



Debating Developmental States in Africa: Reflections on Culture and Civil Society in Botswana

By

Afolayan Gbenga Emmanuel

Fellow, International Institute of Social Studies,
Erasmus University

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Email: yangbengaafolayan@gmail.com

stonemanuel2@gmail.com

Abstract: *The debate about developmental states raises numerous conceptual and contextual questions. Beginning with a critical reflection on the export of ‘developmental states model’ from Asia to Africa, this paper—which considers the emergence of developmental states—explores questions of increasing significance across Sub-Saharan Africa: What might “developmental states model” actually mean in post-colonial Africa? How much component does the concept of developmental states have? How can we relate this discussion about each developmental state within the wider debate about developmental states in Sub-Saharan Africa? How does it engage with local cultures and civil society? This article addresses these questions by providing the conceptual explanations of developmental states as well as their features, before considering the potency of culture and civil society. It further explains the conditions that favour the emergence of developmental state in Botswana. The article will argue that the conditions that have significantly favoured Botswana’s post-colonial economic success are: legitimate state-apparatus, good governance and democracy, commercial customs, strong property rights, and inter-ethnic harmony. The article concludes that the peculiar case of Botswana’s success is not only located in its economic system but also, in particular, in its culture (Tswana) which was developed before and during the colonial period. This particular factor has significantly helped other factors in shaping Botswana’s post-colonial developmental accomplishments.*

Keywords: *Developmental State, Culture, Civil Society*

Introduction

The emergence of ‘developmental state’ concept is as a result of the success of state-led development in the 1970s and 1980s in the East Asia (Woo-Cumings, 1999). It was a new approach in the development studies

which challenged the dominant neo-liberal ideas that the market was the sole determinant of the miraculous economic prosperity. Developmental states model was further refined to capture the alternative developmental trajectories and a

distinction between the socialist and capitalist states in the developing world. However, with the collapse of socialist system in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the political and socio-economic context within which the developmental states was constructed and discussed changed dramatically. The end of the Cold war and intense concern about the resultant effects of neo-liberal economic policies triggered the normative reassessment revolving around the roles of the state-led economic development (Howell, 2006; White, 1998).

By the mid-1990s, international institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and others acknowledged the pivotal role the state had played in the economic prosperity of the East Asian countries, especially the Four Little Tigers. Consequently, there was a growing interest in 'good governance' agenda—a relevant issue that was soon mirrored in aid programmes and analyses of development processes (Howell, 2006). Nevertheless, the anticipation that good governance should be democratic and observant of human rights correspondingly challenged the idea of the developmental state, which in practice had proved to be non-democratic (authoritarian), often repressive of civil society, and less than respectful of civil and political rights. The intensification of foreign direct investment (FDI) from the 1980s onwards led some scholars, such as Cerny (1997, 2000), to

question the potency of state-led economic development and the possibility of developmental states. In spite of the paradoxes associated with the globalisation and good governance, the developmental states model continues to be advanced and adapted (Woo-Cummings, 1999), both as an empirically observed phenomenon and as a normative ideal of state-market relations. For example, Leftwich (2000) opened up a debate around democratic and non-democratic (authoritarian) developmental states in developing world. In particular, Leftwich (Ibid.: 177-179) places Botswana and Singapore in the same category as democratic developmental states. But there is a need to deepen our thinking about this placement of Botswana in the typology, as well as its co-location with Singapore.

Furthermore, previous studies focused more on the understanding of the political, economical, financial and institutinal factors which eventually resulted in the successful development outcomes in the East Asian region (Woo-Cummings, 1999). Recent studies have also directed towards identifying the necessary governance, economic and social conditions that would make the implementation of the developmental state model feasible in African regions under the current global (political and economic) conditions (Musamba, 2010; Mkandawire, 2001). However, cultural explanation of economic phenomena has not enjoyed a renaissance it deserves in

the development discourse. Therefore, this article explores the relevance of the developmental state concept to Botswana against the backdrop of pre-colonial culture, post-colonial state-led economic development and civil society. The article starts by reviewing the concept of the developmental state and why it matters in Africa, setting out the common characteristics of developmental states, examining conceptual underpinnings of culture and civil society, and analysing the significant conditions that favour the Botswana's economic prosperity. Fundamentally, the Botswana's case compels us to rethink our understanding of developmental states for Africa.

