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Botswana

Comparative National Systems



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Introduction

This report considers the comparative politics of Botswana using the SPECIPIO framework for comparative political analysis. Botswana became an independent country in 1966 after nearly 80 years as a protectorate state of Great Britain. Since independence Botswana has functioned as a stable, multi-party democratic state. For this reason Botswana is often viewed as a prime example of sustainable democracy in Africa. Similarly, Botswana has experienced one of the highest economic growth rates in the world over the past 40+ years. These two facts are not unrelated. Several factors played a critical role in establishing democracy and promoting economic growth in Botswana. Specifically, Botswana's history, culture, and institutions significantly influenced Botswana's democratic and economic development. Maundeni (2002) discusses how Botswana's status as a British protectorate state, not as a colony, allowed for indigenous Tswana culture to be preserved and maintained during independence. Furthermore, he discusses how institutions of Tswana culture were adopted and modified by the new state elites to form post-protectorate Botswana's institutions. Robinson (2009) states "I would see democracy as an outcome...evolving with the building of state institutions" and moreover "the same institutional structure which facilitated economic growth also led to democracy."

Botswana held its most recent parliamentary elections on October 16, 2009. This election, like every other previous election in Botswana's post-protectorate history, was won by the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). As a result, Botswana's level of democracy has been greatly disputed by people such as Good (1992), Brown and Kaiser (2007), and Good and Taylor (2008). However, the opposition political parties in Botswana have remained weak; therefore, given the country's record of good governance, most citizens have very little motivation to change the status quo (EIU, 2008). The SPECIPIO framework provides a tool to examine how different variables within Botswana interact and influence each other and also how they impact Botswana's democratic system.

Stateness

Botswana has "no evident problem with stateness" and the "state's monopoly on the use of force is unrestricted and covers the whole territory" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2007). Since independence, the state has been very stable in part due to the BDP being the only political party to rule the country. The BDP has done a good job in government and has not received any significant opposition threat to its ruling status.

Botswana has a functioning taxation system with some of the lowest tax rates in Southern Africa. Overall, tax revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2008 was 35.2% (The Heritage Foundation, 2009).

The population of Botswana is composed of people from different many different ethnic groups, but 79% of the people are Tswana (US Department of State, 2009). This ethnic majority resulted from post-protectorate Botswana being made up of eight Tswana states, and as

Robinson (2009) argues, “it is the organization of the Tswana states which mostly accounts for the relatively homogenous nature of society.” This homogeneity has helped unify the state and allows it to make decisions efficiently. However, in 2002 the state was faced with controversy for its treatment of members of the San ethnic group as it attempted to evict them from their land in the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve (Freedom House, 2009). In 2006, the High Court ruled in favor of the San, and allowed them to return to their land. This example demonstrates the state’s ability to operate effectively when faced with upholding the rights of a minority ethnic group.

Botswana is a landlocked country, slightly smaller than the state of Texas, located in Southern Africa. Very little of this land, 0.66%, is used for any type of crop production (CIA, 2009) since most of the country is either desert or savanna. Botswana has many different natural resources including copper, nickel, coal, soda ash, salt, gold, potash, and most importantly, diamonds (US Department of State, 2009). Revenues from diamond exports make up over one-third of Botswana’s GDP. Unlike the majority of other resource rich African states, Botswana has remained fairly uncorrupt and has avoided the natural resource curse that has affected numerous other resource-rich African countries.

The state has used its resource wealth to pursue a developmental path by investing in education, infrastructure, and human capital. Hillblom (2008) argues that Botswana’s resource dependent development presents only the pre-conditions to actual modern development. Hillblom (2008) describes how the state can achieve modern development by stating, “The progress of Botswana is truly commendable, but the goal for any society must be development through MEG (modern economic goals), and the next step is to leave the safe haven of stability and growth to venture into structural change and development. With a developmental state promoting equity and bringing prosperity to all segments of society, Botswana could use its diamond wealth to diversify industry, transform agriculture, and become a modern society. This is necessary for long-run economic sustainability because it is development and not diamonds that lasts forever.” Changes, as described by Hillblom, would require Botswana’s leaders to alter business as usual, which could risk some of the economic benefits enjoyed the current economic system.

