

THE 'BASARWA PROBLEM': AN EXAMINATION OF THE INCORPORATION OF A  
FOURTH WORLD PEOPLE INTO THE NATION-STATE OF BOTSWANA

by

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THE BASARWA PROBLEM: AN EXAMINATION  
OF THE INCORPORATION OF A FOURTH WORLD  
PEOPLE INTO THE NATION-STATE OF  
BOTSWANA

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the emerging relationship between a minority indigenous population, the Basarwa (also known as San or Bushmen), and the government of Botswana. Rather than treating these foragers as isolated bands, the study describes the process of Basarwa incorporation into a wider socio-economic setting within the region encompassed by present-day Botswana. This process has resulted in the takeover of Basarwa land and water resources and breakdown of their foraging economy. Like other countries, Botswana is devising programs to address the problems of her increasingly impoverished and dependent indigenous minority. Through these programs, government officials have characterized the Basarwa as a 'problem' for the rural development of Botswana. Similarly, the liberal democracies of Canada, Australia, and Norway have characterized their indigenous minorities as 'problems'. Recent anthropological work on the relation of such indigenous minorities to their respective nation-states has made use of the concept of "fourth world relations". This thesis adopts the fourth world notion to explore the way in which Botswana, a new "third-world" country, is handling its indigenous minority.

Historical material is used to document the process of Basarwa incorporation into the increasingly market-oriented, internationally-linked economy that developed in this region. Materials examined include missionary reports, reports commissioned by governments, and scholarly sources. The analysis

of Botswana's National Development Plans and other sources provides evidence for the development of officials' characterization of the Basarwa as a 'problem' and the response of Basarwa advocates.

The thesis argues that Basarwa foragers are not "primitive isolates"; rather, they have long interacted with other peoples. Further, it demonstrates the usefulness of the fourth world notion to compare relationships that have emerged between indigenous minorities and national governments of dissimilar political and economic backgrounds.

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## I. Introduction

This thesis examines the emerging relationship between a minority indigenous population, the Basarwa (also known as San or Bushmen), and the government of Botswana. Botswana is a land-locked country located in the center of Southern Africa, and within this region, Basarwa comprise approximately 5% of the total population of the country.

The thesis, however, is not an ethnography of this foraging people; instead, the thesis describes the process of Basarwa incorporation into a wider socio-economic setting within the region encompassed by present-day Botswana. An underlying premise of the thesis is that the world must be seen as a whole, a system, rather than as a sum of self-contained societies and cultures (Wolf, 1982:385). By this I am suggesting that foragers, despite their isolation in geographically marginal areas, are best viewed as part of a wider social and economic system. The understanding of the current socio-economic status of such a people necessitates an understanding of the process whereby foragers have interacted with other social and economic systems throughout history.

In the case of the Basarwa, this process has resulted in takeover of their land and water resources with the resultant breakdown of their traditional foraging economy. Gradually, throughout several hundred years Basarwa have increasingly

become incorporated into the political and economic systems of the dominant Tswana cattle herders within Botswana and indirectly into the wider socio-economic system of southern Africa. From full-time independent hunter-gatherers as described by the various ethnographers, Basarwa have increasingly been forced into dependency relationships with other groups and the national government. <sup>1</sup>

Like other states, Botswana is devising programs to address the problems of her increasingly impoverished and dependent minority. However, in the manifesto prepared by the Bechuanaland Democratic Party for the election in 1965, Seretse Khama, the eventual president and influential statesman of Botswana, proclaimed;

. . . the Bechuanaland Democratic Party shall not allow any form of discrimination, whether political, social or economic, against any minority racial group in the country, as this will not be in conformity with the Party's basic principle--Democracy. Neither shall the laws of the country recognize any preferential considerations of a political, economic or social nature for any tribal or racial group in Bechuanaland (Carter and Morgan, 1980:291).

Exactly ten years later, the government launched the Basarwa Development Program which aimed to foster the self reliance and integration of Basarwa into the wider society. In the minds of -----

<sup>1</sup>Implicit in the discussion is the fact that this takeover of Basarwa land and the resultant impoverishment of the Basarwa was due to a combination of inter-related factors. These include the steady expansion of the country's human and livestock populations. Furthermore, the expansion of both these populations into the interior of the country was facilitated by a third factor: the widescale expansion of borehole drilling to provide water sources for both humans and livestock in this arid region.

most politicians and senior civil servants, this project was intended to be little more than a welfare program for this disadvantaged group (Wily, 1981:4). Obviously, by acting in this manner, the government had contradicted one of the major statements outlined in its manifesto. It is the development of this paradox and the resultant relationship that has emerged between Basarwa and the government that provides a focus for the thesis.

Through their programs to address the impoverished condition of Basarwa, government officials have come to characterize the Basarwa as a 'problem' for the rural development of Botswana. In a similar fashion, the liberal democracies of Canada, Australia, and Norway have characterized their indigenous minorities as 'problems'. Recent anthropological work on the relation of such indigenous minorities to their respective national governments has made use of the concept of "fourth world relations". This thesis adopts the fourth world notion to explore the way in which Botswana, a new "third-world" state, is handling its indigenous minority.

To do this the thesis will rely completely on published sources. In terms of research methodology, the thesis can be divided into two parts: the data used to position Basarwa in Botswana historically and the data used to determine government policy in regard to the emerging 'Basarwa problem'.

For the first part, data were obtained from a variety of sources including: reports commissioned by the British

administration, explorers' and missionaries' accounts, historical sources, and anthropological writings. The use of these sources facilitated discussion of the historical relations between Basarwa and other groups within Botswana throughout the period from approximately 1600-1900.

The examination of the 'Basarwa problem' was facilitated through the use of various sources. These included the National Development Plans of Botswana for the years 1966-81, various government reports on the status of rural development and other socio-economic concerns, and reports on the status of the Basarwa Development Programme. By paying specific attention to issues to which the notion of the fourth world directs attention, it was possible to outline the process leading up to the official recognition of the 'Basarwa problem' using these sources. The inherent conflict between the economic policies of rural development and the resultant social and economic problems experienced by the disadvantaged Basarwa could then also be addressed.

It is important at the outset, to make clear the nature of my handling of the various issues related to the topic of "government" in the thesis. As mentioned earlier, one aim of the thesis is to examine the way in which the government of Botswana is handling its indigenous minority. As suggested, this will be done by analysing various government initiated policies of rural development. At issue, however, is whether such a task necessitates a complex and detailed discussion of the various

facets of Botswana's governmental structure.

Gluckman has suggested that if one is to succeed in studying a society, or, in this case, to analyze government policies, one must split up reality by isolating a particular phenomena which presents certain regularities. Having chosen such a topic, it is necessary to confine oneself to that aspect and ignore aspects that can be more appropriately studied by others (Gluckman, 1964:161). He further suggests that anthropologists may take for granted, as "given" facts, some events, or processes, which exert a marked influence over the field of analysis (ibid:163). Obviously, for example, the process of how policies regarding development are designed and implemented has considerable bearing on my task. However, following Gluckman, I argue that this is something that I can appropriately take as "given" so that I may proceed with the task of analysing the effect of such "generated" policies on the Basarwa.

If an anthropologist is to set himself a manageable aspect or field for study, he may have to make certain assumptions which appear to be naive to practitioners of other fields (Gluckman, 1964:166). Indeed, Gluckman suggests that there is a "duty of abstention, which requires that if we are to solve certain problems we have to abstain from studying other, though apparently related, problems, and leave them to our colleagues ..." (1964:168). Provided that it is used appropriately, such naivety will not mar the overall work.

Accordingly, for the purposes of this thesis, "government" will be treated much like a "black-box" characterized by input going in and output coming out. At this level, it is appropriate to analyse both the input and the output; however, about the process that transforms the input into output, I can say nothing. My analysis of government, therefore, will out of necessity be summary and brief. This is not to deny the importance of such relations to my task, but rather, as Gluckman suggests, to avoid getting involved in such interpretations without the necessary data or expertise, so as to get on with the task at hand:

Hence we ourselves incline towards insisting on recognizing the limits of ones own competence, even if this means one must accept that one produces limited answers to limited problems. Otherwise one is liable either to remain in confusion and to lose the opportunity to develop, or one is liable to produce sweeping and unsubstantiated, though plausible, explanations (Gluckman, 1964:242).

While the outlining of the historical relations between Basarwa and others would appear to be reasonably accurate, it must be stressed that what is described is a process of contact. As such, the events described often do not pertain to the Basarwa as a whole but, rather, certain individuals or groups at certain periods of time. Indeed, the sources used reflect the variable nature in the relations between groups within this region, adding further difficulty to this task.

For the second part, however, the information available was even less complete. There was some difficulty in obtaining documents from Botswana, and hence the discussion directed to



the 'Basarwa problem' should be regarded as preliminary rather than final. A detailed discussion of the limitations of these data will be included in Chapter IV.

## Thesis Outline

Chapter II will outline the essential characteristics of the Basarwa population by critically discussing the contributions of the various ethnographers and others who have studied these people. It will also describe the political economy of Botswana, and finally, it will outline the theoretical focus of this study.

Chapter III will deal with relations between Basarwa and others within the geographical territory of Botswana. It will demonstrate the increasing incorporation of Basarwa into wider networks of social relations during the period from approximately the beginning of the 17th century to Independence in 1966. Specifically, it will examine the historical relations between Basarwa and Bakgalagadi, and Basarwa and the dominant Tswana. Finally, it will outline Basarwa incorporation into the increasingly market-oriented, internationally-linked economy that developed in this region.

Chapter IV will detail the process leading up to the official recognition of the 'Basarwa problem'. The conflict between policies of rural development and their effect on the Basarwa population will be elaborated. Specific attention will

be paid to the implementation of the Tribal Grazing Lands Policy and its effects on the rural non-cattle owners.

Chapter V will examine the 'Basarwa problem' in detail. 'Fourth world' similarities will be outlined and an effort will be made to describe the increasing bureaucratization of the 'Basarwa problem'.

Chapter VI, the conclusion, will sum up the implications of this study.

## II. Analytical and Ethnographic Setting

This chapter will provide greater detail about three key aspects of the thesis; the question of "who" the Basarwa are will be addressed; the political economy of Botswana will be described; and the theoretical focus for this study will be outlined. To begin, a brief introduction to the physical characteristics of Botswana will be provided to orient the reader to the region of Africa under consideration in this thesis. A consideration of the name 'Basarwa' will follow, then a discussion of the various theoretical approaches used by ethnographers, followed by a consideration of the concept of "fourth world relations". Finally, the relevant political and economic characteristics of Botswana will be described to point to the differences and similarities between this state and those liberal democracies where the notion of the fourth world has mainly been used.

### The Physical Setting

The Republic of Botswana (formerly the Bechuanaland Protectorate) is a land-locked country of 570,000 square kilometers in area (about the size of France) and lies at the

center of the Southern African plateau. <sup>1</sup> It is bounded by South Africa, Zimbabwe to the northeast, Namibia to the west (including the South African-controlled Caprivi Strip in the north), and Zambia at a point on the map to the north (see Figure 1). Being surrounded by South African controlled territory has, as we shall see, had a considerable effect on Botswana's external and internal policies.

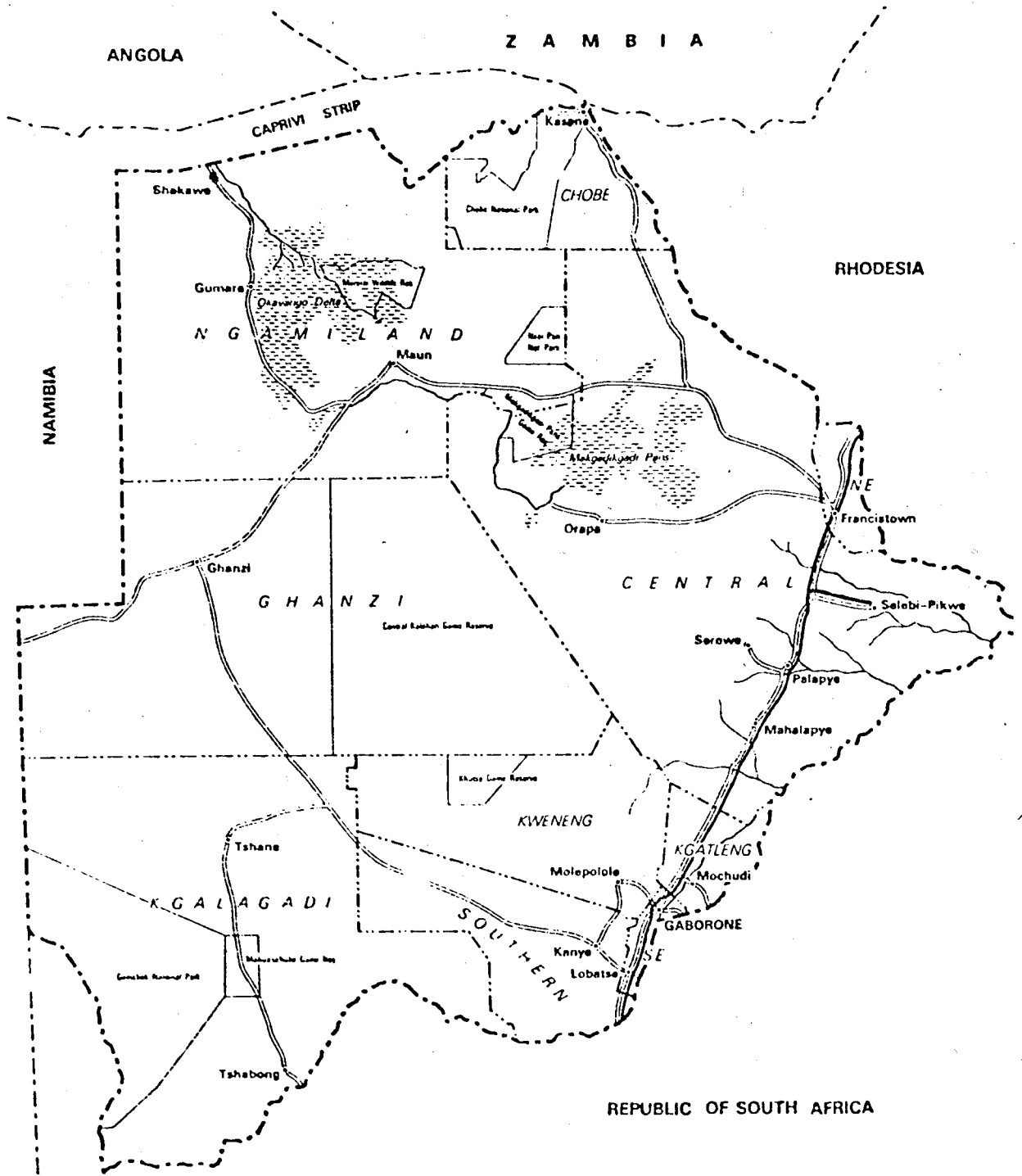
Throughout the country there is little topographical variation except in the extreme east. Despite this, Botswana is a land of great surface contrasts. It contains the dry Kalahari Desert, the extensive swamps of the Okavango Delta and the beautiful Makgadikgadi Pans. The Okavango Delta contains the largest area of permanent water in Botswana. The Delta comprises 16,835 sq/km of swamps at the northern edge of the Kalahari Desert where the Okavango River terminates. Despite the availability of water, the area is of little economic value at present due to its peripheral location with respect to the population concentration, transportation system, and communication network. Furthermore, the widespread presence of tsetse fly, malaria, and other health hazards restricts the usefulness of the area for both human and livestock populations.

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<sup>1</sup>Except where cited, information for this section was obtained primarily from the National Development Plans of Botswana 1966-1981.

<sup>2</sup>Tsetse fly infests the whole of the central swamp regions of the Ngamiland and Chobe Districts. Furthermore, the tsetse fly zone has advanced both south and west in recent years despite efforts to halt its encroachment by clearing bush and spraying

FIGURE 1



The only other permanent water sources are the Chobe and Limpopo Rivers which form part of the northern and southeastern boundaries respectively.

The climate is continental and semi-arid with an average annual rainfall of approximately 475 mm; rainfall is highly erratic in both yearly amount and distribution. More than 90% of the rain falls in the summer months between November and April. However, this rainfall is unpredictable in both time and space. Rainfall is light and erratic, decreasing from the northeast (Kasane 27in/yr) to the southwest (Tshabong 10in/yr).<sup>3</sup> All regions experience a summer maximum where the heaviest rains fall during brief, highly localized thunderstorms. As a consequence, the variability of rainfall is high throughout the country with the steepest gradient occurring in the southeast where approximately one-third of the population lives.

The availability of rainfall, therefore, has a significant influence on the pattern of human settlement. More than 80% of the population is concentrated in the eastern part of the country (largely along the line of rail) which constitutes approximately 30% of the land area (Smit, 1970:55). Fertile soils and adequate rainfall make small-scale farming a viable activity throughout this region for at least a majority of years. Sourgum is the chief crop planted due to its resistance

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<sup>2</sup>(cont'd) insecticides (Grove, 1978).

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix A for details.

to drought, followed by maize. <sup>4</sup> Periodic years of drought, however, can make even this region unsuitable for cultivation activities. As a consequence, there is great variability in the amount of land planted due to rainfall conditions. During 1966, a drought year, 94,000 acres were planted in cereals while in 1967, a year of above average rainfall, 700,000 acres were planted (Smit, 1970:184). Moreover, during a ten year period (1957-1967) the annual imports of maize averaged 200,000 bags/year, indicating that cultivation in Botswana is at best marginal (Smit, 1970:187).

Two-thirds of the land surface is covered with Kgalagadi sand which supports a low savannah type vegetation sufficient to sustain low concentrations of cattle herds; <sup>5</sup> herding is the dominant economic and subsistence activity of a large majority of the rural population. <sup>6</sup> Veld vegetation and soil are delicately balanced and if abused quickly degenerate. More importantly, the recovery rate for such degeneration is slow (Best and Blij, 1977). Still, it must be stressed that the initial factor limiting herd size is not the vegetation

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<sup>4</sup>Best and Blij (1977) suggest that only 6% of the total land area in Botswana (all in the east) can sustain semi-intensive mixed farming.

<sup>5</sup>The thesis concentrates on cattle largely because the Government's development efforts have focused on increasing cattle herd concentrations. Little attention has been paid by the government to the importance of small stock (goats and sheep) despite their importance and widespread distribution among the rural population. Details of small stock herd sizes and distribution are outlined in Appendix C.

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix C for details about herd size and distribution.

resources of a given region but the amount of water that is available. Despite this, the cattle herd size has expanded constantly, due largely to the expansion of borehole drilling which has acted to open up new areas in the interior of the country for grazing purposes. <sup>7</sup>

Botswana has a population of approximately 636,000 people (1971 census). The population is young with about 57% of the total population below the age of 20. The country has an average annual population growth rate of 3.3% suggesting that the population will double about every 22 years. By 1991, therefore, the economy could have to support almost twice as many people as it did in 1971. Such a rapid population growth means that the economy must grow at a rate of 3.3% per year to maintain 1971 standards of living. <sup>8</sup>

Population projections for the Basarwa, however, are less easily obtained due to the government's reluctance to break their census data into categories of defined ethnic groups. However, Lee has suggested the Basarwa comprise about 25,000 people or approximately 4% of the total population within Botswana (Lee, 1979:33) while Wily (1981:3) gives an estimate of 30,000. <sup>9</sup> There are problems with the accuracy of these figures as it is difficult to determine who is included in the category

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<sup>7</sup>See Appendix D for details about borehole drilling activities throughout the country.

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix B for further details.

<sup>9</sup>See Appendix B for further details.



of foragers Lee and Wily have labelled as San.

As can be seen, there is some debate in the literature over the "correct" name of these foraging people. Before proceeding further, therefore, consideration must be given to "who" these foragers are. This can, perhaps, be best carried out by describing the names applied to these foragers by each succeeding category of people who dealt with them.

When the Dutch arrived at the Cape of Southern Africa in 1652 they found two distinct cultural groups among the native inhabitants. These were the cattle herding nomadic groups whom the Dutch labelled Hottentot and the hunting and gathering groups the Dutch initially termed San (Wilson and Thompson, 1969:40-41). The Dutch established an early trading relationship with the Hottentots based on cattle, and consequently, they began to regard the hunting and gathering groups as a threat to this trade. The Dutch applied the descriptive term "Bushmen" to these foragers. This term became widely accepted, and was popularized by Schapera's classic survey, The Khoisan People of South Africa: Bushmen and Hottentot (1930). Both these groups speak a distinctive "click" language unrelated to the Bantu languages of other groups in Southern Africa, such as the Tswana.

As a result, the earliest writings about these foragers within the region of Botswana referred to them as Bushmen. However, as scholars, missionaries, and administrative officials continued to encounter these foragers within Botswana

(Bechuanaland Protectorate) the name 'MaSarwa' emerged in the literature following the standard form of naming in the Setswana language system (Lee, 1979:30). This name continued the derogatory image of these people as connoted by the term 'Bushmen'. The prefix 'Ma' in the Setswana languages refers to a person of inferior or outcast status (Lee, 1979:31). In an effort to reduce the derogatory connotations of these terms, scholars have argued that these people should be known as San, a comparatively neutral term, originally applied by the Hottentots to their hunting and gathering neighbours (Wilson and Thompson, 1969:40-41).

Hitchcock (1982:257) has argued that the term 'San' does not include all people who have a history of foraging within Botswana. The term 'San' does not include those groups who are genetically distinct from other foragers in the country and who occupy the better watered regions of northeastern Botswana.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, as Lee himself has pointed out, none of the foraging groups within Botswana refer to themselves as San (Lee, 1979:30) creating further dissatisfaction with the term.

As a nation Botswana has placed great emphasis on the equality of all her citizens. That such a group of people should be known by the inferior term 'MaSarwa' went against the

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<sup>10</sup>These Basarwa call themselves the "river people" (Cowley, 1968:178). Due to their extreme isolation in the northern swamp region of Botswana, little attention has been directed to these foragers by anthropologists. One account does provide some details about their lifestyle; however, this account stresses their physical characteristics rather than describing their social life (Cowley, 1968).

nation's stated principles, and thus, the government proposed that people of foraging origin or practise within Botswana be referred to as Basarwa. The prefix 'Ba', therefore, would place these foraging people on an equal footing, at least terminologically, with the Tswana people that make up the majority of the population.

Throughout the thesis, 'Basarwa' will be the term used to refer to the foraging people of Botswana.<sup>11</sup> Not only is it considered non-derogatory but, more importantly, it refers to all foraging people within the country. In summary, the category 'Basarwa' refers to people who speak (or spoke?) a distinct "click" language and are of either hunting and gathering origin or practice found within the geographical territory of Botswana.

### Review of the Literature

In the literature review that follows, I will present the major theoretical paradigms by means of which anthropologists of succeeding generations have viewed the foraging adaptation in Southern Africa. These include the ethnological-dominated paradigm of the early period, the evolutionary-ecological paradigm that originated in the 1940's and continues to the present, and the growing body of literature on social change and

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<sup>11</sup>This is not to suggest that "Basarwa" refer to themselves by this term. Indeed, the question of whether these people have a concept of ethnic group unity has been neglected in the literature. Considering the importance of such "unity" for political reasons, it would appear that this question merits attention.

dependency. A review of the conceptual material on fourth world relations will be provided to demonstrate the increasing relevance of this third approach to anthropologists, indigenous minorities, and the states that encompass them.

The earliest ethnographers of the Basarwa attempted to present a "comprehensive survey of what is at present known about the racial characters, cultures and languages of the native people of Africa" (Schapera, 1930:v). Bleek, for example, devoted considerable energy to providing a comprehensive account of the nature of the Bushmen languages (Bleek, 1929) while also providing a more detailed and specific account about the social organization of one Bushman group: the Naron (Bleek, 1928). Another important ethnographer at this time was Schapera who compiled what was known about the major features of Basarwa social organization. Studies of this sort assumed that foragers devoted the majority of their time to the food quest having little time left over to pursue other interests. Schapera observed Basarwa living among the Tswana, but the latter were the main subject of his extensive studies in Botswana.

In the 1940's and 1950's interest in the hunting and gathering societies of the world was primarily centered on their respective kinship institutions. Early theoretical work in this area involved the construction of typologies to depict the social organization of band societies (Service, 1962:59-109, 174-203). Meanwhile in North America another paradigm was being developed to provide insight into the foraging adaptation.

Steward (1955) developed an approach to these societies based on an examination of their core features that he termed the method of cultural ecology. This framework focused on the core features of subsistence, economics, and technology inherent in all societies and attempted to understand social and political organization and other aspects of culture in a given society as a product of its respective core (Steward 1955).

Marshall, an ethnographer trained largely outside traditional anthropology, was the first person to do prolonged fieldwork among a specific group of Basarwa over a considerable period of time in the classic anthropological fashion (Marshall, 1960, 1961). She centered her analysis on the social organization of these people (Marshall, 1976). Marshall did not stress ecological factors and throughout her publications (see also Thomas, 1959) she stressed the isolation of these people. It was precisely this type of scenario to which later anthropologists influenced by Steward's ideas on cultural ecology were attracted (Wilmsen, 1983:10).

Richard Lee was the first anthropologist to approach the Basarwa with this theoretical framework at hand. Having considerable background in primate behavior and evolution, Lee speculated that research on current hunter-gatherers "could provide a basis for models of the evolution of human behavior" (Lee 1979:9). His goal was to generate new insights into cultural evolution ultimately to detail the social and economic institutions of earlier foraging groups.

