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## Migrant Labor, Development, and HIV in Botswana

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MIGRANT LABOR, DEVELOPMENT, AND HIV IN BOTSWANA

by

WILLIAM R. KEARNS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in History  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term 2014

Thesis Chair: Dr. Ezekiel Walker

## **ABSTRACT**

At independence, Botswana was highly underdeveloped and reliant on external capital earned through migrant labor. This presented several challenges to development despite the discovery of diamonds shortly after independence. However, no challenge was greater than the HIV epidemic which came to infect one in four Batswana. This thesis discusses the historical factors which promoted the spread of the virus in the greater context of migrant labor and development within Botswana.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to first thank Dr. Ezekiel Walker for his mentorship over my undergraduate career, which allowed me to pursue my interests and facilitated their development into a clear understanding of where I want to go in my future endeavors.

I would like to thank the library staff at the University of Central Florida, especially Mr. Richard Harrison and Mr. Rich Gauss for their assistance in locating primary documents and historical statistics respectively.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their support of my education, without which I would not have made it to where I am today, and for teaching me the importance of social justice and responsibility.

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## INTRODUCTION

Botswana emerged from colonial rule as one of the poorest countries in Africa dependent on remittances from migrant laborers in South Africa and Rhodesia. With the discovery of diamonds in 1967, Botswana was able to sustain itself by its own generation of internal capital. This allowed the Government of Botswana to invest in infrastructural development, which had been neglected during the colonial period despite the institution of taxes for this purpose. The stability and success of Botswana made it an attractive alternative to foreign laborers, from liberated African states, uninterested in working in apartheid South Africa as well as those displaced by war and famine in neighboring countries. These events coincided with the silent spread of the human immunodeficiency virus from central Africa into the southern portion of the continent. As a result, the virus eventually came to infect one in four Tswana. This thesis argues that the high prevalence of HIV in Botswana can be attributed to a number of factors. Namely, the dramatic shift from an agro-pastoral economy to an economy based on the exportation of diamonds engendered the emergence of a migrant labor class that contributed to the spread of HIV. Since life expectancy was higher in Botswana, people were more likely to live longer with HIV increasing the probability of spreading the virus. In addition, the efforts of the South African government to block the construction of a bridge at Kazungula coupled with certain development programs exacerbated the growing spread of HIV.

This thesis intends to describe the epidemic particular to Botswana, however many of the conclusions can describe the southern portion of the African continent. This is due to the

pervasive migrant labor system and relatively extensive infrastructure characteristic to this region. As will be shown, these characteristics facilitated the spread of HIV in Botswana and a similar argument can be developed as to its spread through the southern portion of the continent.

HIV is primarily transmitted during an acute phase of infection when viral load is high, typically lasting for several weeks, before the individual goes into a latent phase until the development of AIDS several years later. This makes HIV dangerous epidemiologically because the virus multiplies in the individual without symptoms, during a phase known as pre-symptomatic AIDS when the individual is highly infectious. For this reason, HIV spreads more rapidly in populations with a higher prevalence of multiple concurrent partnerships, MCPs, due to the high turnover rate of sexual partners during this acute phase.<sup>1</sup> Several factors increase MCP levels in the population, one being the displacement of migrant laborers from their home communities into concentrated housing, and the resulting separation of spouses during this period of employment.

As a result, migrant labor played a key role in the transfer of the virus between populations with disparate HIV prevalence, e.g. across country borders or from mining towns to rural villages. Otherwise, the virus would become isolated in communities and would not be able to spread throughout the entire sub-continent. The number of foreign mine laborers in South Africa dropped from 600,000 in 1970 to 290,000 in 1977.<sup>2</sup> However, migrant labor

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<sup>1</sup> MCP Report

<sup>2</sup> Kerven. Botswana Mine Labour Migration to South Africa. 36

exportation from Botswana to South Africa did not begin to decline until 1978, as their gold mines became ever more dependent on the former high commission territories.<sup>3</sup>

The emergence of HIV is best viewed in the context of the greater continuity of disease in the southern portion of the African continent for two reasons. First, the virus is more easily acquired in conjunction with other sexually transmitted infections. Second, AIDS weakens the immune system and allows for the development of opportunistic infections such as Tuberculosis disease (TB), which is the leading cause of death among HIV-positive patients. For this reason, TB numbers have risen sharply further compounding the issue of multiple drug resistance, presenting a grave threat to Southern Africa.<sup>4</sup>

An historical assessment of the factors which facilitated the epidemic is key to the development of accurate non-homogenous models for the disease and the optimization of response efforts. This thesis intends to bridge the gap between technical research and the historical literature. By the application of historical statistics and techniques, a clearer picture can be developed of the emergence of the HIV epidemic in Tswana society. This will be achieved through an analysis of primary documents including newspapers, government studies and reports, international reports, telegrams, journals, and the analysis of transportation networks and trade statistics.

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<sup>3</sup> Kerven. Botswana Mine Labour Migration to South Africa. 49

<sup>4</sup> Dow. Saturday is for Funerals. 84-85

Chapter one will examine the origins of the migrant labor system in Botswana, specifically how the steps taken by the British colonial administration in the aftermath of the cattle plague of 1896 promoted the movement of Tswana men from their homeland to the colonies of South Africa and Rhodesia. This system would become entrenched in the colonial period and put the country at an increased risk of urban diseases from abroad for a variety of reasons which will be discussed.

Chapter two will explain how the limited rate at which the ferry could cross the Zambezi River and the closure of borders during the Zimbabwean Civil War caused heavy traffic at border crossings. This attracted the commercial sex industry which facilitated the spread of HIV among truck drivers. Many were destined to travel through Francistown – the transportation hub of Botswana. Francistown had grown substantially since the arrival of the railway. This chapter will detail the internal development instituted after the discovery of diamonds in the country. It will include the politics of foreign investment, with a particular emphasis on how certain development programs ultimately facilitated the spread of HIV.

Finally, the HIV epidemic in Botswana will be covered explicitly in chapter three from its first case in 1985 to the implementation of a free anti-retroviral program in 2002. This chapter will place a particular emphasis on the early period of the epidemic – before the availability of affordable medication – in order to show how the ability of civil society to mobilize against the epidemic was limited by the shift of power from rural to urban areas.