The state also functions as a welfare state by providing its citizens with limited social services. For instance, Botswana has received international recognition for its efforts in putting forth initiatives to combat the country’s HIV/AIDS crisis. The government pays for 80% of the country’s HIV/AIDS activities and provides highly anti-retroviral therapy (HAART) to the public as well as voluntary counselling and testing programs (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2007).

Political Regime

Botswana is often regarded as the success story for the possible existence of democracy in Africa. Since independence in 1966, Botswana has chosen its top government leaders through regularly scheduled elections, the latest occurring on October 16, 2009. Various organizations have labeled Botswana’s democracy using various adjectives. For instance, the CIA World Factbook uses the categorization parliamentary republic, Freedom House designates Botswana as an electoral democracy, and The Economist’s Intelligence Unit’s 2007 democracy index puts Botswana in the top of the “flawed democracy” category.

Many fundamental democratic components are evident in Botswana’s democracy. For example, regularly held elections have occurred since independence that have been deemed free, fair, and open by the international community. Botswana’s democracy also performs well in the areas of protecting civil liberties, such as a free press (newspapers and magazines) and freedom of association (EIU, 2008). This is evidenced by Freedom House, which gives Botswana a Political Rights Score of 2 and a Civil Liberties Score of 2 for an overall Status as Free.

Additionally, academic and religious freedoms are also respected and the courts generally operate free of political interference (Freedom House, 2009).

On the other hand, several aspects of Botswana's political regime have led to questions about the country's level of democracy. A common critique is that only one political party (BDP) has ruled the country since independence. This fact has led some people, such as Brown and Kaiser (2007), to state "Given the absence of alternations of political leadership, Africa's 'premier' democracy has yet to demonstrate its ability to withstand the challenges of genuine political change." In contrast to the freedom associated with the print press, communications freedom specifically through radio broadcasts is much more constrained. Second to face-to-face contact, radio is the most important tool politicians in Botswana have at their disposal to disseminate their ideas to the voters (Zaffiro, 2000). However, access for all is limited since the government claims a monopoly of airwaves due to "radio's nation-building significance" (Zaffiro, 2000). Additionally, according to The Economist's Intelligence Unit's 2007 democracy index, Botswana scores very low in regards to the democratic values of political participation and political culture. Good and Taylor (2008) illustrate this point by declaring Botswana a "minimalist democracy" with voter turnout less than 50% and "high-handed presidentialism."

There seems to be little debate about whether or not Botswana's political regime is a democracy. However, as the previous regime characteristics illustrate, determining the country's level of democracy depends on what democratic principles are being discussed. Good (1992) explains how all these "democratic" and "non-democratic" elements fit together in Botswana with his description of elite democracy in which he states, "Elite democracy as in Botswana presupposes competition and allows for opposition, at the same time as it contains and controls them... But the opposition is not a negligible force in terms of electoral support, and its continued containment is not guaranteed by the liberal system."

Economic Development

Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world at the time of independence, Botswana's economic growth, in terms of per capita income, has been one of the fastest in the world with an average growth rate of 9% per year from 1967 to 2006 (US Department of State, 2009). Given this growth Botswana is considered a middle-income country and had a per capita nominal GDP in 2008 of \$7,343 (US Department of State, 2009). As Przeworski et al. (1996) argue democracies that have reached this level of economic growth become extremely stable and nearly impregnable to collapse. Therefore, given Botswana's level of economic development, democracy would be expected to endure into the future.

Botswana owes the much of its economic success to its abundance of natural resources, in particular diamonds. Cattle products were Botswana's leading export from the time of independence until 1978 when they were overtaken by diamonds (Robinson, 2009). The mining industry currently accounts for over one-third of the country's GDP and 70%-80% of export earnings (CIA, 2009). Debswana (an equal partnership organization between the Botswana government and De Beers from South Africa) is the largest mining company in Botswana. Unlike many other resource-rich African countries, the discovery of valuable natural resources in Botswana did not lead to political instability and conflicts over resource control. Instead, "the government invested heavily in infrastructure, education and health" (Acemoglu et al., 2001). Additionally, "investment in the ranching industry, in mining and in human capital has been facilitated by highly prudent and competent macroeconomic policy and stable property rights" (Robinson, 2009). By following prudent economic policies, Botswana has been able to build up considerable savings (EIU, 2008) and experience remarkably high economic growth, which aid in maintaining the country's political stability and democratic system.