Following the conference on Man the Hunter in 1966, interest among anthropologists in the foraging people of the world increased dramatically. The conference and succeeding book did much to demonstrate the diversity of foraging lifestyles throughout the world and made the study of hunting and gathering peoples a major anthropological endeavor.

Interest among anthropologists in the Basarwa of Botswana increased after this publication. The rise of the ecological paradigm had spotlighted the Kalahari, providing a heavy intellectual influence on the next generation of researchers who followed Lee into the field to document the foraging lifestyle of the Kalahari Basarwa. As a result of this the Basarwa are probably the most extensively documented hunter-gatherers in the anthropological literature. Indeed, in her book about the demography of the Kung San, Nancy Howell stated that there were almost as many pages in her publication as members of the population she was studying (Howell, 1979:xii).

Interest in hunting and gathering groups (especially the Basarwa) was of a rather specific sort; researchers were predominantly interested in the various aspects of the foraging lifestyle. Unfortunately, the body of data about the Basarwa in the anthropological literature has acted to perpetuate the notion of the foraging adaptation as occurring in geographically marginal areas with little contact with the outside world. This is not to say that the researchers were not aware of the process of Basarwa incorporation into the social-economic structure of

the region but, rather, the theoretical interests of the period stressed the need for a complete and accurate picture of the foraging adaptation. An increasing number of researchers set out to study the Basarwa within Botswana taking advantage of the country's encouraging attitude toward fieldwork (Silberbauer, 1981; Tanaka, 1976; Howell 1979; Lee and Devore, 1976). A large body of precise, systematic data was collected by these researchers (and others), contributing significantly to the expansion of the ecological paradigm.

This paradigm and the anthropologists who were influenced by it made a significant contribution to our understanding of the foraging adaptation. As a result of their efforts, foragers are no longer regarded as people who spend the majority of their time pursuing activities related to the food quest to the detriment of their social complexity. As Sahlins has suggested, hunter-gatherers should be seen as the "original affluent society" (Sahlins, 1972:1-32). The task of collecting the scientifically rigorous data needed to make assertions about this view of the foraging adaptation led anthropologists to place an arbitrary analytical boundary around the group to be studied. Such a boundary was required as an anthropologist could realistically cover only a small geographical area with the rigor demanded. This artificial analytical boundary, however, restricts the anthropologist's attention to a small area, and hence variables that arise as a result of actions that occur outside the boundary have not been dealt with in sufficient

depth. While providing considerable insights about foragers' interactions with their physical environment, those working within the ecological paradigm have not directed as much attention to the part played by foragers as elements of a complex interacting social environment as well as a physical one. In this sense, it would appear that the ecological paradigm has not been ecological enough.

Similarly, anthropologists have tended to underemphasize the historical dimension. The Basarwa, similar to other societies, have been in contact with other groups for centuries; indeed, some of the ecological adaptations anthropologists have discussed as being characteristic of hunter-gatherers may have resulted from contact with other groups (Yellen, 1977:11-12).

One of the earliest anthropologists to consider this possibility was George Silberbauer who was approached by the British Protectorate Government to carry out a survey of the Basarwa population. In the published report (Silberbauer, 1965), he detailed the Basarwa's increasing integration into the dominant Tswana political-economy; however, the report itself enjoyed little circulation outside Botswana. Furthermore, in a later publication (Silberbauer, 1981), he tended to neglect the implications of Basarwa external relations preferring to concentrate on Basarwa's internal organization within the scope of the ecological perspective. (Silberbauer, 1981).

Guenther (1973, 1979), an anthropologist, provides an excellent example of the utility of a historical approach.



During his fieldwork, Guenther examined the nature of the changes and conflicts that have occurred in Basarwa society due to their interaction with the white farmers in the Ghanzi farm area of Botswana. He treats Ghanzi as a plural society characterized by cultural diversity and social cleavage arising from contact, predicting the gradual movement from the present plural society to a stratified one. Little emphasis is placed on the Basarwa traditional foraging lifestyle or the ecological setting; rather, Guenther is concerned with documenting various ethnic group interactions within a defined boundary. A limitation of his thesis is that Guenther has not considered the effect of Basarwa interaction with various subsistence strategies, ranging from dependent farm labourers to independent hunter-gatherers, within the Ghanzi region.

Notwithstanding the work of Guenther, however, the ecological paradigm remained the dominant approach throughout the 1970's. Following an archeologist's early statements on settlement patterns (Yellen, 1977), a group of young anthropologists became interested in examining the process that led groups to settle down. Because these foraging groups were encountered in contact with other ethnic groups, anthropologists were forced to consider ethnic group interaction as a factor (Cashdan, 1980; Hitchcock, 1982) and, thus, in their accounts the Basarwa were no longer presented as isolated, marginal people. However, throughout this literature, the emphasis remained evolutionary; Basarwa hunting and gathering groups were

considered an ideal means by which to examine the process of sedentarization because they were actively undergoing it. Data accumulated studying this process could be used to make inferences about similar processes that must have occurred in the past (Lee, 1979:2). Regardless of their present status, it appeared anthropologists still considered the Basarwa as hunter-gatherers; they might presently be settled down, but, it was argued, this was a relatively recent transition.

Gradually, however, a body of data was being accumulated that showed that the Basarwa had not been isolated marginal people for a considerable period of time. This information was necessarily fragmented and secondary as the predominant research interest in the foraging lifestyle remained centered in the ecological paradigm. During the late 1970's, a recognizable shift in theoretical emphasis occurred in the literature. The government, faced with what it considered to be an emerging 'Basarwa problem', needed information about the Basarwa population within Botswana to formulate policies. Despite the volumes of literature on the Basarwa, this information was not available due to a theoretical focus that influenced researchers to study 'traditional' Basarwa.

Thus, anthropologists who approached the government of Botswana intending to carry out ecologically centered research among 'traditional' hunter-gatherers were directed to specific areas. Here they encountered Basarwa foragers who participated in several subsistence strategies ranging from that of

independent hunter-gatherers to fully dependent wage labourers (see for example, Veirich, 1981; 1982). A narrow ecological paradigm became less useful as anthropologists struggled to make sense of local situations where foragers had obviously been in contact with agro-pastoralist groups for a considerable period of time. While the ecological paradigm does not preclude the consideration of social change, the analytically bounded nature of the groups being studied makes such a consideration difficult. Often changes that occur within the social structure of a group are due to actions that take place beyond the artificial analytical boundaries imposed by the ecologically influenced anthropologist, thereby reducing the usefulness of the ecological paradigm when considering questions of this nature.

Accordingly, there has recently begun to emerge in the literature an emphasis on the factors of social change and dependency (see for example, Vierich, 1981; 1982; Gelburd, 1980; Cashdan, 1980) as anthropologists consider the implications of the Basarwa's increasing articulation with the dominant Tswana political system. There is presently a growing body of literature concerning social change and forager-agro-pastoralist interactions. Theoretical formulations on foragers have evolved beyond the ecological paradigm. However, a limitation of the current literature on forager-external relations remains its group specificity. Probably this is an outgrowth of the traditional anthropological focus on small-scale societies.

Increasingly, it is becoming apparent that this is a redundant focus; groups cannot be studied within arbitrarily defined ecological niches just as countries cannot be studied in isolation from each other.

There is a need for further development on the conceptual level. Anthropologists need to look at the Basarwa population as comprising a distinct minority group within Botswana and consider the inter-relations of these people with the dominant political and economic processes of the country (cf. Lee, 1979:8-9). <sup>12</sup> It is precisely this inter-relationship between these minority peoples and the nation-state that the concept of the 'fourth world' attempts to explore.

#### The 'Fourth World'

The concept of the fourth world is relatively recent in anthropology. Unlike its precursor, the third world, it has not yet reached a level of public understanding or an agreed upon academic definition (Graburn, 1981:69). From its beginnings in the early 1970's (see Graburn, 1981 for a historical review of the use of this term), the literature exploring this concept has constantly expanded both from academics and representative writers of the so-named fourth world populations.

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<sup>12</sup>Lee's recent book places a much greater emphasis on the factors of social change and dependency (1984).

Notwithstanding the existence of competing definitions of the attributes of fourth world societies (see McCall, 1980 for example), this thesis will define the notion of the fourth world as follows. Fourth world populations are composed of minority indigenous people encompassed within the boundaries of modern countries. Ethnically stigmatized and politically powerless, these people, due to the loss of their traditional subsistence economies through encroachment on their lands, generally occupy the bottom of the socio-economic class system in modern nation-states (Dyck, n.d.). Furthermore, these people tend to live in small geographically isolated communities retaining a strong sense of identification with a traditional land base. They will not attain political and economic independence from their respective nation-states, but rather, they desire local control over matters relating directly to their communities within the established state political structure (Dyck, in press). Of fundamental importance to these groups is their relationship with the dominant state. Such a relationship is fundamentally an asymmetrical one: a people versus a state (Paine, 1977).

Recently, the problems of minority indigenous peoples have been receiving increasing national and international attention. Accordingly, the concept of the fourth world seeks to examine the process by which such a people represent their political interests to their respective governments. The rapid expansion of welfare state programs in Canada, Australia, and Norway, for

example, following the Second World War had the effect of focusing government attention on the anomalous social and economic status of indigenous people (Dyck, in press). The post-war drive for decolonization triggered a re-thinking of the appropriate place of aboriginal people within liberal democracies. Accordingly, questions about how these characteristically small groups of people in geographically marginal and often remote areas were to exist in the national society crystallized into publicly debated issues. This attention led the governments of the respective countries concerned to ponder questions on this issue, often identified as the 'indigenous problem'.

The actions that have ensued from this process have prompted anthropologists to consider questions and relationships that had previously been ignored in the discipline. Such a concern allows anthropologists to consider the variety of mechanisms that indigenous people currently use to represent their concerns to national governments (Dyck, in press).

The consideration of such issues necessitates an analytical understanding of the role of the state. There is a need to place studies of the relations between indigenous peoples and governments within a framework that will enable us to investigate this specialized sphere of state activity. Dyck (in press) has suggested our depiction of the state be guided by three assumptions: (i) that the state has always played a leading role in facilitating the exploitation of the lands and

resources of indigenous peoples; (ii) the state's subsequent involvement in administering the affairs of these people who have been dispossessed of their lands and resources has been governed historically by complex social and ideological considerations as well as economic factors; and (iii) the nation-state is not a monolithic structure, but consists of an assemblage of agencies, institutions, and processes which are theoretically capable of being coordinated under central direction and control but often are not.

Typically the relationship between an indigenous people and a nation-state is the result of a long historical process. While indigenous peoples' land claims have only recently reached public prominence, such claims are often rooted in some manner with these peoples' past dealings with a government administration. As governments of liberal democracies continued to press forward with various schemes to assimilate indigenous people into the national society--so as to effectively submerge the 'indigenous problem'--indigenous people react in a political fashion. In this context, indigenous people begin to present claims for land rights, special status, and to criticize the government for its past and present policies toward indigenous people.

Demands for land claims are part of indigenous peoples' efforts to achieve greater control over their communities by securing a territorial base. While nation-states tend to discount these land claims as being inherently opportunistic in

nature (Dyck, in press), they are being obliged to do something to address the problems of their indigenous minorities. Respective governments have acted, in various fashions, to reduce anomalies of life expectancy, income, educational achievement, and the standard of living of these people. As a result of these actions, indigenous spokesmen, along with academics and bureaucrats, have been invited to advise various government bodies about indigenous matters. Typically, however, while nation-states expound the principle of equality and officially deplore the poverty of their indigenous population, they are reluctant to entertain the notion of a minority population possessing any special rights as a result of their indigenous status (Dyck, in press).

Historically, indigenous minorities have typically been excluded from the policy formulation process that fundamentally affected their lives. Generally, indigenous minorities do not comprise a homogeneous culture but, rather, distinct groups associated with specific territorial areas. This strong association with a given territory forms the basis of indigenous peoples' political aspirations as it is of fundamental importance to their culture (Manuel and Posluns, 1974). These are concerns that receive little attention from the political institutions of the state, and hence it is difficult for them to achieve representation at the national level (Dyck, in press). Their minority status in terms of numbers precludes any political representation through the traditional political



apparatus of the state; hence indigenous minorities must turn to other methods to achieve their political ends.

Indigenous leaders in many countries have developed the tactic of contrasting past and present treatment by the government with its publicly stated ideals of equality. Throughout the history of their relationship with the nation-state, continued efforts by the state to pressure indigenous minorities to assimilate acted to give these groups a structurally defined inferiority. However, despite this pressure, these groups continued to persist as distinct cultures with a strong sense of injustice about the way they had been treated (Manuel and Posluns, 1974; Brody, 1981). It is this history of unjust treatment by the state that indigenous minorities in Canada, Australia, and Norway characteristically use to manipulate public sympathy to pressure governments indirectly, who are forced to pay attention to this pressure so as to appear to be doing something about their 'indigenous problem'. As Weaver has suggested, indigenous groups tend to act as issue oriented pressure groups (Weaver, 1981) to force the government to grant them concessions.

The political rhetoric that indigenous leaders in western liberal democracies use to support their demands and express their opposition to government policies has two distinctive features. It combines notions of special status and rights with a historical critique of the manner in which past governments have denied these people basic civil rights (Dyck, in press).

Indigenous leaders endeavour to construct and make relevant a set of moral claims against the government. As their ultimate goal, they strive for a perception by government officials that indigenous claims might be accepted as factual by politically significant sectors of the public (ibid.).

The history of interaction between these unequal bodies has resulted in indigenous minorities becoming submerged within an encompassing, dominating system whereby their lives and livelihoods are shaped and controlled by an alien and largely unheeding political system. Indigenous leaders constantly seek to sensitize the general public and the people they represent about this history. Governments, on the other hand, seek to deny any historical aspects to the 'indigenous problem', thereby attempting to downplay the key issue inherent in these relationships: aboriginal rights to land. Indeed, this is one of the areas of concern to which the notion of the fourth world directs our attention.

Furthermore, this notion directs attention to the process whereby such people have come to occupy the bottom rung of the socio-economic class system in nation-states. By exploring this process in detail, the notion of the fourth world moves beyond traditional anthropological studies that seek to explain inter-group behavior as a result of ethnicity and/or class relations, thereby, neglecting the dominant role of the state. Such a concept also directs our attention to the current state of affairs between two conflicting bodies. It allows us to pose

useful questions that seek to examine the current process of interaction between indigenous people and the state whereby the powerlessness of a politically powerless people may be exploited to obtain concessions from a government.

As outlined, fourth world populations did not suddenly emerge--fabricated in the minds of bureaucrats and anthropologists. They are the product of a relationship between two entities that is, in itself, the result of a long historical process. In the Basarwa case, this process is characterized by the gradual loss of Basarwa hunting-gathering territories to cattle herders and the resultant Basarwa dependence on first the cattle herders and finally the nation-state, in the context of the wider process of the European take-over of southern Africa. Probably loss of land is the primary similarity between all fourth world populations. It is the progressive loss of land more than anything else that has forced indigenous minorities into dependent relations with technologically more advanced people. As Brody has suggested, such a process can currently be observed in northeastern British Columbia.

So long as the people of northeast British Columbia continued to slip away from confrontation into the sanctuaries of their own domains, into themselves and the privacy of their own lives, the Indian system remained strong. But this, their own form of resistance to restriction and dispossession, can continue only so long as there are places, domains, and selves that are large and secure, and into which they can still retreat (Brody, 1981:98).

Without adequate territory to carry out hunting and gathering activities, foragers have little choice but to move into

dependent relationships.

The relationship that emerged is an asymmetrical one: a minority people versus a state. This has considerable bearing on the position of these people within the political framework of the nation-state. Lacking the numerical ability to acquire a significant political voice, these people must operate within the confines of the state's political structure to realize their political goals. Indeed, the very existence of fourth world peoples is dependent on this tenuous relationship between a group of people and the nation-state. Formal recognition by the state of the existence of a 'indigenous problem' ensures the maintenance of the problematic status of these people within the state's political institutions. Within Botswana, the problematic status of the Basarwa on the basis of their foraging lifestyle affords them a different status than the other members of the lower socio-economic class. Without this formal recognition, the Basarwa identity as a distinct group of people with their own unique cultural background could gradually be eroded. Furthermore, the Basarwa's claim to a 'special status' allows them to be known within Botswana as a distinct group rather than as a group of poverty stricken dependent people.

## The Bechuanaland Protectorate

During pre-colonial times the Tswana economy was relatively self sufficient, dependent to a large extent on hoe cultivation and cattle production. Foreign interest in this region stemmed not from a desire to acquire resources but, rather, from the area's proximity to the Boer-controlled region of South Africa (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980:11-12).

Concerned with the encroaching Boertrekkers passing through his territory, the Chief of the Bamangwato tribe, Khama III, appealed to the British government for protection in the early 1870's (Sillery, 1952). During the next decade the British themselves became increasingly concerned with the matter of Boer expansion northwards and the resultant struggles occurring within the region, a concern compounded by the German colonial intrusion into Southern Africa. To protect its interests generally, to isolate the Boers and to retain access to the north, the British government provided for the establishment of civil and criminal jurisdiction of the Bechuanaland Protectorate on January 27, 1885.

Bechuanaland was an extreme example of indirect rule as Britain wanted to spend as little money on the administration of the colony as possible. Because of this policy of abstention, more reliance than was usual, even under an indirect system of African administration, was placed on chiefs to maintain order and collect taxes. These regressive taxes and other cash needs

led to the emergence of a pattern of Tswana labour migration to South Africa (Alverson, 1978:26). The administration of Africans rested in the hands of Tswana chiefs under British overrule from Mafeking in South Africa until late in 1961, when territorial headquarters moved to Gaborone. White settlers in this region were predominantly poor Afrikaner farmers with little political influence (Russell and Russell, 1979:7).

#### Political Activity: Pre-Independence (1963-1966)

Before any serious consideration could be given by the British to Protectorate independence, two major roadblocks in the internal political realm had to be surmounted. These included the position of the Europeans (mostly poor Afrikaner farmers) and the role of the traditional chiefs in the proposed independent government of Botswana. By far the most serious consideration was the latter: the continued hold on the people by the chiefs in the rural areas made it essential to provide them with a place in the political realm of post-independence Botswana. This was a problem area because the desire to implement a democratic state necessarily meant the limiting of the chief's traditional authority in some manner.

Under pressure by the United Nations, Britain agreed to provide for a constitutional review of the Protectorate in 1963, to which all major political groups within the Protectorate would be permitted to send representatives. Two political

parties came well prepared to this review: the Bechuanaland Peoples Party (B.P.P.) which was a left-wing party under the leadership of Phillip Matante and the newly created Bechuanaland Democratic Party (B.D.P.) under the leadership of Seretse Khama and Quet Masire. This was a moderate, newly formed, African party which enjoyed support by many whites and a majority of the politicized blacks in the country.

The constitutional review led to unanimous agreement on the one-man, one-vote principle, and hence no legislative seats were reserved for Europeans: their minority interest was safeguarded by a bill of rights. At this time the chiefs were granted separate status as an advisory body (House of Chiefs) with limited powers of review.

The constitutional consultations of 1963 provided for the establishment of a parliamentary government based on the Westminster model, with a 38 seat legislature. In the first election held in 1965, the B.D.P. won an overwhelming victory. This provided the country with the needed mandate to push for independence.

#### Political Activity: Post-Independence 1966-1979

With the B.D.P. assuming control upon independence, the political organization of the newly independent state was restructured slightly. Botswana was headed by a president (Seretse Khama) who was elected for the life of the National

Assembly. The president was also the executive head of the government and presided over a cabinet composed of a vice-president and seven other cabinet members drawn from the National Assembly. The latter consists of 31 elected members, 4 specially elected members, and the Attorney General who may speak to the Assembly but not vote. Under the new constitution the House of Chiefs was maintained (Vengroff, 1977:77-119).

Following independence in 1966, the country was divided into nine districts and three town councils (to represent the larger urban areas) for the purpose of establishing local governments, so as to continue the modification of local government institutions within the country along more democratic lines. Elections to these councils were held in the same year. These district councils vary in size from 12 to 38 people and are substantially composed of elected members. Under this plan, traditional political institutions that were previously in the sole control of the chiefs were gradually being moved out of their sphere of influence and into the control of these elected councils (Vengroff, 1977:124-127).

From this brief outline, it is apparent that the government of Botswana has committed itself verbally to the concept of a democratic state and to the maintenance of overt democratic institutions. Government determination to break down the traditional patterns of leadership is but one example of this process that is, at present, by no means complete. Democracy in Botswana has significant differences to the democracies of, for



example, Canada, Australia, and Norway. However, the government has constantly reaffirmed its commitment to democracy by having elections at regular intervals throughout the time period under consideration:

One of the most remarkable features of this country (Botswana) is the very high degree of personal freedom which exists, the extent of political and every kind of tolerance and the continued existence of a formal multi-party political system with different parties putting forward their candidates at general elections held every five years (Carter and Morgan, 1980:xvii).

In a recent paper, Gartrell has aptly paraphrased a widely held perspective put forward by others when she suggests that modern capitalist democratic states "must both facilitate accumulation while maintaining social order and [their] own legitimacy as serving the broad social good" (Gartrell, n.d.). As has been outlined earlier, it is this legitimacy that indigenous peoples in such nations manipulate to their advantage. Further, minorities in these nations have been able to make use of various laws, especially the sanctity of property relations and the inviolability of contracts to defend their claims to land (Gartrell, n.d.).

Unlike liberal democracies where the large majority of citizens are, in comparison to those of a "third-world" nation-state, relatively affluent, within Botswana the large majority of the population is poor. Wealth and power is concentrated among a traditional elite minority; however, because the country is committed to democracy, this elite must demonstrate to the population at large that it regards the

rights of the poor as being important. After all, because of Botswana's commitment to democracy, it is predominantly this poor majority that determines the results of elections.<sup>13</sup> In this respect it appears Botswana differs significantly from other "third-world" nation-states. Because of this major difference, Basarwa groups are able to obtain concessions over certain matters as the government cannot afford to allow the large voting mass of rural poor, who often have similar problems to the Basarwa, to become dissatisfied. In this respect, the Botswana government, like those of advanced capitalist liberal democracies, must protect its legitimacy by maintaining an image of serving the broad social needs of the rural poor.

As will be pointed out in the next section, the government has adopted a development strategy of providing incentives for the rich to boost the economy before anything of significance can be done for the socio-economic conditions of the rural poor. Against such a scenario, the above argument becomes even more relevant.

#### Economic Activity: Pre-Independence

At the time of independence, Botswana was worse off in terms of an established political and productive infrastructure

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<sup>13</sup>An issue that needs further research is, of course, the influence of traditional chiefs over the electoral decisions of the rural poor.

than any other British colony about to embark on independence (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980:28). Protectorate government expenditure had been financed almost totally by the domestic tax system; hence Britain herself had given little to the colony. Little money had been spent on education and health while wage employment occupied only 2% of the resident population.

At this time, therefore, Botswana could be characterized as a country large in terms of area, with minute resources, and with a relatively small, predominantly rural population. <sup>14</sup> The economy had a strong external orientation based on the import of manufactured goods and the export of staple products--primarily beef. This resulted in a strong dependence on the demands of foreign markets particularly those of South Africa. For example, the South African labour market is crucial to Botswana. Wage labourers [from Botswana] working in South Africa [still/in 1966] outnumber[ed] those working in Botswana by a ratio of two to one--evidence that Botswana is dependent on the exportation of labour (Alverson, 1978:35).

Prior to independence, Botswana, with a per capita annual income of 80 dollars U.S., ranked as one of the world's poorest nations. Widespread drought during the early 1960's had led to reductions in the national cattle herd and by late 1965 fully 100,000 people (1/5 of the total population) were dependent on famine relief for survival.

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<sup>14</sup>Except where cited information for the sections on Botswana's economy was obtained from Botswana's National Development Plans, 1966-81.

## Economic Activity: Post-Independence 1966-1979

Upon independence then, the government's primary concern was achieving economic growth, which was seen to be vital if development was to proceed. Increases in domestic production were sought in three ways: by increasing the amount of agricultural products available for export, by substantially increasing the level of mineral exploration, and by stimulation of the government sector itself.

During the period 1966-1968/69, the agricultural sector led the way in terms of economic growth. Output of agricultural products increased rapidly due to a timely end to the prevailing drought conditions. Rural areas began to build up their cattle herds as increased range area became available, thus stimulating the growth of agricultural production and allowing the heavy reliance on famine relief to subside. During this period, the profit return from livestock export increased considerably due to the building of a meat processing plant and the establishment of the Botswana Meat Commission. Renegotiation of the 1910 customs agreement with South Africa resulted in increased funds (more than double the previous amount) becoming available to the government. Combined with budgetary aid from Britain during this period, rapid growth in the government sector occurred adding further stimulus to the economy.

The period 1968/69-1973/74 displayed continued escalation in domestic production. Continued rainfall allowed a steady increase in the population of the national cattle herd, and hence the amount of cattle slaughtered for export increased as well. Dramatic stimulation of the economy occurred with the opening of two mines: the Orapa diamond mine and the copper-nickel mine at Selsbi-Phikwe. As a direct result of this growth in the mining sector--livestock and livestock products had accounted for 80-90% of the export total in 1969, but by 1973 minerals had surpassed them--the construction industry began to boom.

