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GIGA Research Programme:
Legitimacy and Efficiency of Political Systems

Stagnation of a "Miracle": Botswana's Governance Record Revisited

Christian von Soest

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Stagnation of a "Miracle": Botswana's Governance Record Revisited

Abstract

Botswana has been dubbed an "African miracle." The country has been praised not only for maintaining a multiparty system and high growth rates since independence but also for its good governance record. In contrast to other African countries, the extent of neopatrimonialism, which runs counter to good governance, is said to be low. This article aims to a) precisely assess Botswana's neopatrimonial profile and b) put forward explanations for the comparatively low level of neopatrimonialism and for the recent "stagnation of a miracle." The paper finds that there have always been neopatrimonial tendencies in Botswana, though they have been largely overlooked by mainstream analyses. The crucial difference is the limited nature of these tendencies relative to other African countries. This can be attributed to the independence period, characterized by the homogeneity of political, economic, and administrative interests in safeguarding private property rights through a "strong" rational-legal state, that is, by limiting neopatrimonialism. Financed by massive revenues stemming from diamonds, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), and the Bank of Botswana, the government of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) was able to secure its reign through the provision of public goods and limited neopatrimonial exchange relations. However, due to decreasing electoral dominance and elite cohesion, the ruling party is now reverting to some neopatrimonial and authoritarian means in order to safeguard its rule.

Keywords: neopatrimonialism, corruption, governance, institutions, interests, development, Botswana

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Zusammenfassung

Stagnation eines „Wunders“:
Eine neue Analyse der Regierungsführung in Botswana

Oftmals wird Botswana als “afrikanisches Wunder” bezeichnet. Das Land wird nicht nur für seine Mehrparteiendemokratie und sein hohes Wirtschaftswachstum seit der Unabhängigkeit geschätzt, sondern auch für gute Regierungsführung. Im Gegensatz zu anderen afrikanischen Ländern wird der Umfang von Neopatrimonialismus, der guter Regierungsführung entgegensteht, für niedrig gehalten. Um dies zu überprüfen, verfolgt dieser Artikel zwei Ziele: 1) die systematische Erfassung von Botswanas neopatrimonialem Profil und 2) die Erklärung des vergleichsweise niedrigen neopatrimonialen Niveaus des Landes und der “Stagnation des Wunders” in jüngster Zeit. Es zeigt sich, dass in Botswana schon immer neopatrimoniale Tendenzen bestanden haben, die in den meisten Analysen übersehen werden. Jedoch sind diese Tendenzen begrenzter als in anderen afrikanischen Ländern. Von besonderer Bedeutung ist dabei die Zeit der Unabhängigkeit, die durch die Homogenität politischer, ökonomischer und administrativer Interessen gekennzeichnet war. Die Elite unterstützte die Garantie von Eigentumsrechten durch einen starken Staat. Der Abbau von Diamanten, die Überweisungen der Zollunion des Südlichen Afrikas (SACU) und die Profite der Zentralbank erbrachten zudem hohe Staatseinnahmen, mit denen die Regierung öffentliche Güter finanzieren konnte. Dies stabilisierte die Herrschaft der seit der Unabhängigkeit amtierenden Regierungspartei *Botswana Democratic Party* (BDP). Jedoch nehmen ihre Dominanz bei Wahlen sowie die Elitekohäsion in jüngster Zeit spürbar ab. Als Reaktion darauf bedient sich die herrschende Elite nun einiger neopatrimonialer und autoritärer Mittel, um ihre Herrschaft zu sichern.

Stagnation of a "Miracle":
Botswana's Governance Record Revisited

Christian von Soest

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1 Introduction: Africa's "Miracle"

Botswana appears to be an exception. Scholars recurrently describe the country as a "deviant" (Charlton 1990: 137-138; Kloeden et al. 2004: 53) or a "special case" (Hansohm 2001: 294) compared to the rest of Africa.[1] A plethora of studies have been conducted on the political and economic development of the country, all stressing its "exceptionality."[2] Some even term Botswana the "African miracle" (Samatar 1999). The country is seen as a heaven of prosperity and stability in a region full of economic and political misery.

Indeed, Botswana's development path has been remarkable, particularly in the African context. Since independence, the country has retained a multiparty system, with free elections

[1] "Africa" is used interchangeably with sub-Saharan Africa in this article.

[2] Moore (1998: 109, en. 28) once remarked that "explaining Botswana exceptionalism is a small academic industry in its own right."

being held on a regular basis.[3] Botswana has also generated high economic growth rates, driven by the exploitation of its vast diamond resources. With an average annual rate of 7.7 percent from 1965 to 1998, the country had the fastest economic growth worldwide (Acemoglu et al. 2003: 80; Harvey/Lewis 1990: 1; for a current critical analysis see Hillbom 2008). Most fundamentally, Botswana's government has earned a reputation for "clean" governance of public resources (e.g. Nordås et al. 1998). Good governance is seen as the fundamental reason for Botswana's positive political and economic record.

This is all the more remarkable when one takes into account how scholars generally describe and—to a lesser extent—analyze governance in the African state (e.g. Chabal 2005; van de Walle 2001b; Englebert 2000; Chabal/Daloz 1999; Bayart 1993). Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 277), for instance, maintain that "the distinctive institutional hallmark of African regimes is neopatrimonialism." The basic proposition of the neopatrimonialism concept is that the separation between the public and the private realm, which stands at the basis of the "modern" conception of the state, is fundamentally abrogated and supplanted by a mixture of personal and impersonal rule. In Weber's terms, patrimonial rule, a subtype of traditional rule, fuses rational-legal rule and twists the logic of formal state institutions (Weber 1980 [1922]: 133-134, 136). This mix of rationalities is perceived to have a corrosive effect on the African state, state-society relations, and public administration capability.

Botswana is always seen as an outlier in this respect; the concept of neopatrimonialism is generally not applied to analyze governance in the country. Attempting to fill this gap, the article endeavors to precisely characterize Botswana's neopatrimonial profile. The discussion will demonstrate that, contrary to mainstream analysis, neopatrimonial tendencies have always existed in Botswana. The crucial difference to most of the country's neighbors is not the (non)existence of neopatrimonialism per se but rather its limited nature. The analysis will also ask how this profile has changed over time in the "African miracle." In order to answer, the article will present indicators that go beyond anecdotal evidence, present in much of the literature dealing with the continent, or highly aggregated indices.

Following this endeavor, the main factors accounting for the country's comparatively positive neopatrimonial profile will be assessed. The main question is as follows: Why is Botswana's neopatrimonial profile low? A large number of explanatory models have been brought forward in order to try to explain the "African success story" (Acemoglu et al. 2003) and "why Botswana prospered" (Leith 2005). Both Leith's and Acemoglu et al.'s publications can be regarded as major recent contributions in this respect, yet they do not specifically focus on assessing and explaining Botswana's governance features.[4] Indeed, there have been hardly any attempts to present indictors for the systematic analysis of neopatrimonial-

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[3] The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has always emerged as the winner and has consequently provided the country's presidents and governments since independence in 1966.

