzania reveals, physical working-conditions of the MPs are further important for their ability to participate in policy-making.

The *de facto* power of the representatives in the legislature to modify proposals from the executive may be difficult to analyse, because modifications may not only be the outcome of an open debate, but may as well be the outcome of consultations prior to the official debate (i.e. private discussions between ministers and MPs). It may be in the interest of the executive to avoid open clashes, and the executive may during the process of preparing proposals try to anticipate opposition. For example, with reference to the Norwegian parliament, Olsen (1983:67) argues that the executive-legislature relation is not characterised by confrontation and domination, and that "much coordination takes place through anticipated reaction and mutual adjustment."

Recalling figure 1.1 in the preceding chapter, the elections and the role of the elected representatives may be perceived as a bridge between the state and society. An important dimension in analyses of the position of legislatures is the relation between the representatives and the electorate — the citizens. One way of approaching this issue has been through the demand-input conception of the representative model (Olsen 1983; Wahlke 1971). The interests of the citizens are seen as policy demands which are transferred into the policy-making process through the elections and the legislators. Such an understanding of representativity may, according to Wahlke, be questioned. In terms of specific policy issues, one may question what mandate the elections actually give the representatives. The political consciousness of the average citizen may vary. Voters may be less concerned with specific policy issues than other factors determining their party preference (e.g. social background, ideology, ethnic affiliation, and the personality of the individual candidates). Party programmes may be general in nature, and it is plausible not to expect a mass of voters to support all aspects in a programme (Olsen 1983). This does not necessarily imply that the politicians act (make policies) without concern for the views

of the public. Aspirations for the next election may still discipline the politicians to seek conformity between their actions and the public's opinion. Wahlke (1971) even suggests that the representatives in some cases may see themselves as more supervised by the electorate than they actually are.

### *Some African experiences*

Studies of the performance of legislatures in those African countries where such institutions have been present are scarce. The issue is usually not given much attention in books and articles on the democratic experiences of African countries, or the future role of democracy (e.g. Diamond et al. 1988). Studies which have been concerned with African legislatures have, according to Healey and Robinson (1992), not ascribed legislators (MPs) much influence in policy-making. Not surprisingly, the possibility for criticism or presentation of policy alternatives has been found to be limited, especially in one-party systems. However, in his comparison of the legislatures in Kenya and Tanzania, Hopkins (1979) argues that, if not *de facto* decision-makers, the activities of the MPs are still important in the development process. Although these countries have important differences, and may be of less relevance for a discussion of policy-making in a multi-party context, it seems to be worth giving attention to some of Hopkins' observations concerning the role of the individually elected politicians.

Hopkins claims that the particular development strategies pursued in Tanzania and Kenya have only insignificantly been influenced by the legislatures, and mainly been determined by key political figures with executive power. The private sector has in addition been an important influence group in Kenya, while the TANU party has been an important arena for political decisions in Tanzania. The role of the legislatures in both countries has mainly been to formalise and legitimise the decisions made by the political executive. The legislatures as an arena in policy-making have thus been characterised by building supportive coalitions for decisions taken elsewhere (Hopkins 1979:183). However, Hopkins argues that one has to view the role of the MPs beyond those tasks constitutionally prescribed. It would be clearly noticeable that MPs are part of politics in these countries if the legislatures disappeared. The informal and indirect functions of the MPs are emphasised. For example, in Kenya the legislature was observed to be an important arena of recruitment for leadership. Although the freedom to criticise the government in both countries has been constrained, the role of MPs as intermediaries of information was found to be important: goals were clarified, and needs and demands from the



constituencies were presented to the governments. The MPs provided to some extent feedback from the implementation of policies. However, Hopkins observed that the MPs in both countries contributed insignificantly to the formulation of specific policy alternatives. This was partly explained by lack of capacity to undertake independent policy analysis.

The role of the MPs as linkages between the countryside and the central government was in both Kenya and Tanzania found to be important. In Kenya the MPs functioned as patrons for their constituents. The MPs had an important role in raising funds for development projects (e.g. schools). The MPs assisted constituents in allocation of land, and to overcome problems with the bureaucracy. The performance of the MPs in such fields was found to be important for their chances to become reelected. Although some of the functions of the Kenyan MPs were performed by the institutions of the TANU party in Tanzania, the presence of the MPs in the rural areas was still important. Hopkins further emphasises the role of the Tanzanian MPs to create understanding and legitimacy of government policies in the constituencies.

Lessons from the comparison seem to be that the MPs may still perform important roles, even if the survival of a government is not reliant on the support from the legislature, and even though the MPs are not major law-makers, or do not present alternatives to government policies. The legislature contributes to the legitimacy of the government by giving consent to policies presented to it. The MPs bring forward information about the needs in their constituencies, and they may provide important feedback for the efficient implementation of government policies.

\* \* \*

To facilitate the ensuing empirical analysis I have paid attention to variables like state-society relationships, political institutions, administrative capabilities and policy instruments available. I have argued that a *state-centred* approach does not preclude a focus on actors outside the state. On the contrary, a recent trend in political science is to analyse how society-centred forces may get access to policy-making processes, and how political institutions may regulate the ability of such actors to influence policy-making. Organisations in civil society and elected politicians may be perceived as intermediaries between state and the populace. A strong legislature may be important in making the executive and the bureaucracy largely accountable and responsive to real needs. However, this strength may in addition represent a challenge to the autonomy of the policy-makers.

### **3. Development planning, policies and economic change**

This chapter outlines the policies adopted, development patterns and structural changes in the post-independence period. A main objective is to demonstrate the coherence in the Botswana government's approach to economic development. The history and role of development planning during these years will be emphasised. As the scope of this study is limited, I will focus on some selected, but central, aspects of the economic development process; i.e. industrial development, rural-urban dualism, agricultural modernisation, and income policy. The analysis will combine comparisons across sectors of the economy with a focus on policy choices over time. The aggregate of these dimensions will be looked upon as Botswana's development strategy.

#### **3.1 The challenges at independence**

Botswana's exceptional low level of development at independence may be illustrated in various ways. In terms of economic dualism, the dichotomy between a traditional and a modern sector of an economy, Botswana's underdevelopment was revealed by the virtual absence of an industrial sector (e.g., manufacturing and mining), a service sector, or educated citizens (Colclough & McCarthy 1980; Harvey & Lewis 1990; Murray & Parson 1990). As table 3.1 illustrates, one could hardly talk about any urbanisation at all, and 90 per cent of the population was based in the underdeveloped rural economy (Parson 1984:58). This rural predominance should be kept in mind, not least as an important dimension of Botswana party politics.

However, the low level of development did not mean that independent Botswana started from a "point zero" (e.g. a non-monetarised traditional economy based mainly on subsistence agriculture). Colonialism affected the economy despite negligible physical presence. Taxation, for example, made the population increasingly dependent on income from wage labour (Murray & Parsons 1990). The economic structure had for more than a century been affected by its proximity to South Africa. Cattle rearing for export to the

southern neighbour had taken place since the nineteenth century, and although it did not occur on a large scale, the establishment of a modern abattoir and meat cannery in the 1950s increased the export capacity and created some formal employment (Harvey & Lewis 1990). However, formal employment opportunities within the protectorate were virtually non-existent. Temporary labour migration to South African mines and farms represented both the major source of wage income, and formed a linkage between traditional and modern economic sectors. In the late 1930s, for example, about 20,000 Batswana worked temporarily in South Africa (Murray & Parsons 1990:164); a figure which has remained roughly at the same level until today (see also table 3.4 below). It is illustrative that in 1965 twice as many Batswana had formal employment outside the protectorate as within (RoB 1991f:box 1.1). The economy of the Bechuanaland protectorate had further been linked to the South African economy through a customs union established in 1910. Beyond the produce from the subsistence agriculture, nearly all consumer goods were imported (Harvey & Lewis 1990:24).

Table 3.1  
Level of urbanisation  
(largest settlements, population in thousands)

Settlement/Year	1964	1971	1981	1991
Gaborone	3.8	17.7	56.7	136.4
Francistown	9.5	18.6	31.1	58.2
Lobatse	7.6	11.9	19.0	28.4
Selebi-Phikwe	-	4.9	29.5	54.6
Urban share of total population	4%	9.5%	17.7%	33.1%

Source: RoB 1991f:table 1.2; Harvey & Lewis 1990: table 3.5

Until the 1950s there were hardly any efforts to develop the domestic Bechuanaland economy. The colonial rulers had until that time given priority to balancing the budgets, and consequently kept the public expenditures low. Domestic taxation was meant to cover the recurrent expenditures, and insignificant transfers from Britain took place. Beyond some spending on infrastructure and veterinary services, and a small amount on education and health, no funds were spent, or efforts made,

before the 1950s to modernise or develop agriculture or industry. This neglect was noticeable in comparison to other African areas subjected to colonial rule. However, a change occurred from 1955 and onwards, as development funds, budgetary grants and loans were increased from British sources. As a result, some improvements occurred in the decade prior to independence, i.e. increased levels of school enrolment, increased spending on health, and some development of infrastructure, especially centred on the establishment of the capital Gaborone, which literally had to be constructed from scratch (Colclough & McCarthy 1980:table 1.1; Harvey & Lewis 1990).

The initial low level of administrative capacity, combined with the multiplicity of development needs, presented tremendous challenges to Seretse Khama and his government at independence, both in number and scope. The manpower and financial constraints required the new rulers to make strict priorities. Although it may be correct to say that the Khama government in the early days after independence lacked autonomy vis-à-vis their former colonial masters, this does not necessarily imply that different decisions would have been made even if, for example, reliance on British funding for the development and recurrent budgets had not been necessary. I will argue that considering the objective constraints which existed at independence, it is reasonable to question whether there was any alternative development path open at all. However, at the same time, one should keep in mind that Khama and his ministers ideologically represented a moderate/liberal African government, compared to the “socialist oriented” rulers in several other contemporary newly independent states. As will be elaborated in chapter 5, a political “left-right” cleavage apparently existed in Botswana politics in the 1960s; with the party in power to the “right”, and the opposition parties to the “left”. However, I will argue that although the opposition “rhetorically” positioned itself to the “left”, it was unclear what *real* political alternative the opposition actually represented.

The priorities which were made at independence had been elaborated through a process commencing in the early 1960s when the colonial administration adopted a more explicit planning approach, and African politicians were gradually brought into decision-making and administrative matters (see chapter 5). Among other things, three “principal” objectives came to the fore at independence:

- (a) Priority was given to development planning, although primarily focused on resource allocation to the various sectors, and less on direct state involvement in productive activities (RoB 1968). This emphasis was reflected institutionally, as planning departments were given a *de*

*facto* strong position; more dominant than in many other African countries (Colclough & McCarthy 1980).

- (b) It was explicitly pronounced that the emphasis on planning was not intended to lessen the importance of the private sector in the development efforts. On the contrary, the government was to assist the private sector in its contribution to the attainment of overall development goals (RoB 1968:11).
- (c) A major objective was to reduce the dependency, or diversify the sources, on external funding of the recurrent and development budgets (Healey & Robinson 1990; RoB 1968).

The priority given to financial independence is understandable, as the domestic economy in 1966 could hardly provide the government with any revenues at all. British aid financed half of the recurrent budget and all development spending (Harvey & Lewis 1990:39). Soon after independence it became clear that a potential for mineral exports (i.e. copper-nickel and diamonds) existed. Hence a major share of development spending and administrative capacity was assigned to fast development of the mining industry. Secondly, institutional development of the government agencies themselves, and further construction/plans for the capital Gaborone demanded much attention. Priority was in general given to development of physical infrastructure, geared especially toward improving the roads between the major urban areas. In general, the development priorities in the first post-independence years were biased towards the urban sector, while education, health and agriculture lagged behind (Colclough & McCarthy 1980). The first planning efforts were marked by their transitional nature, which is understandable as the new rulers had to "get organised" before one could expect attention to be directed towards economic development in a broader sense.

In the early 1970s the prospects for future development were exceptionally enhanced by the improved financial situation; for three main reasons. First, the customs union which had existed between Botswana and South Africa since 1910 had until independence only brought insignificant gains to the former. In 1969 the agreement had been renegotiated, and Botswana's share of the customs union's revenues increased significantly as the receipts now became tied to the volume of import to Botswana, and not a fixed share as earlier, as well as a bonus emanating from a renegotiated revenue sharing formula (Harvey & Lewis 1990:190). Between 1968 and 1970 the annual revenues from the agreement quadrupled, and

increased further to represent 45 per cent of domestic revenues in 1972-73 (Murray & Parsons 1990:168). Second, the development of the mineral export sector turned out to be a success, and although the diamond mine project was financed by a private South African company (De Beers), the government received an increasingly large share of the profits from 1972 onwards (Harvey & Lewis 1990: table 6.1). Third, great efforts had been made, with success, to increase the contributions from bilateral and multilateral donors. The copper-nickel mine project was largely funded by foreign aid, and the financial dependency on the United Kingdom decreased after 1970 (Harvey & Lewis 1990:198). A contributing factor to the good performance was certainly also the end of a devastating drought in 1966; a factor which led to a “self-driven” restoration of the agricultural production in the early years after independence (Isaksen 1981:9).

To sum up; the prospects for economic development had improved noticeably during the first five years of independence. The confidence in the economic prospects expressed by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning in 1970 was in retrospect justified (RoB 1970:*introduction*). As the political leaders now had more room for manoeuvre, the extent to which the new prospects turned the development efforts towards those sectors which had been neglected during the initial years of independence became a relevant issue for planning.

### **3.2 The second “independence”**

The revenue situation of the government continued to improve throughout the 1970s. In 1972/73 the reliance on support from the United Kingdom to meet recurrent expenditure ceased — a circumstance that Harvey and Lewis characterise as the achievement of a second “independence” (1990:53). High economic growth rates were sustained. However, some changes in the relative contribution of the various sources of income took place. Cattle production, in terms of the size of the stock and volume of exports, increased steadily until the early 1980s. The major markets in the first post-independence years were South Africa and the United Kingdom (UK). After UK entered the European Economic Community (EEC), the Botswana government put much effort in getting access to the EEC market. In 1974 an agreement was reached which gave Botswana a fixed quota and reduced tariffs on cattle import into the EEC countries (Harvey & Lewis 1990:79).

Table 3.2  
Major exports in selected years (per cent of total revenues)

Sector/Year	1974	1980	1985-91*
Meat & meat products	38.9	7.2	5.1
Diamonds	36.7	60.7	78.5
Copper-Nickel	10.1	20.7	8.9

Source: Calculated from RoB 1986b:table 23 and 1991f:table A7.

\* Annual average rates for the period.

As table 3.2 reveals, the livestock sector has declined in importance as a major source of export revenue. The cattle industry has ceased being a source of net income for the Botswana government. On the contrary, it has been estimated that the taxes and payment for services received from the cattle holders do not exceed the transfers to the sector from the government, e.g. vaccination, fencing, and subsidies for borehole drilling (Harvey & Lewis 1990:89). However, it should be kept in mind that the sector continued to represent a major source of income for the individual Motswana.

After major investments were made in the early 1970s, the mining sector increasingly became the major source of income for the government. Income came not only through the direct share of the export revenues accruing to the government, but also by increasing revenues from the customs union agreement, which increased proportionately with the import of inputs demanded by the construction boom in the mineral sector. The revenues from mineral exports facilitated a build-up of foreign exchange reserves, and the dividends from these reserves became an important source of revenue from the late 1970s onwards (Harvey & Lewis 1990:194). An increasing amount of development aid was furthermore received by the government in the 1970s, and the objective of diversifying the range of contributors of external aid was accomplished. No donor provided more than 20 per cent of the development aid received by Botswana at the end of the decade (Harvey & Lewis 1990:42).

A development plan which was presented in 1970 signified a more comprehensive and long term perspective concerning the development strategy of the Botswana government. However, the plan did not represent any major change of strategy. A dual strategy was outlined in the plan, in which surpluses generated by mineral exports were intended to be transferred to rural development. It was in the plan explicitly stated that rural development was a major challenge, and the government intended "to

devote considerable resources to the task of rural development” (RoB 1970:13). However, beyond a modest increase in spending on education, no important changes in terms of allocation of public funds occurred during the initial years of the plan period (Colclough & McCarthy 1980:table 4.4).

In the revised development plan presented in 1973, it was reiterated that inequality within the rural sector was a problem. The government maintained that rural development should be given priority, through: “improvement and expansion of social services and infrastructure” and “creation of income generating activities” (RoB 1973:58). The government reconfirmed that resources were available for rural development. Murray and Parsons (1990), however, claim that the project portfolio did not reveal any major favouring of the rural sector, compared to the former expenditure pattern. The plan was furthermore, according to Colclough and McCarthy (1980), vague in defining the relative priorities of the various objectives presented. However, a rural development programme was launched in 1973 (the Accelerated Rural Development Programme — ARDP). Funds allocated to the rural sector in the following years increased substantially (Colclough & McCarthy 1980:table 4.4). Water regulation, primary schools, health facilities and road improvements represented the major elements of the development programme (Picard 1987:241). This may be looked upon as a sincere attempt to devote attention to the government’s rural development objectives. However, the sudden increase in spending had apparently also a political motive. The timing of the launching of the rural development programme has by several authors been related to the election in 1974, and the need for the ruling party to present tangible results of its policy (Colclough & McCarthy 1980; Harvey & Lewis 1990; Murray & Parsons 1990).

The approach towards rural development adopted in the 1970s has been characterised as being mainly focused on development of infrastructure and social services (i.e. schools and health). It has been argued that a comprehensive strategy for rural development in a broader sense was never presented (Picard 1987). Agriculture, for example, received only 3 per cent of government development spending between 1973 and 1976 (Harvey & Lewis 1990:table 10.1). Although the modern, predominantly urban, economic sector had expanded continuously in the 1970s, neither the level of employment in the rural sector, nor agricultural productivity improved.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The high level of self-employment within the rural sector has to be kept in mind. The number of farming households increased by 67.5 percent between 1968/69 and 1979/80, which included a 70 percent increase in farm households holding cattle (calculated from Harvey & Lewis 1990:table 5.2).



Development of manufacturing industries both in urban and rural areas also lagged behind (see table 3.3 & 3.4). Governmental institutions charged with the task, among others, to allocate public funds to industrial development emerged in the early 1970s, however with limited success (Murray and Parsons 1990). The funds allocated by these institutions had, for example, largely been concentrated in urban property and commercial business (Harvey & Lewis 1990).

Table 3.3  
Contribution by selected sectors to GDP (per cent)

Sector/Year	1966	1977/78	1982/83	1988/89
Agriculture	39.6	19.9	5.8	3.0
Mining	-	15.5	31.2	51.0
Manufacturing	7.9	6.8	6.3	4.2
Construction	5.7	4.7	5.4	3.3
Trade/Hotels	18.6	20.0	21.3	16.4
Finance	6.6	8.3	6.6	5.3
Government	16.7	16.3	17.2	12.8

Source: RoB 1991f:table 1.3.

In his analysis of the Botswana economy until 1980, Isaksen (1981) claims the government had been biased towards sectors which generated revenues (i.e. mineral export and cattle), and less concerned with employment creation *per se*. The role of the state in employment creation is crucial, Isaksen argues, because in Botswana a disproportionately large share of national funds is concentrated in the hands of the government, compared to the private sector. However, the development strategy which had emerged in the 1970s revealed that the government had ascribed to itself mainly an indirect role in manufacturing growth and employment creation within this sector. The government attempted to provide various incentives for private entrepreneurs, but refrained from getting directly involved in manufacturing activities. In a report published in 1978 it was suggested that a rural employment programme concentrating on the development of small scale industry and modernisation of agriculture might substantially improve the employment situation in the rural sector (Lipton 1978). I will in the following section discuss the economic strategy and development achievements in the 1980s, and explicitly focus on the approach towards development in the rural sector.

### 3.3 Economic strategy in the 1980s

The mineral-led growth which started in the 1970s continued throughout the 1980s, especially after 1985 when growth accelerated both in the mining and non-mining sectors (except for agriculture). Mineral exports made the foreign exchange reserves swell, and the financial scope of manoeuvrability of the government was expanded (RoB 1991f:table 3.2 & fig.3.3).

In his comprehensive report, Lipton (1978) claimed that the absence of deliberate policies militated against employment creation, and especially the development of a manufacturing sector, both in urban and rural areas. This was related to the organisation of responsibilities between the ministries, and he pointed to the institutional weakness of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. He further argued that the existing policies did not activate “the great mass of industrial potential — in rural areas”, and claimed that “restrictive legislation” was a further obstacle to the development of industry and commerce (Lipton 1978:97). It is unclear what direct bearing the Lipton report had on the government’s policy choices in the years to follow. According to Harvey and Lewis (1990), at least it coincided with a shift of emphasis in economic priorities — a shift which apparently signified a “higher priority to rural development, employment creation, income distribution and diversification away from the country’s dependence on mining and cattle” (Harvey & Lewis 1990:56).

A number of reviews of existing policies were made in the early 1980s, and new policy initiatives were presented by the government. A comprehensive study of economic opportunities in Botswana, with a focus on the major economic sectors, were presented by the government in 1982. Its major recommendations were subsequently adopted in a white paper entitled *National Policy on Economic Opportunities* (Harvey & Lewis 1990; RoB 1982a; 1982b). The strategy outlined in the white paper included *inter alia*:

- (a) Increasing citizen involvement in the economy, albeit without decreasing the economic growth rate; in other words, create productive employment increasing the share of expenditures devoted to productive activities and rural development; refraining from government activities that are regulatory and discourage economic activity; and advocating investment by indigenous citizens, although without relinquishing the openness towards foreign investment.
- (b) Improving educational opportunities.

- (c) Developing arable agriculture, and, because of limited grazing land, promoting qualitative improvement of the cattle rearing.
- (d) Improving the efficiency of the government's institutions.
- (e) Developing further the commercial banking services and government-sponsored financial institutions.

It would be an exaggeration to look upon the white paper as representing a major alteration of the economic strategy. Although diversification of the economy had come to the fore, the white paper in general renewed the approach towards economic development which had been developed throughout the initial post-independence period; i.e. livestock and the mining industry should continue to be the backbones of the economy, the direct involvement of the state in productive activities should be limited, and the economy should remain open in terms of foreign investment and trade. However, some modest efforts in the following years were made to diversify the economy.

### *Efforts to diversify the modern sector*

The launching of the "Financial Assistance Policy (FAP)" in 1982, followed by the "Industrial Development Policy (IDP) in 1984, were both initiatives aimed at employment creation, and development of the manufacturing sector, both in urban and rural areas. These schemes, which excluded cattle and mining activities, mainly provided direct financial support. Some measures of a more qualitative nature were also presented, e.g. "local preference purchasing", and, to some extent, protection of domestic industries (Kaplinsky 1991). However, the openness towards the South African market was in general not changed. The programmes distinguished between support to small-scale enterprises (SSE) and medium- and large-scale enterprise (MLE). The SSE scheme was limited to citizen owners, and is regarded by Kaplinsky (1991) as a response by the government to political pressure for indigenous participation in industry. Although table 3.3 may suggest that manufacturing's contribution to the economy has stagnated, or even declined, this is an observation which is distorted by the substantial increase in revenues from mining through the 1980s. As table 3.4 reveals, employment in manufacturing has continuously increased since the early 1970s, and accelerated towards the end of the 1980s. As the number of employed in the parastatals have only grown

insignificantly through the 1980s (RoB 1991f:table A2), the major contributor to manufacturing growth has been the private sector.

Table 3.4  
Employment structure 1972-1989  
(Shares of total employment in selected years (per cent)  
and absolute changes within the individual sectors after base year 1972,  
in brackets)

Sector/Year	1972	1980	1985	1989
<i>(a) Formal sectors</i>				
Agriculture	12.6 (100)	5.2 (85)	3.4 (79)	3.7 (130)
Mining	4.2 (100)	8.6 (428)	6.2 (434)	4.3 (452)
Manufacturing	5.7 (100)	6.7 (243)	8.6 (438)	10.3 (786)
Water & Electricity	0.01 (100)	1.8 (445)	1.6 (564)	1.2 (653)
Construction	16.1 (100)	16.1 (207)	9.9 (179)	13.6 (370)
Trade & Hotels	15.1 (100)	12.5 (172)	15.6 (303)	16.2 (473)
Other services*	12.0 (100)	12.2 (209)	15.6 (379)	16.2 (592)
Government**	33.5 (100)	37.0 (229)	38.9 (339)	34.4 (451)
	(1976)			
<i>(b) Employment in South African mines***</i>	42.7 (100)	24.2 (79)	18.0 (83)	9.9 (68)
[Relative size related to (a)]				

\* Includes: Transport & Communication, Finance & Business Services and Social & Personal Services; domestic servants excluded. \*\* Parastatals incorporated in the other sectors. \*\*\*Base year 1976.

Source: Calculations based on RoB 1977:table 1.5; 1985a:table 2.8; 1986b:table 15; 1986c:table 8.4 and 1991f:table A2.

However, to assign the FAP and the IDP schemes the main credit for formal sector growth after the policies' introduction does not seem to be justified. Although it has been estimated that the FAP until 1987 had contributed 4,500 new jobs, this was only half of the projected number. Evaluations revealed that the scheme's focus on financial support was inadequate to challenge the major obstacles to industrial development (Kaplinsky 1991:156). In other words, in its efforts to induce economic diversification, the government overlooked major constraints, as, for example, the insufficient competence of entrepreneurs, skills of the workers,

the inadequate functioning of the markets, and technological weaknesses. Kaplinsky argues that much of the employment growth which has been related to the government schemes may have occurred even without financial support, and claims that a "free rider" problem has been associated with the schemes. For example, in a survey of medium- and large-scale enterprises it was revealed that the majority would have made their investments even without the support from the schemes (Kaplinsky 1991:159). The growth of the manufacturing sector has been stimulated by factors additional to the financial support provided by the government, e.g. the attractiveness of the open Botswana economy to entrepreneurs in neighbouring countries, especially from Zimbabwe; the increased demand caused by the revenues generated by cattle and mineral production; and the potential for domestic production which was left unexploited through the colonial neglect of this sector. As Kaplinsky sums up (1991:158):

...in common with many African economies the poor state of the manufacturing sector at independence left considerable scope for what has come to be called "the easy stages" of import substitution. Thus, with the exception of textiles, the sectors displaying growth over this period were largely either "pulled" by the success of the mineral sector or filled the spaces left by colonial neglect.

However, one cannot disregard the employment generating effects of the government programmes in the 1980s. As the recent development plan reveals, the number of Botswana owned manufacturing firms increased almost five-fold between 1984 and 1989 (RoB 1991f:158), and the FAP focus on citizen ownership has certainly been one contributing factor to this growth.

One should keep in mind that the Botswana government has never intended to be a major participant and employer in the economy. As the programmes discussed above demonstrate, the government has mainly assigned itself an indirect role in the economic development process; especially towards industrial development beyond mining. Nationalisation of private enterprises has, for example, not been on the political agenda in Botswana. This may certainly be explained by the virtual absence of larger private enterprises at independence, but should as well be seen as reflecting the ideological orientation of the politicians in power. Hypothetically, one might have expected that the government would have spent a share of the mineral revenues on establishing government-owned industrial enterprises (parastatals), as happened elsewhere in Africa after windfall revenues from mining or oil got into the hands of the political rulers (i.e. Zambia and Nigeria). In Botswana, the transfer of public funds to industrial activities

has not been less substantial than in other countries, but of a different nature. Direct involvement in productive activities, and creation of parastatals, have been limited to a few enterprises which provide core services in utilities and infrastructure such as communications (railway and civil aviation), electricity and water supplies, and telecommunications. Public enterprises engaged in housing and marketing of agricultural products also exist. The government is also a shareholder in several manufacturing firms through the Botswana Development Corporation. However, these engagements have mainly been of a commercial and profit-making nature, and do not compare to the "loss-making" public enterprises often found in other African countries (Harvey & Lewis 1990; Jefferis 1991a; World Bank 1989). The government continued to favour such an approach when the strategy for the 1990s was presented in the seventh National Development Plan (RoB 1991f:28):

...the initiative must be seized by those in the private sector. Beyond direct investment in physical and social infrastructure, and human resources, the government's strategy for productive investment of the mining revenues will be to channel the funds to the private sector, and continue to improve the enabling environment which makes engaging in business activities in Botswana attractive.

This should be looked upon as a deliberate political choice by the government, and reconfirms the approach adopted with regard to its own role in the economic development process which was initiated at independence.

### *Rural development*

Although development of the rural sector to some extent is incorporated in the government programmes discussed above, the main growth and diversification has occurred mainly in the urban areas. This suggests that the private sector has been less able to contribute to economic development in the rural areas. Although successful in urban areas, the same strategy may be less applicable to rural development.

