

Local Governance Institutions and Land Reform in the North East District of Botswana

Boga Thura MANATSHA

PhD Candidate

Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation

Hiroshima-University, 1-5-1 Kagamiyama

Higashi Hiroshima, 739-8529, Japan

E-mail: manatshaboga@yahoo.co.uk

Keshav Lall MAHARJAN

Professor

Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation

Hiroshima-University, 1-5-1 Kagamiyama

Higashi Hiroshima, 739-8529, Japan

E-mail: mkeshav@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

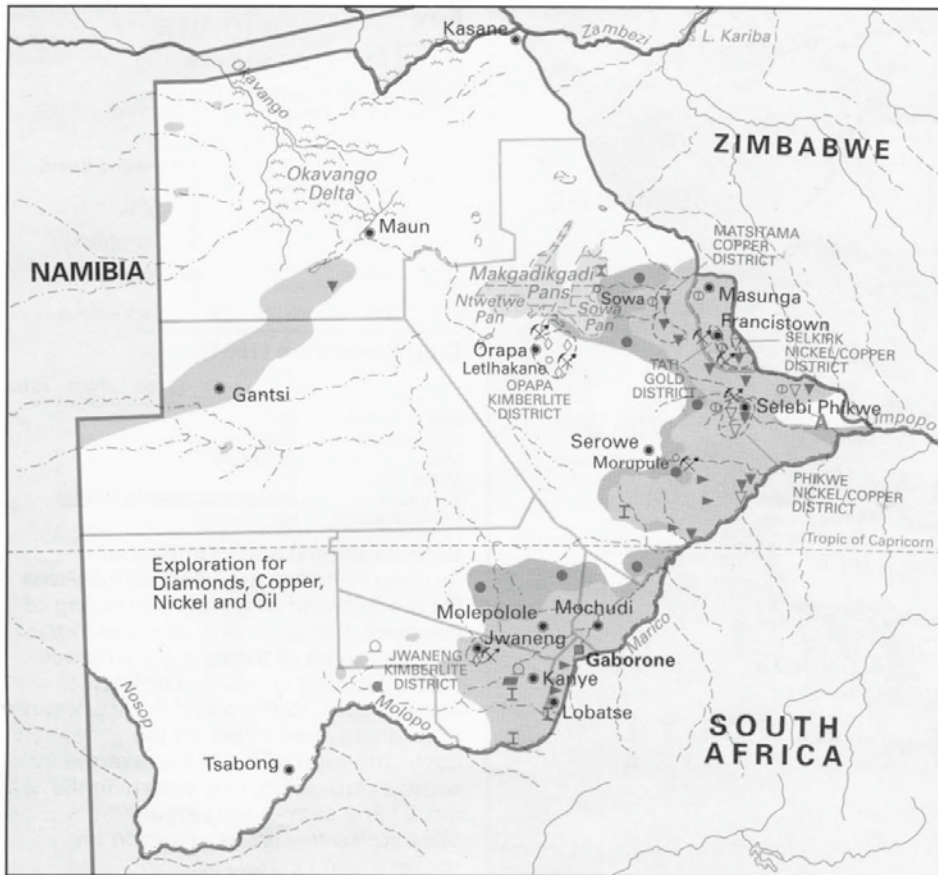
Abstract

This article examines the role of local governance institutions in the land reform programme in the North East District of Botswana. In this district, there is an ongoing state-led land reform which tries to address acute land shortage: a product of colonialism. All four local governance institutions are examined: the North East District Council, Tribal Administration, Tati Land Board, and District Administration. The interactions between these institutions and the local communities in relation to land reform are critiqued. The article contends that strong coordination and genuine consultation among these institutions could have facilitated better execution of land reform than it is the case. It reveals that due to various factors, the role of some of these institutions in the ongoing land reform is unclear. The Tribal Land Act excludes the chiefs from active participation in land issues. Ironically, the Chieftainship Act expects them to inform their communities about development programmes.