[4] Early substantial accounts were Colclough/McCarthy (1980), Picard (1987), Holm (1988), Harvey/Lewis (1990) and Holm/Molutsi (1992). Yet, none of them applies systematic governance or neopatrimonialism indicators.

ism.[5] This paper endeavors to provide a contribution to overcome this gap. The analysis is based on semistructured interviews, primary written sources and secondary literature. The over 75 interviews conducted allow for "process tracing" (George/McKeown 1985; George/Bennett 2005) and provide most of this article's added empirical value. Field work was conducted from 28 May to 28 August 2004.

The article will argue that the country's relative success in inhibiting neopatrimonialism has been based on interests and institutions. Firstly, the independence period served as a critical juncture characterized by the homogeneity of political, economic, and administrative interests in safeguarding private property rights through a strong state, that is, formal institutions. Secondly, along the development path the BDP government was able to secure its reign through state services financed by vast diamond revenues; Southern African Customs Union (SACU) receipts; and, since the mid-1970s, Bank of Botswana profits. A further factor was—restricted—neopatrimonial relations. They have always existed, but to a limited extent. Yet, in the face of decreasing electoral dominance and elite cohesion, the government is currently reverting to some neopatrimonial and authoritarian means in order to safeguard its rule. Despite the fact that these are still limited compared to other African polities, the continent's "miracle" is stagnating or even regressing.

The article begins by outlining the three principal dimensions of the neopatrimonialism concept and their indicators. In the second section, political practice in Botswana is systematically analyzed. The third section presents the factors accounting for the country's relative success in the African context, that is, the limited occurrence of neopatrimonialism. In a final section more recent developments accounting for the "miracle's" stagnation are brought forward.

2 Measuring Neopatrimonialism

The term neopatrimonialism principally denotes a mixture of two Weberian types of domination: patrimonialism, a subtype of traditional rule, and the ideal type of legal-rational rule. "Patrimonialism" connotes that a patron in a certain social and political order bestows gifts from his own resources on followers in order to obtain and strengthen their loyalty and support (Weber 1980 [1922]: 133-134, 136). The exchange between patron and client is inherently unequal, leading Rothchild (1986) to describe this relationship as a "hegemonial exchange."

The defining feature of neopatrimonialism is the simultaneous operation of patrimonial and legal-rational logics (Bratton/van de Walle 1997: 62; Clapham 1985: 48; Therkildsen 2005: 37). In other words, "informal politics invade formal institutions" (Erdmann/Engel 2007: 105; see also Bratton/van de Walle 1997: 274). Patrons are typically office-holders in state institutions who use public funds or office to build personal loyalty among clients in order to stay in

[5] Notable exceptions are Bratton/van de Walle (1997) and van de Walle (2001a). As can be seen below, the operationalization in this article is based on Bratton/van de Walle.

power. As a result, social practice is fundamentally different from the impersonal formal rules which are supposed to guide official action. The most extreme consequence is the "criminalization of the state" (Bayart et al. 1999).[6]

In accordance with Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 63-68), this article applies the three features "systematic concentration of political power," "provision of personal favors," and "use of state resources" for the empirical analysis of Botswana's governance features (for operationalization see also Table 1). The first facet, the concentration of political power, implies the dominance of one individual, "who resists delegating all but the most trivial decision-making tasks" (Bratton/van de Walle 1997: 63).[7] As a defining feature of this "big man politics," the president or, in other words, the patron stays in power for a long time, sometimes until the end of his life.

Table 1: Operationalization of Neopatrimonialism

Dimension	Indicator
Systematic concentration of political power	Incumbency of president vs. incumbency of ministers
Provision of personal favors	Size of ministerial cabinet Composition/expertise of ministerial cabinet
Misuse of state resources	Management of public funds and state land Aggregated indices on corruption

Source: Author's compilation.

Indeed, presidents in sub-Saharan Africa on average officiate significantly longer than their counterparts in Asia and Latin America (Bienen/van de Walle 1992: 693). Young (1994: preface on x) consequently speaks of "'life president' power management." On the other hand, neopatrimonial rulers frequently rotate members of the political elite in order to prevent any potential opponent from developing his or her own power base and also to extend the clientelist network (Snyder/Mahoney 1999: 108-109; Snyder 1992: 392). The simultaneous fulfillment of both requirements, the long tenure of presidents and the short tenure of key government members, therefore suggests a neopatrimonial power concentration.

The second facet of neopatrimonial rule is the "provision of personal favors," for example, the distribution by the patron to followers of public sector jobs and public resources through licenses, contracts and projects. Generally, the big man secures authority through an "extensive network of personal patronage, rather than through ideology or impersonal law" (Snyder 1992: 379). This political practice can be observed through an analysis of the size

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[6] Chabal and Daloz (1999: 17) even argue that "in most African countries, the state is no more than a décor, a pseudo-Western façade masking the realities of deeply personalized relations." This, however, significantly departs from this article's understanding that neopatrimonialism is characterized by a *combination* of patrimonial and rational-legal rule.

[7] Bratton and van de Walle term this feature "presidentialism." However, this is misleading as the traditional political science definition of presidentialism refers to political systems in which the president is directly elected by the electorate, exerts executive power, and cannot be deselected by parliament (in contrast to parliamentary systems) (Schmidt 2000: 309-310).

and the structure of a ministerial cabinet, which often acts as a focal point for awarding personal favors (in this case employment) to the political elite (van de Walle 2001a: 32-33). Bloated cabinets are a response not to functional but to neopatrimonial needs. Van de Walle (2005: 80) has shown that the average number of ministers in sub-Saharan Africa has grown substantially and today amounts to far more than 20 per country. According to him, the tendency of cabinets to grow is "mirrored by an increase in the size of other national bodies" (van de Walle 2005: 83). The present paper uses the size and expertise of the ministerial cabinet as an indicator of the "provision of personal favors" by the neopatrimonial big man. It is important to keep in mind that the provision of favors, for example, the expansion of patronage positions, is not necessarily illegal but can be done in perfect accordance with the legal provisions of a polity.

Although there might be some overlaps or legal grey areas, this fundamentally separates the provision of favors from the "misuse of state resources," which constitutes the third feature of neopatrimonial practice. According to Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 66), big men make "little distinction between the public and private coffers, routinely and extensively dipping into the state treasury for their own political needs."[8] It is difficult to find objective indicators for the hidden practice of misusing public office. This article uses the misappropriation of public funds and state land as an indicator. It also refers to Botswana's ranking on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) from the NGO Transparency International in order to supplement evidence from the interviews with key persons from politics, public administration, businesses, civil society, social science and international organizations. The CPI is a composite index incorporating various studies with expert evaluations of a country's incidence of corruption (Graf Lambsdorff 2005). Additionally, the ratings of the similar World Bank Governance Index with respect to "control of corruption" are also used (Kaufmann et al. 2005b; Kaufmann et al. 2005a).

3 Analyzing Botswana's Neopatrimonial Profile

The assessment of the concentration of political power, provision of personal favors and use of state resources serves to establish Botswana's neopatrimonial profile and potential changes over time. It will demonstrate that the government was successful in restricting neopatrimonialism to certain instances of elite clientelism and patronage. It will also show that the country's neopatrimonial profile has regressed in recent years.