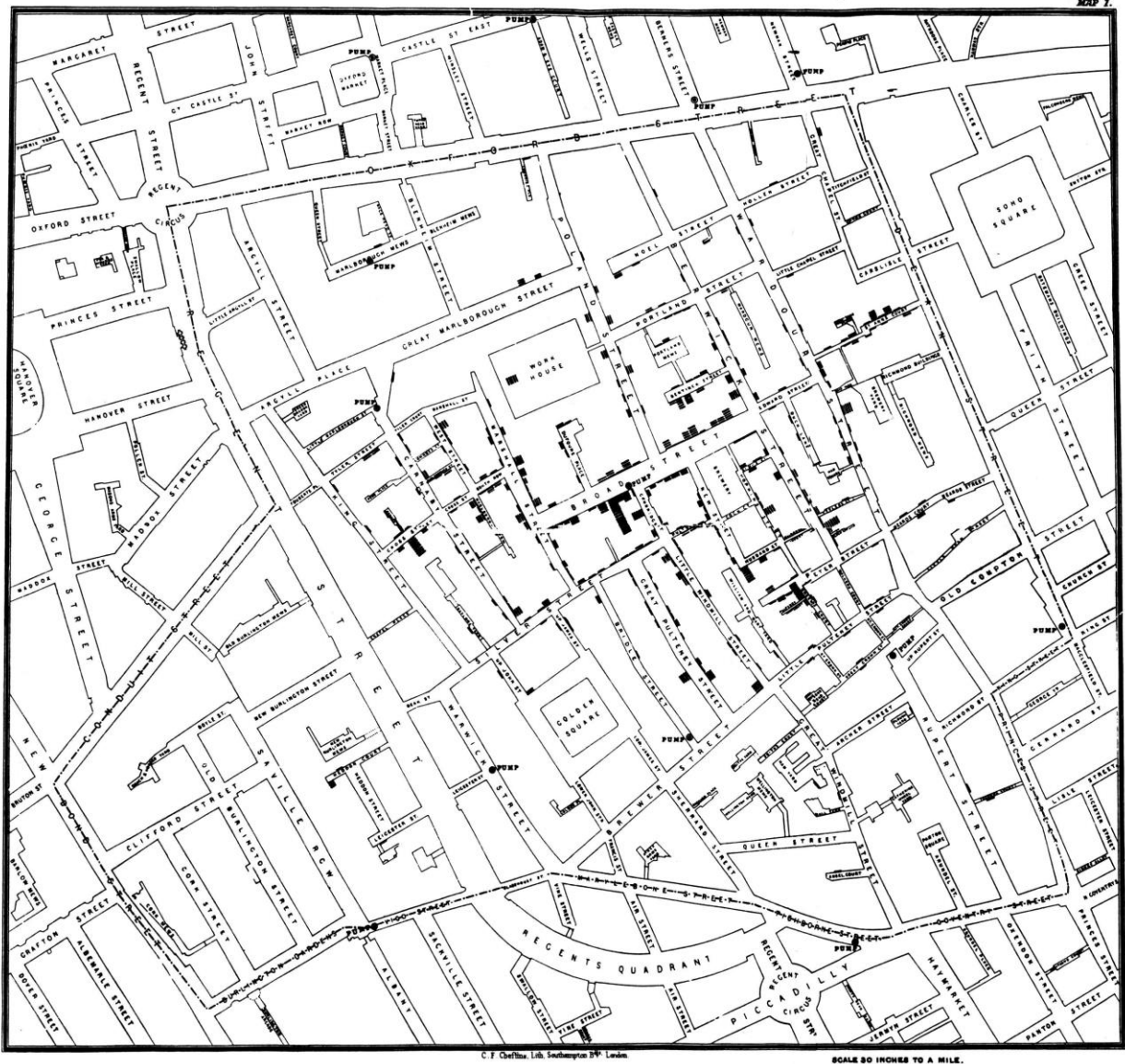


Figure 1 1854 Cholera Epidemic Map by John Snow

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to miasma theory, which was the dominant theory up until the latter half of the nineteenth century, infectious diseases were a result of “bad air.” John Snow, a physician and skeptic of this theory, believed that the communication of disease was a result of the excretion of the sick which was accidentally consumed by those who would become sick.<sup>5</sup> Based on this theory, he believed that the most likely source of contamination was in the water supply. In 1854, a cholera epidemic afflicted London. John Snow used graphic methods to isolate a water pump on Broadwick Street, as the source of the epidemic (see Fig. 2). A similar approach can be taken with the HIV epidemic. From a map of Botswana, it is apparent the sources of infection lie along truck routes and mining towns particularly Francistown, Selebi-Phikwe, Sowa, and Chobe.<sup>6</sup> Armed with this information, this thesis will examine these regions to determine what factors caused these particularly severe levels of infection.

The miasma theory of disease was replaced by the germ theory of disease in 1882, when Robert Koch isolated and scientifically proved that *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was the causative agent of Tuberculosis disease, thus beginning the modern study of infectious organisms. This placed western countries in a position of power with regard to the prevention of disease.

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<sup>5</sup> Kotar. *Cholera*. 164

<sup>6</sup> CSO Botswana HIV/AIDS Impact Survey III Results. 2

The British Parliamentary Papers provide telegrams from the nineteenth century between colonial officials in Botswana and those in the Cape as well as between the Cape and Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of the Colonies. These correspondence are not only a source of raw information, but also reveal the schemes and motivations of the colonial administration. This source covers the topics of the development of the Mafeking-Bulawayo railway and the Rinderpest virus.

The first written anthology on the Tswana was written by Isaac Schapera, a British anthropologist who studied the Tswana during the latter half of the colonial period from 1923-1947. He wrote three works: the *Handbook on Tswana Law and Custom*, *Married Life in an African Tribe*, and *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life*. They have been an excellent source for researchers concerned with the history of Botswana and deserve a reassessment in light of its HIV epidemic. By the juxtaposition of these sources, one gets a sense of the interplay between migrant labor and customs including marriage during the late colonial period.

In *Married Life in an African Tribe*, Schapera relays a Tswana proverb “A man like a bull, cannot be confined to a kraal”, a remainder from a tradition of polygamy which was used to rationalize marital infidelity by men. He explains that he was informed by the Kgatla that this was justified by the absence of men from the community which led to a greater number of women at home. In fact, the majority of changes in domestic patterns can be linked to labor migration.<sup>7</sup> In

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<sup>7</sup> Kerven. *Botswana Mine Labor Migration to South Africa*. 88

*Migrant Labor and Tribal Life*, Schapera states that Batswana men had a high prevalence of venereal disease, specifically syphilis, thus disqualifying them for work on the mines.<sup>8</sup> This disease he speculates was most likely introduced to the protectorate by men returning from work abroad, but had entered into the general population.<sup>9</sup> In this same way, HIV was most likely introduced into Botswana and was more easily spread in conjunction with syphilis sores.

Rodgers Keteng Molefi wrote a comprehensive medical history of Botswana throughout the colonial period, 1885-1966. The work examines the interplay between the chiefs and the colonial government with regard to the application of modern medicine. It attributes much of the disease to poor working conditions of migrant laborers. This thesis intends to add to this discussion with an assessment of the HIV virus and response efforts in Botswana.

John Iliffe, a British historian, has written the most comprehensive historical narrative of the HIV epidemic to date. From a general consensus of sources, the epidemic is agreed to have begun in Kinshasa around the 1950s, when it was Léopoldville the colonial capital of the Belgian Congo. Along with commercial sex, Iliffe describes oscillating migrations as the driving force of HIV in southern Africa.<sup>10</sup> Men while abroad in urban areas would contract the virus and then transmit it to their partners in rural areas. The younger generation was exploring their freedom due to the independence and prosperity of the country in the 1980s and 1990s. They had

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<sup>8</sup> Schapera. *Migrant Labor and Tribal Life*. 17-20

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 18

<sup>10</sup> Iliffe. *The African AIDS Epidemic*. 39



migrated to urban areas in order to seek out opportunities and were delaying marriage, increasing their likelihood of contracting sexual transmitted diseases.

Migrant labor in Southern Africa was the focus of substantial discussion among researchers in the 1970s and 1980s. A second comprehensive study on labor migration was conducted shortly after independence. Carol Kerven, a researcher for the government, challenged the idea that rural areas had “traditionally” been unproductive and rather placed their unproductive nature as a result of out-migration from these areas.<sup>11</sup> Her study acts as an excellent report on the economic conditions experienced during the emergence of HIV in Botswana. In Kerven’s system, there are three interconnected economic spheres: rural, urban, and external. Since their domestic income did not match their import needs, Tswana society became reliant on an external cash flow.<sup>12</sup>

The issue of labor in the capitalist system has a long history, Karl Marx’s magnum opus *Das Capital* examines this question thoroughly from a dialectical materialist position. It consists of three volumes the first of which, *A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, was published in 1867, the same year that the first diamond was discovered in southern Africa. They were translated into English by Frederick Engels in 1886 and give a detailed account of life for the industrial worker in the early stages of capitalist society.

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<sup>11</sup> Kerven, C. *Rural-urban Migration and Agricultural Productivity in Botswana*. Gaborone: Central Statistics Office, 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid 7

Randall Packard, a medical historian, wrote a book entitled *White Plague, Black Labor* in which he details the history of tuberculosis in South Africa and the connection between tuberculosis and mine labor. This book examines statistical evidence and puts it into historical context of apartheid South Africa. Thus, the reader is able to obtain a clear picture of the conditions which precipitated the increases in Tuberculosis among mine laborers in apartheid South Africa.

*Saturday is for Funerals* written by Max Essex, chair of the Harvard AIDS initiative, and Unity Dow, the first female high court judge in Botswana, is an excellent first-hand and culturally appropriate account of the epidemic in Botswana. Unity Dow recounts specific events that occurred while she was a judge in Botswana's High Court.

While labor migration, development, and HIV have all been studied by researchers, there exists no thorough assessment of the interconnectedness of these three spheres in Botswana. This thesis intends to fill this gap in the literature. The recent awareness across multiple disciplines to the significance of identifying the source of the HIV epidemic has warranted a reassessment of the existing literature as well as a reinterpretation of the primary sources available from the colonial period to the present.<sup>13</sup> This study serves as a case study of labor migration, development, and HIV in Botswana with application for response efforts and prevention in industrializing countries. Botswana was chosen because of its rapid post-

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<sup>13</sup> Webb. *Historical Epidemiology and Infectious Disease Processes in Africa*.

independence development, its extensive history of labor migration, and its particularly severe epidemic.

While a thorough assessment would require fieldwork in the affected areas, the discussion of the causes of the HIV epidemic in Botswana, would benefit from the established methodologies of historiography – attention to detail, as well as the authentication and contextualization of sources. Modern advances in genetic sequencing act as novel archeological evidence of the origins, variations, and mechanisms of disease,<sup>14</sup> warranting a reassessment of the existing literature and primary sources from the period surrounding the expansion of the virus.

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<sup>14</sup> Giles-Vernick, Tamara, Ch. Didier Gondola, Guillaume Lachenal, and William H. Schneider. *"Social History, Biology, And The Emergence Of HIV In Colonial Africa."* 12-13

ROYAL MAIL SERVICE.  
 CASTLE LINE MAP  OF SOUTH AFRICA.

