

BOTSWANA ELECTIONS REVIEW

2019



This report has been researched and compiled to serve as a review of the general elections of Botswana, held in October 2019.

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PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT:

In On Africa (IOA) is an African-focused research and consulting firm based in Johannesburg. This report is a culmination of in-depth research that IOA has conducted over the past six months focussing on Botswana's 2019 General Elections. The report has two primary objectives: 1) to provide our readers with expert insight into the developments leading up to and directly following the elections that took place in October 2019; 2) to serve as a sample of IOA's political analysis that our team regularly conducts across the African continent.

ACRONYMS

	DESCRIPTION
AP	Alliance for Progressives
ART	Antiretroviral treatment
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BMD	Botswana Movement for Democracy
BNF	Botswana National Front
BOFEPUSU	Botswana Federation of Public, Private and Parastatal Sector Unions
BPF	Botswana Patriotic Front
BPP	Botswana People's Party
BURS	Botswana Unified Revenue Service
DCEC	Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime
DISS	Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services
FPTP	First-Past-The-Post
MP	Member of Parliament
NYD	<i>Ntlo Ya Dikgosi</i>
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
UDC	Umbrella for Democratic Change

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the more theatre-oriented connoisseur at heart, the name 'Botswana' has risen to greater prominence among the mind of global citizens through the 2016 film *A United Kingdom* which follows the story of Sir Seretse Khama, the hereditary chief of the Bangwato people and first President of Botswana, and his marriage to an English woman by the name of Ruth Williams.¹ Although the film tells the story from a romantic point of view, focusing on the relationship between the main characters, it does bring some attention to the case of Botswana as one of Africa's most stable democracies. At the onset of independence in 1966 the first President and Vice-President, Seretse Khama and Quett Masire, respectively, commenced the meticulous crafting of the Republic of Botswana.² Throughout the presidencies of both leaders in subsequent years, Botswana benefitted from excellent leadership that oversaw the implementation of sound economic and political policies, propelling the country from an impoverished nation described as "a useless piece of territory" by a British colonial official³ to the top of the global diamond producer supply chain following the discovery of diamonds shortly after independence.⁴ The country's third

President, Festus Mogae, received the Ibrahim Prize for "his role in maintaining and consolidating Botswana's stability and prosperity in the face of an HIV/AIDS pandemic"⁵ during his term in office from 1998-2008, further illustrating the strong leadership Botswana has enjoyed over the years.

Aside from the long-term political stability, the landlocked country of Botswana is generally associated with two topics; the best African country for safaris, especially if you are looking to see elephants,⁶ and the second largest diamond production capacity in the world, after Russia⁷ – which is geographically about 28 times bigger than Botswana. A politico-economic study of Botswana would emphasise the nation's heavy reliance on diamond mining which trumps all other commodities in Botswana's international trade⁸, and the failure in parallel to translate the national wealth into broader dividends for citizens.⁹ While Seretse Khama is often hailed as the father of Botswana, his son, Ian Khama, proved to be a less popular leader after succeeding Mogae as the country's fourth president between 2008 – 2018. Though Botswana's economy is one facet that deserves its own analysis, this study focused on the socio-

¹ "A United Kingdom: Plot". IMDb, 2016. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3387266/plotsummary?ref=ttstry_pl

² "History of Botswana". Embassy of the Republic of Botswana: Washington DC, 2019. <http://www.botswanaembassy.org/page/history-of-botswana>

³ Guest, R. *The shackled continent*. London: Macmillan, p. 26

⁴ Padnani, A. "Ketumile Masire, Who Shaped and Led a Vibrant Botswana, Dies at 91". *The New York Times*, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/world/africa/ketumile-masire-dead-botswana-president.html>

⁵ "2008 Ibrahim Laureate - President Festus Gontebanye Mogae". Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019. <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/prize/laureates/festus-gontebanye-mogae>

⁶ Correia, S. "Botswana holds onto title as Africa's best safari country". *The South African*, 2019.

<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/travel/botswana-best-safari-country-in-africa-award/>

⁷ "World Mineral Statistics Archive". Minerals UK, 2019.

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/statistics/worldArchive.html>

⁸ "International Merchandise Trade Statistics". Statistics Botswana, 2019. http://www.statsbots.org.bw/sites/default/files/publications/IMTS%20Annual%20Report%202016_0.pdf

⁹ Jacobs, T. "A political risk analysis of Botswana". University of the Free State, Master's Dissertation, 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/11660/10007>

political development realm in assessing the country's latest national election results.

In May 2019, Botswana rose to prominence in relation to the international political arena after the incumbent government lifted a long-standing ban on elephant hunting.¹⁰ While the world was transfixed on conservation rhetoric echoed in various media outlets, elephant hunting was but one of Botswana's domestic concerns. After handpicking his preferred successor as early as 2014, former President Ian Khama handed the country's reins over to Mokgweetsi Masisi in April 2018, triggering the events that transpired over the last 18 months.¹¹ Following the change in leadership and the subsequent reversal of some of Khama's main policies, a rift ensued between the two leaders which contributed to the recent outcomes of Botswana's most hotly contested elections. From the feud between Khama and Masisi, and the formation of a new political party headed by the former president, to the opposition coalition launching an extravagant campaign to take the reins away from the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Botswana's 2019 General Elections took the country by storm.

With these developments in mind IOA recognised the need to delve deeper into the socio-political environment evolving on the ground and given the fairly limited pool of research available on Botswana's political climate, conducting an in-depth analysis of the country in the lead-up to the national election proved an important decision. In recognition of the intricate relationship between ethnicity, society and politics, the current study did not confine itself to a review of the General Elections alone. Instead, Botswana's society as well as its politics were contextualised to clearly illustrate the intertwined and interwoven nature of its domestic politics. To cater for this need, the present report focused on topics such as electoral sentiment, HIV/AIDS, education, unemployment and water scarcity in bringing about a measure of attention to better-understanding the voting discourse of citizens. In parallel to this, the publication aimed to further the understanding of Botswana's internal dynamics by codifying the public's sentiment and perception on information that is locally taken as

general knowledge, as well as consolidating a significant portion of the sparse information on Botswana's socio-political sphere into a holistic assessment. Here, the connection between the Tswana culture and Botswana's politics is more effectively organised and delineated, equipping the reader with the necessary knowledge to best understand the significance and outcome of Botswana's 2019 General Elections.

While the election has passed, this publication takes note of the opposition's intention to challenge the outcome of the results. At present, the court case is only just beginning and, admittedly, there is some scope for change in the final outcome of the results, however this study focuses on a more comprehensive view of the socio-political environment. The ultimate aim of this report is to highlight the most prominent factors that saw the ruling party secure another electoral victory, by providing a discussion on developments which took place since the 2014 elections including the formidability of the main contenders, and the relevant impacts of developments over the last five years on the final election results.

¹⁰ "Botswana lifts ban on elephant hunting". *BBC News*, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48374880>

¹¹ Konopo, J. et al. "Who is Botswana's new President Mokgweetsi Masisi?". *Mail & Guardian*, 2018. <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-04-03-who-is-botswanas-new-president-mokgweetsi-masisi>

2. BATSWANA SOCIETY

The word 'democracy', which underlines Botswana's political system, is derived from two Greek words: *demos* and *kratos*. Individually, *demos* refers to 'the people' or 'the many' and *kratos* infers power or rule. Collectively, this concoction quite literally translates into the phrase 'rule by the people'.¹² A vital component of democracy is, therefore, the people or, in this case, the Batswana. From this backdrop it is only natural to initiate the discussion of Botswana's 2019 democratically elected government by providing a brief overview of the country's societal dynamics.

Before we jump into the various facets of Botswana's society, a brief overview of its demographic composition is in order. On a national level, the latest data from the country's national bureau of statistics, Statistics Botswana, estimated Botswana's 2017 population at 2 154 863¹³ while the United Nations World Population Prospects projects the 2019 population to be about 2 303 697.¹⁴ At present, Botswana's annual population growth rate is estimated at 2.03% in 2011 and projected to decline to approximately 1.46% by 2026.¹⁵ There are also slightly more women than men in Botswana with the population consisting of 48% men and 52% women.¹⁶

The country presides over an expansive population characterised by the larger portion of youth and further points to a high fertility rate with lower life expectancies. Nevertheless, this type of population pyramid is consistent with a developing third world country such as Botswana.

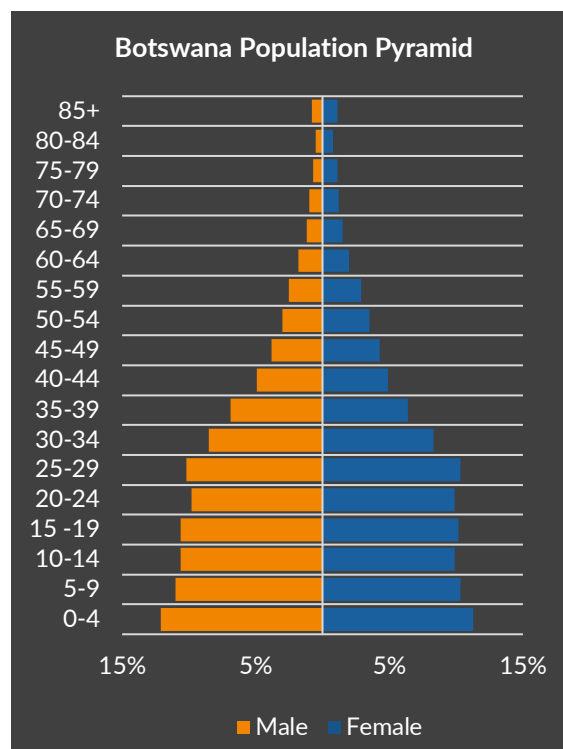


Figure 1: Gender and age distribution of population
Data courtesy of 2011 National Census

On a more granular level, Botswana consists of 10 administrative districts, similar to provinces, with an additional six city or town councils known as urban administrative districts. The former includes the Central, Chobe, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Kgatleng, Kweneng, North East, North West, South East and Southern Districts whilst the latter is comprised of Francistown, Gaborone, Jwaneng, Lobatse, Selebi-Phikwe and Sowa Town.^{17 18 19}

¹² Heywood, A. *Politics*. 2013, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke

¹³ "Botswana Demographic Survey Report 2017". *Statistics Botswana*, 2018.

¹⁴ "2019 Revision of World Population Prospects". *United Nations Population Division*, 2019. <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

¹⁵ "Botswana Population Projections 2011 - 2026". *Statistics Botswana*, 2015. http://www.statsbots.org.bw/sites/default/files/publications/population_projection.pdf

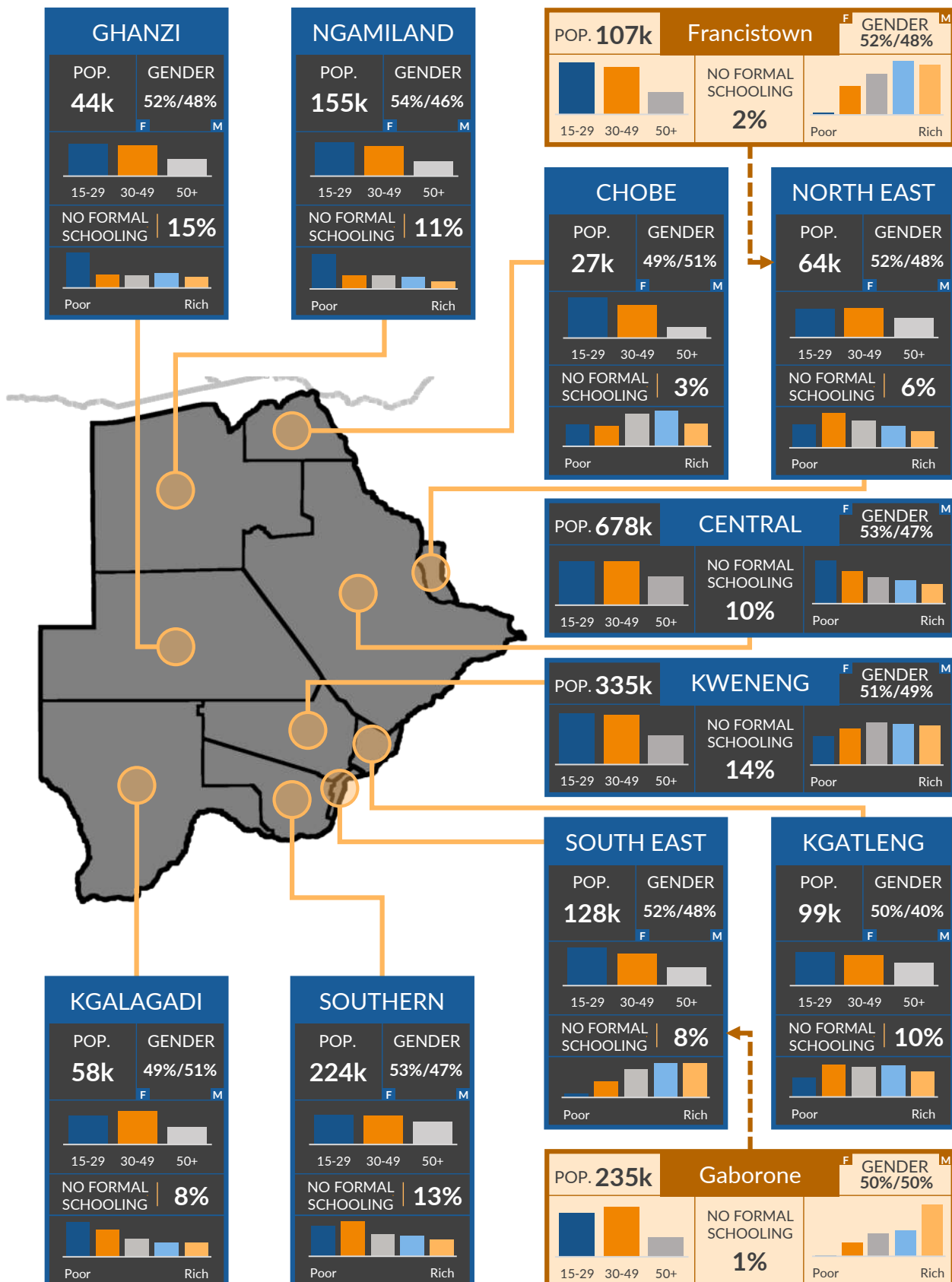
¹⁶ *Ibid*, "Botswana Demographic Survey Report 2017", 2018

¹⁷ *Declaration of Administrative Districts Order*, Republic of Botswana, 2006

¹⁸ "Population Census Atlas 2011: Botswana". *Statistics Botswana*, 2015. <http://www.statsbots.org.bw/sites/default/files/publications/Census%20ATLAS.pdf>

¹⁹ "The World Factbook: Botswana". *Central Intelligence Agency*, 2019. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bc.html>

Figure 2: Demographic breakdown of major districts and cities in Botswana



This infographic is not an accurate representation of the urban and rural districts of Botswana, but rather aims to provide key geographic and demographic information by isolating the two largest cities within their rural districts. The information has been gathered from multiple Statistics Botswana publications (2011-2019).

As seen in Figure 2, the districts of Ghanzi and Kgalagadi are not only among the larger districts in terms of geographical size, but also preside over some of the smallest population groups. The reason for these big yet sparsely populated districts is the Kgalagadi Desert that covers most of Botswana's western half and is particularly prominent across these two districts. This is also from where Botswana's southwestern most district derives its name.²⁰ Consequently, Botswana's population is mainly concentrated in the eastern regions with a focus around the capital of Gaborone and, to a lesser extent, around Francistown in the far eastern part of the country. The prominence of the Kgalagadi Desert also significantly contributes to environmental challenges such as desertification, mild sand storms, and periodic droughts, in turn, exacerbating challenges pertaining to water scarcity.²¹



Figure 4: The Kalahari Desert in Botswana

Further to its society, Botswana is also marked by a fairly heterogeneous population with 79% consisting of the Tswana ethnic group and while English is the official language, Setswana is the most widely spoken language, 77.3%. Other languages include Sekalanga, Shekgalagadi, Shona, Sesarwa, Sembukushu and Ndebele. Along with this heterogeneity is the topic of religion that sees Christianity being the most widely practiced religion, engaged in by 79.1% of the population.²² Due to the almost one-sided view deduced from these basic demographics,

there exists a need to provide an additional layer of scrutiny to fully delineate the reality of Botswana's society.

2.1. Conditions and Talking Points

While the demographics of Botswana's population provide a decent snapshot of its society, there is a deeper layer to consider. With a Gini Coefficient of 0.67,²³ Botswana is tilted towards the more unequal side of social classes due in no small part to the variety of social ills plaguing the nation. From a particularly disconcerting youth unemployment to a growing conflict between Botswana and wildlife in the northern parts of the country, there are a number of social conditions that further contextualise Botswana's society. To promote the understanding of Botswana's social conditions, the fieldwork contained a

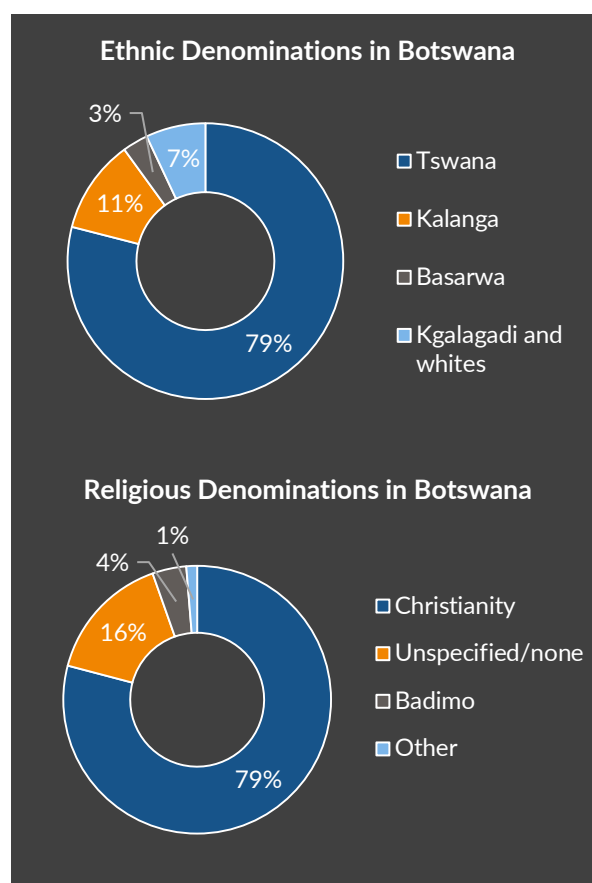


Figure 3: Ethnicity and religions in Botswana
Data courtesy of CIA World Factbook

²⁰ Silberbauer, G. B. & Logan, R. F. "Kalahari Desert". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Kalahari-Desert>

²¹ *Ibid*, "The World Factbook: Botswana", 2019

²² *Ibid*

²³ "Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey Report 2015/16". *Statistics Botswana*, 2018. <http://www.statsbots.org.bw/publication-by-sector/labour>

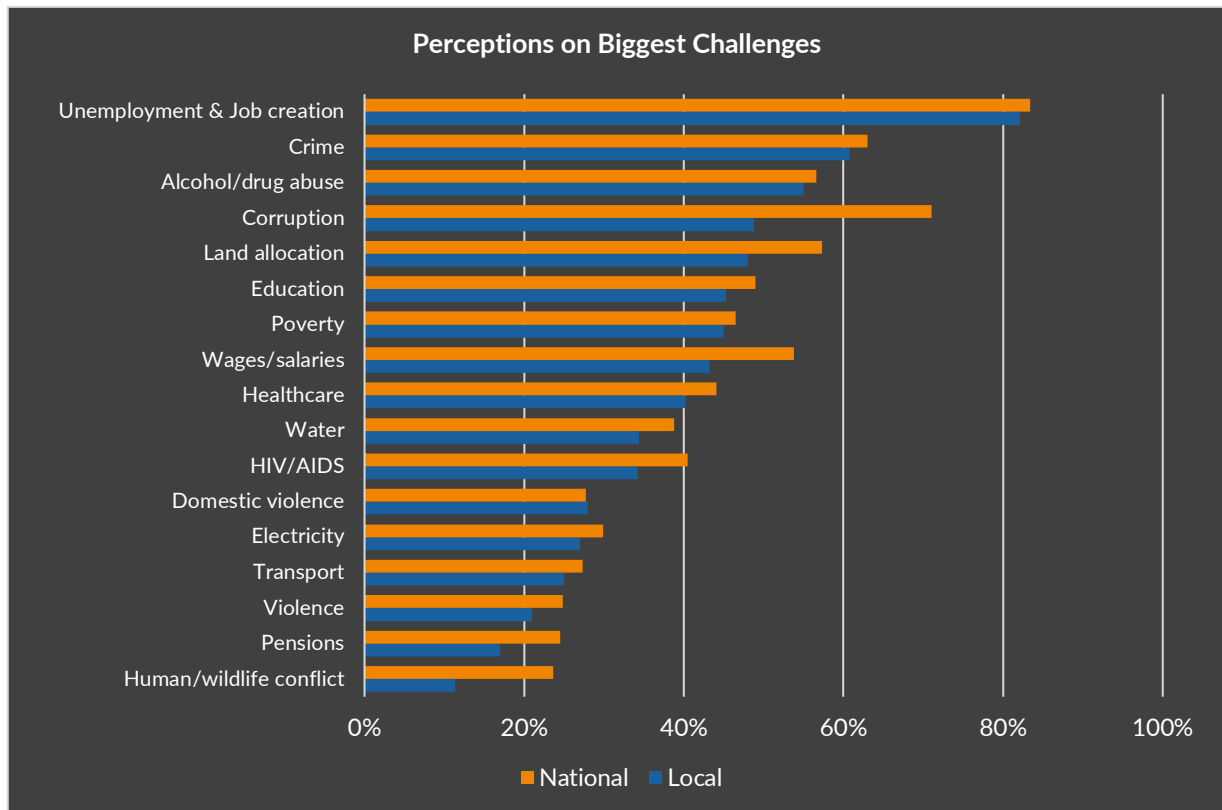


Figure 5: Biggest challenges, both district-specific and national, according to Botswana
Data derived from fieldwork

component looking to scrutinise the most prominent local and national socio-political challenges. Results from the fieldwork indicated unemployment as the major challenge across the board with corruption and crime following thereafter.

Though this component only sought to reflect the perspectives of the people, additional research further increased the significance of other issues not as prominent in the field work. These include a disconnected education system, a lacking healthcare system, consistent challenges pertaining to water scarcity, and a growing conflict between an overpopulated elephant population and the local Motswana inhabitants of the Okavango Delta.

2.1.1. Education and unemployment

Despite its thriving economy, Botswana's unemployment rate remains persistently high at 18.2%, despite the remarkable decline from 23.8% in 2003.²⁴ Though high, Botswana's

unemployment rate does not prove to be exceedingly high and is still quite low compared to its neighbour to the South, South Africa – at 27.3% in 2019,²⁵ there is an additional factor to consider: discouraged job seekers in the market. The current unemployment rate only includes individuals who are actively seeking work and not employed, thereby masking the number of Botswana who have become despondent and have stopped looking for employment. In the latest Multi-Topic Household Survey, Statistics Botswana indicated that the 2016 unemployment rate of 17.6% would increase to 33.5% should discouraged job seekers be taken into account. Furthermore, the same survey found that Botswana's youth unemployment is of particular concern coming in at 25.1% in 2016.²⁶

Two factors prove most viable explanations for Botswana unemployment rates; an economy built upon an industry that is not labour intensive and an education system that does not sufficiently equip Botswana students with the

²⁴ "Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) – Botswana, South Africa". *The World Bank*, 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SLUEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZA-BW>

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*, "Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey 2015/16 Report", 2019.

relevant skills required in the job market. Botswana's undiversified economy heavily relies on its mining industry, which is not labour intensive. All the while, labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture and construction account for limited contributions to GDP.^{27 28} Therefore, although the mining industry is flourishing and contributing a lot to the economy, it is not a great employment creator, leading to the challenging position Botswana currently finds itself in. The reason for the mining industry's labour paucity is that mining companies generally focus on reducing production costs to remain viable during times when commodity prices are depressed.²⁹

Second to the aforementioned is Botswana's education system, particularly post-secondary education, perceived to be suffering from a chronic disconnect between the theoretical priorities in the curriculum and the needs of the labour market. Students are often underprepared for the practical demands of the workplace, and this critical skills gap is perceived to constitute the greatest barrier preventing graduates from penetrating the local labour market.³⁰ The current unemployment rate in the country is also in-part a symptom of an inadequately educated workforce, one which is not equipped to think independently and creatively to be entrepreneurs. While the country boasts a literacy rate of around 90%, the performance of students continues to plummet, and their productivity after school remains constricted in the confines of government-generated jobs. Though the Government remains the main employer of tertiary graduates, the limited availability of vacancies often results in an increased number of stranded unemployed graduates.^{31 32 33 34}

2.1.2. Water scarcity

Botswana is an arid to semi-arid country with a climate that ranges from months of dry weather during the winter to humid subtropical weather interspersed with drier periods of hot weather during the summer.³⁵ Rainfall is unreliable and unevenly distributed varying from 250mm annually in the southwest to 650mm in the northeast. These climatic conditions make the country prone to chronic droughts and is further exacerbated by the total surface area of the country being covered by the Kalahari Desert – a sand-filled basin averaging 1 100 m above sea level, with only 15 000 km² of the total surface area being water.³⁶ The lack of surface water, and with two-thirds of the country being dependent on groundwater,³⁷ makes it difficult to effectively distribute water nationally, translating into serious water shortages in some areas. Furthermore, water scarcity affects virtually all industries and undermines the nation's economic growth. Botswana has endured one of the worst droughts in its history, with a significant proportion of the population facing severe water shortages. As a result, serious concerns have been raised regarding water accessibility and quality, food security, the impact on the ecosystem, and water related health issues.³⁸

Groundwater is a source that Botswana has used extensively over the years, particularly in the more arid areas as well as areas with heavy mining activities.³⁹ While the Botswana Government continues to supply its various social and economic spheres with water, excess strain has been placed on its groundwater sources in the past. As a result of its receding groundwater sources, recurrent droughts, erratic

²⁷ Motlhabane, D. "Poverty declining in Botswana but...". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2018. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/5159-poverty-declining-in-botswana-but.html>

²⁸ Chiutsi, N. "Unemployment still high despite buoyant economy". *Botswana Guardian*, 2017. <http://www.botswanaguardian.co.bw/business/item/2777-unemployment-still-high-despite-buoyant-economy.html>

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ "Botswana Graduates: Unemployed or Unemployable?". *Sunday Standard*, 2015. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/botswana-graduates-unemployed-or-unemployable>

³¹ Chabaditsile, G.K, Galeboe, A.K. & Nkwane, T.D. "SACMEQ IV Project in Botswana: A study of the conditions of schooling and quality of education". *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality & Department of Educational Planning and Research Services Research Unit*, 2018, p. 18. http://www.sacmeq.org/sites/default/files/final_saqmeq_iv_report_botswana-compressed.pdf

³² *Ibid*, "Botswana Graduates: Unemployed or Unemployable?", 2015.

