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Defending negative freedoms: Liberalism as a response to the rising authoritarianism of the Botswana Democratic Party

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Abstract

Botswana has received a great deal of scholarly attention for its rapid economic growth and seemingly impressive democratic performance after independence. This paper examines how self-identified liberal politicians in the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD) and Alliance for Progressives (AP) adapt liberalism to Botswana's ideological, political and socio-economic context in order to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment through social welfare policy. It relies on semi-structured interviews with Members of Parliament (MPs) and party officials in both the BMD and AP, as well as content analysis of official party documents. It demonstrates that liberalism to the BMD and AP is largely shaped by a 'negative' understanding of liberty. When the individuals in the BMD and AP defected from the governing Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), they were motivated by the importance of upholding constitutional democracy, not articulating a new welfare vision or expanding positive freedoms. While individuals in the BMD and AP recognise the required role of the state in promoting positive freedom through the provision of social welfare, this view does not appear to be the result of a deliberate espousal of positive freedom. Rather, it appears to be resultant of an innate embrace of, or complacency with, the existing social welfare system and the accompanying norms about the state's role in protecting the poor, as seen in the political elite, civil society and the public in Botswana.

1. Introduction

Botswana's rapid economic growth after independence earned it the title of an 'economic success story' by international observers. Yet as many scholars have previously pointed out, Botswana is characterised by extensive income inequality and 'poverty in the midst of plenty', making it difficult to conclude that the country can legitimately be referred to as an example of success (Mogalakwe, 2008; Mogalakwe & Nyamnjoh, 2017; Ulriksen, 2017). Despite the country's impressive economic growth following independence and the creation of a largely conservative welfare system, poverty and unemployment have persisted and growth has since slowed. This has left the government's 1997 goal of eradicating

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absolute poverty by 2016 unrealised (Republic of Botswana, 1997). Botswana's poverty rate stands at about 19 per cent as of 2008, while its unemployment rate stands at approximately 18 per cent as of 2010 (World Bank, 2008; World Bank & Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis [BIDPA], 2013).

Botswana not only garnered international attention for its impressive economic growth but also for its democratic performance. Botswana has held regular multi-party elections since independence in 1966, with the 12th general election set to take place in 2019. However, scholars have also poked holes in the characterisations of Botswana as a 'democratic success story', defining Botswana's political system instead as a 'minimalist democracy' and as an example of 'authoritarian liberalism' (Good, 1999a, 1999b; Good & Taylor, 2008). This was heightened in 2008 when Ian Khama, son of Botswana's first president and paramount chief of the Bamangwato, Seretse Khama, became the new president and leader of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP).

In 2010, a group of individuals left the BDP to establish the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD) after quarrels with Ian Khama, which were initiated by charges that he was an autocrat defying basic rights and principles enshrined in the country's constitution. The newly established BMD identified itself as a liberal party and quickly joined the Africa Liberal Network (ALN) and Liberal International (LI), setting it apart not only from the conservative (and sometimes populist) BDP, but also from the social democratic opposition parties including the Botswana People's Party (BPP), the Botswana National Front (BNF), and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP). The BMD maintained its liberal identity after joining with the social democratic BPP and BNF to form an opposition coalition – the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) – in the lead up to the 2014 general election.[1] A year after the election, a violent conflict between BMD factions at the party's electoral congress led to a split within the party and the subsequent creation of the Alliance for Progressives (AP). It has not yet been considered how either of these parties conceptualise liberalism in the context of Botswana and how they attempt to tackle persistent poverty and widespread unemployment.

This paper examines how liberal politicians in the BMD and AP adapt liberalism to the context of Botswana in order to tackle the continuing challenges of poverty and unemployment through social welfare policy. It relies on semi-structured interviews with Members of Parliament (MPs) and party officials in the BMD and AP (see Appendix) as well as content analysis of official party documents.[2] It utilises the morphological theory of ideology which argues that all political ideologies consist of an internal structure of core concepts which are defined in

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[1] The BCP has since joined the UDC after first refusing to join in 2012.

[2] Interviewees are identified with a code (e.g. BMD#) in a footnote when referenced in the text. Interviewees' names and codes are listed in the appendix.

relation to the geographic, temporal and cultural context in which they operate. In doing so, this paper considers Botswana's ideological, political and socio-economic context (see Table 1). It incorporates Michael Freeden's (1996) seven core concepts of liberalism – liberty, individualism, role of the state, general interest, sociability, progress, and rationality. It examines how liberal politicians adapt liberalism to tackle poverty and unemployment through a focus on four ideological dilemmas: the general role of the state in ensuring individuals' well-being; whether social assistance creates a 'culture of dependency'; how to assist the unemployed; and if non-contributory transfers should be paid in cash or in kind and if cash transfers should be conditional.

Table 1: Ideological, political and socio-economic context of Botswana

Ideological	
Hegemonic ideology	Developmentalism, Conservatism, moderate intervention
Political	
Authoritarianism	Growing (especially under Ian Khama, 2008-2018)
BMD and AP's Major support base	Urban
Socio-economic	
Institutionalisation of social welfare	Low (no legislation, some discussion in popular discourse)
Coverage of social welfare	Medium
Driver of social assistance	Largely government-initiated
Unemployment	Medium
Informal employment	Medium
Formal employment	Low
Mode of production	Wage-labour
Poverty	Medium
Inequality	High

This paper shows that BMD and AP interviewees embraced the role of the state in the provision of universal basic social services such as education and health care, and targeted social assistance programmes. There was a general consensus that social welfare should be a constitutional right but interviewees did not feel

particularly strong about whether or not it is included in the constitution. Interviewees perceived cash transfers for the unemployed as an intervention that would hinder an individual's ability to access opportunities by instilling a sense of laziness. This meant that interviewees preferred the use of workfare over unemployment benefits. The interviewees also demonstrated a preference for transfers made in kind and the use of behavioural conditions in order to ensure that social assistance is used in a way that will promote human capital development.

Liberalism within the BMD and AP was largely shaped by a negative conceptualisation of liberty, reflecting the origins of the BMD (and later the AP) as a breakaway party from the BDP, and was motivated by upholding basic negative freedoms such as constitutional democracy. However, liberty was also thought to include positive freedom in terms of the ability to access opportunities. Individualism simply meant that interviewees recognised the centrality of the individual. General interest meant a sense of national unity while sociability meant that the well-being of the nation was contingent on the well-being of all of the individuals within it. Progress was interpreted as economic growth and opportunity creation. Rationality meant that individuals were thought of as rational actors; however, this seemed to be undermined by concerns about dependency and preferences for conditions and transfers paid in kind.