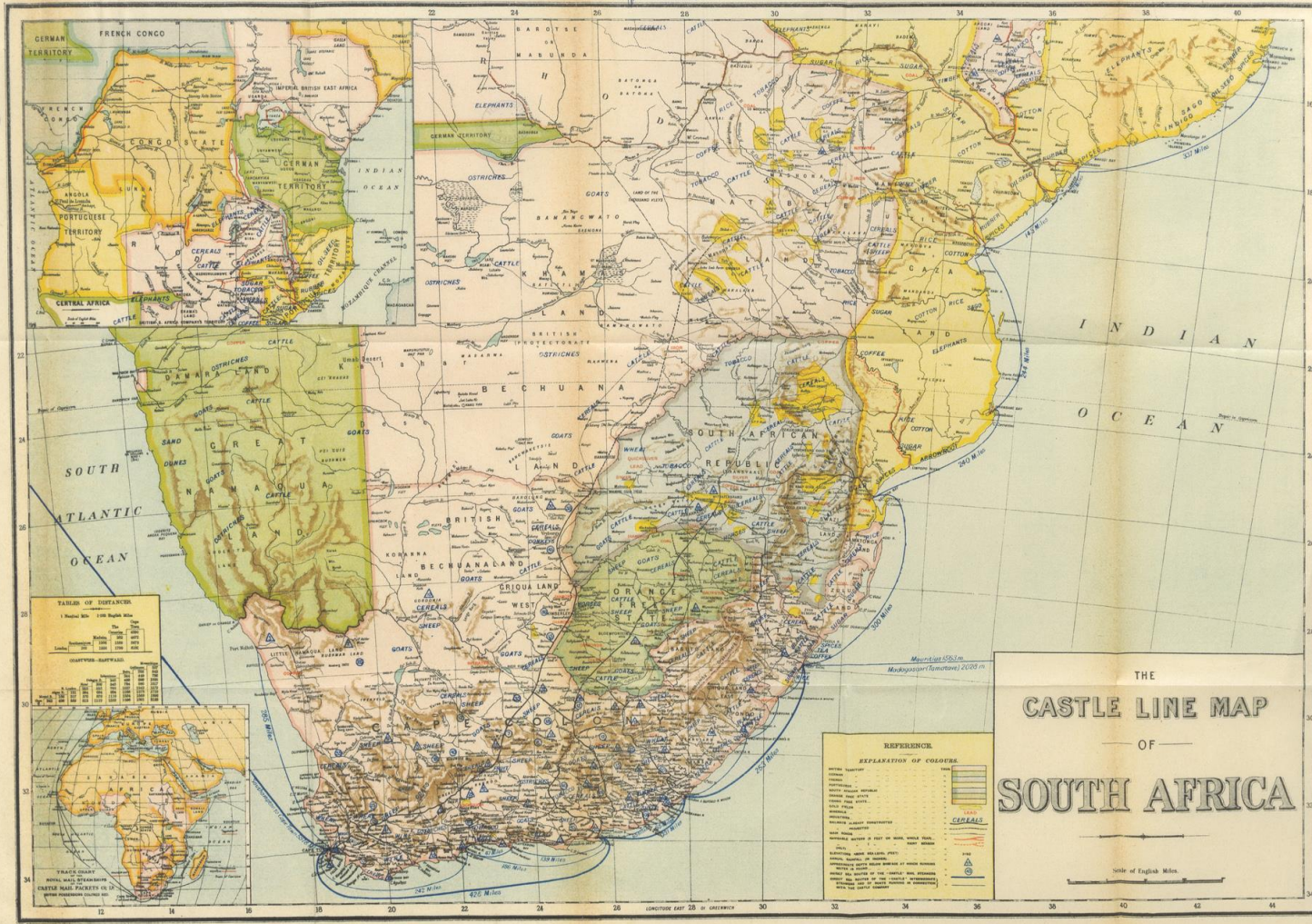


Figure 2 Map of Southern Africa 1896

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This section covers the history of southern Africa from the Bantu migration into the southern African region through the founding of the colony of Rhodesia. This section serves two purposes: as a reference from which to compare later developments and as the necessary framework to understand the Tswana diaspora. It will begin with a discussion of the history of the *Highveld*, followed by the arrival of the Dutch and later the British to the Cape of southern Africa. From this point, it will provide the history of industrialization in the region as a result of the discovery of diamonds and later gold, with an emphasis on the development of a capitalist class. Finally, it will cover the founding of Rhodesia.

### Highveld History

As part of the Bantu migrations, the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana migrated into the southern African region displacing the native Khoi and San. The Nguni occupied the coastal regions, while the Sotho-Tswana occupied an area on the inland plains of the Drakensberg Mountains known as the *Highveld*. The Sotho-Tswana were a pastoral nomadic society, who traded primarily in cattle. The arid plains south of the Zambezi River were particularly suitable for the raising of cattle, as the tsetse fly was limited to the northern equatorial region, near the

Zambezi.<sup>15</sup> As a result the Tswana were able to amass large herds and used cattle as a source of wealth.<sup>16</sup> Due to the area of land required for cattle grazing, Tswana capitals were among the largest and densest in Southern Africa.<sup>17,18</sup> Both the distance between villages and the relatively low tse-tse fly population protected the Tswana against disease.

Broken down into smaller wards, each was administered by a headman, who reported to the chief. Each extended family society was centered on a circular meeting place called the *kgotla* where all matters were discussed, and each man was free to speak.<sup>19</sup> All matters of land within the society were overseen by the chiefs through their headmen, who were in charge of each ward.<sup>20</sup> Land was held communally and matters of dispute were discussed at the *kgotla* where an arrangement was arrived at peacefully.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the size of Tswana villages, cattle-posts were established a considerable distance from the village.<sup>22</sup> The native San were used as farm-hands and slaves, marginalized by the Tswana.<sup>23</sup>

Among the Tswana, each married man was entitled to land on which to build his homestead and each male was allowed to graze cattle on the communal land.<sup>24</sup> For agriculture,

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<sup>15</sup> *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*. 18

<sup>16</sup> *Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*

<sup>17</sup> "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Bechuanaland and Adjacent Territories." Presented to both Houses of Parliament in February 1887. 67

<sup>18</sup> *Picturing a Colonial Past*. 61

<sup>19</sup> Schapera, Isaac. *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*. 1-34.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 207

<sup>23</sup> BPP. "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Bechuanaland and Adjacent Territories" September 1887. 393

<sup>24</sup> Schapera, Isaac. *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*. 196-197

a man was allowed as much land as he was able to cultivate.<sup>25</sup> Among the Ngwato, one of the eight principal Tswana ethnic groups, Kgamelo cattle were entrusted from the chief to the poor people of his homeland or other prominent commoners.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the Batswana were bound in a patron-client relationship to large cattle holders. This type of cattle feudalism was practiced until the cattle plague of 1896.

Cattle served as the medium of exchange and were an indication of status within Tswana society.<sup>27</sup> Notable is the practice of *bogadi*, or bride-price. A payment from the groom to the bride's family in return for marriage. Agriculture was the primary source of sustenance; however, cattle provided milk and hides for clothing as well as serving as pack-animals.<sup>28</sup> During times of drought, bad harvests meant that cattle provided vital nourishment.

Due to a number of factors, Nguni societies crossed over the Drakensberg Mountains and into open conflict with the Sotho-Tswana in the early half of the nineteenth century. This period is known in Setswana as the *difaqane*. Mzilikazi was the chief of the Ndebele a larger of these ethnic groups, which had separated from the Zulu empire and moved northward in the early nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> The Northernmost Tswana Chief, Khama III had been in constant struggle with Lobengula, the son of Mzilikazi, over the land within the Tati region. The Tswana had been at war with the Ndebele since the time of the *Difaqane*, thus they allied themselves

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<sup>25</sup> Schapera. *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*. 200

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 268

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 214

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Morton. *Historical Dictionary* 87

with the British in their conquest of Matabeleland. Khama had been baptized by David Livingstone in 1860, setting him at odds with his father Sekgoma whom he ultimately overthrew in 1875.<sup>30</sup> The struggle between Christianity and traditional society was one of the first dichotomies to develop in Botswana, and the Chiefs were able to cement their power through cooperation with the British.

### Cape History

The British established control of the Cape in 1806 from the Dutch, at the Battle of Blaauwberg. The Cape was used by the Dutch East India Company to resupply ships between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean. This colony was of strategic importance to the British during the Napoleonic Wars as an alternative route to the East. Through the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 the Cape was ceded to the British. The Boers were Dutch farmers who had occupied the Cape since it was a Dutch colony.

The British instituted a series of laws which threatened the Boer hierarchy, including the Hottentot Code of 1818 and Ordinance 50 of 1828 which gave the Cape Africans the right to own land and protection under the law. When the British outlawed slavery in the 1834 the Boer set out eastward into the frontier to escape British control. Their later northward push into the Highveld, in the 1840s, put them into open conflict with the Ndebele under Mzilikazi and the

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<sup>30</sup> Morton. *Historical Dictionary*. 61



Sotho-Tswana. The Boer established the South African Republic in what is now the Transvaal province of South Africa in 1852, pushing the Ndebele across the Limpopo where they settled in the region of Bulawayo.

In order to secure raw materials and to acquire foreign markets for their manufactured goods, European countries sought colonies.<sup>31</sup> The invention of the train, the telegraph, and Maxim gun allowed European powers to penetrate the African continent. As competition over the resources of Africa developed, the European governments met at the Berlin Conference in 1885 to carve out the continent between themselves. It was decided that control over a specific region was to be determined by effective occupation, meaning that settlers had to inhabit the region in question. This led to a period known as the Scramble for Africa, in which the European governments sought to rapidly colonize as much of the continent as they could claim for their countries.

### **Kimberley**

The first diamond in South Africa was discovered in 1867, prospectors flocked to the Cape in search of mineral wealth. A township developed around the Kimberley mine, with the largest diamond deposits (Figure 3). The prospectors contracted the local populations for labor. Cecil Rhodes was able to consolidate diamond claims into the De Beer's Mining Company. Cecil Rhodes was elected Prime Minister of the Cape Colony in 1890 and was in office until his resignation after the ill-fated Jameson Raid in 1896.