This rapid growth continued until the period 1973/74-1976/77 when growth declined substantially. This decrease can be attributed to a combination of factors. In the agricultural sector the output of beef had remained high, but the production of agricultural products in the tribal areas had been drastically reduced due to the farmers having sufficient stock from the previous year to meet subsistence needs (at this time the government lacked facilities to store grain adequately for extended periods). Furthermore, mineral production declined due to technical difficulties at the mines necessitating considerable foreign borrowing; hence the dependent construction industry suffered as well. The continued availability of foreign aid, however, allowed the government sector growth to remain relatively isolated from the economic downturn during this period.

With this brief outline at hand, there can be little doubt that since independence Botswana has made considerable strides forward in terms of domestic production; however, similar gains toward a lessening of dependence on external market conditions have yet to occur. For Botswana, growth in domestic production leading to a rise in the national per-capita income has necessitated a greater dependence on the whims of foreign markets, especially those in South Africa.

Against such a political-economic background the government was forced to walk a tightrope in terms of economic development. Urban areas initially were to be developed at the expense of rural areas. Revenues earned by industrial development projects were to be channelled into development programs for the rural areas. The thesis will examine the effect of these programs for rural development on the socio-economic status of a segment of the rural population: the Basarwa.

### III. Basarwa Incorporation: A Historical Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the ongoing and historical relations between Basarwa and other ethnic groups in the geographical region of Botswana. As in the case of other minority indigenous populations within modern nation-states, the historical relations of Basarwa with other ethnic groups can be depicted by interactions that occurred due to a constantly expanding north and westward-moving frontier, controlled by the dominant socio-political groups. Furthermore, these relations were not only a product of time but also of space. Due to the dispersed nature and small population size of Basarwa groups, not all of these groups were affected in a similar fashion or at the same time by contact with this expanding frontier. Indeed, contact between Basarwa groups at the frontier itself had differential effects within these groups; individuals would oscillate along a continuum between full-time foragers to dependent members of the dominant socio-economic groups. What this chapter describes, therefore, is the process of Basarwa incorporation into the political and economic framework of the dominant ethnic group. Like many processes, the effects of this incorporation were felt differently by various Basarwa individuals and groups. Throughout at least the last one thousand years, however, this process of incorporation has steadily expanded; at present, very few independent foragers

exist in Botswana.

The chapter will begin with a description of the historical relations between Basarwa and Bakgalagadi and will further consider the socio-economic changes in Basarwa society that occurred as a result of this. Historical relations between Basarwa and the dominant Tswana will be discussed in detail. To facilitate this discussion, a brief ethnographic background will be provided to describe the relevant features of Tswana society. Basarwa incorporation into the larger Tswana-controlled region will be addressed through discussions concerning the fur trade, serfdom, borehole drilling, and Basarwa involvement in the region's emerging cash economy.

Regarded by scholars as the original inhabitants of Southern Africa, Bushmanoid-type peoples had been in contact with southward moving African settlers for centuries (Wilson and Thompson, 1969:40-41). Specifically, within the geographical region of Botswana, there had been a gradual but increasing expansion of agricultural and pastoralist groups northward from the Vaal River region dating back one thousand years (Vierich, 1981:97-99). These groups mainly settled in the southeastern region of the territory where adequate rainfall and soil conditions existed to make cultivation and cattle production possible. Hunter-gatherers, who previously considered this area their territory, were forced to retreat in the face of these technically and organizationally more complex groups, into the



more marginal, less watered areas of the interior. <sup>1</sup>

### Forager-Farmer Relations in the Southeastern Region

The first of these agricultural-pastoralist groups to move into this new territory were the Bantu-speaking Bakgalagadi. These were a group of people who derived the major portion of their subsistence from small-scale cultivation and small-scale stock raising. Technically and politically more sophisticated than Basarwa, they were able to drive the hunting and gathering groups out of the well-watered region of the southeastern part of the country.

Once the Bakgalagadi had become firmly established in the southeastern region of the country, fluctuations in the rainfall pattern again allowed for increased contact with nomadic Basarwa. <sup>2</sup> The agricultural boundary was dependent on rainfall and would advance westward and retreat accordingly. The general pattern, before the arrival of the Tswana, was of out-migration of farmers from the drier western regions during seasons of

<sup>1</sup>It is highly unlikely that hunting and gathering groups during this period were ever exclusively foragers; probably they occasionally, in years of sufficient rainfall, practised some small-scale agriculture (Cashdan, 1980; Vierich, 1981:99; Hitchcock, 1982:235). The same situation probably held true for the agricultural groups; during drought conditions they likely practised some hunting and gathering (Lee, 1979:255).

<sup>2</sup>It must be stressed that this contact occurred predominantly in the southeastern region of the country. The rest of the Kalahari, where considerable concentrations of foragers lived, was little affected by the farmers as the ecology of the region dictated against the agricultural economy.

inadequate rainfall and in-migration during the wet seasons. Basarwa groups to the west of this region, therefore, were faced with a constant oscillating pattern of farmers moving in and out of their home territories.

Gradually over the years, Basarwa began to approach the farmers to work as labourers. Basarwa individuals did this as a matter of choice; they used the encroaching economy when it suited them and left it when the rewards became too thin (Vierich, 1981:12). People, therefore, began to shift back and forth between various economic strategies involving a greater and lesser degree of independence. Prior to 1900, the indigenous Basarwa foraging economy and social organization remained intact due largely to the seasonal nature of the contact. Basarwa employees would work when the farmers occupied the region and return to foraging when the farmers left because of inadequate rainfall. The degree of Basarwa dependency at this time, therefore, was very much in the control of Basarwa individuals, for access to the foraging economy was constantly available.

#### Permanent Westward Expansion

Beginning in the early 1900's and rapidly expanding during the 1950's, the hinterland areas to the west began to be opened up on a permanent basis due to the large-scale expansion of

borehole drilling. <sup>3</sup> Basarwa populations in this region of the country were now faced with permanent settler occupation and a constantly expanding settlement frontier. The availability of drilled water resources allowed farming and small-scale stock raising to become a viable year around occupation throughout a much greater, expanding region.

During this period, labour activities, that had once been an optional economic activity, were increasingly becoming a necessity in areas where there was a heavy population influx of farmers of a permanent nature (Vierich, 1981). Rapid ecological deterioration occurred around the boreholes, and the traditional nutritious veld products were transformed into thorny bush vegetation due to pressure from the grazing and farming activities of the new settlers. More importantly, perhaps, a drop in the water table occurred affecting traditional sip wells further afield in the interior (Hitchcock, 1978:235; 1982:245).

Factors such as these had a dramatic effect on Basarwa. In the immediate area around the boreholes, the viability of the foraging mode of subsistence was threatened. Game made scarce by the increasing competition for grazing resources and the reduction of gathering products forced increasing numbers of Basarwa into dependency relations with farmers. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>This should not be confused with well drilling. Borehole drilling was undertaken in areas where water could only be obtained at considerable depths, thus, necessitating the use of modern technology. For further details refer to Appendix D.

<sup>4</sup>These relations will be discussed later in this Chapter.

Movement of foraging people to a more settled lifestyle is one of the more important factors that leads to loss of the ideology of sharing (Lee, 1979:412-414). This effectively removes these groups from the important extended kin group network of other Basarwa foragers, and hence during drought conditions these groups do not have access to the shared resources that groups maintaining this ideology have. Presented with a situation of declining availability of wild plant food and scarce game resources around the boreholes, Basarwa foragers have a choice. They can continue to pursue foraging by means of increased levels of mobility and work effort, or they can enter into the realm of forager-farmer interactions. Increasingly, Basarwa are choosing the second option. By choosing this option, further inroads are made into the traditional social system. Women, for example, become primarily involved in domestic employment and as agricultural labourers. No contracts are involved in these activities nor is the work of a steady nature. Domestically, women work in the processing of sorghum. On days when a woman is working she does so on her employers' premises bringing her children along with her. Children, therefore, play with Bakgalagadi children and not with Basarwa children and hence are being socialized into another social order, including the acquisition of a new language. The same situation exists in cultivation activities.

Furthermore, work of this type is of a part-time, seasonal nature. Women no longer contribute the major share to the

foraging household economy. Women eat part of the food they process when working; hence women and children eat at the women's employers and away from her household leading to further tension in her own domestic sphere. These factors have acted to alter drastically the egalitarian nature of Basarwa society; women, due to the change in their economic role, have lost their corresponding equal status in regard to men (Draper, 1975).

As the contacts between various Basarwa groups and the farmers became more prolonged, a tendency toward economic disparity between the two groups began to emerge.

. . . instead of being integrated or absorbed into the surrounding black population, the Basarwa of the southeastern Kalahari were instead emerging as a distinct ethnic minority within the region (Vierich, 1981:12).

Throughout the period of contact between the two groups, Basarwa instead of making the transition from foraging to agriculturalism have undergone a long term slide into dependency within an encroaching economy. Most groups still maintain contact with the foraging lifestyle; however, with the loss of the ideology of sharing these contacts are becoming increasingly tenuous.

### Tswana-Basarwa Relations

Throughout the period between 1700-1900, the Tswana tribes, which consisted of highly organized chiefdoms, migrated into the southeastern region of Botswana and began to dominate and

incorporate other ethnic groups. This appears to have been done by either assimilation or the adoption of quasi-feudal relations (Vierich, 1982:218). The two major subject groups affected in this manner within Botswana were Basarwa and the Bantu-speaking, agro-pastoralist groups, Bakgalagadi. As outlined, these people had already established an economic relationship with Basarwa in the southeastern area prior to the arrival of the Tswana. However, the Tswana, upon arrival, were able to superimpose their political authority over both groups to establish a hierarchal dominance status moving up from Basarwa to Bakgalagadi to Tswana (Vierich, 1981:99; Schapera, 1970:86-89). By the late 1800's, most of the Kalahari region itself had been divided up as a territorial hinterland of the five major Tswana tribes who had established their characteristic large village centers in the southeastern region of the country. This division became formally recognized by the British upon the establishment of the Protectorate.

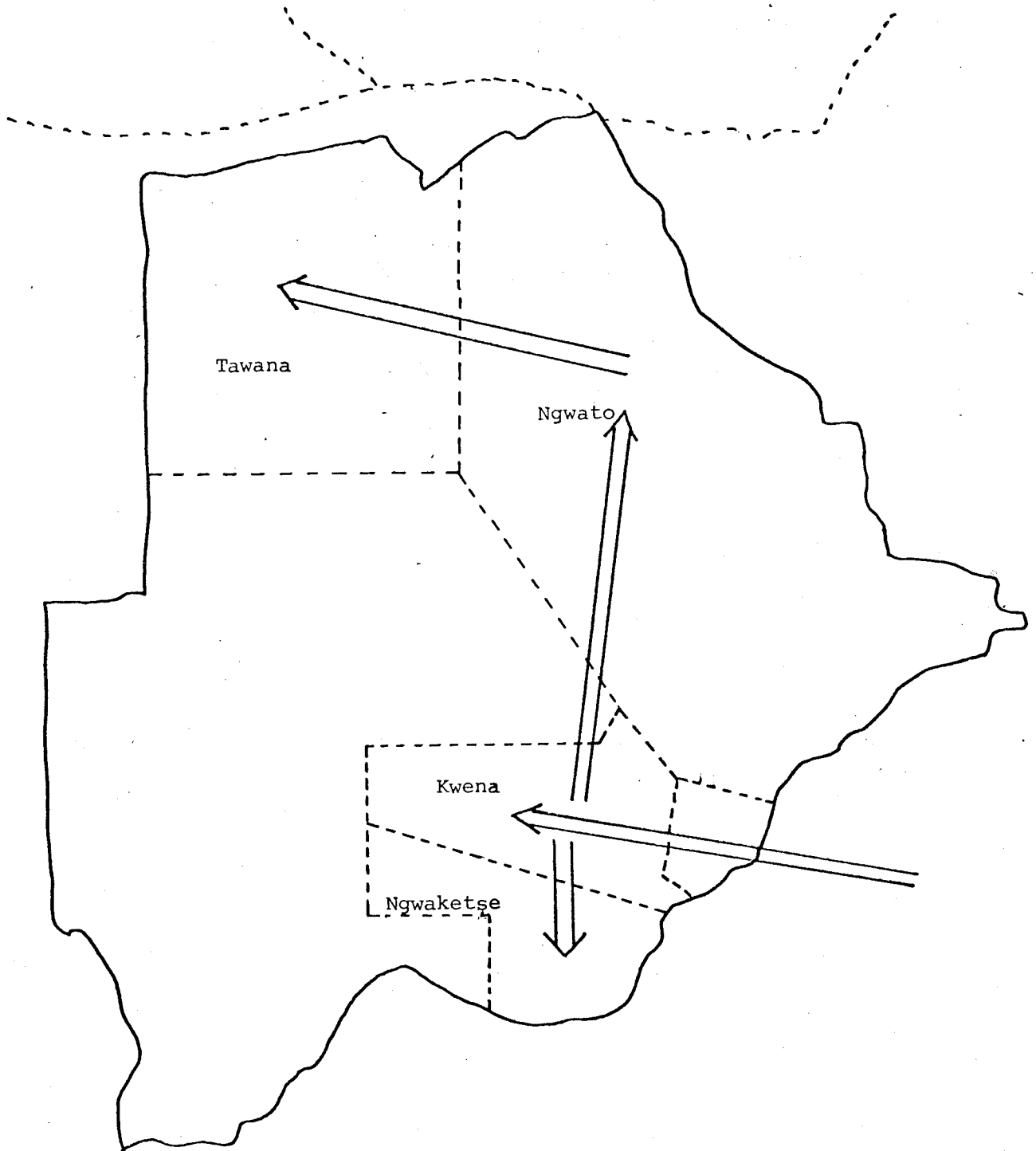
#### Tswana Movements: 1700-1900

A constantly recurring feature of the Tswana social system was for part of a tribe to secede under a discontented member of a ruling family and migrate to a new location (Schapera 1953:15). Upon arrival in the new location, these people would set up a new independent tribal structure under the chieftainship of this new leader. These newly independent

tribes, however, did not always continue to exist as politically separate entities due to civil wars, invasions, and other disruptive events, and hence would revert to living as subject communities in other tribes (ibid., 1953:34).

During the early 1700's such a process occurred and the first Tswana tribe moved westward from what is today the Republic of South Africa into the southeastern region of Botswana. This was the Kwena who came to occupy the region formerly controlled by the Bakgalagadi (see Figure 2). The Bakgalagadi were either incorporated into this tribe as a subject people or pushed further westward into the drier regions. Soon after this, the Ngwaketse seceded and established their tribal territory to the south. At approximately the same time the Ngwato seceded as well to establish a tribal territory to the north of the Kwena territory. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Tawana broke away from the Ngwato and established a territory in the northwestern region of the country (Schapera, 1953:15; 1955:3-7). By examining the geography of the country (see Figure 1), it is clear that these successive migrations were to areas where permanent water was available. In fact, each successive migration utilized the land area of a new drainage system. Throughout this period, the central region of the country was not utilized by the Tswana due to its lack of permanent water.

FIGURE 2





## Tswana Social Organization

People living in each of the tribes within the country acknowledged the supremacy of the tribal chief and constituted a single political unit under his leadership and authority (Schapera, 1955:2). Within each of the designated tribes, members settled in one large central town and a number of smaller outlying villages generally located near permanent water sources (Schapera, 1953:35-36).

Each of the smaller villages consisted of a single hamlet or a cluster of homesteads. Hamlets were arranged in a circular pattern with a central open space containing a number of cattle kraals and the central meeting place (the kgotla). Inhabitants of each hamlet comprised a distinct social and administrative unit of the tribe (the ward) and each always had their own kgotla. For example, the kgotla of the chief's hamlet was located in the center of the tribal capital (the major village) and was the central seat of the integrated tribal administration (Schapera, 1955:8-9).

Wards formed distinct social and political units under the leadership and authority of a hereditary headman. This headman had well defined administrative functions and judicial powers. Families who belonged to a ward were generally related to the headman by descent traced through the male line to a common ancestor (Schapera, 1953:46). Each headman was responsible to the tribal chief for all that went on in his ward and was the

medium through which all official communication to his subjects occurred. Furthermore, the headmen, of all the wards in the tribe, constituted an advisory council which was available to advise the chief when he wished (Schapera, 1955:21-22). Within traditional Tswana society, therefore, every person in a tribe belonged to a ward. Each of the various wards were differentiated in rank according to their respective historical status and descent from the chief. Furthermore, ranking occurred within wards as well. For example, strangers in a ward were always ranked lower than individuals who had rights according to birth. Tribes therefore, contained people from a variety of foreign communities (Schapera, 1955:4-6). Every one of the Tswana tribes are composed of people drawn from many different stocks including those of an alien language and culture. Furthermore, the ruling community or nuclear stock of every tribe is itself dispersed with offshoots being found in at least one other tribe, and more generally in several tribes (Schapera, 1952:127-128). <sup>5</sup>

In this manner, tribes were differentiated into classes. There were three such classes: (i) nobles, who were the descendants of any of the former local chiefs, (ii) commoners, who were the descendants of aliens incorporated long ago, and (iii) immigrants, who were the people of groups more recently admitted into the tribe (Schapera, 1953:36). Each of these

<sup>5</sup>The most widespread stocks are those of the Kwena (found in all ten tribes), Ngwato, Tawana, Khurutshe, and Kgatla tribes according to the 1946 census (Schapera, 1952:126).

classes had differential access to cattle. As a general rule, the closer a man was descended from a chief the wealthier he was in cattle. <sup>6</sup>

In pre-colonial times, the Tswana depended largely on hoe cultivation and cattle raising for subsistence. Their social structure, however, led to a different yearly residence pattern than other Bantu groups in southern Africa (Schapera, 1955:11). To begin, the distance of an individual's agricultural fields from the village settlements made it impossible for family members to return to the villages each night. As a result, during the agricultural season (November-June) most family members settled alongside their fields where they erected homesteads. Accordingly, during this time of the year, the population was scattered over a large area in numerous small settlements (Schapera, 1955:11). It was only during the non-agricultural period of the year that the villages were at their population capacities.

Furthermore, the large size of the villages <sup>7</sup> made it impossible to keep all of the village peoples' cattle in or even near them. Livestock, therefore, were kept in the veld at cattleposts located at considerable distances from the villages (20-40 miles). These locations were selected according to the adequacy of grazing and water resources. Draft oxen (used in

<sup>6</sup>For a detailed description of the differential access to cattle among the Tswana see Schapera, 1955:53-103.

<sup>7</sup>Some of the larger ones had populations of over 10,000 people prior to the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

cultivation activities) moved back and forth to the fields; the rest of the livestock remained at the cattleposts year around. Stock was tended constantly by older boys (who were replaced by the next age set when they reached manhood), employees, and serfs (Schapera, 1953:21-24; 1955:11-12).

### Pre-Colonial Tswana Land Tenure

Control over the tribal land and its resources was invested in the chief (Schapera, 1955:197). However, all members of the tribe were entitled to the use of as much land for cultivation purposes as they needed. Distribution was generally carried out within the context of the ward under the supervision of the headman. Families were given fields according to their size and needs; however, allotments tended to be fairly generous (Schapera, 1955:200-202).

In a similar fashion, every man in the tribe was entitled to free grazing land and water for his livestock. Pasture land was allotted by the chief to each of the wards for their communal use. All members of the ward, therefore, had the right to graze and water their cattle in these regions (Schapera, 1955:207-208). <sup>8</sup> Not all of the land within the tribal territory, however, was designated to the wards. Accordingly, the remaining unspecified land was open to the grazing

<sup>8</sup>The chief of each tribe has his own special grazing area for the sole use of his cattle herd.

activities of any man without permission from the headman or chief. This, of course, enabled land to be constantly available for the expansion of the grazing frontier. As a ward's grazing land became overcrowded, individuals were encouraged by the chief to dig wells in the drier regions further afield. For their efforts, these individuals were granted 'de facto' rights to the water and the grazing land in the surrounding region (Schapera, 1955:209-211). In such a manner, the traditional Tswana social system was able to provide, not only for constant expansion but also for the resultant incorporation of other ethnic groups that such a process entailed.

Once incorporated into the Tswana tribal structure, both Basarwa and Bakgalagadi individuals essentially became serfs (Schapera, 1970:88-89).<sup>9</sup> As serfs, these people did not have the basic right to the use of land for agricultural and grazing purposes and were, furthermore, expected to pay yearly tribute to the chief of their region (Schapera, 1955:121). By the time the region was declared a Protectorate under British administration, this system was firmly in place.

When the region became a Protectorate under British control, several changes occurred in the pattern of traditional land tenure. In 1895 the chiefs of the Kwena, Ngwaketse, and Ngwato tribes surrendered some of their land to the Crown for railway construction purposes. In 1899 the remaining portions,

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<sup>9</sup>See later in this chapter for a description of this relationship.

along with the tribal areas of the Kgatla and Tawana tribes, were officially proclaimed tribal reserves with designated boundaries (Schapera, 1970:96). <sup>10</sup> Land in these reserve areas was secured for the exclusive use and occupation of its tribal people. None of the land could be alienated to outsiders without formal government approval (ibid:96). Within the reserves the chief and his headmen continued to allocate holdings of land and settle disputes about trespass and ownership. However, in 1934 the Protectorate administration assumed the power to give the tribal chiefs orders about the use of land and other natural resources within the reserves (Schapera, 1970:96-97).

During the period of Protectorate administration all land outside the tribal reserves became the property of the Crown to dispose of as it willed. This meant that a large portion of the Kalahari region, where the greatest concentration of Basarwa foragers lived, was under the immediate jurisdiction of the Protectorate administration. Upon independence, all Crown land was transferred to the control of the Botswana government. Such land, therefore, was free from the restrictions of traditional Tswana land tenure which had not applied in these regions. <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>See Table 1 for details on the designation of land in the Protectorate.

<sup>11</sup>This greatly facilitated the spread of 'de facto' land ownership throughout this region as wealthy cattle owners were not bound to follow the communal pattern of grazing land use.

TABLE 1  
LAND OWNERSHIP

(a) CROWN LANDS	165,175 sq/mi
(b) NATIVE RESERVES	
Buralong Farms	450 "
Bamangwato Reserve	42,080 "
Batawana Reserve	34,500 "
Bakgatla Reserve	3,600 "
Bakwena Reserve	15,000 "
Bangwaketse Reserve	9,000 "
Bamakete Reserve	178 "
Batlokwa Reserve	56 "
(c) EUROPEAN FARMS	
Lobatsi Block	214 "
Gaberones Block	260 "
Tuli Block	1,930 "
(d) TATI DISTRICT	2,074 "

Source: Annual Reports of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1954

## Basarwa Land Tenure

The indigenous Basarwa system of rights in waterholes and associated food gathering territories was not well understood during the colonial period and has in fact been the subject of much controversy among scholars. Since Lee's work, a consensus seems to have emerged that Basarwa do 'own' the land they occupy. This ownership is collective and not individual following the egalitarian nature of Basarwa society. Hence while a group's territorial boundaries are not well marked, the concept of ownership is there nonetheless (Lee, 1979:337). Members of a core group may exploit that group's territorial resources without restriction. Neighbouring groups may use the resources of this territory as well, but they must keep the region's owners informed of their movements. Finally, while more distant groups may use these resources as well, explicit permission must be obtained from the core group's members before they do so (Lee, 1979:338).

This pattern was not recognized as a formal system of customary tenure by either the British Protectorate administration or by the new independent government. The struggle over Basarwa land rights will be discussed below, especially in Chapter V.



## Basarwa Socio-Economic Incorporation

The rest of this chapter will describe the increasing integration of the largely independent foragers in the drier hinterland areas of the country, into the wider socio-economic network controlled by the dominant Tswana. Such a description will be concerned with detailing developments--with the exception of serfdom--that occurred from the mid 19th century onwards until the time of independence in 1966.

### The Fur Trade

There are indications that trade began in the 1840's when the first white trader reached the Ngwato kingdom in 1844 (Parsons, 1977:117). <sup>12</sup> A brisk trade commenced in ivory and other hunting products and by the 1860's the capital of the Kwena tribe had become the northern limit of the Grahamstown-based Cape trading network into the "far interior" (Parsons, 1977:119). Indeed, Parsons has gone as far as to suggest that by this early date, the Tswana economies were becoming a "periphery to the periphery" of European capitalism (Parsons, 1977:119).

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<sup>12</sup>Certainly trade could not have existed to any great extent between the Tswana and white traders prior to this period, for the Tswana were found to be piling rotting ivory as late as 1849 (Chirenje, 1977:58).

After the establishment of the Protectorate, the products of the Kalahari began to be used in increasing amounts to support a growing trade with the British. <sup>13</sup> As sources of supply became exhausted near the heavily populated areas a need was felt for the opening of trade routes into the Kalahari hinterland. At this time, the Tswana had a considerable desire to maintain the established trade; it was not only profitable but it allowed them to acquire firearms which they believed essential to protect themselves against Boer expansion (Vierich, 1981; Solway and Lee, 1981:4).