[8] This feature is not called "corruption" because the misuse is not necessarily for *private* benefit (could also be group benefit) as the traditional definition of corruption holds (e.g. Anderson/Tverdova 2003: 92; Andvig et al. 2001: 5-6).

3.1 Concentration of Political Power

Since independence, Botswana has maintained a multiparty system with a Westminster-type parliamentary structure consisting of two chambers. Yet, the country's political system does not fully qualify as a "liberal democracy" in the sense of Merkel/Croissant and Merkel but instead partly displays features of an "exclusive" or "delegative democracy" (Merkel/Croissant 2000: summary on 12; Merkel 2004: 49-50). For these authors, a liberal democracy is characterized by the (complete) realization of Dahl's two basic principles, "participation" and "contestation," as well as the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*).[9]

In addition, despite being a parliamentary system, Botswana's polity is highly centralized and is dominated by the presidency. The constitution assigns all executive power to the president,[10] while the cabinet only advises (Republic of Botswana 2002: art. 47 (2), 50 (2)). The head of state can dissolve the National Assembly "at any time," is in supreme command of the armed forces, and has to recommend every bill that increases taxes or alters the government debt (Republic of Botswana 2002: art. 91 (2), 48 (1), 88 (1)).

However, an analysis of presidents' and ministers' average tenure suggests that centralization does not necessarily translate into big-man rule. The ministerial merry-go-round typical of many countries on the continent has not been a feature of Botswana's political practice. Neither has the Ministry of State President become "a parallel government" as is the case in other African countries (van de Walle 2003: 310). Table 2 shows that only four presidents have governed Botswana since independence in 1966, all from the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). When the country's first president, Seretse Khama, died in 1980, he was succeeded by Quett Masire, who then filled Botswana's highest political position for 18 years. In 1998, Masire *voluntarily* handed over the presidency to Festus Mogae, who was only recently, on 1 April 2008, succeed by Ian Khama, son of the country's first president (BBC 2008).

The long incumbency of Botswana's presidents has not been accompanied by a high fluctuation in cabinet ministers and senior administrative staff. In contrast, "considerable attention was paid, particularly within the civil service and the cabinet, to putting able people into key positions and keeping them there for extended periods" (Harvey/Lewis 1990: 9; see also Charlton 1991: 270). As can be seen from Table 2, key ministers in Botswana remained in office for 5.3 years on average, which is more than a legislative period. That contrasts with the average of 2.6 years established for four other African countries and is also significantly longer than the average of 3.8 years in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany.[11] The central

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[9] On Botswana's weaknesses in this respect cf. Sebudubudu/Osei-Hwedie (2006). In contrast, Freedom House has consistently rated the country as "free" since 1973 (Freedom House 2008).

[10] The term "president" should not distract one from the fact that Botswana's polity is a parliamentary system. The president is elected by the members of parliament and not directly by the electorate. Accordingly, the National Assembly can also deselect the president (Republic of Botswana 2002: art. 32 (8)).

[11] The countries for which the average tenure of key ministers from 1966 to 2005 was calculated were Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho and Malawi. Sources: 1966–1969: The Statesman's Year-Book (Macmillan 1964–1970); 1970–2005: Africa South of the Sahara (Europa Publications 1971–2004; Routledge 2005). In the developed countries the difference between the average tenure of presidents or prime ministers and their ministers is

positions of the vice president and the minister of finance and development planning have shown a particular degree of personal continuity. Following the neopatrimonial logic (and a general political logic), they would be the prime challengers for the presidency.

Table 2: Tenure of Presidents and Ministers in Botswana

Office	Number of incumbents	Average length of tenure (in years)
President*	4	10.5
Vice President	6	7.0
Minister of Finance	8	5.0
Minister of Foreign Affairs**	7	6.0
Minister of Defense***	-	-
Minister of Home Affairs	13	3.2
Average of ministers	8.5	5.3

Notes: Number of incumbents since independence in 1966 (= 42 years).
* Since the 1997 constitutional amendment, article 34 (1) of Botswana's Constitution has restricted the presidential tenure to "an aggregate period not exceeding 10 years" (Republic of Botswana 2002). In effect, a president is eligible for re-election once only.
** For nine years, a separate Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not exist in Botswana. The post of minister of foreign affairs was filled by "ministers of state," who were cabinet members and are counted as ministers.
*** Up until 2007, the function of the minister of defense was exercised by the president. In 2007, the responsibilities of the minister of presidential affairs and public administration were subdivided into a minister for public services and parliament (held by Daniel Kwelagobe) and a minister for justice, defense, and security (held by Ramadeluka Seretse).

Sources: 1966–1969: The Statesman's Year-Book (Macmillan 1964–1970); 1970–2005: Africa South of the Sahara (Europa Publications 1971–2004; Routledge 2005–2007).

Both ministers and senior civil servants have been able to accumulate knowledge in their respective policy areas, and the ministries have thus "developed institutional memories" (Leith 2005: 56). In some areas, the continuity of ministers has proven to be even higher than in the rapidly expanding public administration. For instance, in the first two decades after independence, only two persons served as minister of finance and development planning, whereas four individuals acted as permanent secretaries (Charlton 1991: 270).

The stability argument is further strengthened if one takes into account the process of presidential succession. After Seretse Khama's death in 1980, former vice president Masire became Botswana's head of state. Festus Mogae and Ian Khama were vice presidents, respectively, before they ascended to the highest political office.[12] Masire and Mogae, simultaneously to filling the vice presidency, officiated as ministers of finance and development planning. They were

notably smaller than in the case of their African counterparts. The heads of government were in power for only 5.9 years on average since 1950. Source from which the data was calculated: The Statesman's Year-Book/The Statesman's Yearbook (Macmillan 1950–2005).

[12] In contrast, some scholars see the "automatic" succession procedure as a major deficiency in Botswana's democracy (Good/Taylor 2005; Taylor 2003). In addition to restricting the presidential tenure to two terms, the 1997 constitutional amendment provides the legal basis for the automatic take-over of the presidency by the vice president after the president ceases to hold office, without an immediate national election being necessary (Republic of Botswana 2002: art. 35 (1)).

both powerful and experienced actors who had gained political strength *before* they ascended to the presidency (Leith 2005: 58, 33; Harvey/Lewis 1990: 9; Charlton 1991: 270).

In Botswana's political system, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning constitutes the strongest political power base after the Ministry of State President. Whereas the presidency has the responsibility for national security, government information and public administration, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning exerts extensive powers with respect to the budgetary and financial affairs of the government. According to Briscoe and Hermans, in both cases "their ministerial responsibilities are extensive, systemic and Government-wide" (2001: 108; see also Charlton 1991: 274). The remarkably strong position of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has been unanimously acknowledged in the literature (Hansohm 2001: 307; Holm/Molutsi 1992: 79; Nordås et al. 1998: 6). For Samatar, it is the "institutional brain" which has "dominated all other ministries" (1999: 85, see also 82, 182).