When the individuals in the BMD and AP defected from the BDP, they were motivated by the importance of upholding constitutional democracy, not articulating a new welfare vision or expanding positive freedoms. While individuals in the BMD and AP recognised the required role of the state in promoting positive freedom through the provision of social welfare, it did not appear to be the result of a deliberate espousal of positive freedom but rather an innate embrace of, or complacency with, the existing social welfare system and the accompanying norms about the state's role in protecting the poor among the political elite, civil society and the public in Botswana. This meant that there was a greater focus on ensuring negative freedoms such as constitutional democracy rather than access to social welfare and other positive freedoms. The comparatively weak significance of positive freedom appeared to be related to the lack of a political incentive to offer alternatives to the institutionalised conservative welfare system established under the BDP government. Even the social democratic opposition parties have yet to propose radical alternatives to the existing social welfare system. These parties, like the BDP, BMD and AP, have made job creation their central focus, reflecting the concern amongst the public towards unemployment and the resulting political incentive to make promises about jobs rather than social welfare.

2. Conceptual framework

This paper presents the results one of three case studies carried out for a larger study on how liberalism adapts to contexts outside of the global North in order to address issues pertaining to 'the social'. In the global North, questions surrounding the social aspects of liberalism centred around the need for state intervention in the realisation of individuals' well-being and the recognition of socio-economic rights (Gordon et al., 2014). It was these kinds of questions that initiated the liberal reform movement in the late 19th-century and early 20th-century and the establishment of the liberal welfare state. It is similar questions that are pushing the boundaries of social liberalism and shaping what might be best referred to as contemporary liberalism.

The literature on the diffusion and adaptation of liberalism in the global South (and in Africa in particular) is limited. Individuals often maintain that Anglo-centric values such as individual rights are incompatible with the communal nature of many African cultures (Mutua, 2002). Rejoice Ngwenya, a Friedrich Naumann Foundation consultant for Zimbabwe, argues that liberal thinkers in Africa (and scholars who write on liberalism in Africa) are commonly criticised as being 'neoliberal', 'agents of western imperialism', and 'apologists of white monopoly capital' (Ngwenya, 2018). This has certainly limited academic inquiry into the adaptation of liberalism outside of its European birthplace.

The limited literature that exists instead focuses on the spread of neoliberalism in the global South and its socio-economic outcomes (see Ashman & Fine, 2013; Lim & Jang, 2006; Moore, 1999; Robinson, 2006) and the spread of ideas associated with liberalism, such as constitutional democracy and individual rights (see Alford, 2000; Carothers, 1999; Levitt & Merry, 2009; Mutua, 2002; Seekings, 2018). It has not yet considered how liberalism might be adapted in order to answer questions surrounding the social (Gordon et al., 2014).

The study aimed to address how liberalism is adapted to three Southern African countries – South Africa, Botswana and Zambia – in order to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment through social welfare interventions. It relied on semi-structured interviews with MPs and party officials in the Democratic Alliance in South Africa, the BMD and AP in Botswana, and the United Party for National Development in Zambia, all of which are opposition parties. The study was therefore not concerned with the politics of policy-making in Southern Africa but with the normative ideas surrounding the role of the state in the provision of social welfare. The study also utilised content analysis of official party documents.

The analysis was guided by Freeden's (1996) comprehensive account on the emergence of liberalism in 19th-century Britain (and Europe more generally) and its evolution thereafter. It also drew from the work of critical liberal thinkers from John Stuart Mill (1885, 1929) to Amartya Sen (1999). From this literature, three phases of liberalism can be extrapolated: classical, social and contemporary. The first phase includes the emergence and formalisation of classical liberalism in the 18th- and 19th-century. This was then followed by the second phase, beginning in the late 19th- and early 20th-century, which was characterised by the rise of the reform movement and the establishment of social liberalism. The literature on what might best explain the third phase, broadly referred to here as contemporary liberalism, is less complete (owing to the fact that contemporary liberalism is arguably not yet a coherent ideology). This study used egalitarian liberalism to represent one variant of contemporary liberalism, as manifested by Sen's (1999) *Development as Freedom*.

The study analysed the adaptation of liberalism in Southern Africa using the morphological theory of ideology, which regards political ideologies as consisting of a core groups of concepts that are defined by the spatial, temporal and cultural contexts in which they operate (Festenstein & Kenny, 2005; Freeden, 2013; Strath, 2012). It is the semantical interpretations of each core concept that give rise to the unique variations of the same political ideology. Freeden (1996) argued that all variants of liberalism must demonstrate seven core values: liberty, individualism, role of the state, general interest, sociability, progress, and rationality. While all three variants of liberalism maintain the seven core values of liberalism, it is the contrasting interpretations of liberty and the role of the state that sets them apart from one another (see Table 2).

Table 2: Interpretation of the seven core liberal values in each of the three main variants of liberalism

	Classical Liberalism	**Social Liberalism**	**Egalitarian Liberalism**
Liberty	Freedom from constraint to develop the self	Freedom from (constraint) and freedom to a decent standard of living, which necessitates socio-economic rights	Political freedom (civil rights); economic facilities (economic participation); social opportunities (health care and education, shelter, food); transparency guarantees (individuals can engage in contracts with transparency and honesty); and protective security (social safety net)
Individualism	'…the notion of the person as a separate entity possessing unique attributes and capable of choice' (Freeden, 1996: 145)	The individual is the central unit of focus in a broader society	
Role of the state	State intervention is only justified in order to 'prevent harm to others' (Mill, 1929: 17)	The promotion of positive freedom, including the right to a life worth living	To ensure the realisation of the five instrumental freedoms and the corresponding rights; expansion of capabilities
General interest	Concern for the 'general good' (Freeden, 1996: 151)	'Self-interest, if enlightened and unfettered, will, in short, lead him to conduct coincident with public interest' (Hobhouse, 1923: 59)	'…people themselves must have responsibility for the development and change of the world in which they live' (Sen, 1999: 282)
Sociability	'There is a greater fulness of life about his own existence, and when there is more life in the units there is more in the mass which is composed of them' (Mill, 1929: 118)	A shared morality for the common good (Freeden, 1996)	'Individual freedom is quintessentially a social product' (Sen, 1999: 31)
Progress	'The spirit of improvement' (Mill, 1929: 132)	Self-development, which contributes to the development of the whole	Development as freedom; the expansion of capabilities and freedoms
Rationality	Individuals pursue wealth, happiness, and power (Freeden, 1996)		

Classical liberal thinkers interpreted liberty as the freedom from constraint to develop the self. State intervention was believed to be justified only to prevent harm to individuals. With the negative effects of industrialisation becoming increasingly apparent, it became evident that the 'invisible hand' of the market was not alone able to maximise individuals' well-being. Liberal thinkers subsequently pushed for a greater role for the state in the maximisation of individuals' welfare. Liberty was reinterpreted to include not only the freedom *from* but also the freedom *to*, especially the freedom to a decent standard of living, or 'positive' freedom (Green, 1881; Hobhouse, 1923; Hobson, 1909). With the rise of egalitarian liberalism, Sen (1999) provided another re-interpretation of liberty, stressing that freedom is made up of five types, which, together, foster development: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. To Sen, the state is responsible to help individuals realise all five of these freedoms.