³³ Mbuya, T. "The decline and fall of higher education in Botswana: The curse of commercialization". *Mmegi*, 2017. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=65780&dir=2017/january/13>

³⁴ Tiro, B. "Tertiary graduates unemployment figures soaring". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/6592-tertiary-graduates-unemployment-figures-soaring.html>

³⁵ Parsons, N. "Botswana". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Botswana>

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Carnemark, C. "Drought in Botswana is learning opportunity to achieve water security – UN rights expert". *Global perspective Human stories*, 2015. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/11/515742-drought-botswana-learning-opportunity-achieve-water-security-un-rights-expert>

³⁹ "International bank for reconstruction and development project appraisal document on a proposed loan in the amount of US\$ 145.5 million to the Republic of Botswana for a Botswana Emergency Water Security and Efficiency Project". *World Bank*, 2017. Report No: PAD2026. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/363411488682883157/pdf/Botswana-PAD-02172017.pdf>

rainfall, high evaporation rates, and relatively high water losses, the provision of regular access to water to Botswana has proven to be a tall order for the Government.⁴⁰

2.1.3. Human-wildlife conflict

The topic of water also exerts a significant influence on the growing issue of conflict between Botswana and wildlife in the northern parts of the country, as briefly mentioned above. Due to the increasingly threatening droughts and a general lack of water, wildlife, and elephants in particular, are forced to stray into populated areas in pursuit of sustenance. With Botswana's giants moving into areas where Botswana live, work and farm, the expected result includes the destruction of crops and houses, as well as the loss of human lives.⁴¹ Adding to the mix is the elephant hunting ban instituted by former president Ian Khama in 2014. Without any

natural predators to sufficiently keep the elephant population in check, Botswana's elephant population has seen a significant increase from an estimated 71 000 in 1995 to more than 130 000 in 2015.⁴² Zimbabwean ecologist Rowan Martin, presiding over an impressive portfolio of elephant and wildlife management, argues that "[a]ll wild species have predators and humans are the super-predator for elephant. There is nothing 'natural' about a large national park dominated by elephants without a predator".⁴³ The result of an unchecked elephant population, spurred on by a hunting ban effectively eliminating the 'super-predator' element, is overpopulation leading to the destruction of their habitat and the crops of farmers within their range, as well as the growing incidence of conflict between humans and wildlife.⁴⁴

Considering Botswana's elephant carrying capacity,⁴⁵ Ron Thomson, a renowned yet



Elephants are both a blessing and a curse in Botswana, as large herds encourage tourism but negatively impact vegetation growth.

⁴⁰ "Botswana Environment Statistics: Natural Disasters Digest 2017". Statistics Botswana, 2018. <http://www.statsbots.org.bw/sites/default/files/Botswana%20Environment%20Natural%20Disaster%20Digest%202017.pdf>

⁴¹ Hansrod, Z. "Botswana and KAZA – trying to overcome human-elephant conflict by empowering local people". *Africa Wildlife and Conservation News, Elephants, Southern Africa*, 2019. <https://africasustainableconservation.com/2019/05/11/botswana-and-kaza-trying-to-overcome-human-elephant-conflict-by-empowering-local-people/>

⁴² "African Elephant Database". IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group, 2019. <http://africanelephantdatabase.org/report/2016/Africa/Southern%20Africa/Botswana>

⁴³ Martin, R. "The Great Elephant Debate: Let's remove emotions and pseudo-science from wildlife management and get down to scientific facts". *Daily Maverick*, 2019.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-06-30-the-great-elephant-debate-lets-remove-emotions-and-pseudo-science-from-wildlife-management-and-get-down-to-scientific-facts/>

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ The average population density or population size of a species below which its numbers tend to increase and above which its numbers tend to decrease because of shortages of resources. See: "Carrying capacity". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/science/carrying-capacity>

controversial wildlife management expert, highlights the consumption needs of a large herbivore such as elephants who are able to travel 25 km from water sources seeking out sustenance. Thomson argues that the result is a radius of 25 km in which food sources become exhausted, especially in the dry seasons, leaving little to nothing for other smaller herbivores. On this point, Thomson mentions that Botswana's 2013 elephant count was accompanied by the Botswana government announcing that "all other species" declined by between 60% and 90%.⁴⁶

The most common human-wildlife conflict incidences undermine human welfare, health and safety, resulting in zoonotic diseases, physical injury, and loss of human lives.⁴⁷ Community members are unable to maintain their standard of living due to a persistent loss of economic revenue because of damage to properties and facilities, including crops and water systems, depredation of cattle and transmission of domestic animal diseases. In Botswana, the population living along the Okavango Delta is very poor⁴⁸ and destruction of their produce and properties continues to push community members further into poverty.

2.1.4. Corruption and crime

Transparency International holds Botswana in high regard,^{49 50} with the country being regarded as one of the least corrupt countries on the African continent. However, the findings of the annual Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, highlights a new trend of corrupt activities in various sectors of society: cases of nepotism, partisanship, bribery and public procurement primarily within its government, construction and land distribution.^{51 52} This trend is further supported by the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, which reflects perceptions on the

extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. The topic of corruption has gained significant momentum over the years, with particular traction during Khama's tenure.^{53 54} His term was heavily criticised for the erosion of democracy, rampant corruption and gross nepotism.⁵⁵

When Masisi ascended to the presidency in 2018 he vowed to combat corruption which he perceived as one of the great "evils" supposedly hindering the country's Vision 2036 objectives,⁵⁶ and in turn cementing the perception that corruption is one of Botswana's more prominent challenges. Locally, it has grown to be general knowledge that corruption is permeated from government down to ordinary citizens and is present from local government up to the national government.⁵⁷ This means that corruption can manifest in the bribing of local law enforcement all the way to corrupt ministers or members of parliament. Resultantly, the growing presence of corruption holds the potential to disrupt various facets of Botswana's economic, political and social landscapes. Areas such as infrastructural development, service delivery, and even efforts to alleviate unemployment may be at a disadvantage when corrupt dealings are at play.

Contributing to the mix is the general weak institutional frameworks vested in the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC), the Financial Intelligence Agency, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), and the Director of Public Prosecution. Case in point is the chain of command; the Director General of the DCEC reports to the state president which risks presidential interference in the mandate of the agency. Concurrently, the performance of the DCEC has been nothing but abysmal. In 2013, for example, it received 1 400 cases of which it only completed nine. Of the nine, it only

⁴⁶ Thomson, R. "Elephants and the Carrying Capacity of Habitat". *The True Green Alliance*, 2018. <https://www.mahohboh.org/elephants-and-the-carrying-capacity-of-habitat/>

⁴⁷ Nicole, B. "An Assessment of the Human-Wildlife Conflict across Africa". *Intech Open*, 2019. <https://www.intechopen.com/online-first/an-assessment-of-the-human-wildlife-conflict-across-africa>

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Hansrod, 2019.

⁴⁹ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2018". *Transparency International*, 2018. <https://www.transparency.org/country/BWA#>

⁵⁰ Pring, C. & Vrushi, J. "Global Corruption Barometer Africa 2019". *Transparency International & Afrobarometer*, 2019. https://www.transparency.org/files/content/pages/2019_GCB_Africa.pdf

⁵¹ *Ibid*, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2018", 2018.

⁵² "Botswana grapples with social and economic challenges – Khama", *Sunday Standard*, 2017.

<http://www.sundaystandard.info/botswana%E2%80%99s-economic-difficulties-fast-becoming-country%E2%80%99s-existential-threats>

⁵³ Good, K. "Bad Khama: The corruption of the Botswanan Presidency." *Democracy in Africa*, 2018. http://democracyinafrica.org/bad-khama-corruption-botswana-presidency/#_edn1

⁵⁴ "Worldwide Governance Indicators". *The World Bank*, 2019.

<https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>

⁵⁵ Konopo, J. "Good Khama, bad Khama". *Good Governance Africa*, 2017. <https://gga.org/botswana-good-khama-bad-khama/>

⁵⁶ Mosinyi, T. "Botswana: Corruption Fight Still Priority". *Botswana Daily News*, 2019. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=49262>

⁵⁷ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

managed four convictions. The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa argue that institutions of similar size and with similar cases are doing a lot more with the same level of resources.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the OAG, which cannot directly report instances of fraud within the government to the police or DCEC, is only authorised to report directly to the minister who heads the concern being audited.⁵⁹ Consequently, Botswana's current checks and balances, especially on the issue of corruption, creates a government truly vulnerable to pervasive corruption.

On the topic of corruption, which is essentially a form of criminal activity, the latest Gallup Global Law and Order report found that Botswana ranks among the lowest 10 countries when it comes to sentiments of personal safety. The Gallup Global Law and Order report asked adults from more than 148 000 countries various questions pertaining to law and order, and found that a mere 34% of Botswana feel safe walking alone at night, which is just slightly above the 31% in both Brazil and South Africa.⁶⁰ The most prominent reasons for this insecurity can be ascribed to cases such as human trafficking, wildlife poaching, road accidents, intimate partner murders and illicit drugs amongst others.⁶¹

Further exacerbating the situation is the prevalence of underperforming policing and criminal justice systems. Unskilled investigating officers and/or poorly resourced criminal justice systems hamper the proper functioning of authoritative agencies. Despite these considerations, Botswana's police force is still seen as the best in Africa and was ranked 47th in the world according to the World Internal Security & Police Index.⁶² This perception quickly dissipates when the topic of corruption

enter into play where it is said that the police are considered the most corrupt individuals in Botswana, according to the Global Corruption Barometer – a public opinion report published by Transparency International in partnership with Afrobarometer.⁶³

2.1.5. Healthcare

Botswana was, and still is, one of the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS epidemic globally. During the peak of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in 1995, Botswana saw 37 000 new infections in the space of 12 months – this number increased 10-fold over the following 13 years with approximately 370 000 Botswana living with HIV as of 2018.⁶⁴ ⁶⁵ However, while Botswana's neighbour to the south grappled with AIDS denialism in the early 2000s, by 2002 Botswana had launched one of the most successful Antiretroviral treatment (ART) programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, and is characterised as being universal, free, and available to all eligible Botswana.⁶⁶

While 95% of Botswana reside within an eight-kilometre radius from a healthcare facility,⁶⁷ the country's healthcare system continues to face daunting issues. In addition to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, further challenges include 'diseases of poverty' caused by poverty-induced circumstances including malnutrition, poor sanitation and exposure to adverse environmental conditions, mismanaged abortions, and weak service quality and governance.⁶⁸

It is also a common cause that alcohol and drug abuse has a direct correlation to HIV/AIDS,⁶⁹ as those abusing drugs and alcohol are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, thus leading to HIV/AIDS. In addition to the latter, alcohol

⁵⁸ "Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Southern Africa". Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, 2017. <http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/OSISA-ACC-Text-29MAR1130-WEB.pdf>

⁵⁹ Badham-Jones, M. "Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Botswana". Transparency International, 2014. <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-botswana>

⁶⁰ "2018 Global Law and Order". Gallup, 2018. https://www.safer-spaces.org.za/uploads/files/Gallup_Global_Law_And_Order_Report_2018.pdf

⁶¹ Ontebetse, K. "Botswana among most dangerous countries in Africa - Report". Sunday Standard, 2017. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/botswana-among-most-dangerous-countries-africa-report>

⁶² Abdelmottlep, M. "World Internal Security & Police Index". International Police Science Association, 2016. <http://www.ipsa-police.org/Images/uploaded/Pdf%20file/WISPI%20Report.pdf>

⁶³ Ibid, Pring & Vrush, 2019.

⁶⁴ "HIV and Aids in Botswana". Avert, 2019. <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/botswana>

⁶⁵ "Country factsheets: Botswana 2018". UNAIDS, 2019. <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/botswana>

⁶⁶ Ibid, "HIV and Aids in Botswana", 2019

⁶⁷ "Health Statistics Report 2010". Statistics Botswana, 2018. <http://www.statsbots.org.bw/sites/default/files/publications/Health%20Statistics%20Report%202010.pdf>

⁶⁸ "Issues and challenges - Progress on the Health-Related MDGs". African Health Observatory, 2019. http://www.aho.afro.who.int/profiles_information/index.php/Botswana:Issues_and_challenges_-_Progress_on_the_Health-Related_MDGs

⁶⁹ "The Second Botswana: National Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS 2010-2016" The National AIDS Coordinating Agency, Ministry of State Presidency, 2009 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_172465.pdf

and drug abuse is a growing problem in Botswana, particularly amongst the adolescent population.⁷⁰ There is a pendulum effect in terms of employment as those abusing alcohol and drugs are more likely to lose their jobs, thus increasing unemployment. Additionally, in areas of high unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse tend to be more prevalent.⁷¹ As people resort to substance abuse, they also become more susceptible to mental ailments such as depression. There is evidence that this issue has undermined economic and social development and has contributed to crime, instability and insecurity across the country.⁷² Alcohol and drug dependency further increases the risk of neurological, communicable and non-communicable diseases.⁷³ Not only is there a lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities to deal with the issue, but there is no concrete policy in place either.⁷⁴ Due to a lack of policy and appropriate facilities the result is an increase in mortality and morbidity, which in turn has a direct impact on the healthcare sector as there is a greater strain on the sector to deal with these issues.

Botswana's healthcare system, on the other hand, is also marred by a shortage of trained and qualified staff, subpar infrastructure maintenance and medical stocktaking, no clear standards for the distribution and size of health facilities leading to either over-or under-utilisation of certain facilities, and incredibly weak supply chain management at both hospitals and clinics resulting in unreliable availability of essential drugs.⁷⁵

While the overall lacking quality of Botswana's public healthcare system on its own necessitates intervention, the plethora of health issues faced by Botswana further highlights the need for an improved system that is not only in close proximity to most of the population, but also fully capable of dealing with any health concerns that might emerge in the near future.

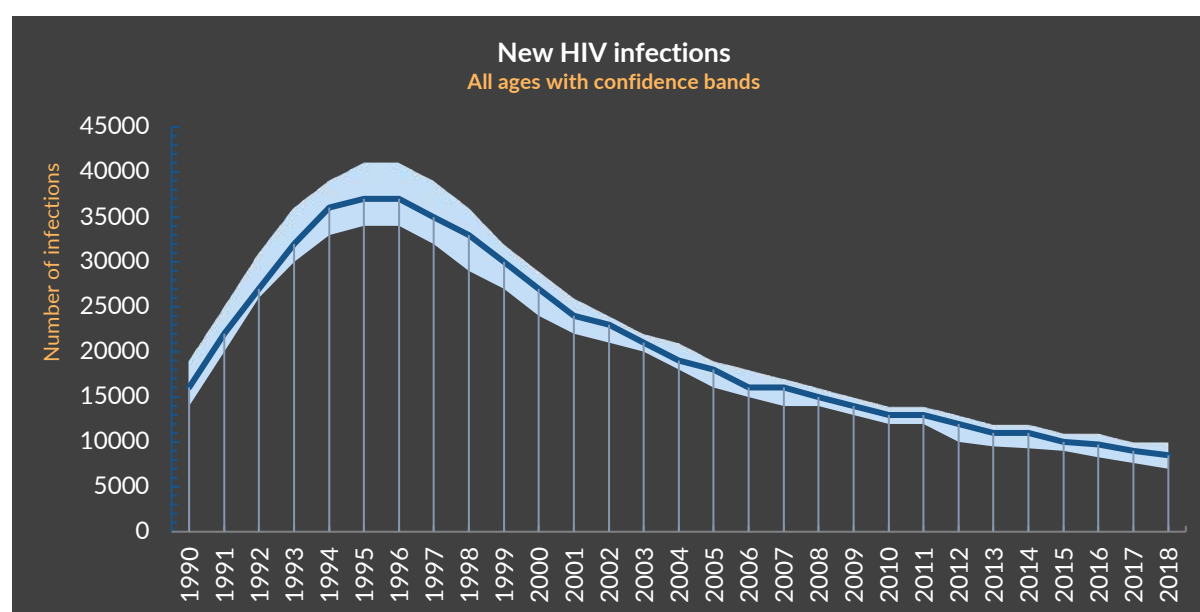


Figure 6: HIV infections (new: 1990-2018)
Data courtesy of UNAIDS

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ "Desk Review of the Botswana National Alcohol Policy". UNDP, 2017. <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/BWA/5383%20UNDP%20DESK%20REVIEW%20OF%20THE%20BOTSWANA%20NATIONAL%20ALCOHOL%20POLICY%20TEXT.pdf>

⁷² "Bulukani, H. "Substance abuse worrisome", *Botswana Daily News*, 2015. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/mobile/news-details.php?nid=19073&flag>

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Mokwape, M. "Lack of rehab centres forces ministry to use mental institutions." *Mmegi*, 2017. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=77516&dir=2018/september/11>

⁷⁵ "Integrated Health Service Plan: A Strategy for Changing the Health Sector for a Healthy Botswana 2010-2020". *Botswana Ministry of Health*, 2010. <https://www.moh.gov.bw/Publications/policies/Botswana%20IHSP%20Final%20HLS.pdf>

2.2. Tribal Factor

A significant portion of Botswana's social landscape includes a strong ethnic undertone that relates to the dominance of the Tswana culture and, in particular, the eight principal Tswana tribes that enjoy a very definite role in Botswana local politics. Despite this African nation being rather ethnically heterogeneous, its ethnic context proves to be quite unique through constitutionally grounded ethnic differentiation and the general permeation of peace throughout its ethnicities and society despite the constitutionally legitimated ethnic differentiation. The eight principal tribes include the Bangwato, Bakgatla, Bakwena, Barolong, Batlokwa, Bangwaketsi, Balete and Batawana.⁷⁶

Whilst there is agreement on the ethno-linguistic diversity of the country, the ethnic composition of Botswana is still contested. Botswana is comprised of 60% of non-Setswana speaking ethnic groups, previously referred to as minority tribes and Setswana speaking ethnic groups

make up only 17.9%, according to Nyati-Ramahobo.⁷⁷ These statistics are contested by Prof Otlogetswe's analysis in The Linguist Chair column in the Sunday Standard newspaper.⁷⁸ He argues that these statistics are arrived at from a confusion of linguistics and ethnicity. Otlogetswe highlights unavailability of reliable ethnic/tribal data to substantiate that argument, which he argues should be distinguished from linguistic data.⁷⁹

Botswana's contemporary ethnography is still greatly defined and influenced by the historical dominance of Setswana speaking ethnic groups. The 2017 Botswana Demographic Survey Report shows Setswana to be the most widely spoken language at home, by 76.6% of the population. This is followed by Kalanga and Shekgalagari, at 6.2% and 3.7% respectively.⁸⁰ Just 1.4% of the population speak Sesarwa, Mbukushu and Sebirwa, 1.6% Setswapong, 0.7% Herero and Ndebele, 0.3% Subiya and Shiyeyi, 0.1% Shona.⁸¹

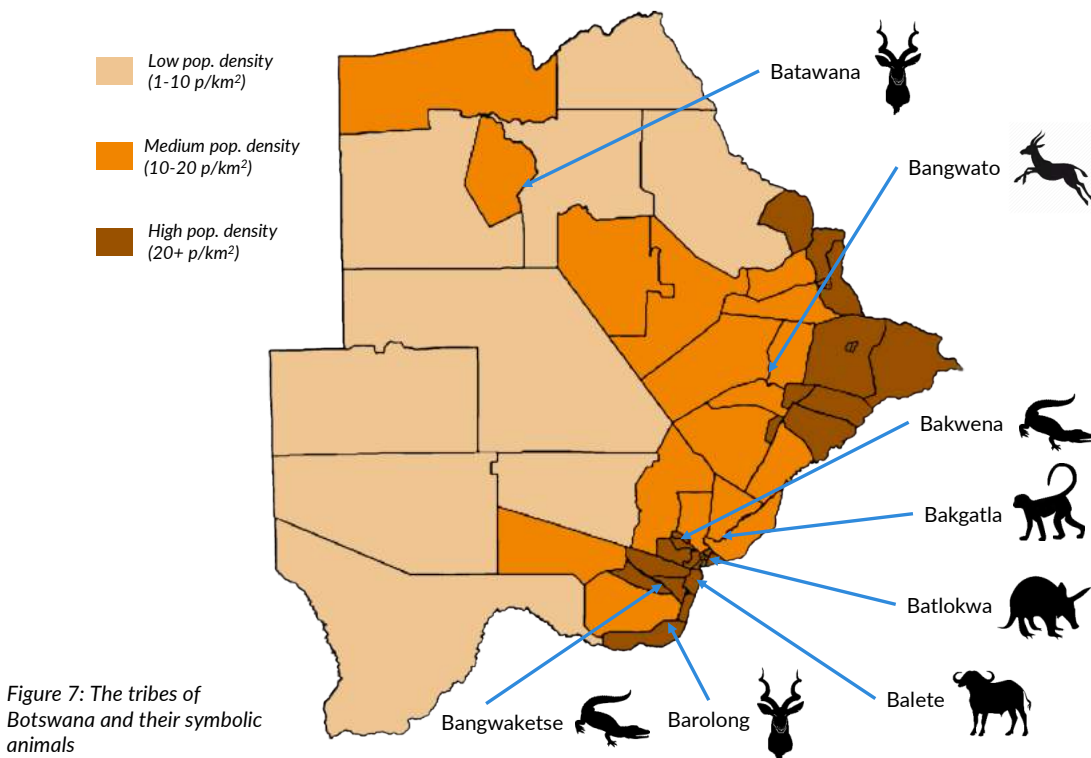


Figure 7: The tribes of Botswana and their symbolic animals

⁷⁶ Mulinge, M. "Botswana, Africa's haven of ethnic peace and harmony: status and future prospects". *African Journal of Sociology*, 6(1), 2008.

⁷⁷ Nyati-Ramahobo, L. "Minority Tribes in Botswana: the Politics of Recognition". *Minority Rights Group International*, 2008. <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/496dc0c82.pdf>

⁷⁸ The Linguist Chair. "RETENG Confuses Ethnicity With Linguistics". *Sunday Standard*, 2011. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/reteng-confuses-ethnicity-linguistics>.

⁷⁹ Selolwane, O.D. "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Botswana". *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development*, 2004. [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/\(httpPublications\)/C9BAF6926799077AC1256E9E00447A6F?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/(httpPublications)/C9BAF6926799077AC1256E9E00447A6F?OpenDocument)

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, "Botswana Demographic Survey Report 2017", 2018

⁸¹ *Ibid*

2.2.1. Traditional leaders, institutions and the government

Ntlo Ya Dikgosi (NYD) is the most notable institutionalised recognition and incorporation of Bogosi⁸² in Botswana's modern governance structures. It is a body of traditional leaders that primarily advises the National Assembly. NYD is comprised of 35 members, eight ex-officio members from Barolong Farms, Southern District, Ga Malete in the South East District, Ga Mmangwato in the Central District, Goo Tawana in the North West District, Kgatleng District, Kweneng District, Ngwaketse in Southern District, Tlokweng in the South East District.⁸³ Five members are appointed by the President. 20 members are elected by the regional electoral college from Bobirwa, Boteti, Mahalapye, Serowe, Tonota, Tswapong, Tutume, Ghanzi East, Ghanzi West, Kgalagadi North, Kgalagadi South, Letlhakeng, Molepolole, Thamaga, Maun, Ngami, Okavango, Kanye, Moshupa and Ngwaketse West regions.⁸⁴

Permanent members are essentially Dikgosi⁸⁵ of the territories within which the eight Setswana speaking ethnic groups, previously referred to as the main ethnic groups are geographically located. The regional electoral college then elects members to accommodate representation from mostly areas where the majority of non-Setswana speaking ethnic groups reside. This setup is viewed to institutionalise Tswana hegemony which predates the colonial era.

In most pre-colonial polities, communities were led by Kgosi. This royal leader was in most instances from a Setswana speaking ethnic group. Non-Setswana speaking territories were usually under a Kgosi from one of the eight main ethnic groups. Kgosi monopolised political and economic power. These powers reduced during the colonial era and Tswana dominance was maintained.⁸⁶

These imbalances were not addressed during transition to independence. The 1966 Constitution recognised the eight Setswana

Speaking ethnic groups as the principal ethnic groups and others as minority. As social and cultural dynamics gradually changed with time, cultural groups representing non-Setswana speaking ethnic groups increased advocacy for cultural and linguistic equality which agitated the Constitutional amendment of 2005, changing Section 77, 78 and 79 in order to render them tribally neutral.⁸⁷ These contestations also increased representation of non-Setswana speaking ethnic groups. Tswana cultural and linguistic dominance continues in the contemporary socio-economic setting.

The clout of traditional leaders at community level and their importance as custodians of culture can never be underestimated. However, at national level and collectively through the NYD, they wield limited influence or power, and the Parliament has in the past passed a bill disregarding its stance and advice.⁸⁸ Dikgosi are paid by the Government, under the Minister of Local Government who has the power to de-recognise a Kgosi. For this reason, a Kgosi is expected to resign from their position if they are to contest for a political position or any other active political role.

