

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to describe and evaluate the structure and membership of the municipal council in Botswana. This is important because in Botswana, council membership is made up of different categories. Some of the council members are elected whilst others are nominated by the Minister of Local Government, Lands and Housing. In addition to these two categories there are those who occupy their positions by virtue of their official positions.

The structure and organization of councils in Botswana are defined and determined by the Town Councils Regulations; 1966 and District Councils Law, 1965, as amended. (District Councils Act, 1966 (Act No. 35 of 1965) and Townships Regulations 1966, (Regulations No. 40 of 1966)). The size of each council is defined and laid down in the order establishing each council. (District Councils Act, 1965 (Act No. 35 of 1965 and Townships Regulations, 1966, (No. 40 of 1966)). Councils are composed of two entities or components i.e, the political and administrative. (Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, (1974)).

1.1 The Political Arm or Component

This component consists of the politicians i.e. councillors. This is the organ which is charged with the responsibility of local law enactment and policy formulations, the control and management of policy objectives and goal implementation as well as kindling local public interest and enthusiasm in the affairs of the council. They are therefore the key to the success or failure of local popular participation in the local activities such as development and elections. In Botswana there are nine

district councils and five town councils. District councils operate in the rural areas whilst town councils operate in the urban areas. The smallest council is the South East District Council and the Central District Council is the biggest council in Botswana. The Gaborone City Council is the wealthiest council.

(See Table 1)

Botswana has three categories of council members:

- the elected councillors;
- the nominated councillors, and
- the *ex officio* councillors.

1.1.1 The elected council members

Councillors are elected by the public in a general election or by-election, and represent specific wards. They are elected on a party political basis or as independents. Elected councillors form the majority in the council. (District Councils Act 1965 (Act No. 35 of 1965) and Township Regulations 1966 (No. 490 of 1966)). Each council has been divided into wards. Each ward is represented by an elected councillor who represents the ward for a period of five years and is eligible for re-election.

1.1.2 Nominated councillors

Nominated councillors form a second category of councillors. In terms of the District Councils Act, 1965, as amended, and the Township Regulations, 1966 as amended, the Minister of Local Government, Lands and Housing, is empowered to nominate additional councillors to each council. The Minister has used this authority since the introduction of councils in 1966. Nominated councillors do not represent a specific ward within the district or town, they are supposed to represent the whole district or town. According to the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing:

"Those councillors who have been nominated by the Minister of Local Government and Lands have a wider constituency in the sense that their

appointment is not specific to any single ward, but rather to the council area as a whole. Nominated councillors can take a wider view and specialise in problems affecting the whole council area, such as roads, water supplies and health facilities. They can support and enhance the work of the elected councillors by providing a link and a source of information about common interests and problems. Nominated councillors build up and maintain contacts in the same way as elected representatives.

Nominated councillors are however discouraged from undermining elected councillors. According to the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, (Ibid p.26):

"A nominated member should not however, use his position in a party political way to challenge the authority of an elected councillor in that councillor's ward. He should be supportive not competitive".

In theory, nominated councillors are nominated on the basis of merit, that is, their expertise in the social, economic and educational fields. This means that no party political considerations are taken into account. In practice, however, the ruling party has used this provision to nominate its own party supporters into the council. In some instances it has used this provision to nominate its own party members who have lost in the general election. Thus prior to the 1984 general election this provision was used to nominate only members of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party. Egner (1986:4) observes as follows:

"The Minister used his statutory nominating power in 1969, 1974 and 1979 to ensure that there was a voting majority for the ruling Botswana Democratic Party in all councils. He frequently nominated BDP candidates who have been defeated in the elections".

This obviously was a gross nullification of the democratic wishes of the voters and undermining of the elementary principles of democracy. It is therefore not true that:

"The councillor will have been selected for nomination solely because of the contribution which the Minister believes he can make to the conduct of public business in that council area". (Op cit p.27).

Since the 1984 general election, however the Minister has also included members of opposition parties in the list of nominated councillors. This was in response to widespread criticism not against the nomination of only the BDP members but also against the whole system of nominated councillors which the public considered undemocratic. The majority of nominated councillors, however, remain BDP members and the system remains controversial and there is a growing rejection of the system. There is no indication that the government is about to abandon the system, perhaps the fact that opposition parties have accepted the nomination of their members into the council has influenced the government to believe that the system is generally acceptable.

1.1.3 *Ex officio* council members

Ex officio councillors are the third category of council members. This category comprises the district commissioner and the chief. The district commissioner is an *ex officio* member of the council of the district under his jurisdiction. The district commissioner sits on the council as a representative of the central government. He can also be seen as a transmission belt or a communication channel between the central government and the council. In this capacity he or she communicates central government views, policies, programmes and projects to the council whilst also transmitting council's views, policies, programmes and projects to the central government.