In order to identify how liberal politicians in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia adapt liberalism to the Southern African context to address the challenges of poverty and unemployment through social welfare policy, the study considered four ideological dilemmas: the general role of the state in realising individuals' minimum well-being; whether non-contributory social assistance creates a 'culture of dependency'; how to assist the unemployed; and whether non-contributory transfers should be paid in cash or in kind and if they should be conditional. These dilemmas are not only pertinent to liberal politicians in Southern Africa but also across the global South and, to some extent, the global North. The stances of the governing parties and prominent opposition parties, civil society organisations (CSOs), the public and other relevant actors, towards each of the four dilemmas, were considered in each case study in order to better contextualise the ideas of liberal politicians in each of the three countries.

In the global North, it was not until the emergence of social liberalism that the state came to play a strategic role in social welfare. Classical liberal thinkers were of the opinion that individuals' well-being was best realised through the market without the intervention of the state. State interventions were limited to workhouses set up by the Poor Laws where individuals would receive food and accommodation in exchange for work. The state also started to play a preliminary role in education. Individuals in need of assistance were largely reliant on private philanthropy (Fraser, 2009). Charity, however, was associated with fears of dependency and laziness. With the rise of social liberalism and the embrace of positive freedom, liberal thinkers came to accept a greater role for the state in the provision of social welfare. The state was thought to be responsible for the provision and management of education, health insurance, contributory insurance plans for the elderly and the unemployed, workfare and means-tested social assistance (Beveridge, 1942, 1944; Hobhouse, 1923; Hobson, 1909). At the same

time, individuals came to embrace the concept of socio-economic rights. This helped to limit fears about dependency as individuals asserted that social welfare founded on legal right did not create dependence.

With the emergence of egalitarian liberalism, positive freedom has come to include the right to what Sen (1999) refers to as 'capabilities', which includes a minimum income or a 'social safety net'. Due to widespread poverty and low formal employment in the global South, contributory insurance plans fail to help a large proportion of the population. As a result, non-contributory social assistance programmes, such as Social Cash Transfers, have become increasingly important to social welfare systems across the global South. However, these generally do not reach poor, able-bodied adults who are unemployed. Individuals falling into this category are typically assisted through workfare programmes, or not at all. How each of the three variants of liberalism has approached (or might approach) the four ideological dilemmas is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Responses to the four ideological dilemmas by each of the three main variants of liberalism

	Classical Liberal	**Social Liberal**	**Egalitarian Liberal**
Role of the state	Individual welfare should be maximised through the market; no coherent social welfare system; preliminary provision of education; poor houses for the elderly, the infirm, and the disabled and workhouses for the able-bodied; individuals largely reliant on charitable assistance	The state should intervene where and when the market has failed; contributory insurance; targeted, means-tested social assistance; education and health insurance; introduction of socio-economic rights	The state should intervene where and when the market has failed; right to basic capabilities (health, education, food, shelter, minimum income guarantees); greater use of non-contributory social assistance in the global South
Dependency	Individuals are best able to maximise their freedom without the intervention of the state; charity makes people lazy	Rights-based, means-tested assistance/insurance does not create dependence	Rights-based, means-tested assistance does not create dependence
How to assist the unemployed	Workhouses (workfare)	Workfare; contributory unemployment benefits	Non-contributory unemployment benefits; contributory unemployment benefits; workfare
Conditions and transfers made in kind	Assistance for unemployed 'conditional' on work; beneficiaries either received food and accommodation or cash	Social assistance paid in cash; Workfare 'conditional' on work; employment benefits sometimes conditional on training or looking for work	Social assistance paid in cash; assistance provided in workfare programmes 'conditional' on work

3. Background of Botswana's political landscape

Botswana held its first democratic election in 1965, with the BDP, headed by Seretse Khama (1965-1980), securing an overwhelming victory. The BDP, a conservative (and sometimes populist) party which joined Socialist International with the help of the (South African) African National Congress (ANC), has won every election since independence. This has made it arguably the most successful political party in Africa. The 2014 general election was the first time the BDP did not secure an absolute majority of the vote. Nevertheless, the party still won the majority of the seats in the National Assembly.

The BMD was formed in 2010 after a number of individuals, including Gomolemo Motswaledi (who would become the BMD's first president) and Ndaba Gaolathe, left the BDP due to conflicts with the party leader and president Ian Khama. Gaolathe was an adviser and script writer for President Mogae who also served as the chairman of Gomolemo Motswaledi's campaign when he ran for the Gaborone Central parliamentary seat beginning in 2008. In 2009, Motswaledi became the Secretary General of the BDP's Central Committee. The same year, Motswaledi was charged with not cooperating with the party's leadership and was suspended from the party and removed as a candidate for the Gaborone Central parliamentary seat. Gaolathe, on the other hand, was charged with speaking against the leadership of the country after the extrajudicial killing of Mr. Kalafatis and was subsequently suspended from the party. In creating the BMD, these individuals were inspired by a desire to uphold the civil liberties and democratic values that they believed had become threatened under Khama's presidency. As the BMD stated in its constitution:

> [The BMD] was founded in April 2010 to defend and advance the rights of the peoples of Botswana during and in order to interrupt and reverse the progressive destruction of their independence and the creation of what, by most accounts, threatens to be an authoritarian government (BMD, 2010a: 2).

In 2012, the BMD joined forces with the BNF and the BPP to form the UDC. Months before the 2014 election, president Motswaledi died in a car accident and was succeeded by Ndaba Gaolathe, the BMD's policy director at the time. In the 2014 election, the UDC won 17 out of 63 seats in the National Assembly while the BDP won 37 and the BCP won three. The UDC won four of the five constituencies in Gaborone, confirming the strength of the opposition parties in urban areas. The BMD won eight of the UDC's 17 seats in the National Assembly. The coalition allocated constituencies to members of the coalition and the members then campaigned under their own political party. Members of the

coalition have thus maintained allegiance to their own political party (and presumably the ideological stance of their party) despite forming the coalition.

