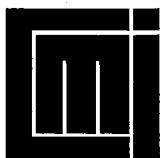


Development Planning and the Importance of Democratic Institutions in Botswana

Andreas Danevad

R 1993: 7
November 1993



Report
Chr. Michelsen Institute
Bergen Norway

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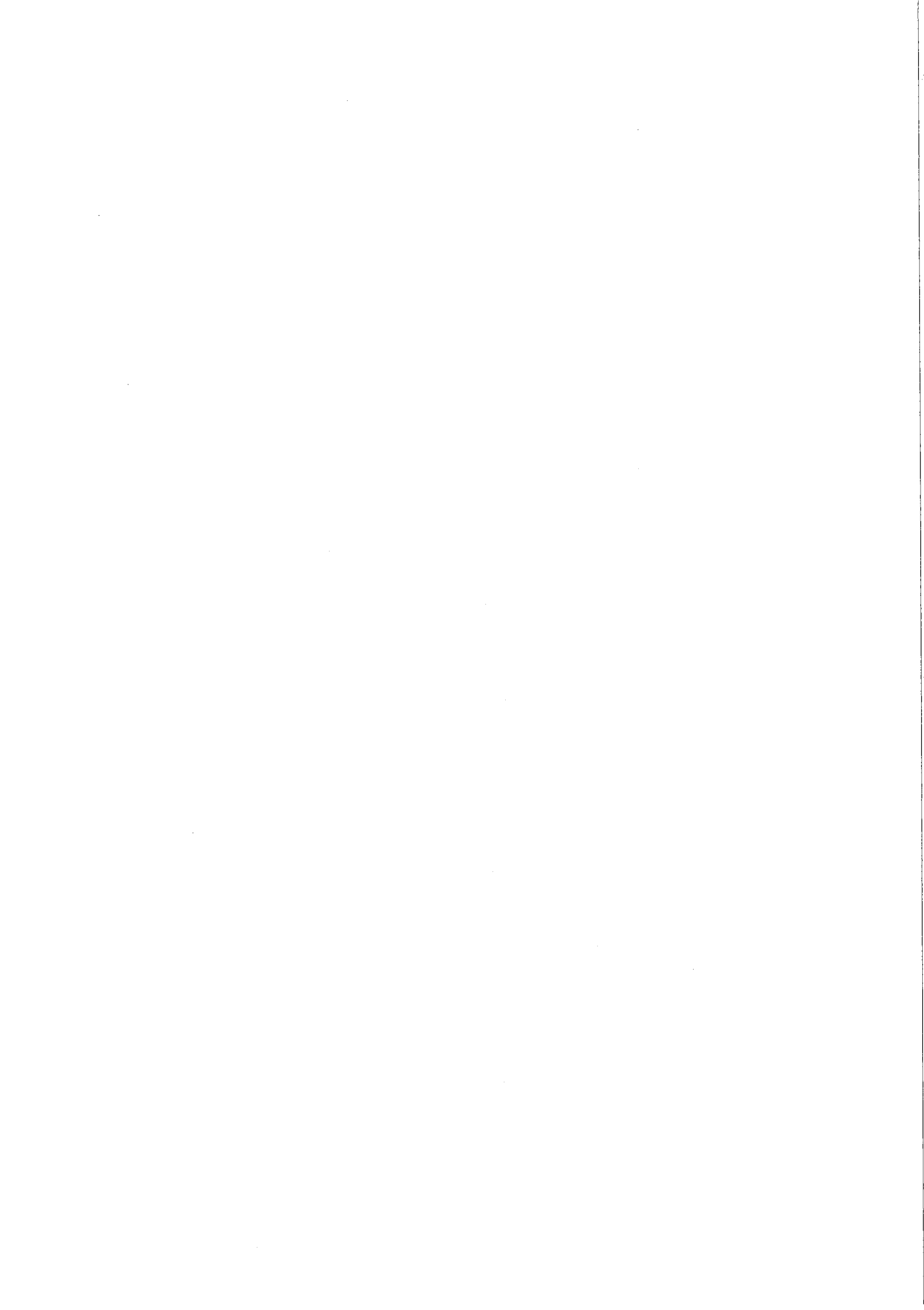
This study takes an extended look at Botswana, a country which is found to depart from the common pattern of African states and therefore may be considered as something of a special case. By using a state-centred approach, the study is able to isolate some of the factors explaining the defining features 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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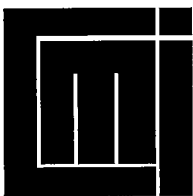
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Indexing terms