Therefore, in contrast to other African countries, at least two power centers in the political sphere are discernable in Botswana. Power concentration has not translated into big-man rule, dominated by one individual. Yet, a dynastic principle is eminent: In addition to being strengthened by his long tenure in office, the big-man potential of the first president, Seretse Khama, was also supported by his traditional authority as the rightful heir of the Bamangwato tribe's chiefs. At that time, many rural Batswana perceived his presidency as the continuation of chieftaincy and, in turn, as a permanent rather than an elected office. The fusion of traditional and political authority also applies to his son Ian Khama, who became president on 1 April 2008. He started his career in the Botswana Defence Force[13] and was made deputy to former president Mogae. Although he was elected Member of Parliament in 1998, he is largely inexperienced as a politician and has rarely attended parliament. In 2001, he took a controversial one-year sabbatical from office (Africa Confidential 11.7.2003). His candidacy was even contested within his own party, the BDP. It can be safely said that Ian Khama has won office on grounds of his heredity and traditional popularity as the son of Botswana's founding father president alone (see critical accounts in Good/Taylor 2005; Good 2005; Taylor 2003). In this respect, his ascendance to the presidency must be seen as a regression in terms of neopatrimonial big-man potential. It appears that to some degree politics in Botswana is now seen as a Khama family affair. The president's parliamentary seat for Serowe North West has been taken over by his younger brother Tshekedi Khama.[14]

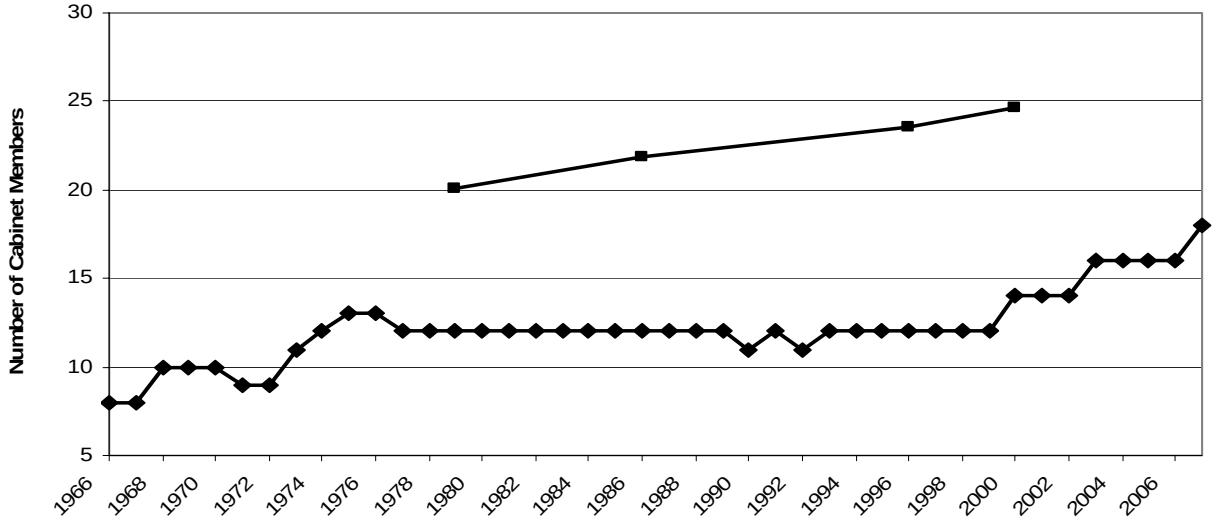
[13] Between 1989 and 1998 he was commander of the Botswana Defence Force. Vice President Mompati Merafhe also commanded the BDF in the 1980s. Furthermore, a new Directorate on Security and Intelligence Services (DSIS) was created; it was led by Ian Khama's former senior private secretary (Africa Confidential 11.4.2008).

[14] Tshekedi Khama won the constituency by-election with 1869 to the 119 votes registered for Botswana National Front (BNF) candidate Gagolepe Nthebolang (Botswana Gazette 24.6.2008).

3.2 Provision of Personal Favors

Bloated ministerial cabinets suggest the unregulated provision of personal favors at the top political level. In contrast, Botswana's cabinet has for a long time remained small. It consisted of only eight members when the country became independent in 1966 and today comprises 18 members, including the president. This is less than the average cabinet size in sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 1). For a period of over 20 years, from 1977 to 1999, no more than twelve ministers formed Botswana's cabinet.

Figure 1: Size of Cabinet



Notes: Totals include presidents and vice presidents, but not deputy ministers,[15] permanent secretaries and provincial governors. The data on cabinet size were mostly derived from the months August and September of the respective years. In assessing the average number of cabinet members for sub-Saharan Africa, van de Walle systematically excluded "heads of states." For comparability to this study's figures one post was added to his average data, respectively.

Sources: Botswana: 1966–1969: The Statesman's Year-Book (Macmillan 1964–1970); 1970–2005: Africa South of the Sahara (Europa Publications 1971–2004; Routledge 2005–2007); average sub-Saharan Africa: Van de Walle (2005: 80).

The additions came recently: In 2000, the government appointed a separate minister of presidential affairs and public administration, a position previously held by the then vice president Ian Khama,[16] and created the Ministry of Lands and Housing (Europa Publications 2000: 223). Two years later, President Mogae added the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism to the ministerial complement (Europa Publications 2003: 105). In January 2007, the responsibilities of the minister of presi-

[15] The "Africa South of the Sahara" volumes in some years added two to six "assistant ministers" to the cabinet. Reporting has, however, been inconsistent. In the interviews conducted for this article politicians and policy makers maintained that only ministers form Botswana's cabinet.

[16] As outlined above, it has been common political practice in Botswana that the post of the minister of finance and development planning is filled by the vice president. In contrast, in the first period of his incumbency, Vice President Ian Khama acted as minister of presidential affairs and public administration. After 2000, he officiated only as vice president.

dential affairs and public administration were subdivided into public services and parliament (held by Daniel Kwelagobe) and justice, defense and security (held by Ramadeluka Seretse). Furthermore, a new Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture was created.

It can be argued that the ministerial expansion at the beginning of the current decade was warranted by the functional demands of Botswana's rapidly expanding economy. The still comparatively low number of ministers suggests that the cabinet has not become a locus of systematic clientelism and/or patronage. Yet, the 2007 expansion clearly served to accommodate a disgruntled faction in the ruling BDP. The two factions' fight within the governing party has dominated media coverage for years now and is a sign of the decreasing cohesion within the political elite and the ruling party (Basedau/von Soest 2007). In this case, then president Mogae drew on neopatrimonial means in order to safeguard his rule.

Indicative of the provision of personal favors is also the *composition* of cabinet. It appears that the complement of Botswana's cabinets has most of the time not followed an ethnic or neopatrimonial logic but has been dominated by merit and political principles. Samatar, for instance, wrote that the "accomplishment of the last three decades must be credited to the competent political and technocratic leaders of the state (1999: 12; see also Harvey/Lewis 1990: 9; Acemoglu et al. 2003: 106, 113). Ministers are commonly perceived to have the expertise for the formulation and implementation of policies in their respective areas of responsibility.