1. Introduction

Botswana is internationally acclaimed for good governance and economic prosperity. Sound institutions and good political leadership are credited for its success (Leith, 2005). It is a multi-party parliamentary democracy, and holds elections every five years. Members of Parliament and District Councils are elected through first-past-the-post system. Botswana has a two-tier system of government (central and local government). The local government is the 'vehicle' to channel and coordinate rural local development. It receives budget, logistical and administrative support from the central government (Mfundisi, 1998). At the district level, the local government structure is made up of the District Councils, Tribal Administration and District Administration. However, the Land Boards, which are also at the local

Map 1: A Geographical Map of Botswana



Key
Geology

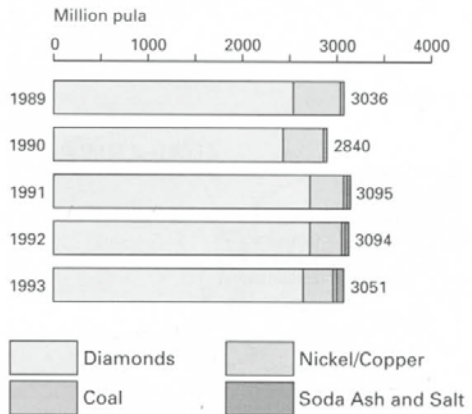
- Kgalagadi Sands—exploration difficult
- Karoo Rocks—high coal potential
- Makgadikgadi Pans—high salt potential
- Basement Rocks exposed at the surface—area of highest mineral potential

Minerals

- A Agate
- Asbestos
- Coal
- ▼ Copper
- ◇ Diamonds
- Gold
- I Iron
- Manganese
- ▽ Nickel
- Platinum
- ⊠ Soda Ash
- ▬ Talc
- ⊗ Mine in Operation

0 100 200 300 400 kilometres

Estimated Sales Value of Mineral Production 1989-1993

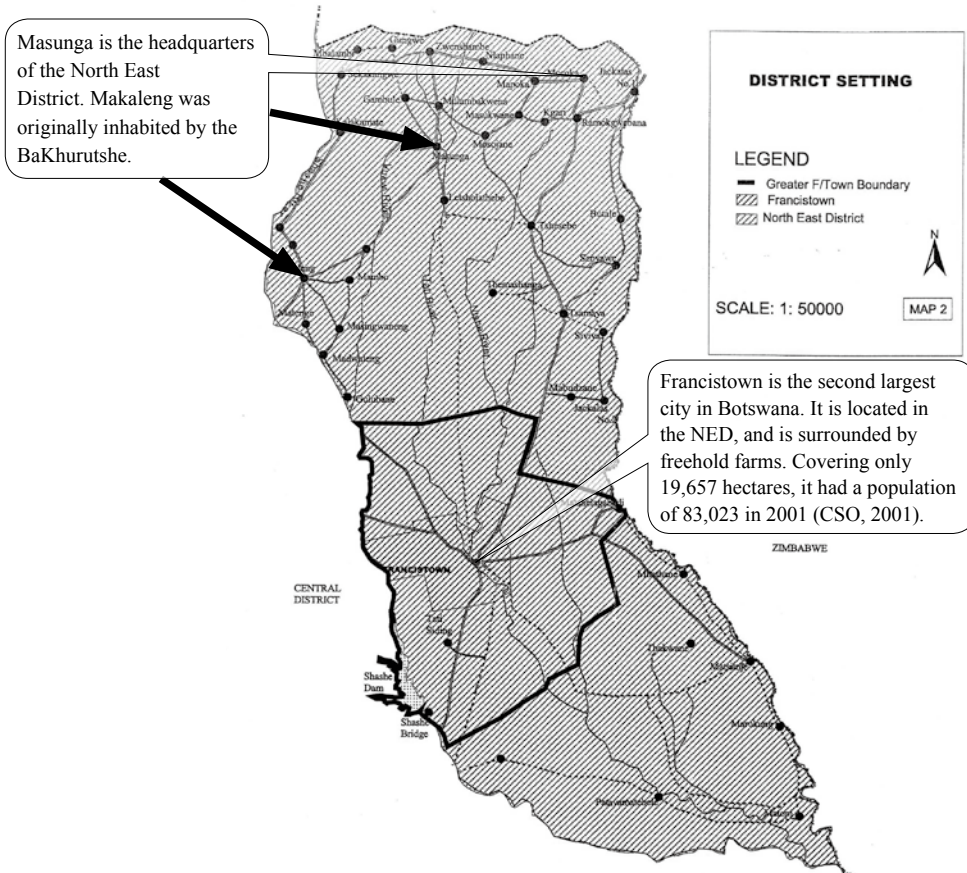


Source: (Government of Botswana, 1995:16).

authority, have since been transferred to the Ministry of Lands and Housing (Government of Botswana, 2003:163). The Government of Botswana recognises that decentralisation ‘provides a direct link between the central government and the communities’ (Mothei in Maundeni, 2004:7). Thus, Botswana’s local governance institutions are expected to work closely ‘in harmony for good governance and development at local level’ (Sharma, nd:16). However, there are institutional and other problems with regard to how they execute and coordinate their activities (Government of Botswana, 2001).