After a violent conflict between factions at the BMD's elective congress in 2015 where participants used rocks as weapons, the party split into two. One faction, led by Advocate Sidney Pilane, held onto control of the BMD and remained in the UDC. The other faction, led by Ndaba Gaolathe, formed the Alliance for Progressives shortly after. The AP took six of the BMD's eight MPs with it after the split. Pilane became the new president of the BMD and Gaolathe became president of the AP. The AP has since been reported stating that it has no interest in joining the UDC if Advocate Pilane and the BMD remain in the coalition (Mokwena, 2018). Individuals in the AP and other opposition parties have asserted that Advocate Pilane has been paid by the BDP to 'cause trouble' in the UDC, but no evidence has been found to support this.

4. The political ideologies of the BMD and the AP

Both the BMD and AP have a limited number of documents on their official stance. Shortly after its inauguration, the BMD joined the UDC and did not draft its own manifesto for the 2014 general election but allied behind the UDC's manifesto. The AP, on the other hand, was only officially launched in 2017 and is still in the process of crystallising party policy. Nevertheless, the AP has thus far produced *The Purple Vision* (AP, 2017), outlining the party's vision for governance, and a draft policy document (AP, 2018). This section outlines each party's overall political ideology as depicted by the available party documentation and interview data.

4.1 Botswana Movement for Democracy

Individuals in the BMD identify the party's guiding ideology as 'pragmatic liberalism'[3]. In 2010, the party produced a constitution and a policy document to outline the party's overall objective for governance. Although the party embraces 'pragmatism', this does not detract from the party's overall 'liberal' stance. Yet when asked to define liberalism, many of the interviewees in the BMD associated liberalism with negative freedoms as opposed to positive freedoms.

The BMD's constitution identifies 11 aims and objectives that guide its 'movement' (See BMD, 2010a). The first of the 11 objectives is '[to] unite all the people of Botswana for the complete liberation of the country from all forms of discrimination and oppression' (BMD, 2010a). The second objective is '[to] uphold good governance, the rule of law, human rights, civil liberties, transparency, and accountability' (*ibid.*). The remaining aims and objectives

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[3] BMD 2; BMD 6

include fighting for social justice and reducing inequality, promoting economic development for the benefit of all, ensuring the rights of children and disabled individuals, and embracing pluralist democracy. The BMD's embrace of these mostly negative freedoms highlights the party's motivation to uphold good governance, human rights, and civil liberties and to fight against the discrimination and oppression that inspired the founders' defection from the BDP.

Despite the prominence of negative freedoms, it is clear that the BMD also embraces positive freedom. The BMD's policy document states that the party imagines 'A future in which every citizen looks forward to a life of opportunities, rendered by a flourishing, diversified and resilient economy that churns meaningful jobs and/or stake-holding for all citizens…' (BMD, 2010b: 2).

The document also provides insight into the party's conceptualisation of other key liberal values such as individualism, rationality and the role of the state:

> Our Movement is of a pragmatic and open-minded mindset in its approach to solving political, economic and social problems, and values the role of open dialogue, consultation, free markets, personal initiative, creativity and drive – and, in the management of the economy, is willing to authorise smart, restrained responsible Government intervention where the market continually lapses in facilitating the achievement of our people's ideals... (BMD, 2010b: 2-3).

This quote speaks about individualism in relation to individual creativity and personal initiative, and rationality in relation to the individual as a legitimate player in solving the country's political, economic and social problems. It points to ideas about the role of the state in the economy, in that it accepts a legitimate yet 'restrained role' for the state where and when the market has failed.

The BMD's constitution and policy document do not provide insight into what the party means by 'pragmatism'. One interviewee in the BMD's national leadership explained that the party embraces pragmatism due to the fact that Botswana is a 'very traditional society'.[4] As BMD 2 explained:

> It is a society where if you had to raise an issue like gay rights… they would say 'No, you cannot be talking about this' … and we knew [this]… We knew that it's a 2.2 million population, very traditional in its outlook and the way it addresses issues, and when you say 'liberalism' they are probably going to understand it as 'we are going

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[4] BMD 2

to open the flood gates now' … So, we say, 'No, we will take things step by step' … So, to us, pragmatism is when an opportune moment arises for us to introduce a subject matter [such as] human rights…

The BMD's inclusion of the word 'pragmatic' seems to be motivated by the awareness of the conservative and traditional context it is operating in and the attempt to introduce non-negotiable, yet controversial, issues in a progressive manner so as not to put-off the electorate rather than as a justification for divorcing key party values in order to gain voter support.

4.2 The Alliance for Progressives

The AP identifies with both progressivism and liberalism. It also incorporates the BMD's idea of pragmatism. The AP produced its party manifesto *The Purple Vision* after the party's inauguration in 2017. The party also published a draft policy document after holding a policy forum in July 2018. The AP portrays itself as a pragmatic party that is not strictly bound by liberalism or any other ideology. Yet, like the BMD, the ideological outlook it articulates is in line with core liberal values. However, also similar to the BMD, some of the interviewees in the AP articulated an interpretation of liberalism that placed greater emphasis on negative freedoms.

According to *The Purple Vision*, the AP draws from a wide array of ideological viewpoints, including what it conceptualises as social democracy:

> Progressives are not bogged down from their mission by ideological nuances. We are pragmatists that are solution driven, borrowing from the best benchmarks and aspects of a mixture of pragmatism, social democratic principles and private initiative (AP, 2017: 2).[5]

When asked to speak about the party's political ideology, the Secretary General equated progressivism with liberalism, explaining that this approach allows the party to be pragmatic:

> We believe that progressivism, in a political field, is called liberalism, which means being dynamic enough to come up with practical solutions to the challenges that face the nation… We believe, like Amartya Sen says, development has to be about capacities. We believe that as liberals we need to be able to understand that our people might

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[5] The leadership has also said that it is interested in joining international organisations such as the Africa Liberal Network and Liberal International.

be poor materially but they are not poor mentally. They have ideas on which we need to capacitate them.[6]

When the party president was asked to explain the party's ideological position, he explained:

> We fashion ourselves as pragmatists, we fashion ourselves as reformists, that, in a genuine democracy, seek to grant people liberties, freedoms, rights and participation… We wouldn't consider ourselves as pure liberalists…being pragmatists means that there are major components of liberalism in our approach, and those components of liberalism would entail such ideals as free market initiatives, the role of science in progress and advancement… In that sense, we identify with liberal components, but there is also a social democratic side to us and that's where the progressivism comes from… we believe that for a country as small as Botswana … requires a strategic and concerted government intervention.[7]

The AP president defined the party's ideological approach as pragmatic, incorporating both liberalism and progressivism. The AP espouses liberalism but not 'pure liberalism', which the president defined as a complete embrace of free market principles. He points out that the party believes in responsible state intervention, which he associated with social democracy.