The pressure for ethnic representation in Tswana-dominated Botswana has been lower than in other African countries. The country's presidents have also "emphasized the universalism of their leadership" (Holm/Molutsi 1992: 84). Yet universalism has a distinct flavor: The composition of the House of Chiefs (Ntlo ya Dikgosi), for instance, discriminates against other ethnic groups. Although it fulfills a rather symbolic role, the House of Chief's composition has been a widely debated issue. In July 2000, this led to the appointment of a constitutional review commission (Balopi Commission) (Nyamnjoh 2003: 107-110; IRIN 13.04.2005) and a change to the constitution. However, it is still only the representatives of the eight Tswana tribes who are *ex officio* members of the chamber (Republic of Botswana 2002: art. 78).[17] Other groups have been co-opted by the BDP.[18] Most prominent in this regard have been the Kalanga, which, compared to their share of about ten percent of Botswana's population, are significantly overrepresented in the country's political elite (for a detailed account of the Kalanga elite see Werbner 2004).

In essence, Botswana's four presidents have not used the cabinet as an instrument for the systematic provision of personal favors; yet, the pressure to accommodate different factions in the ruling BDP through cabinet posts has increased in recent years and the cabinet has grown in turn. Generally, elite cohesion within the governing party is weaker than in the past.

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[17] The Constitutional (Amendment) Act of 2004, which removed the most severe discriminations, did not change this basic imbalance between Tswana and non-Tswana groups.

[18] On non-Tswana groups in Botswana see Solway (2004) and Parsons (1985).

3.3 Misuse of State Resources

Although Botswana's political elite has desisted from systematically misusing state office for particularistic ends, the analysis of this dimension of neopatrimonialism paints an ambiguous picture. The first president, Seretse Khama, pursued a tough stance against corruption (e.g. Adamolekun/Morgan 1999: 592), which from early on earned the government a reputation for the "clean" management of public resources. The NGO Transparency International has consistently rated Botswana the least corrupt of all African countries included in its Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (see Table 3). Accordingly, the World Bank's Governance Index has awarded favorable ratings with respect to the "control of corruption." It has repeatedly classified Botswana as belonging to the third of countries with the lowest incidence of corruption (Kaufmann et al. 2005a).[19] The Bertelsmann Transformation Index country report on Botswana comes to a similar conclusion (Bertelsmann Foundation 2007). Charlton (1990: 6) expresses the common perception that "what Botswana lacks is political graft, i.e. the diversion of public resources for personal ends."

Table 3: Botswana's Corruption Perceptions Index Rankings

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
CPI score	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.4	5.7	6.0	5.9	5.6	5.4
Position / no. of rankings	22 / 85	24 / 99	26 / 90	26 / 91	24 / 102	29 / 133	29 / 145	31 / 158	37 / 163	38 / 179

Notes: The CPI ranges from 0 to 10, with the value 10 denoting the complete absence of corruption. Due to different studies being included in the respective Corruption Perceptions Indices, a direct longitudinal comparison of the CPI scores is not feasible. The number of countries included in the CPI has been subsequently expanded, with some countries being ranked on the same corruption level. Therefore, the number of rankings does not equal the number of countries included in the sample. On the methodological issues of the CPI see Graf Lambsdorff (2005).

Source: Transparency International (2008).

However, despite high marks on the CPI, corruption has not been absent in Botswana: serious scandals involving high-level corruption and the misuse of state resources first erupted in the 1980s and 1990s.[20] One area particularly prone to irregularities has been the allocation of state land to private business persons and members of the political elite, which often are synonymous. Even the family of then vice president Masire was involved when in the mid-1980s several persons obtained more than one farm under a government scheme to support agriculture. This Tribal Grazing Lands Programme (TGLP) was introduced to provide one farm per person interested, but Quett Masire's brother received at least three. The cabinet refused to take action "because of the potential embarrassment" (Holm 1988: 213, en. 64).

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[19] In their composite index, incorporating 37 data sources, Kaufmann et al. rate six different governance dimensions such as "control of corruption" on a scale ranging from +2.5 (best) to -2.5 (worst). In the 2004 round, 209 "countries and territories" were covered by the Governance Index. On the methodology of the index see Kaufmann et al. (2005b).

[20] These cases of corruption are well documented in Good (1994; 2002) and Theobald/Williams (1999).

In 1991, a presidential commission (Kgabo Commission) investigating illegal land transactions in villages near Gaborone found that then vice president Mmusi and then minister of agriculture Kwelagobe were involved in illegal land sales. Both resigned from government in March 1992, but Daniel Kwelagobe has since continued to play an important role in the government as well as in the BDP. He served for a long time as the party's secretary general before he was made minister for public services and parliament in January 2007. Irregularities again emerged when a commission found in 2004 that due process was not followed by officials from the Ministry of Lands and Housing in allocating land to investors (EIU 2004b: 16-17; EIU 2004a: 15-16).

In 1993, another series of scandals reached its climax when newspapers exposed the fact that government politicians had incurred huge repayment arrears with the state-owned National Development Bank (NDB). This nearly led to the bankruptcy of Botswana's biggest public lending institution (Tsie 1996: 602; see Good for a list of defaulters 1994: 511). President Masire also featured among the loan defaulters. Furthermore, the government for a long time funded the Financial Assistance Policy (FAP), a scheme which provided grants for emerging businesses. According to Briscoe and Hermans, "the Financial Assistance Policy has become the focal point of high-level corruption and fraudulent activities" (2001: 10, see also 124; Bolnick 2004: A.3; Theobald/Williams 1999: 131), and even the minister of finance and development planning at one time conceded "widespread abuse of the scheme by some beneficiaries" (Republic of Botswana 2001: 15).[21]

The land sales, housing, and loan-fund scandals all involved high-ranking government politicians. It appears that Botswana's political and economic elite has made use of public resources for particularistic ends. These cases were documented by various presidential commissions; in response, institutions for executive control were created. The most prominent are the Directorate of Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) (launched in 1994) and the Ombudsman (launched in 1995) (on the DCEC see Olowu 1999; on the Ombudsman see Fombad 2001). Their achievements and their image, however, have been mixed. The DCEC, for instance, has to refer prosecutions to the attorney general, who in turn reports to the Office of the President (Republic of Botswana 1994: sec. 39).[22]

A general problem has been the close integration of Botswana's political and economic elite. Members of the BDP government are often also owners or directors of commercial companies and farming enterprises. Some politicians engage in "highly questionable dealings which are believed to have led to unacceptably high financial gains" (Theobald/Williams 1999: 130; see also Good 1994: 517). At the same time, the BDP has consistently refused to pass legislation which requires MPs and cabinet ministers to declare their assets and eco-

[21] Interview with the chief executive director of the successor institution Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), Gaborone, 05.08.2004.