Another form of interaction with the Government is individually through the Kgotla. The Bogosi Act of 2008 defines Kgotla as "the customary meeting place of a tribe or tribal community for the discussion, in terms of customary law, of matters of tribal or communal concern."⁸⁹ In some instances, this platform is used for consultative purposes, commonly during the policy-making process or on processes of similar nature. The Kgotla is not to be used for political purposes, but is usually availed to incumbent Executive, Cabinet, and Members of Parliament to engage with the citizenry. This access is occasionally used to gain political mileage. Consultations or announcements to communities will be strategically utilised towards elections. However, the Kgotla is never overtly used for campaigns or like a freedom square – a town meeting that takes place in a public area with no

⁸² The Bogosi Act of 2008 defines Bogosi as an institution of traditional leadership or the position of Kgosi, and in this context refers to the former.

⁸³ *Constitution of Botswana* | Section 77. Republic of Botswana, 2002: Gaborone.

⁸⁴ "About Ntlo Ya Dikgosi". *Parliament of Botswana*, 2017. <https://www.parliament.gov.bw/index.php/about-ntlo-ya-dikgosi>

⁸⁵ Dikgosi is plural of Kgosi. A Kgosi is a traditional leader designated by the community or ethnic group to lead a tribal community.

See: *Bogosi Act*. Republic of Botswana, 2008: Gaborone

⁸⁶ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, "About Ntlo Ya Dikgosi", 2017

⁸⁸ Holm, J.D. & Botlhale, E. "Persistence and Decline of Traditional Authority in Modern Botswana Politics". *Botswana Notes and Records*, Vol. 40, 2008. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41236034>

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, *Bogosi Act*, 2008

official ties to government and is fair game for any party, ruling or opposition to use. The language is often rough and crass as would be expected at a political rally, and takes on a no-holds-barred nature.⁹⁰

2.2.2. Tribal politics and the impact of traditional leaders on electoral outcomes

In Botswana the active participation of a traditional leader as opposed to ethnicity is what is likely to have a bearing on electoral outcomes. This was proven by the Botswana Congress Party's (BCP) failure to gain the Bobirwa constituency when they based their campaign on promises to gain Babirwa independence from Bamangwato⁹¹ leadership.⁹² Traditional leaders often oversee territories comprised of various ethnicities. It is often a leader from one of the Setswana speaking ethnic groups overseeing a tribal community of his ethnicity as well as non-Setswana speaking ethnic groups. For example, the Bamangwato leader in the Central District oversees a territory comprised of Bangwato (Setswana speaking), Babirwa, Batswapong and Kalangas (non-Setswana speaking). The Bamangwato leader is a Paramount Chief, with traditional leaders of other ethnicities in that territory holding a position lower than that of the Paramount Chief, reporting to him. Further to this, it is important to note that Non-Setswana speaking ethnic groups are now contending this unbalanced setting where their leaders are not of equal status as traditional leaders of Setswana speaking ethnicities. Generally, the trend has been that a traditional leader is almost guaranteed to win if they for political office in their territory.⁹³

The trend of traditional leaders successfully contending for political office dates back to Kgosi Bathoeng of the Bangwaketse ethnic group, the founding leader of Botswana National Front (BNF). In the early years, the party gained support and remained a stronghold in urban areas and the Ngwaketse District, within which a majority of Bangwaketse and other ethnic groupings ruled by Chief Bathoeng were located. In 2015 Kgosi Lotlamoreng of Barolong, not a very strong politician, won when he stood in the Barolong constituency.

Prior to the 2019 elections, Bangwato territory, especially Serowe, has also been argued to be an unshakeable BDP stronghold because of its links to the first President Sir Seretse Khama who was the rightful traditional leader of that territory. A new political party, the Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), with the backing of the former President Khama, has been formed with the hope to leverage on this kind of support. Weeks prior to the formation of BPF, the former president Khama held "consultative" meetings in his home village of Serowe with his people, the Bangwato, where he is the hereditary Paramount Chief. However, he has never assumed this position, but is still respected and treated as the traditional leader by the tribal community. The meetings were intended to inform his community that he was quitting the BDP given ongoing rivalry with the current president. This may have been a tactic to get community support, preying on the support and loyalty enjoyed by traditional leaders.

The performance of BPF in the 2019 elections is a further testament to the belief that communities tend to support their Kgosi regardless of the party alignment. Serowe presents an especially interesting case since it is generally linked to the BDP. Although some community members are loyal to the BDP in connection with Seretse Khama, Kgosi of Bangwato and instrumental to Botswana's independence, it is also believed that others supported the party as a way of showing loyalty to their Kgosi.

⁹⁰ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

⁹¹ Babirwa are a "minor ethnicity under the Bamangwato, their territory falls under Central District overseen by the Bangwato Chief

⁹² *Ibid*, Holm & Botlhale, 2008

⁹³ IOA Fieldwork, 2019



3. POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Botswana's politics has received significant attention over the years, from a dispute between the government and the Khoisan people,⁹⁴ to former president Ian Khama publicly criticising Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe,⁹⁵ to the very same Khama leaving the BDP – a party his father co-founded.⁹⁶ Regardless, Botswana is generally perceived as an “excellent trade partner and an advocate for stability in Africa” quoting the U.S. Department of State,⁹⁷ a view echoed through the relations between Botswana and South Africa which enjoys mutual benefits and the promotion of cooperation.⁹⁸

Pivotal to Botswana's current sparkling image and political stability is its post-colonial leadership. Since independence, Botswana leaders oversaw and carefully crafted the state of Botswana to be both a beacon of democracy and a role model for the rest of Africa in its governance of its resource endowment. While the majority of Africa was plagued by the Resource curse leading to vast political turmoil across the continent, Botswana's impeccable leadership saw to the peaceful and effective capitalisation of its immense diamond deposits. Key to Botswana's 'rise to success' was Sir

Seretse Khama, the first president of the Republic of Botswana, and his vice president Sir Quett Masire, though both could not rule forever.⁹⁹ In short, Seretse maintained the presidency from 1966 until his death in 1980; Seretse was then succeeded by Masire until his retirement in 1998; Festus Mogae was elected and re-elected following BDP victories and served as president from 1999 until his retirement in 2008. In the past decade, Seretse's son, Ian Khama, was in power from the BDP electoral victory in 2009 until he stepped down in 2018,^{100 101} and, following the BDP's victory in 2019, Mokgweetsi Masisi is currently the president-elect of Botswana with Slumber Tsogwane as his vice president.¹⁰²

Vested in its 1965 constitution, Botswana is a republic with an executive president – being both the chief of state and the head of government – chosen by the National Assembly for the concurrent five-year term. Botswana's main political parties include the Alliance for Progressives (AP), BCP, BDP, Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD), BNF, BPP, Botswana People's Party (BPP), and the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) – a political alliance that includes the BCP, BNF and BPP. Considering that the BDP has been in power

⁹⁴ Throup, D. “Botswana: Assessing risks to stability”. *CSIS Africa Program*, 2011. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/110623_Throup_Botswana_we_b.pdf

⁹⁵ Cropley, E. “Botswana's Khama tells Mugabe to go”. *Reuters*, 2017. <https://af.reuters.com/article/zimbabweNews/idAFL8N1NN2SF?feedType=RSS&feedName=zimbabweNews>

⁹⁶ Toyana, M & Benza, B. “Former Botswana president quits ruling party in row with ex-ally”. *Reuters*, 2019. <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKCN1SV0G9-OZATP>

⁹⁷ “U.S. relations with Botswana”. *U.S. Department of State*, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-botswana/>

⁹⁸ Ntshole, T. “Botswana, South Africa committed to relations”. *Daily News*, 2014. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=15945&flag=1>

⁹⁹ Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S. & Robinson, J. “An African success story: Botswana”. *Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Economics Working Paper Series*, 2001, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

¹⁰⁰ Parsons, N. “Sir Seretse Khama”. *University of Botswana History Department*, 1999. <http://www.thuto.org/ubh/bw/skhama.htm>

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, Parsons, 2019.

¹⁰² Fabricius, P. “Botswana's ruling BDP defies the pundits”. *Institute for Security Studies*, 2019. <https://issafrica.org/amp/iss-today/botswanas-ruling-bdp-defies-the-pundits>

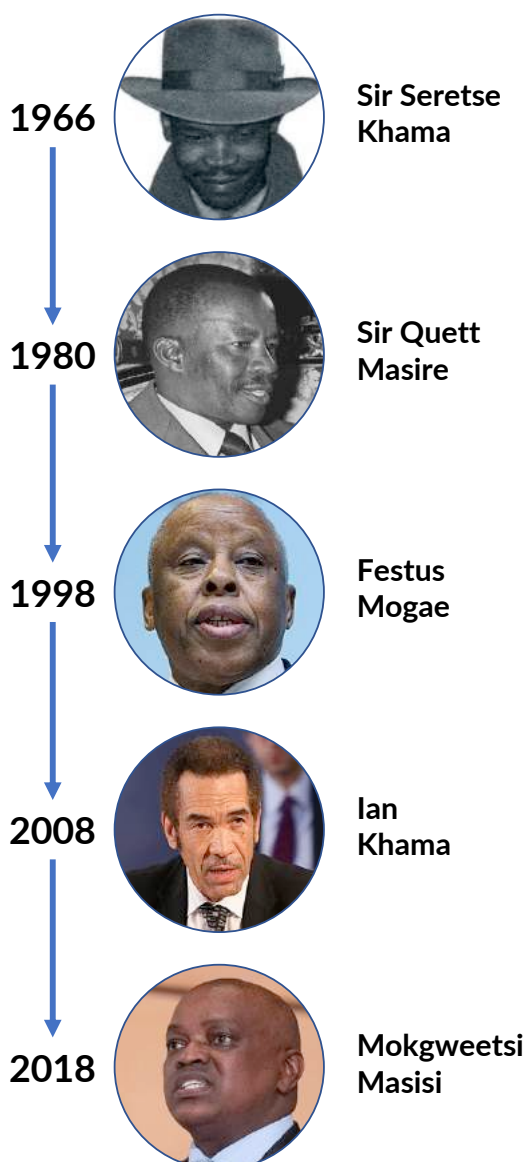


Figure 8: Presidents of Botswana since gaining independence
Images courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

since independence in 1966, holding the majority of seats in parliament after every election thus far, Botswana politics can also be characterised as a dominant party system.^{103 104 105}

3.1. Composition of Government

As an acknowledged sovereign African state, Botswana is a unitary and parliamentary republic consisting of a two-tier governmental system with a central government and a devolved local government. Central government exercises *trias politica* – the separation of powers – among the three branches of government; legislature, judiciary and the executive which is headed by the president. Local government, which holds no constitutional provision and is only enabled by the Local Government Act 2012, is headed by a mayor within the metropolitan and a council chairperson in rural districts. Concurrently, legal cases in rural areas are heard by customary courts with Botswana's legal system coinciding with Roman-Dutch law. Its legislative branch constitutes a bicameral parliament made up of the National Assembly which, in turn, is supported by the lower house, the NYD – also known as the House of Chiefs. The latter advocates the former on social and cultural issues wherever necessary.^{106 107}

Filling the seats of the upper house of parliament, the National Assembly, are 57 members directly elected by universal adult suffrage under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system from single-member constituencies, an additional six Specially Elected Members of Parliament, and two Ex-officio members being the President and The Speaker.^{108 109 110} Despite the House of Chiefs being limited to a mere advisory role, it is still a prominent stakeholder in the legislature. It consists of 35 members, with each member adhering to a 5-year election cycle.^{111 112 113}

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, "The World Factbook: Botswana", 2019

¹⁰⁴ Maundeni, Z. et al. "Dominant parties: The case of the Botswana Democratic Party". Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2006. A Friedrich Ebert Foundation Research Project. Elections Botswana.

¹⁰⁵ "Botswana: Constitution and politics". *The Commonwealth*, 2019. <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/botswana/constitution-politics>

¹⁰⁶ "Botswana political structure". *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2019. <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1888329172&Country=Botswana&topic=Summary&subtopic=Political+structure>

¹⁰⁷ "Botswana: Government". *GlobalEDGE*, 2019.

globaledege.msu.edu/countries/botswana/government

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, "Botswana political structure", 2019

¹⁰⁹ "FAQs: How many Members does the Parliament have?". *Parliament of Botswana*, 2019.

<https://www.parliament.gov.bw/index.php/frequently-asked-questions>

¹¹⁰ Piet, B. "Cabinet reshuffle looms as two new ministers arrive". Mmegi, 2016. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=63243&dir=2016/sepember/20>

¹¹¹ "The local government system in Botswana". *Commonwealth Local Government Forum*, 2018. www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Botswana.pdf

¹¹² *Ibid*, "Botswana: Government", 2019

¹¹³ *Ibid*, "About Ntlo Ya Dikgosi", 2017

As the head of state and government, the President is indirectly elected by members of the National Assembly, serving no longer than 10 years with an electoral cycle of five years.¹¹⁴ A noteworthy aspect of Botswana's presidential cycle is its disconnection with that of the electoral cycle. Near the end of his tenure, former President Masire amended the constitution introducing presidential term limits. This, coupled with his retirement 18 months prior to the 1999 elections, initiated an institutionalised edge for the ruling party as the end of every President's 10-year cycle now occurs 18 months before the next elections allowing for the new President to serve as a seemingly fresh new direction for the ruling party, sparking renewed hope among the electorate.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the Executive Cabinet is also sourced from the National Assembly with members of parliament appointed to ministerial positions by the President.¹¹⁶

Botswana's 1966 Constitution, forming the foundation of its democracy, is divided into nine chapters catering for most all aspects of the state from Motswana rights to the delegation of executive powers.^{117 118 119 120} Exercising the highest level of judicial power is the High Court and the Court of Appeal whose Chief Justices are appointed by the President while other judges are appointed by the President upon the advice of the judicial service commission. In addition, the mandatory retirement age for the judicial branch of government is fixed at 70 years of age.^{121 122}

3.1.1. Electoral system

In the preceding section, brief mention was made of Botswana's FPTP electoral system which runs on a five-year cycle. While the brief official mention is one high-level way to describe the system, there remains some uncertainty of the true inner workings of Botswana's elections.

First off, the FPTP system dictates that the first party to reach a predetermined and agreed upon metaphorical post would be declared the victors of the General Elections. This post, in Botswana's context, constitutes a simple majority of seats in parliament, currently 29 of the 57 to be specific.^{123 124} A seat in parliament, in turn, is determined by an electoral contest in each of the 57 constituencies where a single candidate is elected as the member of parliament representing the constituency in question. Parliamentary candidates can either contest under the banner of a specific political party or opt to contest as an independent candidate. The latter tends to see very little support, though time has come to show a few exceptions. Generally, however, parties are represented through their constituency candidates.¹²⁵ In summary, whichever party presides over 29 or more candidates that have won the election in their constituency will then be crowned victors with the winning party forming government.

Against this backdrop one might be wondering how a political party might decide who gets to contest which constituency. To this end, political parties will hold internal elections known as 'primary elections' during which candidates are elected by registered members of the party.¹²⁶ Primary elections are usually held well in advance prior to the national elections to ensure sufficient preparation time.¹²⁷

Botswana's electoral system seems simple enough, though its simple nature also leaves it vulnerable to critique. While a diversity of critical voices can point out a significant number of weaknesses, the most prominent include the indirect election of the president, a hung parliament and limiting the opposition which, in turn, robs parliament of quality debates and discussions.

¹¹⁴ "Botswana: Government and Society". *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Botswana/Government-and-society>

¹¹⁵ Beardsworth, N. "Botswana's electoral disconnect — and how it keeps the ruling party in power". *Mail & Guardian*, 2018.

<https://mg.co.za/article/2018-04-16-00-botswanas-electoral-disconnect-and-how-it-keeps-the-ruling-party-in-power>

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, "Botswana: Government and Society", 2019

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, "The local government system in Botswana", 2019

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, "Botswana political structure", 2019

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, "Botswana: Government", 2019

¹²⁰ *Constitution of Botswana*. Republic of Botswana, 2002: Gaborone.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, "Botswana: Government"

¹²² *Ibid*, "The World Factbook: Botswana", 2019

¹²³ "Botswana: Electoral system". *African Democracy Encyclopaedia Project*, 2019. <https://www.eisa.org.za/wep/bot4.htm>

¹²⁴ Molomo, M. "The Need for Electoral Reform in Botswana".

African Journal on Conflict Resolution, 2004. <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/%EF%BF%BCthe-need-for-electoral-reform-in-botswana/>

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

¹²⁶ *Ibid*

¹²⁷ "Constitution of the Botswana Democratic Party". *Botswana Democratic Party*, n.d. https://fcb2a104-dd10-45d7-b23d-60f09c4db5a0.filesusr.com/ugd/735bf4_d05d3e91a5784070835afd6092e922b3.pdf

¹²⁸ *Ibid*

For one, critics emphasise that the absence of presidential elections means that the single most authoritative office in Botswana's government is not chosen by the people.¹²⁹

Second, a hung parliament refers to a scenario in which no party reaches 'the post' resulting in the need to either form a minority government, that is vulnerable to parliament domination, or to form a coalition government, that can be susceptible to instability and internal turmoil.¹³⁰

In the third instance, it is argued that a single member constituency means that only one person and one voice represents the interests of the constituency, with no scope for any alternative voice to be represented in parliament.¹³²

Despite the critique and its tendency to put the ruling party at an advantage, this system has seen Botswana to its current beacon of peace, stability and, above all else, democracy.



Politics, tribes and history is present in all things Botswana, including art.

¹²⁹ Ibid, Molomo, 2004

¹³⁰ John, T. "U.K. Election Delivers a 'Hung Parliament.' What Is That?". *Time Magazine*, 2017. https://time.com/4810499/uk-election-hung-parliament/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+time%2Fworld+%28TIME%3A+Top+World+Stories%29

¹³¹ Kalitowski, S. "Hung-up over Nothing? The Impact of a Hung Parliament on British Politics". *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 61(2), 2008. DOI: 10.1093/pa/gsn005

¹³² Ibid, Molomo, 2004

3.2. Political Parties

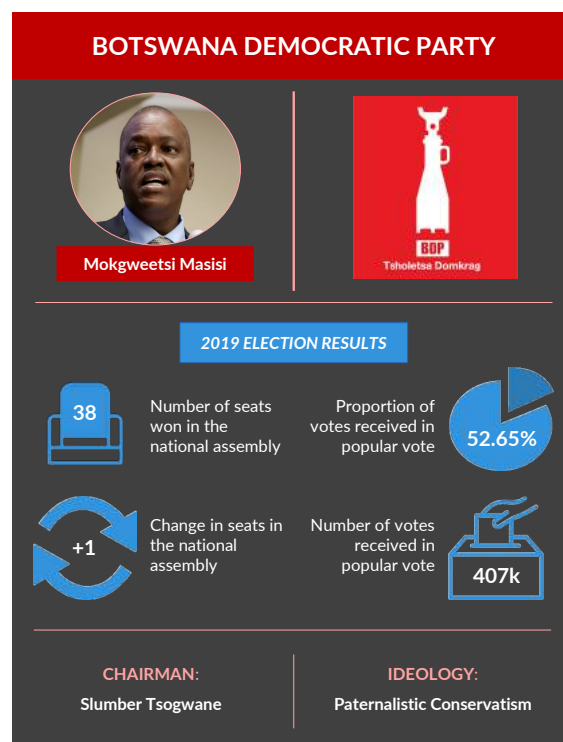
Imperative to Botswana's elections is, naturally, its political parties contesting for governmental power during each General Elections. So far, mention has been made of the AP, BDP, BMD, BPF, and UDC with its composing parties – the BCP, BNF and BPP. While it is true that these are not all of Botswana's political parties, very little impetus exists to mention role-players such as the Honour for Batswana¹³³ or the Real Alternative Party¹³⁴ whose combined support accounts for less than 0.01% of the national votes.¹³⁵ Concurrently, the 2019 election period delivered the BDP, UDC, BPF and AP as the main contenders – also the only parties who had nominated presidential candidates – rendering the rest nearly irrelevant.

3.2.1. Botswana Democratic Party

Standing head and shoulders above the rest is the ruling BDP that has been governing since Botswana's independence in 1966 with 12 consecutive election victories. The advantage of having ruled for so many years is that the BDP enjoys the benefits of the incumbency effect.¹³⁶ They have a track record of having ruled for over 50 years, an established voter base – particularly in rural areas – and the advantage of a constitution which is set in their favour. A lot of the sentiments surrounding the BDP are tied to the government's track record. In most cases this should give the party an edge over others, however, after 52-years, many Batswana have grown tired of the ruling party's rule.¹³⁷ This was evidenced by the failure of the Khama-led BDP to secure the 2014 popular vote, obtaining only 46.5% thereof. Kama's governance style was criticized as authoritarian, though accusations of nepotism and tribalism have now also been levelled in parliament against Masisi. Masisi's lifting of former President Khama's ban on elephant trophy hunting has been seen by some as a vote-getting measure amongst rural residents.¹³⁸

The disconnected presidential cycle, previously discussed, works in favour of the BDP and has

played out through the appointment of President Masisi in April 2018. Since his appointment, Masisi has already boosted public confidence in the party, through efforts to restore foreign direct investments into the country, which in turn aims to inspire job creation. The president is rebuilding foreign relations for bilateral and multilateral partnerships, he has appointed the youngest minister in the country's history in Honorable Minister Bogolo Kenewendo, signalling his commitment to drive forward youth participation in governance, and is allowing the media unprecedented access (unlike his predecessor), acknowledging the importance of the role of the media as a vehicle to spread political messaging.¹³⁹ Whilst these actions have worked to rebuild confidence in the party, they have largely been overshadowed by the rift between Masisi and Khama.



Regardless, the BDP continues to enjoy support from the rural population who predominantly vote based on the familiarity of the party name, or for the sociological reasoning that they and their family have been voting BDP since its

¹³³ Pelontle, K. "Honour for Batswana Party launches manifesto". *Botswana Daily News*, 2019. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?id=50626>

¹³⁴ Selatlhwa, I. "Real Alternative Party or Real Joke". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81090&dir=2019/may/27>

¹³⁵ "Botswana 2019 Election results". *The Voice Botswana*, 2019. <https://news.thevoicebw.com/election-results/>

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, Beardsworth, 2018

¹³⁷ *Ibid*

¹³⁸ Poloko Tau, "Masisi tries to shake off Khama legacy as showdown looms," *City Press*, 2019. <https://city-press.news24.com/News/masi-si-tries-to-shake-off-khamas-legacy-as-botswanas-showdown-looms-20190605>

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, Ramatiti, 2019

inception. Very seldom does the rural base vote on the rationale of what the candidate stands for.¹⁴⁰

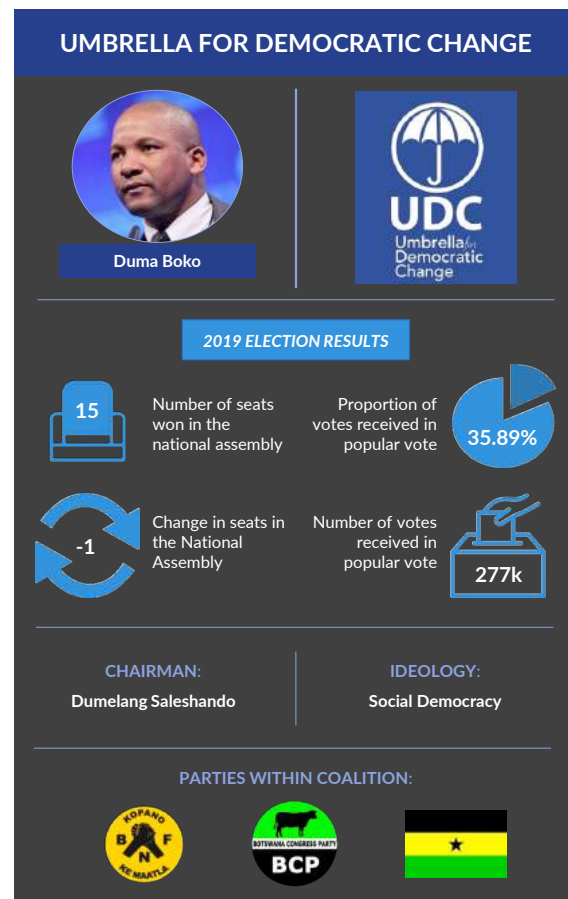
Headed by President Masisi, the BDP's current focus is captured in the National Development Plan II and the party's 2019 manifesto. Currently, the goal is to diversify its minerals-based economy in pursuit of a knowledge-based economy by 2036. Land reform and social welfare programmes form part of this pursuit, the latter serving to help alleviate poverty.¹⁴¹ Toward the goal of ending poverty, President Masisi noted when he launched the BDP's manifesto that, "[f]or economic growth and diversification, we need investment in productive export focused activities that will generate jobs, new sources of export earnings and tax revenues".¹⁴²

3.2.2. Umbrella for Democratic Change

Since the 2014 elections, the UDC has seen the entrance of the BCP into the coalition, the suspension of BMD from the alliance, and the formation of a new party, the AP, a breakaway party of the BMD. Founded in November 2012, the alliance has as its principal members, the BNF, the BCP and the BPP. All parties contested the October 2019 elections jointly, bound by a shared ideology defined in the UDC constitution and refined in terms of issues highlighted by the UDC party manifesto released for the 2019 election campaign.¹⁴³

In the lead-up to the 2014 General Elections, the sentiment around the UDC and particularly its leadership, is that it is a party for intellectuals.¹⁴⁴ The leadership of the party consisted of young professionals, including the likes of Ndaba Gaolathe, now president of the AP, who were able to easily appeal to and capture the youth in Gaborone and surrounding areas. However, it is also for this reason that they were unable to draw in and capture the older generation especially those based in rural areas. Duma Boko, the BNF and UDC's president, is known for using over-complicated language which tends to overshadow his message. In addition to this, the

UDC did little to educate the rural voter about the coalition, causing confusion for voters outside Gaborone with all the different party names, contrasting party colours, and the constant change in member parties of the alliance.