This article examines the role of local governance institutions in the ongoing land reform programme in the North East District (NED) of Botswana. It contends that strong coordination and genuine consultation among all local governance structures could have facilitated better execution of land reform than it is the case. There is institutional conflict, excessive bureaucracy and confusion on the whole land reform process. From a historical and political perspective, the NED land question is the most complex in Botswana (Tapela, 1976; Manatsha, 2008). This article is not about the role of local governance institutions in rural development as a whole. Instead, it only focuses on the ongoing land reform. It is an outcome of a fieldwork conducted by the first author from August to September 2007 and September to November 2009. Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, photographs, (in)formal discussions, and document analysis were employed to collect data. The NED was chosen

Map 2: The North East District



primarily because of the ongoing land reform programme. It is the only district which was effectively colonised in Botswana (Tapela, 1976).

2. Literature Review and Contextual Issues

The land issue in Botswana has been a sensitive topic since independence in 1966. Land in Botswana, as elsewhere in Africa (Lund, 2008), is directly linked to its political economy (Molomo, 2008). Therefore, the role of various institutions (both national and local in administering it) has aroused interesting academic debates (Peters, 1994; Onoma, 2010). Like elsewhere in Africa, colonial land policies still play critical role in Botswana's land question, and the NED illustrates this (Tapela, 1976). Therefore, in order to understand the role of local governance institutions in land reform in the NED, this article shall refer to historical studies, among others, to inform its analysis.

There is an appreciable corpus of literature on Botswana's local governance institutions. For example, interdisciplinary studies have focused on the land boards and their role in land administration. In most of these works, the land boards have been found to be inefficient (see Werbner, 1980). Historians, on the other hand, have examined the institution of chieftaincy (Tribal Administration) in the context of contemporary Botswana. They argue that though it is waning, its popularity in the rural areas remains intact (Sekgoma, 1994; Morapedi, 2005, 2010). Others as well have critiqued the role of chieftaincy in Botswana's politics in general (see Vaughan, 2003), and in promoting peace and stability (see Osei-Hwedie, 2010). Furthermore, political and social scientists have interrogated the relationship between central and local government in Botswana. They contend that compared to other African countries, this works relatively well (Lekorwe, 1998; Mfundisi, 1998).

Regarding the NED land question, anthropologists have examined it from an anthropological perspective. Schapera (1943), for instance, argues that colonial land alienation in this district has disastrous repercussions on its settlement pattern. Richard Werbner (1969), on the other hand, examines the conflicts between traditional leaders and the Tati Company. Historians employed archival sources and oral interviews to examine land alienation by the Tati Company (e.g. Tapela, 1976). Similarly, Woto (1976) and Mupindu (1983) focus on the Tati Company and land alienation, and the scramble that ensued as the local communities struggled to reclaim their lost land. Manatsha (2008) examines the political economy of the ongoing land reform in the NED. This work plays a critical role in understanding this land reform.

However, the relationship between the whole local governance structure and land reform is a scarcely discussed topic in Botswana. It is not covered in the above works. The importance of the relationship between local governance institutions and land reforms should not be underestimated. The Government of Botswana embarked on a state-led land reform in the NED in 2005 to address its long-standing land question: a product of colonialism. However, the chieftaincy in the district feels sidelined. Moreover, the role of other local governance institutions: the District Council and District Administration is unclear or minimal. Only the Tati Land Board is actively involved in this land reform. This has resulted in untold confusion and accusations.