Conceptualizing Developmental States

Developmental states have been an important research focus for empirical analysis at different points in history. The historical antecedent of the idea of developmental state dates back at least to List (1909) and Gerschenkron (1962). They were concerned with the role of the state in rapid 'late' industrialisation in Europe. The most recent experiences with successful structural transformations engineered by developmental states have been those in East Asia between the 1960s and 1980s. Over the span of 30 years, a set of countries including Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan underwent rapid and radical economic development, moving from being poor agrarian societies in 1960s to

producers of high technology and high value-added goods by the 1990s (Fritz and Rocha Menocal, 2006; Kohli, 2004; Haggard, 1990). In the last three decades, China has also experienced remarkable processes of socio-economic transformation. In Africa, although limited examples abound, state-led development has been found in countries such as Botswana, Rwanda and Mauritius (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Rochal Menocal, 2004)

More importantly, the concept of developmental states started to be defined by scholars in response to the explorations of economic growth stories of countries in East Asia, and this experience has tended to dominate its framing (Evans, 1995; Johnson, 1982). Johnson's model was described as a market-driven device that could be utilized for advancing a developmental agenda, whereby the state involved itself in "setting...substantive social and economic goals" (1982: 19). As Öni notes, 'it is the "synergy" between the state and the market which provides the basis for outstanding development experience' (1991: 110). This challenges those who consider the state as being in disagreement with the market and rather points in the path of the successful developmental state (Johnson, 1999: 48).

Although Johnson's own Japanese model has been challenged, the success of other countries in East Asia that used strategic interventions and achieved high growth periods

arguably establishes the conceptualization of 'the developmental state' (Wade, 1990; Evans, 1995; Kohli, 2004). Put simply, Leftwich asserts that developmental states can be described as "states whose politics have concentrated sufficient power, autonomy, capacity and legitimacy at the centre to shape, pursue and encourage the achievement of explicit developmental objectives, whether by establishing and promoting the conditions of economic growth (in the capitalist developmental states), or by organising it directly (in the 'socialist' variants), or a varying combination of both" (2000:155). This article will explore the applicability of Leftwich's explanation to concretise the case of Botswana in later section.

Developmental state model has important implications for Mkandawire's formulation of an 'African democratic developmental state' (2001). Democratic developmental state is particularly seen as the one that ensures citizens' participation in the development and governance processes, with regards to the ideologies of electoral democracy. Therefore, when questioning how the developmental state can be positioned in the African context, it becomes imperative to emphasize on consensual agreement and deliberate traditions by bringing people together across party lines, racial backgrounds, class divides and other differences, for the common

good. Conceiving the democratic developmental state in this way is an attempt to deploy ideological orientation, institutional architecture (administrative and political) and its policy orientation to underpin the realisation of developmentalist project. According to Edigheji (2010: 4), democratic developmental state is a state that "could act authoritatively, credibly, legitimately and in a binding manner to formulate and implement its policies and 'developmentalist' programmes" (emphasis added).

Moreover, developmental state model remains predominantly associated with East Asian states which have been successful in achieving prolonged high rates of growth. There has, however, been concern in the usefulness of the developmental state model for other regions, perhaps Africa in particular (Meyns and Musamba, 2010). The narrow regional focus of developmental states is contested in a number of ways. Mkandawire contends that, that the East-Asian model was born in the context of authoritarianism does not mean that all developmental states are autocratic (2001). Other scholars have identified states that have been patrimonially developmental at certain times (Kelsall and Booth, 2010; Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 2012). Therefore, the concept of developmental states offers itself a degree of comparative investigation. However, a common strand by all these afore-mentioned scholars is that one-size-fits-all approach to the

construction of developmental state will not work because there is a need to take account of differences in each country's specific historical, political, economic, ideological and institutional setting¹. We shall now turn to the characteristics of developmental states in the next section.