Over and above this disconnect, the alliance began to crumble following the 2014 election. The UDC was accused of failing to manage the conflict in the BMD which eventually led to the two factions going their separate ways.¹⁴⁵ They welcomed the BMD back into the fold, acknowledging Sidney Pilane's faction as the legitimate claimants to the party, a decision which was largely unpopular with their base. In addition to this, the BCP was welcomed into the alliance after 2014. Whilst the party presented Duma Boko as its presidential candidate, issues remained in the selection of candidates for constituencies where the BCP sought to take

¹⁴⁰ Tshegang, K. "Why BDP Is still in power after 5 decades". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=79774&dir=2019/february/25>.

¹⁴¹ Chube, L. "BDP launches manifesto". *Botswana Daily News*, 2019. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=48897>

¹⁴² "2019 Election Manifesto". *Botswana Democratic Party*, 2019. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14IXAleodjG6PZWfrQCdDDTw6dG>

¹⁴³ Ntshingane, B. "Co-opted and Fragmented: Crisis of Botswana Opposition Parties". *The Politist*, 2018. <https://thepolitist.home.blog/2018/09/04/co-opted-and-fragmented-the-crisis-of-botswanas-opposition-politics-how-do-we-fix-it/>

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*

precedence, an issue which alienated the smaller party, the BPP, who had been left feeling marginalised.¹⁴⁶

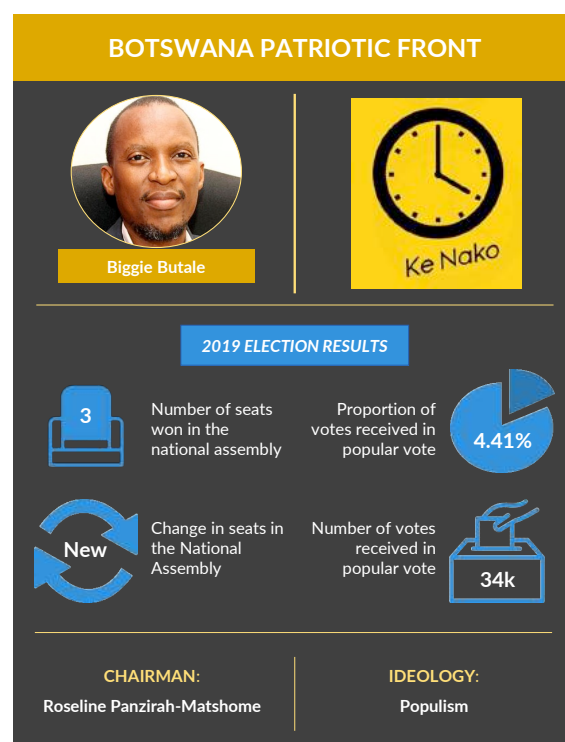
Following Khama's exit from the BDP, the UDC was linked to Khama after he made it clear that he would be supporting the opposition, and Boko allowed for a loose alliance with the BPF.¹⁴⁷ Overall, public perception of the UDC is that it is highly unstable, the cracks within the coalition are visible for all to see, which creates a high level of distrust and presented them with a crisis of low public perception. This was in addition to their failure to connect with the everyday Motswana, particularly in rural areas, campaigning largely in urban areas and on social media. In 2019, the UDC sought to rectify this disconnect by rolling out a massive campaign covering the whole of Botswana. Its manifesto, with the slogan *Decent Jobs, Decent Lives*, also promised a wide variety of changes and policies to specifically attract the support of rural voters.¹⁴⁸

Through a philosophy of "unity through strength", the coalition has overcome the usual divisions inherent in opposition groups to present a credible electoral challenge and political alternative to the dominance of the BDP. Divisions and factionalism do appear in the alliance. However, overall the UDC has steadily improved its parliamentary representation and, prior to the 2019 elections, was poised to offer the BDP its most formidable match-up.

3.2.3. Botswana Patriotic Front

The end of May 2019 saw both the exit of former president Khama and the formation of the latest entry to the electoral race, the BPF.¹⁴⁹ While former Minister and Member of Parliament (MP) for Tati West Biggie Butale came to be the president of the BPF, the party's patron, Khama, has proven to be the one in

control.¹⁵⁰ Being as new to the electoral space as the BPF, its members consists mostly of disgruntled BDP members, some of which lost the party's primary elections.¹⁵¹ Even Butale fell among primary election losers after his humiliating defeat in August 2018 following a growing sentiment of contempt towards his leadership of the constituency.¹⁵² Due to this membership base, the BPF is often perceived as a 'coalition of the bitter'. Further to this, the party is also seen as a mere pawn in Khama's campaign against Masisi with the core campaign objective of robbing the ruling party and



boosting the opposition's chances of victory.¹⁵³ Unlike the more prominent parties, which had more time to formulate and pursue a certain ideology, this component appears to elude the BPF. It has been argued that populism is an ideology permeating both global and domestic politics,¹⁵⁴ though the term populism is used

¹⁴⁶ Mmolawa, T. "BPP snubs UDC meeting". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <https://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7064-bpp-snubs-udc-meeting.html>.

¹⁴⁷ "Botswana votes as President Masisi faces surprising challenge". *Al Jazeera*, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/botswana-votes-president-masisi-faces-surprising-challenge-191023053458753.html>

¹⁴⁸ Mokwena, N. "UDC rolls out massive election Campaign". *Botswana Guardian*, 2019. <http://www.botswanaguardian.co.bw/news/item/4064-udc-rolls-out-massive-election-campaign.html>

¹⁴⁹ Motlhoka, T. "Khama officially quits BDP as new party is confirmed". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/khama-officially-quits-bdp-new-party-confirmed>

¹⁵⁰ Ndhlovu, M. "Khama's hand still rocks Botswana". *Mail & Guardian*, 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-10-17-khamas-hand-still-rocks-botswana>

¹⁵¹ "Khama's BPF yet to define itself". *Mmegi*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82133&dir=2019/august/09>

¹⁵² Mmolawa, C. "BPP's Makhani slams Biggie Butale's leadership in Tati West". *The Botswana Gazette*, 2018. <https://www.thegazette.news/news/bpps-makhani-slams-biggie-butales-leadership-in-tati-west/24648/>

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, Ndhlovu, 2019

¹⁵⁴ Ntshingane, B. "Is populism surging into Botswana politics?". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82230&dir=2019/august/16>

pejoratively and rather synonymously with demagoguery. Demagogues are politicians that position themselves as one of the 'common people', triggering waves of powerful emotion, manipulating this emotion for political benefit, and threaten established principles of governance.¹⁵⁵ Considering the pace at which the BPF needed to garner awareness and support, it would be natural for it to appeal to some measure of populism, though not to the degree demagoguery. As far as ideology goes, however, the BPF might only be characterised by its appeal to populism.

Overall, the BPF's main strength comes from their affiliation with Khama, the Bangwato's Kgosi, and the resultant support from Botswana's largest Tswana tribe. Other than this, Khama's power in the BPF tends to dominate most facets of its campaign with little to check or limit his decisions. The BPF is criticised for expressing very little policy discourse with their only aims and goals reflecting populist rhetoric aimed at opposing the BDP.¹⁵⁶

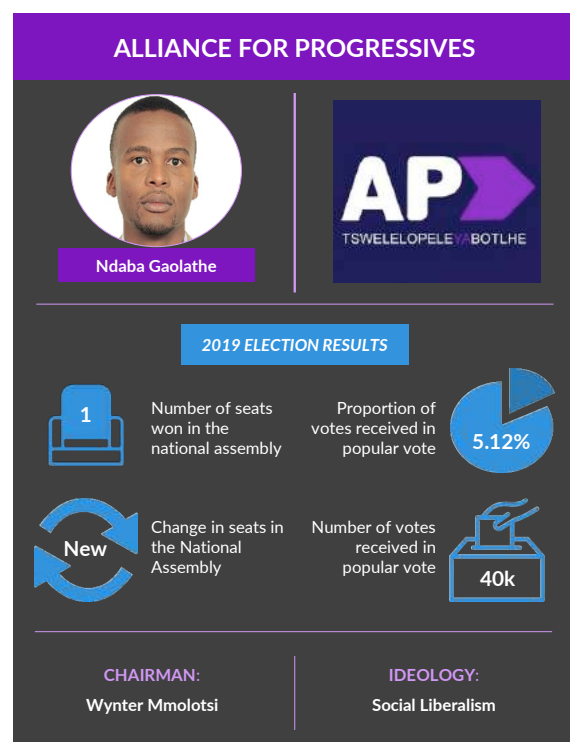
3.2.4. Alliance for Progressives

Born from the party factionalism of the BMD, the Gaolathe-Mmolotsi¹⁵⁷ faction was seen as the more progressive, stable and principled side compared to the Pilane faction.¹⁵⁸ The AP is one of the newer political parties joining the political arena in Botswana. Led by Ndaba Gaolathe, who is well-regarded amongst the people, particularly in urban areas, he is intelligent with strong family ties, being the son of the late former finance minister Baledzi Gaolathe. They preach a "new Botswana"¹⁵⁹ which is clean and corrupt free - a mission which is made credible by the party's consistent efforts to remain honest in a less than honourable political playing field.

In the midst of political feuds, friction and instability, the AP proved to be the sole stable party in a sea of instability.¹⁶⁰ It is the only party in the political arena that managed to avoid party

in-fighting and factionalism leading up to the 2019 elections, save for some defections.¹⁶¹

They are a peaceful and well-organised party, which gives them credibility over their opponents. However, their disinclination towards forming any sort of alliance left the AP with little influence in the 2019 electoral landscape despite their promising policies of a 'new Botswana'. They are not as well-known in areas outside of the urban cities and towns given they have only been in existence for two years and where they are known, it is only relative as people are still establishing their opinions on them as an independent party. The AP is one of the few that had teams on the ground during voter-registration periods encouraging and assisting people to register.¹⁶²



Further diverging from its opposers, the AP was also one of the few political parties to provide truly comprehensive policy discourse, including an outline of how they intend to reach their goals

¹⁵⁵ Signer, M. "Donald Trump wasn't a textbook demagogue. Until now". *The Washington Post*, 2015. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/12/02/donald-trump-wasnt-a-text-book-demagogue-until-now/>

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, "Khama's BPF yet to define itself", 2019

¹⁵⁷ Wynter Mmolotsi is the Vice President of the Alliance for Progressives

¹⁵⁸ Dube, C. "BMD factions come face-to-face in Bobonong". *Mmegi*, 2017. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=70271&dir=2017/july/14>

¹⁵⁹ Gaolathe, N. "Birth of Alliance for Progressives". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2017. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/analysis-opinions/item/4735-birth-of-alliance-for-progressives.html>

¹⁶⁰ Mkhutswa, L. "Stable' AP to attract many to its fold". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81152&dir=2019/may/31>

¹⁶¹ Dube, C. "Defector Kgari opens up". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82812&dir=2019/september/20>

¹⁶² Gabathuse, R. & Mosikare, L. "Trying times for political parties". *Mmegi*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=79118&dir=2019/january/11>

and fulfil their promises.¹⁶³ While many Batswana concur that the AP is an impeccable political party, limited awareness coupled with the dominance of the BDP and the UDC leaves the AP to take a backseat in the 2019 elections.

3.3. Key stakeholders

In light of the intricate dynamics of Botswana's 2019 General Elections attention should also be paid to individual role-players exerting a significant influence on the electoral landscape. While Khama and Masisi, for example, have been mentioned quite a few times, there remains scope for further delineation of these, and other key stakeholders.

A key example of a prominent stakeholder is Prince Maele who contested the 2019 elections as an independent candidate. Maele, former Minister of Land Management, Water and Sanitation, as well as the MP for Lerala-Maunatlala prior to the 2019 elections was suspended from the BDP towards the end of 2018 following his public support for the former president.¹⁶⁴ His prominence, however, comes about through his influence in the 2019 elections after his constituency reiterated their support for Maele regardless of his affiliation.¹⁶⁵ It was quite obvious that Maele would be a key factor in the elections with various parties courting him prior to the election.¹⁶⁷ Maele went on to contest the elections independently and while he acquired double the number of votes of the UDC, the BDP's Sethabelo Modukanele still managed to secure the constituency.¹⁶⁸ Though many try, independent candidates rarely make such a big impact in a constituency and, if Maele were to join a party such as the BPF or UDC prior to the elections, his chances might have looked a lot better and the end result slightly different.



One of Khama's key focus areas was the banning of ivory trading in Botswana
Image courtesy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3.3.1. Ian Khama

Khama is the eldest son of Sir Seretse Khama, hereditary leader of the Bamangwato tribe. He served as Commander of the Botswana Defence Force and entered politics in 1998 winning several Parliamentary elections as Member of Parliament for Serowe North and served as Vice-President from 1998 to 2008 and as President from 2008 to 2018.¹⁶⁹ Khama can be described as a self-assured, technocratic leader, someone with a world vision and a modern approach to political issues. He has been criticised for ignoring the African Union and for criticising regional leaders. In interviews, Khama stated that he left office willingly and believes that Presidents should face the laws of their countries if they had done anything wrong¹⁷⁰ – this despite Botswana's constitution absolving its president from any legal proceedings during their tenure.¹⁷¹

Though he claimed to have had a zero-tolerance policy against corruption, critics asserted that Khama had become increasingly authoritarian, corrupt and inflexible. He is accused of having created a security structure that was

¹⁶³ "2019 Abridged Manifesto". *Alliance for Progressives*, 2019. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wRSeNSi7F62_7FZdgMAyTviFnGFDGlgq/view?fbclid=IwAR0-kLdD6vVsR8veeS-6pRcHygzZRkf7FGON26cxD5T3HIUcl5Zm9OuLof4

¹⁶⁴ Komane, K. "Botswana's big men battle it out". *Mail & Guardian*, 2018. <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-12-14-00-botswanas-big-men-battle-it-out>

¹⁶⁵ Gabathuse, R & Seepi, B. "Maele journeys anew into opposition politics". *Mmegi*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81249&dir=2019/june/07>

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁷ Baaitse, D. "Political parties scramble for independent Maele". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6909>

¹⁶⁸ "Votes by Constituency 2019". *Botswana IEC*, 2019. <https://govbw.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/f2d3b68da67c48138de0c9a7ff88ba9e>

¹⁶⁹ "Ian Khama". *Prabook*, 2018. <https://prabook.com/web/ian.khama/1344171>

¹⁷⁰ "Botswana Ian Khama: Leaving office not a train smash". *BBC News*, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-43785765/botswana-s-ian-khama-leaving-office-not-a-train-smash>

¹⁷¹ *Constitution of Botswana | Section 41*. Republic of Botswana. 2002: Gaborone.

unaccountable, and guilty of extrajudicial killings, the Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services (DISS).¹⁷² Khama was further accused of nepotism and of having personal interests in environmental developments which were favoured by his policies.¹⁷³

Due to his intense commitment to work, Khama was considered an extraordinary, enigmatic man; with a long-lasting love for pace and adventure; and a leader who had the reputation of doing things his way and on his own. Said to be extremely stubborn, Khama would rarely listen to other people's opinions. This manifested in him choosing Masisi as his successor, almost resulting in a cabinet revolt, as some felt he wasn't the right candidate for the job.¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, Khama has had a long history of political contest with the former Leader of the Opposition, Duma Boko, who now heads the UDC coalition. Boko in the past accused him of being ineffective, militaristic and dictatorial, attributing a clout of hypocrisy over Boko's decision to ally with Khama in 2019.¹⁷⁵ As both the former president, son of the First President, and rightful chief of the Bangwato people, the magnitude of Khama's influence should never be underestimated. Taking into account his ties to the DISS and the military, Khama proves to be one of a handful of elite Batswana wielding significant political power in Botswana.

3.3.2. Mokgweetsi Masisi

Prior to his entrance into the political arena, 58-year old Masisi, was relatively unknown, starting his career in teaching before expanding into education programmes development. Born in Moshupa, a small village found in Botswana's Kgatleng district, located in the southern region of Botswana, President Masisi is the son of the late Edison Setlthomo Masisi. Edison Masisi was a former minister in Seretse's cabinet and former MP for Moshupa.¹⁷⁶ In 1995, Masisi joined UNICEF as an Education Project Officer, working to develop education programmes for children in remote areas and pregnant students. He also

initiated policy reforms to implement special programmes previously excluded in Botswana, as well as in Eastern and Southern Africa.¹⁷⁷ He resigned from UNICEF in 2003 to join politics, contesting in the BDP primary elections in Moshupa. Whilst he was unsuccessful in his initial run, he was elected as the Deputy Secretary General of the BDP's Moshupa Branch Committee, his official entry into politics.



*Masisi's time in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development saw focus placed on reducing alcohol and drug dependencies
Image courtesy of Michael Mayer*

In his second attempt, Masisi won the Moshupa primary elections in 2008, later securing the seat to become the MP for Moshupa in 2009. From here, Masisi saw an unprecedented rise in political ranks, as he was immediately appointed to the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration as an Assistant Minister.¹⁷⁸ He was then promoted to full time Minister of Presidential Affairs in 2011, where he spearheaded the Poverty Eradication programme and the expansion of Botswana Television and Radio Botswana. In 2014, Masisi was transferred to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development on an acting basis, a position which he retained following his re-election in the 2014 elections. Masisi was hand-picked by then

¹⁷² "Africa 360 - The politics of Botswana". eNCA, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6xGYYsPKII>

¹⁷³ Dithase, Y. "Khama Inc: All the president's family, friends and close colleagues". *Mail & Guardian*, 2012.

<https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-02-00-khama-inc-all-the-presidents-family-friends-and-close-colleagues>

¹⁷⁴ Allison, S. "Ian Khama and the post-presidential blues". *Mail & Guardian*, 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-06-07-00-ian-khama-and-the-post-presidential-blues>

¹⁷⁵ Fabricus, P. "Ian Khama formalises his divorce from Botswana's ruling party". *Institute for Security Studies*, 2019. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/ian-khama-formalises-his-divorce-from-botswanas-ruling-party>

[org/iss-today/ian-khama-formalises-his-divorce-from-botswanas-ruling-party](https://issafrica.org/iss-today/ian-khama-formalises-his-divorce-from-botswanas-ruling-party)

¹⁷⁶ Komane, K. et al. "Who is Botswana's new President Mokgweetsi Masisi?". *Mail & Guardian*, 2018. <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-04-03-who-is-botswanas-new-president-mokgweetsi-masisi>

¹⁷⁷ "Profile of His Honour Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana". *Botswana Government*. <http://www.gov.bw/en/News/Masisi-is-the-Vice-President-of-the-Republic/>

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*

President Khama to be his successor in November 2014, a move which would mark the key determinant to a successful political career.

President Masisi has been described as an “earnest, highly educated, elitist and remote” leader.¹⁷⁹ In comparison to the former president, he is perceived to be lacking in charisma, however, over the course of his first year as President, Masisi has presented to be an assertive, eloquent and driven leader, committed to the empowerment of his people. Considering his current career trajectory, Masisi has proved to be the ultimate survivor.¹⁸⁰ He exhibits a spirit of perseverance, the ability to adapt to the political climate when necessary, coupled with a strong commitment to a long-term vision as an individual as well as for the collective of the nation. Masisi came into politics relatively unknown, his father being a former political figure and his claim to fame, a factor which for most, would not justify the rapid rise through which Masisi attained the top office.

Masisi aligned himself to Khama early on which carried him through many attempts on his position. The most significant of these attempts was that of the Cabinet retreat in 2017. Ministers along with Khama had planned to oust him as Vice-President, citing a lack of experience for the job. Masisi survived the attempted coup thanks to a surprise turn from Khama, who is said to have been trying to curry favour and loyalty with Masisi for his own future benefit.¹⁸¹

As a result of his alignment with Khama, analysts had expected the President's leadership style to follow that of Khama, based on their close relationship as President and Vice-President.¹⁸² The expectation was that Masisi would continue to be unfavourable to the media, intolerant to the needs of public servants and civil society as a whole. Despite this expectation, Masisi has

proved the observers wrong, asserting himself and his style of leadership, independent of the former President's. Following a year of the Masisi presidency, he can be described as a transparent, open and compassionate leader that is consultative, extremely patriotic and committed to the empowerment of Botswana, in order to take the country to the next level.

3.3.3. Additional influencers

Aside from the two main opposing forces and the key role-players vested in the political parties, a handful of external individuals, such as Bridgette Motsepe Radebe and Zunaide Moti, have grown to become prominent talking points in discussions pertaining to the elections. While not as prominent as Khama or Masisi, nor the leaders of political parties, regardless, these individuals raised a few eyebrows and saw to an alteration of the 2019 election course.

3.3.3.1. Bridgette Motsepe Radebe

On the 31st of March 2019, a local newspaper, the *Sunday Standard's*, headline read “New Jerusalem Vic Falls Secret Meeting Scuttled” kickstarting media coverage of Bridgette's influence in Botswana.¹⁸³ ¹⁸⁴ What ensued after this article was a myriad of threatening court summonses from Bridgette¹⁸⁵ and her brother Patrice Motsepe¹⁸⁶ towards the *Sunday Standard* and even Bridgette's husband, former South African Minister Jeff Radebe, threatening to sue Khama for wrecking his marriage.¹⁸⁷

At present, little concrete evidence has emerged from the allegations surrounding Bridgette's secret meeting with Khama, with the goal to discuss the funding of Khama's campaign against Masisi. This included the initial attempt to replace Masisi as BDP chairman with Pelonomi Venson-Moitsoi – which failed miserably after

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, Komane et al, 2018

¹⁸⁰ Mokone, O. & Mogapi, S. Masisi: “The ultimate survivor”. *Sunday Standard*, 2018. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/masisi-%E2%80%93-93-ultimate-survivor>

¹⁸¹ Ibid

¹⁸² “From Khama to Masisi: A whole new style of Botswana leadership?”. *Sunday Standard*, 2017. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/khama-masisi-whole-new-%C2%A0style-%C2%A0-botswana-leadership>

¹⁸³ Khama, S.K.I. “RESPONSE TO SUNDAY STANDARD NEWSPAPER ARTICLE TITLED ‘NEW JERUSALEM VIC FALLS SECRET MEETING SCUTTLED’”. Facebook, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/667630409972128/posts/response-to-sunday-standard-newspaper-article-titled-new-jerusalem-vic-falls-sec/2023740807694408/>

¹⁸⁴ Du Plessis, C. “Secret meeting between businesswoman Bridgette Radebe and Ian Khama intercepted, claims report”. *Daily Maverick*, 2019. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-04-05-secret-meeting-between-businesswoman-bridgette-radebe-and-khama-intercepted-claims-report/>

¹⁸⁵ Ngcobo, K. “Bridgette Motsepe-Radebe to sue Botswana newspaper over coup claims”. *Independent Online*, 2019. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/bridgette-motsepe-radebe-to-sue-botswana-newspaper-over-coup-claims-36384297>

¹⁸⁶ Dlamini, P. “Patrice Motsepe sues Botswana paper for defamation”. *TimesLIVE*, 2019. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-06-06-motsepe-sues-paper-for-defamation/>

¹⁸⁷ “Motsepe's husband to sue Khama for marriage wrecking”. *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/motsepe%E2%80%99s-husband-sue-khama-marriage-wrecking>

Venson-Moitsoi withdrew her candidature,¹⁸⁸ the funding of Khama's newly formed BPF,¹⁸⁹ as well as a secret deal with the UDC.¹⁹⁰ There were even rumours of an affair between Bridgette and Khama doing the rounds.¹⁹¹



Bridgette and her husband, Jeff Radebe, attended the South African State of the Nation Address in 2018. Image courtesy of Government ZA

Although Bridgette and Khama have both dismissed claims of the former's involvement in

Botswana's political landscape, the Motsepe's renowned wealth¹⁹² coupled with the strong ties between the Khama's and Motsepe's¹⁹³ does create a scenario in which these allegations might hold some ground. Accordingly, this would explain the opposition's, especially the BPF, ability to launch an impactful campaign in such a short period of time.