The district commissioner can be seen as a coordinator, coordinating the activities of central and local governments. In practice the district commissioner is much more than the coordinator. The central government has tended to use him or her as an instrument by means of which it controls and monitors the activities of councils and tribal authorities. In fact until the establishment of the Department of

Tribal Administration under the leadership of the Commissioner for Customary Law, the district commissioner acted as the overall supervisor and boss of the tribal administration in his or her district. This placed the chief as head of the tribal administration directly under the control of the district commissioner. This led in most cases to conflicts and clashes between the district commissioner on the one hand, and chiefs on the other. There were three reasons why the relationship between the chiefs and district commissioners, in most cases were characterized by an undeclared civil war. Firstly, chiefs objected to being placed under the control of bureaucrats whom they considered not knowledgeable in customary law and a whole range of Tswana customs, ethics and norms. Secondly, some chiefs objected to the manner in which district commissioners treated them, i.e. being "bossed" around by bureaucrats whom they considered their subjects. This "bossing" around included amongst other requirements being required to keep official office hours and their court cases being reviewed by district commissioners etc. Thirdly, some chiefs objected to what they considered the subtle political manipulation by some district commissioners. These chiefs claimed that some district commissioners not only spied on them on behalf of the ruling party in order to identify their political inclinations, but also try to make them toe the ruling party line.

In some instances the tensions between the chiefs and district commissioners have resulted in a situation where there is absolutely no communication and contact between the chief and district commissioner. In 1982 for instance, the tension between the district commissioner and chiefs surfaced during the June meeting of the House of Chiefs. Some chiefs went to the extent of claiming that district commissioners during the colonial period were better than the present district commissioners. Tensions flared up again in August 1982, during an administrative conference. During this conference chief Linchwe of Bakgatla walked out of the meeting accusing district commissioners of gross interference in the administration of tribal affairs. He also complained about what he called a lack of respect by district commissioners and their staff in the district. In Ngwaketse for instance the tension between the district commissioner and the chief has been an integral



Table 1: List of Urban and District Councils, and Land Boards, 1991

Urban Councils	District Councils	Land Boards
City council: Gaborone	Central Ghanzi Kgalagadi	Ngwato Ghanzi Kgalagadi
Town Councils: Francistown Jwaneng Lobatse Selebi-Phikwe Sowa Township ^(b)	Kgatleng Kweneng North East North West ^(b) South East Southern	Kgatleng Kweneng Tati Chobe Tawana Malete Tlokweng Ngwaketse Rolong

Notes: (a) Comprises Ngamiland and Chobe districts.

(b) Sowa Township was gazetted in 1991.

component of their relationship. In some instances it reached a point where they were not even talking to each other. The district commissioner was even banned from entering the chief's residence where the tribal administration is housed.

Whilst the district commissioner is no longer the direct supervisor of tribal administration another bureaucrat in the form of the Commissioner of Customary Law has been put in charge of the tribal administration. Whether his appointment as supervisor of tribal administration and of chiefs will generate the same tensions is difficult to predict. If part of the problem that gave rise to tension between chiefs and district commissioners was the feeling by chiefs that they did not want to be supervised by bureaucrats the chances are that the relationship between chiefs and his office will be characterized by possible tension.

Whilst the district commissioner has no formal and official control over district and town councils in practice, he/she has a very powerful influence over the councils. This is so powerful that it borders on control. This is due to the fact that apart from being the most senior central government or public officer in the district, he or she is also a representative of central government in the district, a sort of central government ambassador. Hence he or she receives foreign visitors to the district on behalf of the central government. He or she also receives senior government officials such as permanent secretaries, government ministers and the Head of State.

The district commissioner's presence in the council meetings as *ex officio* member influence council decisions. For instance if he or she opposes a council decision because it conflicts with central government policy, council is unlikely to pursue such a decision with the enthusiasm it deserves. More important also the district commissioner has inspection powers over council finances, these powers include audit authority over council finances. In addition to that, the district commissioner has unlimited access to council information. This gives the district commissioner indirect control over council activities. Until recently the district commissioner had overall control over the integrated offices. These are offices which incorporate

both the council and district administration offices, the intention is to make both central and local government services easily accessible to the public. Until 1994, the control of the whole complex was *ex officio* under the district commissioner. This created unhappiness amongst council members, both personnel and councillors. The overall control of the complex of offices by the district commissioner was seen by councils as an indirect form of re-centralization. As one council official remarked:

"The District Commissioner represents central government. Councils provide services and not the District Commissioner. His presence stifles local autonomy". (Interview with Nengwekhulu, 1986).

Whilst the district commissioner has been replaced by the council secretary as the overall controller of the integrated complex, he/she remains a very dominant figure in the affairs of the local government. The central government has been reluctant to drastically modify the status of the district commissioner in relation to his/her role in the affairs of the local government. This is especially so with regard to his *ex officio* position in the council affairs. This is in spite of the fact that there is opposition against his/her presence in the council deliberations from both sides of the political spectrum. His/her presence is seen as a mechanism by the central government to maintain a listening post in the council.

There is likely to be more resistance on the part of the central government to accept the removal of the district commissioner from council meetings now that some councils such as the Gaborone, Jwaneng, Selibepikwe, North East and Francistown are now firmly under the control of the opposition parties and chances are that more may come under the control of opposition parties (Molutsi 1989).

In these circumstances, the position of the district commissioner as an *ex officio* member of the council will become even more crucial for the central government. He/she will guarantee that the central government is not taken by surprise with regard to opposition parties controlling councils' political and ideological orientation

and direction with regard to their activities.