Several challenges exist for Botswana in regards to continued economic growth. First, diamonds exports depend on demand from other countries. Therefore, given diamond export's significant contribution to Botswana's GDP, small changes in the global marketplace can have substantial impacts on Botswana's economy. Second, Botswana is currently faced with one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS infections rates, which greatly impacts the size and productivity of the country's labor market (Econsult, 2007). Economic projections show that "average real economic (GDP) growth will be reduced by 1.5% to 2.0% a year over the period 2001 - 2021, resulting in the economy being 25% to 35% smaller as a result of HIV/AIDS than it would have been otherwise" (Econsult, 2007). Decisions will need to be made to combat the growing HIV/AIDS crisis that address the economic implications predicted to occur in many sectors of the economy. Given the circumstances, Botswana's leaders have, to varying degrees, explored developing policies and programs aimed at diversifying and expanding the economy in other areas such as tourism, agriculture, private sector development, and foreign investment.

Culture and History

The impact of the protectorate (pre-independence) history of Botswana on its state development and regime type is evident when compared to the histories of many other African countries. Unlike the majority of other African countries, Botswana was not a "colony" in the true sense of the word, but rather a British protectorate state. As a result, Botswana avoided full colonization, which enabled the preservation and inheritance of Tswana state culture by the post-protectorate state elites (Maundeni, 2002). Additionally, post-protectorate Botswana was composed of eight Tswana states, which despite Botswana's multi-ethnic composition allowed for the promotion of a common "Botswana" identity (Parsons, 2006) and a country that today is ethno-linguistically homogenous (Robinson, 2009). This united identity allowed for the elites to create a set of national institutions that did not significantly conflict with regional institutions or interests, which again was not the case in many other sub-Saharan African countries (Robinson, 2009). These two historical circumstances presented Botswana with the opportunity develop a state grounded in an indigenous state culture with limited direct influence from its protectorate power.

Tswana state culture was important to Botswana's successful state development. According to Robinson (2009) "the Tswana developed a state with relatively limited chiefs and with a political structure that was able to integrate other groups, such as the Kalanga, into the state via wards." Tribal policy was determined using an assembly of men, known as a kgotla, in which anyone was allowed to speak thus representing different interests for the chief to consider when making decisions (Robinson, 2009). Additionally, Tswana state culture viewed economic accumulation as a worthy state function; thus, functional institutions were established to allow for the creation and maintenance of new wealth (Maundeni, 2002). Tswana institutions such as these provided the framework for new state elites to emerge from the established indigenous state (Maundeni, 2002).

At independence the BDP and its leader, Seretse Khama, emerged as the leaders of the new Botswana after displacing nationalist movements led by the pan-African Botswana People's Party (BPP) (Maundeni, 2002). The BDP took a disciplined, developmentally-focused approach in creating an independent Botswana state (Maundeni, 2002). The BDP gained legitimacy due to Seretse Khama's recognition as a hereditary chief to one of the largest Tswana tribes (Robinson, 2009) and by assembling the parliament to support its developmental objectives (Maundeni, 2002). Additionally, a system of elections was implemented for use in the selection of certain members of the legislative body (Maundeni, 2002), although they were not as open as modern elections. The BDP displaced the chiefs as the central power authorities by establishing

a centralized government under the leadership of an executive president (Maundeni, 2002). However, the chiefs were included in the new system through the House of Chiefs. Despite not having any direct state power they were provided with positions at the local level that were responsible for the allocation of resources (Robinson, 2009). As the emergence of the BDP illustrates, a relatively undisturbed protectorate state and the inheritance of Tswana state culture by post-protectorate elites combined to create a disciplined and inclusive independent state with basic democratic principles.

Institutions

“Botswana became successful because it built strong and accountable state institutions” (Robinson, 2009). Botswana’s institutions benefited from the institutional structures established in the Tswana traditions in which “powers of traditional leaders are limited by custom and law” (US Department of State, 2009). These structures created a system of checks and balances on politicians, which enabled conflicts to be resolved effectively (Molomo, 2000). The inherited Tswana institutions, in addition to, the parliamentary system adapted as a legacy of being a British protectorate provided the basis of good governance in independent Botswana. Botswana’s constitution provides the institutions of a multi-party democratic system including regularly scheduled free and fair elections (Molomo, 2000), a legislative branch whose members are elected into office, an executive branch, and an independent judicial structure of government (EISA, 2007).