3.3.3.2. Zunaïd Moti

On the topic of party funding, Moti has seen his name surface quite a few times in Botswana media.^{194 195 196 197} Returning to South Africa in January 2019, after being detained for five months in a German jail, Moti's controversial public perception only worsens by the day.¹⁹⁸ Further to this disconcerting image of the South African businessman, is his almost overzealous monetary support for the UDC, and allegations of Gupta-like capture tactics aimed at Botswana and Zimbabwe.¹⁹⁹

It is commonly believed that the UDC's massive 2019 Election campaign would not have been possible without Moti's support tactics which, amongst others, included the use of a small business jet and a helicopter both painted with the UDC's branding to transport the party's leadership across the country for the various party candidate launches.²⁰⁰ In light of the UDC's financially intensive campaign, the topic of party funders has grown prominent among analysts. Here, the argument is that significant party funders tend to strategically promote parties and politicians in order to build a good relationship and ultimately allow for the influence of these politicians to inevitably sway policy discourse in

¹⁸⁸ "Botswana's ruling party names Masisi as candidate for October vote". *The Citizen*, 2019. <https://citizen.co.za/news/news-africa/2112912/botswanas-ruling-party-names-masisi-as-candidate-for-october-vote/>

¹⁸⁹ Van der Walt, S. "Motsepe-Radebe ontken beweringe uit Botswana". *Netwerk24*, 2019. <https://www.netwerk24.com/Nuus/Algemeen/motsepe-radebe-ontken-beweringe-uit-botswana-2019-1031>

¹⁹⁰ "UDC in secret deal with Bridgette Motsepe/Khama". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/udc-secret-deal-bridgette-motsepekham>

¹⁹¹ Mahlangu, S. & Chetty, K. "I did not have an affair with Bridgette Motsepe-Radebe, says Khama". *Independent Online*, 2019. <https://www.iol.co.za/sundayindependent/news/i-did-not-have-an-affair-with-bridgette-motsepe-radebe-says-khama-36982761>

¹⁹² Mbanjwa, X. "Father of SA tycoon dies". *Independent Online*, 2007. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/father-of-sa-tycoon-dies-359104>

¹⁹³ Madisa, K. "He's a family friend" - Motsepe defends meeting with Botswana's Ian Khama". *Sowetan Live*, 2019. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2019-06-14-hes-a-family-friend-motsepe-defends-meeting-with-botswanas-ian-khama/>

¹⁹⁴ Masalila, T. "Is Boko and UDC binging on controversial funds from South African businessman Moti?". *Mmegi*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82144&dir=2019/august/09>

¹⁹⁵ "Moti and Boko conspire to undo Saleshando". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/moti-and-boko-conspire-un-do-saleshando>

¹⁹⁶ "Moti's Botswana/Zimbabwe power grab exposed". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/moti%E2%80%99s-botswanazimbabwe-power-grab-exposed>

¹⁹⁷ Odubeng, M. "Who Will Have the Last Laugh". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83192&dir=2019/october/21>

¹⁹⁸ Rupiah, K. "Moti back from stint in German jail". *Mail & Guardian*, 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-22-moti-back-from-stint-in-german-jail>

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, "Moti's Botswana/Zimbabwe power grab exposed", 2019

²⁰⁰ Gibson, E. "Controversial SA businessman Zunaïd Moti's planes for Botswana UDC impounded". *City Press*, 2019. <https://citypress.news24.com/News/controversial-sa-businessman-zunaïd-motis-planes-for-botswana-udc-impounded-20190428>

favour of the funder's business interests.²⁰¹ Although Moti might not be the only stakeholder in the opposition coalition, the emergence of his prominent influence in the UDC, coupled with the argument above, and further exacerbated by his murky track record, has fuelled the topic of questionable party funders, Moti in particular, working against the campaign efforts of the UDC. The presence of a South African businessman linked to a plethora of questionable business deals and international events in the opposition only saw the UDC connoted with questionable politics, a trend of uncertainty and a rising concern for a massively corrupt Boko government. Moti's financial support was originally aimed at promoting the UDC, enabling it to contest at the grand level of the BDP, though ultimately turned out to be one of the critical weaknesses in the UDC's 2019 contest.

3.3.3.3. Isaac Kgosi & Peter Magosi

One of Masisi's first acts as President was to dismiss the revered Director of the DISS, Isaac Kgosi²⁰² – a known Khama loyalist²⁰³ – and replace him with Peter Magosi, a man that was repeatedly rejected for key posts by the former president.²⁰⁴ Vested in their shared experiences in the military, Khama appointed Kgosi as the Director of the DISS shortly after its formation. From here, the DISS, under Kgosi and Khama, became known to be a truly dominating force seemingly operating above Botswana law. After almost a decade of Botswana living in fear of then President Khama and his spy agency, Khama's tenure came to an end and so did Kgosi's.²⁰⁵ Throughout this time, Kgosi was known to be the right-hand man of Khama operating within the key power base of the DISS.²⁰⁷ In January 2019, however, Kgosi was publicly arrested on suspicion of tax evasion²⁰⁸ with allegations of compromising state security

following soon after.²⁰⁹ While Kgosi violated his bail conditions, leaving the country to receive medical treatment in Malaysia, recent reports have indicated that Kgosi is travelling back to Botswana ready to face the charges lodged against him.²¹⁰ Kgosi's ties and relationships in the DISS makes him a constant security concern, especially due to his ties with Khama. Through the DISS, Kgosi has spurred fear among the population, rendering many vulnerable to the influence of both himself and Khama.

Kgosi's replacement, Magosi, came into his new position with an aim to reform and reposition the DISS, particularly the perception that the intelligence agency operates above the law.²¹² Despite the change in leadership, it has been argued that the continued presence of the DISS and the lack of legislative reforms railing in the DISS's power only goes to show that the DISS remains to be more of the same.²¹³ Harassment of the media seems to continue with the DISS searching the house and seizing a cell phone of a *Mmegi* reporter in July 2019. While the officers motivated their entry as connected to a larger investigation into former DISS Director Kgosi, the reporter still maintained that the conduct of the investigation came across as unconstitutional deprivation of property and protection.²¹⁴ Magosi has also been the key component in the suspected assassination intel on President Masisi, delivering the news at just

²⁰¹ Gabathuse, R. "How money influences politics". *Mmegi*, 2019.

<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82440&dir=2019/august/30>

²⁰² Kgalemang, T. "Isaac Kgosi not going alone". *Weekend Post*, 2018.

<https://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=5118>

²⁰³ "The Rise and Fall of Ik". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019.

<http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/6579-the-rise-and-fall-of-ik.html>

²⁰⁴ Komane, K. & Konopo, J. "Who is Botswana's new spy chief?". *INK Centre for Investigative Journalism*, 2018.

<https://mg.co.za/article/2018-07-17-00-who-is-botswanas-new-spy-chief>

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, "The Rise and Fall of Ik", 2019

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, Komane, & Konopo, "Who is Botswana's new spy chief?", 2018

²⁰⁷ Dithlase, Y. "Khama Inc: All the president's family, friends and close colleagues". *Mail & Guardian*, 2012.

<https://mg.co.za/article/2012-11-02-00-khama-inc-all-the-presidents-family-friends-and-close-colleagues>

²⁰⁸ Komane, K. "Botswana arrests ex-spy boss". *Mail & Guardian*, 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-01-18-botswana-arrests-ex-spy-boss>

²⁰⁹ "Botswana court issues warrant of arrest for wanted fugitive, Isaac Kgosi". *Political Analysis South Africa*, 2019.

<https://www.politicalanalysis.co.za/botswana-court-issues-warrant-of-arrest-for-wanted-fugitive-isaac-kgosi/>

²¹⁰ *Ibid*

²¹¹ "Kgosi coming home from Malaysia". *Mmegi*, 2019.

<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83372&dir=2019/november/05>

²¹² *Ibid*, Komane, & Konopo, "Who is Botswana's new spy chief?", 2018

²¹³ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

²¹⁴ Mokwape, M. "Mmegi journalist files urgent application". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81932&dir=2019/july/26>

the right moments.²¹⁵ ²¹⁶ ²¹⁷ The opposition, especially the UDC, however, remain unconvinced arguing that the claims are lies created by the intelligence agency to garner sympathy votes for Masisi.²¹⁸ It remains uncertain whether there were any tangible threats on Masisi's life, or if the UDC were correct in their critique of the events. Regardless, the delivery of the news on the alleged assassination attempts did go a long way to paint Masisi as the liberator facing threats that seek to silence his movement. For a party looking to do as much as possible in a covert manner, this would most definitely be a very large part in the promotion of the public's perception towards Masisi and the BDP.

3.3.3.4. Tshekedi Khama

The last piece of the prominent stakeholder puzzle is the younger of the two politician Khama brothers, Tshekedi Khama. From 2012 until 2018, under the tenure of his brother, Tshekedi was minister of Environment, Conservation, Natural Resources and Tourism, an economically important ministry in Botswana. However, when Masisi came to power, Tshekedi was 'demoted' to the less authoritative ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture Development after a period of tension and disagreement surrounding a new policy to review the hunting ban in the country.²¹⁹ Although Tshekedi was not in favour of Masisi's decision, he maintained that he respected the decision by president Masisi and had never had any dispute with the president and openly takes the challenge to spearhead the ministry and involve the youth on the development of the country.²²⁰

Since Khama's exit from the BDP, questions persisted regarding Tshekedi's allegiance as he remained a loyal BDP member for the majority of the year.²²¹ ²²² This abruptly changed when



*Tshekedi's place in the cabinet has been revoked by new president Masisi
Image courtesy of the World Tourism Organisation*

Tshekedi quit the ruling party a few hours prior to the deadline for Parliamentary candidate nominations.²²³ According to the local media, the original plan was to have a number of sleeper MPs in the BDP that would act in accordance with Tshekedi's behaviour. Similar to Tshekedi's timing, these members would all resign a few hours before the nomination deadline leaving the BDP with a very large hole to fill, and many new constituency candidates that had little time for a fresh campaign. As a result, the BDP would have been truly weak and vulnerable at which time the opposition would almost surely win the elections.²²⁴ Unfortunately for the two Khama brothers and the opposition, Tshekedi was the only one to leave the ruling party in accordance with this strategy. The exit nevertheless saw to the BPF comfortably winning the Serowe West constituency under Tshekedi's candidature. While Khama is still a retired former president, enjoying the benefits that accompany such a title, Tshekedi's exit from the BDP saw him excluded from Masisi's new cabinet announced in November 2019.²²⁵

²¹⁵ "Masisi On Security Alert Following Death Threats". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/masisi-security-alert-following-death-threats>

²¹⁶ Nqola, R. "Botswana Intelligence Dept Confirms Plot to Assassinate President Masisi". *Eyewitness News*, 2019. <https://ewn.co.za/2019/08/05/botswana-intelligence-dept-confirms-plot-to-assassinate-president-masisi>

²¹⁷ Seven, G. "Masisi's life under threat - DIS". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <https://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6564>

²¹⁸ Tiro, B. "Masisi assassination threats lies -UDC". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <https://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7177-masisi-assassination-threats-lies-udc.html>

²¹⁹ Kanon, R. "Tshekedi Demoted". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2018. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/6519-tshekedi-demoted.html>

²²⁰ Gasennelwe, U. "Tshekedi unhappy with Masisi decision". *Weekend Post*, 2018. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=5962>

²²¹ Kanono, R. "Tshekedi steps out of Ian's shadow". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <https://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7555-tshekedi-steps-out-of-ian%E2%80%99s-shadow.html>

²²² Ramatiti, K. "Tshekedi pins his future on Khama". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <https://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6662>

²²³ "Tshekedi quits BDP". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82876&dir=2019/sepember/25>

²²⁴ Keleboge, M. "Khama's 11th Hour Ambush Flops". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/khamas-11th%C2%A0hour-ambush-flops>

²²⁵ Lenna, P. "New cabinet in". *Botswana Daily News*, 2019. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=52733>

3.4. Prominent Developments

Under Botswana's 1965 penal code, homosexuality is punishable by a jail term of up to seven years. After more than 50 years, however, Botswana's High Court ruled in June 2019 in favour of decriminalizing homosexuality.²²⁶ While Botswana's LGBT community and the world rejoiced, the government, through the Attorney General, announced plans to appeal the High Court ruling citing that the high court overstepped its boundaries by overruling an earlier decision of the Court of Appeal in *Kanane V State* in 2003.^{227 228} Events such as this spur significant change in Botswana's socio-political sphere which holds the potential to spill over to other spheres such as political party dynamics and perceptions. Accordingly, key developments prove to be a necessary component in understanding the socio-political Botswana context.

Although this report does not seek to provide a full historical record of Botswana's rise to success, a perspective that is of significant value pertains to the electoral developments that have unfolded since the BDP's victory in 2014. To better grasp the context in which Botswana's 2019 General Elections played out, it is vital to consider these developments and how it has shaped the country's socio-political landscape leading to the country's first truly competitive elections. For example, in 2014 the BDP cruised to a majority victory securing 33 of 57 constituencies, despite the rise of the UDC and the electorate's aversion towards Khama.²²⁹ Following the BDP victory in 2014, Khama was re-elected as president until his retirement in 2018. In 2019, however, Khama threw his weight behind the opposition²³⁰ signalling a whole new set of dynamics contained in this year's elections. For this reason, it is necessary to

revisit what has changed since the BDP, under Khama, emerged victorious in 2014.

Following the 2014 BDP victory, Khama saw to the appointment of Masisi as his Vice-President, paving the way for Masisi's ultimate ascension to the presidency in 2018.²³¹ Masisi, however, was never Khama's first choice, with the general impression being that his younger brother, Tshekedi, would be the chosen subordinate and ultimately his successor.²³² To the detriment of this sentiment, the idea of Tshekedi as Vice-President saw stiff opposition in both parliament and within the BDP which forced Khama to look for a viable alternative.²³³ At first, Khama approached then minister of Labour and Home Affairs minister, Nonofo Molefhi, who turned down the offer. As a result, Masisi came in as the next best option. Masisi's nomination, however, came with the alleged condition that he would hand over the position of Vice-President to Tshekedi prior to Khama's retirement, effectively seeing to another Khama in the State House.²³⁴ Unfortunately for the Khama's, Masisi was not intent on entertaining this grand scheme and proved to be quite the tactical politician, both winning Khama's favour over Tshekedi²³⁵ and eventually ascending to the president of Botswana in 2018.²³⁶ The argument appears to be that Masisi successfully duped his superior, only revealing his hand once he held the powers of the president.²³⁷ Whether this argument proves true remains uncertain, although the choice of Vice-President in 2014 set the stage for a plethora of events leading up to quite the interesting round of elections in 2019.

²²⁶ "Botswana scraps anti-gay laws in landmark decision". *Business Day*, 2019. <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/africa/2019-06-11-botswana-scraps-anti-gay-laws-in-landmark-decision/>

²²⁷ Benza, B. "Botswana seeks to overturn ruling that legalized gay sex". *Reuters*, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-botswana-lgbt/botswana-seeks-to-overturn-ruling-that-legalized-gay-sex-idUSKCN1U1071>

²²⁸ "Botswana to appeal ruling decriminalising homosexuality". *BBC News*, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48892517>

²²⁹ "Botswana ruling party wins national elections". *Al Jazeera*, 2014. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/10/botswana-ruling-party-wins-national-elections-2014102614335233589.html>

²³⁰ "Botswana ex-president backs opposition ahead of poll" *Mail & Guardian*, 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-10-14-botswana-ex-president-backs-opposition-ahead-of-poll>

²³¹ Allison, S. "Khama anoints a second choice successor in Botswana". *Daily Maverick*, 2014.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-11-14-khama-anoints-a-second-choice-successor-in-botswana/>

²³² "Khama snubs Tshekedi". *Botswana Guardian*, 2014.

<http://www.botswanaguardian.co.bw/news/item/1108-khama-snubs-tshekedi.html>

²³³ *Ibid*, Allison, 2014

²³⁴ *Ibid*, "Khama snubs Tshekedi", 2014

²³⁵ Mmeso, P. "Respect my VP! Khama warns Tshekedi". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2017. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/4006-respect-my-vp-khama-warns-tshekedi.html>

²³⁶ *Ibid*, Komane et al., 2018

²³⁷ Owino, W. "Botswana's President Masisi fooled his master Ian Khama". *The East African*, 2019. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/oped/comment/Botswana-President-Masisi-feud-Ian-Khama/434750-5205508-14fu78r/index.html>

3.4.1. BCP licking their wounds

Prior to the 2014 elections, the opposition came together forming the UDC – an electoral coalition at the time consisting of the BMD, BNF and BPP – with the exclusion of another key opposing contestant, the BCP. Despite a strong contest from the BCP in many constituencies, its decision to contest outside of the UDC coalition saw it being punished at the polls, securing only three seats in parliament, and the UDC coming in with 17 seats.²³⁸ From just the seats alone, a UDC coalition including the BCP does not seem like it would have toppled the BDP, though in many constituencies the contest was split between the three contenders in such a way that the UDC, with the BCP, would have most certainly seen an electoral victory. The realisation of their mistake already sparked cognitive dissonance within the BCP and was further spurred on by the mass resignation of the party's youth membership in protest to the party leadership's reluctance to initiate unity talks with the UDC.²³⁹

After analysing the holes in their contesting of the 2014 elections, it became evident that the BCP not only suffered against a stronger, smarter UDC campaign, but also from stubborn candidates and members not adhering to the proposed campaign strategies.²⁴⁰ It became clear that change was needed to revamp the BCP and its members and to align the party in a more strategic position heading into the 2019 elections. However, remaining stubborn, the BCP once again chose to contest the 2015 Goodhope-Mabule by-election alone and was once again met with an abysmal defeat. In the face of yet another defeat and a declining supporter base, the BCP announced their plans to initiate unity talks with the UDC towards the end of August 2015.²⁴¹

By 2016, the BCP seemed eager to join the coalition while the UDC took a more systematic approach to unity talks.²⁴² However, before the

unity talks would come to fruition the BCP would first see a major setback with the loss of one of their three constituencies. In June 2016, former BCP MP for Okavango, Bagalatia Arone, defected to the BDP taking with him the Okavango constituency as well as his supporters, thereby leaving the BCP with only two seats in parliament.²⁴³



The Okavango Delta, otherwise known as the Jewel of the Kalahari Desert, is the flagship attraction of the larger Ngamiland district.

At the onset of 2017, the UDC confirmed that it successfully united four opposing parties under the UDC banner, including the BCP. As part of the alliance agreement, Boko also noted that the UDC agreed to allocate 17 constituencies to the BCP, with the BNF, BMD and BPP each receiving 22, 14 and four constituencies respectively.²⁴⁴ August 2017 officially saw the BCP merging with the UDC, with the opposition party informing the National Assembly Speaker to henceforth recognise all BCP members as UDC members of parliament instead.²⁴⁵

²³⁸ "General Elections 2014 Parliamentary Results". Botswana Independent Electoral Commission, 2014. <https://www.webcitation.org/6U6dkJmTS>

²³⁹ "Botswana Congress Party (BCP) youth". Weekend Post, 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/TheWeekendPostBW/posts/bcp-youth-turns-on-saleshando-joins-udc-division-on-opposition-unity-slowly-feas/915488131809075/>

²⁴⁰ "BCP F/Town Region Blames Candidates for General Election Loss". The Botswana Gazette, 2015. <https://www.thegazette.news/news/bcp-ftown-region-blames-candidates-for-general-election-loss/5134/#.XamLEegzblU>

²⁴¹ Kgosikeyatho, K. "UDC, BCP talks to start soon". The Patriot on Sunday, 2015. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/1362-udc-bcp-talks-to-start-soon.html>

²⁴² Mmeso, P. "Year of UDC, BCP romance". The Patriot on Sunday, 2016. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/1883-year-of-udc-bcp-romance.html>

²⁴³ "Arone not ashamed of joining BDP". Sunday Standard, 2016. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/arone-not-ashamed-joining-bdp>

²⁴⁴ Sibanda, A. "BCP joins UDC". Botswana Daily News, 2017. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=33798&flag=>

²⁴⁵ "BCP MPs join UDC in Parliament". Mmegi, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=70868&dir=2017/august/10>

3.4.2. BMD gives birth to AP

Since the formation of the BMD, following a split from the BDP in 2010,²⁴⁶ controversy tends to follow everywhere it goes. Most notably, after the 2014 elections factionalism significantly worsened within the BMD, reaching a boiling point in 2017 with the BMD's congress in Bobonong, which saw physical violence ensue between two BMD factions, one led by Sidney Pilane, and the other by Ndaba Gaolathe.²⁴⁷ After the events in Bobonong, Gaolathe and his acolytes urged the UDC to intervene and address the Pilane faction following the violent elective congress,²⁴⁸ but were ultimately unsatisfied with the UDC's efforts. This led to the Gaolathe faction forming a new political party, the Alliance for Progressives, towards the second semester of 2017.²⁴⁹ The formation of the AP was accompanied by the defection of six members of parliament, including Gaolathe and his deputy, Wynter Mmolotsi.²⁵⁰ At present, the AP is considered to be one of the cleanest and best organised parties in Botswana, though is still fairly new with a limited following and even more limited financial resources.

The BMD's controversy, however, does not halt with the effective expulsion of the Gaolathe faction. Increasingly, the sentiment emerged that Pilane, and thus the BMD, were in truth agents of the BDP, strategically placed to divide and unravel the opposition to ensure BDP reign.²⁵¹ While no tangible evidence exists to support this idea, the mere presence of the idea proved enough to upset the electorate and the coalition. Further contributing to the BMD's already questionable repertoire, the party failed to resolve its deadlock with the BNF over Moshupa-Manyana and Mmopane-Lentsweletau constituencies, and Pilane displayed uncontrollable media outbursts and a general lack of cooperation. With the continuous

difficulty from the BMD, the UDC National Executive Committee charged the BMD with bringing the UDC into disrepute and subsequently suspended the them from the coalition in October 2018.²⁵² In response, the BMD did not accept the suspension, though, after a number of court proceedings, Botswana's High Court ruled in favour of the UDC, officially seeing the BMD out of the coalition.²⁵³

3.4.3. Masisi ascends

Masisi's appointment as Vice-President laid the foundation for his ultimate ascendance to presidency of the country, though other events throughout the years cemented Masisi's claim to the proverbial throne. A rather interesting development pertains to Khama's change of heart, displaying an increase in regard for his deputy. Early in 2017, Khama addressed his brother, Tshekedi, commanding him to halt his negative comments on Masisi. After a family meeting in Rureitse, Tshekedi was told by both his older sister, Jacqueline Khama, and twin brother, Anthony Khama, to show respect towards Masisi and endorse him as chairman of the BDP in the July 2017 elective congress.²⁵⁴ This paved the way for another key event after Masisi's appointment. In the run-up to the congress, Khama endorsed Masisi for the position of chairperson where he was to contest against the Infrastructure, Science and Technology minister Nonfo Molefhi.²⁵⁵ Concurrently, Masisi emerged with the BDP chairmanship, securing his further ascension.²⁵⁶

On April 1, 2018, Khama officially and peacefully handed over the reins to his deputy, Masisi,²⁵⁷ and so the political theatre commenced. The first bit of friction started with Masisi's choice of Vice-President, which was that of Slumber Tsogwane rather than Tshekedi. Reportedly, Masisi's presidency was conditional, from

²⁴⁶ Ookeditse, L. "The split and the BDP dilemma". *Mmegi*, 2010. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=1&aid=2025&dir=2010/April/Friday30/>

²⁴⁷ Rantsimako, S. "Saleshando Urges UDC to Intervene in BMD Fiasco". *The Botswana Gazette*, 2017. <https://www.thegazette.news/news/saleshando-urges-udc-to-intervene-in-bmd-fiasco/20009/>

²⁴⁸ Masokola, A. "Ndaba faction proposes Congress re-run". *Weekend Post*, 2017. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=4057>

²⁴⁹ "BMD splits and Alliance for Progressives is born". *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2017. <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1655935149>

²⁵⁰ Motsamai, M. "Alliance for Progressives launches". *Botswana Daily News*, 2017. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=39112>

²⁵¹ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

²⁵² "Boko fails to offer a definitive solution to UDC problems, again". *Sunday Standard*, 2018. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/boko-fails-offer-definitive-solution-udc-problems-again>

²⁵³ Mokwape, M. "UDC triumphs over BMD". *Mmegi*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82444&dir=2019/august/30>

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Mmesi, 2017

²⁵⁵ "Khama publicly endorses Masisi for BDP chair". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/khama-publicly-endorses-masisi-bdp-chair>

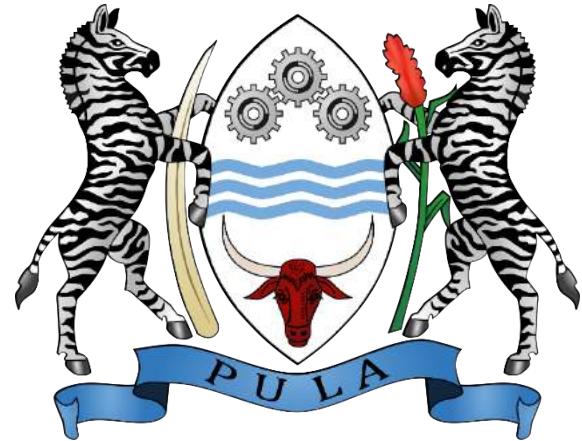
²⁵⁶ "Botswana Democratic Party holds elective congress for a new president". *SABC News*, 2019. <http://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/botswana-democratic-party-holds-elective-congress-for-new-president/>

²⁵⁷ "Mokgweetsi Masisi sworn in as Botswana's new president". *Al Jazeera*, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/mokgweetsi-masisi-sworn-botswana-president-180401142719236.html>

Khama's perspective, in so far as Tshekedi be appointed as Masisi's Vice-President, paving the way for another Khama to take office after the elections.^{258 259} Masisi, a once-loyal subordinate of Khama, became his own man once he was at the realm of office, which did not go down well with his predecessor.²⁶⁰ Further displaying his divergence from the controversial Khama era, Masisi actively engaged the media and the trade unions, as well as overturning a number of unpopular laws and policies implemented by his predecessor.