Due to ecological conditions in the Kalahari region, it was not feasible to establish the typical Tswana village pattern of settlement. The hinterland areas, however, not only had an abundance of fur bearing animals but they were also being effectively exploited by foraging groups who had a much simpler political organization. Tswana chiefdoms, therefore, began to incorporate different Basarwa bands that were capable of exploiting environments beyond the Tswana settlements in the south. A remote area political incorporation system evolved whereby Tswana could obtain a region's resources while not actually residing in the region (Schapera, 1970:88-89). Basarwa individuals were increasingly used to procure elephant tusks, ostrich feathers, and fur for the Tswana (Chirenje, 1978:75). A steady flow of the products of the hunt was ensured by a system

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<sup>13</sup>These products included fur, ostrich feathers and ivory of which the most important was fur (Solway and Lee, 1981:3).

of serfdom and taxation. Chiefs placed an agent among Basarwa to ensure that such things were collected (Chirenje, 1977:57).

Political subjugation was achieved by a system of overseers or 'provincial governors'. . . These acted as extensions of the chiefs' authority in the remote areas where the Basarwa carried on business as usual and were not usually required, as were other Batswana citizens, to return to the big central villages in the non-agricultural seasons of the year (Vierich, 1981:111).

Basarwa-Tswana relations in the fur trade period involved Basarwa groups in a process of incorporation into the lowest socio-economic level of the various Tswana chiefdoms. Due to this incorporation, Basarwa became primary producers <sup>14</sup> in a chain involving the Tswana (and others) as middlemen and European markets in South Africa and Europe as the ultimate consumers. <sup>15</sup> I would argue that the indigenous foraging economy and social structure of the interior Basarwa groups remained relatively unaffected by this trade, mainly because their traditional land base remained intact.

There is, of course, evidence that suggests Basarwa were replacing their traditional techniques with "white" technology. Hodson, for example, reports that "the Bushmen, and especially the Hottentots, use the ordinary iron rabbit-traps a great deal" (1912:51). However, this statement must be treated with caution,

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<sup>14</sup>Chirenje indicates that relatively few Basarwa attempted to conduct trade with the whites directly (1977:65). This is a question, however, that must be treated cautiously as there is not enough information to support either view at present.

<sup>15</sup>Details about the Tswana-Trader relationship during this period can be found in Chirenje, 1977:55-74.

for earlier in his discussion he states that the most common Basarwa trap used during this period (1903-04) consisted of a pliable stick with a running noose made of ostrich sinews attached to it (Hodson, 1912:50-51). Further compounding the problem is the fact that we have no idea how many Basarwa were in fact using the iron-type traps. It is, however, relatively common for the lifestyles of indigenous peoples to be depicted by the degree of acculturation their society has achieved with that of the dominant group. This is an erroneous assumption. What must be kept in mind is the fact that Basarwa are, and have been, for a considerable period of time fully integrated into the national political economy of the region. Accordingly, "Basarwa" like the "Tswana" themselves, were being caught up in the process of the capitalist penetration of Southern Africa during this period (cf Wolf, 1983).

Tswana interest in this region stemmed from its resources and not from an interest in the land itself. Resource extraction was facilitated by the use of Basarwa groups employing traditional methods of hunting to acquire fur; it was to the Tswana's advantage to leave the situation unchanged. The fur trade was a capitalist enterprise of the mercantile variety; the traders relied on the differences in price between the buying and selling of goods to make their profits. Unlike industrial capitalist enterprises that seek to increase profits by re-organizing production along more efficient lines, the Tswana had little need to interfere with traditional methods of

resource extraction. However, the Basarwa were now recognized by the Tswana and assigned a place in the dominant Tswana political and economic realm. The Tswana considered them 'uncivilized', stigmatized them as foragers, and denied them access to cattle. Hence Basarwa largely became members of the lowest socio-economic grouping.

The gradual decline of the fur trade was followed by movement of Tswana cattle herds into the interior of the Kalahari. Beginning in the late 19th century and rapidly expanding during the early 20th century, Tswana herd owners, under increasing pressure to find new grazing regions, began to drive their herds into the interior during the summer months to graze (Lee, 1979:77-78). The dominant Tswana herd owners made use of Basarwa individuals and/or groups to supply labour for the various herding activities while other individuals were used to hunt and trap the various fur bearing animals of the region. When the rainy season ended furs were collected, Basarwa individuals were paid for their services with various goods, and the Tswana and their cattle returned to their large villages. Throughout the next fifty years, the more remote Basarwa groups, in the interior of the country, were increasingly coming into closer geographical contact with the Tswana due to the oscillating pattern of cattle herds moving in and out of their territory. Again, due to the seasonal nature of the contact Basarwa dependence on the Tswana cattle economy was in Basarwa control. Basarwa individuals could still return to foraging;

indeed, they always did when the Tswana left at the end of the rainy season. It could be argued that to a certain extent the Tswana were dependent on the Basarwa during this period. Basarwa groups constituted a labour force that the Tswana depended on to perform various herding activities. Furthermore, the Tswana would also make use of Basarwa gathered products to supplement their diet (Lee, 1979:255).<sup>16</sup>

### Serfdom in Botswana

When "working" for the Tswana, Basarwa individuals were often involved in what has been termed the "master-serf relationship" (Silberbauer and Kuper, 1966).<sup>17</sup> Initially, it would seem that this system originated as an arrangement between a family or small band of Basarwa and the owner of a cattle post. Gradually the relationship progressed until Basarwa groups

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<sup>16</sup>A British official noted that "it is a well known fact that the MaSarwa are necessary to herd the cattle and collect skins, feathers--the later forming (an important) income of the chief and his headmen" (Chirenje, 1978:42). A great deal of caution, however, must be exercised before one jumps to the conclusion that the Tswana were in fact dependent on Basarwa during this period. Little attention has been paid to this issue in the available literature, and perhaps the best that can be said is that Basarwa constituted a needed labour force at some times during the early period of Tswana movement into the interior.

<sup>17</sup>Interestingly, throughout the pre-independence period, Tswana cattle owners preferred to use Basarwa labour to herd cattle because employing Bakgalagadi herders also meant having their cattle herds using the local water source (Vierich, 1981). Obviously, Tswana herd owners were not only being practical but they also had faith in the ability of Basarwa foragers to herd their cattle.

settled themselves permanently near the post and performed certain duties for the owner. Services included herding, milking, collecting firewood and plant foods, etc. Payment was generally in food with most Basarwa workers occasionally receiving cattle and small stock to be grazed with their masters' herds. The control over the disposal of these animals remained in the Basarwa owners' hands. Generally, the Tswana inherited Basarwa serfs, and hence the relationship was perpetuated over time. Ideally, a master had a great deal of affection for his serfs and treated them as adopted children who would not, however, inherit his property (Silberbauer, 1965:28-29; Silberbauer and Kuper, 1966:177; Tagart, 1933:6-7; Schapera, 1970:90; Chirenje, 1977:259-264). Therefore, the relationship can be characterized as paternalistic. It must be stressed that Basarwa foragers made use of this relationship when it suited them and maintained the option to return to foraging when the work effort became too great. <sup>18</sup> At times, however, this option was tenuous. As serfs, Basarwa individuals had no access to the kgotla and hence could be returned forcibly to their masters despite any wrongdoing that might have been inflicted upon them (Schapera, 1955:252).

With the establishment of the Protectorate, missionary activity among the Basarwa, which had previously existed at a minimal level, began to increase. Missionaries who established

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<sup>18</sup>With the advent of borehole drilling, described in the next section, the option of returning to foraging became increasingly problematic due to deterioration of the vegetation.

missions among the Tswana tribes in the southeast region encountered Basarwa groups as well and were horrified at the conditions of 'slavery' of these settled Basarwa. Influenced by the missionary reports, the Protectorate government made a series of anti-slavery proclamations during the 1920's which were read at the various tribal capitals.

The Government will not allow any tribe to demand compulsory service from another, and wants to encourage the Masarwa to support themselves. Any Masarwa who wish to leave their masters and live independently of them should understand that they are at liberty to do so, and that if the Mongwato attempt to restrain them against their will, the government will not allow it. (Declaration by the High Commissioner to the kgotla in Serowe as quoted in Tagart, 1933:3).

These proclamations appeared to have little effect and the Protectorate government under considerable public pressure was prompted to investigate the

. . . extent to which they [Basarwa] are free to engage in any occupation . . . and able to exercise such freedom . . . and the conditions which have led to the present subject condition of these people (Tagart, 1933:3).

The commissioned investigator, E. S. B. Tagart, set out to examine conditions in the southeastern part of the country in the Bamangwato Reserve (Serowe). He spent only three weeks in the field actually observing the conditions the Basarwa were living under at the cattle posts. He derived most of his information from the tribal chiefs and the resident white administrators.

It appears Tagart accepted at face value the Tswana chiefs' explanation of how some Basarwa came to be subjugated. It is



worthwhile to quote Chief Tshekedi on this process; not only does the passage illustrate the biases apparent in Tagart's report but it also effectively depicts the impression of Basarwa held by the dominant Tswana tribes.

Khama tried to improve the condition of the Masarwa --- he stopped the selling of children. He appointed Bamangwato Headmen to take charge of certain areas occupied by the Masarwa. The first duty of these Headmen was to establish contact with the Masarwa. This was ordinarily done by organizing hunting parties when the Masarwa, attracted by the game killed, would come in to get a share, and would receive presents of dagga (hemp) from them, and later tobacco and sometimes beads. In this way the Masarwa gradually lost their fear and became accustomed to intercourse with the Bamangwato, and in time the Masarwa became accustomed to hunt for the Bamangwato, and received muzzle loaders and ammunition from them, while the Bamangwato received skins and meat of the game killed during their stay with the Masarwa, and left guns and ammunition with them when they went away. As time went on and the Bamangwato became rich in cattle, Khama, noticing that the game was getting scarce, ordered his people to give their cattle to be herded by the Masarwa, so that they might have the benefit of the milk. He feared that the Masarwa might otherwise disappear altogether from these parts and become scattered over the country (as quoted in Tagart, 1933:5).

As described earlier, Bamangwato headmen entered Basarwa territory in the interior to establish trade relations, thus facilitating Tswana control and expansion of this enterprise. Basarwa groups "did not gradually lose their fear"; rather, they entered into trade relations on their terms as it was profitable for them to do so. Furthermore, Tswana chiefs did not move their cattle herds into the interior to support starving Basarwa with gifts of milk; rather, the increasing concentrations of cattle herds in the southeastern region of the country forced the Tswana to move them into the interior in search of new grazing

land.

It appears the Tswana chiefs were well aware of British desires to limit serfdom and the subjugation of other ethnic groups. However, increasing concentrations of cattle in their home territory pressured the Tswana into considering a move to the interior. The Tswana, therefore, acted to perpetuate the already existing impression of the Basarwa as marginal, 'primitive', uncivilized people to legitimize their expansion into traditional Basarwa territories in the interior. The process of incorporation of Basarwa groups into the Tswana tribes as serfs was obviously for their own good; they were being 'civilized' into a better way of life: that of herders and cultivators. The Tswana chiefs insisted that, in the new socio-economic conditions of the region, hunting and gathering was no longer viable as the region's population was too large and the resources too limited. It is fairly evident that the ideological stance of the Tswana parallels that of the British in this matter. Indeed, even anthropologists saw the relationship of serfdom as helping the Basarwa to acquire a stable access to food; Basarwa groups, while perhaps in control of the relationship, would activate it during bad times (Silberbauer and Kuper, 1966:175).

It is not surprising that a British Protectorate official would accept a Tswana chief's statement about Basarwa life as factual. At this time, the European opinion of the Basarwa socio-economic position was not high. Statements like Tshekedi

Khama's, aligned perfectly with the European impression of Basarwa society and acted to further legitimate it. <sup>19</sup> The actions of the Tswana with regard to their serfs might be morally regrettable; however, at least the socio-economic position of the Basarwa had improved.

In his suggestions to the government Tagart continued to argue in this vein. He seemed to agree with the Tswana fears: if Basarwa were released from the supervision of their masters they would in all likelihood return to their nomadic existence. Forced by the pressures of starvation, they would resort to stock theft which was an indirect threat to the Protectorate administration who had a vested interest in the Tswana cattle herds. Tagart did suggest that some thought should be given to the establishment of a Basarwa reserve when the Basarwa became cultivators. The Protectorate government, however, need not supply any materials for this (i.e. ploughs, seeds etc.) as only those 'advanced' Basarwa should be allowed to relocate in this region. Tagart had indeed missed the point here; the whole issue of 'advanced' Basarwa was problematic. Certainly some Basarwa 'owned' cattle in their masters' herds; however, under the Tswana system of land tenure, Basarwa individuals were not entitled to the use of tribal land. Therefore, without access to grazing land, Basarwa could not build up their own cattle herds; the status of 'advanced' was correspondingly impossible to

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<sup>19</sup>For an excellent summary of the early European impression of Basarwa see Guenther, 1980:125-131.

obtain. Under these conditions, Basarwa could continue to be either serfs or nomadic hunters, and hence the popular 'image' of the Basarwa as a dependent population or as backward nomadic hunters was perpetuated.

Perhaps Tagart's most important recommendation was that the Basarwa should be forced to pay tax. He argued that every effort should be made to allow the Basarwa opportunity to earn money; indeed, he suggested, the most important factor maintaining their servile condition was the lack of wage employment in the Protectorate (Tagart, 1933:15). Tagart's policy recommendations can be summed up simply. The British colonial administration could not be seen to condone a policy of 'slavery' by one group over another. The anti-slavery proclamations of 1926 were to be reaffirmed; the Basarwa were to be made aware that they were free. Freedom, of course, did not mean supporting the establishment of territories where the Basarwa could continue their foraging lifestyle. Rather, the Basarwa population was to be recognized by means of a census taken under the supervision of a European officer, thus facilitating the collection of taxes from these people. By making the Basarwa pay tax, the Protectorate administration would be able to gradually introduce the Basarwa to a civilized economy. Certainly, this tax could not consist of a full payment initially. However, as the Basarwa became assimilated into the dominant economy of the region their ability to pay would increase, and hence their tax level could be increased as well. Basically, the report implied that the

Basarwa should be assimilated into the wage labour system as soon as possible. If this could be accomplished the 'servile problem' would disappear.

It appears the administration agreed with Tagart's recommendations and took actions to carry them out (Tagart, 1931:23-24). However, the administration did commission another study to be carried out on this issue casting some doubt as to the complete acceptance by the administration of Tagart's proposals. In a commissioned re-study, Joyce found that the information offered to Tagart on the question of serfdom was a gross over-estimation. He argued, convincingly, that only 1% of the adult male Tswana were masters of Basarwa serfs and that the majority of these masters were people of importance (Joyce, 1938:66-67). Unfortunately, there is no information available about the numbers of Basarwa who were serfs at the time of these reports.

#### Serfdom in the Ghanzi District

The Ghanzi area of Botswana was initially settled by poor Afrikaner farmers in 1898 (Guenther, 1973:58). These Afrikaner settlers did not come as the vanguard of a foreign invasion to shatter the peaceful existence of a pristine hunting and gathering society. Instead, the Afrikaners came as yet another cattle-rearing people into a situation of rivalry for land (Russell, 1976:185).

During the early years the Afrikaners lived primarily off the veld, as did the Basarwa. The early trekker economy, rather than being oriented to distant centers of white settlement in South Africa, was instead local: an amalgam of hunting, gathering, transhumance, erratic subsistence cultivation, and exchange trading (Russell and Russell, 1979:15-16). Trekker skills of generations had been built upon Basarwa knowledge of the veld foods. It was the surface water at Ghanzi that drew Basarwa, Afrikaner, and game together at Ghanzi. During the first twenty-five years of Afrikaner settlement the water table gradually declined. Afrikaner skill at sinking wells put them at an economic advantage over Basarwa for the first time. Further declines in the water table necessitated the use of complex borehole technology to maintain the supply of water (Russell, 1976:190). This acted to further accelerate Basarwa dependence on the Afrikaner controlled water sources. It must be stressed, that during the early years this was a seasonal dependence. When the rains came, Basarwa would return to the veld to pursue foraging.

As hunters, both Afrikaners and Basarwa could co-exist in the same territory; however, when the Afrikaner economy began to place more emphasis on pastoralism, the two found their interests in opposition. As described earlier, the impact of cattle began to break down the viability of the foraging lifestyle. Consequently, not only did hungry Basarwa yield to the temptation of easy meat from the calves and oxen but they

also burned off the grazing areas to attract wild game to the newly opened plains of new green grass. The cattle were both troubled and made wild by the thousands of game, especially wildebeest, and were thus lured onto the unfenced land of the region. Afrikaner and Basarwa also squabbled over the tswama melons, a Basarwa staple, which the Afrikaners used to feed their cattle (Russell and Russell, 1979:83). <sup>20</sup>

This is the type of scenario that led to the formation of the myth of the non-adaptive hunter-gatherer. During the early period, the Afrikaners were not very successful cattle herders themselves; only later, when absentee landlords brought in cattle, did the region begin to support large herds (Guenther, 1973:96-97). The impression "once a hunter always a hunter" that Afrikaners hold of Basarwa people emerged out of a period of intense rivalry for resources. Competition centered around the tswama melon which was an important source of water for the

<sup>20</sup>Hodson suggests that there are two types of melons in Botswana, one which is cultivated and the other which grows wild. He further argues that while stock will eat both, humans only eat the former (Hodson, 1912:34). This statement would tend, therefore, to reduce the perceived impact of cattle on this "Basarwa staple" because Basarwa supposedly did not depend on the wild ones to begin with. However, as Lee indicates, both the "cultivated melon" (tswama melon) and the "wild" melon (bitter melon) occur naturally and both are eaten by Basarwa (1979:167-172). In fact, Lee identifies the tswama melon as being a major food source, eaten daily when seasonally available, and the bitter melon as being a minor food source, eaten 2-3 times a week when seasonally available (ibid:168-172). Likely Hodson got the impression that these melons were used differently because some Basarwa, in the drier regions of the country, actively cultivated the tswama melon as a source of water (Cashdan, 1980). The loss of this important food source by the Basarwa during this period, therefore, should not be underestimated.

foraging Basarwa groups. Without this source of water, Basarwa groups were increasingly drawn into the area around Ghanzi where surface water was at a premium. The mythical image of hunters is useful to the whites in this region in that it serves to legitimize their own rather marginal economic position. Guenther provides a detailed description of the socio-economic status of Basarwa presently occupying this region (Guenther, 1973; 1976). It appears, in this area, that hunting and gathering has almost totally broken down and Basarwa have been reduced to a status of almost total dependence on the farmers. In this relationship of dependence, Basarwa individuals hold much the same status as those on black cattle posts.

The confrontation between Basarwa and Afrikaner in the Ghanzi District was not analogous to that between native and colonizer. Rather the Afrikaner's relationship with Basarwa was similar to the Tswana-Basarwa relationship because their situation as herders has forced similar solutions to their co-existence with foragers (Russell, 1976:179).

Unlike Ghanzi, serfdom in the Kalahari had been closely related to the economy of the fur trade. Relations during the fur trade period had involved the Basarwa in a process of incorporation into the lowest socio-economic stratum of the various Tswana chiefdoms. Serfdom, however, was often more of a public identity than an economic reality. The 'image' that existed of the Basarwa as dependent people was the outcome of a long history of social and economic interaction which rarely



approached dependency on the part of the Basarwa. What outsiders observed as a state of constant dependency on the part of the Basarwa was, in reality, the status defining the ethnic boundary between the two groups. This was a status the Tswana went to considerable lengths to maintain. While not actually dependent in reality, the 'image' of the Basarwa that developed during this period as a dependent, politically and socially 'backward' group was to have considerable impact on the status of the Basarwa in the independent nation of Botswana.

#### Borehole Drilling

Throughout the 1950's, however, mutual dependence was threatened and eventually shattered with the policy of borehole drilling. With access to permanent water sources, cattle herds began to graze in selected parts of the interior permanently, along with their Tswana owners. This policy had a profound effect on the Basarwa; ultimately, their land base, essential to their indigenous foraging mode of subsistence, was threatened directly.

The pastoralist frontier began to expand constantly as the drilling of boreholes opened new areas for graze. <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Obviously, the relationship between boreholes and Basarwa dependence is an extremely important one and worthy of further investigation. However, lack of information on the subject of boreholes makes such a consideration impossible at this time. For the available details on borehole' numbers and location, see Appendix D.

Increasingly, Basarwa groups in the interior were faced with a choice similar to that which those groups in the southeastern area had faced previously. The availability of permanent water was an attractive resource for Basarwa groups; it allowed them enough resources to pursue their public life in a large group context for a greater period of time. Whereas disputes once acted to drive large groups apart, now these could now be settled by outside intervention (Lee, 1979:368-369). Initially then, Basarwa groups settled around these various water sources to pursue various economic strategies ranging from full-time hunting and gathering to working on the cattle posts.

As a result of increased stocking rates, due to the permanent influx of cattle into the Kalahari, there have been substantial changes to the Kalahari ecosystem. Indications are that the water table has dropped and that substantial areas of grass have been replaced by woody shrubs and trees (Campbell and Child, 1971). There is a definite correlation between the number of cattle around a borehole and the reduced viability of foraging. As the number of cattle increase, the Basarwa stop relying on, first, hunting and then gathering as the work effort becomes too great (Hitchcock 1978:272; Vierich 1981; 1982:219).

The permanent establishment of cattle herds in the Kalahari has set off several processes that militate against successful hunting and gathering. That there are fewer game animals in certain areas of the Kalahari now than there were 100 years ago is evident when a comparison is made between travellers'

accounts and the present day data on species numbers and distributions (Hitchcock, 1978:268). Competition between game and cattle for graze and browse around water sources, however, is but one reason for the decrease in game number and density.

A second factor that affected the distribution and density of game, and thus the subsistence base of foragers, was the policy of the erection of cordon fences in the Kalahari. Fear of the spread of livestock diseases led to the construction of a series of cordon fences beginning in 1896 (Hitchcock, 1982:244) which have been expanding in number and complexity through to the present (Hitchcock 1978:269; Silberbauer and Kuper, 1966:175). <sup>22</sup> There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that game fences do effectively disrupt the migration patterns of game; game do not simply break through the fences periodically as claimed by many officials (Hitchcock, 1978:269).

The impact of cordon fences on the large herbivore populations and their migration routes has become a complex and controversial environmental issue in Botswana. Since the 1950's, approximately 1200 kilometers of fences have been erected along the perimeter of the western and central Kalahari regions. Williamson and Williamson (1981) have argued that from the evidence available it would appear that these fences have caused a severe decline in the large herbivore biomass of the region. Campbell (1981), however, contends that the removal of fences

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<sup>22</sup>It should be noted that the ability of the British to actually construct a cordon fence in 1896 is questionable.

will not solve the decreases in game populations as fences are only a small part of the overall picture. Campbell presents evidence that demonstrates that Kalahari game populations have not been stable throughout the last century but have instead fluctuated wildly. Such fluctuation, he argues, could only be caused by environment circumstances. Between 1960 and 1980, the population of Botswana doubled and the cattle herd size trebled. Furthermore, the concentration of boreholes and the subsequent movement of cattle into this region has progressed steadily (Campbell, 1981). Cattle are now more or less tied to the boreholes throughout the region and hence wildlife is now denied access to areas that were traditionally available for grazing. It is this factor that Campbell stresses is fundamental when considering game reductions. Regardless of the reason for the decline (fences or boreholes) it appears that the expansion of the cattle industry is the ultimate culprit. Such trends can only act to decrease the viability of foraging within this region.

The disruptive effect fencing can have on the foraging economy can be further observed by directing attention to the Kung. This is a group of Basarwa foragers whose traditional territory straddled the Botswana-Namibia border. Not only has the erection of a border fence between these countries disturbed the movement of game but it has also denied these foragers access to traditional gathering resources and social networks (Lee, 1979:429-430).

The final factor that has drastically altered the game populations is overhunting. With the establishment of cattle in the region, cattle owners and foreign hunters (tourists) began to compete with traditional Basarwa hunters for game. Indeed, as serfs, Basarwa individuals were often compelled to hunt for their Tswana masters. Because of this, a large portion of the meat caught by the foragers could not be used by them but, rather, had to be paid in tribute to the dominant Tswana masters (Schapera, 1955:251). In the 1960's measures were introduced to limit the hunting season and to allow only people with permits to hunt. Basarwa traditional hunters were exempt from this as long as they used traditional methods to hunt and not modern weapons (Vierich, 1981).<sup>23</sup> However, the impact of modern weapons had made traditional Basarwa hunting methods increasingly unproductive. Firstly, game densities had been severely depleted so that Basarwa hunters had to devote increasing amounts of work effort to hunting. Also, it has been found that the flight distance of prey species increases in regions where firearms are used (Hitchcock, 1978:270). This has had a tremendous impact on the traditional subsistence bow and arrow hunter. Prey tend to be more wary and run away at the sight of a hunter; furthermore, they tend to stay out of the effective range of arrows. Unfortunately, the option of using modern weapons was not open to the Basarwa; the use of modern

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<sup>23</sup>The effect of the new hunting regulations established after independence will be discussed in the next chapter.

weapons is only allowed during a defined hunting season--of little use to a subsistence hunter who needs to hunt throughout the year.

Not only are cattle having an effect on the vegetation adjacent to waterholes but so too are the people. High population densities over a long period of time have a negative impact on the local resources of a region (Lee, 1979:367). Traditionally, forager mobility allowed local resources to regenerate; this adaptation is increasingly breaking down as foragers are forced, out of necessity, to remain in one place. Competition between foragers and herders, therefore, results in a reduction in the number and density of both game and plant species. Due to the disruption of their foraging economy, Basarwa individuals tend to remain in one area which acts to further hinder their socio-economic position.