Characterizing Developmental States

Taking a departure from the previous section, it is less easy to specify *ex ante* the main characteristics of developmental states. This is because developmental states are marked by a combination of capacities, norms, ideologies, visions, cultural ethos and values. Developmental states are not associated with specific policies—at various periods and in various places. Different policies have led to social and economic transformations (see Woo-Cummings, 1999). According to Leftwich (2000), the following features often characterise developmental states:

- Developmental elites
- Relative state autonomy
- A powerful, competent and insulated bureaucracy

- A weak civil society
- The effective management of non-state economic interests
- Legitimacy and performance.
- Human rights records

One can say that there appears some form of consensus on the features for successful developmental states as listed above. Developmental states are commonly characterised by leadership and elites who are strongly committed to economic growth and transformation, with power, authority and legitimacy to promote developmental agenda (Musamba, 2010; Fritz and Menocal, 2007; Leftwich, 2000). Often inspired by strong nationalist spirit and sentiments, such elites strive to modernise their nations, raise standard of living and bridge the digital gap. Besides, a degree of political stability is usually a precondition for such capacities to be sustained and to flourish. The social structure of domestic demands is also reflected as an important feature of developmental state. Evans calls this 'embedded autonomy' (1995). For Evans, developmental state is autonomous insofar as it has a rationalised bureaucracy characterised by meritocracy and long-term career prospects, traits that make civil servants more professional and detached from powerful rent-seeking groups. Thus, the state must be connected to a concrete set of social ties that bind it to society and provides institutionalised channels for the continual negotiation and renegotiation of goals and policies

¹ This article does not focus on the comparative analysis of Botswana and Singapore in terms of the democratic nature of their developmental processes, but it contests the Leftwich's classification and co-location of democratic developmental states—particularly the placement of Botswana and Singapore due to their developmental trajectory.

(Ibid: 12). A peculiar example of such is the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in Japan or the Economic Planning Board in South Korea. Both the social-political and policy elites and government agencies in general are relatively autonomous from particular vested interests, allowing them to stand above the demands of specific groups, whether defined by class, ethnicity or region, to shape policy for a broader, national interest.

Another of the underlying characteristics of the developmental states, as noted by Leftwich (2000), is that they tend to have weak civil societies, poor human rights records and repressive political regimes. Although Leftwich opened this up for debate by drawing a distinction between democratic² developmental states such as Singapore, Botswana, Malaysia, and non-democratic developmental states such as China, South Korea (1960-1987) and Taiwan (up till the mid-1980s). Still, the only point this article would take issue with is the assertion (following Leftwich, 2000) that 'civil society' is and remains 'weak'. This reflects a (narrow and western)

'organisational' view that equates 'civil society' with NGOs. This article considers the usefulness of the concept of civil society both as an analytical construct and as a policy tool in African context. It rejects the Leftwich's argument that civil society is and remains weak in Africa's developmental states because civil society is seen as part of an increasingly universal negotiation between citizens, states and markets. There are even some modifications to Leftwich's argument. For example, Woom-Cumings (1999), argues that the developmental state is not an imperious entity lording it over society but a social partner with the business sector in a historical compact of industrial development. Similar notions include the concept of 'embedded autonomy' and 'governed interdependence (Evans, 1995; Weiss, 1998). Although these modifications are essential, they attest to the fact that in both democratic and non-democratic developmental state regimes institutionalise state-society were largely confined to interest groups perceived by the state as important to the attainment of set productive goals. All this has significant governance implications, especially with regards to the representation, consultation, oversight and participation of non-economic factors (Mkandawire, 2005). We shall return to the conceptualisation of civil society later but for now it becomes imperative to state that civil society, in the analysis of

² By juxtaposing the two ideas of democratization and development, Leftwich (1996: 281) critiqued the normative notion prevailing since the late 1980s in development discourse that democratization is an essential element for development, rather than merely an end-result, and invalidates the paralytic idea introduced by combining the two processes.

development trajectory of some African countries, has a capacity to inspire action (for critical details, see Lewis, 2002).