During the 2018 International Institute of Strategic Studies Oppenheimer Lecture, Masisi stated that among his top priorities over his 18 months in office before the 2019 elections was to make peace with the media and civil society. He also appeared determined to mend relations with China, further moving away from the foreign policy of Khama.²⁶¹ Shortly before the elections, Masisi also used social media to reiterate his, and that of the BDP's, commitment to democracy and free media.²⁶² A move that contrasts Khama's strong antipathy towards the media.²⁶³

The alcohol levy is another aspect where Masisi reversed on Khama's discourse. After considering a report on the success of the levy by the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis,²⁶⁴ Masisi reviewed the alcohol levy and reduced it from between 50 to 55% down to 35%.²⁶⁵ This adjustment, along with the relaxing of liquor trading hours,²⁶⁶ already painted Masisi as a face of change, positioning the BDP as a newly invigorated party. This perception was further supported by the sacking of the then head of the DISS, Isaac Kgosi, shortly after taking office.²⁶⁷ Often feared as the head of



Masisi's priorities align with those established as core to Botswana's identity, exemplified by wildlife, industry and agriculture featuring prominently in their coat of arms
Image courtesy of Sodacan

Botswana's intelligence service, Kgosi was known to abuse his office, thus his dismissal saw approval from both the electorate and opposition parties.²⁶⁸ In his place, Masisi appointed Peter Magosi, himself not without controversy.²⁶⁹ Eventually, it seemed as more of the same despite the DISS's change in leadership, with the opposition alleging that state resources, including the Botswana Unified Revenue Service (BURS) and DISS, were being used to target and weaken the opposition.²⁷⁰

Throughout his reign, Khama was known for his heavy-handed approach towards trade unions, showing very little regard and a general dismissive attitude towards them. This is another area Masisi capitalised on as he is said to be more consultative and willing to engage and listen to the interests and needs of Botswana's trade unions.²⁷¹ Early in 2019, negotiations on a salary increase for civil servants concluded, following

²⁵⁸ "Khama Wanted Masisi to Appoint Tshekedi Vice President". *Sunday Standard*, 2018. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/khama-wanted-masisi-appoint-tshekedi-vice-president>

²⁵⁹ Charles, T. "Masisi reveals Khama's secrets". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82441&dir=2019/august/30>

²⁶⁰ Konopo, J. "Botswana: Turmoil in Africa's 'model democracy'". *Daily Maverick*, 2019. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-08-01-botswana-turmoil-in-africas-model-democracy/>

²⁶¹ "Masisi Breaks Rank with Khama on Media and China". *Sunday Standard*, 2018. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/masisi-breaks-rank-khama-media-and-china>

²⁶² Jameson, K. "MEK Masisi's new BDP commits to media freedom". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/mek-masisi%E2%80%99s-new-bdp-commits-media-freedom>

²⁶³ *Ibid*, Konopo, 2019

²⁶⁴ Ramatiti, K. "Alcohol Levy has failed - BIDPA report". *Weekend Post*, 2018. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=5668>

²⁶⁵ Mguni, M. "Elephants, Alcohol and Benefits Divide Botswana Ruling Party". *Bloomberg*, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/>

[articles/2019-03-14/botswana-ruling-party-riven-by-benefits-alcohol-and-elephants](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-14/botswana-ruling-party-riven-by-benefits-alcohol-and-elephants)

²⁶⁶ "Govt Amends Liquor Trading Times". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2018. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=78982&dir=2018/december/17>

²⁶⁷ Mosikare, O. "Masisi fires Kgosi". *Mmegi*, 2018. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=75534&dir=2018/may/02>

²⁶⁸ Motseta, S. "Botswana's opposition welcomes firing of spy boss Isaac Kgosi". *Business Day*, 2018. <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/world/africa/2018-05-07-botswanas-opposition-welcomes-firing-of-spy-boss-isaac-kgosi/>

²⁶⁹ Komane, K. & Konopo, J. "Who is Botswana's new spy chief?". *Mail & Guardian*, 2018. <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-07-17-00-who-is-botswanas-new-spy-chief>

²⁷⁰ Lehihi, S. "Botswana opposition says state resources, agencies targeting them before polls". *SABC News*, 2019. <http://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/botswana-opposition-says-state-resources-agencies-targeting-them-before-polls/>

²⁷¹ Gaothobogwe, M. "Khama's reign destroyed trade unionism, Mogwera says". *Mmegi*, 2018. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=78933&dir=2018/december/14>

Masisi's promise to look into and adjust their salaries accordingly. Civil servants saw a salary increase of between six and 10% coming into force over the following two years.²⁷² Time and time again, Masisi made himself open to the demands and needs of his people through the collective voices vested in the trade unions. His positive approach ultimately saw to the Botswana Federation of Public, Private and Parastatal Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) announcing that they would not be pledging outright support to any party and that they would urge their members to vote for whoever they deem worthy. In 2014 however, Botswana's trade unions were much more vocal in their support for the UDC and actively campaigned against the BDP in the run-up to the 2014 elections.²⁷³



In Maun, northern Botswana, local inhabitants and elephants often rely on the same resources for survival, creating frictions.
Image courtesy of serena_tang

On the 23rd of May 2019, Botswana, under Masisi, announced the lifting of its ban on elephant hunting, citing a rise in conflict between Botswana and elephants in the northern parts of the country. Originally, the hunting ban was implemented in 2014 at the direction of Khama, but the rise in elephant population has seen a growing need for the "elephant in the room" to be addressed.²⁷⁴ The event sparked significant

backlash from the international community with the likes of Ellen DeGeneres making her position known.²⁷⁵ Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Masisi elaborates on the topic explaining that Botswana's geography can simply not support the massive elephant population currently roaming its lands and that the scarcity of resources is causing elephants to wander into populated areas causing chaos among Botswana in the area, at times even the death of residents. Masisi continues by emphasising that mass culling is not on the table and the lifting of the ban aims to allow locals to protect themselves if need be and to encourage local cooperation in anti-poaching initiatives. Additionally, he also argues that a key part of allowing hunting is to deter elephants from populated areas by creating a sense of danger.²⁷⁶ While the government's position on the hunting ban remains unchanged, resentment continues to flow in from staunch conservationists, especially from Khama.

In the height of election fever, various claims were made pertaining to a threat on Masisi's life. Starting early in the year, head of the DISS, Magosi, informed Masisi and his security detail of a potential threat to the president's life.²⁷⁷ While a mere precaution at the time, the threat grew in significance with Masisi's planned visit to Mozambique in June 2019. On his way to Maputo, the presidential aircraft was forced to make a U-turn mid-air in light of intelligence warning of assassins waiting for Masisi's arrival in Mozambique.²⁷⁸ The opposition, however, was not convinced and argued that assassination claims are but a ploy by the ruling party to put the opposition in ill-favour, and to play the victim. While the opposition criticised the DISS for peddling misinformation to Botswana,²⁷⁹ Khama echoed the opposition's sentiment saying that there exists no threat to Masisi's life.²⁸⁰

Since his ascension, Masisi has effectively positioned himself as an agent for change,

²⁷² "Botswana, unions agree civil service pay rise". APA News, 2019. <https://apanews.net/index.php/en/news/botswana-unions-agree-civil-service-pay-rise>

²⁷³ Kgoboge, K. "BOFEPUSU Adopts Neutral Stance on Political Support". Mmegi | The Monitor, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83008&dir=2019/october/08>

²⁷⁴ O'Grady, S. "Botswana overturns ban on elephant hunting". *The Washington Post*, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/05/23/botswana-overturns-ban-elephant-hunting/>

²⁷⁵ Sguazzin, A. & Bax, P. "Elephant Hunt Pits Botswana Villagers Against Hollywood A-List". *Bloomberg*, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-06-07/elephant-hunt-pits-botswana-villagers-against-hollywood-a-list>

²⁷⁶ Masisi, M. "Hunting Elephants Will Help Them Survive". *Wall Street Journal*, 2019. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hunting-elephants-will-help-them-survive-11560985152>

²⁷⁷ "Masisi on Security Alert Following Death Threats". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/masisi-security-alert-following-death-threats>

²⁷⁸ "Masisi Hides Away from Assassins". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/masisi-hides-away-assassins>

²⁷⁹ Tiro, B. "Masisi assassination threats lies -UDC". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <https://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7177-masisi-assassination-threats-lies-udc.html>

²⁸⁰ Chida, D. "No plot to kill Masisi- Khama". *The Voice Botswana*, 2019. <https://www.thevoicebw.com/no-plot-to-kill-masisi-khama/>

generating a renewed sentiment of hope in the electorate. The events since 2014 all point to a key role-player whose influence is vital to the electoral performance of the BDP.

3.4.4. Khama and the BPF

Despite Khama handpicking Masisi, endorsing him for BDP chairmanship, and even warding off critique from Tshekedi, Masisi's ultimate ascension turned out to be quite unfavourable for the former president. Following Masisi's string of changes undoing Khama's legacy, the final straw came with the lifting of the elephant hunting ban. A mere two days after the latter, son of BDP co-founding member Seretse Khama, Khama stepped out of the BDP announcing his support for the opposition.²⁸¹ His departure from the BDP marked the start of Khama's campaign aiming to see to the downfall of the BDP and specifically Masisi, and the formation of a new political party, the BPF.²⁸²

Consisting of various disgruntled BDP members who had previously lost their primary elections, the BPF came to be known as a "coalition of the bitter".²⁸³ Even the party's president, Biggie Butale, falls into the category of a 'bitter primary election loser'. While he won his constituency in 2014, Butale lost the primary elections to BDP Youth Wing Chairperson, Simon Moabi, and was suspended when he announced that he would be contesting the 2019 elections independently.²⁸⁴ With his desperation to have a fighting chance for political power, Butale constituted the ideal puppet for Khama's strategy to topple his new found adversary.

Khama's strategy, however, proved to entail some truly questionable facets, starting even before his exit from the BDP. April 2019 saw allegations of a secret meeting between Khama and South African businesswoman Bridgette Radebe where a sum of US\$ 5.5 million was to be handed to Khama as funding for a campaign

to oust Masisi from within the BDP. At the time, the strategy involved the former foreign minister, Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, opposing Masisi for party leadership in the BDP's electoral congress. The plan, however, failed after the secret meeting was foiled, Venson-Moitoi's supporters were banned from the congress and her last-minute court bid to interdict the conference's occurrence proved unsuccessful.²⁸⁵

One of the greatest developments for Khama and the BPF came in the form of Tshekedi's long awaited defection from the BDP. On the 25th of September 2019, a few hours before the nominations of Parliamentary candidates were due, Tshekedi officially resigned from the BDP and defected to his brother's newly formed party, the BPF.²⁸⁶ As expected, the BPF launched Tshekedi as their Parliamentary candidate for Serowe West, a constituency he won comfortably in 2014, and forming part of the administrative village of the Bangwato, of which his brother, Khama, is the *Kgosikgolo*.²⁸⁷ The inclusion of Tshekedi in the BPF sealed the fate for Serowe West, even though the BDP were able to provide a quick replacement to contest in Tshekedi's place.

3.4.5. Party funding

Over the course of the run-up to the 2019 general elections, no political entity – be that political parties, coalitions or independents – displayed quite the campaign as that of the UDC. The UDC rolled out an extensive, costly campaign that saw the services of a company by the name 'Status' to boost the impact of its campaigning.²⁸⁸ Further additions to its campaign included a private jet and a helicopter at the disposal of the UDC leadership.²⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the BDP announced a rather tight campaign budget and, in some instances, a lack of funds.²⁹⁰ The UDC's flamboyant and seeming expensive campaign raised questions on how the opposition, who historically struggled in

²⁸¹ Benza, B. & Toyana, M. "Former Botswana president quits ruling party in row with ex-ally". *Reuters*, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-botswana-politics/former-botswana-president-quits-ruling-party-in-row-with-ex-ally-idUSKCN1SV0FK>

²⁸² Du Plessis, C. "Ian Khama's renewed ambitions could reshape Botswana's long-standing political equation". *Daily Maverick*, 2019. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-06-06-ian-khamas-renewed-ambitions-could-reshape-botswanas-long-standing-political-equation/>

²⁸³ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

²⁸⁴ "Botswana's Assistant Minister of Health suspended for allegedly violating party laws". *Political Analysis South Africa*, 2019. <https://www.politicalanalysis.co.za/botswanas-assistant-minister-of-health-suspended-for-allegedly-violating-party-laws/>

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Du Plessis, "Secret meeting between businesswoman Bridgette Radebe and Ian Khama intercepted, claims report", 2019

²⁸⁶ "Tshekedi quits BDP". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82876&dir=2019/sepember/25>

²⁸⁷ Mosetlha, T. "Tshekedi launches in Serowe West". *Botswana Daily News*, 2019. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=52347>

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, Mokwena, 2019

²⁸⁹ Seretse, L. & Newel, K. "Boko's Billionaires". *The Botswana Gazette*, 2019. <https://www.thegazette.news/latest-news/bokos-billionaires/26732/>

²⁹⁰ Ramatiti, K. "Masisi delivers P3 million pie". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6691>



Sir Seretse Khama, the first president of Botswana, was awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his chivalrous actions.

financing their campaigns, suddenly had access to such a great scope of resources. As such, the questions later translated into concern over the transparency and integrity of the coalition's funders.

Party funding has grown to be an area of particular interest in run-up to Botswana's elections and became especially disconcerting when Radebe's secret meeting was foiled and controversial businessman Zunaïd Moti's name emerged as key financier of the UDC.

3.5. Electorate sentiment

A key insight on which the outcome of the 2019 election results should be considered is the sentiment of the electorate prior to the elections. The fieldwork that was conducted sought to capture the pre-election sentiment in order to better understand the outcome of the election. On the topic of perception, a point of departure entailed determining the electorate's awareness of the key contenders. To this end, a distinction was made on how respondents are aware of the parties, whether that be spontaneous awareness – suggesting that the parties are at the front of the respondent's mind – or, prompted awareness, which points to a rather vague yet extant awareness. This approach provides a more thorough insight into a person's true familiarity regarding the country's political parties.

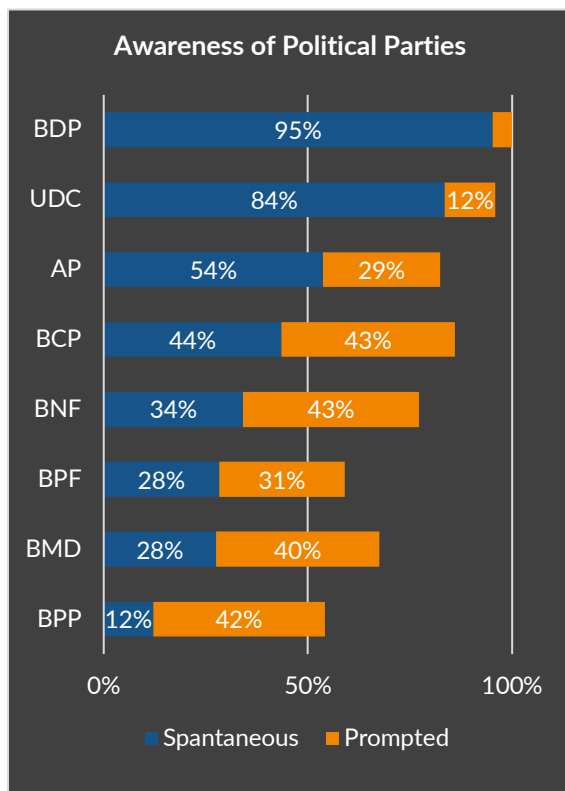


Figure 10: Social knowledge of participating political parties
Data derived from fieldwork

While not presiding over a comprehensive list of the political contenders in Botswana's elections, the idea was to determine the sentiment towards the main stakeholders, those generally expected to be represented in parliament. From the research came a fairly expected result in which the BDP, followed by the UDC, proved to be the most widely known political party, with all but one respondent indicating their awareness of the

ruling party. While the AP sparked a significant spontaneous awareness among the electorate, the BCP's overall mark amplifies its familiarity among the people slightly more than that of the AP.

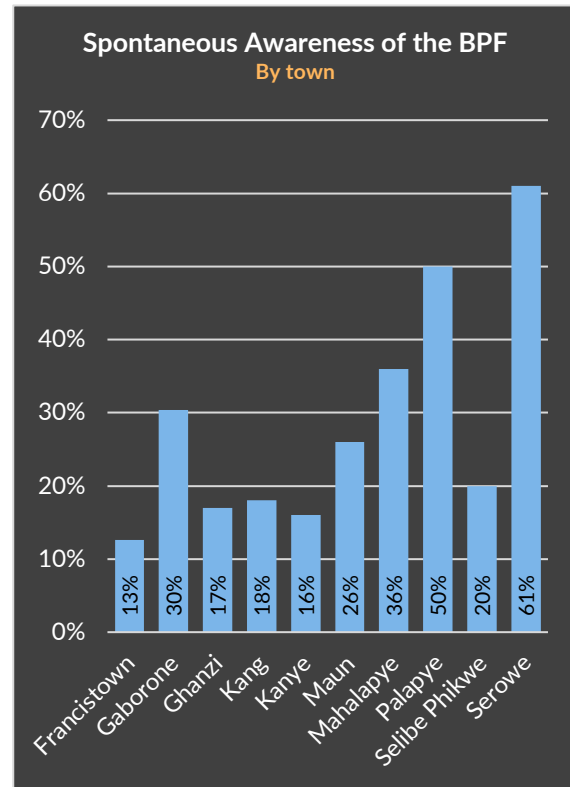


Figure 9: Spontaneous social awareness of the BPF
Data derived from fieldwork

While the newly formed BPF was off to a wonky start with just more than half the sample being aware of Khama's party, the concentration of the BPF's campaign efforts proved to be quite evident. In the key Bangwato strongholds of Palapye and particularly Serowe, the BPF presented a much higher prominence. As alluded to earlier, the strong influence of Khama, still perceived as the rightful Bangwato *Kgosikgolo*, comes into play in these areas which makes it more understandable how these BDP strongholds might be much easier targets for the opposition. Tshekedi's defection from the BDP further promoted the Bangwato royal influence in the heart of the Central District.

Furthermore, respondents were also probed on how they saw the political parties they were aware of. Despite this regard echoing the patterns of awareness, the study found that the UDC edged past the BDP in both how positively the public perceives the parties as well as the extent to which the electorate was willing to trust these parties.

At the conclusion of the fieldwork research, early in September 2019, it seemed as though the UDC was poised to win the elections when considering respondents more positive view of the opposition. Though it was bound to be an extremely close contest, the results of this study raise questions as to what might have tilted the balance to end up being in favour of the BDP rather than the UDC. A key consideration in this context is the president of the UDC's controversial conduct during the 2019 Presidential Debate. Though more elaboration will be given on the topic at a later stage, it can be argued that Boko's actions, among other factors, during this debate might have been enough to slightly tip the scales in the BDP's favour.

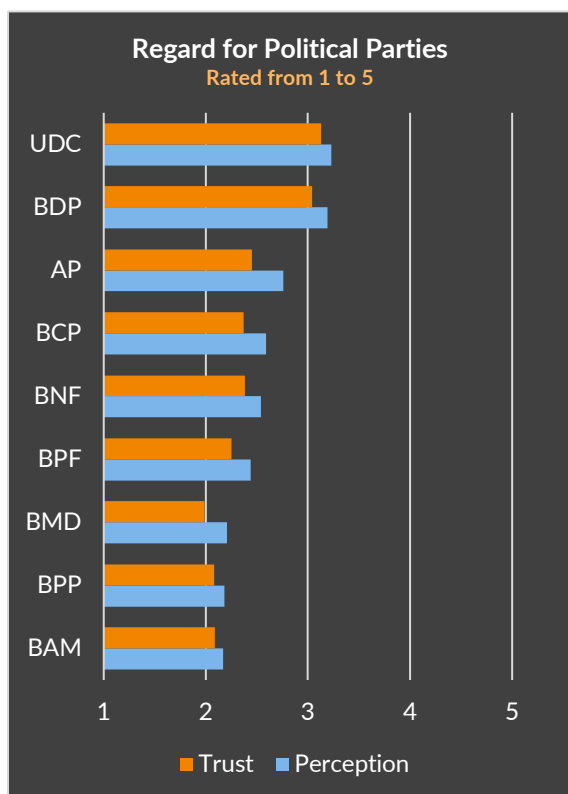


Figure 12: Perceptions and trust levels for political parties
Data derived from fieldwork

In conjunction with their sentiment towards the political party, a measure of sentiment was also gauged through questions on what would discourage and motivate an individual to go and vote. Although respondents were provided with a few generic answer options such as 'exercising my democratic right' – as a voting motivator – or 'I don't want to stand in a queue' – as a voting demotivator, a handful of options sought to extract some insight on specific voter patterns. For instance, under voting motivators, the options of 'keeping a good party in power' and

'keeping a bad party out of power' aimed at gauging electoral support for the ruling party while the option of 'removing a bad party from power' sought to determine the opposite.

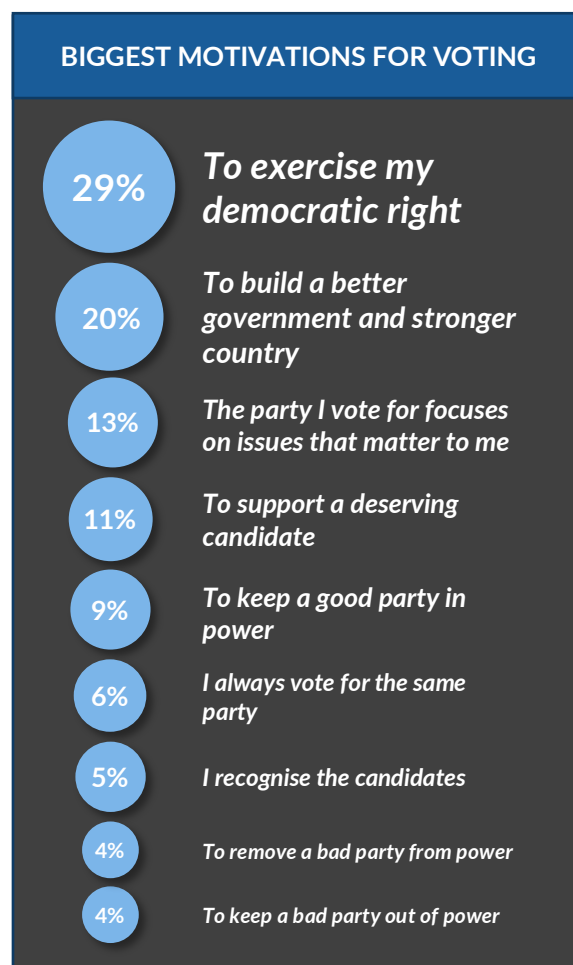


Figure 11: Factors motivating voters
Data derived from fieldwork

In light of this, there proved to be a higher impetus on keeping the BDP in power than there was to remove the BDP from power which, in turn, could be seen as a potential factor edging the BDP's above that of the UDC, despite the latter's relatively positive public image. Then again, the option of 'building a better government and stronger country' might also be seen as a positive indication on the UDC's support. This, however, is a sentiment shared by the opposition as well as Masisi due to the latter being seen as a force of change within the BDP.

On the side of voting demotivators, further detriment is directed at the UDC. Despite their pursuit to cater for the interests and needs of all Batswana, a noteworthy portion of the electorate were discouraged due to 'none of the parties representing their interests' and the sentiment that 'all parties are equally bad'. The presence of these sentiments suggests that the UDC is not the all-inclusive party they were thought to be, or that their campaigns proved not to have appealed as wholly as was the goal.

Many different possible conclusions can be made from the pre-election fieldwork, although the key outtake pointed to an extremely closely contested election. The new face of Masisi coupled with the full force of the opposition has fostered an electorate that appears to be divided between these two main contenders. Overall, the pre-election sentiment saw the UDC edging past the BDP, although voting patterns in which a portion of the electorate would vote according to the 50-year-old status quo remains an additional layer of consideration that holds the potential to render the UDC's edge moot.

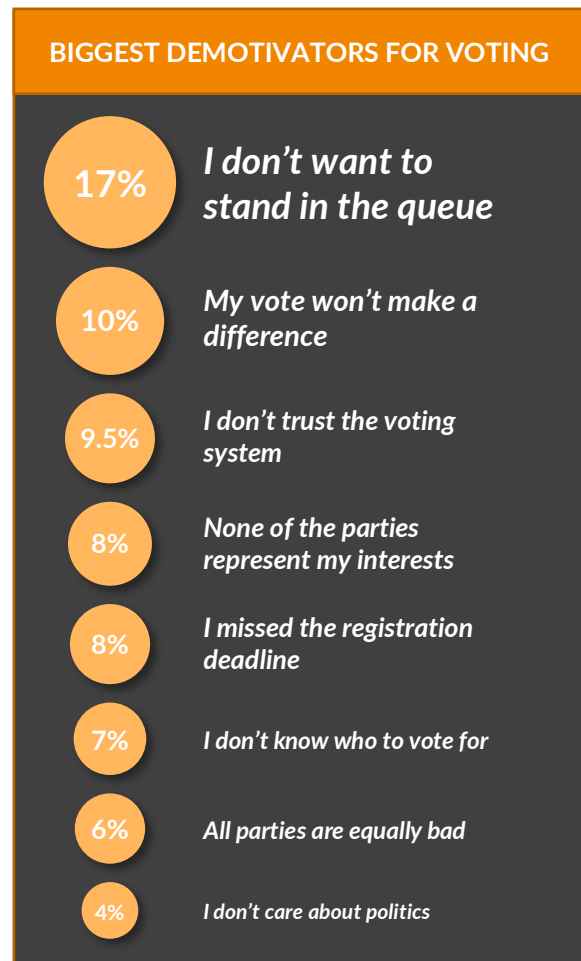


Figure 13: Factors demotivating voters
Data derived from fieldwork



4. REFLECTING ON THE 2019 ELECTIONS

Considering the outcome of the 2019 elections, one might be inclined to disagree with the preceding section's argument that the elections were truly tight. However, one must remain cognisant of the electoral system, outlined earlier, where the seats in parliament fail to effectively capture the true nature of the contest. Comprising this section is a brief look at the campaigns of the key political parties, followed by an analysis of the election results and the political outcome thereof. Ultimately, this section aims to provide a reflective analysis on Botswana's 2019 General Election, building on all the previous sections.

4.1. Party campaigns

As a point of departure, the political campaigns of Botswana's main election contenders have shown to be a key consideration in understanding their formidability. From the UDC's strikingly extensive and flamboyant campaign to the AP's mild and restricted campaign, the scope of these movements goes a long way to serve as foundation for their impact in the 2019 elections.

