



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Half a Century of Peace in Botswana

Johan Brosché

Johan.Brosche@pcr.uu.se

Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

Presentation held at Botsfa Independence Cruise

October 2, 2017



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Aims of this presentation

- Briefly present the project *Causes of Peace – The Botswana Zambia and Malawi “Zone of Peace”*.
- Describe some characteristics of Botswana’s peace.
- Outline some factors that we believe are important in explaining why Botswana has been spared from armed conflict.
- Make use of the extensive knowledge in the room to discuss these factors.



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Countries in Africa NOT Affected by Armed Conflict (1946-2015, interstate and intrastate)



Zone of Peace:
Zambia
Botswana
Malawi

Source:
Uppsala Conflict
Data Program



Zone of Peace: Botswana, Zambia and Malawi

- Africa is the world's most conflict-affected region and have experienced one third of all inter- and intra-state conflicts since 1946.
- Inhabitants of Botswana, Malawi and Zambia, comprise 73% of the African population that lives in a country that has not experienced armed conflict.
- Extensive differences between these countries regarding issues like stability, poverty, and resources which make them more interesting to examine.
- In sum, Zambia and Malawi's peace is theoretically more surprising than Botswana's.



Botswana's Peace: Stable but Unequal

- Stable Peace
 - No evident critical junctures when a more violent path was imminent.
 - No really powerful challengers to the prevailing status quo.
 - Same party in power since independence. President has extraordinary power: head of state, head of government, leader of ruling party, commander-in-chief and, in practice, select his successor.
- Unequal Peace
 - Botswana is one of the most unequal countries in the world (Gini coefficient).
 - About one fifth of the population lives in absolute poverty (less than 2 US\$/day).
 - Some communities, the San in particular, are severely marginalized.



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Colonialism and the Non-Violent Path to Independence

- *Pre-colonial*: developed and well-structured Tswana kingdoms.
- *Colonial*: comparatively light colonial footprint (protectorate not colony) – the precolonial institutional structures were kept and developed.
 - Struggle for independence peaceful and sovereignty achieved without throwing a stone.
- *Post-colonial*: not so sharp contrast to previous structures - many remained similar.
 - Good relations with the Brits.



Ethno-regional Relations

- Dual effect of Tswanaification.
 - Created grievances and false impression that Botswana is ethnically homogenous.
 - Meant that many groups didn't want to strongly emphasize its cultural distinctiveness.
- Ethnolinguistic, socioeconomic, and regional divisions that are both substantively important and long-standing.
 - The most marginalized groups lack means to severely challenge the state.
 - Identities are generally multilayered and mutually exclusive identities hardly exist.



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Elite Dynamics

‘Botswana’s diamonds – like its cattle industry – have been successfully integrated into the state-centered political economy in ways that ... contributed decisively to bringing the major elites of the country together in a persistent and strong interest in political stability and societal peace and order’

(Gulbrandsen, 2013, p. 8).

- Balance between tradition and modernity.
- Nationalization of resources before diamonds were discovered.
- Domination of a consensus-seeking approach to government which had deep roots in Tswana culture.



Other Explanations

- The *Kgotla* constitute an important system for conflict resolution.
- General economic development has decreased the incentives for groups to organize protest.
- Botswana's type of diamonds less conflict prone than other types.
- Professionalism of the army.



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Questions to you?

- Other explanations for Botswana's peace you think are important?
- Any particular critical junctures when a more violent path was possible that you think is important to study?
- Has Botswana performed better – or worse – than what could be anticipated given its conditions?



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Thank you for your attention!