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<sup>31</sup> J.A. Hobson. *Imperialism a Study*. 3-8

## Early Anglo-Tswana Relations

By the mid-nineteenth century, ivory and ostrich feathers were traded for goods including guns and ammunition from Boer traders.<sup>32</sup> This enabled the larger northern Tswana chiefdoms such as the Kwena and Ngwato, under their *Kgosi* Sechele and Khama III respectively, to protect their land against the northward expansion of the Boers from the Transvaal, until the partition of Africa in 1885 when Bechuanaland was declared a British Protectorate. As a result, these chiefs were able to grow their chiefdoms through the incorporation of refugees from the Highveld.

The first Europeans to enter the interior of Africa were missionaries. After leaving Kuruman, Livingstone first stayed with the *Bakwena* as a doctor and missionary eventually teaching their *Kgosi* Sechele English and converting him to Christianity.<sup>33</sup> Upon his arrival, he attempted to purchase land and immediately realized that the Tswana under-appraised land value in negotiation with Europeans.<sup>34</sup> The Boers were also enslaving the Tswana according to Livingstone. From the postal map of 1896, the Tswana traded in Ostrich feathers and cattle with the Boer.

David Livingstone lived among the Kwena at the discretion of their Chief Sechele.<sup>35</sup> Sechele requested to be baptized by Livingstone. In doing so, Sechele was required to divorce

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<sup>32</sup> Livingstone. *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. 28-32

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 16-17

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

all but one wife; however, this immediately put him at odds with the families of the women.<sup>36</sup> The issue being that these families were the very ones who had assisted him in his struggle to reunify his tribe, following the death of his father Motswasele II.<sup>37</sup> This is an example of the complicated, and often conflicting positions these early rulers found themselves. In order to secure their positions, Khama and the other Tswana chiefs of Botswana cooperated with the British. In their mutual interest, they fought alongside the British against the Ndebele and the Boers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the mid-nineteenth century, David Livingstone was the first European to reach the great falls of the Zambezi River on his expedition to locate the source of the Nile.<sup>38</sup> The Zambezi would be traversed by the Victoria Falls Bridge in 1905, connecting Livingstone to Bulawayo, three years after the death of Cecil Rhodes as part of his envisioned Cape to Cairo railway. Livingstone's discovery of Lake Ngami in 1849, sparked British interest in the area.<sup>39</sup>

The British Government believed Bechuanaland was devoid of natural resources north of the Molopo River. This delayed the annexation of the region, as the British saw no profit in colonization. In fact Bechuanaland was administered during the colonial period from Mafeking outside the protectorate.

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<sup>36</sup> Livingstone. *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. 16

<sup>37</sup> *Historical Dictionary*. 111

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 447-448

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 57

The British declared the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885 to prevent the route to the north being blocked by a German-Boer convergence between South-West Africa and the South-African Republic. The British then used the Protectorate to launch an invasion of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, which had been loosely claimed by the Portuguese who mainly occupied the coast.

### **Kazungula**

The Zambezi river basin in southern Africa was contested by the Portuguese, Germans, Boers and British. The main powers Britain and Germany settled the dispute with a treaty granting South-West Africa, present day Namibia, access to the Zambezi at its confluence with the Chobe River. After the separation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia this area, around Kazungula, was the quadripoint of the four countries: Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

## Founding of Rhodesia

### **British South Africa Company**

Cecil Rhodes, a capitalist who had amassed a fortune through diamonds in Kimberley, actively sought to acquire exclusive mineral rights in this region. King Lobengula of the Ndebele tried to appease Rhodes, who he was led to believe had imperial backing, knowing the

devastating result of the Anglo-Zulu War.<sup>40</sup> In 1888, King Lobengula signed the Rudd Concession which he was led to believe permitted only a small number of surveyors and/or miners to enter his kingdom, but the document truly stated that the British South Africa Company would have full and uncontested rights to exploit the mineral wealth of Mashonaland and Matabeleland by whatever means necessary.<sup>41</sup> By virtue of this concession, the British Government granted the South Africa Company a royal charter to administer these regions. In 1890, Cecil Rhodes sent a regiment of troops into Mashonaland, each offered land in return for their service, to establish Fort Victoria and the capital of Salisbury. This eventually led to the First Matabeleland War of 1893-1894, where Dr. Leander Jameson of the British South Africa Company launched an attack on the Ndebele and burnt their capital at Bulawayo.<sup>42</sup> The British with the aid of the Ngwato, the largest of the Tswana ethnic groups, and most devastatingly the newly developed Maxim gun were virtually unassailable by traditional weaponry. In December of 1892, the British South Africa Company came to an agreement with the British Government on the necessary conditions on which the Mafeking Railway would be extended through Bechuanaland to Bulawayo, Matabeleland.

The survival of the Rhodesian colony was dependent on the train connecting it through Botswana to Mafeking in the south. The Tswana laid the railway in 1896 in exchange for maize after the cattle plague and drought caused famine throughout southern Africa before being

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<sup>40</sup> *Cambridge History of Africa*. 440

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 445

contained in the Cape. Previously transport had been by oxcart, with the deaths due to the bovine sickness the supply of the Rhodesia colony was becoming difficult. This lent additional urgency to the construction of the railway that had first been discussed in 1893 and provided the necessary labor.

### **Victoria Falls Bridge**

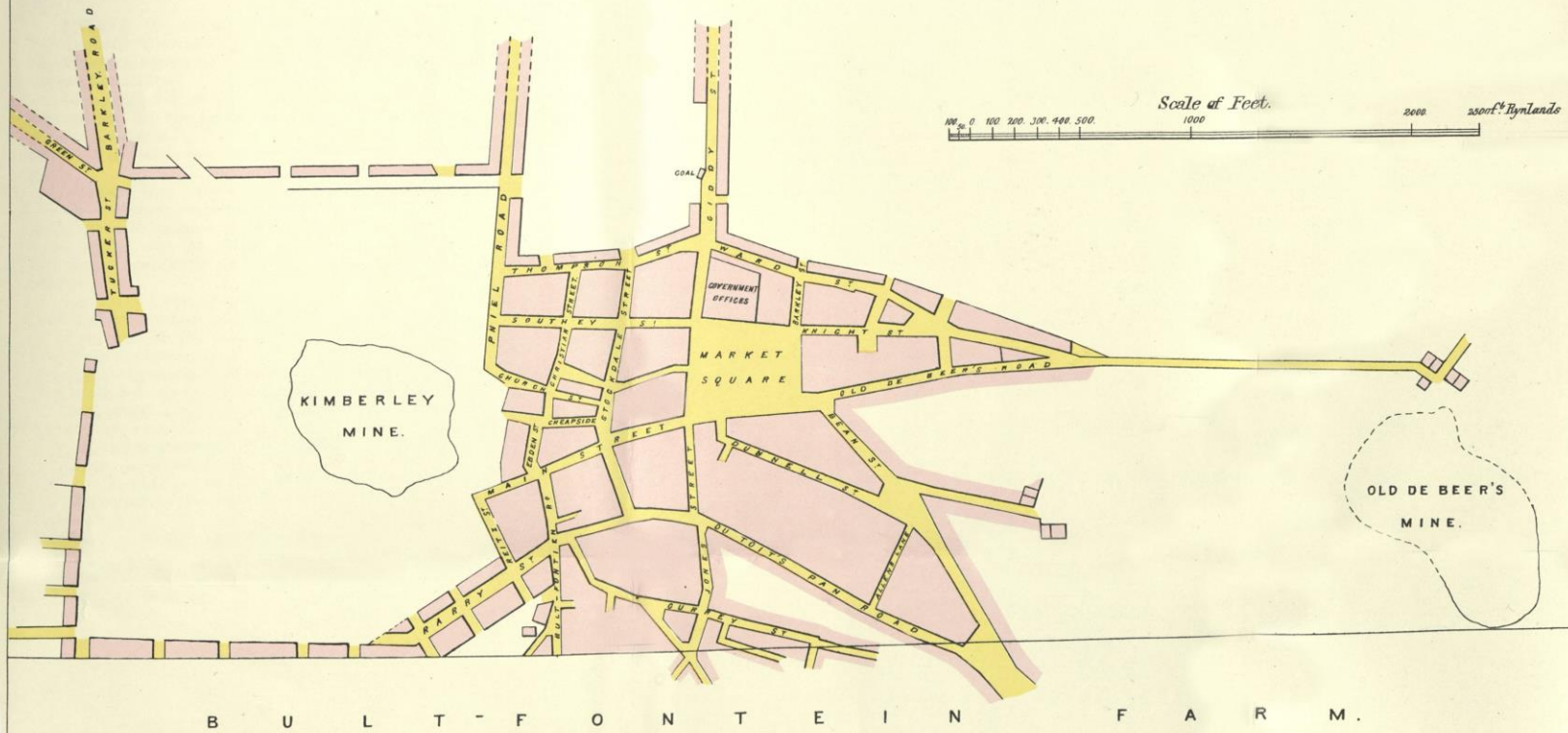
A British engineering company was granted the contract to construct a cantilever bridge at the Victoria Falls in 1904, and completed the project by the end of the following year.<sup>43</sup> The parts were shipped through the Portuguese port of Beira.<sup>44</sup> This bridge spanned the Zambezi River allowing minerals to be exported by railway toward the Cape through Rhodesia.