As revealed by table 3.4 above, the contribution of agriculture to formal employment has remained stagnant in absolute terms, and declined in relative terms after the early 1970s. This stagnation is also reflected in absolute figures of output and area planted (RoB 1991a:table 1), and in the

contribution to the GDP (table 3.3 above).<sup>7</sup> These indicators, however, refer to activity in the formal sectors, and it has to be kept in mind that an estimated 260,000 persons are engaged in traditional farming in the rural informal sector, which therefore represents a major source of income for the two-thirds of the population living in rural areas (RoB 1991f:239).<sup>8</sup>

The standard of living for the rural majority is ambiguous, depending on whether it is to be measured by income or by access to social services. On the one hand, a household and income survey conducted in 1985/86 revealed that large inequalities of income, in general, between the urban and rural sectors, and within the rural sector, had remained unchanged since the early 1970s (RoB 1988). It was reported that urban households, on average, had a total income twice that of rural households (RoB 1988 & 1990a:21). Commenting on the survey, and its finding that no improvement in the income of the poorest 40 per cent had taken place, Harvey and Lewis write (1990:281): "fourteen years of rapid overall growth had little measurable impact on poor households' cash income." A commission appointed by the government concluded similarly that "rural development policies have had only limited impact on relative poverty" (RoB 1990a:24). On the other hand, indicators of health and educational attainment reveal that the standard of living with regard to these dimensions has improved. The provision of public services (i.e. health, primary schools and access to safe water) has been improved through the 1970s and 1980s, and fairly equally distributed throughout the country (Harvey & Lewis 1990). The substantial emergency funds spent to ameliorate the negative effects caused by the drought between 1982 and 1987, have accomplished fairly their objectives (RoB 1990a), although not without imperfections.<sup>9</sup> However, considering the low level of productive activities and insignificant employment opportunities in the rural sector, rural poverty has to be looked upon as a prevailing structural problem.

The government itself claims that a change of focus in the approach to rural development took place after the late 1970s, i.e. an explicit emphasis was put on productive employment and income generating activities (RoB 1991f:87). Although the FAP scheme created some non-farm employment

<sup>7</sup> It has to be noted that the absolute number of persons employed in the formal agriculture sector increased towards the end of the 1980s (table 2.4).

<sup>8</sup> This figure is associated with some uncertainty, as, for example, a labour force survey in 1985 reported that 142 876 persons were employed as "traditional farmer" in the informal sector (RoB 1985c:table 27).

<sup>9</sup> Applying micro-level data, Simmons and Lyons (1992) argue that the drought relief and food aid programmes in Botswana have not been without deficiencies.

in the rural sector, and initiatives were made to target and concentrate rural development efforts geographically to specific areas within each district, these attempts cannot be looked upon as a major assault on the non-farming employment problem. Agriculture has continued to be the principal sector in the rural areas, but insignificant modernisation has taken place. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture's own review of Botswana's agricultural policy points to the low adoption rate of modern farming techniques since independence (RoB 1991a). This may be related to the capabilities of the farmers themselves, but as it is reasonable to assign the government a critical role in the transformation process of traditional agriculture, I will argue that the stagnation suggests that the adopted policies have been ineffective. A lack of will or ability by the decision makers to respond to the challenges in a comprehensive fashion is apparently one factor behind the stagnation.

Cattle rearing and export of beef are two sides of a well known major economic activity in Botswana, and together constitute a dominant contribution to agricultural output (RoB 1991f:252). The size of the livestock sub-sector has, in terms of number of cattle, doubled since independence. However, the productivity of the mode of production does not indicate modernisation to any appreciable degree. The policy on cattle rearing seems to be rather arbitrary, and allegedly reflects a reluctance to intervene in an activity dominated by an economic elite (Picard 1987; Parson 1984). The Ministry of Agriculture has been successful in terms of disease control, but unable to counteract the detrimental ecological effects of growth of the cattle stocks. Productivity (measured in meat per slaughtered animal) has been nearly stagnant during this period (RoB 1991a:17).

The socio-economic importance of the expansion of the cattle sector can be questioned. Exports of beef, although modest compared to other non-mining activities, are less significant as a source of foreign exchange than the mineral exports (table 3.2), and the sector represents a net cost in public budgets. The sector is not labour intensive, and its growth has had insignificant employment generating effects, as reflected by agriculture's declining contribution to formal employment (table 3.4). However, the growth of cattle stocks has been accompanied by an increase in the absolute number of households owning cattle (Harvey & Lewis 1990:table 5.2), and this self-employment has as such contributed to the maintenance of the standard of living in the rural areas in proportion to population growth. On the other hand, the distribution of the cattle herd has remained very unequal



throughout the post-independence period.<sup>10</sup> For example, it was reported in 1987 that one-tenth of the farming households held 60 per cent of the national cattle herd, and about 40 per cent of the farming households owned no cattle (RoB 1991a:3). As cattle holding is an important source of household revenue, and important for other farming activities (i.e. draught power), Good (1992:78) seems to be right in arguing that “the heavy inequalities present in cattle production are reproduced in arable agriculture and through rural society”.

Production of fresh milk constitutes another example of ineffectiveness in policies directed towards the rural sector. One objective of the FAP scheme was to increase the domestic production of milk, by restricting production to citizens only, and providing financial support. However, largely because of lack of managerial expertise, indigenous entrepreneurs were unable to take advantage of this opportunity (RoB 1991a:21). This suggests that financial support only is insufficient to produce changes — an argument which is strengthened by looking at the efforts made in the 1980s to develop arable production. In the National Development Plan covering the period 1979-85, it was stated explicitly that there would be a shift of emphasis from cattle production to arable farming albeit without neglecting the former (RoB 1980a:133). The Arable Land Development Programme (ALDEP) was launched in 1980 with the ambitious objective of achieving self-sufficiency in basic grains, and increasing employment opportunities in the rural areas — specifically aimed at slowing down rural-urban migration. The target group of ALDEP was small-scale farms, and financial grants were the main mechanism (RoB 1980:150). The initial phase of ALDEP was seriously constrained by a drought which started in 1982. Partly as a response to the drought a complementary programme was launched in 1985, the Accelerated Rainfed Arable Programme (ARAP), which enlarged the target group to include farms of medium scale. Børhaug (1992a) argues that ARAP can be looked upon as a political response to the initial lack of success of the ALDEP programme. Whereas ALDEP had a long-term perspective of improving the productivity of poor farmers, ARAP aimed at “somewhat quicker and more concentrated assistance to better off

<sup>10</sup> There is some ambiguity whether the distribution in the late 1980s was worse than at independence. Good (1992:78) indicates that the inequality in cattle production has worsened, while Harvey and Lewis (1990:77) observed that the total number of households owning cattle had risen by about 50 percent — approximately the same increase as the number of farms in general — and concluded that the distribution had neither worsened nor improved. The Government itself states that “one effect of the drought [in the 1980s] has been to concentrate cattle ownership in larger herds (RoB 1991f:17).”

farmers” (Børhaug 1992a:119). The political dimension of ARAP was, according to Børhaug, illustrated by its massive and determined thrust, which made it more visible, and furthermore, its continuation until the 1989 election, despite its inefficiency having been recognised soon after its adoption. Although the schemes led to an increase in area planted and total output growth, the productivity of the sector did not improve. In other words, the scheme became “a subsidy of existing arable farming patterns” and “did not become an incentive for change and development” (Børhaug 1992a:121).

During the sixth planning period (1985-91), funds spent on ARAP together with drought relief measures were nearly double the total amount spent on other agricultural development activities during the period (RoB 1991f:table 11.9). The subsidies raised the domestic production cost of most cereals to double the import price (RoB 1991a:13). Børhaug (1992a) further emphasises the substantial administrative resources required by ARAP, which diverted attention away from other agricultural activities undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture. The considerable resources spent on the programme imply that it has to be considered a serious attempt by the government to be seen to be doing “something”. It is difficult to distinguish how much of the ARAP programme was motivated by a desire to develop arable production *per se*, how much was aimed at drought relief and how significant the political dimension was. The subsidies continued for about two years after the drought ended. This may on the one hand have been necessary to give the farmers some time to adapt to the new conditions. On the other hand, this coincided with the 1989 election, and the claim that ARAP was partly politically motivated is plausible. This claim is strengthened by the fact that the subsidies had benefited most of the Batswana farmers engaged in arable agriculture. The decision to end the programme after only five years suggests not only that it was ineffective as a measure beyond drought relief in the short run, but also that it may have been considered a temporary measure by the politicians from the outset. Again, financial support only proved to be insufficient as a catalyst for agricultural development. A serious shortcoming pointed to by Harvey and Lewis (1990:101) was, for example, “the failure to develop a strong arable research programme and to link it with an effective extension effort.” Another factor is the customs union agreement with South Africa, which because of the flow of imported goods, works against domestic production of agricultural goods (RoB 1991a). Although the ALDEP programme is intended to continue until 1993 (RoB 1991f), this programme is a much smaller programme than was the case when both ARAP and ALDEP were at work, and the recent emphasis on “targeted subsidies” further indicates

a return to the approach to agricultural development prior to the extensive subsidisation schemes of the 1980s.

Although the government seems justified to argue that its agricultural development efforts in the 1980 were constrained by the severe drought between 1982 and 1987, the sector has always been facing harsh physical and climatic conditions, so the drought cannot alone excuse the stagnation of the sector. The insignificant agricultural development is certainly rooted in the pre-independence period, but should today mainly be related to the policy choices and priorities of the politicians after independence. In other words, the government has still not developed any coherent strategy towards agricultural development, and expressly assigns itself only a limited role, as stated in the current *National Policy on Agricultural Development* (RoB 1991b:6):

The role of government in agriculture will be like in other sectors, limited to the provision of necessary services and infrastructure for efficient agricultural production.

Infrastructure has in general received a disproportionately large share of the government's attention and financial resources. As Murray and Parsons write (1990:181): "The economic history of Botswana since Independence has been infrastructural development writ large." This focus reflects not only the chosen development strategy by the government, but also the objective needs at independence and the infrastructural requirements of the expanding mining sector. The emphasis on infrastructure reflects the government's definition of the division of labour between the public and private sectors, by virtue of which the former is to create favourable conditions for the latter, while not itself getting involved in productive activities. As discussed above, the direct participation of the state in the economy has been limited to a few parastatals, providing services and utilities not unusually undertaken by the public sector. Post-independence economic history reveals that productive activities in agriculture, mining, commerce and manufacturing industry have mainly been undertaken by the private sector; although with substantial financial support from the state. As Harvey and Lewis (1990) argue, it is somehow not relevant to criticise the government for not being more extensively involved directly in employment creation, and putting less resources into infrastructure, because this is an option beyond its defined development strategy.

### 3.4 Development planning in practice

Seven National Development Plans (NDPs) have been presented since 1968. The economic policy in the first two years immediately after independence was loosely guided by a transitional plan presented in 1966. The NDPs had until 1979 a five-year perspective, but were suspended by a new plan after three years in a rolling plan fashion.<sup>11</sup> After 1979 the NDPs have covered six-year periods, and have been published without any overlap in time, but with a mid-term review undertaken after three years. The essence of the NDPs is a description of how the government plans to allocate public funds. However, the scope of the NDPs has increased, and the recent documents have presented comprehensive reviews of the Botswana economy: the economic development in the period covered by the previous plan is presented, principal aspects of the economic strategy are outlined, and scenarios about the future are presented. Below I will focus on the role of planning and the NDPs in the economic development process. The policy-making process behind the NDPs will be elaborated in chapters 6 and 7.

Planning as an objective in itself has been emphasised continuously by the government since independence:

The Government wishes to stress its belief in the necessity of planning the social and economic development of the nation. The available resources are so few and the problems so great that only by careful planning can these resources be put to their most effective use. A rationally planned and guided economy is the objective of government policy (RoB 1968:7).

...the first ten years of Independence have seen remarkable progress...This progress would not have occurred without energetic and carefully planned Government action: the Government will continue to pursue actively interventionist economic and social policies (RoB 1977:15).

Words like “guided economy” and “interventionist” may suggest that the Botswana government has given itself an extensive and major role in the economic development process. However, although this may in some sense be correct, it has to be kept in mind that the nature of the government’s involvement in the Botswana economy has been of a different nature than those of other African states which have attempted to “guide” the domestic economy (e.g. Tanzania, and Ghana during the Nkrumah period). For example, the pivotal role of the private sector and the government’s

<sup>11</sup> The NDP published in 1968 was replaced by a new plan after two years.

intention not to put constraints on private entrepreneurs have been emphasised in all development plans presented since independence. The way the planning objectives are defined in the current development plan seems to be illustrative of the nature of development planning in the post-independence period (RoB 1991f:77): "Planning in Botswana is intended to ensure that the nation's financial, manpower and natural resources are used effectively and in accordance with national priorities." In other words, as stated in the *Planning Officers Manual* (RoB 1986:1-1): "the emphasis is on making the best possible use of the scarce resources under government's control within a mixed economy."

It should be noticed that the strategy pursued after independence has not been signified by a level of public expenditure relatively lower than that of other developing countries. On the contrary, total public spending as share of the Gross National Product (GNP) has in Botswana been in general above most African countries (World Bank 1989a:table 25). In perspective, the share has been about the same as in the Scandinavian countries, France and Italy. However, as revealed in this chapter, this does not reflect a state extensively involved in productive activities. In brief, *indicative planning* characterises the Botswana government's involvement in the economy.

The nature of the current approach to planning is rooted in the first planning efforts around independence. These efforts were largely determined by the constraints facing the planners in the early post-independence years. As the country was very poor, the planners had to consider the ordering of priorities very carefully so as to make maximal use of the scarce resources available. Hence, planning was from the outset focused on government budgets. A major objective in the first years was to increase and diversify the sources of external development aid, and this further directed the planning process towards projects (RoB 1986a). However, although a close link between the National Development Plan and the project portfolio of the development budget has remained, the plans have gradually become more sophisticated and broader in scope. The role of the plans in soliciting external aid is still important. On the other hand, the substantial growth of the revenue base has made it a major task from the mid-1970s onwards to manage public expenditures in a fashion which will not distort the macro-economic balance, i.e. avoiding accumulation of foreign debt and inflation.

The revenues generated by the mining industry, and the large share of them in the hands of the government, have upheld the crucial role of the Botswana state in the development process. A central question which arises is to what extent the plans actually serve as genuine guidelines for the implementation of the objectives decided upon by the government. The

National Development Plan has during the budgeting process been given a legal status in the sense that development projects can not be implemented without prior incorporation in the NDP and approval by the legislature (the National Assembly). However, this does not imply that all development expenditures have to be decided upon at the beginning of the six-year plan period. The planning exercise should be looked upon as a continuous process. New projects may be incorporated into the plan, and the budgetary frames can be altered, through the annual budgets, or during the budgetary year. These formal procedures all require approval by the legislature. Gasper (1990:238) characterises these mechanisms as a "system of ordered flexibility." This flexibility is demonstrated by the difference between planned and actual expenditures after the revenues from the mining industry accelerated in the late 1970s. While actual expenditures in general were lower than the level forecasted in the NDPs prior to 1978/78, the pattern has been the opposite in the recent years (RoB 1973:30; 1977:48; 1980a:34; 1985:33; 1991f:100). In other words, as the revenue situation has improved beyond what has been forecasted, the government has responded by increasing the level of expenditure. However, these increases have evidently been undertaken in a planned manner. As discussed in the sections above, the government has acted relatively consistently as the growth of expenditures has in general corresponded to the growth of government revenues. A substantial financial surplus has thus been generated (Harvey & Lewis 1990:195).

It may be seen as a paradox that a large inflow of export revenues may create serious problems for a domestic economy, even causing more harm than good, if spent wisely. Increased export revenues might, according to Hill and Mokgethi (1989:178), have affected the Botswana economy negatively by:

- (a) Appreciating the exchange rate, so that other export products are made more expensive for foreign buyers.
- (b) Raising the cost of non-tradables (e.g. services) in the domestic economy, because of increased demand created by export revenues fuelling the economy.
- (c) Leading to wage increases in the export- and public sectors, and, consequently, generating pressures to increase wages in other sectors. The latter may have a detrimental effect on employment creation, as the employers turn towards capital-intensive production techniques, or

productive investments are not made because of lack of competitiveness vis-à-vis external markets.

A concrete problem related to development spending by the government is the effects on the recurrent budget of expanding the project portfolio. In other words, by adding to the development programme one additional project, the recurrent budget has to be increased as well, not only during the year the project is initiated, but for the whole lifetime of the project, if financed mainly by public funds. If the development budget grows beyond the long-term growth of revenues, the government may be forced to increase its foreign debt, and may in a worst case be trapped in a spiralling debt problem.

The Botswana government has so far been able to avoid the problems outlined above. Harvey and Lewis (1990) relate the growth of export and manufacturing specifically to the stable exchange rate in the 1980s. The government has been successful in stabilising the growth of public expenditures. This confirms that avoiding foreign debt problems and stabilising the economic growth rate have been guiding principles in the planning efforts after the inflow of mineral revenues started (Hill & Mokgethi 1989). The mechanisms built into the planning system seem to be a major factor behind macro-economic stability. As elaborated by Hill (1991) and Harvey and Lewis (1990), the government has followed a counter-cyclical policy in the management of the foreign exchange reserves. During years of unexpected high revenues from the mineral export, public expenditures have not been automatically increased, but saved, to be spent in years with revenues below forecasted levels.

As discussed above, a main mechanism to keep the level of expenditures stable has been the annual budget. The budget may be seen as an annual updating of the NDP, and through this mechanism it has been possible to adjust the total level of public spending as the forecast of revenues has changed. However, the second half of the 1980s has demonstrated that the government is far from conservative in their spending policy. During the 1985-91 period, the actual development expenditures exceeded the originally projected level by 143 per cent. Drought-related expenditures have been estimated to account for 16 per cent of this deviation, other major factors behind the increase being adoption of new projects (18%), increased cost of existing projects (54%), and government's own expansion, especially transfers to parastatals and military spending. Accordingly the expansion of the development budget led to growth of recurrent expenditures by more than double of what had been targeted (RoB 1991f:99-102). Still, the growth of public expenditure did not imply that the

state was becoming more directly involved in the economy. The expenditure growth was mainly related to an acceleration of projects already decided upon. However, it was admitted that the effects on the recurrent budget from the increase in development spending had been underestimated, and that a budget deficit in the following year was expected (RoB 1991e:19). In the National Development Plan (NDP7) adopted in 1991 it was announced and outlined how the government intended to decelerate the rate of expenditure growth (RoB 1991f:53-56). That the government was able to cut spending if necessary was demonstrated in the early 1980s. In 1981 and 1982 the diamond export revenues declined because of changing world market prices. The government responded to this change by reducing its expenditure, and the growth of recurrent spending was zero in 1983. When the revenue situation subsequently improved, the government responded by increasing expenditure (Harvey & Lewis 1990:216). Whether or not the government will be capable of repeating this operation in the 1990s remains to be seen.

As mentioned, the development plans are not only frameworks of the expenditure programme of the government. The plan documents also explicitly outline more qualitative aspects of the development strategy. In the current development plan (NDP7), for example, a white paper titled *the Revised National Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profits* (RoB 1990b), constitutes an important point of reference for several sections of the plan. I will below present some of the policy guidelines contained in this white paper.

### **3.5 A note on Botswana's income policy**

As the title indicates, *the Revised National Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profits* refers to several central aspects of the economic development process. The white paper presents a review of the government's policy on several issues, e.g. minimum wages, low-income groups, prices on consumer goods, business licensing, housing policy and rents, training and localisation, expatriates, and how to implement such policies. I will here mainly deal with the policy on wage and salary levels, and the white paper will henceforth be referred to as the Income Policy.

The income aspect of the white paper is worth discussing for several reasons. First, the policy paper should be seen as a political statement. It relates to the role of the state vis-à-vis the private sector, and to the role of the government as an employer. The latter is illustrated by a strike in 1991 by blue-collar workers in the public sector, which was related to the wage policy decided upon in the white paper. In chapter 5 I will use this incident



to illustrate the strength of civil society in Botswana. Second, the political nature of the white paper makes it interesting in terms of distribution of influence outside and within the Botswana state. The policy-making process behind the white paper will therefore be analysed in chapter 6.

The first Income Policy was presented by the Botswana government in 1972, but some of its substance had been adopted as policy already in the first years after independence. A major objective had been to change the public sector salary structure inherited from the colonial rulers. This structure represented wide inequalities in wage levels within the public sector. The government announced a policy of keeping the upper levels stable, while raising the salaries of junior employees (RoB 1968:10). The ratio between the highest and lowest levels consequently decreased from 36:1 to 13:1 between 1966 and 1974 (Harvey & Lewis 1990:293). The prospering economy in the early 1970s presented new challenges to the government as regards income policy. The modern sector of the Botswana economy was very small, and the government was the largest employer. The wage levels decided upon in the public sector would therefore set a standard and affect the private sector.

In a report prior to the 1972 Income Policy, it was set out how the government's wage policy decisions might affect several aspects of the economy: the pattern of income distribution, the volume of investments, the level of employment, and the magnitude of rural-urban employment (Ghai 1970:6). A tension between two concerns was reflected in the policy subsequently adopted (RoB 1972). On the one hand, it was decided to establish a legal minimum wage for unskilled workers within the public sector, parastatals, and within some main private sub-sectors, ostensibly to protect the workers. The wages for skilled workers within the public sector would be decided annually by the government, and the private sector was expected to adhere to the levels set by the government. The other concern underlying the Income Policy was an awareness of the detrimental effects uncontrolled wage increases might have on employment growth, and on urban-rural differences. It had already been stated in the development plan presented in 1970 that the wage levels in the mineral industry and in the public sector should be restrained (RoB 1970:13). This may explain why the government established institutions, i.e. Salary Review Commissions and the Wages Policy Committee (WPC), to monitor and decide upon wage levels. The annual review of wages by the WPC covered some 30 to 40 per cent of non-government employees between 1974 and 1980 (Harvey & Lewis 1990:295). The real wages in sectors covered by the Income Policy had been only modestly increased. A guideline for the nominal increases had mainly been the changes in the cost of living. Although a stated

objective had been that the minimum wage should reflect the average rural income, parity with rural income had in reality not been adhered to (RoB 1990a). The policy to compress the differences between the highest and lowest wage levels was continued until the end of the 1980s; the ratio was 16:1 in 1987 (Harvey & Lewis 1990:293). These observations reveal that the Botswana government to a certain extent has been able to “coach” the development of the wage levels, and that it has followed a coherent policy. However, beyond enforcing minimum wages, the government has in the 1980s become less interventionist in deciding the wage levels in the private sector. As the employment growth in the private sector has been faster than in the public sector, the ability of the government to control the general wage levels has been reduced (RoB 1990a:48).

The expanding private sector was probably one main reason why the government decided to review its income policy in 1989. As mentioned above, the wage differentials within the public sector had consciously been compressed. This implied, for example, that the salaries of senior professionals within the public administration remained stagnant throughout the 1980s (RoB 1990a:50). In the private sector, on the other hand, the salary levels for senior professionals and employees with sought-after skills have in general increased well above their counterparts in the public sector. Consequently, the public sector experienced an exodus of personnel towards the private sector (RoB 1990a:60). Harvey and Lewis (1990:293) argue further that a widening wage gap between local and expatriate employees also increased the pressure for higher incomes at the senior level within the public sector.

The revised Income Policy approved by the National Assembly in 1990 entails a liberalisation. It was announced that the policy toward licensing, restrictions on shop hours and price controls would be eased. The government rejected a recommendation made by the commission which had reviewed the existing policy to introduce a uniform minimum wage to all Botswana employees. Arguing that “the level of minimum wages affects the competitive ability of local producers”, the government decided that the level of the minimum wage should be allowed to differ across various sectors (RoB 1990c:9). The criteria underlying the individual minimum wages should be both the cost of living, and the ability of the individual category of employers to pay. This differentiation was further reflected in the emphasis on market forces to determine the individual wage levels. The government announced that collective bargaining between the employers and employees should in the future be the main mechanism for deciding wage levels in the private sector. The rationale behind this “withdrawal” of the state, compared to the interventionist policy pursued since 1972, was

that greater reliance on market forces was now feasible because the private sector had become more effective (RoB 1991f:86).

The government began in the late 1980s to decompress the salary differentials between its own employees. This policy was formalised by the new income policy in 1990. It was further decided to let the parastatals become more autonomous in determining their own wage scales. The effects of the new Income Policy on the government sector were soon observed by an increase of the total salary bill for central government by 18.7 per cent (*Mmegi*, 14-20 December 1990, p.3). This reflected increased salaries for the middle and senior levels (RoB 1990c:26). This widening of the gap between the highest and lowest paid government employees did not pass unnoticed by the latter group. The trade union of central government and parastatal manual workers demanded in 1991 a 154 per cent wage increase. Although obviously an unrealistic demand, it has to be viewed as a serious signal of dissatisfaction with the existing wage levels. This was confirmed by the dramatic strike which ensued when the demand was turned down. The trade union argued that the actual cost of living was far above the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) calculated by the government. The PDL constituted a reference point for the wages offered by the government to manual workers. It was during my stay in Botswana, September — December 1991, commonly recognised that an income reflecting the PDL (148 Pula in 1991), provides for a very low standard of living, especially if the employees have several dependants. I will argue therefore that the wage demand was to some extent justified, when seen from the point of view of the manual workers. However, considering the government's definite rejection of the claim, and resolute response to the strike which followed, the incident also illustrates that the government consciously wants to keep the wage level of manual workers low. Macro-economic deliberations are apparently justifying this stance in the eyes of the government. A wage increase within the public sector would certainly spread to the private sector. This might further negatively affect the general growth of the economy and the creation of new jobs; objectives which seemingly are fundamental and unalterable in the economic strategy of the Botswana government.

### **3.6 Botswana's development strategy in retrospect**

When comparing the current development plan and the plan presented after the mineral prospects had been unearthed in the late 1960s, it is striking how similar the "Strategy for Development" sections appear to be. The actual strategy pursued also reveals a coherence in the approach to

development by the Botswana government, both across sectors and over time. The approach may briefly be characterised as a capitalist mineral-led growth strategy with development planning as a facilitator.<sup>12</sup> Although not all Botswana have equally benefited from the economic growth after independence, the development strategy has been a success in terms of macro-economic stability. As the preceding pages have shown, the task of realising the development strategy has been approached step by step by the political rulers in Botswana. At the same time, however, I will argue, the major principles underlying the strategy were decided upon in the early days prior to and soon after independence.

The economy in Botswana has remained open, both in terms of trade policy and an accommodating attitude towards foreign investors. This openness was introduced during the colonial period by virtue of the protectorate's geo-political position, and institutionalised by the customs union agreement with South Africa. Botswana's small domestic market and meagre production capacity at independence seem to be major reasons why a more protectionist policy has not been seen as an option. However, openness should also be looked upon as part of a conscious policy not to intervene in the private sector. The maintenance of such openness is thus seen as a political choice by the Botswana rulers.

To facilitate growth of the private sector has been an important component of the economic strategy through the post-independence period. This has been repeatedly stated in government documents, and reflected in the conscious policy to limit the involvement of the state in directly productive activities. Considering the substantial funds at the disposal of the government, the presence of state-owned enterprises is strikingly modest, compared to many other developing countries. The government has carried through its policy of creating an enabling environment for private entrepreneurs. Financial support for the private sector has been substantial, especially in the 1980s. However, it has been argued that the growth of the private sector might have taken place even without government funding. Although the rural sector to some extent was given attention in the efforts to diversify the economy, manufacturing growth occurred in the urban sector. In other words, the development strategy has been more successful in the urban sector than in rural areas. At the beginning of the 1990s the government has reiterated that the private sector and market forces will continue to be the many elements in its development strategy.

<sup>12</sup> In his analysis of Botswana's industry policy, Kaplinsky (1991:167) concludes that the policy has in general remained within the "neo-liberal paradigm" in contrast to the more interventionist "structuralist" approach.

The approach to rural development has in general been the same as to the urban sector. However, less public funds have been spent on the former, despite the fact that the majority of the population lives in rural areas. The development efforts have mainly been directed to provision of social services and development of physical infrastructure. Individual entrepreneurs have been assigned the main responsibility for non-farm employment, and the government has mainly limited its role to provision of financial support. The latter has also been the main device in efforts to modernise non-cattle agriculture. I have shown that this approach has been ineffective in generating rural development. Lack of employment opportunities in the rural sector has remained a problem, and modernisation of the agricultural sector has been insignificant.