Developmental states are also defined by legitimacy and achieved outcomes towards the improvement of standard of living for a broad cross-section of society (Lin and Monga, 2011; Fritz and Menocal, 2007; Wade, 1990). Developmental states deliver speedy growth, as well as general well-being, measured in terms of literacy, employment, health status, life expectancy, per capita income and industrialisation. All these social indicators imply that the performance of developmental states is striking because they demonstrate a capacity to combine economic growth with good ingredients of redistribution. For example, there was thorough increased employment and industrialisation in the case of East Asia and Mauritius. However, the caveat here is that emphasis being placed on these various aspects varies between scholars, and indeed scholars usually focus on different elements—growth, standard of living and legitimacy—at different junctures.

In the later section, the article will further examine whether or not any features of the developmental states, as highlighted by Leftwich above and as advanced by other scholars has any purchase in the case of Botswana. By examining Botswana, this article is not seeking to privilege Botswana over others in Sub-

Saharan Africa, though the track record of Botswana in particular does stand out in the continent.

Conceptual Discourses: Culture and Civil Society

What we try to do in this section is to set out conceptual explanations about the culture and civil society because they are relevant to the case of Botswana:

Culture

Several economists often feel reluctant to reckon with the role that culture plays for two cogent reasons; because of the several channels through which culture can affect, and be affected by, economic outcomes; and because culture “has a sulphuric odour of race and inheritance, an air of immutability” (Landes, 2000: 2). Preferences and beliefs are taken as given in the neoclassical economics’ sphere; however scholars in the mainstream economics have now joined the economic historians who have traditionally been less doubtful of cultural assumptions (see Miguel, 2004; Fernandez and Fogli, 2006). For Landes (1998), economies make significant progress (or fail) as a result of attitudes driven by cultural factors and concludes that “if we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes all the difference” (p.516).

A general definition of culture is: “The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with

one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning” (Bates and Plog, 1991: 7). Recognising differences between culture and institutions is often challenging. In some African countries, if not all, culture seems to have influence on economic outcomes as a transmission mechanism from historical pre-colonial to post-colonial institutions. Etounga-Manguelle (2000: 75), for example, argued that “culture is the mother...and institutions are the children”. As Hjort (2010: note 6b) opines, “culture is more of a midwife for institutions”, although it is certainly not the only transmission mechanism. In the world of culture, the real is more apparent than tautology. This is because cultural exchanges are made manifest and so reversely changed into the sphere of politics across the axes of everyday life. Tacit in all these are discourses of mainly evaluation expressed, alliances and antagonisms, support and opposition which tend to be articulated around identifiable dissenting groups (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997). All in all, there is much more to the substance and dynamics of culture--both past and present—because it helps us to make sense of contemporary discourses of development outcomes and the postcolonial politics of nation-states.

Civil Society

Civil society can be generally defined as “the population of groups formed for collective purposes primarily outside of the State and

marketplace” (van Rooy, 1998: 30). Traditionally, civil society is rooted with different ideas. Ferguson (1767/1995), for example, saw civil society as a socially desirable alternative both to the state of nature and the heightened individualism of emergent capitalism. While Hegel (1821/1991) argued that self-organised civil society is needed to be balanced and ordered by the state, otherwise it would become self-centred and would not contribute to the common good. These two ideas shaped how the concept of civil society was evolved. Moving from the social and political terrain to a narrower organisational lens, De Tocqueville’s positive account of 19th century associationism in the U.S. laid emphasis on volunteerism, community spirit and independent association of life as protections against the domination of society by the state, and as an offset which helped to make the government accountable and effective. This De Tocqueville’s account and elements of those which preceded it tended to underline the role of civil society as one in which some of kind of evenness was created in relation to the state and the market (Lewis, 2002).