3. Tribal Land Administration in Botswana

To comprehend the role of local governance institutions in land administration in Botswana, an introduction to tribal land administration system is necessary. Botswana's total land area of 582,000kms² is divided into tribal land (70.9 per cent); state land (24.9 per cent) and freehold land (4.2 per cent) (White, 2009:2). These were inherited from the British colonial system. They were called native, crown, and freehold land respectively. At independence, crown land became state land (Mathuba, 2003:4). The Tribal Land Act of 1968 alienated the chiefs from tribal land

administration by creating land boards in 1970. Before then, the chiefs were directly controlling the land, and allocating it to their subjects. However, this system was seen as anti-development because it promoted tribal interests rather than the country.

Thus, the Tribal Land Act section 13 (1) states that: ‘All the powers previously vested in a Chief and a subordinate land authority under customary law in relation to land... shall vest in and be performed by a land board acting in accordance with powers conferred on it by or under this Act’. Furthermore, section 10 (1) states that: ‘All the rights and title to land in each tribal area [is] for the benefit and advantage of the citizens of Botswana and for the purpose of promoting the economic and social development of all the peoples of Botswana’. However, the chiefs are disgruntled by the lack of genuine consultation by the land boards (Republic of Botswana, 2008). The Tribal Land Act (Amended) in 1993 replaced the word ‘tribesmen’ with the phrase ‘citizens of Botswana’ to ensure that there is equal access to land by all citizens. Since then, eligible applicants can acquire land anywhere in the country, whenever it exists. Before then, only tribesmen could acquire land in their respective tribal territories. Though the Tribal Land Act is, on paper, ‘inclusive’, ‘democratic’ and ‘development oriented’, access to land by some remains a critical issue (see Molomo, 2008).

4. Local Governance Institutions in Botswana

This section briefly explains the functions of local governance institutions; emphasising their role in land administration/matters. It shows that there is no clear single structure in which local governance institutions can execute their role on land matters. However, it should not be misconstrued as advocating for the merging of local governance institutions into one structure. As pointed out, the article is about the role of local governance institutions on an ongoing land reform in a particular district.

4.1. District Councils

They are democratically elected bodies established under the District Councils Act of 1965. Their functions are: to provide primary education, primary health care, clean water, construction and maintenance of ungazetted roads, and community development (Mfundisi, 1998:169). They ‘operate through committees that report to the full council and have delegated authority to make decisions.’¹ Furthermore, councils are free to establish other committees such as those related to staff, health, and community development. District Councils work closely with local structures such as the *kgotla* (village assembly) and village development committees (VDCs). The *kgotla*, presided over by the chief, is a traditional institution where the government reaches rural communities. And, ‘The power base therefore is local and the decisions reflect the aspirations of the local communities’ (Republic of Botswana, 2003:163).

District Councils are ex-officio members of the district land use planning unit (DLUPU) which is chaired by the District Commissioner. The land boards are also its ex-officio members. The DLUPU is responsible for land related matters. It designs the land use plans in consultation with the local communities. However, some concerns are that the chiefs (community leaders) are not members of the DLUPU. This undermines their role in the process of designing land use plans and land management programmes within ‘their’ villages. Ironically, the chiefs and VDCs are expected to work closely with all other structures on local development (Republic of Botswana, 2003). Whereas the District Councils are the ex-officio members of the DLUPU, their role in land matters is overshadowed by that of the land boards. For instance, the councilors (elected community representatives) are not supposed to interfere with land board operations. Thus, the Council Secretary attends the land boards’ meetings on their behalf. The Council Secretary is, however, a government appointee and may not necessarily be equipped with the concerns and aspirations of the people at the local level to the extent that the councilors are. Furthermore, in most cases, the District Councils are only

interested in issues related to infrastructural development planning not the social and cultural aspects/significance of land to the local communities.