As a multi-party democracy, Botswana uses a system of elections to select its top government leaders. Democratic principles regarding elections were expanded in 1997 with the passage of a constitutional amendment that provides universal suffrage at 18 years of age, the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to oversee and determine the fairness of elections, and an absentee ballot (Molomo, 2000). The electoral system used in Botswana is the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system applied to single member districts. Elections are held every 5 years with the latest occurring on October 16, 2009. With the exception of two district elections in 1989 during which “administrative irregularities in the conduct of those elections” was declared by the high court (Molomo, 2000), Botswana’s elections are generally viewed by both national and international observers as being free and fair.

Botswana has a weak bicameral legislature consisting of two houses, the National Assembly and House of Chiefs. The National Assembly, the legislature’s lower house, is the primary legislative body. It consists of 57 directly elected members from single-member districts, 4 members chosen by the directly elected members, and 3 ex-officio member—the president, the speaker, and the attorney-general. The directly elected members are elected to serve a 5 year term. The House of Chiefs, the legislature’s upper house, was recently expanded from 15 to 35 members to allow more regional representation. It consists of 1 member representing each of the 8 principal subgroups of the Batswana tribes, 5 members chosen by the president, and 22 members elected from designated regions (US Department of State, 2009). Similar to the elected member of the National Assembly, the 22 elected members of the House of Chiefs are elected to serve a 5 year term. The 8 members representing the Batswana tribes are members for life. The House of Chiefs, a largely symbolic establishment, lacks legislative powers and serves as a consultative body to the National Assembly on issues regarding native law, customs, land, and may also deliberate on constitutional amendments (Political Handbook of the World, 2009).

The executive branch consists of a president and cabinet. The current president is Seretse Khama Ian Khama. The president serves as the head of state and government and is chosen by the National Assembly after each countrywide legislative election to serve a 5 year

term concurrent with the legislative members. The president is limited to serving no more than two full terms in office. The cabinet consists of a vice president, ministers, and assistant ministers. Cabinet members are selected by the president from the members of the National Assembly (US Department of State, 2009). The president can not veto legislation put forth by the National Assembly, but can delay for up to six months (Political Handbook of the World, 2009).

The judiciary acts as an independent body that interprets and administers the constitution and other laws for the protection of individual rights and freedoms. It consists of a High Court, a Court of Appeal, and magistrates courts. The President appoints the Chief Justice and the President of the Court of Appeal, and the President with consultation from the Judicial Service Commission appoints judges. In instances of judge misbehavior or incompetence they can be removed by the President, but only after consultation with a special tribunal (EISA, 2007). Customary disputes are handled using tribal courts with a village assembly structure, or *kgotla*, in which traditional chiefs serve as court presidents (EIU, 2008).

The FPTP electoral system has both pros and cons as a method for electing Botswana's government leaders. FPTP elections have provided Botswana with a stable and effective government since independence. This system consolidates the country's multi-party politics and provides constituents with a connection to their Member of Parliament. This connection allows constituents to hold their representative accountable for their actions and decisions in parliament (Molomo, 2000). Additionally, the formation of a one party cabinet allows for effective policy formulation and implementation (Molomo, 2000). On the other hand, the FPTP system is often criticized for not allowing minority interests to be represented in government, an effect of the system's winner-take-all nature. As a result, the number of parliament seats won by a party is often not an accurate reflection of the percentage of the popular vote the party received. For instance, in the latest election the majority party (BDP) claimed 45 out of the 57 parliamentary seats (79%), but only won 53.3% of the vote. Conversely, the two leading opposition parties (BNF and BCP) claimed 6 (11%) and 4 (7%) parliamentary seats, despite winning 21.9% and 19.2% of the vote, respectively (EUI, 2009). These discrepancies prevent opposition groups and the interests they represent from being heard in national government thus decreasing their influence on the policies created. Therefore, the continued receiving of increasing percentages of the national vote by opposition parties without proportional representation in parliament has the potential to create disruptive political discontent in Botswana.