Other important issues that are often marked in civil society discourse are: fragility/ weakness of civil society (Putnam 2000; Leftwich, 2000), and the historical specificity of civil society which is rooted in the Western European experience and which perhaps have only limited

applicability to non-Western contexts (Blaney and Pasha, 1993). The two issues were revealed in Brown's (2000) account of civil society as an unjustified, time-bound idea which first developed from a different 'historical moment' in the particular areas of Western Europe during the late 18th century. During this period, state became strong enough to maintain law and order but not so resilient to become repressive—a balance which Brown (2000:8) argues was crucial:

There is very little margin for error—if the state is too expensive it will strangle civil society at birth, too weak and private institution will compete for its role as provider of order, if people are too much involved in each other's lives then they will lose the sense of distance needed to preserve civility, too little involved and they become part of an atomized 'mass society'.

Such ideas, during the past decade, tend to promote democratic institutions and market reforms in developing world. This is what is tagged 'good governance' agenda which was prominent in the early 1990s and which suggested a 'virtuous circle' could be constructed between the state, economy and civil society which balanced growth, equity and stability (Archer, 1994). Much of the recent interest in civil society is clearly associated with the global dominance of neo-liberal

beliefs during the past decade which suggested a declined role for the state and privatised forms of services delivery through flexible combinations of governmental, non-governmental and private institutional actors (Lewis, 2002). Another different notion of civil society has been influenced by Gramsci (1971), who argued that civil society is the arena, separate from state and market, in which ideological hegemony is contested. The implication of this is that civil society consists of a broad range of various organisations and ideologies which both challenge and uphold the existing order. These ideologies were influential in the context of the analysis of resistance to totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and Latin America from the 1970s onwards. The foregoing ideas can also be linked to the research on 'social movements' which seeks to challenge and transform structures and identities (Howell and Pearce, 2001; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992).

In spite of the differing ideas of the concept of civil society, either fragile, historically specific or Gramscian, the concept is ridden with ambiguities in both Western and non-Western contexts (see Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001; Hann and Dunn, 1996). However, if we move on to consider African contexts, differences of culture, history and politics will polarise its usefulness (See Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Lewis, 2002). Amidst all different ideas of civil

society, the present article takes a clue from the adaptive view which considers the importance of the localised, cultural and flexible different meanings of the concept of civil society, either at the level of analysis or in the implementation of policy. Maina (1998), for example, argues that such an idea can be indispensable if it is adapted in different ways. In particular, he suggests that it should be moved away from a Western obsession with rights and advocacy to include ‘self-help groups’ (organisations founded on a strong mistrust of the state and the overcoming of civic apathy) that are organised for personal and economic ends. A plethora of cases of Maina’s account in Africa abounds (see Gibbon, 2001—Tanzanian case; Brehony, 2000—Ugandan case; Honey and Okafor, 1998—Nigerian case).

Therefore, the need to think more broadly about the organisational and the moral values of civil society in African contexts align with Comaroffs’ (1999: 22) position: there is an “Eurocentric tendency to limit civil society to a narrowly defined institutional arena” which runs counter to the earlier ideas. Also, Lewis (2002:579) notes that:

There may be partisan, parochial or fundamentalist organisations each with a claim on civil society roles and membership. Recognition of local counterpart traditions may

therefore counter the tendency to undervalue the role of kin-based and ethnic organisations in helping to form public opinions and political pressure groups. The changing role of tradition in helping to structure different forms of African civil society is also important.

With this perspective above, there are possible dangers of moving from prescription into an equally unhelpful position of cultural relativism with the understanding of what civil society really means. For example, if it is widened to include kin groups, it is a long way from Gellner’s (1995) argument that civil society should not only be seen in terms of balancing the state, but is also a counter-balance to what he terms the ‘tyranny of cousins’. Although the concept of civil society allows us to connect local and international perspectives of political struggle, Mamdani (1996) and Ferguson (1998) show how the concept tells more about the risks of over-simplification of the horizontal transnational identities and linkages. In spite of the conceptual ambiguities which lie at the heart of the idea of civil society, an adaptive and historically contextualised view appears to be more useful to the present case study because it is linked to wider structural changes and state transformation. And it has become part of the political and social discourse of a wide range of

organised groups and individuals with the means to rethink politics and development under conditions of global change, either in Africa or elsewhere. Overall, civil society in Africa can be ambiguous, and as an 'all-purpose placeholder' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999:3) it can take cognisance of the emerging aspirations in the context of local social struggles for social well-being, and global socio-economic and technological transformations.