The chief is also an *ex officio* member of the district council in which he is a chief. He sits on the council as a representative of the tribe, and advises the council on matters relating to Tswana customs, ethics, norms and customary law. Like the district commissioner the chief can speak at council meetings but cannot vote.

Until some years ago chiefs were allowed to serve as chairpersons of councils. They were however expected to separate their activities as chiefs from their activities as chairpersons of councils. (explanatory guide for District and Town councils 1985:27).

Until 1974, some councils had chiefs as their chairmen, but this has now been effectively stopped. In terms of the Government White Paper (No.1 of 1981:3) :

"The role of chiefs as heads of the various tribes and customary courts is accepted. However their role as ceremonial heads of districts would be likely to confuse their relationships with the councils and would be misunderstood".

Despite these legal and legislative limitations, chiefs have remained influential personalities in the districts in which they are chiefs. They still enjoy respect. Generally speaking councils do take into account suggestions made by chiefs during council debates, largely because the success of council policies, programmes and projects depends on the support they enjoy from the chiefs (Brothers 1994). A remarkable feature of the relationship between chiefs and councils in Botswana has been the absence of a real conflict between the two local institutions. This is in spite of the fact that councils have usurped almost the powers and privileges previously enjoyed by chiefs. More importantly also has been the absence of any conflict regarding their respective areas of jurisdiction. This is in spite of the fact that they operate within the same geographical

jurisdiction. The authority of the chief extends as far as the geographical boundaries of the council. The reason why perhaps there has not been any serious conflicts between the chiefs and councils may lie in the clarity of their respective legal jurisdictions. There is also strong evidence to suggest that the fact that most council politicians still recognize chieftainship as an integral component of Botswana society has contributed greatly to the absence of any secessionist jurisdictional conflicts. Chief Linchwe II (1989:102) comments as follows:

"Perhaps one of the reasons why there is relatively permanent stability in Botswana is the fact that, while there is multi party democracy in our country, even members of political parties still rally behind the chiefs, divest themselves of party affiliations ..."

Whilst the relationship between the councils and chiefs has been marked by an absence of any serious conflicts the relationship between the chiefs and the central government, is increasingly becoming untenable. This has been especially so with regard to the gwaketse and kgatla chiefs - the two chiefs who have always been critical of central government policies towards chieftainship in Botswana. The transfer of chieftainship affairs from the office of the President to the Minister of Local Government, Lands and Housing, has also greatly exacerbated the relationship between the central government and the chiefs. Chiefs saw this as an indication of central government's negative attitude towards the institution of chieftainship. More important also they saw the transfer as a lowering of the status of chieftainship, since they considered being under the office of the President as a sign of an elevated status.

The question of whether the cordial relationship that currently exists between the councils and chiefs will continue to flourish, is difficult to predict. Indications are that as councils continue to grow stronger by taking more functions and responsibilities, tribal administrations will continue to decline in importance. The involvement of younger and more educated Botswanans whose knowledge, understanding and appreciation of chieftainship are likely to be lower than the

present councillors, is also likely to generate strain between councils and chiefs (Sekgoma 1994, Molutsi 1989).

There are clear indications that the government is intent on reducing and ultimately eliminating the little political role that chiefs play within the framework of the kgotla. The aim seems to make them dispensers of customary law through customary courts. (Hermans, S J & Neta, D, 1994).

2. THE STATUS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The focus of the current analysis will be an attempt to assess and evaluate the nature and character of the council leadership. This will be done in terms of class, gender, education, age, occupation and administrative experience. These features or indicators will provide a more objective profile of the leadership of councillors

2.1 Class position

By class position reference is made to the relationship that people have to the means of production. A social class is therefore

"... large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in the historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in some cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose." (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol 3, 1971:248).

Thus a social class is composed of people who stand in a common position with the process of production. In its fullest sense, the notion of class goes beyond merely describing a person's place in the process of production. It also explains and signifies the essential and basic mould of social existence in the society. A

person's position in relation to the means of production also defines his or her place in the social and political systems. The implication is that class organization is necessarily a political organization, class consciousness encapsulates political consciousness, and class conflict embodies political conflict. An analysis of relations between classes is thus necessarily included in a political analysis that incorporates an analysis of the economic structures and institutions.

Viewed from this perspective, to understand and appreciate the nature and content of political institutions in a society, the actions and activities of political parties, interest groups and political leaders, it is essential to first analyze and assess the class structure and the nature and intensity of the class struggle in the society under investigation. The question of who rules or governs must be preceded by who owns the basic means of production. This is the definition of a social class that will be used in this analysis to determine and situate the class position of the council members in Botswana.

Defining the composition and limits of specific classes and their internal strata in Botswana is a complex process. Two difficulties create this complexity: one is the constantly changing character of the composition of specific classes and the presence of intermediate strata; the second difficulty is the diverse character of the socio-economic formation of Botswana. This arises from the presence of pre-capitalist modes of production or their relics in a society which is otherwise predominantly capitalist. These difficulties explain why classes in Botswana do not always stand out on the surface of social reality and often appear as transitional phenomena. Despite these difficulties, it is still possible to identify the class position of the councillors. According to Molutsi (1989:124):

"Most who stand as ... councillors are people with some form of status in their communities. Such status is usually obtained from high levels of ... substantial property holdings e.g. a large herd of cattle, a ranch, a tractor, a restaurant or a general dealership".