Another interviewee spoke about their turn to liberalism as being inspired by the 'tyranny and oppression' of former president Ian Khama, pointing to the negative conceptualisation of liberty.[8]

5. Botswana's social welfare system

The foundations of Botswana's social welfare system date back to the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, when the BDP government began to invest in human capital development through spending on basic social services and social assistance programmes (Seekings, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Selolwane, 2013). Access to primary and secondary education has been universal in Botswana since the 1990s (Nthomang, 2013). However, in 2006, the government reintroduced school fees (Seekings, 2016b). Two years later, in 2008, the poor were exempted from paying fees (*ibid.*). Similarly, by the 1980s, almost 90 percent of citizens were within 15 kilometres of a health facility (Nthomang, 2013: 157).

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[6] AP 2

[7] AP 1

[8] AP 3

Botswana's system of social assistance has received considerable attention in recent academic literature, being defined both as a frontrunner (Garcia & Moore, 2012) and as one that has failed to reach many of the country's poor (Bar-On, 2001; Ulrisken, 2017). As Seekings (2016b) argues, Botswana's welfare system can be described both as a 'parsimonious laggard' in comparison to other middle-income countries, such as South Africa and Mauritius, and a frontrunner in comparison to other countries such as Zambia or Zimbabwe.

The government currently provides a universal Old Age Pension, adopted in 1996, to all Botswana citizens over the age of 65, at a value of P220 per month as of 2012/2013 (World Bank & BIDPA, 2013). In 1998, the government implemented the Orphan Care Programme, providing all caregivers looking after orphans with a monthly food basket or coupon. Both of these programmes were implemented to support individuals who did not have support from their family unit.

The state also provides assistance to 'destitutes' through the Destitutes Persons Programme where individuals are provided with a monthly food basket or coupon (ranging from P500-700) and a cash component of P90 (World Bank & BIDPA, 2013: 24). A school uniform is also provided for children of 'destitutes'. A destitute is defined as 'An individual who, due to disabilities or chronic health condition, is unable to engage in sustainable economic activities and has insufficient income sources' or an individual who due to old age, mental or physical disability, emotional or psychological disability, or illness 'is incapable of engaging in a sustainable economic activity…' or an individual who is under the age of 18 and who is not receiving any other form of significant assistance from the government (Republic of Botswana, 2002: 5).

In 2008, the BDP government introduced the Ipelegeng Programme, a public works programme targeted towards poor and unemployed able-bodied adults. Although only becoming a permanent programme in 2008, Ipelegeng serves as a replacement for the drought-relief public works programme first introduced after independence (Hamer, 2016). The food-for-work programme was replaced with cash-for-work in 1982 (Seekings, 2016b; Siphambe, 2013). Individuals working on the Ipelegeng programme receive approximately P500 per month.

6. The official stances of the BMD and AP towards social welfare

The BMD and AP have limited content on social welfare in their official documents. Nevertheless, this section provides an overview of the ideological components of both party's official stance towards social welfare and the four ideological dilemmas guiding this study's analysis.

6.1 Botswana Movement for Democracy

The BMD views the role of the state as creating the right economic conditions for the creation of opportunities, but also recognises that the state is responsible for the provision of social welfare. The BMD's stance on the remaining ideological dilemmas is largely unclear.

The BMD's policy document states that the BMD government will intervene where and when the market has failed to facilitate people's ability to live meaningful lives and engage in economic opportunities (BMD, 2010b). The policy document states that the BMD government will ensure that all citizens have access to quality education, housing, food and adequate health care. The BMD also acknowledges the importance of targeted social assistance programmes.

With regards to dependency, the BMD document states:

> People living with Disabilities (PwDs) do not wish to live on handouts, but prefer self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Employment (formal and informal) is preferable to charitable assistance. Nevertheless, social protection and social assistance is necessary to protect PwDs against vulnerabilities…(2010b).

The text on 'handouts' and 'charitable assistance' does not seem to be warning against a dependency culture but instead providing a justification for the proposal of extending social assistance, perhaps to appease voters who fear dependency in light of Botswana's long history of concerns about a 'dependency culture' (Seekings, 2017). There is no other text in either of the BMD's documents on the idea of dependency and it is therefore unclear what the party's official stance towards it is.

The BMD's constitution and policy document do not include anything on social assistance for the unemployed. The BMD policy document does, however, discuss improving vocational and technical training in order to help the unemployed. The BMD documents are also scarce with regard to the use of conditions and transfers paid in kind. The documents do not say anything about

the use of behavioral conditions. The policy document proposes the implementation of a disability grant as opposed to a transfer made in kind (such as food). While this may not suggest that the party has a complete preference for cash, it does suggest that the party recognises cash as a useable tool in the provision of social assistance.

6.2 Alliance for Progressives

The AP's *Purple Vision* and draft policy document do not provide extensive insight into the party's official stance towards welfare. What the documents do demonstrate, however, is that the AP acknowledges the required role of the state in creating the right environment for individuals to engage in the market and to live meaningful lives, which includes the provision of basic social services.

The AP explains in its *Purple Vision* that the state is responsible to create an environment for individuals to be economically active:

> The Government in the new Botswana will cultivate a cultural, legislative and economic environment for its citizens to enjoy unprecedented access to wealth creation, employment, and skill acquisition opportunities… It is Government that will ensure that our country and its citizens realise their full potential in every sphere of life, which potential is currently underutilised (AP, 2017: 3).

The AP's draft policy document also discusses the need to improve the equality of the education system so as to provide people with the right skills to enter the labour market (AP, 2018). It also states that the AP pledges to 'revitalise and modernise' Botswana's health system (AP, 2018: 15).

In both the *Purple Vision* (AP, 2017) and the draft policy document (AP, 2018), the AP outlines its approach to unemployment as improving education and diversifying the economy through government investment and other interventions in order to create opportunities for employment. It does not discuss social assistance or other forms of protection for the unemployed. Neither of the documents address the remaining ideological dilemmas: dependency and whether or not social assistance should be conditional or unconditional, and if transfers should be made in kind or in cash.