Democracy

Development planning

Economic policy

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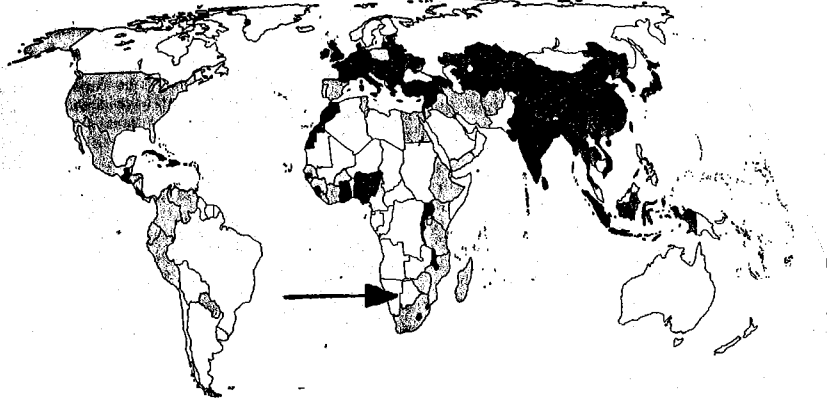
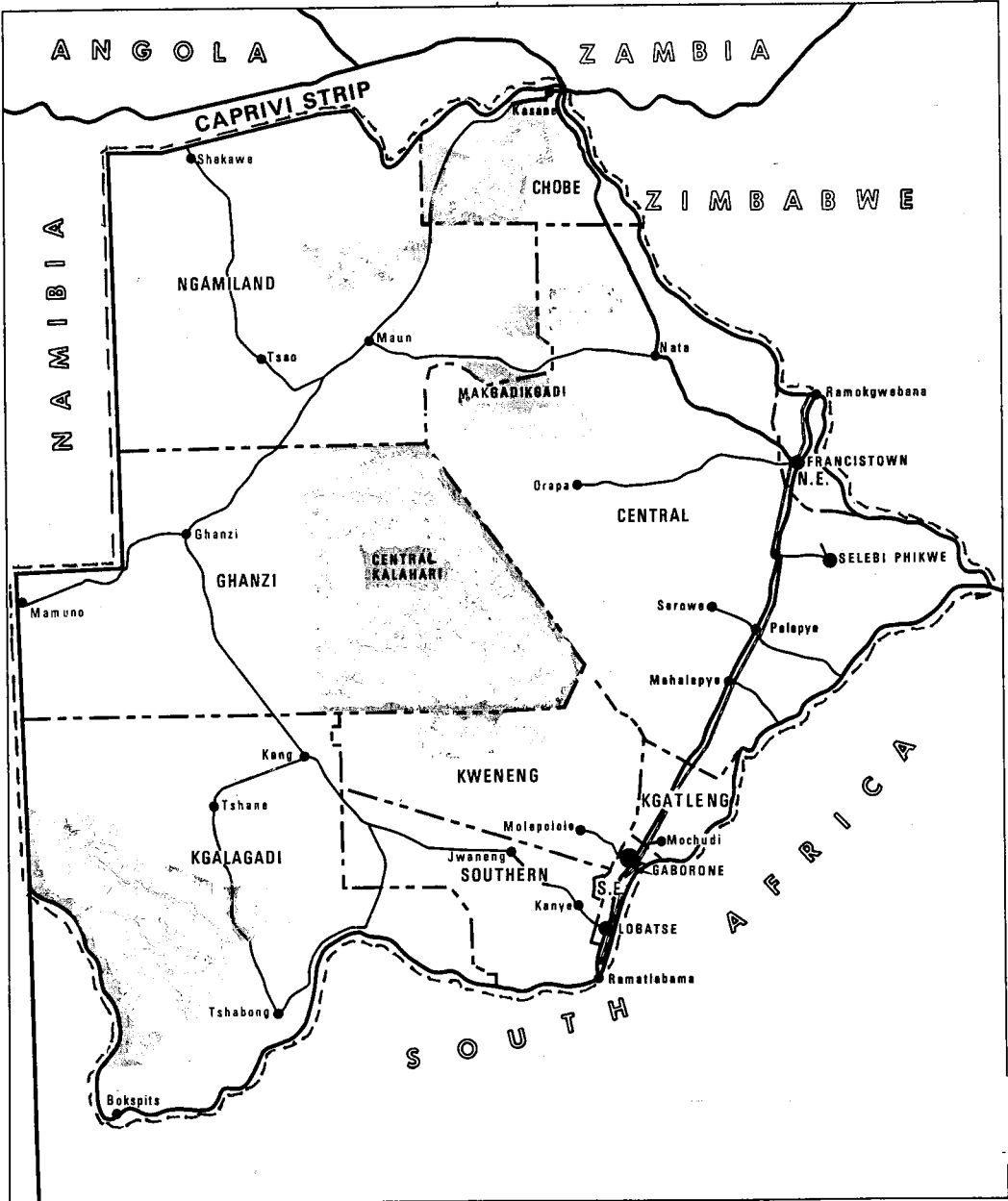
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Botswana