Further to this, one must also consider the medium through which political parties sought to communicate their message. To this end, the conducted fieldwork also sought to analyse Botswana's main modes of communication as well as the bias one can come to expect from these media streams. From this data, it emerged that social media and street posters were the

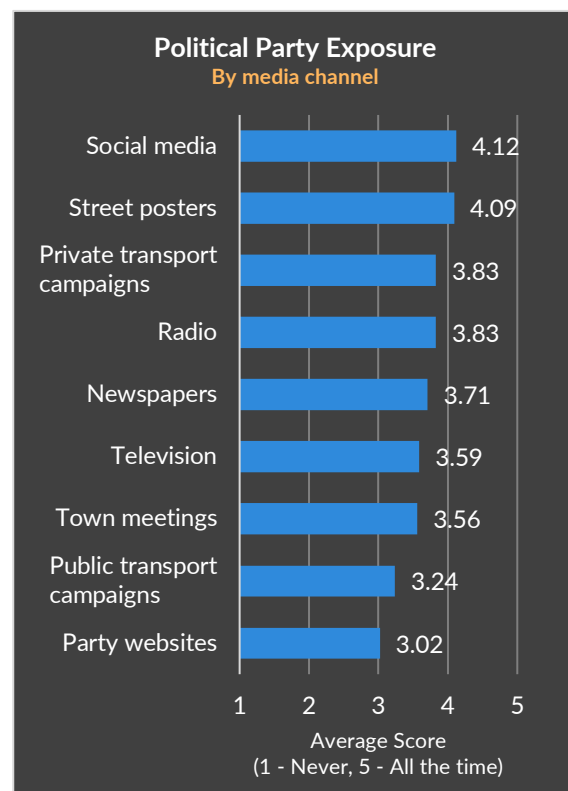


Figure 14: Exposure to messages from political parties through different mediums
Data derived from fieldwork

most common way in which the electorate would come into contact with campaign messages from the political parties. The former of the two channels is also the most common way in which government or any other public entity tend to communicate with the people, to the extent that social media is often thought of

as Botswana's "internet".²⁹¹ Other common methods include private transport campaigns which include vehicle branding and, sometimes, party vehicles travelling around towns announcing the party's messages.²⁹² Because social media tends to be Botswana's "internet", supported by the popularity of mobile social media bundles rather than data bundles,²⁹³ party websites are not that popular, which is why it is the least utilised media channel. Lastly, television tends to be too expensive for most parties, which is why this option falls towards the bottom of the pool.

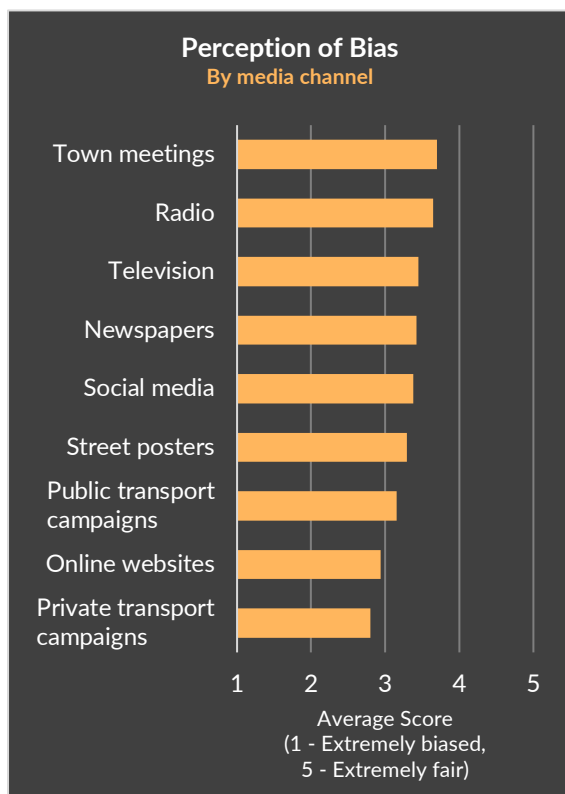


Figure 15: Bias experienced in the various media outlets
Data derived from fieldwork

To add another layer of analysis to the topic of party messages, respondents were also probed on how biased they perceived these media platforms to be. Naturally, the media outlets least popular for party messages also proved to be the least biased, whereas those channels that were funded by the respective political parties displayed a higher degree of bias for the funder's messages. Interestingly, although social media

pages are generally owned and maintained by the parties, Botswana still feel that the framework of social media allowing for comments and replies to posts, provides some degree of fairness to counteract the predominant nature of parties' social media pages.

4.1.1. Alliance for Progressives

As far as Botswana's political parties go, the AP turned out to be the beloved underdog that did not conclude with the happy ending their supporters were hoping for. Launched in 2017 with the slogan 'Tswelelele Pele ya Botlhe' – meaning 'progress for all' ²⁹⁴ – the AP summarised their 2019 campaign as a movement towards a 'New Botswana' and 'Towards Transformation'. In brief, the AP states that a 'New Botswana' refers to a distinctly well-run country and economy that cares for its people and ensures employment for all, which in turn affords Botswana a comfortable, happy and healthy lifestyle.²⁹⁵ The last-mentioned encapsulates the whole scope of the AP's movement with all of their policy promises sprouting from this vision.

However, the AP's campaign faced two critical obstacles; it's fairly new entry into Botswana's political scene and a limited pool of financial resources. In contrast to the more spectacularly expensive campaign of the UDC, the AP's campaign was limited to its manifesto, social media communication, positive coverage in the local media, door-to-door campaigning through the use of two buses, and, with whatever funding they had left, campaign posters across the country.²⁹⁶ Lacking significant funding, the AP's main monetary source was vested in wealthy domestic investors, some academics and their party members.²⁹⁷ In the end, this translated into the AP's key modes of communication with the electorate being limited to private transport campaigns, Facebook and Twitter pages, and Radio interviews.

Considering its size and the fact that the party only launched in 2017, it was never expected that the AP would win an overt amount of

²⁹¹ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

²⁹² *Ibid*

²⁹³ *Ibid*

²⁹⁴ "New opposition party, Alliance for Progressives launches". *YourBotswana*, 2017. <https://yourbotswana.com/2017/11/05/new-opposition-party-alliance-for-progressives-launches/>

²⁹⁵ *Ibid*, "2019 Abridged Manifesto", *Alliance for Progressives*, 2019.

²⁹⁶ Tiro, B. "UDC lead in battle of manifestos". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <https://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7081-udc-lead-in-battle-of-manifestos.html>

²⁹⁷ IOA Fieldwork, 2019

constituencies. Regardless, the AP still contested in 42 of the 57 constituencies with the aim at elevating Gaolathe to Botswana's State House. While it did have the votes of prominent figures such as former president Mogae's daughter, Chedza Mogae, according to her article in the *Sunday Standard*,²⁹⁸ it was commonly accepted that in the midst of the BDP and UDC's major competition, the AP would be forced to take a back seat. Regardless, in the context of Botswana's political landscape, there still remains scope for this new promising party to rise to prominence with its leader, Ndaba Gaolathe, being a politician that is not likely to be forgotten.

AP's Campaign Promises	
	Improve governmental institutions to promote checks and balances
	Shrink unemployment from 20% to less than 10%
	Boost the economy through foreign direct investment
	Diversify the economy to more than just the mineral sectors
	Afford local communities at least a 50% stake in all tourism activities
	Develop the SE District as a regional meetings, conventions and exhibitions centre (MICE)
	Reduce patient to doctor ratio to 200:1

4.1.2. Botswana Democratic Party

Known by their slogan 'Tsholetsa Domkrag' – literally translating into 'lift jack', referring to the strength of a car jack – one of the most influential campaigns of Botswana's 2019 elections came from the ruling party, the BDP. Ruling for half a century, the BDP presides over significant state resources, as well as key

individuals such as Masisi. Despite the BDP's resources being rather limited in the run-up to the 2019 elections,²⁹⁹ the ruling party still enjoys considerably more support than most other parties in Botswana, whether it be electoral, financial or indirect. An example of the BDP's benefit from its stature manifests in Masisi's continuous use of state aircraft for BDP's campaign efforts.³⁰⁰

During the BDP's 2019 campaign, it became increasingly noticeable that the BDP's efforts were concentrated on more covert and strategic movements that combined party politics with personality politics.³⁰¹ A significant contribution to the BDP's campaign was, in fact, Masisi's policy changes and overall improved governance that almost rendered campaigning moot for the ruling party. The BDP, in its incumbent position, opted to rapidly boost its recent track record rather than to go all out on election campaigns like that of the UDC. For a party that has been ruling for as long as the BDP, it is undeniable that service delivery far outweighs the campaign efforts of an incumbent party. Considering the outcome of the 2019 elections, Masisi's BDP opting to pursue this course of 'campaigning' proved to be the best course of action as well as the most successful campaign in light of the 2019 election outcome.

Due to its campaign resources, as well as it being the executive branch of government, the BDP were among the few political parties to have access to television campaign measures. The BDP also presided over an amicable website and were visible throughout social media spheres. Private transport campaigns and street posters also proved to be common methods through which the ruling party sought to distribute their message to the electorate.³⁰²

Since independence, the BDP has consistently contested in all 57 constituencies, enabled by its use of state resources and widespread support, with this year being no different. Although the BDP saw a significant opposition in their Central District strongholds, it became clear that their message resonated well with the urban populace, in turn serving as stiff competition for

²⁹⁸ Mogae, C. "Why the BDP Won't Get My Vote October 23rd". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/why-bdp-won%E2%80%99t-get-my-vote-october-23rd>

²⁹⁹ Ramatiti, K. "Masisi delivers P3 million pie". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6691>

³⁰⁰ Malunga, S. "Botswana: Why Masisi held on, and how voters rejected ethnic politics". *The Africa Report*, 2019. <https://>

www.theafricareport.com/19759/botswana-why-masisi-held-on-and-how-voters-rejected-ethnic-politics/

³⁰¹ Gabathuse, R. "Analysts predict which political horse will win the race". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83145&dir=2019/october/18>

³⁰² IOA Fieldwork, 2019

the opposition's strongholds. As opposed to the 2014 election dynamics, the BDP's new discourse positions it with quite the positive outlook for the coming decade.



4.1.3. Botswana Patriotic Front

Khama's 'coalition of the bitter' came about mainly due to his campaign against his successor. As a result, the movement chiefly revolves around this pursuit to defeat the BDP and oust Masisi. Following the initial rejection of the BPF's colours³⁰³ and some controversy alleging that the BPF muscled their symbol away from an independent candidate,³⁰⁴ the party settled on the slogan 'Ke Nako' – translating into 'it is time'.³⁰⁵ From the onset, it was clear that the BPF would draw strongly on Khama's tribal influence and, therefore, focus the majority of their attention towards the constituencies in the Central District, especially around Serowe and Palapye, where Khama's tribe is concentrated.

³⁰³ Basimanebotlhe, T. "More People Will Resign From BDP". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81295&dir=2019/june/10>

³⁰⁴ Basimanebotlhe, T. "BPF In Tussle Over Party Symbol". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82578&dir=2019/september/09>

³⁰⁵ Baaitse, D. "I remain BDP - Venson-Moitoi". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <https://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6566>

Throughout the pre-election period, the BPF appeared unstable and rather arrogant at times.³⁰⁶ ³⁰⁷ For the most part, however, Khama was able to keep his party members in line, and ultimately saw the opposition making inroads in the Central District with the Bangwato capital, Serowe, proving the influence of tribal politics in Botswana's national politics as well as their undying loyalty in their *Kgosikgolo*. Since its launch in Kanye in July 2019, the BPF seemed to be a truly formidable force with their launch and concurrent election campaigns pulling large crowds and hosting a number of local entertainers.³⁰⁸

While the BPF's ostentatious campaign rallies impressed both constituency locals and political analysts, soon after the elections it became clear that the BPF's formidability had been a façade with serious financial challenges rising to the surface.³⁰⁹



Aligned with the general trend in Botswana, the BPF relied heavily on the use of social media to

³⁰⁶ Chida, D. "Divisions rock BPF ahead of launch". *The Voice*, 2019. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fJC6QZTXfPtavWZ1G_gMqFolLtQAqrXV/view

³⁰⁷ Motlhoka, T. "Butale vows to personally ensure Masisi, Tsogwane lose". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/butale-vows-personally-ensure-masisi-tsogwane-lose>

³⁰⁸ Basimanebotlhe, T. "BPF Launch Pulls Crowds". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81693&dir=2019/july/08>

³⁰⁹ "BPF said to be struggling financially". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/bpf-said-be-struggling-financially>

communicate party messages while also enjoying significant media coverage due to its controversial formation. Due to the party's strong reliance on the tribal component, local town meetings were also used, especially by Khama, for campaign efforts.

Regardless of its controversy, though, the BPF and Khama should still be commended for its strategy execution. Being even newer than the AP, the BPF, despite having very little policy discourse to support it, outperformed its small counterpart. The BPF's rise to relative prominence is a testament to the importance of large-scale campaigning as well as the significant role that personality and tribal politics plays in Botswana.

4.1.4. Umbrella for Democratic Change

A first for Botswana came with the UDC's monumental campaign spanning the whole of the country. In the past, the opposition was often financially restricted and could not afford to contest all 57 constituencies, as is the case with the AP and BPF. However, with an unprecedented opposition campaign effort such as this, many people were convinced that the UDC were sure to win the country's 12th General Elections.³¹⁰ Basing their 2019 campaign on a theme of 'Decent Jobs, Decent Lives',³¹¹ the UDC sought to appeal to both rural voters as well as those in the urban areas, where the opposition were known to have a stronghold. Their manifesto contained utopian promises of job creation and a high minimum wage with a number of promises targeting individual electorate groups.³¹²

With its deep pockets, the UDC were able to capitalise on most media platforms to communicate their campaign messages. Naturally, a preference was given for social media platforms to ensure coverage for the majority of its supporters. Like the BDP, the UDC did preside over a party website although this proved to be a much less preferred channel of

communication. For the most part, the website was marred with instability³¹³ and was not properly marketed, as even their official Facebook page provided an outdated website link.³¹⁴

UDC's Campaign Promises	
	Creation of 100,000 jobs within 12 months
	A living wage of 3,000 pula
	An old-age pension of 1,500 pula
	Free sanitary pads
	Tablets for all learners
	A tertiary education student allowance of 2,500 pula
	The reopening of the BCL mine

Ultimately, the UDC's campaign efforts were crippled by its affiliation with Khama, as well as questions pertaining to the integrity of their funders.³¹⁵ Equipped with big budgets as well as campaign aircraft,³¹⁶ and pulling the biggest crowds of all the political parties,³¹⁷ the UDC proved to be the most formidable among the BDP's opponents.

Masisi's more covert approach to campaigning, however, points to the opposition still lacking the tact of true statecraft. The UDC managed to secure sufficient funding, which was a good starting point, though failed to grasp the need for balance between extravagance and tact.³¹⁸ Although many negative sentiments can be attributed to the failure of the UDC's campaign efforts, it can also be argued that the UDC's second attempt at contesting the elections as a

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, Mokwena, 2019

³¹¹ "Decent Jobs, Decent Lives". *Umbrella for Democratic Change*, 2019, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oj3Fw0ksVoY8OCkHs2KjVdRZZsTxfVvF/view?fbclid=IwAR2fU8FFfIH0QR2K2cKNUkMHQR7EVpwJXJ_2RydRpbm4XbV3qmRPWfKcvPI

³¹² *Ibid*

³¹³ Accessing the web link on the back of the UDC's manifesto, www.udcbotswana.org.bw/ - accessed repeatedly throughout the year, was met with a message stating "There has been a critical error on your website."

³¹⁴ "Umbrella for Democratic Change", n.d., Accessed 9 December 2019, <http://www.udc.org.bw/index.html>. This page still lists Ndaba Gaolathe as the UDC's Vice President.

³¹⁵ *Ibid*, Masalila, 2019

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, Gibson, 2019

³¹⁷ "Big winners and losers". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83273&dir=2019/october/28>

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, Malunga, 2019

coalition already displayed a great leap forward for the opposition. Indeed, the movement was marred with internal weaknesses, ranging from the BMD controversy, questionable funding, all the way to the top with Boko's arrogance, though it also proved that Botswana's opposition is capable of mounting a respectable offence. Henceforth, the UDC needs to take stock of the lessons learned and retaliate with more streamlined campaigns in future elections, as the new election dynamics have proven that the insurmountable ruling party can be defeated.

4.2. Comparing elections

Since 2014, Botswana's electoral dynamics have changed significantly in terms of the opposition, in particular, gearing up their approach in hot pursuit of a 2019 electoral victory. Unfortunately for Boko and his support base, the 2019 elections did not unfold in their favour, with the BDP securing a landslide majority victory. While the BDP's victory was not entirely unexpected, it remains of value to consider the election results in pursuit of pinpointing the key reasons for the BDP's 12th consecutive victory, and the UDC's loss after a vigorous campaign coupled with the endorsement of Khama.

As indicated above, the election results delivered the BDP, and thus Masisi, as the ultimate victor in Botswana's 2019 elections. This came after it crossed the 29 constituencies mark and, therefore, 29 seats in parliament, reaching the minimum threshold to form government and win the General Elections. Specifically, the BDP won 38 constituencies, the UDC 15, the BPF 3, and the AP only 1. Comparing the 2019 election results to that of 2014, the BDP gained one additional seat in parliament while also winning the popular vote with 53%, up from 46.7% in 2014. The UDC, as the main opposition, lost two seats down from 17 in 2014 with 36% of the popular vote. Among the new parties, the BPF's three constituencies was accompanied by a paltry 4% of the popular vote while the AP, with its single constituency, enjoyed 5% of the popular vote.³¹⁹

Although the elections saw the BDP besting the opposition with a great number of constituencies, it was not a landslide across the board. As the popular vote suggests, the BDP did

not truly win by a margin of 66.7%, as suggested by the 38 of 57 seats. While the BDP did managed to garner more than 50% of the popular vote, the collective support directed at the opposition indicates that in many cases it was truly a tightly contested election. In constituencies such as Boteti West, the BDP's vice president, Slumber Tsogwane, edged past the UDC's Sam Digwa with a margin of less than 3%. Ghanzi North is another example of the close contest between the BDP and the UDC with the BDP's Johane Thiite scraping past Noah Salakae of the UDC, with a difference of less than 2% between them.³²⁰ While the end result delivered a landslide BDP victory in terms of parliamentary seats, the contest per constituency proved to be quite less dominant and more closely contested.

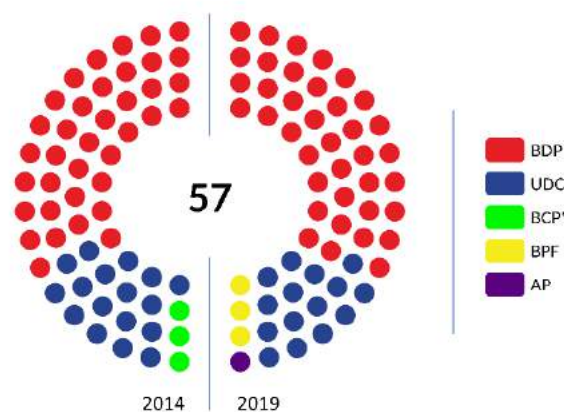


Figure 16: Botswana's post-election parliament (2014 & 2019)
* The BCP joined the UDC in 2017

The 2019 elections also saw a number of constituencies change sides. In the northern regions of Botswana, the constituencies of Maun East and Ngami shifted from the BDP to the UDC. To the east, Bobonong, Nkange, Selibe Phikwe East, and Tonota also saw the UDC convert constituencies previously held by the BDP. Further to this, Mahalapye East, Mahalapye West, Palapye, Sefhare-Ramokgonami and Shoshong saw Khama's influence at work in overturning more BDP constituencies in favour of the UDC. The three Serowe constituencies proved their loyalty to their *Kgosikgolo* with the BPF capturing key constituencies that were once BDP strongholds. From the Mochudi constituencies, all the way through Gaborone to the Molepolole constituencies, the BDP were the ones turning the tables. Gabane-Mmankodi, Gaborone,

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, "Votes by Constituency 2019", 2019

³²⁰ *Ibid*, "Botswana 2019 Election Results", 2019

Mochudi, Mogoditshane, Molepolole, Ramotswa and Tlokweng all shifted from the UDC to the BDP, amounting to a shift of 12 constituencies. Following suit, Ghanzi North, Goodhope-Mabule, Jwaneng-Mabutsane and Kanye South turned to the BDP, with Ghanzi South doing the opposite and moving from supporting the BDP to the UDC, the former emerging victorious in 2019. Areas which proved to be particularly closely contested were that of Boteti West, Ghanzi North, Ghanzi South, Kgalagadi North, Maun East, Ngami, Serowe South, and Takatokwane.

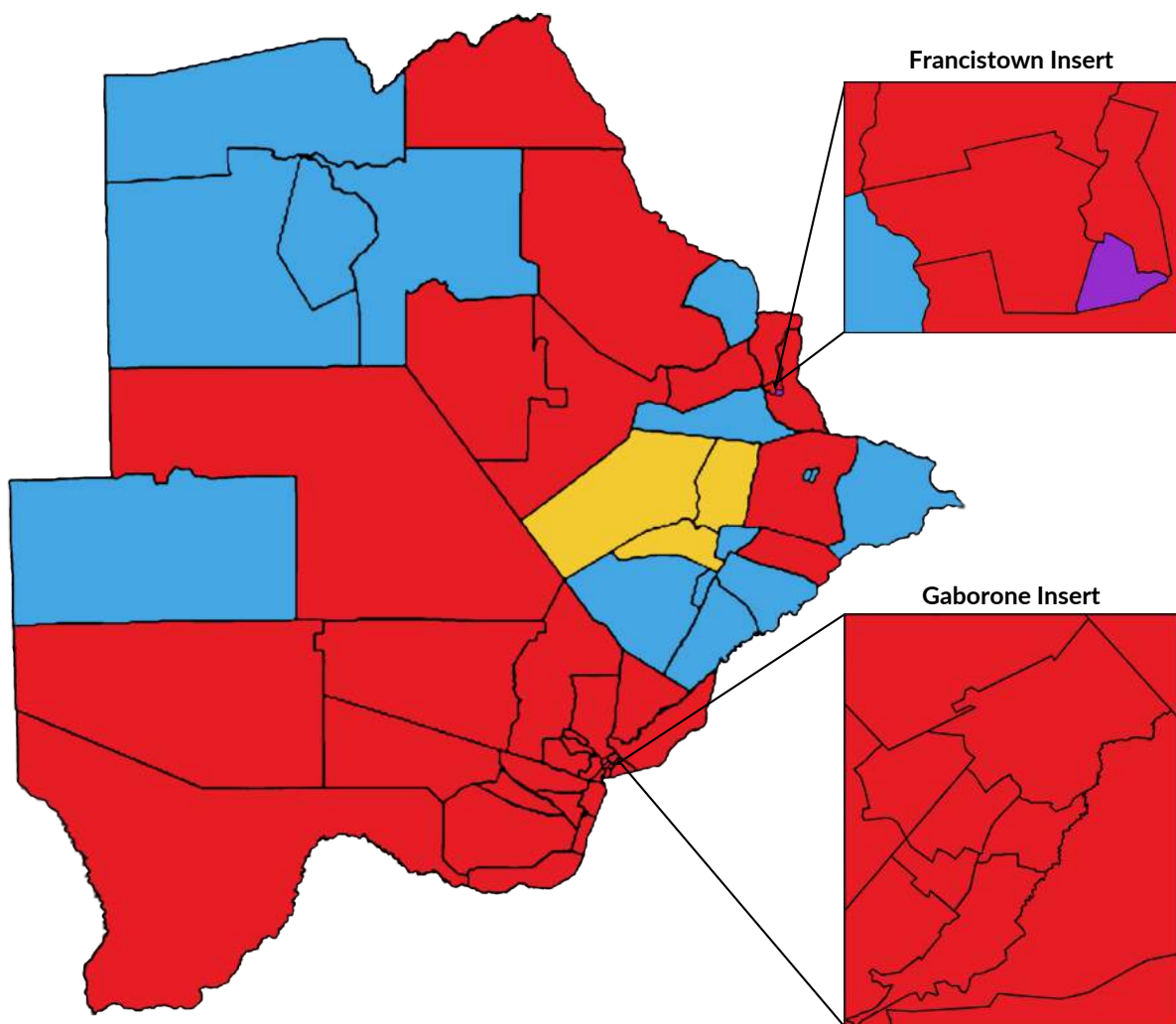


Figure 17: Parliamentary representation by constituency (2019)

4.3. Contesting the outcome

According to Botswana's Electoral Act, a petition to the outcome of the elections can be lodged within 30 days after the announcement of the official results.³²¹ Marking another first for Botswana's elections, the UDC, under Boko, is challenging the results of 16 parliamentary constituencies in Botswana's High Court.^{322 323} Shortly after the election results were made public, the UDC announced its intentions to challenge the outcome citing "glaring discrepancies and irregularities" that undermine their acceptance of the elections to be "true, correct and fair".³²⁴ Specifically, Boko's testimony stipulated that "the [voter] roll that was used on the polling day was not the same as the one certified by the Secretary of the [IEC]".³²⁵ Boko also stated that the UDC's allegations are supported by a supposed whistleblower said to have been part of the BDP's Communications Support Sub-Committee. Accordingly, it is claimed that the BDP saw to the double registration of 16 000 voters. It is also alleged that most of these fraudulent activities took place in the Gaborone Bonnington North constituency – where Boko lost his seat in parliament to the BDP's Anna Mokgethi.³²⁶ To this end, the UDC approached a South African investigative company, headed by Paul O'Sullivan, Forensics for Justice. Concurrently, the preliminary findings point to a number of "red flags", among which the absence of Electoral Pens were prominent, that suggest widespread corruption, fraud and money-laundering for the purpose of election rigging.³²⁷

Despite Boko's petition and testimony, encouraged by Khama,³²⁸ the outlook is looking grim for the UDC's court case. Supporting the belief shared by many that the UDC, and Boko in particular, are just sore losers,³²⁹ BCP leader Saleshando, whose party won 11 of the UDC's 15 constituencies, has distanced his party from the coalition's petition. Instead, the BCP and their leader accepts the election results stating that the constituencies in which they contested saw no issues that warrants any contestation in the High Court.³³⁰ Similarly, one of the constituencies in the UDC's petition is that of Gaborone Bonnington South where Gaolathe lost to the BDP's Christian Greeff. Acknowledging that the UDC contacted them, the AP stated that they will not be part of the UDC's petition.³³¹ This is after Gaolathe publicly congratulated his opposer and noted that he is content with the outcome of the elections.³³² Further discrediting Boko's position, both the Southern African Development Community and African Union Electoral Observation Missions maintained that Botswana's General Election was conducted in a peaceful, free and fair environment ensuring the accurate and transparent representation of the voice of Batswana voters.^{333 334} Even Khama, who is urging the UDC to challenge the results, admitted to not presiding over any evidence himself and avoiding the term 'election rigging' opting rather for 'irregularities' as it does not infer "deliberately tried to cheat".³³⁵ Nevertheless, this matter is currently before the court with the High Court's Registrar, Michael Motlhabi, stating that election petitions are urgent and had to be tried and determined within 90 days.³³⁶

³²¹ Electoral Act, 116, 117. Government of Botswana.