7. Ideas about social welfare among liberal politicians in the BMD and AP

7.1 Role of the state in realising individuals' well-being

The BDP has long viewed social welfare as the responsibility of both the individual and society, with society encompassing both the state and the family (Seekings, 2016b; Seekings, 2017). The emphasis on the role of the family can be seen from the BDP-dominated government as late as 1997 in *Vision 2016*:

> By the year 2016 … The family will be the central institution for the support and development of people in Botswana, and for the transmission of social and moral values. The strength of the family will have been reinforced in response to the rapid social changes that are sweeping the country, the region, and the world (Republic of Botswana, 1997: 12).

In recent years, with a new generation of leaders, the BDP's idealised role of the family in social welfare has disappeared from party documents (See BDP, 2009, 2014). Instead, the BDP points to the importance of the market in realising individuals' welfare, with the state stepping in for groups who cannot obtain a living through economic participation. The family unit has also been absent from government documents, including the 10th and 11th National Development Plans (NDP) (Republic of Botswana, 2009, 2016). This indicates a shift within the BDP, and government as a whole, towards a focus on the individual and the state, and away from the family.

It is clear that the social democratic opposition parties also embrace the role of the state in ensuring individuals' welfare, likely to a larger degree than the BDP, yet they have not sufficiently articulated how this would be materialised (See BCP, 2014; BNF, 2009; UDC, 2014). The available documents from these parties since the 2009 election do not have any mention of the role of the family in realising individuals' welfare (See BCP, 2014; BNF, 2009; UDC, 2014).

Ideas about social welfare among civil society, on the other hand, continue to be characterised by an emphasis on the role of the family unit. The Botswana think tank, the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), together with the World Bank, proposed a family-centred grant titled the Family Support Grant in order to target poor families who are not eligible for any form of assistance under the current system (World Bank & BIDPA, 2013). Another member of civil society, the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions, (BFTU),

published a position paper on social security, stating that the federation would 'campaign for the strengthening of the family structure…' (2007: 45-56).

Public attitudes on the role of the state and the family are less well documented. Seekings (2016b) cites a social worker in an online media report who alluded to the erosion of the role of the family in realising individuals' welfare due to the extensive involvement of the state. In discussions with members of the public throughout the time the interviews were conducted for this study, there was a similar discourse about the state doing 'too much'. These criticisms, however, were linked to concerns about individuals becoming lazy as opposed to fears about the erosion of the family unit. Other individuals in the public did not have a strong stance on the provision of social welfare. As one individual stated, 'I don't really pay attention to things like that'. While it is hard to say what the norm is based on for these discussions, the latter statement supports the interpretation of the Afrobarometer survey results that suggest the majority of the public is complacent with the state's role in social welfare (Afrobarometer Network, 2015).

7.1.1 The BMD and the role of the state in realising individuals' well-being

Despite the prominence of negative freedom in the interviewees' conceptualisation of liberty, the BMD interviewees provided insight into the idealised role of the state that reflected and embraced the concept of positive freedom and the justified role of the state in ensuring individuals' well-being. This not only included state intervention in the economy to ensure the right conditions for the creation of opportunities but also the provision of basic social services and targeted social assistance programmes. There was a general agreement that social welfare should be in the constitution; however, interviewees did not feel particularly strong about it. A small minority of interviewees also spoke about the role of the family in realising individuals' well-being. BMD interviewees criticized the current universal Old Age Pension scheme, arguing that it should be targeted towards the poor.

When asked what role the state should play in realising individuals' well-being, the BMD interviewees stated that the primary role of the state is to the create the right environment for people to thrive, especially the right economic environment for people to engage in the market.

As one interviewee explained when asked whose responsibility it is to look after the poor:

> The state should not abdicate its responsibility to take care of the people… These people find themselves where they are because of the policies of the state, because of the behaviour of the state, the

characteristics of the state, because if the state is not being able to enable them to do something with their lives, to enable them to do something with the economy, to open up the economy, because this is a closed economy… Everyone is able to do something for themselves and the state must somehow open the doors for him…[9]

Another interviewee spoke about the role of the state in creating economic opportunities, while also contrasting the BMD's approach with that of the BDP:

… we believe in creating opportunities or creating opportunities for people to create opportunities for themselves, whereas the BDP … in Setswana we have this saying, it means 'Open your mouth, let me feed you'.[10]

A third interviewee spoke about creating an environment where people can thrive and develop themselves as individuals:

I believe the government has a duty to provide to every citizen an environment to thrive. Make sure they have basics, water is provided, healthcare is provided. I believe that every individual must be accorded as the duty of every government to make sure those basics are in place and ya, over and above that an environment where people can be what they want to be, in terms of personal ambitions, in terms of job, in terms of anything. The government must provide these things for individuals to thrive…[11]

This interviewee related the state's responsibility to create an environment to thrive to labour market interventions as well as the provision of basic social services.

Beyond ensuring individuals have access to economic opportunities, all of the interviewees stated that the state must provide access to social services such as free health care and education. Some interviewees also included housing for the vulnerable as something that the state is responsible to provide:

It is the responsibility of the government to provide survival tools for those people, education being of course the first because we believe provide education and you have provided a person with the necessary survival tools… We believe that government should have in place

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[9] BMD 2
[10] BMD 5
[11] BMD 6

21

systems where it ensures basic, basic necessities: shelter, food, for those who are unable to move in the [economic] system…[12]

All of the BMD interviewees acknowledged the need for targeted social assistance programmes. As one interviewee stated, 'Where necessary… [the] government should have in place social assistance programmes for those who are left behind'.

The majority of BMD interviewees also argued that social rights, including access to basic social services and social assistance, should be in the constitution. However, a number of interviewees did not feel particularly strongly about this.

One interviewee explained that adding it to the constitution would prevent political parties, especially the BDP, from using social welfare as a political tool:

> For people who need it, it should not be a favour, it should be their right because, as it is right now, if my party goes into power, it is like I have the leeway to shape it as however I want to shape it so at the end of the day it becomes my programme and not a national programme so that it will be attached to my party rather than being attached to the nation.[13]

One interviewee explained that it is a given that the state must be responsible to take care of its citizens when needed and that such assistance is a basic human right:

> It's implied that as a government you have an obligation to your people. Whether or not it's explicit in the constitution that you need to do that… Human rights shows that the bare minimum, this, this this, needs to be in place… To me, as a government, it's a no-brainer that you have to take care of your people. But… This is Africa, we have seen a lot of strange things happen… It is not such a bad idea.[14]

Other interviewees felt less strongly about the addition of socio-economic rights to the constitution. As BMD 5 explained, 'It's implied that as government you have an obligation to your people whether or not its explicit in the constitution… Whether we need to explicitly put it in there…'

A small minority of interviewees discussed the role of the family in the realisation of individual's well-being and poverty reduction.[15]

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[12] BMD 4
[13] BMD 4
[14] BMD 5
[15] BMD 1; BMD 5

Look, we only gained independence in 1966 and for the longest time we have been doing things traditionally where we had the Kgotla system where you had the extended family model which sadly is dying away, or has died away … It's not just government, it's everybody, it's the civil society, it's everybody… the extended family in there … It might be a traditional way of doing things …[16]

A second interviewee spoke about the family in relation to the provision of housing:

The government must come up with a scheme in which every nuclear family has a home… We can't have the homeless. I think that is intolerable…[17]

These interviewees reflected the belief that the family should act as the central unit in the provision of social welfare.