I do not disclaim that the peaceful transfer of power from the colonial rulers makes it reasonable to believe that the policy of the former masters had a bearing on the "ideological" orientation of the independent government, and further more, that the budgetary dependence on UK in the initial years after independence established guiding principles in the budgetary process which basically remain today. However, the situation changed significantly when Botswana attained financial independence in the early 1970s, and the economy increasingly became fuelled by revenues from the mineral sector. The current strategy should be looked upon as a deliberate choice of the BDP government which has remained in power continuously after independence. Although Botswana has pursued a coherent strategy, flexibility and gradualism have characterised the choice of economic policies. Pragmatism in terms of adjusting policies and priorities to objective conditions has apparently been one hallmark of realism found in Botswana's policy choices. However, pragmatism may alternatively be seen as adjusting policies and priorities to political concerns. This does not imply that the overall principles of an economic strategy will be ignored, but may, for example, alter somewhat the ordering of priorities in certain conjunctions. For instance, the sudden increase in spending on infrastructure and social services in the rural areas in 1974 was no doubt related to the general election in the very same year. The introduction of a financial support scheme to small-scale enterprises in the early 1980s may furthermore be seen as primarily a political response. The substantial transfers to arable agriculture prior to the 1989 election constitutes another example of political pragmatism. As Picard (1987) and Parson (1984) argue, the policy towards the cattle sector has largely been one of accommodating economic elites in Botswana society. It is reasonable to believe that political concerns have somehow been intervening factors in several other development activities undertaken by the government.

However, the relative coherence of the development strategy suggests that the political dimension has not been too dominant, and less present in some central aspects of the development strategy than in others. The unequal distribution of income may be related to the influence of economic elites, as demonstrated, for example, by the favouring of cattle owners. Moreover, the persistence of rural poverty and unemployment seems to support Lipton's (1978) assertion that these issues have not been at the forefront of the political agenda. Achievements in terms of provision of social services and development of infrastructure may also attest to the government having been successful in creating "political acquiescence" (Picard 1987:232). However, it is still reasonable to expect that tensions must exist below the surface. Lipton (1978) forecasted that an increased level of urbanisation and literacy in the wake of economic development would create a growing awareness of structural deficiencies. The government has, however, recently signalled that any direct assault on the poverty problem is not to be expected. The revised Income Policy and the current development plan demonstrate that the government intends in the future to further limit its intervention in the economy. It has been said explicitly that policies on social welfare will come second to facilitating productive activities (RoB 1990b:16).

The Botswana government has given much attention to macro economic management, which is an important aspect of development planning. It was shown above that a major objective in the planning efforts has been to keep the growth of expenditures within the growth of revenues. The achievement of this objective in general, coupled with sound macro economic management, suggests that the planning exercise is less influenced by short-term political intervention. Botswana has succeeded with its efforts to apply development planning as a tool within the context of a capitalist economy. A technocratic approach seems partly to lie behind development planning. On the other hand, the essence of development planning is allocation of funds, and the possibility of political interference has to be kept in mind. For example, the ARAP programme was prolonged partly for political reasons. However, this move was accompanied by growing revenues from mineral exports, and it was subsequently demonstrated that the government was highly efficient in terminating these generous subsidies. The government demonstrated such a strength also in the early 1980s when public spending effectively was reduced as a response to falling revenues. A kind of dualism appears to be present in Botswana decision-making. On the one hand, policy choices are to some extent led by political concerns. Technocratic assessments, on the other hand, are seemingly given due

attention as well, and these keep policy choices and the volume of public spending within the confines of macro-economic objectives.

The Botswana government and its economic strategy has been unable to effectively tackle the problem of rural poverty and insufficient employment opportunities. This may reflect a lack of capacity in devoting attention to the multiplicity of development needs present in the post-independence period. As policy documents (i.e. the development plans) reveal that the government is aware of the problems, one may ask why it has not responded more effectively. A reluctance of the political rulers to let the public sector become directly involved in productive activities seems to be one explanation. A *society-centred* approach might, for example, further reveal that the power of rural economic elites works against structural reforms needed for rural development. The political power of such elites may thus be an obstacle to rural development (Picard 1987). On the other hand, although the chosen development strategy deliberately limits the direct participation of the state in the development process, one may argue that more effective policies might be chosen, even within this framework. As Kaplinsky (1991) has argued, government assistance beyond financial support is needed to mobilise indigenous entrepreneurs. Marketing, administrative assistance, and technological development are mentioned as issues whereby the state may further foster economic diversification.

Mechanisms in the policy-making structure may hinder feasible approaches for rural development to evolve. One shortcoming seems linked to the administrative framework and the division of tasks among the ministries (Lipton 1978). The planning process at large may also become a factor which stultifies the approach towards development. As Faaland (1982:13) warns, development planning may become an "exercise in extrapolation." The abundance of financial resources represents a particular challenge to the Botswana policy-makers, compared to the situation in poorer countries. Faaland argues that an "imaginative" approach is needed. Rural underdevelopment may thus be related to a conservative nature of governance in Botswana.

As the presentation of the National Development Plans regularly brings the continuous planning process to the surface, the development plan may be looked upon as an important "institution" in the political system. The plans are debated and approved by the National Assembly. The presentation of the plans to the public exposes the government to scrutiny. In other words, the plans may be seen as a mechanism for making the political rulers accountable to their constituents. These issues figure prominently when the role of elected politicians in economic policy-making is discussed in the subsequent chapters.

## 4. The Botswana state: A special case?

The advantageous financial situation of the Botswana state has provided a policy instrument not available to most other African states. However, the utilisation of such an advantage requires a committed government and an effective administrative apparatus. If wrongly used, the diamond wealth might have generated both political and economic instability. It was in the preceding chapter revealed that the Botswana government has been far more successful in its contribution to economic development than most other African countries. As elaborated in chapter 2, the relationship between the state and society, the availability of policy instruments, and organisational factors are important determinants for the development strength of a state. The state-society aspect of Botswana politics will be analysed in the subsequent chapters, but I will here briefly introduce some particular features of the Botswana state.

It was argued in chapter 2 that the patron-client dimension within the "African state" has been detrimental for economic development. A political rationale obliging political rulers to distribute patronage in exchange for political support is one important *raison d'être* for patrimonialism. It may be argued that patron-client relationships between the political rulers and the population in Botswana are present as well. Examples were given above on how allocation of public funds may have a political motive. However, this type of public spending is fundamentally different from that undertaken in other African countries. The level of public spending is controlled by the budget process, and exposed to public scrutiny. Patronage is usually distributed in the form of development programmes (i.e. provision of public services), or subsidies distributed openly and subject to formal criteria. Although the public sector is large in Botswana, this has not been related to a political rationale of making means for social control available to the political rulers. The bureaucracy has grown mainly because of functional needs, not because the political rulers needed jobs (patronage) to distribute. Although the activities of the government have been constrained by shortage of skilled manpower (Harvey & Lewis 1990:217), this limitation has not led to expansive staffing of unqualified personnel. The growth of the bureaucracy has been modest. The deliberate decision to keep the number of parastatals low further demonstrates that the political rulers have



not felt a need to expand the public sector out of a need to "buy" political support.

Constraints put on the private sector, e.g. a rigid licensing system, may be seen as part of a patron-client order. In Botswana the government has consciously pursued an accommodating policy towards the private sector, and has repeatedly stated that it will avoid unnecessary regulations (e.g. RoB 1982b:10 & 1990c:13). In other words, the Botswana government has neither used regulations and licences to constrain the development of a private sector which might challenge its dominance, nor to make patronage available. The development of the private sector has probably been an important reason why the decay of the state as an institution in other African countries has not been paralleled in Botswana. The state has been an important employer, and an important avenue for the career of the individual educated Motswana. However, the recent problems concerning an exodus of skilled personnel from public institutions to better paid employment in the private sector demonstrate that the state is not the only road to personal prosperity. Cattle rearing has since independence been a major source of personal wealth. The involvement of both civil servants and politicians in this activity seems to be a major reason why the development of the livestock sector has been given so much attention by the government (Picard 1987). This demonstrates a pattern contrary to many other African countries, where a deteriorating agricultural sector has reinforced the important role of the state as a source of personal prosperity.

Anecdotal evidence gathered during my fieldwork suggests that the Botswana politicians and civil servants take advantage of their positions to promote their own or associates' activities outside the public sphere. However, the extent of such activities seemingly does not represent a penetration of state institutions to the extent found in other African countries. Corruption, in terms of the need to pay bribes for public services, licences, permits etc., does not seem to be widespread, and is not an obstacle to the development of the private sector. However, misuse of the position as civil servant or politician is not totally absent in Botswana. The government allowed in 1982 public officers to participate in private sector activities (RoB 1982b:15). This has apparently opened up for the possibility of individual public servants, as well as politicians, benefiting from exclusive access to information concerning his/her specific activity; they can thus influence relevant decisions (e.g. provision of licences, appraising of tenders, and deciding government regulated prices on certain goods). Although it was also decided in 1982 that both public officers and ministers should register their economic interests (RoB 1982b:16), the government has apparently not yet made any efforts to make such activities subject to

public scrutiny. When I presented this issue to MPs, the response was ambivalent; some feared that corruption might become a more serious problem and called for more openness, others clearly expressed that private sector involvement "has to be looked upon as a private matter."

In December 1991 a commission of inquiry presented President Masire with a report dealing with allegations of non-legal transfers of land in the outskirts of the capital (RoB 1992).<sup>13</sup> In the wake of the report it was revealed that the Vice-President and one minister had taken advantage of their positions to acquire land by overriding local authorities, and one minister allegedly had been involved in corruption concerning tenders (*Mmegi* 6-12 March 1992). Consequently, the three cabinet members had to resign. The affair confirms that corruption and/or exploitation of one's position as politician or public official has become a problem in Botswana. However, the decision to make a commission of inquiry investigate the irregularities, the publication of the report, and the handling of the affair by the president suggest that the political rulers have become attentive to the problem, and are prepared to take drastic steps against it.

Despite the irregularities discussed above, Charlton (1991) seems to be right in characterising the public administration in Botswana as a bureaucracy in a Weberian sense. Gulhati (1990a:29) claims that the policy makers in Botswana feel a "strong commitment to rational decision-making." Recruitment into the civil service is based to a large extent on merit rather than personal connections. Salaries and promotions are regulated by defined guidelines. The authority to employ and promote is centralised in the Directorate of Personnel and the Manpower Planning Unit in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (Raphaeli et al. 1984:69). The budgetary process is regulated by the Finance and Audit Act, and practice demonstrates that formal procedure is adhered to (Raphaeli et al. 1984:3). The transfer of public funds to the private sector, i.e. through development programmes like the FAP and ARAP schemes, is mainly based on formal criteria and not arbitrarily distributed in accordance with personal connections and/or bribery.

Institutional coherence was above pointed to as an important factor for government efficiency and capacity to insulate itself from societal pressures. Several scholars emphasise the core-position of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) in the Botswana bureaucracy. As Colclough and McCarthy (1980:91) write: "the sectoral executive ministries found that they could exercise little initiative without [the MFDPs] approval." The

<sup>13</sup> A similar report concerning politicians taking advantage of their position to benefit from a development programme was presented in 1980 (RoB 1980b).

authors further claim that the ministry is allotted the best qualified staff. According to Gasper (1990:230), only the Ministry of Agriculture manages to achieve a certain degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the MFDP. The present strength of the MFDP is not only reflected in the organisational set-up; the fact that Quett Masire after independence both headed the MFDP and served as Vice President, has apparently also caused the MFDP to develop as a stronghold in the bureaucracy. After becoming president in 1980, Masire has been in the position to mitigate any conflicts emerging between the line ministries and his former bastion. In chapters 6 and 7 I will pursue the argument further that the MFDP constitutes a powerful core in policy-making.

A general problem of policy-making in African countries, according to Gulhati (1990a/b), seems to be that the process is confined to a narrow circle, often dominated by an autocratic powerholder, and civil servants being subject to arbitrary political rule. In Botswana, Gulhati (1990a:29) claims that the policy circle is "much more institutionalised", and confidence and consultation are key elements in the relationship between the politicians and the bureaucrats. The bureaucracy has by various authors been characterised as a powerful actor in Botswana policy-making (Børhaug 1992a; Gunderson 1970; Picard 1987). However, Gasper (1990:228) underscores that: "The right to dispose remains with the politicians. They override the civil servants when they feel fundamental political or economic interests are at stake." It was demonstrated above that a political dimension has been overtly present in several policy initiatives. When discussing policy-making processes more specifically in chapters 6 and 7, I will thus assume that, although the bureaucracy is powerful, the ministers are capable of exercising political leadership. An important question to discuss is to what extent politicians in the legislature provide input to the policy-making, and how the politicians are able to control or make the bureaucrats accountable.

One dimension which apparently acts as a bridge between the political and administrative spheres is the sharing of economic interests by the political and bureaucratic elites. Both politicians and civil servants have been involved in the livestock sector, and both groups are increasingly participating in economic activities in the modern, predominantly urban, sector. The harmonious relationship between the political and bureaucratic elite may further be explained by the fact that many politicians have formerly been employed in the civil service. My own research revealed that at least twelve of the sixteen cabinet members in 1991 had prior experience as civil servants, and in addition six of the twenty non-cabinet MPs of the ruling party had such experience.

What may explain this alleged balance between political leadership and administrative efficiency? I have already argued that the development of the private sector as an alternative path of personal prosperity partly explains why the Botswana state has not fallen into decay. I will here briefly present some preliminary explanations for the healthy administrative structure. These, together with the observations made above, should be looked upon as assumptions underpinning the further analysis.

The transfer to independence in Botswana was a peaceful process. As revealed in the preceding chapter, modest promises about the future were made in the political programme of the politicians who gained power in the 1960s. The initial development plans presented to the public demonstrated that Seretse Khama's government did not encourage unrealistic expectations. The government stated from the outset that the private sector was assigned an important role in employment creation. Morrison seems to be right in relating the roles assumed by the public and the private sectors to the configuration of political and economic elites dominating the independence process. The situation, he writes (1987:xii), was characterised by "an accommodationist form of elite politics which bridged public and private spheres...".

It was argued in chapter 2 that the administrative structures inherited from the colonial rulers in several respects were ineffective as instruments for development, and disproportionately large compared to society-centred forces, which might have countervailed their dominance. The private sector seems to have represented such a balancing force in Botswana. However, the administrative inheritance from the protectorate period was also different in Botswana as compared to other former colonies. The colonial neglect and insignificant physical presence did imply less administrative development (Harvey & Lewis 1990). The administrative centre of the protectorate had been located in South Africa, and consequently, colonialism, in terms of physical presence, had less direct bearing on the society in general, and put less leverage on the institutions of the post-independent state; as Harvey and Lewis write (1990:26):

The colonial attitudes, the hierarchies based on status in the civil service, the large residences for senior officials, the bands of government clerks who lorded it over their fellow citizens whom they were supposed to serve — these residual effects of a colonial era were also absent in Botswana, as was any tradition of government intervention in the economy.

The absence of a large corps of expatriate colonial administrators seems partly to explain an accommodating attitude to foreign advisors after

independence. The shortage of educated Batswana required the government to employ foreigners in key positions. Batswana civil servants filled only one-fourth of the senior posts in 1966, but the share had increased to three-fourths by the early 1980s (Raphaeli et al. 1984:5). However, Gulhati (1990:30) still claims that the continued presence of expatriates in the civil-service has strengthened the policy process. Isaksen (1981) argues that expatriate influence has been substantial, especially in the MFDP and its associate, the Bank of Botswana. Although the expatriates contribute to efficient decision making, their presence may have dysfunctional effects as well. The differences in salaries between the local and expatriate civil servants have, for example, led to pressures from the former group (see section 3.5). Isaksen (1981:37) claims that the presence of expatriates in key positions has fostered a conservative attitude to public spending. The fact that the individual expatriate is engaged for only a brief period (two to four years), and the imperative to leave Botswana with a good testimony, makes the expatriate avoid risks and "experimentative development policies."

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I have argued above that the achievements of the Botswana government reflect a strong state compared to its counterparts in many other African countries. Three preliminary explanations for this strength have so far emerged:

- (a) The substantial financial means available represents a policy instrument usually absent in other developing countries.
- (b) Botswana has a far more effective bureaucracy, adherent to rational policy-making, than most other African states.
- (c) Patron-client relationships which may penetrate the institutions of the state, and thus frustrate effective policy-making and implementation, have not become a major problem in Botswana.

An argument to be elaborated in the subsequent chapters is that the strength of the Botswana state is partly explained by low pressure from the opposition, the legislature in general and a weak civil society, which thus facilitate insulation of the key policy-makers found in the institutions of the government.

A discussion about the political development in Botswana and the strength of civil society will be presented in the next chapter. I will especially focus on the role of the elections, explanations for the party preferences of the voters, and the position of the opposition. In other words, the emphasis will be on what kind of mandate the politicians are given when elected. In chapter 6 and 7 I will address the issues of how able the politicians are to influence the policy-making through the National Assembly, and to what extent organised interests groups are given access to the decision-making arena.

## 5. Parties, elections and civil society

It was concluded in chapter 3 that continuity characterises the economic development strategy pursued in Botswana after independence. This seems to reflect a high level of political stability in the post-independence period. In this chapter I will discuss the political development which has taken place after the democratic institutions were introduced in the 1960s. The main attention will be given to politics at the national level and the evolution and functioning of the party system. The role of organised economic interest groups and the media will also be discussed. Underlying the discussion is a belief that an analysis of the political development may somehow uncover the capabilities of society-centred forces, and what kind of expectations the constituents hold about their elected representatives. One important question should be asked: does the outcome of the elections reflect genuine support for the development strategy of the government? In other words, do legal-rational principles prevail or is legitimacy still based on “traditionalism” and stability reliant on the authority exercised by the chiefs and headmen?

### 5.1 The emergence of a party system

Holm and Molutsi (1990a) argue that the majority of the Batswana were on the eve of independence unprepared for liberal democracy. The traditional decision-making forum, *the kgotla*, did not represent any genuine democratic tradition. This institution was mainly a vehicle to mobilise public support for decisions already made by the community's political elite. Women, younger males, and minority groups were left outside the *kgotla* discussions, and if there was any opposition, it was bound to be cautious. Ngcongco (1989), on the other hand, underscores the democratic nature of the traditional Tswana polity. Leaving this debate aside, at least it seems correct to say that the political system embracing parties and elections which was adopted immediately before independence in 1966 introduced novel institutional mechanisms upon which to base legitimacy and authority.

As outlined in the chapter 1, nationalism and the struggle for independence did not surface in Bechuanaland until the late 1950s. The first political party to emerge was the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party (BFPF), founded in 1959. However, the BFPF was never able to mobilise any large number of Batswana, and vanished in 1962, after an unsuccessful attempt the previous year to rename itself "the Liberal Party".<sup>14</sup>

The first party which led to any political mobilisation was the Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP), founded in 1960. The founders of the BPP have been described as well educated and having experience from the nationalist movements in South Africa: the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). The BPP found support mainly in the most urban areas, Francistown and Lobatse.<sup>15</sup>

One reason why the BPP did not receive any major support in the rural areas was the absence of links to the traditional power structure (i.e. the chiefs and their headmen). However, as emphasised by Nengwekhulu (1979), the "radical" policies expressed by the BPP frightened the colonial administration and the local white population. There have been claims that the colonial rulers put pressure on the chiefs to suppress BPP activity in the rural areas, where the majority of the population lived. Nengwekhulu further relates the lack of support to a general low level of political consciousness of the peasant community. By 1964 the BPP had become fragmented into three factions, each associated with the three founders of the party: BPP (Motsetse), BPP(Matante) and BPP(Mpho). The latter formed that same year the Bechuanaland Independence Party (BIP). The major reason for this division is unclear, but a combination of three factors seems to have been decisive: personality clashes, accusation of embezzlement of party funds and property, and the transfer of the conflict between the ANC and the PAC in South Africa to Botswana politics.

The Bechuanaland Democratic Party (BDP), which has gained a dominant role in Botswana politics, was formed in 1962. Various scholars seem to agree that the initial success of Seretse Khama and the BDP was ensured by the support of four influential groups: traditional authorities, the educated elite, large cattle owners (including European settlers), and the colonial administration. Both Nengwekhulu (1979) and Picard (1987)

<sup>14</sup> Background information for this historical outline has mainly been found in Gunderson 1970; Holm 1988; Nengwekhulu 1979; Parson 1990; Picard 1987; Polhemus 1983; Tlou & Campbell 1984.

<sup>15</sup> The present capital, Gaborone, was in the early 1960s still only a village (see table 3.1 in chapter 3).



attribute the arrival of the BDP partly as a reaction to the initial success of the BPP. The radicalism, Pan-Africanism and links to the ANC and the PAC were perceived as something "alien", not only by the chiefs and the colonialists, but also by a segment of the Bechuanaland establishment, which was represented in political bodies established by the colonial rulers; i.e. the African Advisory Council and the Legislative Council. The latter should especially be noted because the position of the BDP founders in the pre-independence political institutions is an important premise for the "administrative state" thesis put forward by Gunderson (1970:277), an issue to which I will return in chapter 6 and 7. Briefly, it is suggested that the support given by the colonial administration to the BDP set a pattern for administrative-party cooperation in Bechuanaland and later in Botswana.

Gunderson argues that the colonial administration in the years prior to independence had started to encourage the more modernist minded segments of the African establishment, the "new men" (Gunderson 1970:273).<sup>16</sup>

...it seems that from this point the colonial administration had turned away not only from the chiefs but also from the Europeans. It had been with those two elements which the colonial administration sought to cooperate during the colonial era. But as self-government and independence became possibilities the British cast their lot with the non-traditional oriented Africans who were also oriented towards British values and who formed the nucleus of the African element on the Legislative Council.

The "new men" were a group in society constituted by citizens who were anti-traditional, in the sense that they wanted to reduce the power of the chiefs, and anti-colonial, although they represented a more cooperative attitude towards the British colonial rulers than the pan-Africanism expressed by the BPP.

In 1963 the transition to independence had gained momentum with a conference and an announcement by the colonial rulers that internal self-government would be granted in 1965, and that a Legislative Assembly should be established. The new Assembly was to be constituted by thirty-two members elected from single-member constituencies, four nominated members, and two government officials. No special arrangements were made for the European citizens, and the chiefs were "relegated" to a House of Chiefs with power only related to issues of tribal concern. The BDP

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that Gunderson (1970) associates this term with the BDP founders, while Picard (1987) relates it generally to the emerging group of more educated citizens, and those working at the clerical-level of the colonial administration.

captured 81 per cent of the votes and twenty-eight of the seats in the election held in 1965, while the BPP gained three seats.<sup>17</sup> Although they received 4.6 per cent of the votes, the BIP gained no seats (Gunderson 1970:278). The BDP formed after the election the first indigenous government, with Seretse Khama as its Prime Minister.

Various factors explain the overwhelming support for the BDP. In addition to the backing from the colonial rulers and other influential groups, the loyalty to Seretse Khama from the majority of the population living in the rural areas has been emphasised. The controversy caused by Seretse Khama's marriage to a British woman seems to have generated support for the BDP leader throughout Bechuanaland (see chapter 1). Although Khama renounced his claims to the chieftaincy of the largest tribe in Bechuanaland, both at his return from six years of forced exile in 1956, and again in 1963, he continued to hold traditional legitimacy. Gunderson even claims that "the peasants were told that a vote for Khama was a vote to recognize him as chief of all the Tswana" (1970:347). Picard (1987) further argues that the favouring of the BDP by the colonial administrators was demonstrated in the election campaign in 1965. All parties but the BDP were closely watched by the colonial administrators, and Picard claims that the chiefs were directly advised to support the BDP.

The role of the traditional power structure, especially the position of the chiefs, has been an important dimension in Botswana politics both throughout the colonial period, during the transition, and remains today a factor of concern for the central government (Gunderson 1970; Molutsi & Tsie, n.d.; Parson 1990). The BDP's initial success could partly be ascribed to the support from the chiefs; if not active cooperation — at least their nominal endorsement at the election. The relationship between the BDP rulers and the chiefs may be seen as a paradox. The BDP rulers recognised that the majority of the rural population, the peasants, remained voluntarily obedient to the chiefs, and the BDP was thus dependent on the support from these. They introduced, on the other hand, measures to neutralise the power traditionally exercised by the chiefs. Gunderson (1970:286) emphasises especially the necessity to eliminate the chiefs' power "to compete for authority to allocate resources..." At the national level the chiefs were delegated only "symbolic" power in the House of Chiefs. At the local level their power became subject to the constitution, and various institutional arrangements were introduced to take care of the tasks formerly

<sup>17</sup> Two factions of the BPP had put forward candidates in this election. The Matante faction won all three representatives, while the Motsetse affiliates obtained only 377 votes (Wiseman 1990:table 4-1).

undertaken by the chiefs and their headmen. The instalment of District Councils, with the majority of the members elected, took away most of the formal decision-making power of the chiefs and the *kgotlas*. The Councils were assigned tasks which earlier were responsibilities of the chiefs, e.g. primary schools, maintenance of public water supplies, rural roads, licensing private businesses, and assisting in the implementation of various development projects (Holm 1988). The chiefs' traditional rights to allocate tribal lands were transferred to local Land Boards, which were supervised by the central government. The system of District Commissioners introduced during the colonial period was maintained, with the Commissioner to serve as the "field link" between the central government and the District Council, and as a supervisor of the activities of the chiefs (Gunderson 1970).

Although the chiefs initially and during the post-colonial period have expressed dissatisfaction with their "relegated" position, they seem quietly to have accepted the changes. However, Picard (1987:151) claims that the chiefs have retained an important position at the district level:

With party branches and District Councils not yet viable as local organs of influence, the traditional authorities as a potential political opposition group remain a potent, if still muted, force to be reckoned with. It is easier to strip the chiefs of their power than to deprive them of their influence.

After independence was attained in 1966, the cabinet and the representative assembly elected in 1965 continued until a new election was held in 1969. The new constitution abolished the Prime Minister post and Seretse Khama now assumed the title of President. A new party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), contested seats in the 1969 election. Various authors have claimed that the formation of the BNF was an attempt to reconcile the opposition parties: the BIP and the different factions within the BPP (Nengwekhulu 1979; Parson 1990; Picard 1987). One of the main promoters of the party, Dr. Kenneth Koma, had prior to the 1965 election unsuccessfully tried to mediate between the opposing divisions. Discussions about forming a united front took place soon after the election, but the leadership of the opposition parties (the BPP and the BIP) were not enthusiastic about the idea (Parson 1990). The BNF which materialised in October 1965 thus became no umbrella for the opposition. Consequently, the party ended up in the 1969 election competing for seats with the BIP or the BPP, or both, in several constituencies. These three opposition parties have until today remained separate (see table 5.1).

By its socialist rhetoric, the BNF clearly defined itself to the left of the BDP. The party strongly criticised the BDP rulers for its “cooperative” relationship with the former colonial rulers, portraying the BDP government as “a black pro-colonist government” (BNF 1966:1). It is a paradox that the BNF entered an alliance with a former chief of one of the major tribes soon after the founding of the party. Chief Bathoen II resigned his chieftainship because he was dissatisfied with the BDP’s policy towards the traditional authorities, and wanted to participate in politics. He joined the BNF, and was even put forward as the party’s presidential candidate. Polhemus (1983:408) applies the term “a schizoid alliance” to characterise this relationship between the radical elements of the party and the former chief, who to a large extent kept his traditional authority. The BNF went as such to the polls in 1969 with a rather opportunistic strategy. According to Picard (1987:152): “The party’s goal was to appeal to the left in the cities and the right in the rural areas, in effect outflanking the BDP in both political directions.”

Gunderson (1970) describes the socio-economic base of the BNF at the 1969 election as constituted by: urban African labourers, lower level African civil servants, and traditional rulers and rural peasants in Bathoen’s tribal reserve. However, the main credit for the three seats won by the BNF in the 1969 election could be ascribed the latter group, as these were gained by Bathoen and two other BNF candidates in constituencies located in the ex-chief’s tribal homeland. This confirms the importance of the chiefs as “mobilisers” at the elections. There was a power struggle within the BNF after the election, and Bathoen replaced Dr Koma as the party’s president. Although some radical elements left the party, Koma maintained an important position as Vice President (Polhemus 1983). The BNF has today become the most important opposition party. I will return to a discussion of the electoral bases of the BDP and the BNF below.

## **5.2 Elections and parties in the post-independence period**

The post-independence period in Botswana has been characterised by a political stability which is unique compared to all other African states. Although stable, it is reasonable to expect that some changes of the political context must have taken place. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss changes at the micro level, for example to what extent democratic values have become manifest in the individual Motswana.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Glorinah Somolekae (1989) provides a brief, but well documented analysis on this issue.

However, a point of departure in more general terms is the supposition that the regular elections and the continuous participation of opposition parties demonstrate that a democratic institutional framework (elections, parties, the legislature etc.), was on its way to becoming consolidated as the 1990s commenced.