Most councillors are members of the petty bourgeois class. No attempt will be made to become involved in the controversy as to whether a national bourgeoisie exists or does not exist in Africa. Suffice it so say that several studies seem to indicate that a national bourgeoisie in the mould of that of developed countries of Europe and North America does not exist, African bourgeoisie according to Shivji (1975:20) seems to:

"... lack the historical maturity of their metropolitan counterpart and the latter's objective economic base. The natural process of the development of the authentic national bourgeoisie and the national capitalism in Africa was irreversibly arrested by these countries coming into contact with advanced capitalism".

It seems therefore hardly correct to talk of a national bourgeoisie in Africa. Hence many scholars have tended to identify the petty bourgeoisie as the ruling class in Africa, but unlike the classical petty bourgeoisie : (Ibid 22).

"The petty bourgeoisie in Africa, on the other hand ... came to control the state apparatus thus becoming a ruling class ... This is the most distinguishing feature of the African petty bourgeoisie".

It is in this context that the petty bourgeoisie will be used in the case of Botswana and in our analysis and assessment of council members. Like in other African countries, the petty bourgeoisie in Botswana does not constitute or form a homogeneous and undifferentiated mass although in its defence of its class interests it normally presents a united and common front. In Botswana the petty bourgeoisie can be divided into different categories and fractions in terms of their relationship to the means of production as well as their role in the process of labour organization. It can also be divided or categorized, according to the relationship each category has to the state and its apparatuses. It is therefore possible to categorize the petty bourgeoisie in Botswana into the "national" petty bourgeoisie

and the local petty bourgeoisie. This is a functional categorization rather than an intraclass categorization.

The "national" petty bourgeoisie is the category that is in charge of the state and its apparatuses or institutions at the national level. It is the category that controls the national government, the House of Chiefs and the national assembly or Parliament. The local petty bourgeois category is the category which controls state apparatuses or institutions at the local level. These institutions include amongst others, councils, landboards and kgotla. The petty bourgeoisie in Botswana can also be further divided into upper, middle and lower layers. The upper layer is largely composed of intellectuals, senior civil servants, wealthy cattle barons, wealthy crop farmers, wealthy business and professional people, higher military and police personnel. The middle layer is made up of e.g. middle ranking civil servants, medium-scale farmers, traders. The lower layers consist of petty traders, shopkeepers and lower salaried in the services sector. It is also possible to further divide the petty bourgeois class in Botswana into an agrarian rural petty bourgeoisie and an urban petty bourgeoisie.

This heterogeneity in its composition has been the source of intra petty bourgeois contradictions and conflicts. The principal contradiction within the petty bourgeoisie in Botswana involves the struggle to assume monopoly control of the state and its apparatuses. More specifically, the struggle involves the control of the means of production and the process of the accumulation and appropriation of surplus value. Despite these intra class differences, the petty bourgeoisie in Botswana has displayed a durable class cohesion which is probably unparalleled elsewhere in Africa.

The following categories of the petty bourgeoisie at council level can be identified.

2.1.1 Agrarian or rural petty bourgeoisie

According to the general election survey conducted by the University of Botswana General Election Project (1984), 53.6 per cent of the candidates who stood for both district and town council elections were members of the rural or agrarian petty bourgeoisie. This was also confirmed by the Study of Democracy in Botswana (1989). This study indicated that 38.60 per cent of the councillors were members of the agrarian or rural petty bourgeoisie. Previous studies by Hitchcock on the Central District and Camoroff on the Barolong area, have concluded that the rural bourgeoisie in the rural areas constitute the dominant group in the councils. ColClough, McCarthy and Lipton have also demonstrated their predominance in the councils. (Hitchcock, Camoroff and Lipton:1978). Molutsi (Op cit, 1978) argues that councillors are generally people of wealth and social status in the society.

An important point that needs to be emphasized is that some of the agrarian petty bourgeois councillors have also diversified into the commercial area, in short, into agro business. This is largely due to the penetration of capitalism in the rural areas and the continuing decline of agriculture as a source of accumulation especially in the area of crop production. Commenting on this dualism or split personality of the agrarian petty bourgeoisie Masale ((1984:135) remarks that:

"The agrarian/commercial bourgeoisie had agricultural holdings similar to those of the agrarian bourgeoisie but in addition reported that they owned business. The agrarian/commercial bourgeoisie constituted 32.7 per cent of the sample, the largest single component of the candidate group. Like the agrarian bourgeoisie, the agrarian Commercial Stratum was more likely to be the class of district/town council candidates (34.5%) than of national assembly candidates (19.2%)".

2.1.2 Commercial petty bourgeoisie

The second fraction or stratum of the petty bourgeoisie dominant in the council is the commercial petty bourgeoisie. This is the stratum that derives its livelihood

almost exclusively from commercial activities. This stratum represents only 3.6 per cent in the council. This may be because most councils are based in the rural areas and therefore the majority of their councillors are rural-based which may explain the predominance of the agrarian petty bourgeoisie or kulaks.