³²² Ngatane, N. "Botswana's Umbrella for Democratic Change to challenge election results". *Eyewitness News*, 2019. <https://ewn.co.za/2019/11/03/botswana-s-umbrella-for-democratic-change-to-challenge-election-results>

³²³ Benza, B. "Botswana opposition challenges election result in court". *Reuters*, 2019. <https://af.reuters.com/article/idafkbn1y00ra-ozatp>

³²⁴ "Botswana's UDC accuses leading party of manipulating recent election results". *Political Analysis South Africa*, 2019. <https://www.politicalanalysis.co.za/botswanas-udc-accuses-leading-party-of-manipulating-recent-elections-results/>

³²⁵ "Boko's Cheating Testimonial". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=7055>

³²⁶ *Ibid*

³²⁷ Trent, S. "Forensic Report Regarding Alleged Botswana Vote Rigging". *Forensics for Justice*, 2019. https://www.forensicsforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/01-FINAL-REPORT-Botswana-Elections-2019-12-04_Redacted.pdf

³²⁸ Basimanebotlhe, T. "Khama urges UDC to challenge election results". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83322&dir=2019/november/01>

³²⁹ Gasennelwe, U. "IEC rubbishes UDC's rigging claims". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6965>

³³⁰ Gasennelwe, U. "Saleshando Okays elections results". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6960>

³³¹ Basimanebotlhe, T. "Duma Boko Petitions Constituency Election Outcome". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83518&dir=2019/november/18>

³³² Gaolathe, N. "Thank you for my days at parliament". *Facebook*, 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/ndaba.gaolathe/posts/3686781834680806>

³³³ Moyo, S. "SADC Electoral Observation Mission Preliminary Statement". *Southern African Development Community*, 2019. https://www.sadc.int/files/9715/7225/2549/Botswana_SEOM_Preliminary_Statement.pdf

³³⁴ Tambajang, F.J. "AU Electoral Observation Mission Preliminary Statement". *African Union*, 2019. <https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/37581-pr-aeom-preliminary-statement-botswanas-general-elections-2019.pdf>

³³⁵ *Ibid*, Basimanebotlhe, "Khama urges UDC to challenge election results", 2019

³³⁶ *Ibid*, Benza, "Botswana opposition challenges election result in court", 2019

4.4. Dissecting the 2019 outcome

It is one thing to look at the results and understand that the BDP won, or understand that the different dynamics led to another victory, however, it is something else entirely to truly grasp the key reasons for yet another BDP victory to the detriment of the UDC. This section aims to scrutinise the outcome of Botswana's 2019 General Elections and assess the reasons for the UDC's loss despite a vigorous campaign and the support of the BPF under Khama. Many would argue that a plethora of events came into play to see to the BDP's 12th consecutive victory, though a prominent few stand above the rest. These events include the actions and behaviour of former president Khama as well as the positive actions of his successor, Masisi; the internal turmoil of the opposition coupled with Boko's controversial personality; and, the absence of the weight of Botswana's influential trade unions. In some instances, the smaller opposing parties vested in the AP and BPF resulted in the UDC losing further traction, and in other cases, completely lose out on potential constituencies. Proving to be quite the intricate web of politics, the lead-up to Botswana's 2019 General Elections suggested a strong UDC force, though the culmination of events and undercurrents ultimately saw to an abysmal performance by Botswana's main opposition.

4.4.1. The Khama factor

In 2014, the opposition's golden goose was the hatred expressed towards Khama, ensuring the vote of many Batswana who were strongly opposed to his rule. Since taking the president's seat in 2008,³³⁷ Khama's popularity drastically declined to the point where the BDP nearly lost the 2014 elections, and did in fact lose the popular vote.^{338 339} As an almost direct result of Khama's extremely unpopular policies and his authoritarian ruling style, many Batswana expressed a strong antipathy towards the son of Botswana's first president.^{340 341} With the feud

between Khama and Masisi, and Khama's ultimate exit from the BDP, the main factor that was weighing the BDP down turned to the opposition for his campaign against his successor. Now, the main deterrent for votes, especially in the urban areas, no longer associated himself with the BDP but with the BPF and UDC instead. As a result, Khama translated the negative sentiment projected onto him by the urban electorate to the UDC and, in essence, inverted the 2014 sentiment so that many Batswana no longer opposed the BDP, but rather the UDC, with Khama.^{342 343} The election results, especially in the Gaborone constituencies, thoroughly illustrate the new found disregard for an opposition that was strongly against Khama in 2014, though chose to ally with the one they demonised in 2019.

Khama's strategy, however, was not limited to throwing his weight behind the UDC. To further his campaign against Masisi, Khama also saw to the creation of a new political party, the BPF. Historically, Botswana's opposition failed to prove a strong opposing force in the general elections as the votes per constituency were divided, leading to the BDP slightly outweighing the rest and emerging victorious. One of the best testaments to this issue is the Kanye North constituency in 2014 which saw the BDP win with 36.05% of the vote, the UDC with 35.60% and the BCP with 25.37%.³⁴⁴ The BDP edged past the UDC, though if the opposition stood united, they would have far outweighed the BDP's support in this constituency. With the formation of the BPF in 2019, Khama's apparent strategy was to split the vote of the BDP, rather than the opposition, seeing to the UDC emerging victorious in closely contested constituencies.³⁴⁵ In most cases, such as Boteti East, Lerala-Maunatlala, and Mmadinare, this did not work, as the BPF ended up repeating the age-old Botswana opposition curse of splitting the vote and seeing to a BDP victory instead. There exists one prominent constituency, however, that perfectly captures the realisation of Khama's

³³⁷ "Ian Khama to step down as Botswana's president after 'farewell tour'", *France24*, 2018. <https://www.france24.com/en/20180330-botswana-ian-khama-step-down-president-after-farewell-tour>

³³⁸ Njanji, S. "Botswana president says Khama exit is 'good' for the ruling party". *Gulf Times*, 2019. <https://www.gulf-times.com/story/645029/Botswana-president-says-Khama-exit-is-good-for-the>

³³⁹ Lebanna, P. "Various factors power BDP to victory". *Botswana Daily News*, 2019. <http://www.dailynews.gov.bw/news-details.php?nid=52581>

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, Njanji, 2019

³⁴¹ The Watchdog. "Khama took the UDC up in 2014, he's now pulling it down in 2019!". *Sunday Standard*, 2019.

<http://www.sundaystandard.info/khama-took-udc-2014-he%E2%80%99s-now-pulling-it-down-2019>

³⁴² *Ibid*, Njanji, 2019

³⁴³ Basiami, B.P. "Review and evaluation of UDC's electoral performance in the 2019 General elections". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/review-and-evaluation-udc%E2%80%99s-electoral-performance-2019-general-elections>

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, "General Elections 2014 Parliamentary Results", 2014

³⁴⁵ "Inside the Khama Strategy that Delivered Seats to the UDC". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/inside-khama-strategy-delivered-seats-udc>

strategy: Mahalapye East. Here, the UDC won the constituency with a comfortable 42.18% compared to the BDP's 36.91% and the BPF's 20.91%.³⁴⁶ In this context, Khama's strategy proved much more noticeable than in other constituencies.

On a more macro-level, however, the 2019 elections saw Khama lose the running feud with Masisi, following a BDP victory.

4.4.2. Masisi's interlude

While Khama's national image deteriorated throughout the years, and especially so after his exit from the BDP, Masisi was hard at work to position himself as an advocate for positive change and a fresh new course for the BDP. The reforms Masisi brought in his first 18 months in office and his appeal to populism soon saw the electorate reconsidering their enmity towards the ruling party.³⁴⁷ Though many were convinced that the surname of the former president would surely carry his campaign against Masisi to great lengths, Masisi's purported progressive attitude turned out to far outweigh the influence of the Khama name. The 2019 election results are a testament that most Batswana simply prefer Masisi over Khama, which is understandable considering the vast differences in attitude and policies. For voters from Molepolole, for example, voting proved to be a fairly simple decision, as a vote for the opposition would be a vote for Khama, whom they did not favour.³⁴⁸

Even though Khama's campaign against Masisi appeared threatening at first, Masisi proved to be quite the political rival by using Khama's constant lashing out to play the victim and attract empathy votes. Khama's constant attacks directed at Masisi only painted the former as the aggressor and the latter as the victim of a bitter old man's utterances.³⁴⁹ Furthermore, reports of assassination attempts only promoted the image of Masisi being targeted for his positive divergence from the controversial Khama.^{350 351} It also contributed to the idea that Khama, with his intelligence and military links, was somehow looking to put an end to Masisi. The perception

of Masisi as the victim further placed the core of the BDP's negative perception, from the eyes of the electorate, squarely in the lap of Khama, almost absolving the BDP of negativity. As the victim, Masisi also enjoyed the role of the protagonist under constant attack from the 'villain' of the story. Such a perception led many Batswana to simply vote for the BDP because, from this perspective, it is the 'good' party.

In sum, it is critical to take account of Masisi's efforts to revamp the BDP's image. While the electorate displayed evident disgust for Khama, this would not have been sufficient if not for the positive change vested in Masisi's diplomacy.

4.4.3. Neutral trade unions

Another critical influence, or rather lack of influence, is that of the trade unions. In the past, the unions stood by the opposition and all those opposed to Khama, and overtly commanded their members to vote against Khama in the 2014 elections. Contrastingly, Masisi's engagement with the trade unions and his willingness to negotiate and accommodate the needs of the unions and their members left the once steadfast unions in two minds on which side they would be backing in the 2019 elections. With various opinion differences among the union members, one of the largest unions, BOFEPUSU, could not agree on either side and ultimately announced that they would be adopting a neutral stance on the 2019 election and encouraged their members to vote wisely and for whoever they believed would best advance their interest over the coming five years.³⁵²

The indecisiveness of the trade unions further testifies to both Khama's notoriety as well as Masisi's popularity. Posing an interesting insight into the neutrality of the trade unions, some analysts argue that BOFEPUSU's positioning was, in fact, an endorsement of the BDP as they had effectively abandoned their long-time allies

³⁴⁶ *Ibid*, "Botswana 2019 Election Results", 2019

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Lebanna, 2019

³⁴⁸ Motlhoka, T. "Khama, Masisi war a factor as Molepolole returns to BDP". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/khama-masisi-war-factor-molepolole-returns-bdp>

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*, Lebanna, 2019

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Nqola, 2019

³⁵¹ Selatlhwa, I. "Masisi's armoured car crashes". *Mmegi*, 2019.

<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82818&dir=2019/september/20>

³⁵² *Ibid*, Kgoboge, 2019

The Botswana Federation of Trade Unions collectively represents other unions' interests, such as the Botswana Mining Workers Union



in the opposition.³⁵³ ³⁵⁴ This view is further supported by the fact that other trade unions have urged their members not to vote for the opposition as their promises are unattainable and uninspiring.³⁵⁵ Manual Workers Union chief executive officer, Johnson Motshwarakgole, said that the Masisi government deserves appreciation after the salary increases that were agreed to, following the PEMANDU negotiations.³⁵⁶

The combined conclusion from the two arguments point to the trade unions being inclined to favour the BDP prior to the elections. If this trend had to be taken at face value, it does go a long way to explain the increase in the BDP's support and the concurrent decrease of the UDC's support in the 2019 elections.

4.4.4. A rickety coalition

As alluded to earlier, Khama's allegiance with the UDC saw to the electorate's negative sentiment being transferred from the BDP in 2014 to the UDC in 2019. This detrimental influence, however, was not limited to the perception of the electorate, but also led to division within the coalition. While Khama appeared to enjoy an amicable relationship with Boko, UDC vice-president, Dumelang Saleshando, took a strong stance in which he made it clear that he did not want to be associated with a man whom they blamed for the collapse of the economy and suppression of the public sector workers' rights.³⁵⁷ This dichotomy of differing opinions further permeated the coalition and its members.

³⁵³ Morima, N. "BOFEPUSU is right on political neutrality". *Weekend Post*, 2019. http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-column-details.php?col_id=1226

³⁵⁴ Jameson, K. "BOFEPUSU has strategically endorsed Masisi's BDP". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/bofepusu-has-strategically-endorsed-masisi%E2%80%99s-bdp>

³⁵⁵ Gaothobogwe, M. "Motshwarakgole takes aim at opposition". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82767&dir=2019/september/18>

³⁵⁶ Seepi, B. "Unions must appreciate government – Motshwarakgole". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82777&dir=2019/september/18>

³⁵⁷ Mmeso, P. "Khama divides the UDC". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <https://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/6929-khama-divides-the-udc.html>

Unfortunately, Khama was not the only cause of the UDC's internal turmoil. As the results trickled in, it became clear that the BCP constituencies far outperformed those of the BNF. Though many knew the BCP would see a significant amount of victories, the coalition's main partner, the BNF, was believed to be the one with the largest support base. At the conclusion of the vote counting, 11 of the UDC's 15 constituencies belonged to BCP candidates with BNF and UDC president, Boko, losing his constituencies.³⁵⁸ Comment from the BNF Veterans Association Committee pointed to Boko's arrogance as well as the BNF's general weak cohesion and preparation prior to the election. According to the committee, the BNF structures collapsed across constituencies with those surviving not well coordinated, leading to various disputes.³⁵⁹



Jwaneng, a constituency of the Southern District, proved a key capture of the BDP
Image courtesy of Ossewa

Among these disputes were last-minute applications for the re-run of primary elections in a few wards in the Jwaneng-Mabutsane constituency.³⁶⁰ The key component in the BNF structure failing to coordinate and mitigate any such disputes is the Central Committee of the BNF. In both the Jwaneng-Mabutsane disputes and the comment from the veterans committee, the weakness of the BNF Central Committee came to light.³⁶¹ ³⁶² Failing to take a strong

position as the party's coordinator led to further instability of the BNF, allowing for the BDP to come in as a strong and coherent political entity, resulting in the BDP trumping BNF constituencies.

More specific to the constituencies in and around Gaborone is the recent controversy surrounding the 2014 UDC councillor and Gaborone Mayor, Kagiso Thutlwe. In October 2019, a few weeks before the national elections, the city council's internal auditors reported that Thutlwe lied about the outcome of an Executive Committee meeting in order to unlawfully allocate billboard sites. Increasingly, controversy surrounding Thutlwe grew in prominence which saw UDC councillors ramping up their defence of the mayor in parallel to the accusations.³⁶³ As the UDC councillors sought to uphold the coalition's public perception, the secrecy of the matter only caused increased mistrust in the Gaborone politicians and ultimately, led to the BDP overturning all Gaborone constituencies.

The BNF Veterans Committee also pointed out the topic of party funding, particularly from Zunaid Moti. Specifically, it is said that while the media was abuzz with mention of the UDC's significant financial support, the impression from the veterans was that many BNF candidates, both parliamentary and local, encountered serious financial constraints. Moreover, BNF members were told that each constituency was promised P50 000 even though the BNF Central Committee were not aware of this promise with, only Boko's favourite cronies being the intended recipients.³⁶⁴ In turn, this claim points back to the dominance of Boko, who is said to have been truly arrogant and inconsiderate in his decision making. Many argue that the BNF fell away and only the voice of Boko presented to be the final word.³⁶⁵ ³⁶⁶ ³⁶⁷

4.4.5. Boko's infamy

Following the loss of his constituency, critique against the charismatic yet unpopular leader of the UDC only grew in prominence. Widely

³⁵⁸ "UDC's main undoing was administrative dysfunction of its main partner". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/udc%E2%80%99s-main-undoing-was-administrative%C2%A0dysfunction%C2%A0its-main-partner>

³⁵⁹ *Ibid*, Basiami, 2019

³⁶⁰ Basimanebotlwe, T. "BNF internal fights might cost UDC". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=82811&dir=2019/sepember/20>

³⁶¹ *Ibid*

³⁶² *Ibid*, Basiami, 2019

³⁶³ "Rot at GCC puts UDC in dangerous electoral position". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/rot-gcc-puts-udc-dangerous-electoral-position>

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*, Basiami, 2019

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, "UDC's main undoing was administrative dysfunction of its main partner", 2019

³⁶⁷ *Ibid*, Fabricius, 2019

considered to be 'flashy and arrogant',³⁶⁸ controversy surrounding Boko snowballed following his affiliation with Khama.³⁶⁹ Highlighted earlier, Boko's decision to rely on the Khama influence ultimately led to the electorate's antipathy shifting towards the UDC. Boko's decision to ally with Khama, mostly seen as an individual and ill-conceived decision,³⁷⁰ turned out not to be the only point of critique. Due to his heavy reliance on Moti, fostering a close business relationship with the controversial South African, Boko was also implicated in allegations of state capture and the potential of increased corruption, should he be elected as president.³⁷¹

Although this might have been mere allegations, Boko's biggest blunder and source of infamy arose shortly before the elections. During the national presidential debate, Boko used words from a local Botswana song by late folklore legend Ratsie Setlhako which left a bitter taste among many Batswana.³⁷² Specifically, words from the song read:

*"Re buswa ke bo nkoborwane, ditlhodi bo magogajase ke raa bo Rankurate"*³⁷³

This phrase means 'we are ruled by the goblins, the spies and the giraffes and the Rankurate'. Following the debate numerous Batswana took to social media and even called into radio shows to raise their condemnation against Boko. The argument was made that he abused Batswana culture as well as the words of a local legend for his own political gain.^{374 375} As an individual act, Boko's arrogance and misuse of local culture likely saw to the final nail in Boko's Bonnington North coffin.

4.4.6. Splitting the pieces

The influence of Khama in the BPF still saw to the extremely new party conquering all three Serowe constituencies. This, despite the BDP's candidates who stood for re-election winning by wide margins in 2014. Following a fallout with Dorcas Makgato of the BDP, and after significant pressure from his brother and the Bangwato, Tshekedi joined the BPF shortly before the deadline for candidate nominations.³⁷⁶ Although the plan was for the BPF to only split the vote and pave the way for the UDC to win, the combination of Boko and the UDC's controversy, along with the influence of the Khamas, led to the BPF securing all three Serowe constituencies, which could have served the UDC better.³⁷⁷

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the AP also saw the opposition vote split in a handful of constituencies. In Francistown South, the AP secured the constituency which would otherwise have seen a close contest between the BDP and UDC, potentially swinging to the opposition. Gaborone constituencies, in particular, saw a number of close contests between the AP, BDP and UDC, with the opposition split between the AP and UDC, leaving room for the BDP to secure the constituencies.³⁷⁸ The presence of both the AP and BPF further contributed to the detriment of the UDC and, ultimately to the opposition's inability to topple the ruling party.

Boiling Botswana's General Elections down to the basics, the outcome once again showed that Botswana's ruling party remains the preferred political entity. What might not be as striking is that the change within the BDP and UDC signify the evolution of Botswana politics. Whether Masi's appointment was coincidental or the result of some grand scheme by BDP stalwarts such as the late Masire and the former president

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*

³⁶⁹ Molefe, R. "The reasons why UDC cannot win this election". *Sunday Standard*, 2019. <http://www.sundaystandard.info/reasons-why-udc-cannot-win-election>

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Fabricius, 2019

³⁷¹ *Ibid*, "Moti's Botswana/Zimbabwe power grab exposed", 2019

³⁷² Odubeng, M. "Who Will Have the Last Laugh". *Mmegi | The Monitor*, 2019.

<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83192&dir=2019/october/21>

³⁷³ Kaelo, G. "The presidential debate in the mind of an audience". *Mmegi*, 2019. <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=83165&dir=2019/october/18>

³⁷⁴ Morima, N.A. "Boko may have sealed victory for the BDP!". *Weekend Post*, 2019. http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-column-details.php?col_id=1232

³⁷⁵ Mmeso, P. "Is it the end for Boko?". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7670-is-it-the-end-for-boko.html>

³⁷⁶ Kanono, R. "BDP pushed me out -Tshekedi". *The Patriot on Sunday*, 2019. <http://www.thepatriot.co.bw/news/item/7585-bdp-pushed-me-out-tshekedi.html>

³⁷⁷ Pusoentsi, T. "Serowe is now Opposition 'stronghold'". *Weekend Post*, 2019. <http://www.weekendpost.co.bw/wp-news-details.php?nid=6938>

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, "Botswana 2019 Election Results", 2019

Mogae,³⁷⁹ or even a ploy between Khama and Masisi, the key takeaway from this event is that Botswana's 2019 election has initiated a departure from strong personality politics vested in the Khama legacy, towards a higher emphasis on service delivery and policy discourse. More than 50 years after its independence, Botswana politics is finally showing true transformation, slowly edging itself into contemporary domestic politics.



*A large proportion of Botswana's society consists of individuals under 30 years old, living in rural areas.
 Image courtesy of THINK Global School*

³⁷⁹ Morton, B. "How Masisi outsmarted Khama to take the reins in Botswana". *The Conversation*, 2019. <https://theconversation.com/>

[how-masisi-outsmarted-khama-to-take-the-reins-in-botswana-126150](https://theconversation.com/how-masisi-outsmarted-khama-to-take-the-reins-in-botswana-126150)

5. CONCLUSION

The inauguration of Mokgweetsi Masisi as Botswana's president-elect on the 1st of November³⁸⁰ marks the 12th consecutive victory for the BDP, extending its undefeated reign by another five years. Unlike previous elections, 2019 produced a tight electoral race with a multitude of factors coming into play. While the average person and most of the international arena might attribute the close contest to the feud between Ian Khama and Masisi, this dynamic, though significant, constitutes but one part of the larger socio-political landscape that spans across numerous role-players, both foreign and local.

The assessment of the country's political dynamics noted that the Khama factor did play a major role in the recent elections and ultimately proved to be a key element in the UDC's failure to secure victory. Within the BDP itself Masisi almost single-handedly saw to the reinvigoration of the party despite the constant lashes from his predecessor. Additionally, the neutral stance of the trade unions proved to work in favour of the ruling party as Duma Boko's arrogance, coupled with the opposition's affiliation with Khama, resulted in labour unions showing their support for the ruling party on election day. The research noted that internal turmoil within the opposition coalition further promoted the BDP's public image as the electorate ultimately displayed a preference for the more stable ruling party, regardless of bitter defectors who joined the BPF and UDC following initial losses in the primaries. The participation of the BPF, in practice, contributed to the BDP's victory as it, along with the AP and other independent candidates, split the opposition's support base enough to allow for the BDP to secure certain constituencies. Still, the newly formed BPF, strongly relying on tribal politics and the influence of the Khama's, had a notable impact on the BDP's influence in the Central District, and while the future of this 'coalition of the bitter' remains uncertain, it is worth keeping an eye on over the coming years.

Although opposition parties have expanded their reach in the northern regions of Botswana and wrestled control of the Central District away

from the BDP, Masisi's influence won the favour of the urban electorate and rolled back the ground gained by the UDC in the 2014 elections. Botswana political landscape has indeed experienced an evolutionary phase in its 2019 elections that will see the coming 2024 elections favour the most stable, proactive political party instead of the status quo or the Khama legacy. This evolution of Botswana politics brings in a sense of democratic competition and the very real threat that future BDP victories are no longer guaranteed. Going forward, the ruling party will need to ensure that it delivers on its election promises and uphold the air of positivity currently surrounding Masisi. It needs to further ensure positive change, successfully combating corruption and attracting more intelligent politicians that are able to act and govern on par with the country's current leader. As the world grows increasingly more connected and the media enjoys ever more influence, the ruling party needs to tread carefully in upholding its public image. The days of undermining the media and the people, such as during the former president's reign, are something the BDP would need to distance itself from and ensure that the party is never again tied to the same practices.

The landlocked Southern African country continues to face an array of social ills and while the BDP and President Masisi have won the battle, there is still a metaphorical war to be won. Botswana's current social conditions and wealth distribution do not reflect that of an upper-middle income country and Masisi's work has only just begun. As climate change continues to grow in prominence, Botswana's water situation, with its knock-on effects across the socio-political spectrum, is a particularly important factor that needs an increased impetus with more effective service delivery in the country's rural areas. Accordingly, this will go a long way to improve the living standard and general health of many Botswana. In relation to this, it is pertinent for Masisi's government to find more effective methods to deal with human-wildlife conflict, in addition to the hunting ban. Any strategies aimed at the latter should also bear in mind the role of Botswana's tourism industry both in relation to the economy and broader employment. With this in mind the age-old over-reliance on the diamond industry will have to be

³⁸⁰ Benza, B. "Inaugurated, Botswana's Masisi pledges to diversify economy away from diamonds". *Reuters*, 2019.
<https://af.reuters.com/article/southAfricaNews/idAFL8N27H2EQ>

adjusted and more proactive policies adopted to provide sustainable employment, especially among the youth. However, a vital component of youth employment has proven to be education aligned with the needs of the job market. Masisi's government urgently needs to ensure that the currently misaligned tertiary education sector be re-evaluated and revamped in order to deliver graduates that are capable of meeting the country's skills requirements.

Botswana's ruling government also needs to look inward and address the institutional weaknesses that manifest in its outdated constitution. For the good of the whole nation and its future, it is critical to close in on the constitutional and other legislative loopholes with an aim of promoting its checks and balances. This is particularly important in the fight against corruption. Part of these institutional frameworks is the controversial image of the DISS which should also be reworked to truly serve the people instead of being an instrument at the disposal of the president.

Looking on to the next five years, Batswana are met with a sense of relief following Khama's now limited influence over the country's politics and the BDP, bringing a measure of hope that has been lacking for the past 10 years. Though some within the opposition and their support base may not agree with the outcome of the election they too will still share in this sense of relief given the long-term impact left by the Khama legacy. The year 2019 will forever be remembered as the election year where Botswana politics saw a giant leap forward surrounding the democratic experiment. Should this trend continue 2024 will be an even more competitive election.



*With Masisi's victory in the 2019 General Election, Batswana are hopeful for a new dawn in their government and society.
Image courtesy of Travel Local*



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