[22] For a current and detailed overview of the shortcomings of Botswana's democratic system see Sebudubudu and Osei-Hwedie (2006).

nomic interests (e.g. Mmegi 24.11.2004). As a result, there are strong indications of "old-boys networks" which closely link economic and political interests.[23]

The ruling BDP elite can be referred to as a "club government." The term denotes the closed character of the political circle (Levi-Faur/Gilad 2004: 107; Marquand 1988: 178). In this club, the boundaries between public and private interests are blurred. A high-profile example in recent years has been President Ian Khama's "helicopterism." Although prohibited by law, the former commander of the Botswana Defence Force continues to fly army helicopters himself. He also pilots these helicopters to BDP party events (Mmegi 18.03.2008). Botswana's state is not criminalized as other African states are. Nevertheless, economic and political interests are closely integrated and political elites make use of state resources. The use of state resources for private ends has—in contrast to common perception—not been absent in Botswana. However, it has been characterized by limited, elite-centered provision of favors and the misuse of state resources. Obviously, this has been less harmful to governance and economic development than the widespread blurring of the public-private divide in other African states.

4 Private Interests Favor Public Institutions—Explaining Botswana's Neopatrimonial Profile

Why then, did Botswana's main political actors limit instances of neopatrimonialism from the outset? Initial answers can be found by looking to the independence period.

4.1 Protectorate Period and Elite Interests at Independence

Scholars widely describe the British protectorate regime up to independence in 1966 as one of "neglect," exerting only "minimal" influence on the territory. According to Holm (1988: 183), "the degree of sovereignty the British chose to exercise was so mild that even the term 'indirect rule' would be an exaggeration" (see also Harvey/Lewis 1990: 15; Picard 1985: 32; Colclough/McCarthy 1980: 242). The protectorate period left precolonial structures of authority largely intact.

The social and political organization of the eight Tswana tribes was characterized by the chiefs' vast powers. They simultaneously executed the roles of the government, the courts, and the public administration (Schapera 1970: 11; Tlou 1998: 21). Furthermore, the chiefs dominated the tribal economy. They allocated land for all purposes and largely controlled or owned the cattle, the most distinct form of wealth in the Tswana society (Holm 1988: 182). The power of the chiefs was not unrestricted as the so called *kgotla*, a gathering of adult males, discussed issues brought forward by the chief or his headman. However, the extent to which the *dikgotla*[24] were in reality an "effective way for commoners to criticize the king," as Acemoglu

[23] This was a common perception expressed in interviews with business and civil society representatives (interviews, Gaborone, 22.06.2004, 08.07.2004, 12.07.2004, 15.07.2004 and 18.08.2004).

[24] *Dikgotla* is the plural of the Setswana word *kgotla*.

et al. claim (2003: 93), remains contested. According to Maundeni, *dikgotla* "were in fact highly centralised institutions" (2002: 114; see also Holm/Molutsi 1992: 77). These *kgotla* gatherings have remained of high social relevance in today's Botswana, particularly in rural areas.

Crucial in limiting neopatrimonial exchanges were the main political actors' *interests* at independence. In the early 1960s, Seretse Khama, Quett Masire, and other rural-based individuals founded the moderate Bechuanaland Democratic Party, later renamed Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). Party president Seretse Khama was the first-born grandson of Khama III, the chief of the largest tribe, the Bamangwato, who had ruled until 1925 (Colclough/McCarthy 1980: 35). The British-educated Khama maintained a close relationship with the foreign rulers and "cultivated the colonial regime as a supporter of his political career" (Holm 1988: 186). He also secured support from the economically powerful cattle farmers, as he himself owned one of the biggest commercial cattle ranches in the protectorate.

As a result, Seretse Khama and his BDP appealed to all politically important groups in the newly founded Botswana: the educated elite, the traditional authorities, the cattle farmers, and the rural population. Accordingly, the party secured an overwhelming majority in the first parliamentary elections, held in March 1965 (before the official declaration of independence). It gained 80.4 percent of the votes cast and 28 of 31 elected seats in parliament (Baumhögger 1999: 112-113). In stark contrast to radical movements in other African countries, the party was dominated by elites who had already been powerful under the protectorate dispensation and who fused political and economic interests (Maundeni 2002: 125; Fawcus/Tilbury 2000: 88).

Two-thirds of the members of the first National Assembly were large- or medium-scale cattle owners (Samatar 1999: 69-70; Acemoglu et al. 2003: 101). Accordingly, Harvey and Lewis (1990: 9) found that "Botswana's government was largely a government of cattlemen." Even today, most ministers own over two hundred cattle and derive significant additional income, on top of their official emoluments, from this commercial activity (Holm 1988: 203; Tlou 1998: 21). It was in the interest of this politico-economic elite of cattle owners to codify their individual property rights. Acemoglu et al. (2003: 113) argue that this was best attained through the introduction of a liberal-democratic system which safeguarded "institutions of private property." Botswana's unique elite composition, merging political and economic interests and resting on a strong traditional legitimacy, therefore explains to a large extent why the BDP government did not initially opt for the nationalization of the economy and the creation of a one-party state, as did many of its neighboring countries. In a nutshell, public institutions served the elite's private interests best.

Only at a later stage did the fusion of nominally different interests prove to be dysfunctional in certain areas, as can be seen in the scandals involving the misallocation of land, housing, and loan-funds (see above). In analyzing Botswana's development path, we see that the close elite integration, favorable at independence, met its limits in the following decades.

4.2 Public Administration

Of crucial importance for limiting neopatrimonialism in Botswana were also early decisions with respect to the public administration. Due to Britain's colonial "neglect," Botswana's bureaucracy is in essence a product of the post- and not the pre-independence era (Harvey/Lewis 1990: 49; Molomo 1989: 239; Charlton 1991: 271).

Immediately following independence in 1966, the government built up and massively expanded the public administration but desisted from interfering with or politicizing it. The lines of political and administrative authority have remained separate; the recruitment of personnel has largely been guided by merit and not by neopatrimonial principles. According to Parson, in Botswana's public administration "probity, relative autonomy and competency have been nurtured and sustained" (1984: 10; see also Raphaeli et al. 1984: 36). In addition, the public administration has gained a key position in the development planning process. Many scholars even argue that it has been *the* driving force in formulating policies. Somolekae, for instance, maintains that "in Botswana the bureaucracy and not the political leadership has been the dominant actor in policymaking" (1993: 119; see also Adamolekun/Morgan 1999: 593; Carroll/Carroll 1997: 475; Molomo 1989: 239-242).

Directly after independence, the tiny core of educated political actors in government was reliant on the public administration, which was dominated by expatriates, who made up around 73 percent of the staff. Furthermore, as was the case with political and economic actors, there was strong congruence between the political and the administrative elite. Both high-ranking civil servants and BDP politicians often ran large cattle farms and came from the Batswana elite. In this way they shared "a commonality of economic interest and purpose that cuts across the civil service/politician divide" (Charlton 1990: 12; see also Hansohm 2001: 307). For Picard (1987: 220), the small political establishment and the state administration constituted Botswana's "administrative state." All groups focused on preserving (their) individual property rights and on allowing capitalist development through a largely impartial public administration.

Two interrelated facets in Botswana's further administrative development path stand out and explain why it has largely followed a rational-legal logic: First, the BDP government decided to only gradually localize the public administration and to wait until suitably qualified Batswana were available to fill the posts (Acemoglu et al. 2003: 100).[25] Second, expatriate civil servants were placed in middle-level positions, the strata where African public administrations "are apt to be the weakest" (Goldsmith 1999: 539). In Botswana, they became integral part of the "normal" public administration structure.