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.¹ 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.² In terms

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

² 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

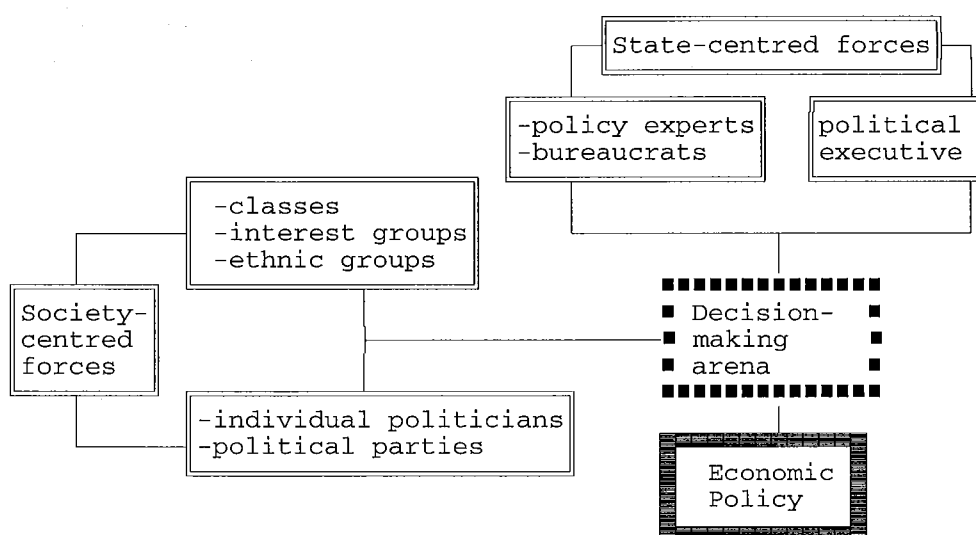
the “rationale” behind authoritarianism and violation of civil and political rights has in general not been the economic imperative of development, but should be seen as a matter of political choice and character of the rulers. With reference to African authoritarian regimes, Anyang’ Nyong’o (1987) similarly 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.³ 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

³ 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.⁴ 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

⁴ 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.