2.1.3 Bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie

The bureaucratic category consists of former civil servants. This category or stratum constitutes 6,7 per cent of council members. Its representation in the council is slightly higher than that of the commercial petty bourgeoisie. This indicates clearly that more and more former public servants are entering the political fray. For most of them the council provides a useful stepping stone into the lofty and greener pastures of national politics. Most of them occupy dominant positions within the council's political structures such as chairmen of council committees. In fact, most of the chair persons of the council committees are former public servants. This is largely due to their higher levels of education as compared to that of the other council members, as well as their technical knowledge of government machinery because of their previous experience in government, either at council level or central government level.

From the above analysis of the class position of council members it is quite clear that the petty bourgeoisie monopolizes the council membership. Only 12,3 per cent of the council members comes from a working class background according to the 1984 University of Botswana Election Study Project. This is a clear demonstration of the crucial and decisive link between wealth and political leadership in a class divided society. According to Molutsi (1989:129):

"Botswana's political elite has come from a position of social privilege and economic influence. This was the case at independence and it remains so to date".

According to Benjamin Watkins (1975:66):



Table 2 : Class Position and Gender, 1984

Class	Male No.	%	Female No.	%
Agrarian bourgeoisie	46	24.3	7	23.4
Agrarian/commercial bourgeoisie	63	33.3	9	30.0
Bureaucratic/agrarian bourgeoisie	11	5.8	0	0.0
Bureaucratic/agrarian/commercial bourgeoisie	11	5.8	1	3.3
Other bourgeoisie	6	3.2	2	6.7
Small peasant	22	11.6	7	23.3
Semi-proletarianised	23	12.2	4	13.3
	Total 189	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Parton J: 1984. Election Study Survey, Parson, J., Nengwekhulu, R., and Cliffe, L. (Eds) Gaborone, 1984.

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"Power and property may be separated for a time by force or fraud but divorced never. For so soon as the pang of separation is felt ... property will purchase power or power will take over property. And either way, there must be an end to free government".

Masale (1984:137) raises another profound question regarding the nature of Botswana's political elite when she remarks:

"These results raise certain questions ... about the nature of political parties and the public policy decision making process. The fact that the rate at which candidates own businesses and that the types of businesses owned were very similar between the BDP and BNF questions the extent to which they really were different".

Ideological uniformity based on shared socio-economic characteristics is more to be expected. This also means in general that candidates constitute the socio-economic entity and therefore the proliferation of political parties in Botswana is nothing more than an expression of intense competition within the bourgeois class for the control of the state and the resources it commands ... These similarities explain why it is the case that the opposition parties and in particular the BNF have not formulated a clear policy alternative to "the manifesto of the BDP".

What this means is that the number of political parties represented in the councils mean very little for genuine democracy, for they in general, represent the same class interests, i.e. the interests of the ruling petty bourgeois class. Multipartyism in a liberal democracy based on class merely means the continuous circulation and recycling of leaders from the same ruling class.

2.1.4 Gender representation

Gender is an issue that should be focused on in the analysis of the nature of council members. This is because as Molutsi (1989:125) argues:

"Gender also remains an important factor with regard to entry into Botswana's politics. To be male increases the candidate's chances of being selected by his/her party and his/her chances for winning the election e.g. (over 40% of our survey respondents expressed reservations on women in leadership positions)".

This is not surprising for Botswana, like most societies is a male-dominated society. Kimble and Molokomme (1984:144) concur with this observation when they remarks:

"In the Botswana political system where the neo-colonial state embraced within its institutional structure the apparatuses of the colonial state, which were based on elements of the precolonial state (bogosi and dikgotla), there were certain political offices which were gender specific. Thus ... despite a few historical cases of regency, it was virtually impossible for a woman to hold office within the upper echelons of the tribal administration or to sit in the House of Chiefs - The fact that since independence the government ... has theoretically acquired the power to appoint women to particular posts within these state apparatuses, did not change either the reality or the perception of that reality. The reality in this sphere is of politics remain a masculine on both the traditional and modern conceptions of gender ... women are not fully integrated into the political process ... it is a comment on the overall limits to the democratic character of the Botswana political system".

The tendency to prefer men to women for political positions either within political parties or in the organs of government cuts across political party lines. During the 1984 general election, only 13.7 per cent of the sample were women. This was an improvement from the 1969 and 1974 general elections. An interesting aspect of the women elected into the councils is that they share the same characteristics of their male counterparts, meaning that they come from the petty bourgeois class. In fact, according to the 1984 general election survey, sixty three per cent of women elected into the councils were from the petty bourgeois class. This

compares favourably with almost three quarters of men who stood for election. This was a continuation of the trend observed in 1974 general election. In the 1989 General Election Report it was observed that women candidates were poorer than men. Civil service positions were also less often a route for women than men to achieve positions of political status.

The irony of women representation on the councils is that they are generally more politically active than men. In addition to this, the *de facto* population of Botswana is heavily weighted in favour of women. Jack Parson's data analysis of the 1984 general election shows women were 56.4 per cent of the eligible voters and 56.0 per cent registered to vote. This showed that women registered more or less in proportion to their eligibility, indicating a clear interest in politics in general and voting in particular. This trend was repeated during the 1989 and 1994 general elections.