7.1.2 Alliance for Progressives and the role of the state in realising individuals' well-being

Like the interviewees in the BMD, the AP interviewees also embraced the role of the state in realising individuals' well-being through the provision of basic social services and social assistance. Unlike the BMD, none of the interviewees spoke about the family in realising individuals' well-being. AP interviewees also criticized the current universal Old Age Pension scheme, stressing that it should be targeted towards the poor.

The primary role of the state in contributing to individuals' welfare was perceived as providing individuals with an environment to thrive. As one interviewee stated:

Like Amartya Sen says, development has to be about capacities…We need to capacitate people alongside their interest, alongside their capabilities, because then they have their own ideas. I sit in my office everyday while these young people come up with brilliant ideas … they are way ahead of the government …[18]

Providing a similar response, AP 4 stated:

[The government] should build a conducive environment so people can do whatever they want to do… So that they can get themselves out of

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[16] BMD 5
[17] BMD 1
[18] AP 2

23

poverty…. create a conductive environment whereby you have the right policies, right regulations, right temperature for the economy for people to really use their potential. You know, to create jobs for themselves and to create jobs for others… Government should be able to empower individuals so that they can do whatever they want to do.

Beyond ensuring that the economic environment is such that individuals have the ability to thrive, the AP interviewees also recognised the necessity of providing basic social services. This included health and education.

Similar views were also held about the responsibility of the state to provide targeted social assistance. Social assistance, it was argued, should be targeted towards people who are unable to work.

As one interviewee explained:

I believe that in every country we need a social safety net, but the social safety net has to have certain considerations, you definitely need a clear cut social safety net for orphans, and there is a sizeable population of orphans in our country, you need a clear social safety net for retired people, you need a social safety net for people in labour force that are moving between jobs, people aspiring to join the labour force … a proper social safety net for people living with disabilities…[19]

All but one of the interviewees argued that access to social welfare should be in the constitution. None of the interviewees spoke about the role of the family.

7.2 A 'culture of dependency'?

Fears about a 'culture of dependency' have long been a prominent feature of the BDP's welfare doctrine (see Seekings, 2016b, 2017). As recent as 2009, cries about dependency were articulated by former minister and BDP member, David Magang. In his memoir, Magang wrote:

In today's Botswana, the culture of dependence, as opposed to one of self-resourcefulness, is omnipresent and the blame lies squarely with government. Instead of encouraging its citizens to stand on their own two feet, government has tended to spoon-feed and at times force-feed them. It has created a haven of handouts from which it is well-nigh impossible to wean them. […] There are just too many free or easy-to-acquire things in Botswana and, for a country that is of limited endowment, this amounts to profligacy. Batswana are so used to give-

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[19] AP 1

aways that they cannot nurture a sustained entrepreneurial spirit; whatever business undertaking they indulge in has to be underwritten, directly or indirectly, by government (as cited in Seekings, 2016b: 45).

In 2012, while discussing the Ipelegeng programme, former president Ian Khama also expressed concerns about dependency. In contrast to Magang, Khama presented a more diplomatic statement about the *possibility* of dependency as opposed to a conviction that dependency does indeed exist. Moreover, Khama avoided (unsurprisingly) attributing the cause of dependency to government action:

> Poverty eradication is no simple task, for one, a particular action of charity could motivate them to step out of poverty, but for another, the same act could make them government dependent individuals, as such, programs implemented are always done in the best interest of the poor to help them realise that hard work will lead to something good. Our vision for Ipelegeng [isn't] necessarily about giving people money and good food, but rather [instilling] the idea and habit of waking up early to go and do something (work) with oneself. Remember, 'laziness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger' (cited in Hamer, 2016: 14-15).

Khama attempted to make his statement about welfare and 'laziness' more palpable to the BDP's rural electorate by invoking the Biblical proverb seen in the last sentence. What these two statements have in common is the idea that welfare can create laziness and thus erode individuals' willingness to work. Gulbrandsen (1996) identified similar concerns in private discussions with Botswana's political elite throughout the 1970s to the 1990s. These ideas about the erosion of individual agency are representative of neoliberal concerns about laziness as opposed to conservative concerns about the moral importance of reciprocity (Seekings, 2017).

Since 2009, the available documentation from the social democratic opposition parties do not contain any pejorative comments on dependency. Opposition parties have discussed dependency in relation to the state not providing individuals the opportunity to 'graduate' from dependence on the state (See BCP, 2014; BNF, 2009; UDC, 2014). Thus, their official stances do not provide insight into whether they believe that welfare creates a 'dependency culture'. In a discussion with BNF 1, the interviewee argued that dependency is not something to be concerned about because everyone in Botswana would prefer to have a job than receive government assistance.

Fears about dependency have been seen in civil society organisations. A 2013 report by the World Bank and BIDPA, for example, argued that, 'In assessing the generosity of the social protection programs, we should be concerned with four issues…' (2013: 50). The second issue was 'whether they are too generous and therefore serve as a disincentive for the beneficiaries to work and save and create a culture of "dependency"' (*ibid.*). BIDPA, with the World Bank, also proposed lowering the wage for Ipelegeng to ensure that the programme is not more attractive than formal employment (2013). A similar suggestion was made in a 2012 BIDPA report funded by the Ministry of Local Government and UNICEF (see BIDPA, 2012). A media report on Maatla a Basada, a project launched by Love Botswana Outreach Mission, quoted members of the project saying, 'The main objective is to combat unemployment and dependency syndrome' (The Voice, 2013).