4.2. Tribal Administration

The central component of this structure is the chieftaincy. In Tswana context, 'The Chief, as a head of the tribe, occupies a position of unique privilege and authority. He is a symbol of tribal unity, the central figure around which the tribal life revolves' (Schapera, 1938:62). The functions of every chief is 'to promote the welfare of the members of his tribe; to carry out any instructions given to him by the Minister; to ensure that the tribe is informed of any development projects in the area which affect the tribe' (Chieftainship Act, 1987). A chief can be deposed by the appointing minister (Chieftainship Act section 12 (I)). Thus, section 18 (2) states that 'any chief who fails to comply with any direction given to him by the Minister shall be liable to be suspended or deposed in accordance with the provisions of section 12.' After independence, the government introduced the House of Chiefs (*Ntlo ya Dikgosi*).² Its main role is to advise parliament on cultural matters. For some years, it was composed of the paramount chiefs of the 'principal tribes.'³ Pressure from the 'minority tribes' caused the government to allow them to choose rotating members to the House on five-year term.⁴ A joint advisory committee appointed by the President in July 2008 advised that the chiefs be made ex-officio members of the land boards just like the District Councils and District Administration. The committee reasoned, 'This we believe will enhance participation by Dikgosi in decision making on land allocation and use' (Republic of Botswana, 2008:30-31). Since the chiefs are not ex-officio members of the land boards, they do not have the powers to reject decisions taken by the latter, even if they deem such unfair. Interestingly, the chiefs are ex-officio members of the VDCs and District Councils. They are also land overseers.⁵ However, the fact that they are not members of the DLUPU and only ordinary members of the land boards impacts negatively on their role in land administration. This is evident in the ongoing land reform in the NED.

4.3. District Administration

The District Administration is headed by the District Commissioner. Its primary function is to ensure 'effective representation of central government in the district' (Republic of Botswana, 2003:164). It is made up of specialist district officers such as the district officer (administration), district officer (development), and district officer (lands). The District Commissioner is a central government appointee. However, administratively, the incumbent is responsible to the Ministry of Local Government. During the colonial period, the District Commissioner 'enjoyed enormous delegated powers' to maintain law and order. His 'development functions were limited' (Lekorwe, 1998:175). After independence, the District Commissioner was given responsibility to coordinate development at the local level (Lekorwe, 1998:175). The District Commissioner chairs the district development committee. Thus, the District Commissioner is responsible for implementing district development plans and annual plans. The District Commissioner also chairs the DLUPU. The district officer (lands) is the secretary of the DLUPU and 'has to advise land boards on land issues' (Lekorwe, 1998:175). In short, the District Commissioner 'should ensure dissemination of information on different government legislations, policies and programmes to all stakeholders' (Republic of Botswana, 2003:164). However, as we explain later, in the NED, the District Commissioner was concerned about the lack of communication from the Ministry of Lands and Housing. Therefore, there were institutional problems with regard to the process of buying and handing over of the farms to the Tati Land Board. As the central figure at the local level, the District Commissioner was supposed to have been informed on each step taken by the ministry.

4.4. Land Boards

The land boards were created in 1970 to administer tribal land. Previously, tribal land was administered by the

chiefs. In total, there are twelve main land boards and thirty-nine subordinate land boards. Subordinate land boards are only required, by law, to allocate residential lands and fields. There are also empowered to process applications for boreholes and common law grants, and make recommendations to the main land boards (Molomo, 2008). The land boards do not make policies themselves, but rely on the Ministry of Lands and Housing for guidance. The ministry provides them with funds and logistical support. Land boards are ex-officio members of the DLUPU. The land board members should not be actively involved in 'party politics' (Republic of Botswana, 1968). Each land board comprises of ten members; half of which are democratically elected by the *kgotla*. The other half is nominated by the minister (Molomo, 2008:162). The land board selection committee, which process and selects suitable candidates for land boards' elections, is made up of 'the appropriate District Commissioner, who shall be the chairperson; (b) the Land Board Secretary of the tribal area concerned, who shall be the secretary of the Land Board Selection Committee; (c) the Council Secretary of the District Council concerned; (d) the Chief or Sub-Chief of the tribal area concerned; and (e) a member appointed by the Minister' (Republic of Botswana, 1968). However, the land boards have been found to be inefficient, corrupt, poorly managed and inadequately resourced (Werbner 1980; Republic of Botswana, 2001). Therefore, conflicts between the land boards, the chieftaincy and local politicians are common. This badly impacts on efficient land administration.