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<sup>43</sup> The Beira Post. "The Victoria Falls Bridge"

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

# KIMBERLEY, plan of TOWNSHIP AND MINES.



(1875. 2/16. 1405) [FO. 114]

Harrison & Sharpe Lith. St. Martins Lane, W.C.

Figure 3 Map of Kimberly from British Parliamentary Papers Cape Colony

## CHAPTER ONE: THE TSWANA DIASPORA

The Tswana had been economically self-sufficient long before the arrival of Europeans.<sup>45</sup> This is evident from archeological evidence as well as their ability to trade their surplus with Europeans for manufactured goods.<sup>46</sup> However, the Cattle Plague of 1896 destroyed the internal wealth of Botswana and when combined with drought greatly reduced agricultural productivity in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The British used this period of famine to acquire, through the importation of maize from America, the supply of labor necessary to construct a railway through the protectorate to connect the Rhodesian colony to the Cape line.

While the cattle population would not recover until 1934,<sup>47</sup> the British instituted an annual tax on each family, in 1899, with the intention of forcing the Tswana into wage-labor in the gold mines of South Africa and Rhodesia. The economic inequality this created between those who worked in the mines and those who had not, normalized this system as a rite of passage to manhood in lieu of traditional ceremonies. This led to a decrease in rural productivity, making the protectorate entirely dependent on external capital. Meanwhile, the abundance of laborers from Botswana and other surrounding territories allowed the economies of South Africa and later Rhodesia to thrive.

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<sup>45</sup> Schapera. *Migrant Labor and Tribal Life*. 6

<sup>46</sup> Livingstone. *Missionary Travels*. 8-25

<sup>47</sup> International Historical Statistics: Africa, Asia, and Oceania 1750-2005. 284-296



This chapter is primarily concerned with the emergence and entrenchment of the migrant labor system in Tswana society. First, it explains the events surrounding the Gold Rush in the Transvaal, which ultimately led to a breakdown of Anglo-Boer relations. Then, it will explain how the British were able to capitalize on the Cattle Plague of 1896 to further their ambition in the sub-continent at the expense of the separation of men from their homelands. From this point, it will then examine how this affected Tswana society. This will lay the groundwork for a study of how Tswana society was further changed by HIV.

This benefited the Cape economic system by providing an abundance of laborers who would work on Boer farms and on the mines in the urban centers. The majority of these laborers would be employed as miners in Rhodesia or in the Union of South Africa. Due to this abundance of labor and availability of natural resources, the colonies in Johannesburg and Kimberley were able to prosper and obtain their independence by 1910. Within these mines they were kept in concentrated housing, either in labor compounds or in nearby shanty towns. This concentration put them at risk of Tuberculosis and these workers would then carry the diseases back to their villages. Because of similar circumstances the HIV virus emerged and exacerbated this TB epidemic.

## Witwatersrand Gold Rush

In 1886, gold was discovered in a region of the South African Republic known as the Witwatersrand. British immigrants, known by the Boers as *Uitlanders*, flooded into the Transvaal. They founded their own mining town in Johannesburg near the Boer capital of Pretoria, placing them at odds with the Afrikaans speaking Boers. Gold mining is more labor intensive than diamond mining due to the hardness of the rock. Thus requiring additional labor. This labor was imported from the surrounding colonies. This took the cooperation of the Chiefs.

### **The Three Dikgosi**

When Cecil Rhodes asked the British Government to incorporate Bechuanaland into Rhodesia, the three *Dikgosi* Bathoen, Khama, and Sebele travelled to London in 1895 to petition Queen Victoria and Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, to remain a protectorate of Britain rather than be subject to rule by the British South African Company. However, Chamberlain was not sympathetic to their requests for sovereignty. Along with W.C. Willoughby of the London Missionary Society the three Chiefs traveled around England and rallied public support to maintain their protectorate status. The Christian Chiefs, having outlawed alcohol, were able to appeal to the temperance movement in Britain at the time by explaining that under the control of the BSAC there would be liquor sold within their homelands.

Due to their public support, Joseph Chamberlain allowed Bechuanaland to remain a protectorate under the condition that the *Dikgosi* collect a hut tax of ten shillings per annum

from each family and concede an eastern strip of land for the construction of the BSAC railway to connect Rhodesia to the Cape. Of the tax, the chiefs would keep one shilling and the remaining nine shillings would go to the British government. This benefitted both the colonial government by reducing the cost of administration and the traditional elite who were able to maintain their socioeconomic status.

### **Jameson Raid**

Cecil Rhodes, while Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, seized the mineral wealth of Zimbabwe through the British South Africa Company – achieved through a *royal* charter from Queen Victoria. The company's colony of Rhodesia required a railway for the importation of supplies. The Kruger government had been in confrontation with the Cape government, as Rhodes had the intention to regain the Transvaal for Britain following the Boer War for Independence. The Boers were trying to prevent the foundation of a colony in Matabeleland through the denial of access to its railway. In 1895, the Kruger government closed the drifts across the Vaal River. This led to the isolation of Rhodesia from the Cape, except by ox-cart traffic through Bechuanaland. When a bovine virus spread from Ethiopia through East Africa, the virus was able to reach the Cape both through these oxen and other wild even-toed ungulates.

Rhodes planned to stage an uprising in the Transvaal with the aid of British immigrants within the republic known as Uitlanders. Rhodes ordered Dr. Leander Starr Jameson to launch an invasion from the eastern border of Bechuanaland. The invasion party was captured when

the Uitlanders failed to revolt, this blunder was an embarrassment to the Cape and Britain. Cecil Rhodes was forced to resign and relations between the Cape and the Kruger government hit a breakpoint.

Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany telegraphed Paul Kruger congratulating him on his successful defense of his country. This telegram inflamed Anglo-German relations and is generally given as a precursor to World War I. After the Jameson Raid, the Kruger government was no longer willing to negotiate with the Cape. As an alternative, Cecil Roads was forced to develop a railway through Bechuanaland in order to reach Matabeleland. This railway was a vital lifeline for the British South Africa Company in Matabeleland until the end of the Anglo-Boer War. The labor achieved for this linkage was made possible by the Cattle Plague of 1896.

### The Cattle Plague of 1896

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1896, the rinderpest virus reached the cattle in Bulawayo in Matabeleland.<sup>48</sup> The British Administration was alerted to the impending disaster and chose to act by closing the borders with Matabeleland to cattle, however oxen transporting goods to and from Rhodesia were allowed through in the early stages of the epidemic. The Northern District on the Zambezi River was an important watering ground for ethnic groups on both sides. The

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<sup>48</sup> Telegram No. 1 March 26 from Sir Hercules Robinson to Joseph Chamberlain in "Correspondence Relating to the Outbreak of Rinderpest in South Africa."

Rinderpest virus was transmitted into the Northern District, while oxen from Bulawayo spread the disease along the trade route to the South, reaching Gaborone by the 26th of March.

The demand for grain in the early stages of the colonization of Matabeleland, led to an inflation of prices and the Tswana freely sold their grain so that stores were nearly depleted after the 1895 harvest.<sup>49</sup> That following year, as a result of drought and swarms of locusts, crops failed and reserves were not available.<sup>50</sup> The Tswana living on the skirt of the Kalahari were accustomed to drought by relying on the milk and meat of their herd to sustain themselves through bad harvests.<sup>51</sup>



Figure 4 Rinderpest Outbreak in South Africa 1896

However this was not an option as a result of the rinderpest virus that killed nearly all cattle in 1896, and the situation rapidly developed into famine. Due to the Great Famine of 1896, the *Dikgosi* agreed to provide the necessary laborers for the construction of a railway in exchange for subsistence levels of food.

The colonial administration did not support the idea of compensation, which appeared to never be an option due to lack of financial support and commitment from the High Commissioner, instead the administration devised a scheme to administer aid to the native Africans in exchange for labor. However, this labor did not account for all the food required and

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<sup>49</sup> Condition of Affairs in Protectorate with Proposals and Scheme for Relief in "Correspondence Relating to the Outbreak of Rinderpest in South Africa. 51

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

an impending tax was required to pay for the service. In 1899, the colonial administration established a hut tax that many Batswana were unable to afford as a result of the plague. The resulting famine combined with the institution of a hut tax forced many men to enter South Africa as migrant laborers and it would be nearly thirty years before the cattle population fully recovered.<sup>52</sup> By 1943, close to half the male population was in wage labor in the mines of South Africa.<sup>53</sup> As a result of the lack of male figures in the community, this period has been noted as having a moral decline and an erosion of traditional values.<sup>54</sup>

Rather than compensating the native Africans for their cattle as recommended by Arnold Theiler, the expert veterinarian employed by the government, the disease was allowed to progress and farmers withheld the conditions of their cattle and moved them in order to avoid their extermination which further spread the disease. However, the attitude of the colonials was that the spread due to antelope would cause the virus to spread regardless. Colonial officials gave up on stopping the spread of the disease once it reached Palapye and ordered the destruction of almost all the cattle in the Protectorate. The natives were devastated as the plague corresponded with a severe drought. The colonial administration pivoted giving up on the idea of compensation, which appeared to never be an option due to lack of financial support and commitment from the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson.

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<sup>52</sup> *Historical Dictionary*. 18

<sup>53</sup> Beaulier, S. Explaining Botswana's Success: The Critical Role of Post-Colonial Policy.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Rather, both he and Joseph Chamberlain decided that the administration would provide food aid to the native Africans in exchange for labor.