#### Basarwa Involvement in the Cash Economy

Not only had the various foraging groups of the Kalahari been involved in the fur trade, relations with black and white farmers and pastoralists as serfs but they had also been involved in increasing numbers in wage labour throughout the country. As early as 1909, Basarwa individuals living in the Ghanzi region had been employed as drovers by professional Afrikaner cattle trekkers involved in the long distance trade of cattle throughout the region (Russell and Russell, 1979:22).

Basarwa individuals with their intimate knowledge of the water resources of the region were indispensable to the cattle trekkers moving cattle throughout the Kalahari prior to the establishment of a complex system of boreholes. By 1922, Basarwa were used to transport mail between Olifantskloof and Ghanzi.

This was the beginning of a system whereby Basarwa were employed as 'native runners' throughout a much wider trade network throughout the territory (Russell and Russell, 1979:22). Basarwa knowledge of the region was further utilized by the owners of the first transport trucks to reach the Kalahari. Throughout the period 1928-38, Basarwa workers gave advice on routes and were employed as labourers to cut and lay branches to make passable tracks through the deep sand (ibid:27). Indeed, Afrikaners have remarked on Basarwa ability to master the principles of engines; this is an indication of a group of individuals who are familiar with a way of life radically different than that of traditional foraging (ibid:108). By the early 1960's, Basarwa groups, living in the area of Ghanzi, had become completely familiar with a cash economy as a direct result of this long term process of incorporation (Guenther, 1973:63).

The policy of borehole drilling in the 1950's further involved Basarwa in the region's cash economy. The road infrastructure in the Kalahari region dramatically increased during this period due to the combined efforts of the borehole drillers, the South African mine recruiters, and the Protectorate administration. Prior to the 1950's, few Basarwa

individuals had been recruited to work in the South African mines. However, with boreholes and improved transportation access opening up the previously isolated regions of the Kalahari, Basarwa individuals began to work in the South African mines in increasing numbers (Vierich, 1981:125). In fact, the situation became so severe that the socio-economic system of some foraging groups was affected. Families of the departed miners did not receive any remittances, and hence, lacking men to hunt for them, their social system was disrupted. Local administrators, aware of the situation, acted to limit the recruitment of Basarwa individuals to those living on the cattleposts (Vierich, 1981:126-127). Despite this, the development of the road infrastructure in the Kalahari put increasing numbers of Basarwa in contact with the cash economy. Indeed, even the remote Basarwa groups of the Dobe area were reported by Lee in the early 1960's to have had individual members of bands seek wage labour in the South African mines (Lee 1979:414, 1984).

Development of the road infrastructure also led to the movement of companies organizing tours into the previously remote Kalahari interior from the late 1950's onward (Vierich, 1981:129). Basarwa individuals and groups were commissioned by these companies to perform for tourist audiences their 'primitive' skills of hunting and gathering. Generally, payment was in 'western' foodstuffs (ibid:130). People in non-traditional dress were turned away; if Basarwa individuals



wanted 'western' food they had to wear traditional leather and hide clothing (ibid:130). Obviously these companies perceived that tourists wanted to see 'primitive' hunters and not Basarwa individuals dressed in the current fashions of the day. Likely, at this time, a bartering trade developed between the tourists and the Basarwa for traditional goods.

As outlined, Basarwa groups have increasingly been drawn into the cash economy of the region over a considerable period of time. Gradual at first and occurring only at the periphery incorporation continued to expand during this period. Certainly, this process of incorporation has not acted to make all Basarwa groups dependent or even all individuals within a respective group dependent; however, as the pastoralist boundary continues to expand, the viability of the remaining foraging groups becomes increasingly problematic.

. . . the long history of the region's development can be understood only as a progressive loss of lands by a people for whom mobility has always been at the heart of economy and culture. A simple analogy may convey the result of cumulative impact on such a people. To shove, be it gently or forcibly, a person who stands in the middle of a field is one thing; but to shove someone who stands at the edge of a cliff is quite another (Brody, 1983:246).

Accordingly, for hundreds of years, Basarwa have not constituted isolated, marginal groups within the region of Botswana. As demonstrated, throughout a long period, they have been in contact with and participated in a wider socio-economic network. Until Basarwa groups lost access to their traditional hunting and gathering territories, they retained strong ties to their

indigenous foraging economies and social organization despite their involvement in other socio-economic systems. Without access to their traditional land base, however, Basarwa traditional social organization was increasingly disrupted resulting, finally, in the emergence of dependent Basarwa groups throughout Botswana.

#### IV. Rural Development and the Basarwa

The process by which Basarwa have become incorporated into the wider socio-economic network throughout Botswana, up until independence in 1966, has been described. This chapter will extend this line of analysis on two levels. It will provide a description of the increasing Basarwa integration into a national economy from 1966-1979, and it will address issues concerning the effect of government-designed policies of rural development on the socio-economic status of Basarwa, matters to which the notion of the fourth world directs our attention. The chapter will detail the events that led up to the official recognition of the 'Basarwa problem', paying specific attention to the question of land tenure.

Beginning with the 1973-78 National Development Plan, the Government began to pay more than lip service to the outlining of development strategies for the rural areas. Policies of rural development were elaborated in the Plan years that followed; policies in succeeding years became more complex as government understanding of the problems facing the rural areas of the country became more sophisticated. Within the realm of policy formulation, it is important to realize that officially, the Basarwa were treated according to the national ideals of equality throughout the first decade of independence. Accordingly, the Basarwa were considered to have similar

obstacles in their path to development as all other small or non-cattle owners who make up the vast majority of the rural population. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe, in detail, all the various facets of rural development. <sup>1</sup> This chapter, therefore, will provide a brief overview of the major policy emphasis regarding rural development describing in greater detail those policies that most directly affect the Basarwa.

In early 1970, the President of Botswana stated that "The greatest challenge ahead of us is undoubtedly that of rural development" (The President: National Development Plan, 1970-75). In Botswana six out of seven people live in the rural areas, and despite escalating levels of urban migration, <sup>2</sup> the demographic characteristics of the rural areas will ensure a steady population increase. The poverty of the vast majority of the population in the rural areas is extreme, and the government recognizes a responsibility to alleviate this condition. The government has further argued that it has a responsibility not only to increase rural incomes but also to provide and improve basic social services and generally raise the quality of life in the rural areas.

Firstly we wish to strive for social justice; secondly we are concerned to provide wherever possible equality

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<sup>1</sup>For a good general discussion of government development policies in the urban and rural settings from 1966-78, see Colclough and McCarthy (1980).

<sup>2</sup>Botswana currently has one of the highest levels of urban migration in Africa.

of opportunity; thirdly, we intend to use persuasion rather than compulsion in order to achieve change in a democratic and constructive way. These three objectives are rooted in our four principles of democracy, development, self-reliance, and unity. (The Vice-President: National Development Plan, 1970-75).

Against such a backdrop, policies for rural development were formulated.

Early planning for rural development began with the initial policy statement outlined in a government paper in 1973 (National Policy for Rural Development, 1973). Consequently, these ideas were officially adopted in the National Development Plan of 1973-78. In brief, the government intended to pursue a two-part economic strategy with regard to development. The rapid and large returns to the nation from the capital intensive resource industries (largely mining) were to be re-invested in (i) education and training, (ii) promotion of agriculture and labour intensive manufacturing industries, and (iii) the improvement of services in the rural areas (National Development Plan, 1973-78:37).

Specifically, within the framework of rural development, the government wanted to improve the livestock and agricultural industries. Rural land use in Botswana was mainly divided between crop production, livestock ranching, and hunting/tourism. <sup>3</sup> Due to an extreme shortage of demand for wage labour in the rural economy, the bulk of the population was

<sup>3</sup>It is important to note that hunting and gathering was not recognized as a land use; rather, the government recognized the value of hunting as a tourist attraction to provide a further source of income to boost the rural economy. See Chapter V for details.

dependent on agricultural production for their livelihood. Accordingly, Government policy makers adopted the tactic that increased living standards and income levels could be best achieved by improving cultivation techniques and, more importantly, livestock production (National Policy on Rural Development, 1973:4-6). The best way to do this would be to build up the infrastructure supporting these industries by providing funds for the development of artificial insemination centers, demonstration ranches, animal health service centers etc. The ultimate goal was to, "raise the percentage off-take from the national herd by a half while continually improving the quality of slaughter stock" (National Policy on Rural Development, 1973:5).

Within Botswana, the rural economy is heavily dependent on livestock; however, the ownership of livestock is very unevenly distributed. Some 32% of the rural population own no cattle and 46% own less than 10 head (National Development Plan, 1973-78:167-169). Parsons has suggested that the vital question for future research is how the general rural poverty in Botswana originated and, more importantly, how it is distributed (1977:135). Using 1967/68 census material he determined that 13% of the rural population derived a living from no crops or cattle at all, surviving on the incomes of migrant workers; 31% possessed no cattle at all; and among the remaining 56% who did own cattle, 12% owned 60% of the total cattle herd in the country (Parsons, 1977:135). Within the rural economy,

agricultural production directly involves some 80% of the rural households. Within this agricultural sector, livestock production accounts for over 80% of the total population's activities (National Development Plan, 1976-81). Obviously, as pointed out earlier, cultivation activity in Botswana is at best marginal.

It was this situation that produced much of the government rhetoric on development in the post-colonial period. At the level of public statement rural agricultural development (especially livestock development) and the equitable distribution of assets and benefits from these programs were central to the government's development strategy. <sup>4</sup>

As a consequence of the government's recognition of the problems inherent in having the livestock population so unevenly distributed among citizens in the rural areas, a radical land

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<sup>4</sup>It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the effects of the government's handling of this situation, however, some summary comments can be made. It would appear that the bulk of expenditures on development projects have failed to alter the opportunity structure of agricultural production. In fact, they have had the effect of reinforcing existing inequalities (Parson, 1981:237). Furthermore, within the rural political structure, while government policy has been to break down the traditional power of the chiefs, these chiefs are being replaced by people who themselves have little interest in the conditions of the large mass of the rural poor. Holm suggests that the local political elite have a very noticeable bourgeois background relative to education and economic standing compared to the rest of the rural community. Of even greater concern, is the fact that of the 49% of the local MPs sampled by Holm, 54% of them indicated paternal kinship ties to the chief (Holm, 1972:86). Obviously, government policy has done little to help the rural poor. However, government options are perhaps few as Botswana is constrained as a subordinate, peripheral entity within a much wider system wherein are located the basic dynamics governing the system as a whole (Parson, 1981:255).

reform policy was proposed to address this issue. <sup>5</sup> However, the poorest sections of the rural population, those without cattle, would be unaffected by such reforms, and hence the government argued, it would be necessary for this group to obtain their livelihood in arable agriculture. Therefore, the Government proposed to spend money investigating means of improved cultivation techniques to help this section of the population obtain their subsistence largely through dryland farming (National Policy on Rural Development, 1973:7).

Also intended as a major policy to alleviate the depressed living standards of the rural poor was the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP). Most projects financed under this programme had to do with developing the rural infrastructure--schools, health clinics, rural water supplies, etc.--and hence tended to satisfy basic needs rather than to stimulate directly the rural economy. <sup>6</sup> Government policy makers and expatriate advisors believed strongly that basic social services and an improved road system had to be provided before any successive development policies could proceed; accordingly, this programme was emphasized (National Development Plan, 1976-81:74-75). In the area of education, for example, the

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<sup>5</sup>Because of its importance for later political organization of the Basarwa, this policy will be discussed at length later in this chapter.

<sup>6</sup>This is consistent with policy proposals to deal with the 'Basarwa problem'; policies were designed to alleviate the symptoms of the 'Basarwa problem' rather than to alleviate the conditions giving rise to the problem itself.



government argued that the primary school syllabus needed to be redesigned to meet the needs of the rural population (National Policy on Education, 1977). Accordingly, the primary school syllabus would no longer stress academic subjects because most pupils from the rural areas were highly unlikely to proceed to secondary school. Rather, the primary school syllabus would be designed to provide an education so that students would be better prepared to participate in a rural environment where the majority of school children will eventually spend their adult lives. This policy had little direct effect on the Basarwa, for at this time few Basarwa children attended school. However, at a political level the effect is subtle and of concern: Basarwa along with other rural poor are being denied the opportunity to acquire an education that will enable them to participate politically at a national level. To participate politically at a national level requires comprehension of English; with the new syllabus, rural students will no longer have access to this.

By providing for improvements in rural infrastructure, the government hoped to improve agricultural production by laying the groundwork for the introduction of improved marketing techniques. For example, schemes for the regional storage of grain would be introduced, and a further emphasis would be placed on improving cattle trek routes and providing access along them for holding pastures to fatten cattle. These measures should be interpreted as a means of providing better prices for cattle producers; of course, non-producers would receive little

benefit. In the case of Basarwa, this policy would result in a further erosion of their traditional lands.

Throughout its stated policies of rural development, the government maintained its rhetoric about wanting to provide for more employment opportunities within the rural economy. While it recognized that its policies would create few rural job opportunities, the government hoped to address this issue by promoting the development of rural industries: specifically, handicraft industries. Under this policy, the government acted to encourage new rural enterprises to adopt labour intensive techniques. Handicraft industries were to be supported by the government which saw these as a means of providing employment opportunities for the most disadvantaged of the rural poor (ie the Basarwa) who could market traditional items for cash (National Policy on Rural Development, 1973:11).

As a corollary of this policy, the Government argued for wage restraint among urban workers to ensure that as many citizens as possible would be able to find wage employment (National Policy on Incomes, 1972). Furthermore, government decided not to introduce a minimum agricultural wage. For the Basarwa especially, this had a rather ambiguous connotation. If a minimum wage had been set, the practice of allowing Basarwa extended kin groups to squat on a farmer's land, while one member of the kin group worked for subsistence goods rather than wages, would be effectively halted. The farmer would not be able both to pay wages and to provide subsistence items; hence the

squatters would be forced out (Russell and Russell, 1979:88). More importantly, if a minimum agricultural wage were introduced, Basarwa citizens would lose out in the competition for jobs as farmers would probably hire the more highly regarded Tswana workers. This policy, therefore, acted to preserve the status quo; Basarwa squatters were protected and consequently the exploitation of this group continued unabated. <sup>7</sup>

### Livestock Promotion and the Basarwa

Policies such as these could have only one effect on the Basarwa: increased dependence on other better-off socio-economic groups. Government policies of rural development had made official what had unofficially been going on for a long time: the successive loss of Basarwa land to a constantly expanding agricultural and livestock frontier. Rural development had but one goal: increased production of livestock to boost the national economy. Revenues from livestock could then be re-invested in social services, etc., for the rural non-cattle owners in the country.

Government policy toward the Basarwa was outlined accordingly. To receive the benefits of rural development,

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<sup>7</sup>See Hitchcock (1978) for a detailed discussion of this policy. There can be little doubt that Basarwa workers were being exploited. Throughout Botswana, Basarwa workers, supposedly being paid in kind, were not even receiving this payment regularly and had no recourse when such payment was not forthcoming.

Basarwa must be settled down and moved to village centers. Early policies directed toward the Basarwa reflected this.

Of the 5,000 [Basarwa] on the Ghanzi Farms, about one quarter are employed or are dependents of employees. The rest live off proceeds of occasional employment, poaching on the farms, begging and stock theft. The relations between Bushmen and Ghanzi farmers have deteriorated rapidly, due to the fact that these destitutes--no longer able to support themselves off the veld--turn to stock theft and local charity, and so impose a serious burden on the economy of the district (National Development Plan, 1968-73:116).

It would appear that the government regarded Basarwa, especially those in the Ghanzi District, as increasing becoming a dependent population. The government apparently regarded the takeover of their lands as being for their own good: they would be civilized and hence able to benefit from the policies of rural development. Basarwa were to be made to be like all other rural citizens so they could assume an active role in the rural economy of the country.

This was to be done by projects that would settle the Basarwa down and teach them the, "basic principles of stock ownership, stock management and dryland farming" (National Development Plan 1968-73:116). In the new nation of Botswana, of which the Basarwa were part, hunting and gathering was no longer viable (if indeed, argued the Government, these ever had been) as the region's population was too large and the resources too limited. Therefore, government policy with regard to the Basarwa must be aimed at expanding the livestock industry and creating new job opportunities for wage earners. Economic development of the nation was a prerequisite for the socio-economic development

of the Basarwa. Implementation of government policies of rural development and the resultant state intervention to address the issue of the Basarwa had led directly to further takeover of Basarwa indigenous land. From a Basarwa viewpoint, government policies of development were in reality an attack on their traditional foraging economy by depriving them of their traditional land base. As a result of these policies of rural development, it would appear Basarwa were increasingly being forced to seek wage employment or to enter into dependent relationships. With the already oversaturated labour market in the country, the unskilled and stigmatized Basarwa increasingly became members of the second category. Policies of 'enlightened' development for these 'poor uncivilized people', had by 1975, resulted in Basarwa becoming increasingly destitute and dependent on the nation-state for subsistence. The 'Basarwa problem', as it had become known (National Development Plan, 1976-81:82), had gradually grown in national importance. As a result of the most far-reaching Government economic development proposal, the Tribal Grazing Lands Policy, the problem came of age.

### The Tribal Grazing Lands Policy

The idea that traditional communal land tenure in Botswana should be changed to allow exclusive tenure by individuals had long been advocated by influential cattle owners in the country.

Earlier recommendations to achieve this had originated out of a commissioned report on rural development prepared during the early 1970's (Chambers and Feldman, 1973). These researchers pointed to several problematic issues in the area of livestock and agricultural production. The government response to this report was the publication of the White Paper on Tribal Grazing Lands in 1975 which detailed several important changes to land tenure in Botswana. <sup>8</sup> Despite its importance, this White Paper was heavily based on a number of questionable assumptions about the past, present and future in Botswana.

Under the traditional land tenure system in the tribal areas of Botswana (i) grazing areas were the property of the tribe as a whole, (ii) could not be controlled by an individual or group of individuals, and (iii) could not be fenced. However, individuals had been gaining 'de facto' rights to grazing land, including parts of the Kalahari as the grazing frontier extended beyond the old tribal areas, through the widespread practise of borehole drilling. Through the ownership of these water sources, individuals also effectively controlled the surrounding land area and the people living in these regions who were dependent on the water sources. Serfdom had originated partly from the control of water resources, and the practice was not modified by the introduction of borehole sources.

Of primary importance to the proposed Tribal Grazing Lands Policy (TGLP) was the fact that overgrazing had already occurred

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<sup>8</sup>For a complete overview of this Policy see Greenhow, 1978.

leading to sheet erosion, bush encroachment, and a general decline in livestock productivity (National Policy on Tribal Grazing Lands, 1975:para 10). Government officials pointed out that under the old communal land tenure system in Botswana, the rich could more easily control cattle than the poor; furthermore, under the communal system improved management techniques would be difficult to introduce (ibid:para. 12). It was further argued that the communal system was hindering productivity; adequate technical information existed to increase cattle production on a given amount of land if simple management techniques could be introduced (ibid:para. 17). Giving designated individuals exclusive rights over the areas which their cattle grazed would, therefore, provide incentive for those individuals to manage properly their grazing resources (ibid:paras. 18, 20, 44). For the rest of the country, the government decided it would be politically feasible to enforce compulsory stock regulations on the other herd owners to solve the overgrazing problem (ibid:paras. 29, 30, 40).

Under the policy guidelines of the TGLP the major problems to be attacked would be range deterioration and the increasing socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor in rural Botswana. Officials argued that in order to achieve sustained livestock production, better management practices were needed along with strict control of livestock grazing. Perhaps the most efficient method of achieving this would be to allow the fencing of land throughout specified areas of the country. The TGLP

should, therefore, be seen as the end product of a long campaign by Government officials<sup>9</sup> to commercialize the livestock industry while at the same time retaining poor citizens' access to communal land.

For these reasons, the government argued that it was necessary to change the land allocation system so that all people could benefit from the results of improved range management. To achieve this principle, land in Botswana would correspondingly be zoned into three areas: commercial, communal, and reserved.

On the 14 of July 1975, the President of Botswana, Seretse Khama, launched the TGLP with a speech to the nation.

In Commercial Farming Areas groups and individuals will be given exclusive rights to specific areas of grazing land. These areas will include much of the existing sandveld cattle post areas where borehole owners at present pay nothing for the land they use. The land will cease to be held in the traditional way. A lease will be given and rent will be payable to the local authorities in return for the exclusive rights given in the lease.

In Communal Grazing Areas the traditional communal grazing system will we hope be changed. The traditional tenure will not be changed and no rent will be paid. No individuals will be allowed exclusive rights to grazing land in the communal areas and the land will be stocked in accordance with its capability.

The Reserved Areas will be set aside for future use. They are the safeguards for the poorer members of the population. Suitably large areas of grazing will be reserved and guaranteed for those who have only a few cattle at present. (From a speech by Seretse Khama, Launching the Tribal Grazing Land Policy, July 14, 1975 as cited in Carter and Morgan, 1980:322.)

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<sup>9</sup>A large percentage of these government officials were also wealthy cattle owners. Accordingly, when formulating this policy they were acting predominantly in their own class interest.



As a result of the TGLP, a national land zoning exercise began. The government appointed District Officers (Lands) to carry out surveys and draw up tentative land use plans and zoning maps for the entire country. Data was to be collected primarily on water source distribution, type of water available, and the nature of present grazing activity. A key aspect of the plan was a nation-wide consultation program that was to proceed along with it. <sup>10</sup> People would not be steamrolled into acceptance of this program of land reform, but rather, they would be educated into the reasons for it and would be consulted before implementation would occur (National Development Plan, 1976-81:79).

The rationale behind the TGLP was based primarily on four assumptions. Perhaps the fundamental assumption of the policy was that there were sufficient lands into which the large herd owners could move to alleviate the grazing pressure in the communal areas. The results of the land surveys, however, determined that these 'sufficient lands' were not in fact 'unused', but rather, they were occupied by both people and water sources. Land in Botswana was not as unoccupied as officials had thought when formulating the TGLP. The second

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<sup>10</sup>This was the Radio Learning Campaign. In addition, the government published 'simplified' educational manuals to describe key aspects of the policy to the poor and to assure them that their rights were not going to be eroded as a result of land reform. However, due to the fact that a large percentage of rural poor, especially the stockless people, did not have access to radios, lived remote from villages, and were illiterate, the effectiveness of this policy must be questioned.

assumption was that the exercise of land use planning would cater to the needs of the poor non-cattle owners by setting aside land for their exclusive use: the reserve areas. However, as there was less 'unused' land than had previously been calculated, allocations of reserve land tended to be neglected to enable larger blocs of commercial land to be set aside. A third assumption assumed that the rents collected from the commercial areas would be used to develop the communal and reserved areas. Generally, however, the rental payments proposed by Land Boards tended to be sub-economic and consequently were of little use for development purposes. Finally, it was assumed that individual land boards in each of the districts would impose stock limitations in the communal areas to relieve some of the pressure on the grazing land in these areas. An examination of various district zoning proposals, however, indicates that District Land Boards appear extremely reluctant to do this. Furthermore, the implementation of the TGLP was expected to halt the relatively open policy of granting permits for borehole drilling until the land within each district had been zoned into designated areas. In fact, the expansion of boreholes northward into the Kalahari by wealthy cattle owners continued relatively unabated (Hitchcock, 1978:155).

During the TGLP land zoning exercise, the land surface in Botswana was divided into the following areas: 12% of the land was zoned commercial, 30% communal, 1% forests, 17% game areas, 5% freehold farms (the Ghanzi and Tati regions), and finally,

25% of the surface area was designated as undecided (Sandford, 1980:4). From this breakdown, one factor is immediately apparent. None of the land area has been designated as reserved, and indeed, it is highly unlikely that any of the undecided bloc will be accorded this designation.

When close attention is paid to the socio-economic factors of Botswana's history such a radical departure from an elaborated policy should not be seen as abnormal. The pre-colonial, pre-capitalist Tswana society in Botswana was based on a tribute-paying peasantry that produced its own subsistence as well as a surplus which was handed over to the chief of a given region. The link between the two classes was cattle. Political and social control at this time therefore depended largely on the ownership of cattle. Large cattle owners (generally the chiefs) loaned out cattle to the non-owners to be herded and generally cared for.

During the colonial period several important changes occurred. <sup>11</sup> The ruling class position changed to a dependent

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<sup>11</sup>A detailed analysis of this is undertaken by Chirenje, 1978 who examines the adaptations the Ngwato tribe underwent to survive in a world that was rapidly being encroached by whites. He portrays Kgama (the Ngwato chief) as an astute man who balanced an array of political, economic, and social factors in an attempt to preserve the sovereignty of the Ngwato state. Like other chiefs he undertook a tightrope kind of diplomacy that leaned toward the British, who eventually declared the region a Protectorate, saving the Ngwato from a more rigid Boer controlled form of colonialism. A further analysis is provided by Maylam (1980) who examines the process of imperial expansion within the Protectorate. He stresses the role of key individuals in this imperial process, paying particular attention to Rhodes and Khama. Furthermore, some attempt is made to relate the growing incorporation of the Protectorate into the wider political-economy of Southern Africa.

one (governing class) as their powers were limited by external market conditions and internal control by the Protectorate administration (Parsons, 1977:134). Furthermore, within the lower class, class relations to the means of production changed. Crop failures and the requirements by the Protectorate government to pay various taxes led to a need for wage employment greater than the country itself could supply. Consequently, males were forced to seek wage labour in the South African mines to acquire the needed cash to pay taxes (Parsons, 1977:135-136). Mudzinganyama (1983) concludes that by 1940, as a result of the articulation between a pre-colonial society and a colonial capitalist state, Bechuanaland had been transformed into a labour reservoir for South Africa. The overall impact of colonial policies was to change what was originally a society based on the tributary system to one dependent on labour migration for its survival. <sup>12</sup>

Because of the nature of South Africa's migrant labour system, those who left Botswana to work in the mines were forced to maintain an agricultural base at home to continue to provide for the subsistence needs of their families. Despite this Tswana involvement in a wage economy the distribution of land within Botswana remained in the control of the chiefs as land could not

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<sup>12</sup>Further research should be directed into the relationship between labour migration and the British Protectorate administration. Furthermore, the extent of Basarwa involvement, both directly and indirectly, in this system needs to be more adequately addressed. See earlier for a summary of the limited available information.

be bought or sold. By retaining their control of access to both land and cattle, chiefs were able to maintain their traditional power in the political and social realms (Parson, 1981:240).