Table 2 shows the male and female class position and table 3 shows male and female registered voters as a proportion of the *de facto* population. The most common explanation for the small number of women in the councils is that women are not interested in political positions (Holm 1989). Some councillors feel that it is contrary to the traditions of Botswana for women to hold positions of political power. Tradition for women therefore seems immutable and static whilst for men it is dynamic and always moving forward. This is in spite of the fact that women have been the most active organizers for political parties for both council and national elections. Kimble and Molokomme (Ibid p.148) comment as follows:

"Women tend to be activists. This is well-known in Botswana. The women are responsible for the grass roots, concrete work in all organisations, even in the political sphere itself. You go to meetings, and it is the women there. Men's conception of politics is to go for the leadership, they are interested in positions ... At the lower level of offices, secretaries, etc of the organisations it is the women's consistency which keeps the organisations going. But now when it comes to standing for office and getting elected,

the people will say 'leadership is for men'. A man who has no claim to political knowledge or experience can stand and get elected, merely because he is seen as a father figure, a figure of authority".

The 1989 and 1994 general elections have seen a marked increase in the number of female councillors, but they still constitute a very small number of councillors. (General Election Reports 1989 & 1994). The discrepancy between political activism and political power opportunity for women is likely to remain very much alive for women for a foreseeable future as long as male prejudice and the culturally imposed female self-doubt remain strong. The situation is not likely to be drastically changed in spite of the Government's commitments that (Ministry of Finance, National Development Plan 7 1991-1997), it will continue to strengthen and revamp the Women's Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, as well as finalizing Women in Development Policy.

This Unit was established in 1981 (Ibid:388). Its objective is to promote the integration of women in national development. The Unit is expected to achieve this objective through the dissemination of information and incorporating gender issues in the information the unit generates. So far the Women's Unit has not been an effective instrument for the advancement of the political ambitions and interests of women either at the national or local levels. In fact it has so far never focused its attention on the under representation of women in the municipal councils or Parliament.

2.2 Age Distribution of Councillors

An assessment of the average age of councillors has revealed that there is a great deal of turnover of council members. In fact there has been much greater turnover of council members than of national assembly members. During the Botswana General Elections (1984) it was observed that:

"Forty-two percent of the BDP's candidates for the national assembly in 1984 had also been candidates in 1969. More than half of the BDP's candidates in 1984 stood for the BDP in 1974. Twenty five of the thirty-four BDP candidates were incumbents".

There is still a noticeable continuity at the council level (Ibid:86):

"About one-quarter of the BDP candidates were incumbents and just under one-third had been candidates in 1979".

Masale confirms Jack Parson's conclusion. This was also confirmed by the 1989 and 1993 election study surveys undertaken by the Democracy Project of the University of Botswana (1993). An interesting dimension of Glorinah Masale's (Op cit:138) observation is that:

"The average age of candidates responding to the survey in 1984 was 46.3 years. This compared with an average age of 50 years in 1974. The pool of candidates was becoming younger during the intervening decade. At the same time the candidate pool in 1984 continued to be much older than the general population. About half of the general population aged 21 years or older was in the age group 21 to 39 years while only about 31 per cent of the candidates were in the age group 21 to 40 years".

The low level of continuity of local government or council members seem to indicate a more open and competitive arena of electoral politics at the local level than in Parliament. This may be a reflection of the fact that rewards for being a councillor are less than those of being a member of Parliament. The significance of the open space for political competition at the council level lies in the fact that it allows the infusion of new blood and also of other strata of the population whilst the membership of the national assembly is characterized by an aging generation. This may lead, as it seems, to have an inability to adapt policies to a rapidly changing society. The continuity of the older generation in the Parliament indicates

commitment to the *status quo*. Table 4 shows a comparative analysis of continuity and change of council members.

2.3 Educational Level of Councillors

An assessment of the educational levels of councillors is essential for it seems the lower the level of education the lower the level of political understanding. More important also it seems that the lower the level of education the lower the level of understanding and management of the modern complex and complicated government machinery. A study conducted by the Democracy Project of the University of Botswana (Molutsi (1993:22):

"After some 25 years or so after independence Botswana's councillors are still predominantly semi-illiterate. The majority have primary (education) only".

This is further emphasized by the extent of the gap between local and national politicians. Members of Parliament are relatively more educated than their municipal council counterparts. This is perhaps not surprising since members of Parliament are required by law to have a minimum of junior certificate or a certificate of proficiency in English. No such a requirement is necessary for councillors, so that even a completely illiterate person can and does become a councillor. Yet the District Councils Act, 1965:65) Chapter 40.01, section 21 and requires categorically that:

"Minutes of proceedings of every meeting of a council and of every committee thereof shall be kept in English and shall be regularly entered in a book kept for that purpose and shall be confirmed at the next ordinary meeting".