5. Land Reform in the North East District in Perspective

Botswana is rarely mentioned in the ensuing literature on the land question in Africa. This gives the impression that the country does not have any land question to talk of. However, Botswana grapples with the unresolved land question in the NED. In this district, colonialism was institutionalised despite the fact that Botswana was a British Protectorate from 1885-1965, and not a colony. A colonial syndicate, later known as Tati Company, colonised the NED and expropriated all the land belonging to Africans (Tapela, 1976). However, since independence in 1966, the NED land question has been used by different political parties for political mileage (Colclough and McCarthy, 1980; Koveya, 1985). In 2005, the government instituted a land reform to address the NED land question. Thus, about 18 freehold farms were purchased. And negotiations are ongoing to buy more land. The purchased farms are mainly reserved for grazing pastures (to augment tribal land). During the *kgotla* consultations, the local communities agreed that the farms be used communally. Thus,

[M]ore attention paid to three options, namely; commercial ranching, communal grazing and community farms. Majority of the communities opted for communal grazing. [T]hese include District Full Council and Dikgosi. The reason for the preference was based on the fact that the farms are small in size and number and their range land status range from fair to poor hence proposal for communal use (Tati Land Board/A/19 IV (72), 14 August, 2008).

However, this reform is beset by complex, but interwoven administrative and political imperfections. For instance, elite land-grabbing is rampant (Manatsha, *forthcoming*). From a public policy perspective, land reforms are one of the most contentious of all domestic policies. Public policy 'always involves efforts by competing interests groups to influence policy makers in their favour' (Kilpatrick, n.d). It is, therefore, imperative to examine the views of different interest groups on land reforms. Policy makers' intents of proposing land reforms varies according to national as well as international, economical, and political factors (Lambais, 2008). In the NED, for instance, land reforms have always been 'primarily political' (Egner, 1971:4). For instance, in 2003 the NED land question became a hotly debated topic in Botswana's parliament. However, the ruling party blocked a motion from an opposition Member of Parliament

demanding the repossession of land held by the Tati Company and absentee landlords (*Botswana Daily News*, 8 August, 2003). If not addressed with the caution and urgency it deserves, the NED land issue may explode in the near future.

6. Land Reform and Local Governance Institutions: Issues and Challenges

The ongoing land reform in the NED is poorly formulated, implemented, and coordinated. These present serious challenges to the local governance institutions. However, the root cause of all these is that the NED land question is exceptionally complex and political. As a result, the Tati Land Board is unable to execute its duties judiciously without undue interference from various actors.⁶ Even though the Tribal Land Act clearly gives the land boards power to administer land, politicians and chiefs want to be actively involved too. This causes dilemma and untold controversies. In the NED, this led to the Tati Land Board being accused of elitism. The Tati Land Board has cited ‘political interference’ as the cause of its ‘inconsistence in decision-making’ (Tati Land Board Strategic Plan, n.d:10). Some local councilors, who are supposed to be the eyes and ears of the people, complain of poor consultation. One councilor said that:

We talked to the minister of lands and housing to speed up the process. The problem is that the Tati Land Board does not consult us. We are at the grass roots; we need to be involved in this issue. Botswana Democratic Party or opposition councilors, we must tell people the truth about the state of land reform in the NED. It is not that we are politicising the issue.⁷

Some local councilors (community representatives) had no concrete details on the progress of this land reform.⁸ Their lack of first-hand information is disturbing. Just like their councilors, ordinary people had very limited and fragmented information too. The consultations were/are haphazardly done, and there is pathetic poor update. One informant was stunned: “I do not have any knowledge about the farms that you are talking about”.⁹ Another said, “We heard that the purchased farms are going to be given to those who have cattle. So, I don’t have any”.¹⁰ Truly, the discussions on the land reform programme were lively among those who own cattle. Cattle-rich villagers were discussing the formation of syndicates (based on cattle rearing) so that they can utilise land as syndicates.¹¹ The District Commissioner decried poor consultation by the Ministry of Lands and Housing regarding this land reform (North East District Administration W 8 II (101), 16 January, 2007). Some tribal leaders complained that the Tribal Land Act will disadvantage the local communities as many Batswana have flocked into the farms upon hearing their purchase.¹² One chief reasoned that:

The Tribal Land Act was done in good faith. It resulted in breaking the issue of tribalism but now it should be looked into. When it involves the north east land reform, it becomes a political issue. I see this Act causing a lot of confusion. Home-grown people should be given priority.¹³

The role of the local chiefs in this land reform is non-existent. Generally, there is a concern that the role of the chieftaincy institution in land matters has been rendered obsolete by the land boards. However, the joint advisory committee of *Ntlo ya Dikgosi* and Botswana council of churches on social values (hereafter JAC), appointed by President Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama in July 2008, recommended that the chiefs be given more powers on land matters. In the NED, the so-called consultations by the Tati Land Board on land reform were sporadically conducted. It appears that since there is no main *kgotla*, what was/is discussed in one village does not necessarily bind the next. Tribal leaders complained that the Tati Land Board reports the already taken decisions; hence their input is non-existent.¹⁴