These class relations continued into the post-colonial era. It was, after all, an agrarian capitalist class and the educated bureaucratic elite that joined together to form the B.D.P., which was elected with wide support from the lower classes (Parson, 1981:241; Vengroff, 1977:104-107). It should not be surprising that this was the group that formed the basis of the now independent governing elite.

As outlined previously, after independence the national cattle herd expanded rapidly. For the early part of this period communal land tenure remained unchanged. The only way large herd owners (often powerful government officials) could get 'de facto' exclusive land use was to monopolize as many water source rights as possible, and therefore, it was in no one's interest to limit herd size.

Thus, the extension of water rights, their individualization, the expansion of the national herd, the intensification of grazing, particularly in already hard pressed communal areas, and, the fact that the situation was structured in a way which did not provide any incentives to do anything about it, and which reinforced the whole system, all had gone into a perceived crisis in the early 1970's (Parson, 1981:246).

Faced with chaotic conditions in its economically vital livestock industry, the central state apparatus of the country intervened to remedy the situation. In the long run its intervention was decisively in favour of the individualization of land tenure and use with the final result being the TGLP. As

Chambers and Feldman argued, the spread of capitalist relations in agriculture was inevitable, and correspondingly, a shift away from patron-client relations to those of employer-employee relations must be allowed to take place. Policies would have to be designed to ensure that as few of the former clients were displaced as possible (Chambers and Feldman, 1973).

#### The TGLP and the Basarwa

The TGLP was the policy designed to protect the interests of the clients in the new capitalist agricultural areas according to the government's policy of equal development for all citizens of Botswana. During the years following its implementation, however, several factors have militated against its effectiveness in reducing the socio-economic gap between the rich and poor in rural Botswana. Of primary concern to this thesis is the effect of this policy of land reform on the Basarwa population. Several detailed studies exist on the effect of the TGLP on the small cattle owners (see for example Sandford, 1980; Parson, 1981). Rather less emphasis, however, has been placed on the impact of the TGLP on hunter-gatherer populations throughout rural Botswana who, as citizens, are equally affected by the policy.

The White Paper is quite clear on how the stockholders who currently use someone else's water source in an area to be zoned 'commercial' will be compensated. However, due to an erroneous

assumption of the White Paper that non-stockholders live only in the communal areas, no attention has been paid as to how non-stockholders are to be compensated when an area they reside in is designated 'commercial'. Indeed, it appears as if the government response has been oriented towards a consideration of whether these people have any legal status that could be upheld in a court of law rather than with concern, at a policy level, regarding the future status of these people within the commercial areas (Sandford, 1980:9). It has been suggested (Sandford, 1980:25), that the legal status of the Basarwa is complex and obscure. It is not possible to predict what would be the outcome of a court's decision if the Basarwa, as a group, challenged their removal from lands they had occupied for centuries.

The framework of the TGLP makes the existence of stockless people problematic, especially in the commercial areas. Three important consequences can be pointed to: (i) What will be the consequences to their social institutions if these people are evicted in large numbers? (ii) What will be the consequences for the new commercial ranchers if there is a section of the population who feel they have been unjustly deprived of their access to land? (iii) How will these people be able to feed themselves in the future?

Faced with such urgent questions, the government acted to employ consultants (R. Hitchcock and S. Sandford) to explore the problem and find some solutions. Both authors stressed the

importance of not allowing the commercial ranchers to evict stockless people from these areas. The government, they continued, should strongly support all efforts by District Land Boards to stop or at least slow this process down. Continuing in this direction, Hitchcock recommended that Basarwa living on the leased ranches be able to continue their foraging economy providing a verbal report of these activities was given to the lease holder at a pre-determined interval (Hitchcock, 1978:424). Both consultants also recommended that areas be set aside within the commercial zones that could serve as service centers and as areas where people could move who wished to leave the ranches. These areas would have a permanent water source, land for arable and small-scale livestock production, a health post, school, and other administrative infrastructure. These Community Service Centers, as they were called, fitted in well with the Government's overall Rural Development Policy by providing social services to the remote rural poor; accordingly, this proposal was adopted. Furthermore, each consultant recommended that an area of land be set aside for Basarwa exclusive use; each, however, campaigned for this on a slightly different level.

Hitchcock was unequivocal about this point. Hunters and gatherers, he argued, should have adequate territory within each district set aside for their sole use whereby they would be able to continue to subsist in their traditional ways protected from the expansion of the livestock economy (Hitchcock, 1978:426).



While supporting, in principle, the idea of regions reserved for hunter-gatherers, Sandford argued

. . . the stockless people need to have reserved for them and to be specifically allocated their own land inside the commercial area, in sufficient quantities to support their population under a technology which is enviromentally suitable for them and to which they can adapt within say, 5-10 years (Sandford, 1980:27; emphasis added).

Again, the lack of recognition of the foraging mode of subsistence as being a viable land use is evident. Sandfords's proposal aligned with government development strategy for the Basarwa and appears to be the direction the government was leaning in outlining policies for the National Development Plan, 1976-81.

Throughout the TGLP development planning exercise, the emphasis was on increasing the national cattle herd; cattle production was seen to be the essential livelihood of the rural areas. Government policy formulation reflects this: an increase in cattle production under a program of socio-economic equality should ultimately act to dissolve many of the barriers to rural development. For the Basarwa, however, socio-economic equality with the dominant Tswana has historically been unattainable; the TGLP has done and will do nothing to change the established Tswana-Basarwa dominance hierarchy. However, neither from the point of view of social justice, nor from that of the security of the commercial ranchers could the government afford the existence of an impoverished and embittered minority. It must be stressed that the TGLP has not caused the 'Basarwa problem'. The

'Basarwa problem', as outlined, is the product of the long historical relationship between ethnic groups in the country. However, by intervening actively in reforming land tenure throughout Botswana, the government has dumped the 'Basarwa problem' firmly in its own lap and is now obligated to find a solution.

## V. The 'Basarwa Problem': Politics and Bureaucrats

As demonstrated, in the last chapter, the 'Basarwa problem' had become one of many problems that the government was faced with when designing policies for rural development. What was unusual about the situation of the Basarwa, however, was the manner in which the government reacted toward it in light of its stated intention of not allowing preferential treatment for any racial group within the country. By establishing a separate department to deal with the 'Basarwa problem', the government contradicted one of its stated principles. This chapter, therefore, will endeavour to trace the role of this newly created department in addressing the 'Basarwa problem' and the uses made by the department administrator of this paradox to achieve her own aims on behalf of the Basarwa population.

Before beginning discussion on these issues, it should be stressed that the evidence available was limited. It was not possible to obtain the Ministry documents relating to the actions of the Basarwa Development Programme, necessitating a reliance on published documents, by the coordinator of the programme, which provided an overview of the actions of the department from its inception until 1978. Information contained in the National Development Plans was used to check these sources whenever possible; however, to a large extent such verification was limited. While I have no reason to doubt the

accuracy of the information in the sources available, I recognize that what has been deleted could be equally as important as what has been described. For these reasons, the chapter can perhaps more usefully point to areas of concern rather than provide definitive answers. Definitive answers, it would appear, must await further research in the Botswana archives in Gaborone.

Throughout the early 1970's, pressure began to increase on the government to do something about the 'Basarwa problem'. Liberal western-trained Batswana elites, anthropologists, missionaries, and expatriate civil servants began to view the Basarwa as being in a somewhat analogous position to other small indigenous minority groups throughout the world. It became a sign of modernization for the country to acknowledge the existence of this minority and to make some special provisions for their needs (Lee, 1979:424-425).

Accordingly, in 1974 an officer was appointed to fill a full-time position within the Ministry of Local Government and Lands to represent the government on all matters related to the Basarwa. <sup>1</sup> This office expanded in both size and responsibility

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<sup>1</sup>Liz Wily, the initial appointee, filled the position of Coordinator of the Bushmen Development Programme from its inception in 1974 to 1978. It should be pointed out that the ambitions and integrity of Liz Wily with regard to the Basarwa have been questioned most notably by Heinz (Heinz and Lee, 1979:250-263). While I am aware of these comments against Wily's character, the thesis does not intend to pass judgement on the coordinator's actions. Rather, an attempt is made to examine the method by which the coordinator obtained concessions on behalf on the Basarwa.

during the succeeding years and was given an official title, Basarwa Development, in the 1976-81 National Development Plan. Following the government's stated intention of seeing social justice and equality carried out among all members of the population, the Programme operated under the following mandate.

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The government is committed to raise the standard of living of the poorest sections of the population which have not benefited, due to cultural, social and geographical obstacles, from the ongoing economic development. Basarwa are one of them. In many areas their situation is one of impoverishment combined with dependence on other better off social groups. In 1975 the government launched a comprehensive Basarwa development programme which covered survey of their situation, educational aspects, handicraft and marketing development and assistance for settlement schemes including provision of water and agricultural development (National Development Plan, 1976-81:325-326).

Prior to the emergence of the TGLP, the Basarwa Development Programme was predominantly concerned with settlement schemes for the Basarwa. The Basarwa Development Programme sought to encourage groups of Basarwa to make applications to sink boreholes, since the ownership of boreholes provided a legitimate means to acquire 'de facto' land rights.

In Botswana, Basarwa generally lived remote from the village situation where every Tswana had, during at least part of the year, his base. Water had traditionally been the key ecological constraint dictating the movements of Basarwa groups. Because of this, it was fairly natural that Basarwa would

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<sup>2</sup>This was Project LG 32 which had a projected budget of P890,000 over the 1976-81 budget period.

gravitate toward a source of permanent water. The initial settlement schemes, therefore, <sup>3</sup> aimed at providing Basarwa groups with water that they could 'own'.

Paradoxically, the real if not widely publicised aim of the Settlement Schemes, was to ensure that the option for these San to continue hunting and gathering, to retain their traditional social organization . . . remained indefinitely open, and the choice in their own hands (Wily, 1979:3).

These settlements were intended to be provided to groups who had retained the ability to survive by traditional hunting and gathering techniques. This, of course, was the Programme's intention, not official government policy which wanted all Basarwa groups 'settled down'.

Obviously, there is a striking anomaly in the intentions of the Programme and the stated government policy in regard to the Basarwa. Government administrators wanted the Basarwa settled down and 'civilized'; the Programme was amenable to helping Basarwa to settle down but it had little intention of altering their foraging lifestyle. This is the first indication that the Programme intended to pursue a strategy of its own in regard to Basarwa rather than simply following government policy.

However, the ecological constraints of the region and the small size of hunting and gathering groups led to financial problems: boreholes were expensive and the government was not prepared to provide the capital to groups with small water needs

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<sup>3</sup>These were in the Ghanzi District where approximately 5,000 Basarwa had been displaced due to the practice of granting exclusive tenure in the form of the Freehold Farms.

in ecologically marginal areas. Despite this, several borehole rights were eventually granted to Basarwa groups in the Ghanzi, Ngamiland, and Kgalagadi Districts (Wily, 1979:25-27).

With the introduction of the TGLP in 1975, however, even the considerable financial problems of the settlement schemes became secondary as the Basarwa Coordinator contemplated the effects of this wide ranging policy. To begin, from the point of view of the Basarwa Development Programme, the whole rationale behind the settlement schemes had become redundant. As a result of the TGLP, a borehole freeze had been implemented--an inconvenience to the cattleowners but a major disaster to the policy direction of the Basarwa Programme.

Prior to the implementation of the TGLP, the official and unofficial attitude toward the Basarwa was a very paternalistic one; to a large extent, this attitude was a holdover of the early image the dominant society had developed of the Basarwa during the initial contact period. Prior to the TGLP, the prevailing attitude toward the 'Basarwa problem' can be summed up simply. If the Basarwa could be removed from their remote regions and nomadic way of life and brought to the village centers they could be 'civilized' and the Basarwa 'problem' would correspondingly disappear. Despite attitudes such as these, prior to the TGLP officials tended to support the Basarwa Development Programme's initiatives in attempting to acquire 'de facto' land rights for the Basarwa. The Basarwa settlement schemes were on a small enough scale to pose little threat to

the large herd owners. Consequently, official policy makers viewed the attempt as being in the right direction; after all, the Basarwa were going to be settled down.

### The TGLP: Impact and Assessment

With the implementation of the TGLP, however, it should not be surprising that these two programmes, disparate in both size and political backing, should come into conflict. The two programs were concerned with different sections of society; the TGLP, despite rhetoric to the contrary, catered to the demands of the large wealthy and politically powerful cattle owners while the Basarwa Development Programme catered to the landless and increasingly exploited hunter-gatherers. With the announcement of the White Paper directives, the inherent conflict of interest between these two groups crystallized over each group's predominant interest in land.

Despite this, the determination to see the Basarwa gain a legally recognized access to land remained the major intention of the Basarwa Development Programme (Wily, 1981:15). The Coordinator of the Programme circulated a policy to act as a guideline for programme workers to follow. On a policy level, it would not be the intention of the Programme to seek compensation for those lands already lost or for those on which there were already conflicting claims. The Programme would direct its efforts to those areas where Basarwa were still the sole



occupants (Wily, 1981:15). As a result, the early focus of the programme was centered on the western region of the country. <sup>4</sup>

Throughout this time period (post TGLP), it was the intention of the programme to take a low profile on the issue of land claims for Basarwa citizens. This was due largely to the fact that Botswana's official policy was to break down what it saw as destructive tribal distinctions. Furthermore, the programme wanted to avoid comparison to South Africa whose "separate development" policy was abhorred by the Botswana government and the world at large. A reservation policy for the Basarwa, therefore, could not be considered in the political climate of Botswana as it had been in 19th-century Canada and the United States.

Because of this, the Basarwa Development Programme, while still retaining the goal of acquiring land for Basarwa, had to work within the country's dominant political ideology to achieve

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<sup>4</sup>At this time (1975), the Basarwa Development Coordinator, along with everyone else, was ignorant of the large population of Basarwa people who, despite the long period of contact and resultant dependency, had retained ties to the traditional foraging mode of subsistence in the eastern part of the country. The coordinator cannot be faulted for this oversight; at this early stage in the programme's history, this information was not available due it would seem to the theoretically and geographically limited anthropological data that had been published. It was on the initiative of the program and the government of Botswana that Basarwa researchers were redirected to areas where data were urgently needed on the Basarwa population. The Dobe area, for example, was not closed to researchers for the vindictive reasons suggested by Lee (1979:427), but rather, because an abundance of data were available on the Basarwa population of this region while other regions where equally large populations of hunter-gatherers lived had been neglected (Wily, 1981: 24-25).

its own aims. As an initial strategy, for example, the Programme began to lobby for the Basarwa to be allowed to hunt as a commercial activity. In the 1960's measures had been introduced to limit the hunting season and to allow only those people with valid hunting permits to hunt in the tribal areas. The aim was to prevent the wide-scale slaughter of wildlife that had occurred in other parts of Africa. The Basarwa were exempt from these regulations as long as they did not use modern weapons or sell any of the products derived from hunting, including meat. Unfortunately, the regulations were unclear as to whether this included Basarwa living in the Game Reserves as well. This uncertainty led to a great deal of animosity between the Department of Wildlife agents and Basarwa over what the Department interpreted as 'illegal' subsistence hunting by Basarwa in the Game Reserves (Hitchcock, 1978:264).

In general, by 1975, the Department of Wildlife was moving away from its earlier preservationist orientation and was beginning to promote hunting as a viable economic activity. In large part this was due to the Department's awakening to the new reality of land tenure in Botswana as a result of the TGLP. Officials within the Department had become aware of the fact that unless economic justification was given for the continuation of wildlife areas, these areas themselves could become threatened by the commercialization of the agricultural industry and the resultant expansion of cattle herds. With the withering away of the wildlife areas, the officials in this

department would find their jobs withering away as well.

Accordingly, the Basarwa Development Programme and the Department of Wildlife began to work together to get areas of land reserved under a specialized land use category: the Wildlife Management Areas (National Development Plan, 1976-81:208). These were to be areas of land where cattle grazing would be subsidiary to wildlife, and no new human settlement would be allowed. They were to be located in areas, outside the established National Parks and Game Reserves, which were critical to the wildlife populations in the country but largely marginal to agricultural activities. Basarwa citizens residing in these regions would be encouraged to turn their traditional subsistence hunting into a profitable economic pursuit.

The government acted on these recommendations by setting up the Wildlife Management Areas and making extensive changes to the hunting regulations (National Development Plan, 1976-81:210). Under the new regulations, citizens who had depended on hunting traditionally and lacked access to other subsistence sources would be allowed to hunt freely under a subsistence licence. Furthermore, these subsistence hunters would also receive assistance in the processing and marketing of animal products. The assistance would be valid for 12 months and would provide for an average of 1200 kilograms of meat; this amount was considerably above the average yearly intake of traditional subsistence hunters. Again, this action is

consistent with government development policy with regard to the 'Basarwa problem'. Government officials agreed to this proposal primarily because they saw it as a further means of integrating the Basarwa into the cash economy of the rural regions.

It is important to note, however, that the government was very careful to sidestep the issue of Basarwa land rights. These areas were designated to ensure the future of wildlife in Botswana--not to grant the Basarwa exclusive access to land. The Government rationale for allowing the Basarwa the right to hunt and sell the resultant animal products derived not from a policy position on Basarwa land rights but rather from a capitalist, profit oriented position. The Government argued that the citizens in these areas depended on the tanning of hides and other related activities. Accordingly, by providing assistance to Basarwa hunters, the government intended to exploit the tourist potential of these goods as one means to help alleviate the 'Basarwa problem'.

The presence of wildlife forms a basis for the development of tourism in remote rural areas, providing much needed employment and, in some instances an economic basis for improving the infrastructure (National Development Plan 1973-78:63).

Government emphasis was accordingly centered on tourist development in these areas with provisions for subsistence hunting as a sideline to this activity. Apparently the government hoped the inflow of tourists would provide subsistence hunters with the needed cash to enable them to successfully integrate into the dominant 'civilized' society.

It must be stressed that the government is acting consistently here to address the issue of the 'Basarwa problem'. By acting to manipulate the public impression of Basarwa, the government is able to pose socially accepted solutions to its 'Basarwa problem'. That the solutions offered address the symptoms of the problem rather than the conditions that have given rise to it are irrelevant; by acting as it does, the government is able to create the impression that a socially just policy is being proposed to address the 'Basarwa problem'. To a government committed to a policy of social justice for all members of the rural population, such an impression is politically crucial. Nevertheless, the Basarwa Development Programme had won a victory of sorts: these land areas were to be isolated from cattle expansion which was the major factor destructive to Basarwa social institutions.

Clearly, similar to the large majority of other countries in the world with indigenous foraging populations, Botswana did not recognize hunting and gathering as a viable form of land use. Indeed, not only did the government refuse to recognize that hunting and gathering was a viable land use but due to this non-recognition they consistently developed policies that attacked the wrong end of the 'Basarwa problem': access to social services was to be provided for, but the fundamental access to land necessary for Basarwa socio-economic advancement was ignored.

At this point, it is necessary to consider whether hunting and gathering could be a viable form of land use in a production/profit oriented society with a rapidly expanding population. We need to consider whether the welfare of the majority would be reduced in an effort to protect the extensive land use of a minority.

If Botswana's goal is to be sustained development and self sufficiency in food production, then it would be legitimate to suggest that such groups that are presently self-sufficient be allowed to remain that way. Efforts aimed at assimilating hunter-gatherers by forcing them out of their present areas or settling them down will not only disrupt their social systems but it will also force them into dependency relationships as their traditional foraging economy will no longer be viable.

Hitchcock (1978:259) has suggested that foraging groups need approximately 1,000 square kilometers in which to pursue foraging. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Hitchcock does not state what group size this figure is applicable to; however, in a more recent article he gives some figures for range size, population size, and population density for a sample of Kalahari hunter-gatherer groups (Hitchcock, 1982:249). Using these figures, an average density of 6.3 persons per 100 sq/km can be determined; however, range sizes vary considerably from group to group. Assuming for a moment that there are, in fact, 6000 "traditional" foragers in Botswana, the government would need to set aside approximately 95,000 sq/km for these groups.

Obviously, the question is academic. Likely, few if any full-time foragers exist at present in Botswana as all foragers at some time or another pursue other economic activities. Furthermore, the variability of forager population densities throughout the country make such calculations relatively useless. However, a figure such as this, while academic, does raise the extremely important issue of whether a country like Botswana, with a large and growing rural population can afford

While this sounds like a lot of land to grant to a minority group, it has been suggested that the exclusion of hunter-gatherers from large areas of the country and the resultant re-settlement of these people into smaller areas where they cannot support themselves is not in Botswana's interest (Hitchcock, 1978:260).

Clearly there are areas in any given district where cattle production is limited due to the nature of the region's water resources. Such areas could perhaps be more usefully exploited by foragers. However, this is an issue that has been poorly addressed by various consultants and anthropologists to date. Due to the country's present emphasis on land tenure as a result of the TGLP, this is an issue of considerable importance to the Basarwa. While it can be suggested that hunting and gathering is an optimum form of land use in some areas of Botswana, further research is needed to substantiate this contention.

Despite the lack of conclusive evidence regarding this issue, the Basarwa Programme began a campaign to convince administrators and politicians that (i) hunting and gathering was a viable land use and its lack of impact on the land should be seen as an optimal use in the more marginal regions of the Kalahari, (ii) the Basarwa needed land like any other rural citizen, and (iii) the Basarwa, as citizens, have a right to land (Wily, 1981:17). Furthermore, it became increasingly

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<sup>5</sup>(cont'd) to be "just" to a small minority on the issue of land. This is an issue that rarely seems to be confronted in the anthropological literature concerning foragers.

apparent that the Programme intended to make political mileage out of the White Paper statement on social justice.

It is the Government's national policy to see that every rural citizen has enough land for himself and his family to live off (National Policy on Tribal Grazing Lands, 1975:para. 14).

As a result of this stated policy, the administrator began to lobby the government on the issue of land tenure. She argued that such concessions would merely extend to 'poor backward citizens' the knowledge of procedures and basic rights that were already available and utilized by the more 'advanced' citizens of the country.

Under this principle, the Basarwa Development Programme sought to use the TGLP as a catalyst to spur the politicization of Basarwa citizens themselves and the effectiveness of the Basarwa lobby. District councils were pressured to consider their need for Basarwa officers, who were eventually appointed in late 1976 (Wily, 1981:15-16). Once appointed, applications began to be made by the Basarwa liaison officers on behalf of the region's Basarwa citizens outlining a detailed land use plan for the reserved areas of each district. <sup>6</sup>

After receiving these briefs on land use, respective Land Boards informed the Basarwa Programme that Basarwa land needs could and would be met in the communal areas where, according to the TGLP directives, no exclusive rights to land would be issued (Wily, 1981:27). It appears that this was a classic 'Catch 22'

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<sup>6</sup>The first of these was drawn up for the Ngamiland District.



situation--Basarwa could not have land reserved against cattle use because they were Basarwa, and hence such land could, therefore, be interpreted as reservations with the resultant (South African style) derogatory image. However, neither could Basarwa citizens obtain exclusive rights to land because hunting and gathering was not recognized as a land use.

### The Radio Learning Campaign

As a result of the Radio Learning campaign, two things became apparent. First, the idea put forward in the White Paper that compulsory stock limitations would be imposed on individuals and/or groups in the communal areas had effectively been abandoned by the land boards in the face of the total opposition revealed during the consultation process (Sandford, 1980:10). Obviously, increasing herd concentrations could only adversely affect the socio-economic conditions of the Basarwa living in these areas. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, the TGLP adversely affected the socio-economic conditions of Basarwa in the communal as well as the commercial areas.

The second and more important feature of the Campaign demonstrated explicitly the government's unconcern with the TGLP's effect on the poorer citizens of the country. Officials consistently neglected to answer questions as to how the TGLP

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<sup>7</sup>For a description of the reasons for this occurrence, see Chapter III.

would benefit those citizens without cattle as it should according to the emphasis on social justice in the policy's guidelines. Officials took the line that the campaign could only answer questions directly related to the policy; since the TGLP did not mention stockless people, questions directed to this issue could not appropriately be addressed (Sandford, 1980:10-11).<sup>8</sup> The Basarwa Development Programme became concerned that policy statements or commitments regarding the Basarwa appeared increasingly to be diluted platitudes. In September 1976, the Coordinator demanded that the Government produce a statement at a political level dealing with the Basarwa issue. While still striving to keep a low profile to achieve the programme's desired end, it was argued that

The problem could easily be 'ignored', as indeed most other countries who have indigenous minorities have done. But this would be foolish in that Botswana . . . has the unique opportunity not to ignore the problem. By comprehensive and socially just planning now Botswana may avoid costly problems later (Wily, 1981:32).