The reliance on foreign staff has been a constant source of debate (Molomo 1989: 239; Picard 1987: 203-213; for more recent examples see IRIN 29.11.2005; Mmegi 13.01.2006) but has at the same time strengthened the rational-legal orientation of the state. Foreign personnel

[25] In contrast, Goldsmith (1999: 537) maintained that "local people flooded the bureaucracies in most countries."

profited from professional training in their home countries; they were—at least at the outset—not connected to local "old-boys" networks and had to legitimize their employment through performance. Consequently, commentators have credited Botswana with having one of the most capable public administrations in sub-Saharan Africa (Somolekae 1993: 113; Raphaeli et al. 1984: 1), one which is principally able to implement policies in such a way as to have the intended effect. In essence, the government was largely successful in creating reliable, that is, rule-bound, formal institutions which in turn impeded the emergence of a system of neopatrimonial exchange at the administrative level.

4.3 Revenues for Public and Private Goods

Botswana's spectacular growth rates have brought massive state income. Between 1965 and 1998, the economy grew on average by 7.7 percent annually, which translated into the highest growth rate worldwide (Acemoglu et al. 2003: 80; Harvey/Lewis 1990: 1). With a GDP of US$312 per capita in 1966 (in constant 2000 prices) the country was one of the poorest countries in the world. Today, Botswana's GDP per capita amounts to US$3532, almost six times the African average. The Word Bank (2005: 291) classifies the country as an upper-middle-income economy, along with only five others in sub-Saharan Africa.[26]

This growth has been based on the extraction of diamonds. Shortly after independence, diamond pipes were discovered at Orapa and Letlhakane. Experts perceive Orapa and the subsequently opened Jwaneng site to be among the most productive diamond mines in the world (Financial Mail 23.-29.07.2004).[27] Of crucial significance proved to be the 1975 renegotiation of the original agreement with the South African mining conglomerate De Beers, which awarded 50 percent of the shares of the joint venture Debswana to the state (Acemoglu et al. 2003: 99-100; Hansohm 2001: 306). Other major sources of income included receipts from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenue pool and the profits from the central bank, Bank of Botswana, which has accumulated foreign currencies and invested in international financial markets (von Soest 2006: 144).

Botswana's economic success cannot be attributed to the abundance of diamonds itself but rather to the government's policies in using the revenue windfalls (Harvey/Lewis 1990; Colclough/McCarthy 1980; Leith 2005). This is in stark contrast to literature on the "resource curse" which claims that resources often have negative consequences for state institutions and, in turn, economic as well as democratic development (Auty 1993; Ross 1999; Karl 1997; Basedau/Mehler 2005; Herb 2005).[28] The BDP government continuously adopted National

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[26] In 2004, the World Bank ranked countries with a GNI per capita between US$3,256 and US$10,065 as upper-middle-income economies. The other African countries in this category were Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa (World Bank 2005: 291).

[27] It is estimated that the Jwaneng mine generates a diamond output worth US$1.3 billion per year (Economist 15.-21.07.2004).

[28] On Botswana and the resource curse see the analysis in Mokhawa (2005).

Development Plans, to which it generally adhered.[29] It pursued a conservative fiscal policy, that is, it contained expenditure and invested in infrastructure, health, and education facilities (Leith 2005: 83-84; Hansohm 2001: 305). Due to expenditure control, the economy did not suffer from the "Dutch Disease" or from high inflation, and since 1972 has generated large budget surpluses in almost all fiscal years (see e.g. analysis in Norberg/Blomström 1993). Yet, government expenditure in relation to GDP expanded considerably and with 44.2 percent of GDP reached a recent peak in the financial year 2002/03 (IMF 2006: 16, Table 13). The government is the key player in Botswana's economic arena.

As can be seen by output indicators, the BDP government has invested heavily in social infrastructure. As early as 1998, 88 percent of Botswana's population lived within only eight kilometers of a health facility and 97 percent had access to safe drinking water (UNDP 2005: 20-21). Furthermore, the national poverty rate dropped from 47 percent in 1993/94 to 30.3 percent in 2002/03 (Central Statistical Office 2005: par. 4).[30] In 1985, the national poverty rate had amounted to 59 percent; that is, more than half of Botswana's population had earned less than US$1 a day (BIDPA 1997: 2). Yet, despite these achievements, "pockets and regions of acute poverty" remain (Clover 2003: 4; see also analysis in Hillbom 2008).

On balance, Botswana's government has benefited from the three easily available revenue sources: diamond extraction, SACU transfers, and Bank of Botswana surpluses. This has allowed the creation of public goods, which has in turn strengthened the BDP's grip on power.

Apparently, the cattle-farming elite's interests were satisfied not only by public goods, but also by a legal conduit for siphoning off some of the vast state revenues. Initially, the BDP government sought to strengthen the cattle sector through direct subsidies and "a very lenient tax system" (Fidzani et al. 1997: 17). Farmers were allowed to offset losses incurred from cattle ranching against profits from nonfarming income such as permanent employment. This mechanism allowed for significant lowering of the overall tax burden (Hudson 1981: 74; FIAS 2004: 149). As large cattle farmers were traditionally the most powerful actors in Botswana's society, the offsetting of losses incurred from cattle farming served not only the development of this economic activity but also the interests of the country's elite.

In 1996, a controversy erupted over the low taxation of cattle when a newspaper exposed that powerful cattle farmers paid little or no tax. Among these farmers was President Masire, who, according to the reports, acknowledged that he continuously offset losses from cattle farming against other income. He had officiated as vice president and minister of finance and development planning when the tax law provisions favoring cattle farmers were passed (Botswana Gazette 31.7.1996; 10.7.1996; 17.7.1996).

The geographical location of cattle farms and the frequency of drought have made it difficult for the Department of Taxes to verify whether losses were actually incurred by the claimants

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[29] The Transitional Plan of 1966 established the "necessity of planning the social and economic development of the nation" (Republic of Botswana 1966: 6).

[30] A poverty datum line approximating the internationally used yardstick of US$1 per day was applied.

or not. It was only in 2004 that the amount of farming losses which can be offset against other income was limited to a maximum of 50 percent of nonfarming income (Republic of Botswana 2004: 21). Nevertheless, a tax advisor commenting on this tax-law provision maintained, "Smart businessmen have a cattle farm."[31]

5 Recent Developments—a Stagnating "Miracle"

Elite cohesion and elite interests at independence, a strong public administration, and the provision of public and private goods have ensured that neopatrimonialism has been limited in Botswana. Why then has the governance record been stagnating or even regressing in recent years as argued in the first part of this paper?