Whilst, in general, communication skills in English do not necessarily depend on a school certification, it is however very rare that people who have never been to

Table 4: Candidate^a Continuity in Local Government Elections, 1969-1984

Same candidate in: As in 1969 1974 1979 Total Number of
 Candidates Incumbents

1969					
BDP				165	
BIP				16	
BPP				43	
BNF				72	
Total				296	
1974					
BDP	59			176	53
BIP	7			15	4
BPP	16			46	14
BNF	11			58	5
Total	93			295	76
1979					
BDP	36	82		176	74
BIP	3	5		15	4
BPP	13	16		59	9
BNF	3	9		79	4
Total	55	112		329	90
1984					
BDP	19	53	81	254	63
BIP	2	3	6	18	2
BPP	11	11	16	72	9
BNF	3	5	15	157	2
Total	35	71	118	510 ^b	76

a Excluding independents

b The total reflects the BPU candidates who are otherwise not listed

Source: Supervisor of Elections, Report on the General Election 1969 (Gaborone): The government Printer, 1970); Supervisor of Elections, Report to the Minister of State on the General elections, 1974 (Gaborone: The Government Printer, n.d.); Supervisor of Elections, Report to the Minister of Public Service and Information on the General Elections, 1979 (Gaborone: The Government Printer, n.d.); and, Supervisor of Elections, Report to the Minister of Public Service and Information on the General Elections, 1984 (Gaborone: The Government Printer, n.d.).

school or left school with very low educational qualification, are able to communicate in English sufficiently articulate unless English is their mother tongue. Most importantly also is the fact that councillors without any education cannot read the minutes, even though these minutes, are always translated into Setswana.

Table 5 shows educational qualifications of councillors interviewed during the survey by the Democracy Research Project in mid 1991 and early 1992. From the data in this table it can be observed that 65.4 per cent of the councillors have only a standard 7 qualification and below whilst 88.5 per cent have the Junior Certificate and below. These qualifications are not sufficiently adequate for understanding the complexities of modern government. This is especially so with regard to public finance, technical documents such as contracts, tenders etc. (Nengwekhulu 1993). Surprisingly though councillors themselves do admit that they find it difficult and sometimes impossible to understand the technical aspects of modern government.

An analysis of the cross-tabulation in terms of the gender of the respondents reveals significant dimension. According to this table women have a higher basic literacy rate than their male counterparts. This is a reflection of the national trend. As a person moves up the educational step ladder there are more men than women. The National Development Plan 7 confirms this phenomenon. According to National Development Plan 7 (1991-1997:330):

"There has always been a relatively high proportion of girls in Botswana's primary schools. This was related to their traditional roles, with boys more likely to be at cattle posts and therefore away from the villages (and hence the schools). As Botswana moves closer to universal primary education, male enrolment in primary schools is catching up ... However, in general the balance shifts towards males higher up the educational ladder..."

Table 6 illustrates this phenomenon clearly, but as already indicated despite the fact that there are more women with basic education than men in the councils,



Table 5: The Educational Qualifications of Councillors Interviewed

Education Level	Number	Percentage	Cumulative %
No Education	7	6.7	6.7
Below Std 7	20	19.2	26.0
Std 7	41	39.4	65.4
J.C.	24	23.1	88.5
O'Level	8	7.7	96.2
Post Secondary	4	3.8	100.0
TOTAL	104	100.0	100.0

Source: Survey Data. Democracy Research Project of the University of Botswana.

Table 6: Education of Respondents by Sex

Education Level	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	Total
None	0 (0.0)	7 (6.7)	7 (6.7)
Below Std 7	1 (1.0)	19 (18.3)	20 (19.2)
Std 7	7 (6.7)	34 (32.7)	41 (39.4)
J.C.	8 (7.7)	16 (15.4)	24 (23.1)
O'Level	1 (1.0)	7 (6.7)	8 (7.7)
Post Secondary	0 (0.0)	4 (3.8)	4 (3.8)
TOTAL	17 (16.3)	87 (83.7)	104 (100.0)

women are still under represented. To be more specific only 16.3 per cent of the respondents during the survey by the Democracy Research Project were women.

The under qualification of councillors becomes even more glaring when it is compared with the educational qualifications of the council administrative personnel. Table 8 illustrates this disparity graphically. In terms of this table the lowest educational standard attained by the upper level of the council administrative personnel is the Junior Certificate, i.e. 26,8 per cent as compared to 23.1 per cent of the councillors, 9.8 per cent of the council officials had the "o" level or Matriculation qualifications compared to 7.7 per cent of the councillors. More importantly also about 34.1 per cent of the officials had post secondary school qualifications compared to a mere 3.8 per cent of the councillors. It must be mentioned, that the wide gap between officials and politicians is not peculiar to the local government level sphere. It is also found at the national level. In addition to that, it is not unique to Botswana. The point needs to be emphasized that what makes the council level situation in Botswana a serious problem, is that this gap is coupled with the rate of under qualification, which borders on illiteracy, of councillors. Molutsi (1991:25) remarks as follows:

"Recent recruitment into the councils have not changed the quality of the councillors that much ... New council members do not appear to have come with substantially better education because the overall quality of council politicians in terms of education remains fairly low".

Part of the reason for the councils' failure to attract well educationally qualified people to become councillors seems to be the tendency by the well educated to look down upon the councils. Most of the educated petty bourgeoisie seem to see the Parliament as their prime prize.