This tactic, however, had little impact as questions on Basarwa land rights remained virtually a non-issue.

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<sup>8</sup>It should be noted that Basarwa, especially in the Ghanzi District, responded to this campaign in significant numbers and directed their questions to the above issue (Sandford, 1980:10-11; Wily, 1981:30-31). There can be little doubt that the liaison officers working in the district were managing to sensitize Basarwa to the effects of this radical policy of land reform, and Basarwa were beginning to respond.

## Crisis and Bureaucratic Expansion

Basarwa 'land rights' should not be confused with the 'Basarwa problem'. While in the eyes of the Basarwa lobby they were one and the same, the Botswana Government saw things slightly differently. While fully prepared to accept its responsibility to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Basarwa, the government, at this time, was not about to do this by granting exclusive land rights. The government position was consistent: Basarwa were to be provided with the opportunity to achieve socio-economic equality with other citizens. Socio-economic equality, however, was to be achieved by assimilation; Basarwa were to be assisted in becoming agriculturalists and small herd owners. Assistance was not going to be granted to those wanting to remain hunter-gatherers, although such assistance was one aim of the Basarwa Development Programme.

Despite this position, Basarwa land rights came to the forefront when the first zoning plan was brought forward by the Central District in November 1976 (Wily, 1981:33). As a consequence of this, the essential contradiction between economic development and social justice inherent within the TGLP was to be tested for the first time.

The District Officer (Lands) presented the overall preliminary zoning of the area to the government. The entire Central District was divided into three categories according to

the policy guidelines: commercial, communal, and reserved areas. The communal area dominated the district which contained approximately one-third of the country's population. No land was set aside as reserved; however, an extensive tract of land to the west of Serowe was zoned as a commercial area (Wily, 1981:34). This area contained considerable numbers of Basarwa dependent on hunting and gathering, <sup>9</sup> but the District Officer considered this fact unimportant and stressed the need for the ranch allocations to proceed immediately. He argued that the borehole freeze in other areas could only be maintained if the population at large saw evidence that ranches were actually going to be allocated under the guidelines proposed by the TGLP (Wily, 1981:35).

An extensive campaign by the Basarwa Development Programme was able to halt this allocation process until additional information was obtained about the land use patterns of Basarwa citizens in the newly designated commercial areas within the Central District. As a result of the lobby, the Government decided that the areas zoned commercial in the proposal would remain so designated; however, they would not be developed until further investigations had been carried out. These investigations were to include a detailed demographic survey of the region along with the land use pattern of each group

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<sup>9</sup>See Hitchcock (1978:227-273) for further details. These were not "traditional" foragers, but rather, foragers who continued to hunt and gather in addition to pursuing other economic activities.

residing in the region (Wily, 1981:36-39). <sup>10</sup>

### The Bureaucracy

During the policy formulation stage of the TGLP, the newly created office of the Basarwa Development Coordinator within the Ministry of Local Government and Lands was not consulted. It appears plausible to suggest that this omission was largely due to the dominant image held by government officials and expatriates about hunter-gatherers. Hunting and gathering was not regarded as a viable land use; hence why consult the Coordinator about an issue of little concern to her mandate? Under the development ideals of the time, all efforts to deal with the 'Basarwa problem' were aimed at 'civilizing' the Basarwa and integrating them into the dominant economy of the country. Administrators felt, at the time the TGLP policy was drawn up, that the small herd owners had been adequately safeguarded by the proposed policy of land reform; ideally, if development programs aimed at alleviating the Basarwa's socio-economic conditions were working, the Basarwa would be joining the category of small herd owners.

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<sup>10</sup>Since independence, it had been Government policy not to allow a census to designate the tribal background of any citizen. The 'Basarwa problem' had at this stage, however, become increasingly difficult for the government to deal with; the answer was to acquire more information about this specific segment of the population.

Increasingly, however, it was becoming apparent that the TGLP was to have a major effect on the socio-economic condition of the Basarwa, unforeseen by TGLP policy makers. Furthermore, the Government was becoming aware that the 'Basarwa problem' was not being alleviated as a result of the policies designed to address this issue. Increasingly, more Basarwa were becoming dependent and destitute (Hitchcock, 1978:272-273). At the same time as the implementation of the TGLP was proceeding, the Government's stated commitment to social justice for all citizens forced it to pay increasing attention to the lobby on behalf of Basarwa citizens. At the time of the Central District's land zoning proposal, however, the Basarwa Development Programme had no administrative function within the TGLP infrastructure despite the latter's negative effect on the Basarwa.

The presentation of the Central District's zoning proposal was made to the newly created Land Development Committee (LDC). This interministerial committee was based in the Ministry of Local Government and Lands which was the chief executor of the TGLP. Increasingly, as Land Boards began to bring forward zoning plans, the LDC began to take over the functions of the TGLP coordinating committee located in the Ministry of Finance. Their function was to evaluate Land Use plans from respective Districts and submit them with their recommendations to Cabinet, which had the ultimate power of approval (Wily, 1981:35).

The Central District zoning crisis had the effect of bringing the Basarwa Development Programme into the mainstream of the Land Policy implementation process. The Basarwa Development Coordinator was made a member of the Land Development Committee and personnel in the Programme were made members of the respective Land Use Planning Advisory Groups which advised the Land Boards in the respective districts throughout the country (Wily, 1981:42). Historically, as demonstrated, during both the pre- and post-independence eras, Basarwa had been effectively excluded from the policy formulation process that fundamentally affected their lives. The Basarwa were not consulted because they lacked an organized method to articulate their views to the government in a forceful manner. Consistent state intervention, at a policy level, to effect a solution to the 'Basarwa problem', however, had acted to increase the bureaucracy needed to administer the 'Basarwa problem'. As a result, the Basarwa Development Programme has become increasingly integrated into the national bureaucratic structure since its inception, for the government constantly needed its advice to effect solutions to the 'Basarwa problem'. Due to this, the government acted, perhaps inadvertently, to further the effectiveness of the Basarwa lobby by constantly increasing its access to information at a policy level before these policies were implemented.

As a result of this process, further changes were to occur in the government administration of the 'Basarwa problem'. As

outlined previously, prior to the 1976-81 National Development Plan, the Basarwa had been referred to as 'Bushmen'; however, with the increased integration of the Basarwa Development Programme into the mainstream of bureaucracy within the country, the 'Bushmen' as they had formerly been called were now assigned the non-derogatory designation: Basarwa. <sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, at the end of 1977, the Basarwa Development Programme was expanded to cater, not only to Basarwa citizens, but to all remote rural poor. Accordingly, the name of the Programme was changed to the Remote Area Development Programme with a mandate to help raise the standard of living of those non-water-right holders in the country. This was an obvious political manoeuvre on the Government's part; in actual numbers, little had changed as the Basarwa constituted a significant and growing majority of these designated citizens (at least two-thirds) (Wily, 1981:43). However, by this manoeuvre, the Government was able to subvert criticism that it was catering to a racially distinct segment of its population and thereby contradicting its national principles.

While the Districts were pursuing their investigations there was considerable internal conflict within the Central Government over how the Basarwa land rights should be accounted for within the guidelines of the TGLP (Wily, 1981:60-61).

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<sup>11</sup>Previous to this, the Basarwa Development Programme had been called the Bushmen Development Programme. For consistency, I have chosen to use the term Basarwa to describe the Programme throughout.



Ministries themselves had become internally split over the issue with the split following the inherent contradiction of the TGLP itself: should the government proceed with its intention of providing the groundwork for immediate economic growth at the cost of an increase in inequality, or should it recognize its obligation for social justice which the TGLP was also meant to provide. Probably, it did not help matters that the Batswana administrators involved in the decision making process were generally cattle owners themselves while their expatriate counterparts had no personal stake in the issue (Wily, 1981:61).

By mid 1977, therefore, administrators concerned with the TGLP were aware of the issue of Basarwa rights versus land enclosure. <sup>12</sup> Because of the internal split within the Ministries concerned, administrators were content to wait until the demographic surveys had been completed before taking action on the issue. It appeared officials, including those of the Basarwa Development Programme, were convinced that if enough information were obtained a solution to the 'Basarwa problem' could be found in an equitable manner for all concerned. The Coordinator later wrote,

. . . if a Land Board, the Ministry, or Cabinet could be presented with a detailed Land Use Plan of a Commercial Area which allowed a significant number of cattlemen to enclose their cattleposts, and yet allowed any vacant

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<sup>12</sup>Possibly, at the back of people's minds was the evidence of what enclosure had done to the socio-economic conditions of the Basarwa on the Ghanzi Farms. For an excellent account of this process see Guenther (1973).

land in the Area to be allocated to the area's resident San, they would probably approve the plan (Wily, 1981:60).

There can be little doubt that all of the various levels of administration involved in the TGLP were reluctant to perceive the conflict as fundamentally political in nature requiring a solution at the Cabinet level.

The indecisiveness of the Ministry of Local Government and Lands during this period led to a strengthening of the Districts' activities in the land use planning exercise. Throughout this period, while the debate continued within this Ministry and the LDC about the 'Basarwa problem', the Districts waited for direction from the Cabinet which never came (Wily, 1981:66). As difficult questions originated in the Districts toward the end of 1977, the LDC increasingly threw the problems back to the respective Land Boards to handle themselves. It was becoming apparent to the LDC that it was much simpler administratively to do this than to seek a directive from the Cabinet (Wily, 1981:67).

As a result, the District Land Use Planners began to complain about a lack of leadership from the Ministry and especially from the LDC. Consequently, early in 1978, the Districts began to ignore advice originating from the LDC and the Ministry as it was often contradictory in nature (Wily, 1981:67). Finally, the Cabinet took a hand in the issue by informing the Land Boards that they were the ultimate authority on land matters; the TGLP White Paper was meant as a guideline on which their decisions should be based (Wily, 1981:68).

Throughout this time period, therefore, the Ministry moved perceptibly from supervisory to advisory activities. This change became official in the 1979-85 National Development Plan when each District submitted their own Development Plans to the Central Government (ibid:68-69).

It appears fairly obvious why the government went to such extreme lengths to disassociate itself from making a political decision on Basarwa land rights. The Government had committed itself to the TGLP, and hence its re-election hinged on maintaining not only the support of the wealthy cattle owners but also, and much more importantly, the support of the rural population to whom social justice was a vitally important aspect of the TGLP. The B.D.P. had won all the previous elections handily by managing to satisfy both groups; however, Botswana was committed to democracy: previous victories were no assurance of a victory in a coming election.

Throughout this process, the Basarwa Development Programme, in an attempt to diffuse the issue of Basarwa land rights, took the tactic that the Basarwa should be regarded as citizens and not as hunter-gatherers. As such, therefore, they had rights, as citizens, that politicians and civil servants should adhere to. As a result of this stand, in 1978, the Ministry of Local Government and Lands issued a directive stating that

on no account is any Land Board to use the race of any applicants as a factor in evaluating applications they might receive from such tribesmen and citizens (Wily, 1981:47).

For the first time, the Basarwa had officially been granted the

status of tribesmen in each of the respective districts; as such, they now had an undeniable legal right to land.<sup>13</sup> However, while Ministry officials recognized this right, it remained to be seen whether the newly autonomous District Land Boards would recognize it as well. After all, the Land Boards were meant to use the TGLP as a guideline on which to base their decisions, and the TGLP certainly did not afford the Basarwa the status of tribesmen.

### Basarwa Politicization: Programme Goals and Aspirations

The Basarwa Development Programme, acting on behalf of Basarwa, sought to manipulate government stated policies on rural development to achieve its own ends. Unlike other indigenous minorities in Canada, Australia, and Norway, for example, who have manipulated public and official sympathy to pressure governments indirectly to grant them concessions, the Basarwa Development Programme did not have this option open to them for two reasons. Firstly, the Basarwa Development Programme is part of the government bureaucracy itself and therefore must lobby internally. Overt political lobbying would have been punished by the government; this fact was recognized by the

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<sup>13</sup>This status has since undergone considerable legal debate with the Attorney-General issuing a statement to the effect that Basarwa could have acquired rights of residence (ie. the status of tribesmen) if they had resided in a region for 30 years (Wily, 1981:65). Considering the limited and permanent nature of Basarwa territoriality (Hitchcock, 1978:234-237), this was not an insignificant concession.

Coordinator (Wily, 1981:14). Secondly, the government had openly declared that the Batswana people do not feel they owe the Basarwa anything despite the recognition that Basarwa groups have suffered greatly from cattle expansion and the resultant loss of their lands (Wily, 1981:76).

Similar to what Weaver has suggested (Weaver, 1981:7-8), the Basarwa Development Programme has consistently acted as an "issue oriented pressure group" to lobby the government from within to grant concessions on the issue of Basarwa land rights. From the programme's inception in 1974, with the policy of obtaining Basarwa land rights through the policy of borehole drilling, the Programme has pursued this tactic. Rather than manipulating public sympathies, as some other indigenous minorities have been able to do, the Basarwa Development Programme acting on behalf of Basarwa has attempted to manipulate the inherent contradictions in the Government's rural development proposals to achieve its own ends. This was especially the case with the Tribal Grazing Land Policy. Basarwa land rights came of age in Botswana largely because of the Government's strong and publicly advocated desire to achieve social justice. With the implementation of the 1976-81 National Development Plan, government policies of rural development were centered on the wide ranging changes to traditional land tenure within the country.

Hence the government was forced to go to considerable lengths to project the image that the TGLP, when implemented,

would safeguard the rights of the rural poor in regard to land tenure. The commercialization of the livestock industry, under the policy guidelines of the TGLP, was to provide the government with the needed funds to finance the specialized policies of rural development designed to alleviate the depressed socio-economic conditions of the rural poor. Rural development in Botswana, therefore, hinged on the successful implementation of the TGLP. Furthermore, because the implementation of the policies of rural development were largely dependent on external financing and expertise, the government needed to maintain the thrust of social justice and equality inherent in the TGLP to continue to attract foreign aid. <sup>14</sup> As Sandford (1980:25) has

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<sup>14</sup>Dependent as it was on foreign aid to finance rural development, Botswana went to considerable lengths to project this image. As a result, Botswana has been one of the more successful African countries in attracting foreign aid. Such aid is essential to support the capital intensive industries throughout the country. Jones has suggested that Botswana has tended to benefit from aid windfalls: money that was allocated to other countries that could not be spent by them (1977:28). Botswana is an attractive country for aid donors. It is regarded as economically solid due to its large mineral deposits and hence there is little chance of the country defaulting on payments. Furthermore, Botswana is attractive politically, being one of the few multi-party democracies in Africa, and the government can be seen to be getting on with the job of development efficiently and without scandals (Jones, 1977:114). Obviously, such an image is of considerable utility to Botswana in the international game of attracting aid. The relationship between foreign aid and development within Botswana is a complex topic that deserves further attention. Leys, for example, has argued that aid policies are designed that fail to understand Botswana's dependence economically on South Africa (Leys, 1978:46-48). As a consequence, there is little indication that aid will bring any economic benefits to the large majority of the rural population. In fact, due to the wealth disparities in the country, there is a considerable problem in making aid programs of a largely technocratic nature contribute to rural economic growth (Freeman, 1978; Leys, 1978).

suggested, the government could ill-afford a dissatisfied minority group who could act, by various means, constantly to threaten the implementation of this policy of land reform. Despite the group's small size, the government realized the group's dissatisfaction could spread to the large mass of the rural population who had little to gain by the TGLP as well.

In such a situation, therefore, it was politically expedient to grant some concessions to Basarwa on the issue of land. By formulating a policy of extensive land reform under a platform of achieving economic development and social justice, the government was forced to grant the minority Basarwa the right, as citizens, to land tenure. As a result of this action, the Basarwa Development Programme acted to manipulate the official rhetoric regarding the Basarwa's newly defined status as citizens to achieve its own ends.

There can be little doubt that as a result of the government implementation of the TGLP and the resultant actions of the Basarwa Development Programme as a lobbying group, a new awareness of the basic right of all citizens to have rights in land has emerged, within the country, at all levels of government. <sup>15</sup> Accordingly, hunting and gathering is now reluctantly recognized as a land use in Botswana, and while there is still no high level commitment not to encroach on

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<sup>15</sup>It was clear by late 1978 that Basarwa would get some land in the commercial areas (Wily, 1981:77). Whether this land would be adequate for hunting and gathering purposes is not clear at this time.

hunting and gathering lands, these lands will no longer be appropriated with the same ease, and in some cases, they will not be appropriated at all.

While the Basarwa Development Programme had been fairly effective in obtaining concessions for Basarwa, it was limited in the actions it could take. As part of the government it engaged in political actions within the state bureaucracy. While the government held the ultimate power it was compelled, for the reasons outlined above, to pay attention to the Basarwa Development Programme's efforts on behalf of the Basarwa. These pressures, however, were not the only ones being exerted on the political decision makers on any of these issues, and hence the Programme's effectiveness was in very real terms dependent on the overall ideological commitment of the elected government to its stated national principles. A decision to abandon the principle of equality, for example, would probably lead to the halting of funds for the Basarwa Development Programme. To decrease the chance of such an event, active political representation was needed from the Basarwa themselves.

It will be obvious to the reader by now that Basarwa were minimally involved in the effort to bring Basarwa land rights to the forefront of the administration of land reform in Botswana. Rather, the Basarwa Development Programme assumed the role of advocate on the Basarwa's behalf.

For the Basarwa, early political action had taken an unusual form. The appointment of an expatriate official to take



charge of the Basarwa Development Programme led to the emergence of an administrative body within the government bureaucracy that lobbied actively for Basarwa rights. By 1978, this Programme had become fully integrated into the various levels of government administration charged with implementing the TGLP.

Settlement schemes, one of the early initiatives of the Programme supported by the government, fostered the beginnings of Basarwa politicization. Contrary to government intentions, however, as such settlement schemes proceeded, it became increasingly apparent that while the Basarwa involved were being settled down they were still living in the 'bush' and, more importantly, they were still hunting and gathering, at least to some extent. Once started, however, the precedent had been set and these Basarwa themselves have become adamant that they will not be moved from their new settlements to the established Tswana village centers (Wily, 1979:26). Further evidence of the beginnings of Basarwa political action can be found in the reaction of Basarwa to the Radio Learning Campaign and the plight of the Ghanzi Basarwa (see earlier discussion). Unfortunately, information about Basarwa politicization in the literature is scanty; this is an area that needs further attention.

## Comparative Implications

Accordingly, while the overall thrust of government policy in regard to the 'Basarwa problem' was similar to those that have originated in the nation-states of Canada, Australia, and Norway, the infrastructure that developed to resolve it was not. As a result of the colonial history of Botswana, Basarwa were never formally assigned a block of land like other ethnic groups within the country. Predominantly, this was because the British had little interest in settling the territory, and hence they felt no obligation to recognize a minority indigenous people's right to land access. As a result, upon independence, no reservation system had been established to compensate this group for the loss of their land due to economic development of the country.

Recognizing the problems inherent in allowing tribal distinctions to remain within the country, the government, upon independence, acted to break down tribal distinctions. Due to the fact that official policy stated that all citizens of the country were Batswana, first and foremost, tribal distinctions were to be downplayed with the result that an official status could not be given to any one group.

However, like the nation-states of Canada, Australia, and Norway, Botswana was faced with the dilemma of recognizing the special needs of a people with a traditional economy and lifestyle different from that of the majority. Due to the

government's emphasis on the equality of all citizens, the reserve system was not an alternative that could be considered by the government to solve this dilemma. Accordingly, the infrastructure that has arisen as a result of this system in the nation-states of Canada and United States is not present in Botswana (ie. there is no equivalent of the Department of Indian Affairs). In fact, Botswana shows remarkable similarity in treatment of its indigenous minority to Norway.

Dyck (n.d.) has suggested that there exist two different forms of recognition of indigenous status within nation-states. The first is characterized by a formal administrative recognition of indigenous status based on 'special status' and separate administrative and legal structures for such people. This is the case, for example, in Canada and the United States. The second form is characterized by informal recognition of indigenous status within states of supposed equality of all citizens. Such is the case in Norway where attempts to assimilate the Saami have had some success but have also had the effect of drawing attention to the differences between Saami and Norwegians. Within this type of fourth world relations, the nation-state does not formally recognize the 'special status' of such people (Dyck, n.d.). However, by designing specific policies to address these people's socio-economic problems, the state grants informal recognition to the differences between these people and the majority of the state's citizens. Consequently, the problem of representivity facing these

indigenous minorities is that of establishing a formal recognition of 'special status' within a nation-state that is equally opposed to this (Dyck, n.d.). It would appear the relationship of Basarwa with the nation-state of Botswana bears some similarity to this second case.

This similarity can be detailed by providing a summary of the major issues raised in this chapter. When the post of Coordinator was first established in 1974, it would not be unfair to state that the Government in a large part established it as a paternal gesture and to present to the world the image of a country proceeding democratically with development. Administrators, politicians, and civil servants at all levels assumed that the Basarwa Development Programme would act to encourage these nomads to settle down--to become cattle herders like the rest of the citizens of the country.

. . . Government's intention was to settle down these nomads, preferably in the existing villages, where they could learn the ways of a more civilized life, learn to plough, to herd cattle. The hunting and gathering life was primitive and to be discouraged at all costs (Wily, 1979:20).

The introduction of the TGLP, however, forced the Government to evaluate the 'Basarwa problem' according to a new set of characteristics. As tribesmen, the Basarwa were legally entitled to land. Furthermore, as time went on it was becoming increasingly apparent that the 'Basarwa problem' was not going to be solved by forcing the movement of Basarwa people to

villages. <sup>16</sup> According to its stated national principles, the Government did not have the power to deny any group of citizens access to their cultural heritage; hence if a group's culture was based on a tradition of hunting and gathering--so be it.

Under the B.D.P. the laws of the country will not . . . destroy any communal associations or bonds based on such common interests as religion, language, culture, etc., as long as these associations or bonds do not undermine the unity and progress of the state (From the Election Manifesto of the B.D.P. as quoted in Carter and Morgan, 1980:291).

Certainly, hunting and gathering did not pose a threat to the state; indeed, it could be suggested that it was an optimum land use strategy in some regions of the Kalahari. By late 1978, the Basarwa had been granted a 'special status' of sorts. The government had recognized hunting and gathering as a form of land use, and special considerations in the form of land tenure were to be granted to them. Accordingly, by late 1977, the 'Basarwa problem' had moved to the forefront of land politics in Botswana (Wily, 1981:77). The early settlement schemes, the Radio Learning Campaign, and the plight of the Ghanzi Farm Basarwa have all acted as stepping stones in the Basarwa's struggle for both self-reliance and self-determination. In the words of the Coordinator, Liz Wily,

The San are beginning to crystallize as their own greatest force in securing their rights to land, and the role of the settlements in this has been critical. Certainly the few Settlement Schemes that have been effected to date have not settled the wider discontent of the San as landless despised poor, but if anything, given it shape and a clear aim (Wily, 1979:27).

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<sup>16</sup>See Chapter IV for a description.

This is not to suggest that the situation in Botswana is now one of equality for the Basarwa. While no commercial leases had been granted to 1979, the process of enclosure is moving slowly and steadily forwards.

All this discussion and planning is getting in the way of development. Bushmen if they are in the way, should be simply gotten out of the way, so we can put up our fences (Presentation to a District Land Board, as quoted in Wily, 1981:71).

With attitudes like these available among herd owners throughout Botswana, the 'Basarwa problem' is an even more pressing issue for the Government than it was when it first arose.

## VI. Conclusions

Basarwa, like the Tswana themselves, have gradually become incorporated into a wider socio-economic setting from the beginnings of the fur trade. As Wolf has suggested (1982:385), since the advent of European capitalist expansion, there have been no self-contained societies, isolated from the rest of the world. Following this premise, the thesis has demonstrated that Basarwa cannot be considered "primitive isolates". Basarwa groups living in Botswana were intimately involved in the changing political-economy of this region. This involvement began with the movement of Bakgalagadi and Tswana people into the region of present-day Botswana, whereby Basarwa became subordinate members in the Tswana-controlled political and economic systems.

Following the establishment of the Protectorate and culminating in the formation of the independent nation-state, Basarwa along with the Tswana themselves have become increasingly caught up in the further political and economic complexity of this region. Obviously, following Wolf, for an adequate historical perspective one needs to step back and broaden the focus beyond Botswana--the unit bounded in this thesis for analytical convenience--to take account of the fate of Basarwa within the context of Southern Africa. While necessary, such an attempt was beyond the scope of this thesis.

In summary, from the Basarwa perspective, such a history would be characterized by the progressive loss of Basarwa land to an encroaching, technically, and numerically superior force by a people for whom mobility had always been central to their traditional economy. Gradually, during this period, a trend toward the movement of independent foragers to relationships of various degrees of dependence was being established. The evidence presented here shows that there is a shortage of information about the Basarwa's subsistence base in many regions of the country (eg. Central District) and the extent to which hunting and gathering is still carried on throughout the country. As pointed out earlier, such information is essential if Basarwa advocates are to argue convincingly that foraging is a viable land use in some areas of the country.