Botswana as Developmental State: Conditions that Favour its Emergence

Upon Botswana's independence in 1966, it was one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capital of \$69 (Acemoglu et al., 2003). The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), then led by Seretse Khama and based on support from both the rural poor and the elite, won the first election and has reigned ever since (Hjort, 2010). The transformation that began in the mid-1960s was successful though, the cattle economy expanded swiftly, and it then seemed that Botswana was moving down a different track than its neighbours; it was not until the revenues from the newly discovered diamond deposits started flowing in the early 1970s that the Botswana's economic miracle truly took off (Good, 1992). Though as an exporter of quality diamonds since 1970s, Botswana has its structural problems, still it has experienced limited symptoms as opposed to other African countries with mineral

resources (Hjort, 2006; Leith, 2005). Evidences from the post-independence experiences in Africa show that Botswana's development accomplishment is indeed an exceptional one (Leith, 2005). Hence, attempting to account for conditions that favour Botswana's relative post-colonial economic success is what this section will turn to next.

Botswana's capacity to adopt growth-enhancing policies derived from their legitimacy, which in turn was due to a connection with traditional authorities, resulted in how Botswana developed an integrative social and political structure for their developmentalism (Robinson and Parsons, 2006; Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007). The ascendancy of the first BDP government represented the way the post-colonial power structure in Botswana was based on Tswana culture (Hjort, 2010). For example, when the BDP was established in 1962, "it was clearly identified as the party of chiefs and therefore the inheritor of their legitimacy and institutions" (Maudeni, 2002:125). The uniqueness of Botswana is that the first government, consisting of farmer-politicians whose interests were closely aligned with those of the majority, contrasted with the condition of most contemporary African countries where leadership was in the hands of urban elites (Good, 1992). In most African states, colonialism gradually battered the pre-colonial political institutions to

shape the power structures of their subordinates, in an attempt to shrewdly extract the resources of their territories (most economically), thereby prohibiting the ex-colonies of the 1960s and 1970s from basing their new states on the existing traditions. However, in Botswana, the Tswana chiefdoms had cemented highly centralized bureaucratic state structures and a nationalistic culture (Molutsi, 1989). Thus, the BDP and economic elites based the administrative system on these pre-existing culture(s), thereby legitimizing the state and furthering the institutionalization of the BDP governments to invest in state capacity in order to articulate a national vision for development (Poteete, 2009). Thus, Botswana then typifies the developmental state of Chalmers Johnson where 'the politicians reign and the state bureaucrats rule' (Johnson 1981: 12).

Botswana has also unfailingly been scoring high on indices of democracy, governance, government effectiveness and control of corruption as opposed to other African countries (World Bank, 2002; World Bank, 2005; Poteete, 2009). That the opposition parties have, however, closed in on the ruling party (BDP) in recent elections, perhaps show a sign of the vitality of Botswana's democracy (Leith, 2005). That the public is able to hold Botswana's leaders accountable is clear; a point strongly accentuated by Acemoglu et al. (2003) that the BDP has been

responsive to the threat of losing power, and the courts have on several occasions declared specific government actions illegal. Botswana's economic success can be attributed to good governance (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980). The political institutions, hugely different from those of most neighbouring states that developed in Botswana after independence, suggests that exceptionally proto-democratic traditions may have favoured its emergence. The contrast with the histories of its neighbours (e.g. South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique) could not be simpler (Hjort, 2010). Besides, Botswana's modern parliamentary system is rooted in her cultural history of consensual politics (P.Peters, cited in Good, 1992). Though democracy has been deficit in Sub-Saharan Africa; all regions of the continent have until recently been dominated by coups, civil war and autocracy. Botswana's thriving democracy is thus a different one that is rooted in her history and culture—with certain features in common with western democracy (Leith, 2005), and "reveals a clear continuity between postcolonial leaders and pre-colonial rulers as traditional patterns of politics influenced by the nature of the postcolonial state itself" (Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007: 197). The culture of consultation sustained in the past, is still apparent in Botswana's current political system. Policy proposals, for example, are circulated for comment among all

relevant ministries and only after an inter-ministerial consensus has been reached will a memorandum go forward to the Cabinet. The strong political checks and balances present in Botswana encouraged competent leadership, and the quality of Botswana's leaders has been noteworthy (Samatar, 1999).