Party Families

Botswana has been ruled by one party, the BDP, in both the legislative and executive branches of government since independence in 1966 and its first president, Sir Seretse Khama, the father of Botswana's current president. The BDP's political success is a result of strong rural support and Botswana's economic growth over the last 43 years (EIU, 2008). The party's position is one that "advocates self-development on a Western-type democratic basis, cooperation with all states, and multiracialism" (Political Handbook of the World, 2009). Recently, the BDP has been faced with struggles within the party. The divisions within the party stem from actions taken by President Khama on party members. In August 2009, BDP secretary-general Gomolemo Motswaledi was suspended due to party indiscipline and subsequently was prevented from running for election in October 2009. In another case, President Khama objected to Daniel Kwelagobe being able to hold a position in the cabinet and the chairmanship of the party concurrently. The significance of this rift is "Mr. Kwelagobe has the support of the Barataphathi ("those who love the party") faction that has a majority on the

party's central committee" (EIU, 2009). During the current 5 year term President Khama will need to focus on developing increased party unity in order to prevent a potential split with the BDP and the creation of another opposition party.

Despite the fact of one party rule in Botswana, the political landscape is composed of several different opposition parties. The two main opposition parties are the Botswana National Front (BNF) and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP). The BNF is a leftist party with the majority of its support stemming from the urban working class and the urban unemployed (Wiseman, 1998). In an effort to expand its support base, the BNF has attempted to organize and politicize non-Tswana ethnic groups in rural areas. This strategy showed initial success with an increased percentage of the vote in the 1989 and 1994 elections (Wiseman, 1998). However, party in-fighting among groups centered on the issue of whether or not they support the party leader, Otsweletse Moupou, has arisen in the BNF. Coupled with its failure to win by-elections, the BNF is faced with diminishing popularity (EIU, 2008). Adding to the BNF's challenge of retaining support is the Botswana Congress Party (BCP), which formed by splitting with the BNF in 1998.

The BCP led by Gilson Saleshando pursues more centrist policies than its left-leaning parent party, the BNF (Political Handbook of the World, 2009) and seeks to gain support throughout partnerships with smaller opposition parties, in particular the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) (EIU, 2008). All three opposition parties (BNF, BCP, and BAM) won seats in the last election with 6, 4, and 1 seat, respectively. Additionally, 1 seat was gained by an Independent. Other opposition parties that put forth a candidate in the 2009 election, but did not receive any parliamentary seats include the Botswana People's Party (BPP) which advocates for social democracy and a pan-Africanist line and signed an agreement in 2005 to work with the BNF, BCP, and BAM in an effort to oust the BDP; the Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Movement of Botswana (MELS); and Botswana Tlhoko Tiro Organisation (BTTO) (Political Handbook of the World, 2009 & EIU, 2008).

Despite coalition attempts by various opposition parties, the results of the 2009's parliamentary election show the BDP improving slightly in the popular vote (51.7% in 2004 and 53.3% in 2009) with the overall opposition total decreasing and being divided up among more parties (EIU, 2008). On one hand, this trend resulted in two parties formerly unrepresented in parliament in 2004 (BAM and Independent) receiving 1 seat each in 2009. On the other hand, without a split within the BDP it appears very unlikely for that party to lose its majority share of parliamentary seats, particularly given Botswana's FPTP electoral system.

International Influences

As previously mentioned, Botswana's history as a British protectorate state influenced its current political regime. More recently, Botswana has been influenced by international actors both globally and regionally in various ways. Botswana's dependence on diamond exports and its need to import almost all of its consumables has led the country to adopt a very open economy (EIU, 2008). Through its partnership with the De Beers, most of the country's diamond exports are marketed in London. Botswana is trying to diversify and increase the local value of its mining industry and in 2008 had agreed to a plan with De Beers to move the processing and marketing of diamonds from London to Gaborone. However, given the slowdown of the global economy this move has been postponed (US Department of State, 2009).

The United States maintains a positive relationship with Botswana and considers it a model of stability for the rest of Africa. The relationship has resulted in Botswana receiving support from various US organizations, such as the U.S. Peace Corps, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), to deal with

issues including HIV/AIDS, education, environmental management, and tuberculosis control (US Department of State, 2009). These different relationships with De Beers and the United States have benefited Botswana's political regime by promoting economic growth and addressing the needs of society.