Table 5.1  
Election results: Support for the parties in per cent, and seats won  
(in brackets)

Party/Election year	1969	1974	1979	1984*	1989
Botswana Democratic Party	68.3% (24)	76.6% (27)	75.2% (29)	67.9% (28)	64.8% (31)
Botswana National Front	13.5% (3)	11.5 % (2)	13.0% (2)	20.6% (5)	27.0% (3)
Botswana Independence Party	6.0% (1)	4.8% (1)	4.2% (0)	3.2% (0)	2.4% (0)
Botswana People's Party	12.1% (3)	6.6% (2)	7.4% (1)	6.6% (1)	4.3% (0)
Botswana Progressive Union				1.3% (0)	0.9% (0)
Botswana Freedom Party					0.5% (0)
Botswana Labour Party					0.02% (0)
Total no. of votes	76,858	64,011	134,496	227,032	250,487

\* Figures adjusted for the results of the by-election in Gaborone South

Source: Figures compiled from the reports on the general elections of 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984 and 1989, reported by the supervisor of the elections to the Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration; revised figures after the by-election in 1984 compiled from Keesing's 1985:33444.

The death of Seretse Khama in 1980 and the subsequent peaceful succession of Quett Masire to the presidency and his reelection in 1984 demonstrate, according to Parson (1990), that legal-rational principles have gained importance in Botswana politics. Parson does not deny that the chiefs and the tribal administration still are important agents for mobilising support for the different parties in the rural areas. But Masire is characterised as a "less imposing personality and brings to the presidency none of the traditional status which may have contributed to Seretse Khama's authority" (1990:133). Examples of voting support which cannot

be explained by ethnic identifications lead Parson to argue that one has to look for multiple factors to explain respect for the political order and support for the parties. The outcome of the economic changes, and the recognition by the population that the system has "worked", is an important factor put forward by Parson to explain the legitimacy of the political system.

Botswana has, according to Holm (1989), gone far towards achieving equality in voting; i.e. there is a general right for persons over the age of twenty-one to vote, there are polling stations within acceptable distance, and the elections are held on Saturdays when most formal sector employees do not work. However, Holm (1987:127) has also mentioned some shortcomings: the differences in size of the constituencies discriminate against the urban voters; there is no provision for absentee ballot and the estimated eight per cent of the population working abroad (mainly in South Africa) are thus excluded from the elections unless they travel home; finally, the requirement of voters to get registered prior to the elections, and the exclusion of persons between the age of 18 and 21, are obstacles to raise participation at the elections. In addition to the constraints facing the voters, discussed above, the freedom to participate as a candidate is under certain restrictions regarding eligibility:

- (1) The chiefs are excluded from political participation outside the House of Chiefs.
- (2) Members of parliament are required to be able to speak and write English.
- (3) Tswana political culture excludes *de facto* females from political participation.
- (4) Government employees (civil servants, teachers, employees of some parastatals etc.) are not allowed to actively participate in politics.

Holm (1987) claims that these factors limit those who run for office to a small segment of the society. Especially the last point is a constraining factor which favours the ruling party. A large share of the better educated population in Botswana is working in the public sector. The political parties are thus largely dependent on public employees who resign, retire or ask for temporary leave prior to the elections. Civil servants who retire are, according to Picard (1987), encouraged to join the BDP and take part in politics at both the local and national level. Holm (1987) claims that the

risk associated with a defeat in the election is greater for the candidates from the opposition parties than for those from the BDP, because the latter has the backing of the party in power. There are several examples of defeated BDP candidates being allotted one of the four "specially elected" seats in the National Assembly.<sup>19</sup> Experience from the civil service among the BDP politicians is striking. My own studies revealed that at least twelve of the sixteen cabinet members in 1991 had some prior experience as civil servants, and in addition six of the twenty BDP backbenchers had such backgrounds.

The legal framework of the election system has in general favoured the ruling party. Some factors have already been discussed. It is further generally known that, compared with the proportional representation system, the plurality system of elections with single-member constituencies often leads to a higher degree of disproportionality between the share of received votes and seats won (Lijphart 1984). The elections in Botswana confirm this assumption. As table 5.1 above reveals, the share of votes received by the BDP has fallen in every election since 1974. This has, however, not been reflected in the number of seats won. On the contrary, the BDP has consolidated its majority in the National Assembly. Although the BNF increased their share of the votes with seven per cent compared with the 1984 election, the number of BNF seats decreased in 1989 from five to three.

The weak position of the opposition cannot be attributed only to the inherently strong position of the BDP and the election system itself. The three major opposition parties (the Botswana Independence Party, the Botswana People's Party and the BNF), have in all elections competed among themselves for seats in several constituencies. This fragmentation was exacerbated in the 1984 and 1989 elections with another three minor parties joining the race. Without this infighting among the opposition parties, the opposition might have won ten seats instead of six in 1984, and eight instead of three seats in the 1989 elections. Although far from being capable of challenging the BDP in terms of governmental power, an opposition with one-fourth of the parliamentary seats would at least be more potent in criticising the policies of the government, and perhaps succeed in influencing public policy-making more than is the case today. An attempt was made in 1991 to create an umbrella organisation of the opposition parties, named the People's Progressive Front (PPF). The

<sup>19</sup> Some recent examples are the BDP candidates Mmusi and Matlhabapiri who became "specially elected" MPs, after being defeated by Koma (BNF) in the 1984 and 1989 elections respectively.

outcome of this process remains uncertain. Personal antagonisms among the old guards of the parties seem to be the principal obstacle. The uncertainty increased when Daniel Kwele, who had been one of the main promoters of the PPF, died in 1991.

To an outsider there seems to be no overt ideological difficulties in reconciling the opposition parties. The left-right dimension, if any, in Botswana politics is often very ambiguous when party programmes, speeches by the leaders, National Assembly debates and the socio-economic background of the leaders and supporters of the various parties are considered. Personal antagonisms from the 1960s, partly rooted in ethnic loyalties, seem to be one dividing factor. Ideology seems to matter less. Nengwekhulu (1979) argues that all political parties initially were primarily focusing on issues related to national independence, and less concerned with "ideology" *per se*. Polhemus (1983:402) suggests that it is "more accurate to speak of variances in ideas and policies than in ideology, for this implies a measure of systematic thought which is largely absent." However, Polhemus claims that some differences exist. The BDP has followed a consistent line of policy with an emphasis on democracy, non-racialism and a rejection of socialism. Polhemus associates the party with both conservatism and liberalism. Compared with the other opposition parties, the Botswana Independent Party seems ideologically to be closer to the BDP. Polhemus (1983:404), for example, characterises the relationship between the BIP and the BDP as being without any "deep-seated conflict".

The Botswana People's Party is regarded by Polhemus (1983) as a party of political opportunism, as it accepts an economic system based on private property and "profit" as a mechanism in the economy, but at the same time advocates "socialism". Polhemus claims that the party has made an issue of challenging the multiracialism which the BDP represents.

The most ideological opposition party is the Botswana National Front (BNF). A point of departure for assessments of the BNF ideology has often been the *National Front Pamphlet No.1* written by Dr.Koma in the mid-1960s (BNF 1966). This document presents a class analysis of Botswana society and outlines a strategy whereby the radical section of the middle class should steer towards a socialist state ruled by the proletariat. There seems, however, to have been a gap between the rhetoric of the BNF leaders and their political activities in political bodies like Town Councils and the National Assembly. Although Marxist analysis is found in pamphlets and in Koma's speeches, the socialist profile is not always overtly present in many of the specific BNF proposals. The ethnic dimension which was brought into the BNF at the 1969 election, by its



alliance with ex-chief Bathoen, seems to have moderated the initial radicalism of the party. Polhemus (1983) claims, however, that the BNF has in general remained to the left of the BDP.

The BNF presented prior to the 1989 election an election manifesto which was the first thorough updating of the party's programme since the publishing of *Pamphlet No.1*.<sup>20</sup> This manifesto (BNF 1989) and my interviews with BNF leaders, suggest that the party is becoming more pragmatic and "social-democratic" in its outlook. However, ideological differences between the BDP and the BNF seem to remain. In an assessment of the 1989 election programmes of the BDP and the BNF, Molutsi concludes that: "the two programmes are substantially different in their approach to the solutions to the issues of economic growth, unemployment, housing etc..." (*Mmegi* 6-12 October 1989, p.2). In the 1989 manifesto it is proclaimed that the Botswana state should be more involved in the economy, although private ownership is recognised. Among other things, the party advocated a more extensive social security programme (pensions, health service, housing etc.), and advocated that (BNF 1989):

...a vigorous policy to harness all the available surface and underground water resources shall be launched to facilitate, among other, dam construction for irrigation (p.12). [And] public-owned enterprises shall be set up to operate all the essential means of production, communication, and distribution on the basis that some services and means of production are too vital to the nation to be left to private hands (p.19).

To what extent these allegedly ideological differences among the parties are translated into the daily policy-making process is ambiguous. Studies of the elections in 1974 and 1984 revealed no clear differences in the political attitudes of the various candidates (Cohen 1979; Masale 1985). The most frequently mentioned issues by the 1974 candidates were: (1) the need for more educational facilities; (2) rural development (i.e. provision of water and loans to farmers; and (3) infrastructural development and health facilities. Cohen (1979:364) observed that, in terms of economic development, the candidates were basically concerned with the provision of more "amenities" and that "[i]ssues of economic strategy do not seem to be troubling the candidates." Masale (1985) observed that the candidates

<sup>20</sup> In the 1989 manifesto it was announced that a new comprehensive BNF programme was available. However, such a programme had still by December 1991 not yet been presented to the public.

in the 1984 election were mostly concerned with drought and unemployment, and was surprised to find, given the prevailing turbulent situation in the southern African region, that there was a general ignorance about foreign policy problems. In my analysis in the subsequent chapters of policy-making processes which have taken place after the 1989 election, I will more explicitly discuss to what extent any ideological difference is reflected in the daily policy-making.

I will below discuss various socio-economic and cultural explanations put forward to explain the preferences of the voters, but first make a comment on the organisation and electoral strategy of the various parties. It is reasonable to expect that organisational strength and the amount of resources put into election campaigns do matter at the elections. The ruling party, the BDP, has both a larger resource base on its own than the other parties, and in addition access to governmental resources. The latter gives the BDP, in addition to being favoured by the election system, certainly an advantage compared to the opposition parties. The activities by the government politicians, development programmes and travels made by the politicians from the ruling party may be seen as a continuous "election campaign". As discussed in chapter 3, for example, there are several examples of development programmes being "timed" to generate support at the elections. The ruling party has privileged access to the government owned radio station and daily newspaper, unlike the other parties. Picard (1987) claims that the BDP utilises the local administration, and especially the District Commissioners, to monitor the activities of the opposition at the district level, and is thus able to respond to grievances when they emerge. The BDP is the only party which has its own national party headquarters and owns a large office building — from which it acquires funds by renting out office space to the ministries (Holm 1987).

Considering the initial strength of the BDP it is understandable that the opposition have been unable to challenge its governmental power. The opposition parties have less funds available, and are in general not as well organised as the BDP. While most smaller opposition parties have distinct regional bases, the Botswana National Front (BNF) is today present in most constituencies. The official election reports reveal that BNF candidates stood for election in all except one constituency in the 1989 election. This is twice the number of BNF candidates standing in elections in the 1970s. However, Parson (1986) points out the geographical unevenness of the party organisation, and its reliance on local organising initiatives and resources. A candidate survey conducted in 1984 found that the BNF candidates to a lesser extent felt they got adequate support from their mother party than did their competitors of the ruling party. The opposition

candidates were, for example, required to spend more of their personal means in the campaign (Parson 1986: table 8 & 9). Unlike parties to the left of the political spectrum in many Western European countries, there is neither any formal cooperation between trade unions and the opposition parties in Botswana, nor any close links to any of the private newspapers.

Holm and Molutsi (1990a) argue that it is difficult for the opposition to carry out a coordinated election campaign because of the differences in the structure of power in the various constituencies. Factors like the strength of the BDP and the influence of the chiefs vary among the particular constituencies, and the opposition has to adapt their strategy to the local conditions, e.g. access to the traditional decision-making forum (the *kgotla*) becomes important in a constituency with a strong traditional leader. In the urban areas the *kgotla* loses significance and more regular inter-party campaigning dominates. The BNF was able in spite of the organisational strength and control of government resources by the BDP, to beat the government party in the urban constituencies Gaborone South and North, both in the 1984 and 1989 elections. This supports Parson's (1990) argument that there must be a number of factors behind the behaviour of the electorate, some of which I will discuss below.

### **5.3 Party preferences; what makes the difference?**

In isolation, the class relations of production in Botswana would lead to a rather different electoral outcome than has been the case from 1965 through 1984. The contradictions, the class conflicts, implicit in the economic process of social reproduction and surplus appropriation should alone lead to the election of persons drawn from and acting directly in the interests of the working classes or it should lead to significant political strife if this did not happen (Parson 1986:90).

As Parson argues, the outcomes of the elections in Botswana do not directly reflect the socio-economic stratification of the society. Although the BNF claims to represent the poor masses, this party has neither emerged from a "bottom up" process, nor has the party established close links with the existing trade unions. In other words, the interests of the poor masses do not seem to be articulated through one distinct opposition party. However, Parson (1986 & 1990) argues that the contextual features underlying the first election after independence, compared to the recent elections have changed. At the time of the 1969 election the traditional institutions had been challenged by the introduction of new democratic framework, and the released frictions had generated support for the opposition. In the 1980s,

however, Parson (1986:56) argues that the supremacy of the central government was no longer in question, and "class politics" had entered the political agenda, resulting in that "the politics of perceived inequality rather than the politics of shared poverty emerged as an issue." Still, a large share of the poor peasant masses have remained loyal to the government party, the BDP, and continued its support in the elections — why?

As discussed above, ideology does not seem to have gained notable importance in Botswana politics. This point is supported by a mass survey (1297 respondents) conducted in 1987 (Somolekae 1989). Somolekae observed that two-thirds of the respondents were not aware of any difference between the BDP and the BNF. Although such knowledge was associated with the educational level of the respondents, only 46.2 per cent of the better educated (post-secondary level) answered that they knew any differences (1989:83). Only about one-fifth of the respondents claimed that they supported a particular party because of the party's ideological basis or policy toward particular issues. The main reasons given for supporting a party was a general "like" or "dislike" for one party over another, followed by "issue reasons" (1989:84).

Although President Masire, who replaced Khama seemingly does not personally command any traditional authority, the "traditional" factor has apparently remained important. Khama's death in 1980 has not led to any noticeable decline in BDP support in the constituencies which belonged to the former president's ethnic base, the Bamangwato districts. However, compared with the 1984 election, the BDP lost in 1989 on average 4.5 per cent in the share of the votes received in these constituencies (in two constituencies the share increased). But in fifteen of the constituencies won by the BDP in the 1989 election, they still received 70 per cent or more of the votes (Parson 1986:table 19; RoB 1989b). Holm (1988:191) claims that within the two tribal areas where BDP traditionally has found strongest support "a vote for the BDP is [still] an affirmation of ethnic membership," and with the resulting dominance in nearly half of the constituencies, and major support in others, it seems justified by the author to conclude that BDP has "an advantage that virtually assures it of governmental control." However, important socio-economic changes have taken place in the post-independence period. The rapid economic growth has led to diversification of the socio-economic structure; differences have developed between the rural- and the urban-sectors, and the distribution of income has continued to be very uneven. Parson (1986; 1990) argues that the substantial revenues received by the state after the mineral boom started in the 1970s have facilitated maintenance of legitimacy beyond mere reliance on the

traditional power structure. On the other hands, the support for the two main parties seems increasingly to reflect the socio-economic differences.

### *Rural constituencies*

The BDP receives in general more support in the rural constituencies than in the urban ones, while the opposition in general finds support in the latter (RoB 1984 & 1989b). However, the BNF controlled until the 1989 election two rural constituencies which both were located in ex-chief Bathoen's tribal homeland. The ethnic factor is thus also important in explaining the party preferences of the rural voters, also those behind the opposition MPs in the rural areas. It was mentioned earlier that the constituencies have continued to follow tribal territory boundaries. This has probably been an important factor in preserving the significance of ethnicity.

A substantial socio-economic inequality has been maintained in the rural sector, especially in terms of cattle-ownership (see chapter 3). However, this inequality has in general not made the rural voters turn away from the BDP. Although the share of BDP votes decreased in most constituencies in the 1989 election, the party's total number of votes was not reduced, due to higher turn-out, and its position in the National Assembly was not challenged. As ten per cent more voters took part in the 1989 election than in 1984 (table 5.1), it seems to confirm that the elections are perceived as important by the electorate.

Several factors have been put forward to explain why the rural electorate has remained loyal to the ruling party. The significance of these factors seems to vary among the various constituencies, and is affected by the dynamics of the development process. One should keep in mind that the opposition received on average 48.8 per cent of the votes in nearly one-third of the rural constituencies won by the BDP in the 1989 election (calculated from RoB 1989b). However, no comprehensive studies have until now been undertaken to analyse the individual voter's perceptions. The explanations put forward by various authors are mostly based on qualitative judgements. It is thus difficult to present any unambiguous explanations about the behaviour of the rural electorate in Botswana. Parson's analysis of the 1984 election is an attempt to combine ecological data (i.e. age, gender, employment structure and distribution of wealth) and election results with more "anthropological" findings about the traditional power structure. Despite some methodological weaknesses, the conclusions of the analysis seem to have some validity, and they have not been repudiated in the later literature.

Parson (1986) presents two important factors to explain the legitimacy of the BDP in the rural areas. First, there is the interrelationship between the wealthier strata of the rural population, those holding traditional authority (i.e chiefs and headmen), and the peasant masses. Second, the increased standard of living in the rural areas for the majority, materialising through the development of physical infrastructure and provision of social services by the government, despite the unequal distribution of wealth, also point in direction of BDP support.

Various studies support the assumption that the politicians in Botswana are recruited from the wealthier segments of the society. This observation applies just as much to the BDP as to opposition politicians, and to representatives in district or national-level political bodies (Cohen 1979; Datta, n.d.; Holm & Molutsi 1989; Masale 1985).<sup>21</sup> Picard (1987:147) characterises the BDP politicians as follows:

The political system is dominated by (and policy is set in the interest of) a coalition of wealthy, well-educated, cattle-owning political elites who are committed to rapid economic growth in the framework of a largely free enterprise system. This coalition of traditional leaders, teachers, junior state functionaries, and wealthy farmers was joined by more senior administrators beginning in the 1970s. Altogether, the members of this coalition represent educational and economic characteristics quite unlike the majority of the population.

Cattle holding and farming have traditionally been the major sources of wealth in Botswana. However, according to Molutsi (1989) and Datta (n.d.), the politicians are increasingly becoming involved in other commercial activities. Datta, however, observed in her study of the 1989 candidates that cattle rearing and farming were still dominating. Parson (1986:85) claims that there are mechanisms at work (e.g. patron-client relationships) between the richer and poorer segments in rural society that mediate the tensions one might expect to exist between these two groups. Examples provided by Parson include the arrangement whereby wealthier cattle holders assist peasants in ploughing, or peasants taking charge of parts of their stocks (*Mafisa*). Estimates from the early 1970s revealed that the large cattle owners let peasants take care of between 10 and 20 per cent of the total national cattle herd (Harvey & Lewis 1990:74). Wage

<sup>21</sup> In her analysis of the candidates for the 1989 elections, Kusum Datta (n.d.) concludes that the BDP candidates in general were better off than their BNF counterparts. However the sample of Datta's analysis comprised 144 BDP candidates and only 22 BNF candidates. This unevenness in her material inclines me to ignore Datta's conclusion.

employment seems further to constitute a basis for making the poorer segments adherent to the political preferences of economic elites. The inclusion of persons holding traditional authority (i.e chiefs and headmen) in this interrelationship, further maintain the loyalty of the rural masses to the ruling party.

In chapter 3 I concluded that the provision of public services and development of infrastructure in rural areas had an apparent political motive. The government party has acquired legitimacy by "delivering the goods". This argument is supported by several authors, i.e. Molutsi (1989a), Parson (1986 & 1990), Polhemus (1983), and as Holm (1987:143) writes:

...the rural population in particular has tended to look on elections as a peaceful means of perpetuating their ethnic solidarity which the government reinforces with its distributionist policies.

Substantial resources have been allocated and have contributed to the development of health and education facilities, roads and access to water. Although these development efforts have not altered structural problems like rural poverty and insufficient employment opportunities, the continuous support for the BDP in the 1989 election suggests that the provision of public services and transfer of subsidies really mattered.

All government programmes are certainly not exclusively for the "poor masses". Holm (1988) argues that government programmes have made "bourgeoisie groups" throughout the country support the BDP as well. Major government programmes have largely benefited the wealthier farmers; i.e, policy packages like the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) or the Accelerated Rainfed Arable Programme (ARAP) (Børhaug 1992a/b; Picard 1980 & 1987). The Financial Assistance Policy (FAP), introduced in 1982, has benefited wealthier groups both in the rural and the urban sector (see chapter 3). One might expect that such a bias in government spending would make the poorer voters turn away from the ruling party. As mentioned above, patron-client relationships seem to soften some of the tension one might expect that the unequal distribution of income would generate. When, apparently, financial assistance to the cattle sector makes wealthier groups continue to support the ruling party, it seems that such a bias in government spending even may contribute to conserving the voting patterns in the rural sector.

Although the explanations of party preferences put forward by Parson (1986) probably have validity, and seem to fit the core areas of BDP support, they clarify to a less extent the behaviour of the electorate in the rural constituencies where the opposition parties obtain a large share of the

votes. For example, if patronage through public services matters, how was it possible for the BNF to win the rural constituency Okavango both in 1984 and 1989, while not even putting forward candidates in this constituency in the earlier elections? One explanation may be that the party loyalty of tribal leaders changes, another seems to be that the support-generating effects of public services and development of infrastructure are changing. Parson himself argues that the development of basic "public infrastructure" was on its way to being completed in the 1980s. The effects of government programmes may thus in the future be less significant than in the first decades after independence (1990:125):

The impact of establishing for the first time a once a week health clinic in a village is much greater than increasing the frequency of its opening to two days a week. The introduction of free primary education and construction of a large number of primary schools had a greater qualitative impact than the extension of more universal education to the junior secondary school level...

To sum up; three factors to explain the preferences of rural voters seem to be important: (a) ethnicity, (b) patron-client relationships, and (c) government development programmes. These seem sometimes to be present in a mutually reinforcing pattern, and may explain the rural strongholds of the BDP. However, considering the variance in voting patterns among several rural constituencies, one has to keep in mind that the explanatory power of each of these factors will vary among the various constituencies.

### *Urban constituencies*

The opposition claims Morake [the BDP MP from this constituency] does not have much to show in Phikwe besides infrastructural development. The question people are asking in town is 'who wouldn't have built roads, clinics, telephones and schools if they were in his position'. People tend to be more concerned about the general upliftment of their social and economic life. (*Mmegi*, 6-12 October 1989, p.2)

Although political comments in the press often are far from objective, the quote above seems to touch on an important aspect of the political development in Botswana — a growing support for the opposition (BNF) in the urban areas; as demonstrated by the table below:



Table 5.2  
Changes in number of votes for the BDP and the BNF in major  
urban constituencies between 1984 and 1989, in per cent

Constituency/Party	BDP	BNF
Gaborone South	+36.1	+59.2
Gaborone North	+ 0.01	+32.2
Francistown	+14.0	+174.9
Selebi-Phikwe	-13.3	+78.7
Lobatse/Barolong	+ 5.4	+ 3.5
All constituencies	+ 5.2	+44.3

Source: Calculated from RoB 1984 & 1989b and Keesing's 1985:33444.

Parson claims that "class polarisation" has emerged in the urban areas, and the BNF has to some extent been successful in mobilising support among the poorer segments (1986:87):

While glaring inequalities also existed in rural areas, in terms of income from cattle, for example, there the mutual ties binding the rich to those less well off mediated the perception of differences in standards of living .... In the urban areas, those in wage labour daily and vividly experienced the conflict unmediated by cultural and ideological buffers.

Phikwe is part of a predominantly urban constituency called Selebi-Phikwe, which emerged out of the development of the copper/nickel mines after independence. The area was a constituency on its own for the first time in the 1984 election, and was captured by the BDP with 64.5 per cent of the votes. Holm (1988:192) points at support for the BDP in the 1984 election to illustrate that ethnicity is also important in explaining the urban voters' preferences. Most of the workers in Selebi-Phikwe came from the surrounding Bamangwato area, which is a BDP ethnic stronghold. The majority therefore allegedly supported the BDP. Holm argues that this reduces the explanatory power of Parson's assertion that the BNF has a "working class" base in the urban areas. However, the BDP retained its Selebi-Phikwe seat in 1989 with only 49.5 per cent of the votes. Split-vote between the BNF and the BPP, with only 170 votes obtained by the latter, made the opposition lose the constituency. Taking the increasing BNF support into account, Parson's argument thus seems justified as far as the 1989 election is concerned.

## 5.4 The strength of civil society

The main objective in the following pages is to discuss to what extent extra-parliamentary groups are present, and potentially able to wield leverage on policy-making. It is beyond the scope of this study to present a more theoretical and historical analysis of civil society in Botswana. A point of departure is, however, that the development of the modern sector of the Botswana economy is still at an initial stage, and one should keep in mind that the economic diversification and the development of interest groups are part of a dynamic process. As stated in chapter 2, one should be careful about drawing too distinct boundaries around civil society. My analysis becomes as such inconclusive, in Bayart's (1986) terms, as I am focusing on the formal associational structure in Botswana: parties, organised interest groups and the press.

### *The capabilities of organised interest groups*

Holm and Molutsi (1990a) consider the political parties in Botswana as the most effective "influence groups" outside the state structure, while trade unions and the press have less influence on the policy-making. The agricultural sector is, according to Holm (1989), weakly organised. Beyond some *ad hoc* attempts to influence particular policy issues, even the wealthy cattle farmers have no national association representing them. The latter observation, however, apparently confirms the claims that the interests of the cattle owners are directly maintained by the politicians in the government (Picard 1987). There has thus been no need to establish a powerful farmers' organisation. However, several interest organisations exist in other sectors of the economy, although this does not necessarily imply that these are effective in taking care of their members' interests. Fifteen trade unions were in 1989 registered by the Department of Labour and Social Security (DLSS), according to its annual report (RoB n.d.). These included both specialised workers (e.g. Botswana Diamond Sorters Valuers Union) and numerically larger groups (e.g. Botswana Mining Workers Union). An umbrella organisation called the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU), which comprises most of the individual unions, is also registered by the DLSS. There are also organisations for white-collar employees, which are not registered by DLSS (e.g. Botswana Civil Servants Association, Botswana Teachers Union and Botswana Federation of Secondary School Teachers. Among the latter, especially the civil servants have in the recent years had some success in raising their salaries.

The employers seem to be strongly organised in terms of financial resources available, office facilities and permanent staff (Holm 1989:149). The Botswana Employers Federation (BEF) is, according to Holm, probably the most efficient organisation in representing the interests of its membership vis-à-vis the government. In contrast to the trade unions, the BEF has access to the offices of ministers and senior civil servants (e.g. through informal personal connections). The favourable position of the BEF, together with financial and organisational resources, gives this organisation a lead compared to the trade unions.

Most of the trade unions are weakly organised, have insufficient administrative capacity and are poorly funded. Officials in the Department of Labour and Social Security complained that they had to spend too much time in mediating grievances between private employers and employees, mainly because of the weaknesses of the trade unions. One exception is the Botswana Mining Workers Union (BMWU) which is strongly organised, both in terms of membership, office facilities and funds. Through their negotiating capacity and industrial action, the miners may be characterised as a powerful group; as expressed in one of my interviews: "When the BMWU initiates a strike, the whole community comes to a standstill." However, the majority of the miners are employed and domiciled in four mining centres which are located at a distance from the two major towns, Gaborone and Francistown.<sup>22</sup> Compared to other African states where mining workers constitute a group with political significance (i.e. Zambia), the thirteen thousand miners in Botswana are less important as a political influence group in national-level politics (RoB 1991f:table 8.6). However, the fact that BMWU is at least holding some power in the relationship with the mine owners is probably reflected by the wage-level and standard of living of the miners which both seem to be at an acceptable level. Beyond the mine workers, the umbrella organisation, the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions, is the best workers' organisation as regards administration (i.e. full-time staff and an ILO expert), but its representatives claim that this is still insufficient to fulfil their tasks. The capacity to prepare background material, make statistical analyses etc. is insufficient, and they are in a disadvantageous position in negotiations with the better endowed employers and the government. Not least the administrative deficiency limits meaningful participation when the BFTU or individual trade unions are invited by the government to take part in policy-making bodies. One general obstacle facing the workers' representatives in such bodies has been

<sup>22</sup> These centres include Orapa, Jwaneng, Lethakane and Selebi-Phikwe. The latter, with its 54 thousand inhabitants, may be looked upon as an urban centre of some importance.

restrictions promulgated by the *Trade Union and Employers' Organizations [Act]* (RoB n.d.), which disallow elected officers to be employed by the trade unions. Consequently the elected representatives are dependent on the goodwill of their employers to be able to attend meetings in policy-making bodies, or those representing the employees have no mandate to make decisions. Informants representing both employers and workers claimed in interviews that employers in general avoided employment of workers who were known to be active trade unionists.