Moreover, respect for private property rights is another condition. The individualization of cattle ownership, for example, facilitated the development of a market cattle economy in Botswana during the 20th century (Hjort, 2010). The justification for this, establishes a strong appreciation of the eventual gains of private property rights. Africa's poverty is attributed, in part, to its history of communal ownership, and in particular the deficiency of individual property rights that characterise many tribal societies (de Soto, 2000). Still, Botswana established an individual thought of ownership centred on cattle during the 19th century based on its pre-colonial social norms (Acemoglu et al. 2001). Approved by Botswana customs and prompted by market ideologies, social amenities such as boreholes began to be recognised as personal property in the 1930s, and moves towards the private ownership of grazing lands and dams as well in the post-colonial period (Good, 1992). In this way, the autonomy of Botswana's bureaucracy was socially anchored within the wider setting of webs and networks that connected the cattle-

ranchers, politicians and bureaucrats together. It can be argued further that the embedded autonomy of the bureaucracy and different viable agencies (especially Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Civil service etc) have served Botswana well; cushioning policy from special-interest lobbying, though perhaps at a cost of the democratic traditions (Edigheji, 2005; Acemoglu et al, 2002).

Besides, there has been minimal opposition to the dominant elites' programmes in Botswana by the fact that civil society has been poorly developed and weak (Leftwich, 2000; Putnam, 2000)—an application of Western's universal logic. BDP has enjoyed supremacy—if not exclusively unchallenged status since independence. This typical nature of 'embedded autonomy' of developmental states (Evans, 1995; 2010), established a powerful interaction between the various groups that supported the private property rights favourable not only to the elites themselves but also to development. This has been facilitated because there was minimal opposition to the dominant elites' programmes in Botswana by the fact that civil society has been disorganised and democratic input has been weak (Molutsi and Holm, 1990). During this period, BDP enjoyed hegemonic status and became strong because civil society mobilisation was negligible, subordinate, increasingly facing

challenges of internal transformation (Ose-Hwedie, 2001; Mokopakgosi and Molomo, 2000), and perhaps was considered to be economically unproductive. However, the efforts of elite-assisted civil society actors to develop more autonomous 'room for manoeuvre' should not be ruled out. Rwanda's post-colonial developmental trajectory appears to be relevant to this claim (see Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 2012; Purdekova, 2011).

Furthermore, the first president of Botswana (Seretse Khama), and his broad political coalitions (in BDP) followed a sound party programme that appealed both to the economic elites and the majority of Botswana. Despite Botswana's structural imbalances, it has thus far avoided or limited them (Samatar, 1999; Leith, 2005). Botswana's economic and political vulnerability to South Africa, especially during the apartheid era, reinforced the importance of unity and bolstered support for the BDP (Molomo, 2000). The BDP's electoral alliance brought together groups with potentially incongruent interests by building on economic interdependencies, bringing in potential rivals, and ostracizing radical challengers. BDP further formed a broad electoral alliance by appealing to exporters of livestock producers and consumers of imports, investing mineral revenues for national development, and appealing to very real international threats to marginalise radical domestic parties

(Acemoglu et al., 2001). Providentially, the diamond revenues that started flowing in the 1970s drove Botswana's growth rates into double figures. Manufacturing has constituted around 5 per cent of GDP throughout the history of independent Botswana—'quite an achievement' (Acemoglu et al. (2003). The government played an important role in kick-starting Botswana's economy, but in the 1980s and 1990s the degree of central planning was gradually reduced, and private commerce and entrepreneurship flourished. Botswana government has not been shying away from an active involvement in promoting the market. Pilot institutions have been built to stimulate growth in the private sector—for example, the Botswana Development Corporation, was saddled with the responsibility of providing financial assistance to investors with commercially viable projects, building partnerships with investors capable of creating and growing commercial viable business and supporting projects that generate sustainable employment for Botswana. By the 1980s, as many African states continued to experiment with import substitution and quasi-socialism, commerce and entrepreneurialism flourished in Botswana (Robinson and Parsons, 2006).