However, some documents from the Tati Land Board indicate that various *kgotla* meetings were held to appraise the communities on land reform. The purpose was to ‘solicit views of the stakeholders and the community on what they perceive to be the best and optimal utilization of these farms, to encompass these views in the preparation process of detailed Land Use Plans, and to produce the detailed Land Use Plans of these farms’ (Tati Land Board/A/19IV (19), 25 May 2005). Disturbingly, in the NED chiefs do not attend land board meetings for various reasons; ranging from politics to lack of accountability. They reason that as ordinary members, their attendance is inconsequential.

Suffice that in the NED, it is impractical for the chiefs’ advice(s) to be generally applied because of the chieftaincy structure. Since there is no paramount chief, decisions are hardly taken collectively by the chiefs. The chieftaincy here is mired in politics and division. One chief argued that the land reform in the NED cannot be successful until they are collectively taken into board as key players.¹⁵ In 2006, the North East District Council councilors argued that tribal leaders should be involved in land matters since they know their villages better (*Botswana Daily News*, 6 March, 2006). In Ghana too, it has been noted that chiefs know their boundaries better (Berry, 2001). By restricting chiefs’ participation in land matters, the government overlooks the fact that a chief ‘is a symbol of tribal unit, the central figure around which tribal life revolves’ (Schapera, 1938:62). The Chieftainship Act (1987) section 15 states that the chief’s role is ‘to promote the welfare of the members of his tribe [and] to ensure that the tribe is informed of any development projects in the area which affect the tribe’.

Similarly, the role of the North East District Council is unclear. A District Council is linked to the local community by the chiefs and elected councilors. However, in the ongoing land reform, the Council Secretary’s knowledge was found wanting. He said, “I am aware about the farms, but personally, I have never been there. I think I am not the appropriate person to answer your questions”.¹⁶ However, the Council Secretary was eager to talk about the expropriation of arable land for infrastructural development.

The District Commissioner by virtue of his/her office is involved in the land reform. However, the District Commissioner decried excessive bureaucracy by the Ministry of Lands and Housing. The concerns were directed to the ministry’s permanent secretary:

[W]e feel compelled to register a concern on your lack of communication over the arrangements you enter into between yourselves and the owners of the farms. It is common that transactions are finalised and arrangements agreed upon regarding grace period that you may have given to the farm owners is not communicated to us. It is indeed necessary that were informed of the period agreed to enable us to plan accordingly (North East District Administration W 8 II (101), 16 January, 2007).

Understandably, excessive bureaucracy disturbed the District Commissioner as the voice of the central government at the local level. For instance, the negotiations with the farm owners to buy their farms are handled at the local level; but the paying is done directly by the ministry (GC 95 IV (86), 14 June, 2006). The District Commissioner thus plays a crucial role in such negotiations.¹⁷ The District Commissioner chairs the DLUPU, which was tasked with developing ‘land use plans that would guide development and allocations of rights within these farms’ (Tati Land Board/C/19/I (46)). On 2 of March 2005, a consultative meeting by the DLUPU was convened and ‘The objective of the meeting was to jointly come with way forward strategies on how to manage the newly acquired farms and also spearhead the preparation of detailed land use plans.’¹⁸ At the meeting, the Tati Land Board secretary raised concerns that the farms are being vandalised. It was noted that the government ‘at times spends a lot of money in trying to evict squatters’. In 2007, the District Commissioner asked the permanent secretary to ‘Kindly ensure that in future funds

for the policing of such farms are secured to avoid vandalism which has become a common phenomenon' (North East District Administration W 8 II (101), 16 January, 2007) as shown in photo one. Eventually, the Tati Land Board decided to hire a security company to guard one of the farm houses shown in photo two.