None of the interest groups have close links to any of the political parties. Even the blue-collar trade unions have no formal association or cooperation with the major opposition party. The BNF, however, claims to represent the poorer segments of the population, and Holm (1989:146) quotes one BNF leader saying that:

...their party did not need to enlist the support of the trade unions in political campaigns because the party's programme was clearly the one which most appealed to the workers' economic interests.

A BNF leader told me similarly in one of my interviews that the party *de facto* controlled the trade unions. However, from my interviews I got the impression that there are tensions within the union movement between the younger and the older generations. The latter group tends to continue to support the ruling party out of tradition, and the vested legitimacy established by Seretse Khama, while the younger trade unionists are becoming more militant and support the BNF in the elections. It is ambiguous to what extent the trade unions have become politicised. Although the BNF seemingly finds support among the trade union members, the activities of the trade unions themselves seem primarily to be focused on issues of immediate concern for the union members, like wage increases and working conditions. More political questions like income inequalities or the role of the state in employment creation are less touched upon. However, as mentioned in chapter 3 (section 3.5), the decision by the government in the late 1980s to widen the wage differences within the public sector did not pass unnoticed by the employees. The strike in November 1991 may suggest that the trade unions are becoming more aware of political issues. The trade union of the manual workers in the public sector demanded a 154 per cent wage increase. When the government refused this demand, the manual workers launched a nationwide strike, involving perhaps as many as 25,000 workers, and seriously affecting public institutions (*The Gazette*, 13 November 1991, p.8). The trade unions and the government were unable to negotiate on the demands,

the strike was declared illegal, and a large number of the workers were fired, although later reinstated. The breakdown of the negotiations demonstrated an immaturity of both the government and the employees' organisations in questions concerning labour relations. However, the assumption that the trade unions are becoming more militant was also confirmed. The tensions exposed in the street rallies, the difficulties which the leaders of the manual workers union had in controlling its members, and the unwillingness to reduce their demands, may suggest that the wage claims signified a political protest against the income inequalities.

The annual reports from the Department of Labour and Social Security reveal that the number of industrial actions increased in the late 1980s. However, disputes are not always followed by strikes. Negotiations between private employers, government representatives and employees take place regularly. Representatives from the trade unions stated that the dramatic strike in 1991 was a break with the consensus tradition which has existed between the trade unions and the government. The Department of Labour and Social Security had until recently been successful in mediating conflicts between the employers and employees. Communication between representatives from the BFTU and the government has to some extent been smooth, usually informal, and has taken place daily. My interviews confirmed observations made by Holm and Molutsi (1990a:330) that the trade unions' involvement in policy-making processes is mainly related to the administrative domain:

From our interviews with all levels of political activists, including interest group leaders themselves, it became apparent that the term "politics" refers *only* to the activities of the political parties and does not involve groups influencing government policy. It is generally considered morally wrong for leaders of interest groups to approach politicians about their problems, or for the reverse to happen. Rather, interest groups should take their problems to the civil servants.

However, Holm (1989) gives examples of cases where backbenchers of the ruling party take up interests of the Botswana Civil Service Association and the Botswana Employers Federation. In my own analyses of debates in the National Assembly I found no reference to particular interest groups, even when an issue like, for example, minimum wage was debated.<sup>23</sup> Holm and Molutsi (1990a) found that only the employers' organisation (BEF) and an

<sup>23</sup> The debates will be presented in chapter 6 and 7.

environmental conservation group (KCS) were regularly formulating policy proposals on their own and attempting to “lobby” government officials.

Bayart (1986:112) characterises the relationship between the state and society, in the African context, as the former seeking to dominate the latter:

Underlying the ideologies of national unity there is a hegemonic imperative which drives the [post-colonial] state and the self-proclaimed dominant social groups to seek to control and to shape civil society. The first task is to define the basis on which others can gain access to the political system. Most regimes severely restrict such access by preventing the autonomous and pluralistic organisation of subordinated social groups. Instead, rulers either attempt to integrate the various social forces into single movements or set up intermediary and indirect means of social control.

With some exceptions, Botswana has gone far in respecting civil rights (Andreassen & Swinehart 1991), and does not as such fit Bayart’s description of the African post-colonial state as “*well-policed*” (1986:113). And, as exemplified in this chapter, organisational and financial factors are more significant in explaining the low level of organised interests and the weak private press, than direct government control. However, it seems as if Botswana conforms to Bayart’s argument that political control, at least indirect control, is facilitated by a small population and continuity in the political leadership (1986:114):

In countries of fewer than ten, five or even one million inhabitants, and where the majority are politically minors — under thirty years old — a ruler who has been in power for one or two decades would in all probability know personally every instance of personal aggrandizement, whether of wealth or influence.

It was argued earlier that the ruling party has used government development programmes as a means to neutralise opposition. It is plausible to believe that Botswana’s small and relatively homogenous population facilitates the government’s aim to have far reaching knowledge about the problems and needs in various parts of the country, and consequently, with the help of its wealth and administrative control, the government can acquire political stability by non-coercive means. Holm and Molutsi (1990a) claim that the relationship between the government and organised interests is assuming some corporatist characteristics. They emphasise, however, that it is not an objective of the government to create a corporatist state. But the government apparently attempts to protect itself against interference in the

policy making. The lack of a group political culture and the shortage of organising talent are main reasons put forward by Holm and Molutsi to explain the weakly organised civil society. The ability of the government to control organised interest groups is therefore characterised as “corporatism by default” (1990a:329).

However, the government has made some attempts to control the interest groups. It has been involved in the founding and financing of interest organisations, and has monitored the activities of these. Various mechanisms also delimit how such groups may participate in politics. The latter include both legal constraints and institutionalised practice, and will be discussed in the next chapter. The trade unions are also to some extent directly monitored by the government. A representative of the government is, in accordance with the *Trade Union and Employers' Organization Act* (RoB n.d.), entitled to attend meetings of the trade unions, and this is also practised. It is plausible to believe that this has contributed to keeping the unions out of politics, or prevented stronger links between the unions and the opposition party, the BNF, to develop.

It was mentioned above that links exist between the trade unions and the administrative side of the government. One of the ruling party's especially elected MPs in 1991, Gaotlhaetse Matlhabaphiri, was a former trade union activist, and stated in an interview that he sees it as his main task to improve the conditions for the population living in the urban areas. However, representatives from the BFTU claimed in my interviews with them that the politicians in general are ignorant about labour relations. The public manual workers' strike in 1991 may suggest that the links between the government and the trade unions is largely a one-way relationship, with the former obtaining information about the undertakings of the latter, without necessarily transferring this into the policy-making process.

### *The media*

The question of government control of the media is much debated in Botswana. The only domestic radio station is owned by the state. The newspaper *Botswana Daily News* is also owned by the state, and is the only newspaper which is published daily. Regularly published private newspapers did not appear in Botswana until the 1980s. The private newspapers which are either published weekly or twice-weekly had in 1988 a circulation of about 33,000 copies a week (Egner & Grant 1989:256). In comparison, the *Daily News* is subsidised by the government and distributed free of charge, with a circulation of 45,000 copies per day in 1989. The *Daily News* brings brief reports about the outside world,

domestic news, and reports the activity of the government and the debates in the National Assembly. It seldom prints analytical articles about policy proposals or adopted policies, but sometimes refers in detail to speeches by the backbenchers, even when the latter criticise the government. Although the *Daily News* occasionally makes reference to the opposition, it clearly has a bias towards covering the activities of the ruling party, not least during election campaigns. Coverage by the state owned-media of the nation-wide strike by the manual workers in 1991 was conspicuously absent. However, Egner and Grant (1989) claim that the competition from the private press has led to less "self-censorship" of the state owned newspaper. None of the private newspapers have links to any of the opposition parties. Political issues are in general given meagre space in the private press, although one of the newspapers, *Mmegi wa Dikgang*, regularly prints critical comments and analyses of political questions of current interest. Compared to the African continent in general, it seems right to say that freedom of the press exists. The private press seems to be more constrained by financial problems than by direct government control. However, some tensions between the private press and the government do exist. Some foreign journalists have been deported (Egner & Grant 1989). After its coverage of the manual workers' strike in 1991, the offices of *Mmegi* were ransacked by the authorities, allegedly because the newspaper had published an internal government document.

### *Traditional institutions*

The *kgotla* has been a traditional forum in Botswana communities where discussions of issues raised by the traditional leaders (i.e. chiefs and headmen) have taken place (Ngcogco 1989). The *kgotla* has persisted as an institution of some importance in the rural communities; as Holm and Molutsi write (1990a:331):

The absence of politicized social groups in Botswana means that elected officials must solicit public opinion directly if they are to keep informed in this regard. For this reason, the *kgotla* has enjoyed a resurgence as a medium through which consultation occurs.

Although the traditional *kgotla* consultation had a democratic dimension, Holm and Molutsi (1990a) claim that the subjects had to be cautious about opposing the position of those with authority. Today the government finds it necessary, according to Holm and Molutsi, to present policies and programmes in this forum. However, its contribution to the policy-making



process seems to be limited to questions related to the implementation stage after the most important decisions have been made at the central level. In the urban areas, a forum called *freedom square*, introduced after independence, does to some extent replace the *kgotla*, although the two institutions also coexist. Any political group can arrange a *freedom square* meeting, which often has the form of a political rally. This forum seems to be especially important during election campaigns. In the rural areas the chiefs may reveal their political sympathies at *freedom square* gatherings. Molutsi and Holm (1990a) claim that these participatory forums are important sources of political information. On the one hand, the population gets information about government policies and the political parties. The government, on the other hand, also receives feedback on how people perceive new policies, and notes when the opposition obtains public support on particular policy question. The latter, according to Holm and Molutsi, has occasionally led the government to modify aspects of a policy or give priority to certain policy issues. Although Holm and Molutsi do not see the forums mentioned above as very important in the policy-making process, they still argue that such forums “may be critical in facilitating institutionalization of pluralist forms of accountability” (1990a:340).

## **5.5 Democracy in Botswana: Parliamentary or presidential?**

The formal institutional framework in Botswana seems to contain aspects of both parliamentary and presidential government. Parson (1984:38) suggests that the system may be characterised as a “parliamentary republic.” The parliament in 1991 consisted of 34 elected and 4 specially selected members of the National Assembly, the Attorney General, and the President. The President heads the cabinet and chooses the ministers from the membership of the National Assembly. The Botswana president is thus both head of the state and the government — as in many presidential systems.

The institutional set-up also includes the House of Chiefs. Although this body is incorporated in the law-making process, it has mainly an advisory role, and should not be looked upon as a second chamber of the parliament. The task of the House of Chiefs is primarily to debate issues concerning the tribes (e.g. use of communal land). However, because of its proximity to other decision-making institutions, it seems wrong to discount totally the House of Chiefs’ ability to exercise leverage on policy-making.

One difference between parliamentary and presidential systems is that the government in the former is usually elected by the legislature, while popular election of a president, either directly or through an electoral

college, is decisive in the latter (Lijphart 1992:3). In Botswana the nomination and election of the president is rather intricate. In principle, the constitution prescribes that the president becomes elected after receiving at least half of the 34 elected MPs' support in the first sitting of the National Assembly (RoB n.d. art.35). One may thus say that the president is elected by the legislature, as in the parliamentary model. On the other hand, to become a presidential nominee one needs the backing of at least 1,000 voters in the general election. The voters declare their support for a presidential candidate by giving their vote to the MP candidate who has declared support for their preference. The constitution does not bind all parliamentary candidates to declare his or her presidential preference, but the way the system has *de facto* worked after independence, support for a presidential nominee is reflected by the share of the votes won by his party. A president may thus be elected directly by receiving support from more than half of the constituencies before parliament meets. However, a majority of the elected MPs may in the first sitting of the parliament announce that the president does not enjoy their support, and subsequently the legislature may elect another presidential nominee (art.32).

The political system formally resembles the parliamentary model by the fact that the power of the executive and the legislature is not separated. The constitution (art.92) assigns the National Assembly power to declare a vote of no confidence in the government. If this happens, the president may either resign and let the National Assembly elect a new president, or the president may dissolve the parliament. A new general election must in the latter case be held. The president may also dissolve parliament if he does not accept a bill presented to him, and the parliament is unwilling to compromise (art.87). The power of the parliament in some issues is directly limited by the constitution, which, for example, hinders the National Assembly to increase taxes or reallocate public spending beyond what is decided upon by the executive (art.88). The extensive power assigned the executive by the constitution makes Botswana deviate from the ideal parliamentary model outlined by Lijphart (1992). The position constitutionally ascribed the president vis-à-vis the cabinet ministers has further similarities to the presidential model by concentrating much power in the president (Holm 1988:187; Parson 1984:40); for example his nearby unlimited authority concerning use of armed forces (art.48).

Although it is constitutionally possible for the Botswana parliament to vote the cabinet out of office, this does not seem to be a real option. In Botswana, the cabinet members constitute about 40 per cent of the National Assembly membership; the ruling party has the backing of the great majority of the voters and the number of opposition MPs has until now

been insignificant — the possibility to vote the cabinet out of office in Botswana is symbolic only. The executive has thus an initial strength vis-à-vis the legislature both constitutionally and in practice. However, the importance of the support of the legislature should not only be valued by the likelihood of being voted out of office. Support shown to the policies of the government may have symbolic significance for the legitimacy of the rulers in general, and for the outcome of the elections in the future. The legislature may as such be seen as a forum where the government mobilises consent and acceptance for its policies (Norton 1990).

## 5.6 Concluding remarks

Botswana introduced a new political framework at independence. This was a democratic system, resembling the institutions found in western democracies. Today, it seems as if the system is on its way to become institutionalised. Considering the nature of the party system and the voting patterns, it is certainly a distinct Botswana type of democracy which has emerged. Although the decision-making power of the chiefs has been substantially reduced, the traditional power structure and institutions still matter and seem to have been one contributing factor to the continuous majority rule by the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). The support for the BDP by the peasant masses seems partly to be related to patron-client relationships between the wealthier and poorer segments in the rural constituencies. The local notables (i.e. chiefs and headmen) are part of this framework, and traditional loyalties seems to matter at the elections.

The secure power basis of the ruling party has in addition been maintained by several other comparative advantages vis-à-vis the other parties. The party is supported by the wealthier Botswana, and the party has thus exclusive access to financial means as well as organisational talent. By being the party in power, the BDP has access to the administrative network of the state, and the publicly owned media. These factors make it easier for the BDP to run efficient electoral campaigns.

The election system disfavours the opposition. The share of votes obtained is certainly not accurately reflected by the seats won in the parliament. Split voting, fragmentation, and poor financial and organisational resources have further weakened the capability of the opposition to represent the minority of the voters. The weakness of the opposition seems also to be explained by the fact that the party system has until recently not reflected functional cleavages (i.e. poor peasants and blue-collar workers joined economic elites in supporting the ruling party). The major opposition party, the Botswana National Front, has also been relying

on ethnic loyalties. In the recent elections, however, it seems like the support base for the BNF increasingly is found in the poorer urban population.

Although the opposition rhetorically positions itself to the left, ideology has not been at the fore in the election campaigns. The BNF had from its founding close links with the traditional power structure, and it is dubious whether the socialist alternative officially propagated by the party has been genuinely supported by its ethnic power base. Ethnicity seems to be losing importance, and the younger BNF leaders are about to outline a more pragmatic social-democratic profile of the party — in line with the functional interests of the new supporters.

The continuity of the development strategy, as outlined in chapter 3, certainly makes it wrong to conclude that ideology has been absent in Botswana politics. The strategy reflects a moderate ideology of the ruling party, with preference given to market economy, private ownership and reluctance to radical changes of the existing economic structure (e.g. the use of grazing land), which contribute to socio-economic inequalities. However, the support for the BDP cannot be solely explained by ethnic loyalties and mediating patron-client relationships. The government has been successful in distributing the diamond wealth in a mode which has given some benefits to all. Provision of public services, development of infrastructure, and drought relief have legitimised the rule of the BDP in the eyes of a great majority. However, as the ethnic factor seemingly is losing significance, the populace seems to become less willing to accept problems like unemployment, rural poverty and a widening wage gap.

Society-centred forces seem to be in a weak position to articulate discontent with the existing socio-economic conditions. The trade union movement is in general not well organised, and their membership base has until now been numerically insignificant. This has impeded the trade unions from becoming a political force of any importance, and has led to the workers being outmanoeuvred by the government. The press has nor been able to make the government more open to scrutiny. The organisation of the employers, however, seems to be capable of exercising leverage on the government.

As discussed in chapter 2, repressive, non democratic means have been applied in other fast growing economies of the developing world to insulate the policy-makers. The Botswana government has in general respected human rights and political freedom. However, the political context in general does not represent a challenge to the insulation of the policy-makers. Considering the development strategy pursued after independence, and the fact that politicians are recruited from the wealthier strata of the

Botswana society, it is reasonable to conclude that the political context has reinforced the conservative/liberal ideology of the government. In other words, there seems to be a consensus among the economic elites about the substance and direction of the development strategy.

The weakness of the opposition is partly related to structural factors like the small size of the population, and economic diversification still being at an initial stage. The analysis has, however, demonstrated that political development is a dynamic process. In their analysis, based on data collected in the second half of the 1980s, Holm and Molutsi (1990a) observed that tensions were emerging between the pluralistic tendencies of society and a government which attempts to control the forces which are released by the development process. My observations in 1991 confirm that the trade unions are becoming more vigorous, and the private press at any rate has not become less vocal in recent years. The opposition party, civil society associations and the media will in the future probably become more potent actors. I would still maintain that the political quiescence suggests that the rule of the BDP has genuine legitimacy among a large share of the population. It is reasonable to believe that the performance of the elected politicians contributes to this legitimacy. In the subsequent chapters I will look more closely at both the roles of organised interests groups and the politicians in economic policy-making.

## **6. The policy-making process I: Defining the development strategy**

In the previous chapter I outlined the political environment surrounding the policy-making process. The objective in this and the subsequent chapter is to uncover how procedures and the institutional framework regulate the ability of society-centred forces to influence the process. In other words, the question is to what extent the institutional framework facilitates insulation of the policy-makers. As concluded above, politics in Botswana is neither focused on ideological matters (e.g. concerning the issue of state involvement in the economy), nor pluralist in terms of parties reflecting functional cleavages or the presence of a dynamic civil society. However, voters continue to vote in elections, and the legislature regularly gathers to address issues like budget matters, laws, economic policies and the National Development Plans. It is therefore necessary to analyse more specifically the activities which take place in the offices and corridors of the ministries, and in the chamber of the National Assembly.

The National Development Plan is a cornerstone of the development efforts of the Botswana government (see chapter 3). It is therefore reasonable to expect that an analysis of the preparation of the plan will illuminate important aspects related to distribution of power and influence in Botswana politics. To what extent the policy-makers are able to make autonomous decisions is here a critical question, because the NDP deals both with the use of public funds and the development strategy to be pursued in substantive terms. In other words, opposition MPs, backbenchers of the ruling party and organised interest groups may, theoretically, both seek to influence the allocation of public funds and the economic strategy of the government. In this chapter I focus on the policy-making behind the strategy aspects of the National Development Plan, while allocation of public funds will be discussed in the next chapter. Before I discuss policy-making as it takes place today, I will briefly present some of the observations made by Gunderson (1970) concerning policy-making in the initial years after independence. Gunderson's thesis facilitates a comparison of policy-making over time, and an assessment to what extent the pattern of policy-making found today may be said to have changed since the early years after independence.

## 6.1 Policy-making in the late 1960s

The new men in the BDP are at the mercy of outside interests, for they have few material resources, little expertise, and few organizational talents. (...) The dominant party "rules" Botswana, but it is the expatriate-controlled bureaucracy which directs policy. (Gunderson 1970:434)

With reference to Weber, Gunderson claimed that the newborn Botswana state resembled an "administrative state". Briefly, this meant that authority flowed downwards from the central government to the rural masses — the ruled. Insignificant input and influence flowed in the opposite direction. Gunderson especially underscores two factors behind this: First, the introduction of new "western" political institutions and a central government was paralleled by a decline of local traditional authority. Second, the majority of the people had neither the understanding and organisational resources needed for participation in the new institutions, nor were efforts made by the government to stimulate participation (Gunderson 1970:431). In addition, the author claims that the ruling party utilised its advantageous position to coopt and neutralise opposition to the government.

As indicated in the quotation above, the "administrative state" was characterised by politicians being subjected to the bureaucrats. Gunderson links the power of the senior civil servants to the strong presence of expatriates in the bureaucracy. The latter phenomenon is related to the lack of skilled Batswana, and to the financial dependence on the former British rulers. The reliance on foreign assistance was reinforced by the demands generated by the emerging mining industry and development of physical infrastructure. Central to Gunderson's argument is the external constraints (embodied in South Africa and United Kingdom) put on the domestic process of making decisions about the use of public funds. He argues that the use of funds in a way which would have benefited the majority of the population (i.e. health, education and water supply) was impeded by this external influence (1970:436). As observed in chapter 3, several of the premises for Gunderson's argument have been changed after the financial situation of the government improved significantly in the early 1970s. The presence of expatriates is less significant today than in the late 1960s. As the increased spending on public services from the mid-1970s onwards demonstrated, domestic political concerns have gained importance. However, if one assumes that Gunderson's observations concerning the relationships between the political and administrative spheres were valid in the initial years after independence, it is reasonable to expect that some of the patterns probably remain today. I asserted in chapter 4 that the politicians at ministerial level exercise political leadership and generate

political input for policy-making. The politicians seem to be less subject to administrative rule today than was the case in the late 1960s. This is an argument which will be elaborated in this and the subsequent chapter. It has to be underscored that this argument does not necessarily imply that less power is concentrated in the central government, nor that political input is generated through a “bottom-up” process. The political framework has been institutionalised gradually, and, as noted in the previous chapter, pluralism has just started to be reflected in Botswana politics. Although it can be expected that there is some continuity with the past in the role perception and the actual position of the recently elected politicians (i.e. MPs), changes may well have taken place. In the rest of the chapter, I will especially focus on the role of organised interest groups and the members of the legislature, and discuss to what extent these actors represent a countervailing force to the core decision-makers in the government (i.e. cabinet ministers and senior civil servants). This focus will also remain in the next chapter, but there I will in addition discuss to what extent the officially stated objective to decentralise the planning process has been carried through in actual policy-making.

## 6.2 The making of economic policies

The development strategy, or the “ideological” aspects of development planning, include, for example: the goals, and policies of the government concerning the participation of the public sector in the economy, the private sector, foreign investment and trade policy, subsidies, taxation and income policy. Formulation of such policies takes place both during and ahead of the drafting period of the NDPs. The basis for the strategy is constituted concretely by reviews of specific policy issues, often presented to the public as *white papers*. Nine such white papers were of particular significance for the seventh National Development Plan (RoB 1991f:79):<sup>24</sup>

- *Financial Assistance Policy* (1982)
- *National Policy on Economic Opportunities* (1982)
- *Industrial Development Policy* (1984)
- *National Policy on Land Tenure* (1985)
- *Wildlife Conservation Policy* (1986)
- *Revised National Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profits* (1990)

<sup>24</sup> Years of approval by the National Assembly in brackets.



- *National Policy on Natural Resources, Conservation and Development* (1990)
- *Tourism Policy* (1990)
- *Agricultural Development Policy* (1991)

The strategy aspect of development planning will here be exemplified by the adoption of the *Revised Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profits* (henceforth the Income Policy), which was introduced in chapter 3. The case will be used to draw some preliminary conclusions about the role of politicians and involvement of other society-centred interest groups.

The production of white papers seems broadly to follow an uniform pattern: a point of departure is often a report produced by an appointed commission, academic scholars, or private consultants. The report and its recommendations are subsequently considered by the political executive, and a draft policy document is presented to the National Assembly, and finally with a white paper is made public. The review of the Income Policy illustrates such a pattern, and is also interesting because of its relevance for various sections of the NDP7 (RoB 1990c; 1991f).

The first Income Policy was approved by the National Assembly in 1972. An important input for the policy document had been a report on the present structure of wages and salaries in Botswana, prepared by an expatriate academic (Ghai 1970). As the historical outline of the Income Policy and the recent changes presented in chapter 3 revealed, the most important objective of the Income Policy has been an emphasis on wage restraint as a means of facilitating economic growth, and of preventing the widening of income disparities between urban and rural areas. It was also decided to compress the wage differences within the public sector. Beyond price control of some essential goods, the Income Policy was never formalised through legislation. However, an advisory body, the National Employment, Manpower and Income Council, was established to monitor the implementation of the Policy, and institutions were created to implement the wage levels. The Income Policy was revised in 1976, and although no further reviews were presented to the National Assembly before 1990, two consultancy reports from 1978 and 1983 have been used as points of reference for the policy-makers (Lipton 1978; Colclough & Olsen 1983). I concluded in chapter 3 that the Income Policy adopted in 1990 signified some changes, although not altering the major direction of this policy issue. It was decided that the prices and wage levels to a large extent should be determined by the supply and demand mechanisms of the market. Collective bargaining between employers and employees, with a minimum involvement by the government, should be the main mechanism

for deciding wage levels. In other words, the new Income Policy both reconfirmed and reinforced one of the most important characteristics of the development strategy pursued in Botswana: to minimise state intervention in the functioning of the private sector.

The issue of state involvement in the economy represents an important dimension on the ideological left-right axis, with the pure *laissez faire* view on the far right, and those who advocate extensive state interventions in the economy representing the far left. Several aspects of the Income Policy may be of relevance for such a left-right cleavage. If ideological differences were manifest in Botswana politics, I would thus expect this to be reflected in the policy-making process leading to the revised Income Policy. Was at any moment the ideology of the government challenged? Here is the policy, as formulated by the Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration during the debate in the parliament (Lt.Gen. M.S. Merafhe, 13.09.90):<sup>25</sup>

...the thrust of the proposed Income Policy really is to let the economy function with little or no government intervention. That is all it is saying and I must say, we are not alone in this view, I am happy to say. This is what the entire world is saying today, and those that advocate for the opposite, I can tell you they are moving against very strong tide because the world is saying, let us liberalise [sic!].

In this chapter I will address this issue by focusing on the various steps in the policy-making process, the main participants, their relative influence, and whether or not diverging opinions were present. The most important questions to be addressed will be: How did the legislature contribute in the process of reviewing the existing income policy; for example, did the representatives (MPs) make important contributions to the process, and did they amend proposals presented to them by the Executive? To what extent were organisations in civil society consulted before the final policy was decided upon?

<sup>25</sup> The report from the debate in the National Assembly had in November 1991 not been published, but I was given access to the drafts of the report in the library of the Assembly. When extracts of speeches are used, reference is made to the respective representative, and the date when his or her statement was made.

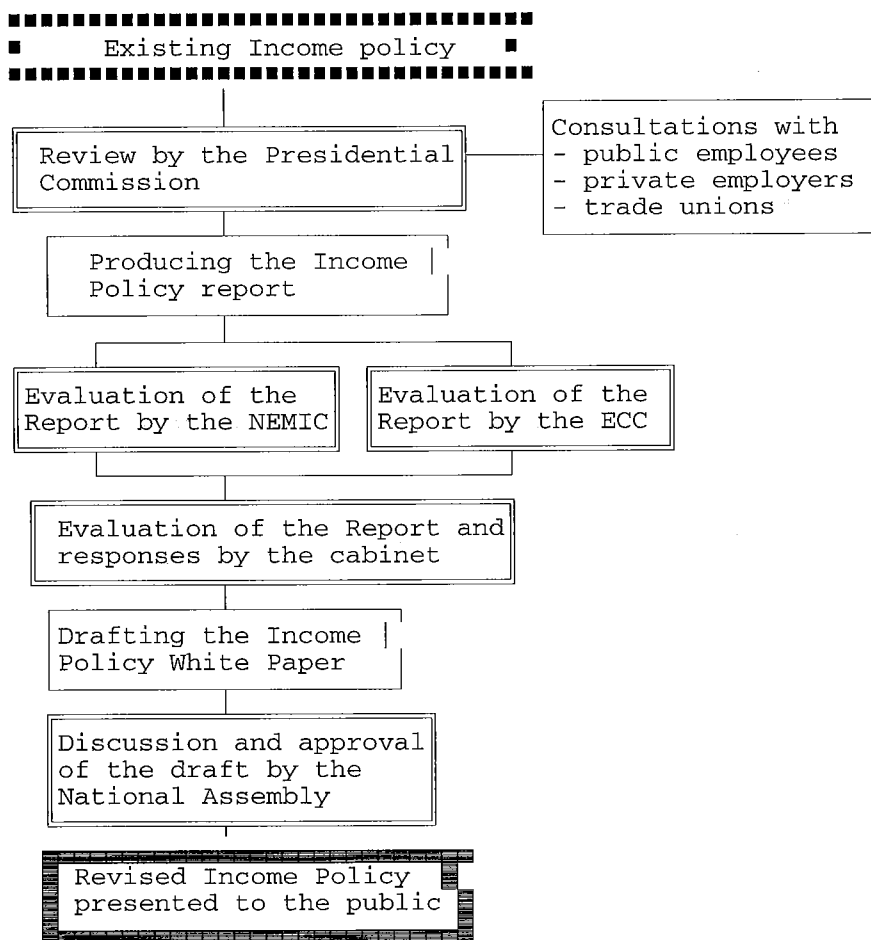
## *Revision of the Income Policy*

The revision of the Income Policy was initiated by the appointment of a Presidential Commission in February 1989. The Commission was chaired by the Minister of External Affairs, and comprised two MPs from the ruling party (one was eight months later appointed Assistant Minister of Finance and Development Planning), three civil servant representatives, two representatives from the parastatal sector, one from the civil service association, two from the trade unions, two from the private employers, one from the "industrial class", two from the rural sector, and two individual members. The latter were both well known scholars on Botswana economics and politics. One of these, Charles Harvey, has for a period been affiliated to the Bank of Botswana as an expatriate, and since the early 1980s been engaged regularly as a consultant to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Expatriate participation in Botswana policy-making had thus not been abrogated in the late 1980s. It should also be noted that one of the parastatal representatives was the Governor of the Bank of Botswana, a close associate of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP). The composition of the Commission revealed that this was not an independent, or non-political body. Politicians from the highest level of the ruling party were participating, and it should be noticed that the MFDP had been given a key-position in the revision of the Income Policy from its initial stage.