With regard to the 'Basarwa problem', a number of conclusions can be drawn. Throughout Botswana, policy makers, and a poorly informed general populace, have tended to ignore the historical relations of Basarwa within the geographical context of Botswana. Further, policy makers, despite the country's encouraging attitude toward anthropological fieldwork, have remained uninformed as to the implications of Lee et. al.'s work on the adequacy of the traditional foraging diet and mode of subsistence. The reasons for this, however, are difficult to determine. It may well be that policy makers are well informed but are acting in their own class interests. In any case, further research is needed regarding the degree of information



possessed by policy makers, who they are, and how their decisions are implemented.

Regardless, policy makers have tended to insist that Basarwa society either never had or has lost a viable economic base. While Basarwa society did have a viable economic base at one time, my evidence suggests that the later part of this statement is broadly correct because of the takeover of Basarwa land and water resources.

Unfortunately, due to this prevalent attitude among policy makers, the proposed solution to the 'Basarwa problem' has been based on the assumption that this 'lost' economy must be replaced as quickly as possible. Basarwa groups were to be assisted in assimilating into the national economy so that their standard of living could increase in proportion to the escalating national economic growth.

By examining the paradox that emerged as a result of government efforts to address the 'Basarwa problem', the thesis has pointed to the usefulness of the fourth world concept outside the domain of a first world nation-state. To begin, the thesis has demonstrated that Basarwa do fit the characteristics of fourth world peoples as described by Dyck et al. More importantly, the adoption of the notion of the fourth world sensitized me to pay particular attention to the role of the state. The evidence obtained by examining this "third-world" nation has tended to support Dyck's depiction (in press) of state activity vis-a-vis its indigenous minority, particularly

his contention that the state is not a monolithic structure. Furthermore, the fourth world notion proved invaluable while examining the actions of the Basarwa Development Programme. The thesis demonstrates that the specific methods used by this lobbying group to obtain concessions for Basarwa differed from those used by lobbying groups in liberal democracies, due largely to structural differences in the political and economic activities of the states involved. However, the overall intention of the Basarwa lobby was similar: the recognition of Basarwa rights to land.

The focus on land tenure suggested by the notion of the fourth world permitted the outlining of relations between an indigenous minority and the "third-world" nation-state of Botswana that show some similarities to those that have occurred in Norway. Such a correlation would appear to be valuable, for the concept has helped to focus attention on issues that have previously been neglected in the cross-cultural comparison of African foragers with those of other nation-states.

While extremely useful when examining the relationship between Basarwa and the government of Botswana, the fourth world notion, as it stands, becomes somewhat less useful when considering the affect of externally generated (outside Botswana) forces on Basarwa that Wolf stresses as being important. This may be one way in which a concept developed for first world nation-states needs modification for application to a nation-state that is itself dependent. At issue here is the

fact that a dependent indigenous minority in a dependent nation-state may not be the same as an indigenous minority in a stronger nation-state.

The core of this thesis is an attempt to go beyond the dominant ecological approach in anthropology and use available sources to provide an overview of the process of incorporation of Basarwa into wider networks of social relations within Botswana. To a large extent, therefore, sources limited the scope of this thesis. While desirable, it was not possible to discuss, in any detail, the concept of 'government', especially the motivation of the government, its actual structure, and the process whereby policies were implemented. On another level, the problems in available information limited discussion on the extremely relevant topics of "who" the Basarwa are and what exactly are their needs and political aspirations. Such topics require urgent attention.

The major limitation of this study was the inability to acquire the documents specifically concerning the Basarwa Development Programme. The lack of these forced a heavy reliance on documents from only one author, Liz Wily, to determine the strategies this lobbying group developed to obtain concessions on behalf of Basarwa. As a result of this, the methods by which this Programme achieved its ends require further documentation; however, that the Programme officials achieved some concessions, particularly in regard to land access, appears likely. Obviously, there is a need for further information about the

Basarwa lobby specifically. Issues that need further attention include a detailed examination of the people comprising the Basarwa Development Programme both at an administrative level and in the field. The Botswana government could perhaps have a legitimate complaint if such people were foreign agitators who acted to stir up the Basarwa and then left the country. Accordingly, particular attention should also be focused on the "role" of anthropologists and other consultants within Botswana.

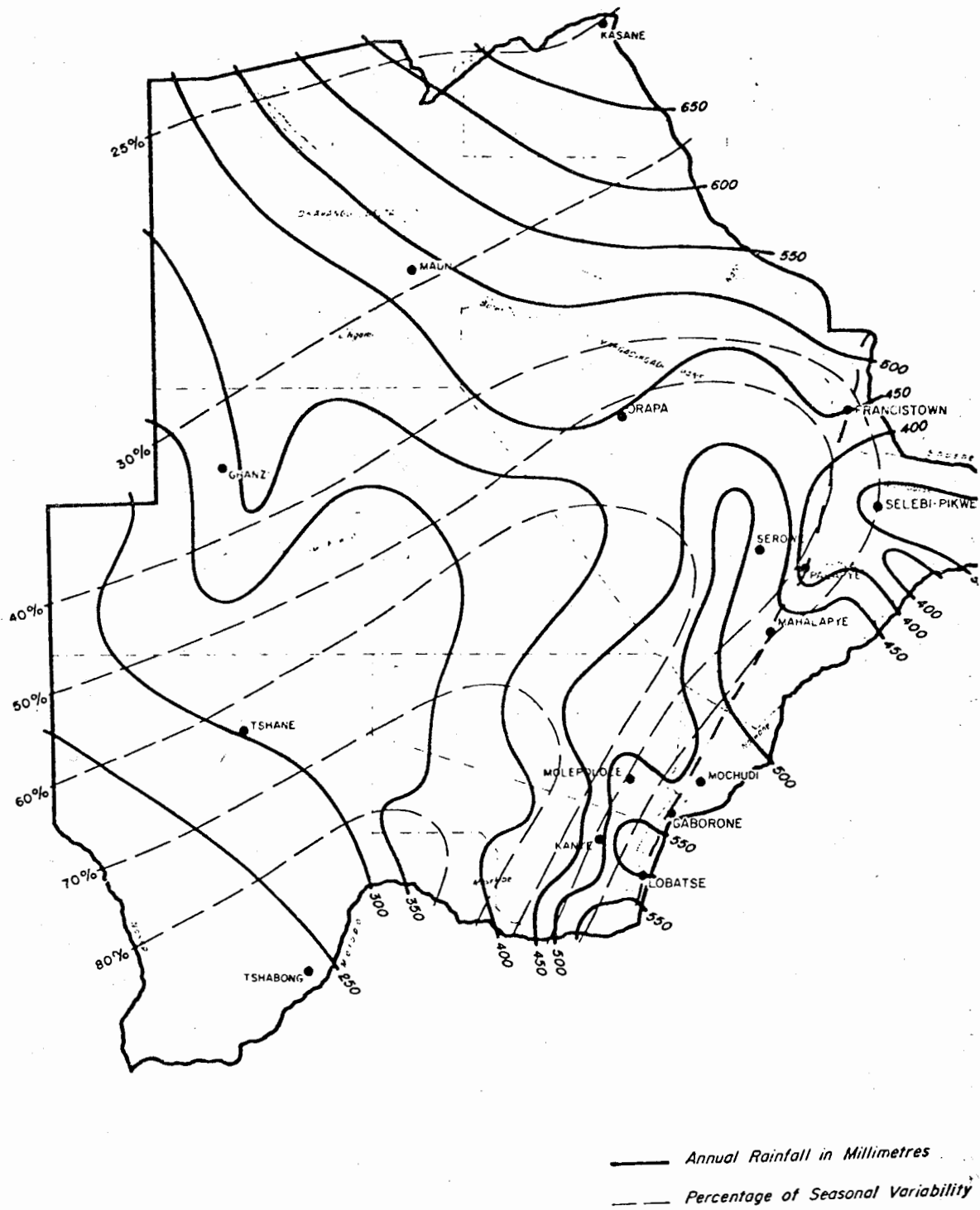
The thesis has also implicitly pointed to issues where other information is lacking. Specifically, further information is needed on the current status of Basarwa land rights in Botswana. For example, we need to know what effect the recent widespread drought throughout Southern Africa has had on Botswana's policies of rural development, especially as they relate to Basarwa. On another level, research is needed on the current status of Basarwa leadership. Are individuals from traditional Basarwa society aspiring to political leadership to further the representivity of the Basarwa lobby at a national level? Certainly, the direction political leadership has taken among other fourth world people would lead us to expect this process to occur among the Basarwa. The answers to questions such as these, however, await further research in Botswana.

## APPENDIX A

### Rainfall Distribution

As demonstrated in the following Figure the important facet of rainfall in Botswana is its extreme variability from year to year. Furthermore, the country experiences periodic years of drought, which appear to be patterned on sunspot activity, and occur on approximately a 22 year cycle (Best and Blij, 1977).

FIGURE 3



Source: National Development Plan, 1976-81.

## APPENDIX B

### Population

As demonstrated by the following Table, Botswana's population has steadily increased from 1936 to 1981 in all regions of the country. What is not so readily apparent in the table is that approximately 80% of the population is concentrated within a narrow belt of land in the eastern part of the country, largely along the line of rail. The remaining 20% is thinly scattered in small communities across the western regions of the territory; 10% of these live in Ngamiland, mainly along the periphery of the swamps; 3% live in the Ghanzi District; and the remainder are found in the Kalahari region. <sup>1</sup> 50.5% of the population is found in small villages and other small settlements with population sizes of less than 500 persons; 10.5% are found in villages of between 500-1000 persons; 22.5% are found in the traditional large villages of greater than 1000 persons; and 9.5% are found in the urban centers (National Development Plan, 1976-81). Obviously, Botswana remains a country with a large rural population living in widely scattered small settlements.

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<sup>1</sup>These are 1971 figures; probably the continued expansion of the borehole drilling program has acted to open up new areas of the arid Kalahari region, as is indicated by the increase in populations levels for the northeast and southeast regions.

TABLE 2

DISTRICT	1936	1946	1956	1964	1971	1981
Baralong				10,833	12,148	15,600
Central				209,565	234,828	357,300
Francistown				9,521	19,903	31,100
Gaberone				3,855	18,436	59,700
Ghanzi				16,366	17,352	18,700
Kgalagadi				16,636	17,289	24,000
Kgatleng				33,100	35,752	42,300
Kweneng				74,000	72,093	115,600
Lobatse				7,613	12,920	19,000
Ngamiland				42,572	53,870	68,200
Ngwaketse				72,419	79,152	104,000
Northeast				25,795	28,524	36,700
Southeast				21,031	22,691	30,900
TOTAL	265,756	279,000	320,675	549,510	630,679	936,600

Source: Annual Report of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1946-64



Currently, Botswana is experiencing rapid rates of urban migration resulting in rapid urban growth (Bell, 1980).<sup>2</sup> This urban migration has several consequences for rural development in Botswana. Rural areas are being drained of a valuable labour force; however, an increasing number of rural households now have at least one wage earner from whom they may receive benefits (Bell, 1980:406). This statement is borne out by Elkan who reports a 32% increase in the level of migrant labourers to South Africa during the period from July 1974-July 1976 (Elkan, 1980:587). This is a brief overview of Botswana's population; greater detail is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Considerable caution must be exercised when looking at the reported figures for the various census returns. Prior to the 1964 census, sampling was based on tax registration. For obvious reasons, this was a highly inaccurate method and hence under-enumeration was likely considerable during this period. Russell warns that the 1964 census must be treated with caution due to the fact that the statistics were derived from a widely dispersed, non-industrial, and largely illiterate population (1976:179-180). The 1971 census was subject to a general under-enumeration of approximately 4% (National Development Plan, 1976-81).

The reliability of any of the estimates for the Basarwa population should be regarded with even greater caution. Young

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<sup>2</sup>See the rates for Gaborone and Francistown in the accompanying Table.

estimated the Basarwa population at 10,000 and suggested that "the bashful and elusive ways of the Bushmen kept them from being counted along with the rest of Bechuanaland's people in the 1964 census" (1966:32). He further argues that they are but one step away from extinction and suggests that their assimilation will be complete in no more than 30 years (Young, 1966:43). Early censuses reported Basarwa populations of 20,000 (1936) and 15,000 (1946). Using the 1946 census, Sillery lists a Basarwa population of 14,400 and notes that this does not include an estimated number of 10,000 nomadic Bushmen (1952:218). Russell produces a figure of 30,000 based on an estimate of the 1964 and 1971 census returns (1976:180). She suggests that 4,000 of these live in the Ghanzi region, 6,000 are independent hunter-gatherers, while the majority live permanently, or for most of the year, at Tswana villages and cattleposts as clients and serfs (Russell, 1976:180).<sup>3</sup>

Probably considerably more estimates of the Basarwa population are available. Despite the numbers of additional estimates that can be produced, however, the best that one state is that there are approximately 25,000 Basarwa in the country. What would be more relevant to the task at hand would be some accurate figures on current Basarwa numbers, rate of Basarwa population increase in comparison with the rest of the country, and region of residence. At present, such information is

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<sup>3</sup>Later evidence indicates that clients and serfs are still pursuing foraging activities.

unavailable.

## APPENDIX C

### Livestock

Botswana is cattle country, and as is evident from the Tables, cattle currently outnumber people by a ratio of better than 3 to 1. Similar to the human population, 70-80% of the national herd, despite borehole drilling activities, remains concentrated in the eastern watershed area of the country.

Because livestock rearing depends more on total rainfall it is a more suitable agricultural pursuit in Botswana, where extreme variability is the norm for rainfall, than is cultivation. Indeed, only in times of successive years of drought does any significant proportion of the national cattle herd die as a result of lack of water or grazing resources (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980:110). While the annual offtake of the cattle herd varies considerably, it rarely exceeds 10% of the total herd size except during periods of extreme drought conditions (ibid:115).

Since the end of the rinderpest epidemic, at the turn of the century, the cattle population has increased steadily, albiet with setbacks from time to time due to disease (see Table). This was largely due to the efforts of the Protectorate government to control the spread of cattle diseases. In 1905 a Veterinary Department was established and as a result of this department's efforts, contagious cattle diseases have been

TABLE 3

	CATTLE	SHEEP	GOATS	PIGS
1947	958,789			3,487
1948	957,060	198,569	387,715	1,497
1949	982,951	214,229	443,993	3,445
1950	1,049,966	217,288	477,277	3,457
1951	1,026,845	197,798	475,271	2,731
1952	1,054,296	216,000	509,015	3,676
1953	1,097,681	277,941	497,654	4,029
1954	1,104,403	191,519	442,224	5,184
1955	1,152,494	152,660	304,641	4,651
1956	1,235,704	125,323	361,575	3,808
1957	1,309,950	117,673	333,641	4,748
1958	1,314,238	91,217	298,255	4,244
1959	1,317,236	89,532	249,381	4,752
1960	1,271,838	88,476	251,179	4,649

TABLE 3 (con't)

	CATTLE	SHEEP	GOATS	PIGS
1961	1,319,127	96,160	273,854	3,918
1962	1,351,778	111,524	314,721	3,771
1963	1,349,773	127,500	359,614	3,537
1964(a)	1,346,533	136,847	378,489	2,110
1965	1,263,000	125,000	335,000	
1966(b)	1,044,000	151,000	390,000	
1967	1,104,722	218,346	716,599	1,762
1968	1,250,259	231,366	703,254	2,457
1969	1,441,197	278,830	846,509	2,708
1970	1,650,000	413,000	1,082,000	9,000
1971	1,700,000	392,000	1,033,000	16,000
1972	2,000,000	402,000	983,000	15,000
1973	2,100,000	410,000	1,000,000	16,000
1974	2,300,000	390,000	1,050,000	17,000

TABLE 3 (con't)

	CATTLE	SHEEP	GOATS	PIGS
1975	2,600,000	400,000	1,000,000	18,000
1976	2,855,000	425,000	1,050,000	19,000
1977	3,000,000	430,000	1,100,000	20,000
1978	2,900,000	440,000	1,150,000	21,000
1979(c)	3,000,000	108,000	557,000	6,000
1980	2,911,000	199,000	637,000	6,000
1981(d)	2,950,000	180,000	680,000	6,000

(a) Livestock statistics for the period, 1946-1964 from the Annual Reports of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1946-1964.

(b) Livestock statistics for the period, 1965-1966 from the African Statistical Yearbook, 1974.

(c) The dramatic decreases in the Sheep and Goats herds during the period, 1979-1981 were due to a large scale outbreak of disease.

(d) Livestock statistics for the period, 1967-1981 from Africa South of the Sahara, 1972-1983/84.

steadily eradicated. As mentioned earlier, a series of cordon fences were erected to control the spread of foot and mouth disease. Cattle throughout the country cannot pass from one cordon zone to another without going through quarantine. Such important early work by the Protectorate government laid the foundations for Botswana's modern livestock industry.

### Sheep and Goats

Like cattle, small-stock populations have almost tripled between 1966-76 (see Table). In many respects, small-stock is the poor-man's cattle. Ownership of sheep and goats is much more widespread than that of cattle, with at least 3/4 of the farming families owning small-stock (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980:124). In comparison to cattle ownership, therefore, the distribution of small-stock ownership is much less skewed.

Sheep and goats fulfill a similar economic function as do cattle. However, not only do they represent a source of wealth (like cattle) but they are a source of food that can be called upon in times of need. While cattle are only occasionally slaughtered for their owner's consumption, almost all small-stock is killed and consumed within the rural areas and hence they are an important source of protein (ibid:124).

It must be stressed that the emphasis from citizens, the government, and various consultants has been on cattle; hence the importance of small-stock to the rural community has been



overlooked. Of even more relevance to this discussion is a consideration of the importance of small-stock to Basarwa. This topic has been neglected almost completely.

## APPENDIX D

### Borehole Drilling

Beginning in 1947 the Protectorate Government undertook the task of expanding borehole drilling throughout the Protectorate. <sup>1</sup> Initially, borehole sites were selected in areas chosen by individual applicants and the drilling was subsequently carried out by the government drilling branch. Under the terms of the contract, the applicant paid an initial deposit and the balance of the cost of the drilling over a five year period. Furthermore, under the terms of the agreement, the owner of the borehole agreed to impose stock limitations throughout the region served by the borehole (Annual Report of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1960).

Due to the stimulus provided by this program, borehole operations increased dramatically throughout the 1950's and early 1960's (see attached table). <sup>2</sup> After independence, borehole operations were financed by the Department of Geological Survey which maintained a record of 7000 boreholes drilled both privately and by the government (National Development Plan, 1973-78:147). During the period from 1965-70, the drilling section opened new water sources at a rate of -----

<sup>1</sup>This programme was financed under the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, Scheme No.678 (Annual Report of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1947).

<sup>2</sup>Yearly figures are unavailable for the period 1965-81.

TABLE 4

YEAR	BOREHOLES COMPLETED	PRODUCTIVE BOREHOLES	WATER PRODUCED GAL/HOUR
1953(a)	48	14	16,360
1954	77	41	27,251
1955(b)	70	43	53,626
1956	87	42	52,378
1957(c)	141	87	73,926
1958	152	103	77,724
1959(d)	119	83	78,440
1960	114	90	113,033
1961	101	73	88,565
1962	71	48	71,210

(a) The low production was due to drilling rigs working primarily in arid regions.

(b) A new heavy capacity 60RL drilling rig was brought into use.

(c) The expansion of the drilling program to private contractors increased the number of rigs in use from 7 to 15.

(d) Contract drilling ceased on July 1959.

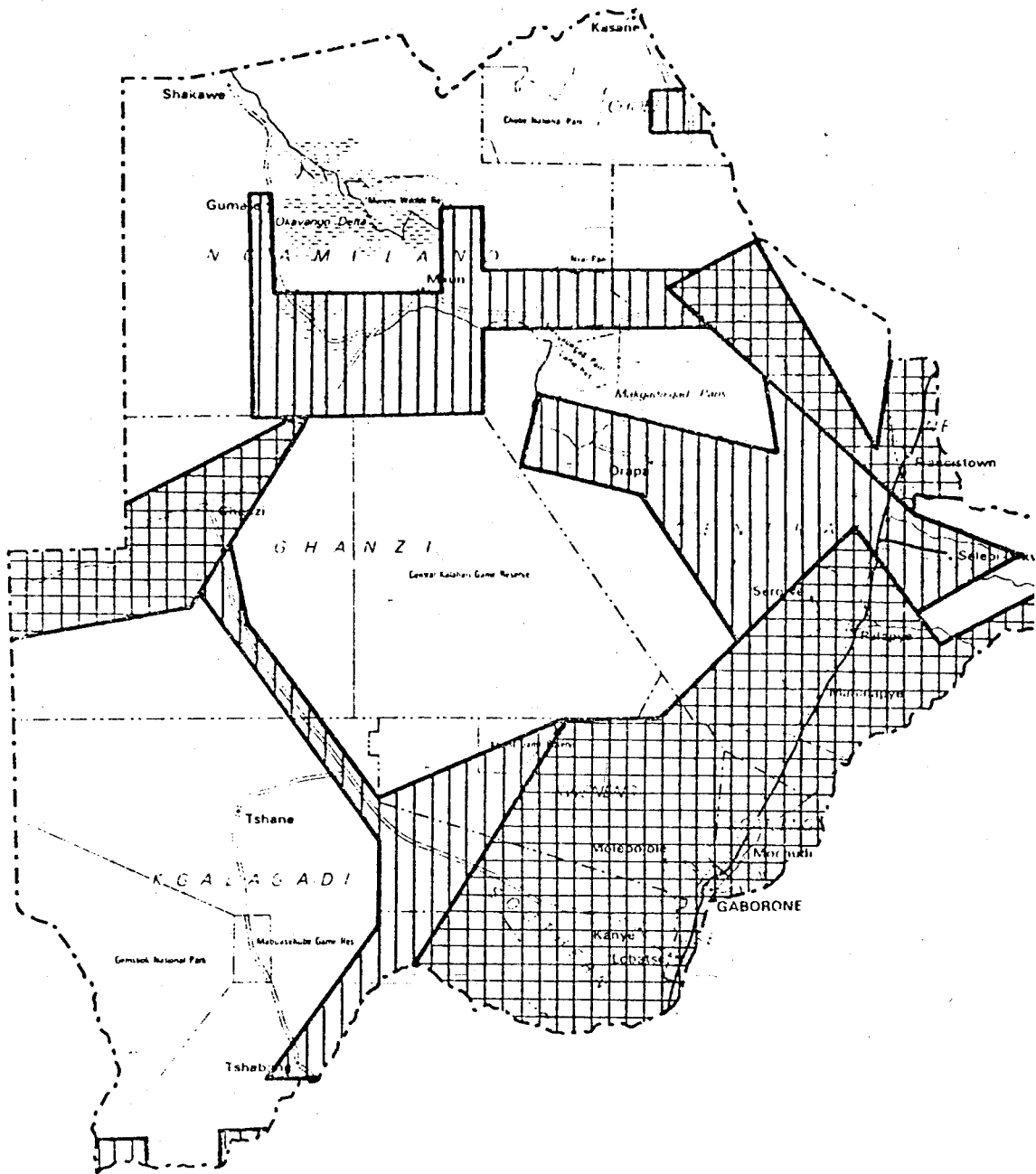
Source: Annual Report of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1946-1964.

100-130 boreholes per year (ibid:150). However, from 1970 onwards the average dropped to 60-80 boreholes per year due to acute staff shortages. Indeed, staff shortages had been a problem associated with the programme dating back as far as the 1950's. The government hoped to correct this by increasing the staff of the drilling programme by 50% during the 1973-78 Plan period (National Development Plan 1973-78:151).






In the early 1970's the focus of borehole drilling shifted westward to the regions covered by Kgalagadi sands (see Figure for borehole density). As a consequence, borehole costs increased dramatically due to the greater depths being drilled (National Development Plan, 1976-81:176). Unfortunately, no figures are available indicating the numbers of boreholes in this region, or the rate of expansion. Figures such as these would obviously have considerable bearing on the status of Basarwa in these regions.




Obviously, borehole expansion has had a considerable effect on the Basarwa. As a result of a twenty-five year period of drilling, extensive new areas of land have been opened up for cattle grazing. This has precipitated the cycle whereby foragers become increasingly divorced from their indigenous land base and are forced, out of necessity, into relations of dependence with the dominant cattle-owning groups. The relationship between borehole expansion and Basarwa dependence is an extremely important one. Unfortunately, with the exception of the government's (both Protectorate and independent) reports on the

FIGURE 4



Source: National Development Plan, 1976-81.

- Road 
- Railway 
- District Boundary 
- National Park 
- River 

-  High
-  Moderate
-  Low

Borehole Densities

nature of borehole expansion, little information is presently available. Several important questions have been left unaddressed and would be an appropriate topic for further research. To date no extensive survey has been made of Botswana's groundwater resources although the government has indicated that funds will be provided for such an undertaking (National Development Plan, 1976-81). Of more direct importance is the question of ownership of boreholes, the control by such owners of the livestock and people using these water sources, and the impact of boreholes on the local ecology of the region. Particular attention needs to be directed to the impact of boreholes on the Basarwa in both a political and economic sense.

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Unfortunately however, the most that can be said at this time is that boreholes have expanded constantly from 1948 onwards. This expansion has increasingly opened up new grazing areas that were formerly regarded by Basarwa as their indigenous territories. As described in Chapter III, this process has resulted in the Basarwa becoming an increasingly dependent population.

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<sup>3</sup>A recent article suggests that a research project has been funded to explore the ownership patterns of boreholes (Peters, 1980).

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