The problem of under qualified councillors has been a cause for concern by council officials who complain about the high level of illiteracy of councillors which they claim contributed to their high level of ignorance. The survey by the Democracy



Table 7: Educational Levels of Local Level Officers

Education	Number	Percentage	Cumulative %
J.C.	11	26.8	26.8
O' Level	4	9.8	36.6
Post Secondary/Cert/Dip	12	29.3	65.9
Degree	14	34.1	100.0
TOTAL	41	100.0	-

Research Project also found that the general view amongst the majority of council bureaucrats was that councillors needed some further training, even if this meant short courses which could improve their general knowledge about council operations. In fact 82.9 per cent of public officers employed by councils feel that councillors need further training which will help them understand e.g. council procedures and financial management.

The fact that most councillors are barely literate makes them maleable to the influence of bureaucrats. In some cases it forces them to leave the function of governing to bureaucrats. In a democracy decision making, which means policy formulation, is or should be the responsibility of elected representatives, that is politicians. Elected representatives are elected by the people on the basis of the policies they advocate. The principal role of the bureaucracy is to advise politicians and to implement policies articulated and proposed by politicians. In practice, things do not work as neatly as they are theoretically articulated. More often than not bureaucrats formulate policies for politicians. This is the trend in the modern world. This is largely due to the fact that bureaucrats are generally experts in the running of the modern government which has become a complicated function. This situation is further aggravated by the educational and professional gap between bureaucrats and politicians. Thus the council situation in Botswana is not unique, but in the local government in Botswana, the dominance of council bureaucracy is made easier by the semi-literacy of most of the councillors. Molutsi (1993:25) explains thus:

"Many senior civil servants interviewed alleged that if policy making was left to the politicians there would be chaos ... Asked to explain why councils are centrally so controlled, senior civil servants categorically said councillors were not educated or informed enough to make intelligible decisions ... Thus while councillors ... do endorse policy decisions, in practice they have little control over policy".

This situation has serious implications for the quality of democracy in general and

local democracy in particular. Democracy means government by elected representatives and not by unelected bureaucrats. If local government is a mechanism for the extension of democracy to the people, it is difficult to establish to what extent the assumption is true in the case of Botswana, if bureaucrats are so dominant to the extent that some commentators on Botswana have termed the state in Botswana an administrative state. (Picard 1987)

In the case of Botswana devolution has become a mere deconcentration of power or rather authority from the central government bureaucrats to the local government officials. Holm (1987:198) believes that civil servants are too dominant. He argues that there is a tendency by civil servants to emasculate elected representatives. He contends that councils have very little freedom because council civil servants formulate appropriation with no more input than mere pleadings from councillors to include their project. The net result is that councillors play a marginal role in policy determination.

Holm, Molutsi and Picard seem to exaggerate the weaknesses of councillors, in most instances politicians do override civil servants in instances where they feel policy decisions taken by bureaucrats are contradictory to their fundamental class interests, which also applies to councils. Although the bureaucracy is powerful and dominant, politicians retain their political leadership. Picard's assertion that Botswana has become an administrative state, whatever that means, is theoretically flawed. Miliband (1968:48) remarks that:

"For officialdom is at the service of the political executive, its obedient instrument the tool of its will. In actual fact it is nothing of the kind. Everywhere and inevitably the administrative process is also part of the political process; administration is always political as well as executive at least at the levels where policy-making is relevant, that is to some in the upper layers of administrative life. That this is so is not necessarily due to administrator's desire that it should be so. On the contrary, many of them may well wish to shun politics altogether and to leave 'political' matters to

the politicians; or alternatively to "depoliticize" the issues under discussion. If the regime is weak, with a rapid ministerial turnover and with no possibility of sustained ministerial direction ... Civil servants will step into the vacuum and play an often dominant part in decision making. But even where the political executive is strong and stable, top administrators are still able to play an important role in critical areas of policy ... However much argument there may be over the nature and extent of bureaucratic power in these societies, the range of possibilities must exclude the idea that top civil servants can be reduced to the role of mere instruments of policy".

This seems to be the correct assessment of the place and role of the bureaucracy in the political system. Picard's (1987) conclusion that the state in Botswana is an administrative state because of the dominant role of public servants seems to be based on a Weberian notion of bureaucracy in which there is an assumed complete separation between the political and administrative sectors of the political system. (Weber 1971:). This is merely a theoretical and juridical fiction which is not borne out of practice.

3. SUMMARY

It has been shown that the organization of councils in Botswana is divided into three categories of members, i.e. elected council members, nominated councillors and *ex officio* members. The nominated members were intended to maintain the balance of power in the council in favour of the ruling party. The presence of the district commissioner, a central government public official, in the council as an *ex officio* member is meant to facilitate the central government control of councils.

The chapter analyzed the nature of council members in terms of class position within the society and concluded that council members were predominantly members of the ruling petty bourgeois class. They can be divided into three sections, i.e. agrarian or rural petty bourgeoisie, commercial petty bourgeoisie and bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie.

Council members were also assessed in terms of age and it was concluded that, unlike in the early years of independence, when the majority of councillors were in the age category of 50 years, the younger people are being elected into councils. It was observed from the perspective of gender that councils in Botswana are essentially the preserves of males with very few women being elected into councils. This, was in spite of women who are more active in politics than men. Councillors were evaluated in terms of their levels of educational qualifications, and it was demonstrated that most council members are either semi-literate or completely illiterate, this affected their performance as councillors.