One may view the Commission as a policy-making arena where it might have been possible for various groups affected by the policy to exercise leverage. It is therefore necessary to focus on how the Commission gathered information about how the existing Income Policy was perceived, and whether or not various groups wanted it to be changed. The Commission used four methods to gather information and assess the general knowledge and perception of the existing Income Policy: (1) visiting major centres of Botswana, and taking oral evidence in public sessions, (2) consultations with invited organisations, (3) request of written submissions from interested individuals and organisations, and (4) special background studies and reviews of incomes related studies already undertaken. The Commission received oral submissions from 250 individuals and organisations. Approximately half of these came from white collar employees in the public and parastatal sectors, followed by contributions from private employers and representatives from the trade unions (RoB 1990a:Appendix C). The latter was, however, dominated by the union of the parastatal workers and only twelve representatives from other trade unions were interviewed. I should also point out that only fourteen politicians at the district level were interviewed and only one representative

from the opposition parties contributed. In addition, the Commission received twenty-six written submissions from various organisations, but none from political parties. The consultations undertaken reveal that the Commission was biased towards the question of salaries for white collar employees. It was less concerned with the questions, also given in its terms of reference, concerning the poorer segments of the population (i.e. the applicability of the Poverty Datum Line as a guideline for the minimum wages and the questions about housing rents). This suggests that although the trade unions and the “industrial class” had been represented in the Commission and consulted, members of this group had seemingly not been in a position to push their concerns to the forefront on the agenda.

Figure 6.1  
Revision of the Income Policy: February 1989-September 1990



The trade union representatives in the Commission took exception to some of the main recommendations in the final report, i.e. the emphasis by the majority of the Commission members on the need for allowing higher

salaries for civil servants, which would widen income differentials. The trade union representatives claimed that too large differences between the highest and lowest pay were immoral. Their attitude towards continuing the policy of wage restraint for the lower levels of employees was in the report referred to as follows (RoB 1990a:63):

They argued that Batswana workers have borne the brunt of the Policy and have subsidized the economy. In the past they were willing to live with severe wage restraint in the interest of national development. However, they are now of the opinion that they have sacrificed enough. At the same time, they are doubtful of what was gained by this sacrifice. In their view, with wage restraint came increased profits for employers, many of whom are foreigners. Unions felt that much of this money was sent out of the country, rather than being used to increase investment and employment.

In the previous chapter I concluded that tensions are growing between workers and both private employers and the state. That the new Income Policy had paid inadequate attention to the interests of this group of employees was confirmed by the strike of public sector manual workers in 1991 (section 5.4).

The Commission completed its report in March 1990, and it was subsequently considered by two advisory bodies, the National Employment, Manpower and Income Council (NEMIC), and the Economic Committee of the Cabinet (ECC), before it was formally submitted to the cabinet. The cabinet presented in September 1990 a draft white paper to the National Assembly. The draft was largely a blueprint of the Commission's report. Of the ninety-one recommendations submitted by the Commission, the government had in its white paper fully accepted half of these, amended one-third, rejected eleven, and deferred two. The amendments did not indicate any major modifications of the policy outlined by the Commission. However, some of the amendments may suggest that the government did not want to reduce its control of certain aspects of the economy as much as the Commission recommended; i.e. the Department of Labour and Social Security should continue to monitor the minimum wage, and the salaries and benefits of the parastatal sector should still be related to those in the public sector. On the other hand, there is nothing that suggests that the government envisaged itself as playing a more interventionist role in the economy than what was suggested by the Commission (see also section 3.5). This was demonstrated by the government rejecting one of the more radical recommendations made by the Commission. It was in the report recommended that all employers should be obliged to pay at least a uniform

minimum wage, and that this standard should also apply to employees in domestic service and in the agricultural sector (RoB 1990a:44). The government opposed these recommendations, and stated in its draft white paper that the minimum wage should be allowed to differ across sectors, and that introducing a minimum wage and legislation regulating working conditions in the domestic service and agricultural sector would be “unenforceable” and “impracticable” (RoB:1990b:39). Although the government altered some of proposals made by the Commission, the substance of the report had in general been maintained.

### *A consultative process?*

At this stage one might have expected that the Report had been distributed to the various affected groups (e.g. employers and trade unions). When presenting the draft white paper to the National Assembly, the government (RoB 1990b:1) claimed, with reference to the involvement of the ECC and NEMIC, that the report had been “subject to extensive consultation within and outside government.” However, several of the backbenchers in the National Assembly lodged complaints about the composition of the Commission and how the report had been subjected to consultation after it was released. It was lamented in the debate that the same people had been involved in all the stages of the policy-making process; from the preparation of the report, to assessing the recommendations and finally drafting the white paper (Mr. B.Temane, 11.09.90). One MP complained that the political parties, even the ruling party (BDP), had not been asked to discuss the Incomes Policy (Mr. G.Matlabapiri, 03.09.90). Similar criticism was expressed by the Botswana Federal Trade Union, which complained that the report had not been sent to the trade unions for consultations before it was debated in the National Assembly (*Mmegi*, 21-27 September 1990). In responding to this criticism, the Assistant Minister of Finance and Development Planning claimed in the National Assembly that the commission had published a request for written evidence in the newspapers (Mr. D.N.Magang, 13.10.90). I will below briefly discuss the role of the two advisory bodies, the ECC and the NEMIC, and ask if it is justified or not to look upon these as genuine channels of consultation.

The first National Employment, Manpower and Incomes Council (NEMIC) was established in 1972 after the adoption of the first Income Policy. NEMIC was initially a tripartite body, constituted by representatives from the government and parastatals, the private sector employers and workers (RoB 1972). The secretariat of NEMIC has since 1980 been provided by the Employment Policy Unit in the Ministry of Finance and

Development Planning, and chaired by its Assistant Minister. The Council has, after a major review in 1981, met regularly (three times each year), and played an important role in the annual salary adjustments not least because the wage adjustment given to the lower levels in the public sector to a large extent has been followed by the private and parastatal sectors. However, the report of the Commission concluded that the organisation of NEMIC had many shortcomings and had in general not been able to fulfil its envisaged role. Among others, the representatives from the private and parastatal sectors in the Commission complained that NEMIC was biased in favour of the interest of the government (RoB 1990a:218). As discussed in chapter 5, employees, other than civil servants, are in general not well organised. Holm (1989) claims that the advisory nature of the councils and Commissions where employees are invited to participate, and the dominant position of government officials, leads to a lack of enthusiasm about participation in such bodies. My interviews with representatives from the trade unions similarly confirmed that NEMIC is not seen as an important channel of influence. However, the NEMIC still represents an opening for the employers to articulate their views on employment issues and wage levels, and may as such be seen as a link between this segment of the society-centred forces and the state. The closeness of this forum to the institutional framework of the state makes it difficult to regard the assessment of the Income Policy report by NEMIC as a sincere attempt to seek feedback on the Income Policy from actors outside the state. This is a conclusion which seems to be strengthened by the composition of the second advisory body which was presented the Commission's report.

The Economic Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) is composed of the entire cabinet, all Permanent Secretaries, the Governor of the Bank of Botswana, and the heads of the defence and police services. The ECC is officially only a consultative body, whose object is to assure interaction of professionals, civil servants, and the politicians at the government level (RoB 1986a). The MFDP provides the secretariat for the Committee. Although the cabinet and the ECC formally are two separate policy-making forums, this separation does not seem to have been adhered to in the daily policy-making. The cabinet seldom meets on its own to discuss, and decide upon, economic policy questions; as described by one of my informants close to the government:

When the Cabinet formally is supposed to make decisions on their own, they ask the Permanent Secretaries and the Governor of the Bank of Botswana to leave the meeting room for 30 minutes. When they return, the Cabinet have usually just ratified what had been agreed upon during the ECC meeting.

The membership of the ECC (i.e. the President, 15 cabinet ministers, Permanent Secretaries and three others) in total comprises a group about two-thirds the size of the National Assembly, and larger than the group of backbenchers and opposition MPs. It is justified to argue that the ECC must thus be considered the most important policy-making forum with regard to economic policy.

The ECC represents further an important channel for the MFDP to influence the development strategy. The MFDP is strongly represented in the ECC with both its Minister and a Permanent Secretary, both of whom in reality rank higher than their colleagues in the other ministries. Through its secretarial function the MFDP may further control the agenda of the ECC. These observations taken into account, it seems rather irrelevant to claim that when the ECC discussed the Commission's Income Policy report, this was part of "extensive consultation", as stated by the government (RoB 1990b:1).

### *Involvement of the parliament*

The involvement of the legislature will here be analysed by asking how the revised Income Policy was presented to the National Assembly, how this body dealt with the draft white paper, and the outcome of this final stage of the policy-making process. Until this stage the process of revising the existing Income Policy had involved mainly actors close to the executive. And, although the politically appointed members of the executive had amended some of the recommendations presented in the commission report, the revision had so far not been exposed to open political debate. As the legislature may be seen as a linkage between society-centred forces and the state, one might have expected that the concerns of groups affected by the Income Policy would be articulated in the parliament. Hypothetically, one might have expected that the legislature would provide political input for further amendment of the recommendations presented in the initial report. However, one reason for not expecting too much from the parliamentary debate is given in an argument by Nengwekhulu, who claims that the party system in Botswana is a *de facto* one party system because of the lack of "diffusion" of parliamentary power (see also section 5.5):

The result is that legislative enactments are not a product of a concerted debate between ruling party and opposition parties. They are relatively "undiluted" products of the will of the ruling party. A substantive multiparty democracy does not only imply the existence of numerous political parties in the society but also, and this is fundamental, that these



parties should have parliamentary representation in order to create a healthy and conducive parliamentary environment in which bargaining and compromise become the seedbed of legislative enactments (Nengwekhulu 1989:2).

The draft of the white paper was presented to the representatives in the National Assembly one week ahead of the debate. Several of the backbenchers and MPs from the opposition protested, and pronounced that they found it difficult to discuss the draft because they had received it far too close to the actual debate. As one of the MPs stated:

It took thirteen months for the Commission to complete its work. The Report was presented to His Excellency the President on the 12th March, 1990 and that is over five months, Mr Speaker, since that date, five months to the day it was presented to Members of parliament. And, Mr Speaker, we have three arms in this Government. We have the Executive, we have the Parliament and we have the Judiciary and it is believed we are made to believe that Parliament is the Supreme Body in this country. (...) Now the one mistake Ministers do is, whenever they conclude whatever business in Cabinet, they feel it is a Parliament decision. And yet it is not (Mr Johnie Swartz, 06.09.90).

The backbenchers have in recent years frequently complained that the executive take them for granted, and that the National Assembly and its representatives are only used to “rubber stamp” proposals from the executive.<sup>26</sup> This was also restated by several MPs in my interviews. Considering the fact that the great majority of the MPs represent the ruling party, and forty per cent are also members of the cabinet, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect that the debates in the National Assembly itself should alter the policy of the government. However, Picard (1987:169) claims that there is a growing “radical” group of backbenchers within the government party, and it may for that reason be required to look more closely at the debate.

The debate in the National Assembly lasted two weeks. As mentioned above, several of the MPs complained about being brought into the revision of the Income Policy only in the final stage. The debate, with contributions from three-fourths of the members of the legislature, was carried through in a rather arbitrary fashion. The various speakers touched upon selected aspects of the draft in an unsystematic order. The speeches were largely

<sup>26</sup> See for example Mr.B. Temane in *Botswana Daily News*, 27 February, 1991, p.4. and Mr. G. Matlhabaphiri in *Botswana Daily News*, 4 April, 1991, p.3.

delivered unilaterally without being met by counter-arguments. The latter was only to be expected as most of the MPs expressed general support for the white paper. However, nine MPs (about one-fourth of the National Assembly membership!) complained that the Income Policy had an urban bias. It was expressed that a strategy for rural development was missing and that too little attention had been given to the problem of rural-urban migration. The Assistant Minister of Finance and Development Planning (who had also been a member of the Commission), responded that the Income Policy was primarily intended to focus on formal sector employment, and further that the government in general was committed to rural development (Mr. Magang, 13.09.90).

The debate revealed that the rural development problems are recognised by the elected politicians. But beyond demanding that "something has to be done," the politicians did not suggest concrete ways in which the government could respond more effectively to the challenges. The debate confirmed that there was a group of outspoken backbenchers (5-6) who did not desist from criticising the government. It is wrong, however, to conclude that this group represents a more radical view on the involvement of the government in the economy. The emphasis on deregulation in the report and the white paper met general support during the debate. And although some backbenchers expressed concern for the social justice aspect of the Income Policy, i.e. the need for housing subsidies or price control to reduce regional price differences, the approach of the government to this question was never really challenged:

The Government believes that, in general, policies on social welfare must take second place to any project which creates employment or increases productive rural incomes, because the latter approach will eventually achieve higher social welfare (RoB 1990b:16).

The opposition did not during the debate express any coherent alternative to the Income Policy proposed by the government. The leader of the opposition wanted to have the debate postponed, and stated that he would only make general arguments for rejecting the draft white paper (Dr.Koma, 07.09.90).<sup>27</sup> Whether deliberately or not, this seems also to have been the attitude of the three BNF representatives. Beyond emphasising the need for strengthening the role of the trade unions, and speaking in general terms of the dangers of political instability if social justice were ignored, the

<sup>27</sup> It was announced that the BNF would draft a position paper on the Incomes Policy. In December 1991, fifteen months after the debate, such a paper had still not materialised.

contributions by the opposition in the debate did only to a limited extent address specifically the proposals in the draft white paper. Considering the "socialist" profile of the BNF expressed in the *Manifesto for the General Elections 1989* (BNF 1989), the contributions to the debate reconfirms the view that the BNF is unable to translate its ideological programme into concrete policy proposals.

The Income Policy white paper finally presented to the public was identical to the draft presented to the National Assembly prior to the debate. This suggests that the National Assembly as such is not the arena where policies are made, or inputs for policy formulation are generated. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the backbenchers may be looked upon as members of the Government, and may exercise leverage on the policy-making through informal communication with the ministers, senior civil servants, through caucus meetings etc. However, considering the concerns expressed during the debate, the review of the Income Policy demonstrates that politicians outside the cabinet were only insignificantly brought into the policy-making process.

### **6.3 Some concluding remarks**

The process leading up to the revision of the Income Policy white paper confirmed that a strong state is present in Botswana. The policy-making process was centralised and quite closed to public scrutiny. The government was directly represented in the appointed Commission and several other members were close associates. Consultations were undertaken by the Commission, but there was a bias in the composition of the informants, and the various segments of the society about to be affected by the Income Policy had unequal opportunities to influence its formulation. There is nothing unusual in a government being involved in all stages of a review of its own policy, and being selective when putting together a Commission. However, the smoothness which characterised the later stages of the process before the White Paper was presented to the public, seems to be symptomatic of the nature of policy-making in Botswana. Taking into account that the implementation of the Income Policy has exacerbated tensions in Botswana society, one might have expected that if the review of the Income Policy had been more open to public scrutiny, the process would have been less smooth. More openness might have been achieved by a public debate after the government had released its draft white paper; i.e. bargaining among various organised interest groups, headlines in the newspapers, political disputes within parliament etc. Nothing of the sort took place. The National Assembly debated the white paper for two weeks,

and it was subsequently approved without a single word changed. The calmness of the policy-making process seems to be explained by two factors: (a) a deliberate tactic by the government to avoid public scrutiny; (b) the weakness of civil society and the low level of pluralism in Botswana politics.

The participation of the trade unions and private employers in the review of the Income Policy demonstrated that policy-making in Botswana is characterised to some extent by corporatism. Trade union representatives were given formal access to the process. However, their influence was insignificant, and the trade unions were not asked to comment on the draft white paper produced by the government before its tabling in parliament. The participation of the trade unions appears to be a means applied by the government to legitimise the policy-making process, and to neutralise the organisations of the workers. However, considering the weakness of the trade unions, the latter is likely to be less important.

The involvement of the legislature in the process demonstrated important aspects of Botswana politics. Although the opposition party expressed concern about the effects of the Income Policy on the poorer strata of Botswana society, the MPs from the Botswana National Front (BNF) did not use the opportunity to present an alternative policy. This lends support to the argument that the BNF, among other parties in Botswana, is in reality not representing the poorer strata of the population (Nengwekhulu 1989a/b). However, it was demonstrated that rural-urban cleavages exist within the ruling party, and although no alternative strategy was propagated, the need to give higher priority to rural development was certainly on the political agenda. The debate further demonstrated that backbenchers of the ruling party are not inhibited in criticising their own government; an observation which weakens the argument that Botswana is a *de facto* one-party state similar to that of other African countries.

The criticism expressed by the backbenchers concerning the biased nature of the Commission and the consultation process was justified. Representatives from the MFDP took part in all stages of the review. The MFDP was strongly represented in both the Commission which initially reviewed the existing Income Policy and in the bodies (i.e. ECC and NEMIC) which assessed the report and advised the government, and the ministry has a generally strong position in the cabinet. It was thus revealed that policy-making is still very centralised, even at the government level. The core policy-makers, cabinet ministers and senior civil servants, enjoy a high level of insulation in terms of not being exposed to public scrutiny before the final policy is approved by the legislature. Although the policy-makers seem to be insulated from pressures from the trade unions, the

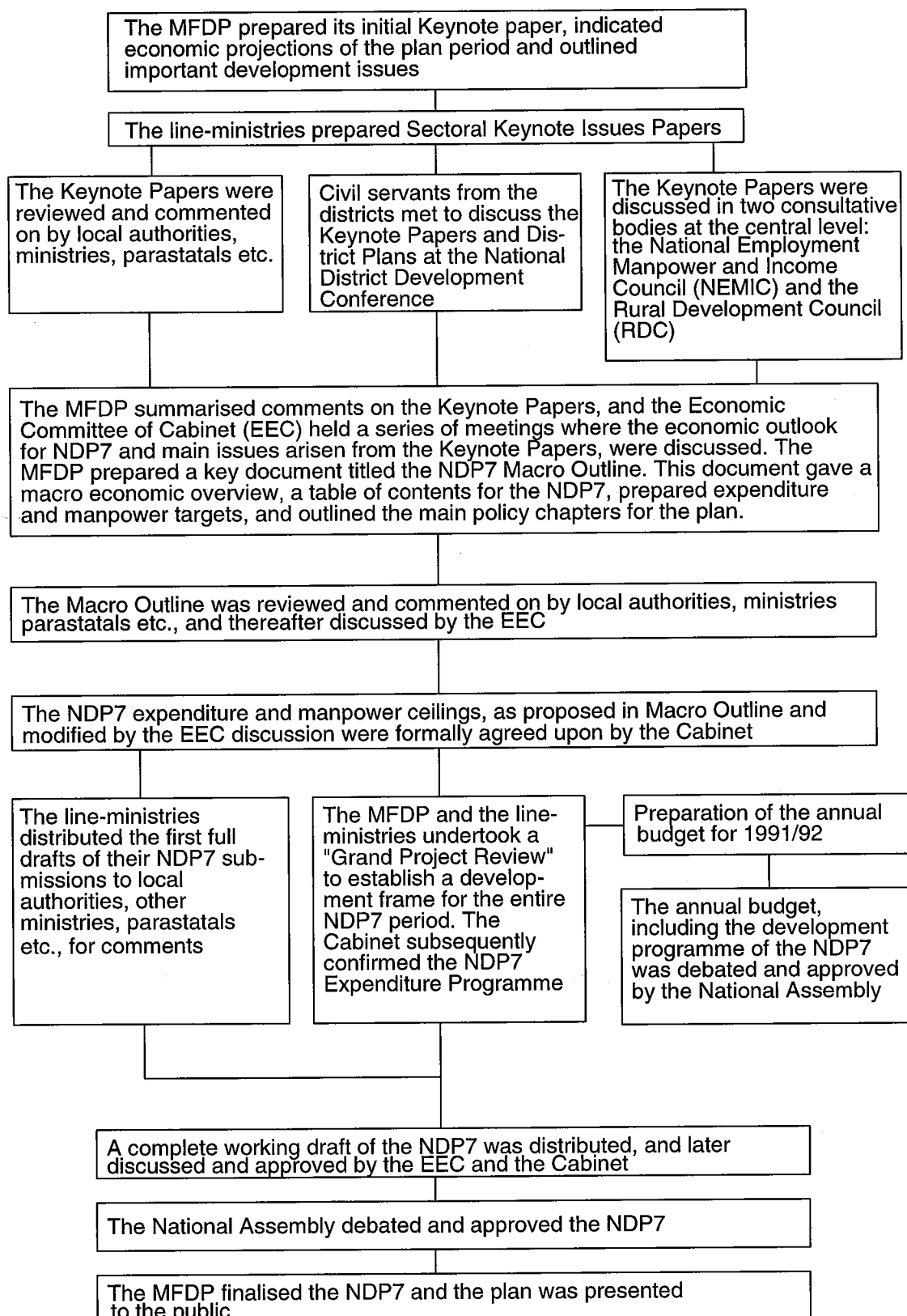
participation of the employers seems to have been more significant. Representatives from the employers in the private sector were given the same formal access to the review process as the trade unions. However, as observed in chapter 5, the private employers are strong in terms of financial and organisational resources, and are able to approach the government on an informal basis. The final white paper revealed that the new Income Policy was in consonance with the interests of the private employers. This may suggest that the private sector employers had been exercising leverage on the policy-making process — that the government lacks autonomy vis-à-vis the private sector when deciding on its development strategy. On the other hand, it would be more relevant to conclude that the interest of the private entrepreneurs was determining if the government had a more socialist profile, and had traditionally been less inclined to emphasise the necessity of a dynamic private sector in the economic development process. As concluded in chapter 3, the government decided already at independence, when the private sector was only an insignificant actor, to create favourable conditions for private entrepreneurship. In other words, the interests of the private sector and the government coincided in the late 1980s.

## **7. The policy-making process *II*: Allocation of public funds**

In this chapter I will analyse the process of drafting the seventh National Development Plan (NDP7), which covers the 1991-1997 period. While the previous chapter focused on one substantive aspect of the development strategy, namely income policy, I will here discuss how decisions regarding the level of public spending and sectoral allocations of funds are made. This aspect of the economic strategy is manifested in the development expenditure programme which is decided upon in the processes of producing the development plans and annual budgets. The main questions which will be discussed are: Who were the main participants in the planning? To what extent are district authorities incorporated in the planning process? What kind of technocratic mechanisms existed to facilitate control of the level of public spending? To what extent were the cabinet ministers able to exercise political leadership? How is power distributed among the ministries? To what extent did the members of the legislature manage to wield influence?

The drafting of the NDP7 lasted, in a technical sense, approximately 2 years. The preparation of the NDP7 included: (1) a review of the status of the different sectors in the economy; (2) outlining strategies about how to reach major development goals (e.g. the Income Policy); and (3) an updating of the project portfolio/development programme. The second aspect was discussed in the previous chapter. It is the third aspect which is focused upon here. In reality, as the recent plan is a continuation of earlier NDPs and the annual budgets, it may be more correct to say that the current NDP has been the outcome of a process initiated when Botswana gained independence in 1966. The historical outline of the economic strategy and development planning in the post-independence period, presented in chapter 3, hopefully enables some broad lines to be drawn in the concluding chapter.

Fig 7.1  
The preparation of the seventh National Development Plan — NDP7  
(August 1989-August 1991)



A point of departure for the formal drafting of the NDP7 may be August 1989, two years ahead of the debate and approval of the plan in the National Assembly. At this time the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) distributed a Keynote Policy Paper (KPP) to the different ministries. In the KPP a timetable was outlined for the preparation of the NDP7 and drafting guidelines were given. The KPP also identified a number of broad issues to be addressed by the different ministries. Below I will first present a summary of the key stages in the two year planning period, and thereafter make an assessment of the role of the main actors.<sup>28</sup> It should be kept in mind that the NDP and the annual budgets are closely linked, and that there is an overlap in the preparation of the plan and the budget.

It should be noted that the summary above gives a simplified and an idealised picture of the planning process. However, the outline depicts the realities especially in one aspect: the insignificant involvement of societal groups, and the involvement of the parliament mainly in the final stage. The outline presents the framework of the planning process mainly at the national level. Parallel, and interwoven, to planning activities which take place at the central level, are the planning activities at the district level. I will therefore first discuss the decentralised aspect of the development planning, and ask whether or not the idealised "bottom-up" description of the process, as often found in official documents and articulated by informants close to the government, conform to the realities. For example, the Minister of Works, Transport and Communication, Mr. C. Butale, stated in parliament:

...that National Development Plan VII was a result of wide consultation and a good example of down-up planning...the government properly consulted through Village Development Committees and the National Development Conference as well as Parliament at this instance. (Quoted in *Botswana Daily News*, 6 August 1991, p.4.)

## **7.1 District level planning: Decentralisation or devolution?**

How decentralised is the system intended to be? To what extent is decision-making power devoluted to local authorities? The planning process in Botswana is according to a government document (RoB 1991f:4.16):

<sup>28</sup> The summary is based on the timetable found in a minute distributed to the Planning Officers in the line-ministries (MFDP 1989), the Keynote Policy Paper (RoB 1989a), and interviews with MFDP civil servants.



“continuous, spatial, and decentralised in nature.” In terms of decentralisation of decision-making, it is not clear what this really means. On the one hand, there has been a strengthening of the administrative capacity in the districts. On the other hand, the local political authorities, the District Councils, seem only to have been delegated symbolic decision-making power.

Before independence the districts were ruled mainly by the chiefs and the colonial field administration led by the powerful District Commissioner. A post-independence strategy to reduce the power of the chiefs led among other things to the introduction of the District Councils, with both locally elected and centrally nominated councillors. However, the distribution of power which has been institutionalised 25 years after independence only ascribes to the councillors a nominal role in terms of how development funds are spent in their own districts (Egner 1987; Gasper 1990). The district administration seems to have been strengthened. The office of the District Commissioner (DC) has remained in the districts as the senior representative for the central government, it has been strengthened by the assignment of District Officers, and a system of District Development Committees (DDCs) was introduced in 1970. The DDC is meant to be a non-political advisory body, chaired by the DC, and made up by public sector representatives in the districts (i.e. civil servants dealing with health, agriculture, education etc.), some representatives from the Council, tribal administration and land-board representatives. The DDC has a central role in the preparation of the District Development Plan.

The central government has, according to Picard (1987), applied two methods to maintain central control over the District Councils. First, most of the District Council administrative staff has come under the direction of the central government. The Unified Local Government Service (ULGS), located at the Ministry of Local Government and Lands, is responsible for the recruitment, promotion, transfer and training of local authority permanent staff. An outcome of this arrangement seems to be that the loyalties of the civil servants at the district level have become biased towards the central authorities. Second, the District Councils have been given only insignificant fiscal autonomy. Most rural districts have a weak revenue base on their own, and they are thus dependent on transfers from the central Government to finance their development activities and recurrent expenditures. However, most development activities are implemented and financed directly by the central government. For example, just over five per cent of the Central government's total development expenditures were in 1988/89 channelled through District Councils (RoB 1991f:19.31).