The Ndebele revolted against the colonists who they blamed for the cattle plague, in the Second Matabeleland War. The Tswana assisted the British in suppressing the uprising. This uprising led greater urgency to the completion of the railway to support the development of the Rhodesian colony which was under siege by the Ndebele.

### **Mafeking-Bulawayo Railway**

The Mafeking-Bulawayo railway, along the eastern north-south corridor, was constructed with labor from the chiefdoms of Khama III, Bathoen I, and Sebele son of Sechele during the great famine at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Once completed, the railway provided the Tswana access to the beef markets in the Cape and Britain and the transportation of supplies to and the exportation of minerals from Rhodesia. This protected their livestock from disease as they were now able to use the railway rather than oxcart. Previously, transportation through the protectorate by ox-cart had led to the Cattle Plague of 1896. The colonial government supported their incorporation into the wage-labor system of the Cape economic system.

Cecil Rhodes convinced the British Government to front the money for a railway through Bechuanaland to Matabeleland and Mashonaland in 1896. His company – the British South Africa Company – acquired the necessary labor for the project as a result of the famine resulting from cattle plague, locusts, and drought. The railway allowed villages along the

railway markets for their surplus production. Thus, the regional capitals developed into towns beginning the process of urbanization.

### **Hut Tax**

The migrant labor system developed in Botswana as a result of the Hut tax. Rather than taxing the railway traffic through the protectorate, the colonial government required payment from each native of the territory. This externally created need for cash forced Tswana men to seek out wage labor in the mines of South Africa and Rhodesia. As the taste for imported goods developed, the necessary cash required for imports outpaced the supply and market value of cattle. A trend of out-migration developed, resulting in traditionally productive rural areas becoming unproductive. This was particularly troubling during times of drought, when families would become physically separated in order to find work.

The Tswana who had traditionally been pastoralists left their villages to work in the mines within Rhodesia and South Africa due to this tax. The British intended for this tax to encourage agro-pastoralists to abandon their farms and seek out external capital in urban areas. This led to the under-productiveness of these rural areas and perpetuated the system where villagers contracted for wage-labor in mining towns and white settlements.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Kerven. *Rural-urban migration and agricultural productivity in Botswana*. i-iv



## Effects of the Railway and Migrant Labor Systems

The way capital has been exchanged has had significant consequences for the development of social structures and dynamics. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of these changes.

### **Marriage**

Men left their villages to work abroad and returned not only with European goods but also the capital required to pay a bride-price. After they were married, these men would often enter into additional wage-labor contracts to further develop their homestead. This practice became normalized as a rite of passage into manhood instead of the traditional rites. The tragedy being that the same men who were at a higher risk of contracting disease while in concentrated labor camps, returned home more able to marry than those who had not.

According to a Tswana proverb, “A man like a bull cannot be confined to one kraal.” This had historically been used as a defense for polygamy, but after its abandonment in the colonial period the phrase was adapted to justify infidelity.<sup>56</sup> The absence of young men meant that women far outnumbered men in the villages and the men in villages tended to be older. Younger men left to work in the mines in order to accumulate wealth with which they could build their own homestead. Early perceptions of fertility led to increases in marital infidelity and

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<sup>56</sup> Schapera. *Married Life in an African Tribe*. 204-205

multiple concurrent partnerships.<sup>57</sup> Intergenerational as well as multiple concurrent partnerships are considered factors facilitating the spread of HIV.

### **Rural-Urban Divide**

In order to obtain the capital necessary to develop their homestead, young men were expected to travel to South Africa or Rhodesia as migrant laborers. These men, who were far away from their villages, lost contact with their homelands. After leaving the mines, many were uninterested in rural life and moved to urban areas which offered opportunities for employment. As a result, agricultural productivity decreased in rural areas and necessitated the continuation of the migrant labor system and the centralization of capital in regional centers.

As settler colonialism led to land dispossession, these workers found housing either in labor compounds or shanty towns. This concentrated housing facilitated the spread of disease in a number of ways, most notably by the proximity of residents, which increased transmission rates.

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<sup>57</sup> Schapera. *Married Life in an African Tribe*. 205

## CHAPTER TWO: THE DIAMOND BOOM

In 1967, diamonds were discovered in Botswana a hundred years after their discovery in South Africa. Since the majority of the country's mineral wealth remained undiscovered during the colonial period, the government of Botswana was not only able to maintain its independence, but was also in the unique position to then utilize these untapped resources for the purpose of post-colonial development. The country experienced three decades of unparalleled economic growth, outpacing all other countries in the world. This growth and stability attracted migrants and refugees from neighboring countries. According to UN data, the population of Botswana nearly doubled in the period between 1966 and 1985 from 612,903 to 1,182,803. This was in part due to an influx of non-natives into urban areas who had no allegiance to the Chiefs.<sup>58</sup>

As a result of the discovery of diamonds the modern government of Botswana was able to centralize power. This allowed for the permanence of a mining class which had previously worked for subsistence labor. As the primary occupation of labor had been mining, Botswana lacked a diversified and technical workforce at independence, with the majority of public sector jobs maintained by expatriates. This presented a challenge to the newly formed government and made them reliant on foreign assistance until the 1980s.

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<sup>58</sup> Vaughn. *Chiefs, Power, & Social Change*. 81

In the late colonial period, after WWII, Africa was in flux. Liberation movements were spreading, and the colonial governments were negotiating independence for the remaining African states. In 1965, Ian Smith of Southern Rhodesia declared independence from Britain. A civil war ensued. The northern border formed by the Caprivi Strip was also under attack during the Angolan Civil War beginning in 1975. The Caprivi Strip is a section of land that was originally negotiated as a part of German South-West Africa, so that they would have access to the Zambezi River. However, the Union of South Africa captured the territory from Germany during WWII. This placed Botswana firmly in the grasp of its white minority controlled neighbors, South Africa and Rhodesia. Its solitary link to the Liberated African States was through Kazungula.

Botswana had no paved roads and relied primarily on the railroad along the east corridor for imports and exports. The colonial government did not invest in development until the 1920s; this was achieved through an additional five shilling tax per annum but investment failed to reach rural areas.<sup>59</sup> Due to the lack of investment in education, Botswana was limited by its technical labor force at independence and therefore expatriates accounted for the majority of the engineers for road projects in the early stages of development.

In 1971, diamonds were discovered in the country. The government entered into a partnership with De Beer's mining company, forming the company Debswana. Within a decade, diamonds had surpassed cattle as Botswana's primary export, transforming a historically agro-

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<sup>59</sup> Schapera. *Migrant Labor and Tribal Life*. 8

pastoral state into the fastest growing economy in the world. The state invested this money into a number of progressive policies including infrastructural development through a campaign known as the Accelerated Rural Development Project.

The human immunodeficiency virus had two main entry routes into Botswana from the North, either from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe or across the Zambezi River via the Kazungula Crossing in Zambia. The Kazungula Crossing is the only meeting point between Botswana and Zambia. South Africa opposed they had a border at all. While the former possibility was present at independence, the latter was developed with the assistance of international aid over a ten year period beginning in 1973, as a means to bypass minority-ruled Rhodesia and strengthen Botswana-Zambian trade and the greater Indian Ocean trade.<sup>60</sup> Traveling southward, both roads must go through Francistown, the regional transportation hub and epicenter of the national AIDS epidemic. This urban network is highly dense and connected to Lusaka the major transportation center of Zambia.

### Internal Development

At independence, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in Africa and was dependent on external capital from white minority controlled neighbors. Those living within the

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<sup>60</sup> Project Completion Report: Botswana-Zambia Road Paving 633-0072

protectorate relied mainly on livestock, with cattle accounting for approximately 85% of exports.<sup>61,62</sup> The protectorate had relied heavily on external capital acquired through wage labor in South Africa and Rhodesia.<sup>63</sup> By the discovery of diamonds, the average GDP per capita of \$100 in 1964 rose to \$7,316 in 2013.<sup>64</sup>

## **Debswana**

The Government of Botswana entered into a 50/50 public-private partnership with De Beer's Diamond Company to form Debswana, Botswana's diamond mining company. By accumulating large diamond reserves, Botswana was able to back its own monetary unit, the *pula*,<sup>65</sup> liberating itself from a reliance on South African capital. The Government of Botswana then invested in the development of the country through rural development programs.

## **Accelerated Rural Development Program**

In 1973, the Botswana Democratic Party sponsored the Accelerated Rural Development Program (ARDP), spending 21 million pula to provide over 200 villages with roads, primary schools, clinics, and water supplies.<sup>66</sup> While historically a nomadic society, mobility was greatly improved through the construction projects of the 1970s, most notably the ARDP. These roads

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<sup>61</sup> International Historical Statistics: Africa, Asia and Oceania 1750-2005 pg. 96

<sup>62</sup> "Botswana's President is Showing His Political Skill"

<sup>63</sup> Schapera. *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life*.

<sup>64</sup> Appraisal of a Second Road Project Botswana 2

<sup>65</sup> *Pula* is the Setswana word for rain, indicative of the importance of water resources in the arid country. Only 7% of the country is arable. As a result the ARDP funded the drilling of boreholes for water.