Given the potency of ethnic fractionalization in development, the absence of ethnic conflict in Botswana is arguably one of the

country's biggest advantages over almost all other African countries (Ibid.). Though Tswana culture is clearly dominant in Botswana, the country has always been ethnically diverse. For example, the damaging effects that ethnic conflict can have on the political economy of a country have been avoided, even though Botswana is ethnically diverse. Besides, the dominant Tswana tribes cooperated to an extraordinary degree before, during, and after colonialism (Hjort, 2010). The absence of ethnic war in contemporary Botswana that contrasts with the experience of nearly all sub-Saharan African countries appears to be due in part to the integrative nature of Tswana culture developed before and during colonial period, which encouraged the alliance of both Tswana tribes and non-Tswana minorities in tribal life (Ibid.). Robinson and Parsons (2006) argue that Botswana was the only African nation that was dominated by such a homogenizing force at the time of independence. Though the unusual and limited nature of colonial rule seems to have further strengthened inter-ethnic unity in Botswana, Samatar argues that the cooperation existing across Tswana tribes and the inclusion of non-Tswana minorities in tribal life "sowed the seed of contemporary Botswana national identity" (1999:7). Although the Tswana tribes are relatively culturally homogenous, modern-day Botswana has been an ethnically diverse territory. The non-existence of ethnic

conflict in Botswana, which appears to have muffled growth elsewhere in Africa (Easterly and Levine, 1997), cannot be considered as an exogenous factor but should be explained in any satisfactory account of Botswana's economic success. In helping to forge a national identity and restraining ethnic conflict in a diverse country, Tswana culture clearly facilitated Botswana's economic success.

Overall, the juxtaposition of the conditions above-mentioned has accounted for the profile of Botswana's economic success as a democratic developmental state in Africa.

Concluding Remarks

This article supports the view that developmental states, whether democratic or autocratic, go through a life span that begins with origins, progresses through alliance and continues with social transformation, in promoting economic growth (Leftwich, 2000). Botswana's success is based on a foundation of market principles in which the state, through a wide variety of incentives and interventions, actively promotes private investments and direct investments by viable national institutions (Taylor, 2005). All this has been facilitated by legitimate state apparatus, strong inter-tribal harmony among others. Though Botswana has faced serious problems related to structural imbalances, equity within the society and political vulnerabilities (Good, 1992; Taylor, 2005), it has been able to

avoid or limit them (Poteete, 2009). Thus, the primacy of politics in the complex process of development has been central to Botswana case (Leftwich, 2000).

The understanding that an important transmission mechanism from historical to current institutions is 'culture' as it has shown in the democratic template of Botswana (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Evans, 1995). From a Sub-Saharan viewpoint, traditional Botswana culture proved uniquely beneficial to economic development after colonialism in the presence of a market system and prolific opportunities. That is, Botswana developed a culture (Tswana) before and during the early days of colonialism with features similar to

those of the developed countries which scholars frequently emphasize as possible explanations why, for example, the industrial revolution started in Europe, when the required technology was in place (Temin, 1997). Unlike Botswana, a legitimate state apparatus, good governance, commercial traditions, stable property rights, and a national harmony were initially not in place in other Sub-Saharan African states to a degree required for market system to work effectively (Samatar, 1999; Good, 1992). While not over-generalizing on the foundation of this case study, we can perhaps learn from the dominant Botswana culture (Tswana) that proved distinctively complementary to the western-style capitalism and governance.

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