Botswana is also involved with other countries on a more regional level, in particular through the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The SACU is comprised of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland, and was founded in 1910 making it the world's oldest customs union. Due to controversy concerning the revenue sharing among the member countries a new arrangement was negotiated in 2001 (US Department of State, 2009). The SACU has expanded its trade agreements with other countries around the world since 2004, providing additional points of trade for Botswana. The SADC is composed of 14 southern African countries. Botswana plans to use the SADC as "a working vehicle for economic development, and... conflict resolution" (US Department of State, 2009). Botswana's relationship with Zimbabwe has deteriorated due to the number of Zimbabweans fleeing illegally to Botswana to escape the economic collapse and political persecution and causing a marked rise in crime (EIU, 2008). As a result, Botswana is working through the SADC in hopes of creating a resolution to bring about the end of Zimbabwe's crisis. Inclusion into these different regional associations provides opportunities for Botswana's continued economic growth as well as incentives to maintain its good governance practices.

Ownership

In Botswana's traditional economy, ownership of cattle was viewed as the main source of wealth and the largest holders of cattle were chiefs and their relatives (Hillblom, 2008). After independence, the traditional economic elite integrated into the new government, thus creating a situation in Botswana where the political and economic elite are generally one in the same (Hillblom, 2008). As a result, Botswana's elite is quite small in size and consists of elected representatives, traditional leaders, top-level bureaucrats, the business elite, and rich farmers (Malila, 1997). Having a small elite class has been used by some to explain Botswana's economic success (Hillblom, 2008).

Given the political elite's connection with leading bureaucrats, much of Botswana's development strategy is geared toward policies that benefit the elite most (Malila, 2008). Unfortunately, many of these policies have led to a large gap in the distribution of wealth between the rich and poor. The majority of Botswana's poor live in rural areas, but the number of poor people in urban areas has also increased (Good and Taylor, 2008). Unless citizens express dissatisfaction with this elite system of politics there is little reason to expect the elites to change their behavior or for new economic and social structures to be created (Good, 1999). However, this does not seem likely to happen in the near future. "Political stability, consensus building and economic growth appear to have dampened the opposition. Diamonds have kept all content and happy, as there has been some for all, and a lot for a few" (Hillblom, 2008).

Conclusion

As the variables of the SPECIPIO framework illustrate, Botswana can serve as a model for the existence of a stable, African democratic state. Botswana's culture and history provided the foundation for the creation and implementation of effective state institutions, including regular, free, and fair elections, a bicameral parliament, an executive president, and an independent judiciary. These institutions have enabled Botswana's democracy and economy to

succeed. Botswana has used its resources wisely and avoided “Dutch disease,” which has impacted many other countries. As a result, Botswana has enjoyed one of the world’s highest economic growth rates. Additionally, the state has exhibited good governance, low corruption, and low rent seeking behavior. The government has also used export revenue to invest in education, infrastructure, and human capital. All of these facts have led the citizens of Botswana to remain content with the system. As a result, the ruling party in Botswana has not encountered any significant threat to its power status. Botswana democratic tradition and open economy has allowed it to establish positive international relationships on the global level and become a significant regional player in southern Africa. Although the institutions and pattern of development will differ among African states, the case of Botswana demonstrates that the potential for a state to function as a democracy does exist Africa.

However, Botswana also has its share of challenges and questions as it heads into the future. As a leading exporter of diamonds, Botswana is dependent on the global demand for this resource. To better support its economic growth Botswana’s leaders should continue to find ways to diversify their economy through other sectors such as tourism, foreign investment, and agriculture. Creating new economic structures will take political will by the state’s elite, but if done successfully will modernize Botswana’s economy and move it away from its current resource dependent status. Another challenge faced by the government is correcting the wealth disparity that exists within Botswana between the rich and poor. The development of a stronger civil society could motivate citizens to be more involved in the political process and begin to make demands for policy change; however, this does not seem likely. The main question regarding the future of Botswana concerns whether or not the state’s institutions are robust enough to withstand a change in the majority party. Since independence, the BDP has been the ruling party and thus controlled practically all of the state’s decisions. Despite the occurrence of regular elections, Botswana is often considered a top-down democracy ruled by a small group of elites with the electorate having limited state influence. If Botswana’s BDP is able to hand over power to a victorious opposition party or coalition of parties in the future, Botswana’s democracy would gain legitimacy by demonstrating it can operate in a bottom-up manner and adhere to the will of the voters.

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