<sup>66</sup> Motzafi-Haller, Pnina. *Fragmented Worlds, Coherent Lives The Politics of Difference in Botswana*. Westport, Conn: Bergin & Garvey, 2002. 92-3.

would ultimately facilitate the frequency of the oscillations of migrant laborers between their occupation areas and homelands and brought truck drivers into rural areas.

### **Land Privatization and Dispossession**

Traditionally land had been communally held; therefore, land privatization had a fundamental impact on a number of socio-economic institutions. The Tribal Grazing Land Policy was among a number of progressive policies instituted by the Botswana Democratic Party. The bill was intended to stimulate the cattle industry and avoid a “tragedy of the commons” by privatization of land.<sup>67</sup> However, in practice through land boards the result was that it increased land disparity, those without land were kept from obtaining it and commercial ranchers were able to accumulate large areas of land. This forced many young men to move to urban areas, as they had no access to communal grazing land, thus leading to the decline of agro-pastoralism and the emergence of a mining class in Botswana.

While there has been a steady increase in cattle production since independence, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) financed a survey in the 1970s, which revealed that half of the national cattle were owned by only five percent of the population and nearly half of rural dwellers had no cattle.<sup>68</sup> This land dispossession, which led to a concentration of cattle wealth in the hands of a minority, promoted the rural-urban migration of youth. The lack of cattle and the absence of young men from these societies delayed the practice of marriage. By working in

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<sup>67</sup> Masire. *Memoirs of an African Democrat*. 187-194

<sup>68</sup> Vaughn. *Chiefs, Power, & Social Change*. 154

the mines, a man was able to return to his village and afford the bride-price. Thus the migrant laborers were more likely to marry.

### Foreign Investment

Following the Second World War, the United States began an ideological war against communism in the East. They each sought to win influence in the former European colonies, after the decline of European powers after the war. The Soviets and Americans fought a proxy conflict in Angola, which stunted the country's economic development.

The Government of Southern Rhodesia controlled by the White minority under the leadership of Ian Smith declared its independence from Britain in 1965, citing that they had been self-governing since 1923. The Rhodesian Civil War was fought from 1964 to 1979, across Botswana's north-eastern border. This put newly independent Botswana in a particularly vulnerable position, as a liberated African state dependent on its white minority controlled neighbors.

With the Angolan Civil War and Zimbabwean War for Independence, Botswana once again became important real estate as the only conflict free path linking South Africa to the interior. As was previously discussed, the Mafeking-Bulawayo railway through Botswana had served as an alternative route to Rhodesia circumventing the Transvaal republic. In this case, it



was as an alternative route to the Caprivi Strip than the one through Rhodesia. Thus maintaining access to the Zambezi.

The White minority controlled countries had a monopoly of the transportation infrastructure in southern Africa. The Tan-Zam Railway was an attempt to alleviate this dependence from the liberated African States. This was hotly contested for this very reason by South Africa, Rhodesia, and their Western allies.<sup>69</sup> The Bot-Zam road would serve a similar purpose, to link Botswana to its neighbors in the North. Up until the completion of its construction, Botswana's only road routes were North through Bulawayo via Francistown and South through Mafeking via Gaborone. This road followed the railway because urban centers had developed along its path.

The BDP placed a high priority on development in the Third National Development Plan for the period 1973-78.<sup>70</sup> Botswana lacked the resources internally to construct a road which could support the traffic of heavily loaded trucks. Therefore, they appealed to the international community for the development of a road to connect it directly to Zambia in order to bypass the civil war in Rhodesia.

### **Chinese Investment in the Tanzania-Zambia Railway**

In 1970, the Chinese government under Chairman Mao Zedong began financing the building of the Tanzania-Zambia railway in order to promote trade between the two

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<sup>69</sup> "TANZAM Railway" in World Strategic Highways

<sup>70</sup> Robert Chambers. Botswana Accelerated Rural Development Programme 1973-1978. xi

countries.<sup>71</sup> This was the largest foreign aid project undertaken by China, with construction lasting from 1970-1975 at a cost of over \$400 million.<sup>72</sup> The railway was the first in southern Africa which was not white-minority controlled, thus earning the name the Freedom Railway. The project employed over 7,000 Chinese engineers and technicians and 14,000 Tanzanian and Zambian laborers.<sup>73</sup> The cost of the project was split between the two countries as a zero interest loan from China.

Upon completion, the Tan-Zam railway linked Zambia's Copper belt to the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, granting Zambia access to Indian Ocean trade. This alternate route, allowed Zambia to close its border to Rhodesia. Ownership of the railway was transferred to the governments of Zambia and Tanzania with a no-interest repayment split equally between each government. China had developed nuclear capability by 1964.

The United States, in response to the TANZAM railway, financed a feasibility study for the construction of a road between Botswana and Zambia. The South African government immediately objected to the project and questioned the existence of a border between Zambia and Botswana.<sup>74</sup> It was determined that they did share a border.

The goal of United States foreign policy was to prevent a "communist monopoly of the insurgent struggle."<sup>75</sup> The Nixon administration sought to appease the civil rights and anti-

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<sup>71</sup> Shillington. *History of Africa*. 480-1

<sup>72</sup> The New York Times. Tanzania-Zambia railway: A bridge to china?

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> "Zambezi Highway Meets Opposition" New York Times.

<sup>75</sup> Foreign Relations 1969-1976, Volume 28 pg. 52

apartheid movements in the United States by providing funding for development projects in Africa. However, it sought to do so without frustrating other countries abroad. The United Nations, under the Nixon administration along with Norwegian Aid and the European Economic Community invested in a road in 1970 between Botswana and Zambia that would strengthen the liberated nations against apartheid South Africa. The policy of the Nixon administration was to provide minimal aid to Africa to keep them out of international affairs.

### **NATO Investment in the Botswana-Zambia Road**

The European Economic Community, Norway, Britain and the United States financed the Botswana-Zambia road paving project beginning with a feasibility project in 1970.<sup>76</sup> This road would provide an alternate route to Indian Ocean trade through Zambia primarily the exportation of diamonds and cattle. It would connect Francistown, which had traditionally been a regional hub of trade between the Union of South Africa and the northern colonies, to the capital of Zambia bypassing Southern Rhodesia.<sup>77</sup>

The road project became of increased importance, in 1976, with the closure of the Rhodesia-Zambia border due to the Rhodesian civil war.<sup>78</sup> This closure was made possible by the completion of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, in 1975, which provided for the importation and exportation of supplies through the port of Dar es Salaam. Their major trade partner was

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<sup>76</sup> Project Completion Report. 1

<sup>77</sup> Ramsay, Jeff, Barry Morton, and Fred Morton. Historical Dictionary of Botswana.

<sup>78</sup> Project Completion Report. 2

China who financed this construction project. In comparison, Botswana's major trade partners were those whom had invested in the construction of the Bot-Zam road.

### **Kazungula Ferry Crossing**

Traffic across the Zambezi River is carried by pontoon boat. Due to the minimal rate at which the ferry can operate and the heavy amount of traffic coming from the north, truckers are required to stop at Kazungula border for long waits even more so if ferries become disabled.<sup>79</sup> There was no bridge at Kazungula, because South Africa opposed it because they were patrolling the Zambezi to prevent the movement of freedom fighters in the Zimbabwean War for Independence and the Angolan War.

Despite the large increase in traffic at Kazungula, a bridge was never constructed between Zambia and Botswana because it was staunchly opposed by South Africa who feared the use of the roadway by freedom fighters and supplies moving along the Rhodesian border between Botswana and Zambia.<sup>80</sup>

This was of particular importance to South Africa during this period because of the constant conflicts in the region of the Caprivi Strip, as part of the South African Border War between 1966 and 1990. The bridge is currently opposed by Zimbabwe, because the bridge

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<sup>79</sup> "Over 150 trucks marooned at Kazungula border awaiting crossing"

<sup>80</sup> ZAMBEZI HIGHWAY MEETS OPPOSITION. 1970. *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, Apr 19, 1970. <http://ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/119161661?accountid=10003> (accessed June 23, 2014).

between Zambia and Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls is only 70 km away. The road gave Botswana direct access to the Zambian road network and the Tan-Zam railway.

The colonial government failed to allow funding for roads and medical clinics, which would later impede efforts to provide healthcare. Fortunately for Botswana, a large diamond deposit was discovered shortly after the country gained independence. Sir Seretse Khama won the first national elections and used the country's mineral wealth to finance infrastructural development.

The purpose of infrastructure had been limited to that necessary for the exportation of resources and the importation of manufactured goods. In order to obtain capital for goods, African workers migrated either to Rhodesia or South Africa.

While Mozambique closed its border to Rhodesia by 1976 in opposition to the minority controlled government of Rhodesia, Botswana was dependent on Rhodesian and South African Railways.<sup>81</sup> Botswana was unable to take control of the railways because of lack of capital and technicians. The railway was essential for imports and exports. Exports include beef, copper, and nickel and imports of food and manufactured goods.<sup>82</sup> Its only link to liberated Africa was through the Kazungula ferry in the North, but the tarmac road was not opened until February

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<sup>81</sup> Kamm. "Botswana nervous about the news from neighboring Rhodesia."