The local authorities may attempt to influence the central level decision makers by various means: e.g. through the District Development Plans, the National District Development Conference, formal and informal communication between civil servants at central and district level, and the district's representatives (MPs) in the National Assembly. It is difficult to make a general assessment of the relative importance of these channels. There is wide variation between the different districts in terms of physical distance to the centre (Gaborone), development needs and not least capability of the individual politicians and administrative manpower. However, there are some common problems facing the different districts in their relationships with central level authorities. One of these is the insignificant power delegated to the political authorities in the districts, as discussed above. Another is caused by the shortcomings in the coordination of district and national level economic planning activities. I will below discuss the role of the District Development Plans (DDP) in the planning process at the national level.

The various districts in Botswana have since the early 1970s made efforts to prepare DDPs. The District Plans aim to serve much the same purpose at district level as the NDP at national level, i.e. the DDP presents relevant information about the district, reviews recent developments and presents projects to which the local authorities have decided to give priority. Ideally, according to the official "bottom-up" philosophy of the government, the planning-process should start at the village level, in Village Development Committees, and this village "consultation" should later be translated into projects and priorities in the DDP, coordinated by the DDC. However, according to a recent study of the planning process (Ellison 1991), and confirmed by my interviews, there are wide differences between the districts in terms of the extent of village consultation and how the DDPs are prepared. Since its beginning, the planning efforts at district level have been constrained by a general scarcity of manpower.

In addition to being a guideline for the development efforts at the district level, one official objective of district planning is to incorporate the priorities of the DDPs into the programmes of the central government (RoB 1991c:19.59). Ideally, the planners in the ministries should have the DDPs at hand when they start the preparation of the NDP. The national plan might thus have been the aggregation of the planning activities at the district level. All development projects in Botswana have to be included into the development programme of the national plan, and approved by the National Assembly. A large share of future projects is thus outlined and incorporated into the plan from the beginning of the six year planning period. This underlines why the planning activities in the districts must be

seen as an important aspect of decentralisation. However, with some exceptions, the DDPs, and the district level priorities, have only to a limited extent been incorporated into the National Development Plan. When preparing the fifth NDP (1979-85), the planners in the central ministries had DDPs available to them from most districts, and the contents of the DDPs seem to have been of some importance (Egner 1987:101). But, in 1983 after the 1983-86 DDPs had been prepared, the MFDP in reality declared them invalid because of changes in the revenue situation (Gasper 1990:248). The DDPs for the 1985-89 period were not completed before 1988, two years after the NDP6 period started, and NDP6 was thus prepared without direct input from DDPs. Although drafts of the DDPs for the 1989-95 period were not completed until 1991, preliminary drafts were circulated one year ahead of the completion of NDP7, and the DDPs seem this time to have gained some relevance.

Even if the DDPs have been given formal approval by the local political authorities, the planners in the ministries most often use them only as "working-papers". Parallel to the preparation of the DDPs, the line ministries are planning projects and programmes which will be located in specific districts. Allocation of development funds to districts will thus often be more a matter of the priorities of different government development programmes than the contents of the DDPs. This implies, for example, that even if a District Council has given priority to expansion of a local clinic, it might be allocated funds for increasing the number of classrooms, years before the Ministry of Health decides to improve the health facilities. The government openly admits that ineffective coordination of planning activities at district and central level is a problem. It has been stated that efforts will be made in the future to ensure that the periods covered by the NDP and DDPs coincide (RoB 1991f:463).

The National District Development Conference (NDDC) may be seen as part of the efforts to coordinate the development activities at the district and central level. Civil servants from the districts and the central level meet at the Conference to discuss various development related issues. NDDCs were held annually until 1989, but thereafter every second year. The main topic of the NDDCs varies, but when coinciding with the preparation of the NDPs, the Conferences seem to be focused on specific issues related to the plan. The Conference produces resolutions which are distributed to the ministries. As figure 7.1 reveals, the NDDC held in 1989 was part of the initial preparation of the NDP7. Resolutions were made at this Conference concerning planning, coordination and decentralisation, development policies, and particular needs in the various districts (Ellison 1990:annex J). That the NDDC is a forum for civil servants and thus within the

administrative sphere was confirmed by the content of the majority of the resolutions (RoB 1989c:134-143). Only a couple of the resolutions were related to issues beyond the administrative sphere (i.e. minimum wage for farm workers and incentives for entrepreneurs in rural areas). As the participants at the Conference are the same as those who are engaged in the preparation of the district plans, the gathering thus represents an opportunity for district authorities to influence the content of the development programme found in the national plan. When I asked a random selection of participants at the NDDC in November 1991 about how important they regarded the Conference held in 1989 to be as part of the preparation of the NDP7, I was given the impression that the Conference itself was seen as a channel for influence equivalent in importance to the ordinary communication between the district authorities and the central government.<sup>29</sup>

The above discussion has shown that the planning and decision making processes that take place at the district level cannot be ignored, although the system does not function as intended. Consultation is made by the various ministries, and the information produced during the preparation of the District Development Plans serves as inputs for the central level planners. However, the ministries decide how they will use the information and feedback received from the district level. Beyond being a source for information, the local authorities are insignificantly involved in the final stages of the NDP preparation. One may conclude that the consultations undertaken by the central government make it correct to say the planning process is decentralised. However, formal decision-making has continued to be centralised, and I find it justified to question the official "bottom-up" description of the planning process.

## **7.2 Some technocratic mechanisms for expenditure control**

As concluded in chapter 3, the planners in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning emphasise the need to restrain the growth of development expenditures so that the recurrent costs generated by new projects do not exceed the planned growth of recurrent expenditures. The government has demonstrated its capability to reduce the level of spending

<sup>29</sup> At the NDDC meeting on the 27 November 1991, I was able to ask 13 participants about what they considered the influence of the district authorities to be on the content of the seventh NDP. The respondents were asked to evaluate the relative importance of: (a) the 1989 NDDC itself; (b) responses given to the Keynote Papers distributed by the central Government; (c) the District Development Plan itself.

when the revenue situation deteriorates. In other words, the administrative and political frameworks in Botswana seem to have built-in mechanisms militating against unchecked growth of public expenditure. According to the government it has been an objective to make the planning system in Botswana flexible and adaptable to changes in the environment:

...many of the variables affecting development opportunities in Botswana, such as mineral prices, external barriers to trade, and rainfall, are not subject to Government control. Hence, planning must be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances of this kind (RoB 1991c:4.7).

The development expenditure programme (the development programme) is the aggregate of projects and subsidy programmes found in the National Development Plan. The development programme is technically organised in various sectoral programmes which reflect the portfolio of the ministries. The NDP presents, within a six-year horizon, estimated costs of the various projects in the development programme, and expenditure ceilings for the sectoral programmes. The politics involved in development planning may both be seen as an illustration of how public funds are distributed among the various sectors, and how the total level of public spending is decided upon.

The distribution of funds has in the recent years been characterised by incrementalism. The development programme introduced at the beginning of the NDP period, and subsequently approved annually, after the budget debate, is largely a continuation of projects which already have been adopted; i.e. of the 206 development projects proposed in the 1991/92 budget, 183 had been adopted in previous plans (RoB 1991e:19). It is difficult to terminate the implementation of a project after its initial phase has been completed, and public funds have already been spent. In other words, the possibility to make radical political decisions to alter the pattern of public expenditure seems in recent years to have become constrained by this incrementalism. However, within the development programme it is possible to accelerate the implementation of certain projects, and postpone others. The substantial spending on arable agriculture in the 1980s demonstrated that although the development programme is tied-up by the established project portfolio, it was possible for the politicians to alter the priorities within the programme (see chapter 3). In brief, the current level of public spending seems to be the outcome of a mixture of technocratic assessments, formal mechanisms, and political inputs. Considering the insignificant fiscal autonomy of the district level authorities, it seems

justified to focus further on the planning and budget processes at the central level.

The annual development budget is an important mechanism in the spending strategy. The budget may be looked upon as the proportion of the NDP scheduled for a particular financial year. However, although the NDP is the starting point for the annual budgets, the budgets may as well be seen as an annual updating of the plan. The development budget includes revised estimates of the development expenditures five years ahead. The annual "Project Review" makes it possible, during the planning period, to increase the level of the estimated costs for existing projects, and incorporate new projects into the NDP. A comprehensive Mid-Term Review of the plan is also undertaken half way into the NDP period.

A point of departure for the economic planners in the MFDP is projections produced by the macroeconomic model MEMBOT (RoB 1991f:3.36). This model provides forecasts for the whole economy's output, prices, employment, foreign trade etc. Based on the MEMBOT projections, estimates of expected costs of existing and planned projects, and an assessment of the manpower needs, the MFDP estimates three main ceilings for the public economy at large:

- The skilled manpower ceiling.
- The recurrent expenditure ceiling.
- The development expenditure ceiling.

These ceilings are the basis for the distribution of funds and manpower to the different sectors of the economy — the provision of ministerial ceilings. The budget ceilings found in the final NDP are the outcomes of an inter-ministerial bargaining process which starts with the resource guidelines assigned to the sectoral ministries from the MFDP, officially through the NDP Macro Outline. Isaksen (1981:35) describes this "budget game" as follows:

The ministries are fighting to increase their budget allocation, partly between themselves but with common front against MFDP to increase the overall budget ceiling. One of the tactics of this game is *overplay*, MFDP stressing the desperate shortage of finance and ministries the desperate need for increased resources to their own fields.

The annual budgets and the NDP are interlinked, but their formal status is different. The development programme found in the NDP is not a formal authorisation for spending public funds on projects. Since detailed

preparation and appraisal of a project's technical and economic feasibility are required before approval of funds by the MFDP, inclusion in the NDP does not guarantee implementation during the plan period. The NDP is a device applied by the government to its development efforts, but it is indicative only (see also section 3.4). The authorisation for the ministries to spend money is made through the approval by the National Assembly of the annual budget, or Supplementary Estimates during the financial year, and thereafter warrants issued by the MFDP.

Although projects can be incorporated into the NDP through the annual budget, inclusion of a project in the NDP from its inception increases the likelihood for a project to be realised. The supporters and those who will benefit from a project will therefore like to see "their" project as part of the NDP. There is here a potential conflict between the sponsors of a individual project, i.e. local authorities or external donors, which may want the project implemented as soon as possible, and the government which has to consider the recurrent cost implication of a project. The annual budget may thus be seen as a mechanism for reconciling such conflicts. To keep the budget decisions centralised seems furthermore to be a tool consciously applied by the government to control the level of public spending.

In the previous chapter it was observed that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is powerful in the process of defining the development strategy in substantive terms. The MFDP seems to be in a similar position in terms of controlling the level of expenditure. The actual disbursement of public funds illustrates this role. There are several conditions which have to be met before the MFDP issues a warrant for project expenditures. Among others (RoB 1986a:3-9):

- (a) The project must be approved by the National Assembly and be part of the Plan; either appearing in the NDP from its inception, or subsequently incorporated via the annual Development or Supplementary Estimates.
- (b) The project must have been appraised by the MFDP and found viable.
- (c) The expenditure must be part of the approved annual budget (the Appropriation Bill), or approved by the National Assembly by a resolution (Supplementary Estimates)

This system ensures that the individual ministries do not spend more than allowed by their ministerial ceiling. However, the warrants also represent an effective tool for the MFDP to reduce the level of spending if necessary.

The warrants for recurrent expenditures are normally issued for the whole financial year. However, when the government decided to reduce the expenditure growth in 1982 (see chapter 3), this was accomplished by the MFDP warranting only 80 per cent of the approved Recurrent Estimates (RoB 1986a:3-4). Expenditure control through the issuing of warrants is even more effective in terms of development expenditure. To release funds for projects the line ministry in question must request the MFDP for a finance warrant covering each project. The MFDP may withhold the issuing of warrants for development projects as a means of keeping expenditure down. But the system also accords the MFDP power to block implementation of a project if it is not in accordance with project criteria set by the ministry (e.g. cost recovery). The power of the MFDP to influence the profile of the development programme can also be illustrated by its monopoly to negotiate funding of projects with external donors.

As argued in chapter 2, coherence of the state's institutions seems to be one aspect which may contribute to insulation from societal pressures. By supervising the line ministries through the MFDP, the government seemingly ensures that a pattern of patron-client relationships does not develop, and consequently hinders uncontrolled growth of public spending. The power formally vested in the MFDP concerning the use of public funds may thus be seen as an important factor contributing both to budgetary discipline, and to coherence of public administration. I will below further elaborate to what extent the line ministries have financial autonomy or not.

### **7.3 Planning activities within the line ministries**

Although national development planning is a portfolio responsibility of the MFDP, each ministry has its own planning capacity, and is primarily responsible for their respective sectoral chapters in the NDP. It seems that the individual ministries have some autonomy in regard to the priority of projects within their respective sectors. The line ministries are, however, linked to the MFDP through the Planning Officers cadre. This is an institutional arrangement of having economists formally employed by the MFDP deployed at different ministries. These Planning Officers (POs) are to a large extent integrated in the tasks undertaken by the economists in the individual ministries, but they also meet regularly the POs from the other ministries and the MFDP senior officers in "the Weekly Planning Officers Meeting". This intermediary position of the POs contributes to administrative coherence, and to the achievement of a high level of realism in the sectoral planning. On the other hand, the POs seem to feel some



loyalty towards their "host" ministry, and assist in the struggle (the "budget game") of the line ministry to get approved budgets as large as possible.

As shown in fig.7.1 above, the preparation of the sectoral plans is a step-by-step process, starting with the Keynote Papers, followed by the negotiation of budget ceilings with the MFDP, and the preparation of working drafts of the sectoral chapters, which after being completed are presented to the cabinet and the National Assembly. The procedure has been that the ministries should distribute their drafts to other ministries, local authorities, parastatals etc., during the planning process, and continually incorporate the feedback into the sectoral plans. The process is, however, running less smoothly than fig.7.1 may suggest. Officials interviewed in the MFDP complained that the line ministries seldom manage to meet their deadlines, and time is often insufficient to consult relevant actors. On the other hand, it was maintained by civil servants in the line ministries that they receive no comments when they succeed in distributing drafts; they do get some from the MFDP but only an insignificant number from other ministries or from district level authorities. Adding to this observation the weaknesses of district planning, it seems justified to conclude that the individual ministries to a large extent are insulated vis-à-vis actors other than the MFDP. However, within its financial frames the individual line ministry also seems to have some autonomous room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis the latter.

As long as a ministry complies with its expenditure ceilings, it is allowed to reallocate funds among approved projects. Although the ministry is not allowed to exceed the Total Estimated Cost (TEC) of the individual project during the plan period (RoB 1986a), there is some allowance for ministers to make political decisions within their own ministries. The individual ministers seem in general to have some influence over the priority of projects within their ministries. Especially when it has to be decided which new projects to include in the development programmes, the ministers often have the final word.<sup>30</sup> My interviews revealed that ministers insist on accelerating the implementation of certain projects, even when this is against the advice of the civil servants in the ministry. Politicians outside a particular ministry, both ministers and backbenchers, occasionally also attempt to influence decision-making inside the ministry, by directly approaching the minister or higher level civil servants. It is difficult to estimate the extent of such activities. However, compared to the policy-making in many other African countries, the politicians in Botswana seem

<sup>30</sup> This observation is based on interviews with Planning Officers in the MFDP, MLGL, MOA, MCI and MOH.

only rarely to force through projects or programmes which are not economically feasible.<sup>31</sup>

The influence of the minister over the sectoral plan will depend among other things on the nature of the relationship between the ministers and senior civil servants, the institutional framework of the individual ministry, and the personality and competence of the minister. Some ministries in Botswana are known to be more influential than others, and have traditionally been assigned the most experienced or competent ministers (e.g. the MFDP and the MLGL). The appointment of assistant ministers seem further to strengthen the individual ministries; The Ministry of Local Government and Lands (MLGL) has at the moment two assistant ministers, the Ministry of Agriculture and the MFDP both have one. Although the number of political appointees within the individual ministries reflect its functional needs, it seems likely, for example, that the core group of political executives in the MLGL (three ministers) is more capable of exercising political leadership than the majority of the ministries which have one minister only.

In the previous chapters I have discussed to what extent the ministers are being dominated by the civil servants or not. I have argued that the ministers to some extent are effective in exercising political leadership. Although the development planning is an activity in which much of the decision-making has to be delegated to the administrative sphere, the political executive is still extensively involved in the process as well. Authorisation by the cabinet is needed regularly at the various stages of the planning process (see fig.7.1); e.g. the cabinet has to approve the Macro Outline for the NDP, and the Planning Officers need authorised preliminary ceilings as guidelines for the budgets. The cabinet is an important arena for final bargaining between the ministers concerning the ministerial budget ceilings. Examples were given in chapter 3 on how several aspects of the development strategy pursued after independence may be seen as politically motivated. It seems that the cabinet is able to make autonomous decisions if it finds it politically necessary to do so. Compared with Gunderson's (1970) characteristic of policy making as a process dominated by expatriate civil servants, the relationship between the administrative and political spheres seems recently to have become more balanced. It is seemingly wrong to conceptualise the activity of the cabinet as basically political, and that of the administration as being involved with only "technical" matters. As argued in chapter 4, there is a close cooperation between the cabinet

<sup>31</sup> The ARAP programme may be one example of "political" considerations taking precedence of economic viability (Børhaug 1992a/b; see also chapter 2).

ministers and the civil servants. The senior civil servants seems to be closely incorporated in the decision-making of the executive.

The Economic Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) is, as discussed earlier, an important forum for making economic policies, and a channel for MFDP influence. As fig.7.1 shows, the ECC met regularly during the preparation of the NDP7. The economic outlook for the NDP period was discussed, and the ECC presented the cabinet recommendations concerning policy issues and budget ceilings. However, I concluded in the analysis on the Income Policy, that the delineation between the ECC as an advisory body and the cabinet as the formal decision-maker was blurred in daily policy-making. Through my interviews I was given the impression that the cabinet itself seldom amended the "recommendations" reached in the ECC concerning use of public funds. This observation strengthens the argument that the ECC may be seen as the *de facto* arena for deciding on government's economic policy. By its strong position in the ECC, the MFDP is thus also at the political level in a privileged position to have its views concerning economic policy adopted. One should be careful, however, not to underestimate the power and integrity of the individual ministers. A majority of the ministers in the current cabinet have experience as civil servants at the central level. Considering also their long terms in office, it is further justified to conclude that reciprocity rather than dominance characterises the relationship between the ministers and the senior civil servants.

#### **7.4 Development planning: a political activity without politicians?**

By claiming above that the cabinet ministers exercise political leadership, the answer to the question in the heading above is obviously no. However, I argued in chapter 4 that the executive both numerically and constitutionally seems to be in a strong position vis-à-vis the legislature. I further suggested that the legislature does not represent a challenge to the insulation of the key policy-makers, which in turn maintains the strength of the Botswana state. I will below first discuss what role the National Assembly and its representatives played in the final stages of the preparation of the Budget for 1991/92 and the seventh National Development Plan (1991-97), and thereafter present some further aspects of the relationships between the representatives of the ruling party in the legislature and the executive, and the position of the opposition. As the development programme and the allocation of public funds to the different

sectors reflect the priorities of the government, one might expect political cleavages when the budget and the development plans are debated.

Five months before the NDP7 debate, the National Assembly approved the annual budget for 1991/92. This was the budget for the first year covered by the NDP7 period, and as such included estimates for projects to be part of the NDP7. The National Assembly thus gave an initial approval of the NDP7 development expenditure programme, without having discussed this in the light of the totality of the Plan. This might have constrained the manoeuvrability of the MPs when the development programme later was to be decided upon in the NDP7 debate.<sup>32</sup>

Some of the backbenchers complained in my interviews that prior to the budget debate the ministers and senior civil servants had presented the budget to them in a technocratic way, which did not facilitate "meaningful" participation of the elected politicians. The backbenchers and opposition MPs were in addition facing some constitutional barriers. The possibility for the representatives in the National Assembly to amend the proposed budget was constrained by the *Standing Orders* (RoB n.d.,p.28). It was not possible for the representatives to amend the total size of a ministerial ceiling; i.e. propose a general increase in spending on the agricultural sector or cut military expenditures by reducing the budget for the Office of the President (see *Botswana Daily News*, 26 November 1991, p.4). To what extent an awareness of this constrained the involvement of the individual MP is unclear, but it seems plausible to say that the formal constraint has contributed to the definition of the division of labour which has evolved between the cabinet and the National Assembly after independence.

The debate confirmed that the elected representatives are mainly concerned with the problems and needs in their own constituencies, e.g. water supply or construction of roads. The MPs were insignificantly concerned with "macro-economic" questions like, for example, diversification of the economy or the financial situation, even when this was put on the agenda by the ministers; as lamented by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning during the debate:

<sup>32</sup> Objections to this practice from an MP were overruled for the reason that the budget figures were merely estimated costs and not actual costs of projects to be undertaken. The 23 new projects for the NDP7 period could, according to the MFDP, be open to further modification, adoption or rejection in the later NDP7 debate (*Botswana Daily News*, 27 February 1991, p.4 and 4 March 1991, p.3).

...Members of Parliament, cognisant of the needs in their constituents, seemed to have totally ignored the message that this is a deficit budget as illustrated by the dramatic drop in exports between 1989 and 1990 with revenues rising much more slowly than expenditures...Mr Mogae also complained that MPs had proceeded to make more demands and did not address themselves at all to an adverse development nor express thoughts on what should be done about it. He reminded Parliament that action must be taken to address the trend of higher expenditure and lower revenue, warning: 'If tax measures are resorted to, MPs should not say they had not been consulted.'(quoted in *Botswana Daily News*, 4 March 1991, p.3)

The debate on the seventh National Development Plan (NDP7) followed a similar pattern as that on the budget. Prior to the debate, which lasted nearly two months, the government gathered all MPs for a seminar (a caucus), and the ministers presented an outline of the main objectives and priorities of the development expenditure programme for the six year period. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning initiated the debate in the National Assembly with a general presentation, and in the following weeks the individual sections were presented, debated and approved by the MPs. The debate was not a debate *per se*, but mainly comments and questions raised by the MPs, which were followed by answers from the responsible ministers. Again, most of the questions pointed to specific problems and needs in the constituencies (i.e. complaints about the provision of public services, the quality of roads, telecommunication facilities, and water supply), often with reference to specific development programmes in the NDP.<sup>33</sup> However, the debate also revealed that the backbenchers are concerned, or at least aware of, more general development policy questions like disparity between urban and rural development, lack of coordination between the various ministries or the role of a public finance institution (i.e. the Botswana Development Cooperation). As in the analysis of the Income Policy debate, it was again observed that there is a faction of backbenchers especially concerned with rural problems. However, alternatives to the existing policy were not presented. The different sections of the Plan were at the end of the day unanimously approved by the representatives. Although the opposition (BNF) expressed concern for the poorer sections of the population (i.e. poor peasants in the communal areas, school leavers or the provision of

<sup>33</sup> The main source for assessing the nature of the questions raised in the parliament has been various *Notice* and *Order Papers* which present the agenda for the meetings of the Legislature.

subsidised housing), the substance of the development strategy in itself was insignificantly criticised and no major policy alternatives were presented.

The Assistant Minister in the MFDP promised in his closing remarks of the debate that the final editing of the plan prior to publication would take the issues raised into account, although he stressed that the debate to a large extent was mostly relevant to the implementation of the Plan (*Botswana Daily News*, 18 September 1991). Comparing the draft NDP7 and the final version presented to the public after the approval by the National Assembly (RoB 1991c & 1991f), it is clear that the debate in the legislature did not produce any visible changes in the content of the plan. It may thus be justified to conclude that the legislators are in fact mere "rubberstamps", and that the main role of the debate in the National Assembly is to legitimise the government's decisions. However, two observations make me doubt that the debate was only symbolic. First, a large number of questions were raised by the MPs concerning specific sections of the plan. The two months of the debate represented a very busy time for the civil servants in the various ministries, preparing answers for the questions asked by the MPs. The ministers were called to the floor continuously. Although many of the questions seemed trivial and parochial, the ministers and the bureaucracy were still called to account on several important matters. This mechanism of accountability, although not constituting a real challenge to the political power of the government, may be seen as an important contribution to making the government responsive to real needs. Second, and related to the latter point, although the total ministerial ceilings of the development programme were not changed, the individual MPs may still have been successful in directing the attention of the various ministries to particular needs in his or her constituency. Several of the projects or subsidy programmes in the development programme are not targeted for particular locations, and the NDP debate thus represents an arena for lobbying for funds to the various constituencies. In other words, the effects of the NDP debate may be found in the subsequent annual budgets.

It should again be kept in mind that the legislators also might have provided inputs for the NDP7 prior to the debate by their involvement in the annual budget process and the revision of government policies. Although I concluded in the previous chapter that the Income Policy debate as such did not alter the policy proposal of the executive, it can not be ruled out that alternative channels of influence have been open to the backbenchers. This issue will be discussed in the more general analysis of relationships between the legislature and the executive below.

From the discussion of the involvement of the MPs in the production of the annual budgets and the NDP7, it seems like a division of labour has

been institutionalised whereby the administration and the ministers formulate the policies and decide the priorities of the development programme, while the backbenchers represent a source of information, and legitimise the decisions made by the government as well as advocating constituency interests. The presence of a dynamic system of parliamentary committees might have strengthened the capacity of the legislature to influence the government's policies. Although the National Assembly appoints a Finance Committee, consisting of six MPs, this forum has insignificant influence on how the National Assembly deals with economic policy issues.<sup>34</sup> It is the duty of the Committee to make recommendations on proposals involving supplementary expenditure from public funds, but this is usually just a symbolic endorsement, and the Committee is not involved in the preparation of the NDP or the annual budget. One of the MPs admitted in one of my interviews that he preferred to "save" his arguments for the debate in the National Assembly, instead of exposing them in the Finance Committee meetings. There are several other parliamentary committees, but none of these are functioning well. A general problem seems to be the absence of a clearly defined terms of reference for the committees.<sup>35</sup>

The rapid economic development in Botswana has made economic policy-making more complex. Although the MPs have become more experienced (see table 7.1 below), and probably upgraded their competence, it has become increasingly difficult for MPs to counter the "technocratic" lead of the civil servants and the cabinet ministers. Another countervailing force, however, seems to be that the development of the planning system may have made the economy more predictable. But the MPs have poor general working conditions. The backbenchers stated in my interviews that they often are given insufficient time to prepare themselves before the debates, policy documents are distributed late, and secretarial assistance and research facilities are lacking.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The opposition by its leader Dr. Koma, had even the chairmanship of this committee in 1991.

<sup>35</sup> The National Assembly decided in November 1991 to make a major review of the Standing Order of the Assembly. In his presentation of this proposal, Mr. B.Temane requested that especially the committee system had to be revised (*The Gazette*, 27 November 1991, p.1)

<sup>36</sup> The MPs are given an allowance for secretarial assistance, but this is neither sufficient to employ anybody on a permanent basis, nor is office space available. For example, the MPs have to borrow the telephone in the library to make important calls, and the administrative staff at the National Assembly are often requested to assist the MPs in preparing their speeches.

Table 7.1  
Seniority of the politicians when taking up office  
(average number of years in parliament and/or cabinet)

Year of entering	1969	1974	1979*	1984	1989
All members of parliament (MPs)**	2,9	6,0	7,6	9,7	9,6
The cabinet members;					
- experience as minister	3,0	4,0	5,7	8,1	8,8
- experience as MP	3,3	5,8	7,6	10,7	11,1
Backbenchers	3,1	6,0	7,1	11,4	9,0
Opposition MPs	1,7	6,6	11,3	0	5,0

\*Figures adjusted for Khama's death in 1980. \*\* The parliament includes the President, cabinet members, and members of the National Assembly only (Backbenchers and opposition MPs).

Source: Calculations based on various *Parliamentarian Reports (Hansards)*.

As noted above, the debates in the National Assembly appear in themselves not to alter the policies presented by the government. Several backbenchers confirmed in my interviews that amendments in general are difficult to get incorporated into policy documents and bills. However, there seem to exist alternative channels for the backbenchers to put forward amendments prior to the debates in the legislature.<sup>37</sup> All MPs of the ruling party, both backbenchers and ministers, gather regularly in caucus meetings during the sessions of the National Assembly.<sup>38</sup> During these meetings the ministers informally present economic policies, new projects etc., and the backbenchers may openly express their viewpoints. The ministers are assisted by civil servants to brief the MPs in detail on specific issues, and to respond to arguments which are put forward. The backbenchers also present problems and needs in their constituencies, and the caucus is as such an important forum for the representatives to draw attention to problems in their districts. The caucus may be seen as a forum where all

<sup>37</sup> After a bill proposal has been read in the National Assembly, and published in the *Gazette*, it cannot normally be read a second time before 30 days have passed (RoB: *Standing Orders*, n.d.). During this period it is possible for MPs to prepare amendments, meet the ministers informally etc. One MP told me that the BDP backbenchers occasionally, indirectly or directly, made threats to vote against proposals of the ministers, if their advice or objections were not taken into account.