Most fundamentally, the BDP's grip on power is less secure today than in the past. Traditionally, the political arena was dominated by the party, which has governed the country since independence. Table 4 shows that the BDP has consistently received more than 50 percent of the votes cast in the national elections. However, the opposition has gained ground since the beginning of the 1980s. In the 2004 elections, the combined vote of the socialist-oriented Botswana National Front (BNF), the Botswana Congress Party (BCP),[32] and smaller parties approached 50 percent, showing that Botswana's ruling party has lost acceptance among the electorate. In fact, it can be argued that the BDP has only remained in power because the opposition remains chronically averse to cooperation or unity (Basedau/von Soest 2007; Sebudubudu/Osei-Hwedie 2006). From the opposition's perspective, the first-past-the-post electoral system used in Botswana makes things worse as it punishes a fragmented opposition. In this context, the presidency of Ian Khama, the son of Botswana's founding father, who also draws on traditional support as the Bamangwato tribe's heir, must be seen as the ruling party's attempt to revive its appeal among voters, particularly in rural areas.

Table 4: Botswana National Election Results, 1965–2004

	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
BDP	80.4	68.3	76.6	75.2	68.0	64.8	54.7	57.2	51.7
BNF	-	13.5	11.5	13.0	20.4	27.0	36.9	26.0	26.1
BPP	14.2	12.1	6.6	7.4	6.6	4.4	4.1	-	0.9
BIP/IFP	4.6	6.0	4.8	4.2	3.2	2.5	2.7	-	-
BCP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11.9	16.6
Other	0.6	0.0	0.5	0.2	1.8	1.4	1.6	5.0	5.6

Notes: Percentages of votes cast. The Botswana People's Party (BPP) contested the 1999 election as part of the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM), which received 4.7 percent of the votes cast and is included in the rubric "other." BIP/IFP stands for Botswana Independence Party/Independence Freedom Party.

Sources: Baumhögger (1999: 112-113); 1999 and 2004 results from EIU (2005: 15).

[31] The details of the respondent were made anonymous.

[32] The BCP is an offshoot of the BNF.

In addition, despite the provision of health and education facilities and the lowering of poverty rates, the social effects of economic growth have remained relatively limited: no broad-based creation of jobs or transformation of the diamond-driven economy has followed (Hillbom 2008). Diamond mining continues to play the dominant role in the economy and remains the engine of growth. It accounts for about 35 percent of GDP, 72 percent of exports, and 50 percent of government revenue (IMF 2004: 21, 18). However, as diamond extraction is capital- but not labor-intensive, growth rates go along with high unemployment. Scholars widely agree that the official unemployment rate of 21 percent significantly underrates the real problem, which other estimates place in excess of 35 percent (Clover 2003: 7). The contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP remains around only five percent (IMF 2006: 6, Table 3). High unemployment rates and the public scandals alluded to above are increasingly limiting the BDP's electoral appeal within a multiparty framework.

Consequently, the elite-driven nature of Botswana's political system has become apparent. Not only are certain neopatrimonial practices on the rise, authoritarian tendencies are also visible. For years now, the government's treatment of the San (Basarwa), the inhabitants of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), has generated international and national controversy. In 2006, members of this ethnic group successfully challenged their relocation from the CKGR before the Constitutional Court. Yet, the case still resonates in domestic politics as the San pressure group, the First People of the Kalahari (FPK), has accused government agents of trying to undermine the court judgment which obliged the state to allow their return to the reserve (Basedau/von Soest 2007). In addition, legal provisions such as the Immigration Act, the Penal Code on Sedition, Defamation and Contempt, and the National Security Act allow the government to unilaterally take action and silence its critics (Holm/Molutsi 1992: 79).[33]

Another example of the recent rise in authoritarian tendencies is the draft Media Practitioners Bill. It was quietly published in the Government Gazette in June 2008 and finally passed by parliament on 10 December 2008. It will give the government greater control over independent media as it stipulates that no one may work in the country unless he or she is accredited by a government-appointed "executive committee." In effect, this bill gives the government the power to determine who can and cannot practice journalism. A person who contravenes any provision of the legislation may be fined up to R5,000, imprisoned for up to three years, or both (Motseta 11.7.2008). The only daily newspaper in the country—printed in English and Setswana and distributed free of charge—is the government-owned "Daily News." According to Holm (1988: 194), independent publications appear "to be subject to effective informal pressure when they become too aggressive for the government."

[33] For further examples see the critical account in Good (1996). The author of this article, an Australian national who had worked at the University of Botswana for 15 years, was declared a prohibited immigrant on the basis of the Immigration Act in 2005. This was the very legal provision he had criticized nine years previously (see extensive documentation of the case in Taylor 2006).

This demonstrates that Botswana's rulers are also reverting to some authoritarian tendencies, in addition to neopatrimonial ones, in order to hang on to power amidst decreasing electoral dominance. The BDP government, led by the new president Ian Khama, seems to be tightening the screws ahead of the coming parliamentary elections.

6 Conclusions

The systematic analysis of Botswana's neopatrimonial profile—that is, power concentration, the provision of personal favors, and the misuse of state resources—allows for the determination of the country's governance record and its changes over time. It demonstrates that, in contrast to widespread assumptions, neopatrimonial tendencies have been a recurrent feature of Botswana's political practice. Yet, in stark contrast to other African countries, Botswana's state has not been subverted by neopatrimonialism.

The security of the BDP's rule, the homogeneity of interests among political, economic and administrative elites, and the plethora of revenues have ensured that no social group in Botswana has expanded its rents at the expense of "rocking the boat" (Acemoglu et al. 2003: 106; see also Helle-Valle 2002: 194; Holm/Molutsi 1992: 84). Botswana's "club government" has consequently limited some favorable exchange relations to members of the elite. This group's interests as cattle farmers have been better served by the protection of private property through a largely impartial state machinery than they would have been through a weak, neopatrimonial state. Nevertheless, the misuse of state resources remains the most problematic neopatrimonial dimension in Botswana. This is complemented by legal forms of advantage-provision such as the mechanism for offsetting virtual losses incurred by cattle farming through the tax system. This advantage-provision shows that the commonality of elite interests served the establishment of a state oriented along rational-legal lines at independence. At the beginning of the 1980s this system became dysfunctional to some extent, particularly with regard to state land, housing, and loan-funds.

The country's abundant revenues from diamonds, the SACU revenue pool, and the Bank of Botswana have put the government in a very comfortable position, separating it from its region. These revenues have allowed to provide "significant returns" (Holm/Molutsi 1992: 81) to all social groups, including both the "normal" population and the elite, and for necessary capital investments. Consequently, citizens' "general attitude is that 'the government' or the 'BDP' will deliver the goods" (Helle-Valle 2002: 196). This role as a "generous patron" has strengthened the BDP's acceptance among the population and has fostered its grip on power. In this respect, Botswana's state-society relationship has been exceptional.

Recent developments, however, indicate decreasing elite cohesion, reduced acceptance of the BDP among voters, stalled economic diversification, and, in turn, stronger reliance on neopatrimonial exchanges and some authoritarian means. President Ian Khama has particular big-man potential and the recent cabinet expansion has served to accommodate critics

within the ruling party. Finally, despite positive Transparency International ratings, there is evidence of the misuse of state resources, particularly in the area of land sales, housing and loan-funds. Neopatrimonial tendencies in Botswana are on the rise, albeit in a restricted manner relative to its neighbors. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the indicators, the "African miracle" is clearly stagnating.

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