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

10, 1984.<sup>83</sup> Imported goods to Zambia and Zaire were the largest amount of traffic on the road.<sup>84</sup>

### Labor Compounds and Disease

Lung disease is an occupational hazard of mining. Inhaled dust containing silicon dioxide destroys alveolar macrophages responsible for cell-mediated immunity. This results in susceptibility to *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the causative agent of TB. The close proximity between miners at work and in living quarters, resulted in their increased risk of contracting this airborne bacteria. Then transmitting it to others when they return to their rural communities. The risk of tuberculosis has only increased with the AIDS epidemic, as once again the immune system is compromised allowing for an opportunistic TB infection. Tuberculosis deaths have risen almost four times the levels in 1990.

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<sup>83</sup> Project Completion Report. 3-4

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

### CHAPTER THREE: HIV EPIDEMIC

The human immunodeficiency virus, henceforth presented as HIV, mutated from a simian form of the virus in Cameroon and reached epidemic threshold at the beginning of the twentieth-century near Kinshasa, then Léopoldville, the capital of the Belgian Congo.<sup>85</sup> The virus spread to the Cape of South Africa by the latter half of the century and developed into the largest AIDS epidemic to date with prevalence at a quarter of the population. The first recorded case of AIDS in Botswana was reported in 1985. However, due to the latency of the virus, it had already spread silently for several years before the population became symptomatic. Eventually, the virus would infect one in four Botswana threatening to undermine the stability of the country and decades of progress. The areas which developed the highest prevalence were Francistown, Selebi Phikwe, and the Chobe district. This chapter will cover the factors unique to these regions which led to their abnormal prevalence, the challenges faced in the early stages of the epidemic with regard to organizing civil society, and finally will cover the African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership which provided the first free anti-retroviral medication program in Africa.

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<sup>85</sup> John Iliffe. *The Aids Epidemic: A history* 3.

## Highest Prevalence Areas

### **Francistown**

The virus most likely first took hold in Francistown, the regional transportation hub, based on its high prevalence in the early stages of the epidemic. Francistown is in historic Tati region of North-East Botswana, on the border of Zimbabwe. The economic prosperity and liberated status of Botswana, in contrast to its war-torn neighbors, attracted migrants from other countries in Africa. Sex workers, typically Zimbabwean immigrants, the unemployed, and those living in rural poverty were employed in bars and along truck routes.<sup>86</sup>

### **Selebi-Phikwe**

The Bamangwato Concessions Ltd. mine is located within the town of Selebi-Phikwe, rather than in a remote area as is the case with the Jwaneng or Orapa diamond mines and the miners live among the townspeople.<sup>87</sup> The main source of capital within the town is achieved through mine labor, an exclusively male profession.<sup>88</sup> The closure of textile factories, in the 1990s, led to high unemployment among women who became financially dependent upon this mining class.<sup>89</sup> This coincides with a sharp increase, based on UNAIDS data, in HIV prevalence among women tested in ante-natal clinics.

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<sup>86</sup> UNHCR. 2012 Trafficking in Persons Report- Botswana.

<sup>87</sup> IRIN. "Botswana: What's Driving HIV in Selebi-Phikwe?"

<sup>88</sup> Wendy Izzard. *Rural-Urban Migration of Women in Botswana*. ii

<sup>89</sup> IRIN. "Botswana: What's driving HIV in Selebi-Phikwe?"



The town is within a short distance of the Francistown distilleries, and therefore is supplied with Chibuku, a cheap alcoholic beverage. According to the Botswana Household, Income and Expenditure survey, 20.5% of urban income was spent on alcoholic drinks with 54% of drinkers identifying as binge drinking – more than five alcoholic beverages in one day.<sup>90</sup> Since alcohol use is correlated with rape and high-risk sexual behavior, e.g. multiple concurrent partnerships and failure to use protection, it was identified by the National Strategic Framework as one of the driving factors of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

### **Chobe District**

Kasane, the administrative capital of the Chobe district, lies at the northern-most tip of Botswana near the Kazungula border post. As was previously discussed, the apartheid government of South Africa had blocked the construction of a bridge during the Botswana-Zambia road project. This meant that all traffic between the two countries had to be carried across the Zambezi River by two pontoon boats.<sup>91</sup> This necessarily caused a bottleneck effect, especially in the case that a pontoon had to be serviced, requiring extended stays by truck drivers. This environment promoted the sex industry in the region.

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<sup>90</sup> Pitso, Joseph M. N., and Isidore S. Obot. "Botswana Alcohol Policy and the Presidential Levy Controversy." 898

<sup>91</sup> Lusaka Voice. "Over 150 Trucks marooned at Kazungula border awaiting, crossing"

### Early Response

There is a high level of dichotomy in Botswana, and the country has managed to blend various traditional and modern institutions. The rural-urban divide had continued to grow during the early years of independence, due to the modern government subverting the powers of traditional authorities. This increased hostility among rural dwellers to the demands of the urban elite negatively impacting their ability to organize civil society.

In the early stages of the epidemic, misinformation resulted from the inability of the government to provide treatment in the midst of rural-urban tensions. For this reason, people looked for alternative methods of treatment including traditional healers.<sup>92</sup> This undermined initial programs with western imported methods of prevention when they finally arrived in 2001.

The economic situation of the sub-continent was directly influenced by their apartheid neighbors. This system of high import of finished goods with exports of labor in addition to raw materials is detrimental to the security of these countries, as this created heavy congestion at border stations where the sex industry was able to flourish. This congestion is particularly difficult in the northern Kazungula border crossing where traffic is ferried by boat across the Zambezi River. The main issue being that it is in the fiscal interest of the sex workers to conceal their HIV status, and they will continue to work regardless of their status.

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<sup>92</sup> Dow, Essex. *Saturday is for Funerals*.

Despite recommendations by medical officers to provide sexual education leading up to the Second World War, the colonial administration failed in this task and VD increased in the post-war period. Miners who had acquired external capital were able to pay the bride-price, and many times would acquire a wife on their return. This gave the potential to spread disease to their spouses who had otherwise been isolated from urban networks.

The economic situation of capital being concentrated in urban areas is very dangerous as these origins are the epicenters of the spread of communicable diseases and are prone to migrations between rural and urban areas. Due to the scarcity of land created by increases in the population, younger men and women often migrated to cities in order to find work, which was often easier to find and paid better. Men who returned from the mines were often wealthy enough to pay the bride-price to become wed upon return. This is potentially dangerous as they are returning from the urban centers where HIV had sunk in. Women, who are sent from rural villages to the city find little support from civil society, and are left to their own devices.<sup>93</sup>

#### African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership

At the international AIDS conference in 2000, President Festus Mogae announced a public-private partnership between the GOB, the pharmaceutical company Merck and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to provide a coordinated response to the epidemic including the

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<sup>93</sup> Masire, Ketumile, and Stephen R. Lewis. *Very Brave or Very Foolish?*

first free anti-retroviral therapy program in Africa, *Masa*. Botswana's low population and high level of rural development made it particularly suitable as a flagship for these international donor organizations seeking to alleviate the deaths from AIDS. However, as has previously been discussed a lack of a technical labor force, particularly doctors, lab technicians, and pharmacists was a significant hurdle.

The Government began rolling out treatment programs in January 2002. It failed to meet initial goals as a result of lack of staff for clinics as well as logistical problems. However, by 2005, the end of the first term of the partnership, the program was reaching 50,000 Botswana. This prompted the commitment from Merck and the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation for another \$100 million dollars over an additional five year term.

### Traditional Practices

Early after independence, the government of Botswana had required the affirmation of the traditional authorities in order to maintain stability. However, the government soon entered into cooperation with foreign governments and multinational corporations. With the HIV epidemic the government had entered into public-private partnerships which further shifted power away from the traditional authorities. As a push back to uncertainty and blunder in the early stages of HIV, there was a revival of tradition and the power of the chiefs.

## Initiation Ceremonies

The WHO recommends male circumcision. The ceremonial practice of *Bogwera* was abolished by the *Kgosi* as part of their transition to Christianity. Male-circumcision is a culturally acceptable method of reducing HIV transmission, though most prefer the procedure to be done in a clinical setting and before the age of six.<sup>94</sup>

## Bride Price

*Bogadi* was intended to ease the loss of a daughter, as she was taken in by her new husband. This price was fairly standardized; however, in recent years, some families have asked a higher price as a result of increased costs for educating their daughters.<sup>95</sup> In the fight against HIV, *bogadi*, or bride-price, has come into the discussion. The higher bride price drives up the rate of cohabitation, which may be linked to increased risk of HIV/AIDS. Standardization of which is supported by all *dikgosi*, in order to limit cohabitation.<sup>96</sup>

## Conclusion

The economic dependence on a migrant labor class, placed Botswana at risk of developing infectious diseases from abroad. Furthermore, the increased stress on the road network due to the Rhodesian War combined with the effort of the South African government

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<sup>94</sup> Kebaabetswe, P. "Male Circumcision: An Acceptable Strategy for HIV Prevention in Botswana."

<sup>95</sup> Denbow. *Culture and Customs of Botswana*. 137

<sup>96</sup> Seretse. "Dikgosi call for regulation of Bogadi".

to block the construction of a bridge at Kazungula further precipitated the emergence of HIV.

Due to the lack of economic diversification in Botswana, the country is highly dependent on the diamond industry. Desertification will lead to more agro-pastoralists leaving their homelands for urban areas, either in labor compounds or shanty towns. This ultimately threatens the security of Botswana and the delicate balance between rural and urban elite.

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