Photo one: A vandalised farm house near Patayamatebele village



Photo taken by the first author on 11 November 2009

At the 2 of March 2005 meeting, the District Commissioner 'promised to provide valuation reports with farms' inventory.'¹⁹ The assistant District Commissioner was of the view that broad land use plans should be drafted to avoid 'concentrating on only one type of Land Use'. The resolution was that the DLUPU should 'give feed back to the District Commissioner on how many Land Use Plans they can do within a given time frame'.²⁰ The District Commissioner was also tasked to negotiate the purchase of farm 16 OQ. It was also put to the assistant District Commissioner 'To find out grace period of previous owners.'²¹ The senior members of the Tati Land Board were also encouraged to attend the DLUPU meetings. This indicates that they have not been attending such meetings. One wonders how senior officers can skip such meetings.

In March and June 2005, the DLUPU conducted *kgotla* meetings in some villages to seek views from the community on how best the farms can be utilised (Tati Land Board/A/19 IV (19)). As mentioned, some chiefs do not

Photo two: A farm house under security protection



Photo taken by the first author on 11 November 2009

view this as consultations. Instead, they said they were being told about the already-taken decisions. The problem is that some farms are located in the proximity of certain villages. Such meetings seem to associate a particular farm to a particular village. Certain villages tend to think that they 'own' a particular farm (see *Botswana Daily News*, 1 November 2006). Generally, the District Administration seems to have done all the best it can through the DLUPU 'consultative' meetings. However, the monitoring of what happens in the farms is disturbingly uncoordinated. Vandalism itself is criminal offence, and one would expect the police to be actively involved. A major problem is that the DLUPU is chaired by the District Commissioner not the land boards. The land boards are better equipped with the necessary information on land matters unlike the District Administration.

7. Conclusion

In the context of Botswana, the NED land reform is exceptionally political and controversial. Thus, the role of local governance structures in its execution is also controversial. Though one would expect the chieftaincy to be united and speak with one voice, in the NED this does not happen. The chiefs in the NED usually do not attend the Tati Land Board meetings. Some contend that it is useless to attend because their views matter less. Their respective communities, however, expect them to have full knowledge on land issues. The Tribal Land Act too restricts the chiefs' role in land administration. The Tati Land Board, though it is the custodian of tribal land, does not chair the DLUPU. It could have been more rewarding had it been the chair. The Tati Land Board sometimes finds itself trapped in party and tribal politics. The North East District Council, through the district development committee, should actively participate in the land reform. Lastly, the District Administration should ensure that all local governance structures actively unite in the land reform exercise. Farm vandalism could have been prevented if there was strong coordination and genuine consultations among all local governance structures including the police. Furthermore, tribal leaders are at the grass root, and can thus play a significant role in maintaining law and order.

Endnotes

- ¹ <http://www.clgf.org.uk/userfile/countries/Botswana.pdf> (accessed 23 April 2009).
- ² Although Tribal Administration falls under the Ministry of Local Government, the House of Chiefs is under the Office of the President.
- ³ These are the Tswana-speaking groups, who constitute 79 per cent of the population.
- ⁴ The Botswana Constitution has been amended, and all 'tribes' are 'supposedly equal'.
- ⁵ The chief is expected to give consent to any person who seeks to be allocated land in the village. However, the chief is not the final authority.
- ⁶ The first author attended political rallies in the district in November 2009. The perception was that the land question in the NED is complex and extremely political.
- ⁷ Interview with a councilor at Makaleng, 18 August 2007.
- ⁸ Interviews with councilors at Masunga, September 2007; November 2009.
- ⁹ Interview with a villager at Makaleng, 18 August 2007.
- ¹⁰ Interview with a villager at Masunga, 16 August 2007.
- ¹¹ In October 2009, the first author discussed at length with one syndicate farmer.
- ¹² Interview with land overseer at Masunga, 19 September 2007.
- ¹³ Interview with one chief, 17 September 2007.
- ¹⁴ Interviews with headman of arbitration, 19 September 2007; and a chief, 18 September 2007.
- ¹⁵ Interview with one chief, 19 September 2007.
- ¹⁶ Interview with North East District Council senior officer, 27 October 2009.
- ¹⁷ 'Minutes of joint consultative meetings of acquired freehold farms', 2 March 2005.
- ¹⁸ 'Minutes of joint consultative meetings of acquired freehold farms', 2 March 2005.
- ¹⁹ 'Minutes of joint consultative meetings of acquired freehold farms', 2 March 2005.

²⁰ 'Minutes of joint consultative meetings of acquired freehold farms', 2 March 2005.

²¹ 'Minutes of joint consultative meetings of acquired freehold farms', 2 March 2005.

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