<sup>38</sup> The BDP MPs met twice a week during the session in November 1991.



the BDP MPs meet on an equal footing to make the backbenchers identify themselves with the government. Furthermore, it is an important tool for the cabinet to “soften up” the backbenchers in cases of controversial issues in order to preserve a harmonious picture of the ruling party. When the debates seemingly reflect a consensus on major issues concerning economic strategy, this may indicate that dissenters have been disciplined in the party caucus, or that compromises have been made informally between the cabinet and the backbenchers prior to the debate.

By meeting regularly in their own caucus, the backbenchers also gain some collective strength vis-à-vis the executive. During these meetings they put forward problems in their constituencies which they want to present to the ministers, and discuss strategies on how to go ahead, and make deals about mutually supporting each other. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the backbenchers constitute a “bloc” in opposition to their government. The backbenchers generally identify themselves with the government. When they make critical utterances in the debates, this seems partly to be a tactic of the ruling party in trying to pre-empt the opposition (the BNF) by expressing arguments they expect from that side in order to neutralise it. This may have been demonstrated in the Income Policy debate when some of the MPs from the ruling party expressed concern for poverty and social justice. It has not been uncommon that backbenchers who have been among the most active critics of the cabinet, have later been appointed to ministerial posts. For example, two of the MPs who had been most active and critical during the Income Policy debate, Mr.B.K. Temane and Mr.Roy Blackbeard, became members of the cabinet in March 1992.

It was observed in the parliamentary debates that members of the opposition (currently the three BNF MPs) in fact do not utilise their seats in the National Assembly either to criticise the government to any degree, or to present policy alternatives. This is certainly related to the opposition’s small size, which has hindered it from wielding any influence on national level politics throughout the whole post-independence period. But, it seems reasonable to question whether the present BNF MPs actually represent any alternative development strategy at all.

Reference was made to Hopkins (1979) in chapter 2, who observed that MPs in Kenya and Tanzania had important roles in policy-making, despite being without *de facto* decision-making power. By linking the countryside to the central governments, the MPs contributed to development in the rural constituencies. The Batswana MPs seem to perform a similar role. The MPs are well aware of the conditions and needs in different areas of Botswana. The great majority of the MPs represent rural constituencies, where they also reside between the meetings in parliament. Both the ministers and the

backbenchers frequently visit their constituencies.<sup>39</sup> During these travels they meet with the local authorities, the traditional leaders (i.e. the chiefs and their headmen) and they address ordinary people in meeting places like the *Kgotla* or *Freedom Squares* (see chapter 5). Regular meetings with local BDP members are important for the MPs of the ruling party. During their visits the MPs talk about the projects already in progress, planned government programmes which will benefit the district, and present government policies in general.<sup>40</sup> The MPs also gather information about development needs in the constituency, and listen to grievances about the provision of public services etc. This is how Egner (1990:2-3) depicts the consultations undertaken by the politicians:

...one result of the insistence of Batswana on their right to be informed and consulted at face-to-face meetings is that cabinet ministers and even the President spend much of their time outside the capital city. It is as though telecommunication, radios and mass media had never been invented...They take it for granted that the core process of politics consists of consulting and informing their listeners about selected government activities wherever a few people can come together to listen...They can truly claim to be in touch with public opinion, to know how the people live, and to be experts on the rural areas.

It was concluded above that decentralisation, i.e. the system of district level planning, is not operating flawlessly. Local authorities are to a large extent delegated responsibility for the provision of public services and the implementation of projects in their own district, but communication between district and central levels have some general weaknesses, and the capacity of the ministries to respond to formal requests from the districts authorities is limited. Similarly to the situation in Kenya, it seems right to say that the Batswana MPs (the ministers included) are to some extent bridging these gaps. However, to what extent these consultations strengthen the argument that the development planning should be seen as a "bottom-up" process is unclear. It is not certain that the information is translated into policy output (e.g. a development project). It was pointed out above that the decisions and priorities of the district authorities often come second to the decisions made at the central level. The same seems to be true with regard to information gathered by the MPs. The demands and information

<sup>39</sup> When asked, most of the MPs told that they usually made travels within their constituencies three times a year.

<sup>40</sup> Civil servants in the ministries are in advance of these visits asked to prepare briefing papers for the MPs about the government's activities in the particular district.

about the needs in the constituencies are “filtered” through the policy-making processes of the annual budgets and the NDP before allocation of public funds eventually are made. The consultations by the politicians seem further to be focused largely on presentation of already adopted policies and projects, and may be seen as an important means of buttressing the legitimacy of the government.

As demonstrated by table 7.1 above, both the ministers and the non-cabinet MPs (backbenchers), have traditionally stayed in their positions for long periods, and have as such attained knowledge about the economy, their position in the institutional framework, and to what extent their chances of becoming reelected depend on their performance in terms of fulfilling the expectations of their constituents. This continuity together with the knowledge of the situation in the constituencies are probably important reasons why public services like health and education are relatively well developed and distributed across the country (chapter 3). However, the continuity and the secure power base of the ruling party seems also to have influenced how the MPs see their role as politicians. New ideas about how the Botswana state may respond more actively to important problems like unemployment or rural poverty were strikingly absent in the debates discussed above. This cannot be explained by ignorance about the problems. In other words, continuity and political stability have seemingly fostered a conservative attitude to the question of development strategy.

## **7.5 Concluding remarks**

The aspects of Botswana policy-making discussed in this chapter uncover a centralised process with formal mechanisms facilitating control of the level of public spending. Considering the powerful position of the civil servants, especially those in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) in the preparation of the annual budgets and the NDPs, and the fact that the civil servants are not as subjected to the politicians as in other African states, one might conclude that Botswana is still an “administrative state” as argued by Gunderson in 1970 (see chapter 6). However, as argued in this and previous chapters, I do not wholly subscribe to such a description. The ministers are capable of forcing through politically motivated decisions concerning allocation of public funds. But the power of the individual ministers is constrained by the budget ceilings, which is the outcome of the “budget game” at the ministerial level. Within this game, and in the executive in general, it was again observed that the MFDP is a stronghold, and it seems likely that the senior civil servants within this ministry are powerful with respect to the total volume of the

public budgets. Administrative power is still a feature of the successful budget policy, but it seems justified to conclude that the relationship between the administrative and political elements of the executive is in general characterised by reciprocity and not subordination of either the political or the administrative sphere. On the other hand, in the inter-ministerial distribution of power it seems as if the concentration of power in the MFDP tends to assign the core group of political appointees and senior civil servants within this ministry a paternalistic role vis-à-vis the other ministries. The planning machinery represents an efficient policy instrument for accomplishing one of the government's main goals: avoiding long run deficits in its budgets. However, the MFDP dominance seems to limit the room for manoeuvre of the line ministries which have objectives and tasks more closely related to their sectoral or functional areas of responsibility.

Although I question the official description of the development planning as a "bottom-up" process, it still seems that the district level to some extent is able to translate its needs into demands fed into the policy-making at the central level. The District Development Plans are not documents for "action". But, together with the administrative linkages between the districts and the government, the DDPs are of some importance. The role of the individual MP is also important in acquiring funds for development projects to his or her constituency.

The observations above about the relationship between the National Assembly and the cabinet seem to confirm that executive dominance is prevalent in Botswana politics. The legislature is, for example, not in a position to alter the total budget ceilings of the various ministries. Although Botswana thus diverges from the ideal of supremacy of the legislature in the parliamentary system of democracy, I find it at the same time difficult to let Botswana unambiguously fit into the presidential model. The smallness of the Botswana parliament and the overwhelming majority position of the ruling party make the backbenchers and the cabinet ministers to some extent constitute a collegium with informal communication and internal bargaining leading to consensus about major policy issues, and about the distribution of funds to the various sectors. The executive still has the final word, though.

As chapter 3 revealed, political concerns have throughout the post-independence period occasionally been overtly present when decisions are made about the use of public funds. Politically motivated decisions seem to be related to the five-year electoral cycles (i.e. substantial funds spent on infrastructure prior to the 1974 election, financial support to small-scale

enterprises in the early 1980s, and subsidies to arable agriculture in the years leading up to the 1989 election). However, considering the modest magnitude of such politically motivated initiatives it is not justified to conclude that political concerns are in general dominating the economic policy-making. As has been uncovered in this chapter, it is more correct to conclude that an effective balance between technocratic assessments and political considerations underlies Botswana's development strategy.

## **8. Conclusion**

In this study I have sought to present an analysis of the politics of development planning in Botswana. Development planning and the strategy pursued were discussed in a historical perspective. It was found that Botswana has pursued a continuous and coherent development strategy. The government has consciously adhered to planning as an instrument to manage the mineral wealth. To explain this strategy I have applied a state-centred approach. The general hypothesis has been that the coherence in the development strategy reflects the presence of a state largely insulated from societal pressures. A historical outline of political developments after independence to uncover the capabilities of various societal actors which potentially may seek to wield influence on policy-making was presented. Policy-making processes were thereafter more concretely analysed to unravel how administrative structures and procedures of consultation and political participation regulate access to the policy-making process, and thus the ability of society-centred forces to activate their capabilities. It is now time to summarise the findings, and to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

### **8.1 Main findings**

It has been revealed that the Botswana state differs in many aspects from its counterparts in other African countries. Various dimensions used to explain the economic and political crises of the "African state" seem also to be useful in explaining why the Botswana state has not experienced a similar decay. The impact of the colonial period was less significant in the Bechuanaland protectorate than elsewhere in Africa. No permanent colonial administration was established within the protectorate. Although this constrained the development capacity of the government in the early years after independence, the build-up of a new administrative framework implied that the new rulers were less burdened by existing administrative cultures. The processes of establishing new political institutions and the public administration coincided, and this has probably been an important reason

why the political and administrative spheres have seemingly become closely interwoven.

Patron-client relationships between officials and actors outside the state have impeded the development process in many African countries. Among other factors this has made it difficult for the governments to control the growth of public expenditures. One might, hypothetically, have expected that the substantial flow of revenues from the diamond industry soon after independence would have led to unchecked patron-client relationships in Botswana as well. This did not happen. Structural factors like the small size and homogeneity of the population in general, the insignificant urban population, the presence of a private sector as an alternative road to personal prosperity, and the enlightened behaviour of the small political and administrative elite have probably been important reasons why the state has not been overtly penetrated by clientelism.

However, one should keep in mind the patron-client relationships between the politicians and their constituents. Botswana has experienced a high growth rate of public spending after independence. Although a large share of these expenditures has been related to investments in the mining industry, more pragmatic political concerns have also been present in the allocation of these funds. The patronage (i.e. development projects largesse, development of infrastructure and subsidies), however, has been incorporated in the development efforts of the government and has seemingly not been detrimental to the overall long-term development process. Chapter 3 revealed that the government has pursued a coherent approach in their development efforts. This strategy has been characterised by limited state involvement in directly productive activities, and deliberate efforts to create an enabling environment for private entrepreneurs. This strategy has been successful in terms of growth of the private sector in urban areas, but less effective for the development of the rural sector.

A critical feature of the development strategy has been to enforce a sound macro-economic policy. This has been defined as keeping the exchange rate stable, avoiding inflation, and balancing the budgets (i.e. keeping the growth of public expenditures within the growth of revenues). The development planning system introduced at independence has been characterised as forging a close link between the annual budgets and the medium-term (recently six years) horizon of the National Development Plan. The general argument has been that this development strategy reflects the presence of a strong state. The strength of the state has been defined as the extent to which policy-makers are insulated from society-centred forces which might exercise leverage over the decisions concerning economic policies and allocation of public funds, administrative coherence, and the

availability of policy instruments for efficient policy-making and implementation.

The fact that patron-client relationships have not been able to penetrate the public institutions has both been a contributing causal factor to the maintenance of the strength of the state, but also an effect of the committed governance of the political rulers. I also found that the political development after independence has contributed to a tranquil political context surrounding the policy-makers. Elections have been held regularly every five years, and the citizens have continued to participate at the polls. The Botswana Democratic Party has ruled continuously with the support of the overwhelming majority of the voters. Its power base is largely based on its strongholds in the rural constituencies. This was explained by ethnic loyalties and patron-client relationships between the rich and poor segments in the rural areas, mediating potential tensions. Support for the ruling party also reflects genuine legitimacy generated, *inter alia*, by the provision of public services, development of infrastructure, and drought relief. However, unemployment and poverty remain serious problems in the rural areas. The reasons why the opposition has not been able to take advantage of this structural factor, and gain prominence in politics at the national level are manifold. The opposition parties have been in a disadvantageous position in terms of not having access to the same means which are available for the BDP as the government party, having a much smaller ethnic base, and being discriminated against by the electoral system based on single-member constituencies. But the opposition has also been troubled by internal fragmentation, and inability to develop strong party organisations. The main opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), has not been able to define a coherent and realistic ideological alternative to the ruling party. This seems partly to be explained by its leadership which has been dominated, on the one hand, by persons advocating a type of socialism with little grounding in Botswana political realities, and, on the other hand, a traditional element (*i.e.* the former chief Bathoen II) opposing the government's legislation curtailing the power of the traditional institutions (*e.g.* the chieftaincy). However, the "traditional" factor seems recently to have become less prevalent in the BNF, and the party is apparently about to outline a more social democratic platform.

By obtaining one-third of the votes in the latest election (1989) one cannot ignore the presence of an opposition in Botswana politics. However, the weakness of the party organisations, the absence of links with trade unions and the press, and the presence of only three opposition MPs in the parliament, suggest that support was found for the argument that the strength of the state has been facilitated by a weak opposition. However,



it is at the same time reasonable to expect that the government is aware of the increasing support for the opposition, and that this fact in some measure influences its policy choices.

The analysis of the capabilities of civil society revealed that neither strong trade unions nor a vigorous press have been present to challenge the insulation of the core policy-makers. It was observed, however, that the employers seem to be well organised, and thus capable of transferring their interests into the policy-making process. Despite the introduction of "modern" institutions at the local level, the traditional decision making forum, the *kgotla*, has remained an arena for consultation. The *freedom square* has in addition been established as a meeting place at the local level. These arenas are not part of the formal decision-making structure. However, both forums seem to be important as arenas of public debate, and the *freedom square* is an important channel for the parties to present their programmes.

What did the analysis of the policy-making process discover? I found it justified to question the official description of development planning as a "bottom-up" process. There is a certain degree of administrative decentralisation, but the major decisions concerning use of funds are made at the central level. The district authorities produce District Development Plans, but these are not decisive, and the priorities found in these plans are subject to decisions made by the ministries. In terms of administrative coherence at the central level it was observed that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is a key actor in the administrative framework. The line ministries are organisationally linked to the MFDP by planning officers, formally employed by the MFDP but being seconded to the line ministries. The financial autonomy of the line ministries is limited, as they are strictly obliged to keep their spending within the ministerial ceilings. Each individual project must be incorporated in the development plan and approved by parliament. The ministries are required to request the MFDP for a warrant in every case where they need funds to be disbursed for a project in their sectoral development programme. In the process of determining the ministerial ceilings, the MFDP is in a powerful position, albeit not omnipotent. The allocation of funds to the various sectors is the outcome of an inter-ministerial bargaining process, where the ministers make political decisions concerning the use of funds. The Economic Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) was found to be the most important decision-making forum at the executive level. All political appointees in the executive (i.e. the President, the ministers, and the assistant ministers), the permanent secretaries, the governor of the Bank of Botswana, and the heads of the defence and police services, meet regularly in the ECC. This forum

seems to be crucial in the efforts to coordinate development activities, reach agreement about important aspects of the development strategy, and to keep the growth of public spending within the growth of revenues. It was observed that the MFDP is in a dominant position in the ECC, and this seems to be one important explanation for disciplined expenditure. It seems justified to conclude that the formal procedures of expenditure control, and the concentration of power in the MFDP represent a policy instrument facilitating state strength and adherence to macro-economic policy objectives.

The general weakness of civil society was confirmed in the analysis of the policy-making process. This weakness is, on the one hand, explained by the fact that Botswana society is still in an initial stage of developing organisational pluralism. On the other hand, there are legal obstacles constraining the activities of the trade unions (e.g. elected officers in the trade unions not being allowed to be full-time representatives of their members). Although the trade unions are given formal access to the policy-making process, their ability to wield influence over aspects of the development strategy of their concern (e.g. income policy) seems to be insignificant. By inviting the trade unions to participate in advisory bodies, the government may be sincere in their efforts to engage in consultation on important political matters. However, this participation seems also to be a means applied to legitimise policy-making and to neutralise, or co-opt, the organisations of the workers. It seems justified to conclude that the state and the policy-making process in general are insulated from pressures from the Botswana workers. However, the possibility of the employers to influence policy-making was found to be more significant.

The Constitution confers much power on the executive. It is possible for the legislature to pass a vote of no confidence in the government. However, considering the large share of MPs who are also members of the cabinet, and the overwhelming majority of the ruling party, this option seems to be theoretical only. The power of the executive to dissolve parliament seems to be far more real. Taking also into consideration the powerful position of the President within the executive, I have concluded therefore that the political system represents a synthesis of the parliamentary and presidential models of democracy — a parliamentary republic.

The centralisation of policy-making confirmed that much power is concentrated in the executive. When the legislature is formally participating in decision-making it seems unable to amend or reject proposals tabled by the executive. It was further observed that legislators were apparently not consulted until the final stage of defining or revising important aspects of the development strategy. However, I found it unjustified to conclude that

MPs are mere “rubberstamps”. The smallness of the parliament (40 members) opens up for informal communication between cabinet members and the backbenchers. The party caucus is an important arena for the backbenchers to articulate their opinions, and for the ruling party to reach a consensus on important policy issues. The MPs were found to be important in bringing forth information about the condition and needs of their constituencies. However, the debates also revealed that the individual MPs are in general not much concerned with overall substantive aspects of the development strategy to be pursued. Although there is an awareness of problems like poverty and insufficient employment opportunities in the rural sector, the MPs do not put alternatives for state involvement in the economy on the political agenda. On the other hand, as the MPs do not refrain from openly criticising the government, and as the executive feels obliged to answer questions raised in parliament, the debates still represent a mechanism of making the government and the bureaucracy accountable and responsive to the needs of the constituencies. The MPs to some extent bridge the gaps left by deficiencies in the decentralised planning system.

## **8.2 Has the “state-centred” approach been fruitful?**

It has been demonstrated that the development strategy pursued in Botswana has not been directed by short-term political demands. A political logic has been present, but not of the detrimental type of political patrimonialism found in many other African countries. The politicians in power have been pragmatic, but this pragmatism has been played out within boundaries established by the general development strategy, e.g. political interventions have not run contrary to the primary objective of macro-economic stability.

The analysis has related the coherence of the economic strategy to the presence of a strong state. This strength is manifested in the nature of the political institutions, administrative coherence, policy instruments (e.g. the planning apparatus), and the insulation of the policy formulation process. The latter is facilitated by organisations in civil society being both weak and to some extent co-opted by the state. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has been assigned a powerful position in the administrative framework. Without this organisational concentration of the tasks related to both medium-term planning and daily administration of the public treasury, one might have imagined that budgetary control would have become less disciplined. The dominant position of the MFDP in the

executive, and its competent leadership, seem partly also to explain why a high degree of administrative coherence has been accomplished.

The division of labour between the politicians and the bureaucracy is characterised by reciprocity rather than subordination of either of the two groups. The small size of the Botswana population seems to be reproduced in the political-administrative sphere. The narrow elite of politicians and senior civil servants, and the smallness of the capital, Gaborone, make politics less complex and inscrutable. There seems to be some realism in the popular phrase which states that "the most important decisions are made at the bar of the President Hotel," an establishment frequented by senior civil servants and politicians.

The analysis has demonstrated that the strength of the state is partly explained by a weak legislature. This weakness does not imply that the legislators (the MPs) have no role to play in policy-making. But the distribution of power between the executive and the legislature implies that the latter is in a weak position to amend decisions already made by the former. The MPs generate inputs to the policy-making process, and make the government responsive to the needs of the constituencies. However, the stable majority rule by the Botswana Democratic Party and the weakness of the opposition have made it possible for the government to be selective in its way of responding to political demands. In other words, ruling by an overwhelming majority has facilitated insulation of the core policy-makers.

It was concluded in chapter 3 that although the state is strong in terms of pursuing a coherent development strategy, and avoiding macro-economic imbalances, this does not imply that the state is an effective participant in the economic development process in all sectors of the economy. Rural unemployment and insignificant agricultural modernisation have demonstrated weaknesses in the development strategy. I raised the following question: Being aware of these problems, why have the political rulers not responded more effectively? The apparent consensus about not letting the public sector get too much involved in directly productive activities (e.g. state owned enterprises) certainly limits the options available to the government. However, I have also argued that the predominantly parochial outlook of the individual MPs has prevented a more "imaginative" approach of the government to emerge in the development process. The dominant position of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning may furthermore be seen as a paternalism which curbs innovative behaviour by the line ministries. In other words, there may be a trade-off between centralised budget control and more effective involvement of the government in economic development. The argument that the concentration of power in the MFDP and the role of the MPs

inhibited the emergence of alternative approaches for the government in the development process, seems to have been strengthened by the analysis. However, the data material is insufficient to reach definite conclusions about the causality suggested in the hypothesis. More intensive studies of decision-making within the ministries are needed.

Does the Botswana case provide a strong argument against the claims that democracy may impede economic development? As Botswana has experienced both high economic growth rates and democracy with regular elections, the immediate answer is obviously yes. However, it has also been demonstrated that Botswana is a special case, which makes the experiences of this country less relevant for other parts of Africa or the developing world. The small size of the population and the presence of the diamond windfall revenues have political implications which place Botswana at a distance from the situation of a "typical" developing country, in which the combination of a large population and financial constraints may be a serious problem. Ethnic and/or regional antagonisms which may impede the economic development process, and may also be reinforced by socio-economic adversities, have not been an impeding factor in Botswana. The combination of these factors makes it possible to understand why political quietude and stability have characterised the post-independence period. Without foregoing other development objectives the political rulers have, in the first decades after independence, made the majority of the population experience improvements in their standard of living (e.g. provision of public services), despite widespread rural poverty and a skewed distribution of income.

If democracy has been without significant economic costs in Botswana, what have been the advantages? Has a functioning democracy been a contributing factor in the economic development process? As already concluded, the majority of the population has one way or another benefited from the economic growth process. The development of physical infrastructure, schools, health facilities, provision of drought relief, and the distribution of such facilities to most parts of the country may be explained by the political representatives being responsive to the needs of their constituencies. It is reasonable to attribute this to elections being held regularly. However, the secure position of the ruling party and the insignificant level of economic development at independence seem to have kept the price of political support low. Political imperatives have not made the political rulers feel a need to involve the state more extensively in the economy. This may partly explain why no substantial assault has been made on rural unemployment and poverty problems. The political rulers in Botswana are not facing a political environment which compels them to pay

attention to short-term political concerns. The stable political context and a relatively predictable revenue situation have facilitated a long-term horizon in development planning and adherence to the overall objective of maintaining macro-economic stability. The Botswana case strengthens the argument that modest short-term political demands may be a precondition for effective development planning. On the other hand, the case also demonstrates that democracy does not necessarily imply that short-term political demands of the populist kind emerge at the forefront on the political agenda. As the analysis has revealed, this does not suggest that Botswana politicians outside the executive are without influence, but just that the involvement of politicians in the policy-making process is not characterised by confrontation, but rather by consensus-building.

The Botswana case has mainly been seen from the angle of a state-centred approach. I have been able to reach conclusions about the distribution of power within the Botswana state, the role of political representatives, and how organisations of civil society are participating in policy-making processes. The state-centred approach has been fruitful in explaining how coherence in the development strategy and adherence to a planned approach in the use of public funds have been achieved. I have argued that the development strategy reflects the ideology of the ruling party, and that the political rulers have been in a position to make the institutions of the state implement this strategy.

The determinants of the substance of the Botswana government's approach to economic development have been less under scrutiny. However, I have addressed this issue implicitly throughout the analysis. It was argued that the basic principles of the development strategy were decided upon in the early years after independence. A capitalist strategy has been pursued, with much attention given to economic growth and development of the private sector. The political and administrative elites which ruled in the early years after independence represented an economic and educational elite in Botswana society — the "new men". This elite shared a common liberal/moderate ideological foundation, and had close linkages to the cattle industry. This fusion of economic and politico-administrative power certainly had a great bearing on the process leading up to the choice of economic strategy. The continuity of the private capitalist growth-oriented strategy pursued throughout the post-independence period appears to have been related to the gradual development and strengthening of the private sector. This is a society-centred argument, and illustrates that the two approaches may to some extent be seen as complimentary rather than contradictory. Society-centred explanations were also added to the analysis when the capabilities of civil

society were discussed, for example, when observing that the employers are better organised and more capable of exercising leverage on policy-making than the trade unions.

A more comprehensive analysis of the politics of economic development in Botswana would have to be complemented by an explicit analysis of society-centred forces, and a deeper discussion of the autonomy of the Botswana state. A hypothesis in an alternative study might thus have been that particular aspects of the development strategy reflect the relative influence of specific societal interests. A step-by-step approach might have been in order. First, it would have to uncover the configuration of various socio-economic groups in society, based, for example, on functional cleavages or various occupational groups (e.g. cattle owners, peasants, urban commercial elites, civil servants, and manual workers). Second, it would have to discuss to what extent these groups have benefitted or not from the economic policies adopted, and finally to explain how various groups have been able to exercise leverage, or have been denied access to the centres of decision-making. The relative influence of private employers and trade unions have in this study broadly been analysed in such a manner. However, the analysis has been limited to the involvement of the formal organisations of these societal groups in policy-making.

As the Botswana economy and society is in the process of becoming more diversified, a point of departure for a further study would be to see whether the society-centred forces are becoming more fragmented, or whether there is a process towards more cohesion among social groups. Detailed studies of organisations would be ways to explore these questions.

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*The Botswana Guardian* (Gaborone)

*The Botswana Gazette* (Gaborone)

*The Midweek Sun* (Gaborone)

# Appendix A

## Individuals interviewed

### A. Politicians

#### *Botswana Democratic Party*

Mr. M.P.K. Nwako, MP, speaker of the parliament, 1 November 1991, Gaborone

Mr. Roy Blackbeard, MP, 18 November 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Lemme Makgekgenene, MP, 18 November 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Johnie Swartz, MP, 19 November 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. M.R. Tshipinare, Assistant Minister, 28 November 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Boometswe Mokgothu, MP, 29 November 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Pelokgale Seloma, MP, 3 December 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Bahiti Temane, MP, 4 December 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Gaotlhaetse Matlhabaphiri, MP, 5 December 1991, Gaborone.

#### *Botswana National Front*

Mr. Maitshwarelo Dabutha, MP, 20 November 1991, Gaborone.

Dr. Kenneth Koma, MP, 4 and 10 December 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Paul Rantao, Mayor, 26 November 1991, Gaborone.



## **B. Civil servants**

Mr. D.M. Gaseitsiwe, Planning Officer, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 22 October 1991, Gaborone.

Dr. J.S. Salkin, Chief Economist, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 23 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Anthony A. Mokgara, Principal Agricultural Economist, Ministry of Agriculture, 24 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Fergus J. Chambers, Economic Consultant, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 24 October 1991, Gaborone.

Ms. Monica Tselayakgosi, Senior Planning Officer, Ministry of Health, 25 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Modise Modise, Senior Economist, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 25 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Dennis Methis, Planning Officer, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, 31 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Klaus Endresen, Planning Officer, Ministry of Local Government and Lands, 4 December 1991, Gaborone

Mr. N.E. Mooki, Assistant Labour Commissioner, 10 December 1991, Gaborone.

## **C. Others**

Mrs. C.T. Mompei, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, 18 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Brian Egner, Economic Consultant (former colonial civil servant), 28 October 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. William Lee, former civil servant in MFDP, 29 October 1991, Mogoditshane.

Mrs. Sissel Bjerck Steen, UNDP Programme Officer, 1 November 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Bezack Maphakwane, UNDP Economist, 20 November 1991, Gaborone.

Dr. Alfred M. Merriweather, Former Speaker of the National Assembly, 27 November, Molepolole.

Ms. Nomtuse Mbere, Deputy Director, SNV (Netherland's Development Organization), 9 December 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. Kai Jensen, ILO representative, 12 December 1991, Gaborone.

Mr. George Marambo, Botswana Federation of Trade Unions, 12 December 1991, Gaborone.

### *Scholars consulted*

Dr. Keith Jefferis, economist, 5 December 1991, University of Botswana.

Mr. Randwedzi Nengwekhulu, Senior lecturer, 12 December 1991, University of Botswana.

Dr. Patrick Molutsi, Head of the Democracy Project, various talks, University of Botswana.

Dr. Kenneth Good, Assistant Professor, various talks, University of Botswana.