Concerns about dependency have also surfaced in the public. An article in *The Voice* (Dipholo, 2014) spoke about a mother who was trying to get assistance from the government to help send her 16-year-old daughter to school. Interviews were conducted with the mother's neighbours and one interviewee was reported stating, 'This dependency on government has robbed people of their pride, people are not ashamed to flaunt their poverty in public' (Dipholo, 2014). As previously mentioned, in discussions with members of the public at the time the interviews for this study took place, some individuals expressed the belief that the government does so much for the public in terms of social welfare that it makes individuals lazy. One individual invoked the Tswana saying 'Open your mouth, let me feed you', suggesting that the state 'spoon-feeds' its citizens to the detriment of society. Seekings (2016b) has drawn similar conclusions, citing two social workers in an online media report discussing dependency and the 'idle' Batswana. In another paper, Seekings (2017) argues that fears about dependency in Botswana appear to be more prevalent among the middle-class than the rest of the public.

7.2.1 The BMD and ideas about dependency

Almost all BMD interviewees shared that they were indeed concerned about a dependency culture. These concerns were motivated by the belief that receiving assistance 'for free' makes an individual lazy and erodes their desire to work. Interviewees were more concerned about laziness than the conservative concern about reciprocity and contributing to society.

One interviewee pointed to the idea that providing able-bodied individuals with assistance prevents them from thinking for themselves. When asked if social assistance makes people lazy, this interviewee answered:

Why can't we have, you know, mechanisms in place where you help these people help themselves rather than defaulting to help these people… Because then you create this mentality of people now being lazy to think for themselves.[20]

This interviewee's use of 'these people' seems to be in reference to those who are able-bodied, as the interviewee went on to speak about 'those who really need these programmes' as being the elderly, people with disabilities and orphans.[21]

Another interviewee expressed similar concerns, referring to a personal experience that they perceived as demonstrative of a 'dependency culture'. When asked if social welfare had the potential to cause 'dependency', this interviewee answered:

Easily. In fact, it is already happening. I have been trying to be a farmer for a long time. If I have some young people I meet in the rural areas, I try to employ them. If you say 'can you look after my goods and come and work on my farm?', they will say they aren't interested. Why? Because they know they can go to the public works. They get a job there, they begin work at 8 o'clock and by 10 o'clock they are done, and they sit under the trees doing nothing.[22]

Similar to the previous interviewee, this interviewee associated welfare dependency with able-bodied individuals. This interviewee, however, spoke about public works specifically, arguing that even when individuals are engaged in cash-for-work programmes there is still a chance that they will become lazy and dependent.

There was one interviewee who did not believe that welfare has the ability to make individuals dependent:

I don't think that's true in the case of Botswana. Look, when someone accuses Batswana of not wanting to work you must remember that the economy of the country is raising three things and these things are dependent on international agreements which Botswana is not a part of… This is why we say 'you (the government) are keeping the poor, poor so that you are able to get more votes'…[23]

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[20] BMD 5
[21] BMD 5
[22] BMD 7
[23] BMD 2

This interviewee associated the idea of dependency with the government and its inability to provide economic opportunities for its citizens. For this interviewee, it was not a question of whether social assistance erodes an individual's agency but rather the inability of individuals receiving state assistance to gain meaningful economic opportunities and remove themselves from depending on the government.

7.2.2 The AP and ideas about dependency

Almost all of the AP interviewees were concerned about the ability of social assistance to make people dependent and lazy. Like the BMD, interviewees were more concerned about the idea that assistance makes people lazy rather than the concern about reciprocity.

When asked if social assistance can cause dependency, one interviewee responded:

> Let me just say it has the potential to inculcate that spirit of dependency, depending on how you use it. You should use it in such a manner as to be very explicit that this one is for this kind of population and this one is for that, and then as a government you will strive very hard to take your people out of poverty in other words. You know, create … there is a lot of potential in this country… People just sit. Look at you as government and say 'Ah, they will give us this'. It's very dangerous…[24]

Another interviewee was not as certain about the ability of social assistance to make people lazy as the first interviewee:

> It could become a problem. You see… if you make social welfare the core focus of poverty alleviation, that's what happens, but if social welfare is a part of an equal system that seeks to assist people to break away from the poverty cycle, then you won't have that problem because, if people have genuine opportunities to become a part of the economic mainstream, they can realise their aspirations, it is unlikely that they will want to stay in the cycle, that they will want to stay lazy…

This interviewee believed that if people have access to economic opportunities, they will not become dependent. More specifically, people will not want to stay on social welfare if they are capable of acquiring meaningful opportunities.

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[24] AP 3

Similar to the BMD, there was one interviewee who argued that dependency is not something to be concerned about in Botswana:

> I think [Batswana] have demonstrated to the contrary… We have had …complaints by people who say 'Oh, you have now made the whole society dependent on government, therefore they are in most instances unwilling to do anything for themselves.' But, I think it is because of the way in which the government rolled out this programme because when you look at it, most of the social welfare networks were engineered in such a way that the poor should continue to be dependent on government so that the government continues to get votes from them and exploit them.[25]

Similar to the BMD interviewee, this AP interviewee associated dependency with the state, arguing that social assistance programmes have not been designed in a way that people have the opportunity to graduate from such programmes and participate in the market.

7.3 How to assist the unemployed

Botswana's history of workfare dates back to 1967 with the food-for-work programme implemented due to drought. In 1982, this programme became a cash-for-work programme. In 2008, the Botswana government, headed by the then president Ian Khama, implemented the Ipelegeng programme, making the cash-for-work drought-relief programme a permanent feature of government policy (Hamer, 2016). By naming the programme 'Ipelegeng', Setswana for 'self-reliance', Khama and the BDP re-invoked the language of self-reliance and hard work used by the BDP and Seretse Khama following independence (Hamer, 2016). The continuation of the workfare programme demonstrates the ongoing preference for public works within the BDP. In 2012, Khama justified the use of Ipelegeng by asserting that charity instills laziness and that assistance for able-bodied individuals must be worked for (Hamer, 2016).

Opposition parties have not said a great deal on this particular ideological dilemma. In the BCP's 2014 manifesto, it stated in the section on 'Protecting the vulnerable' that it would 'create economic opportunities for all people who are poor and vulnerable as we believe that the best form of social welfare is work' (BCP, 2014: 15). Yet, in discussions with BCP 1 and BNF 1, both interviewees expressed that they thought unemployment benefits should replace the current public works programme. Unemployment benefits, it was argued, would provide individuals with the means to look for work. The UDC criticised the Ipelegeng

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[25] AP 2

programme in its 2014 manifesto but did not provide any alternatives, making it unclear what the coalition's official stance on this ideological dilemma is.

With regards to civil society, the 2013 report by the World Bank and BIDPA recommended making the proposed Family Support Grant conditional on work for able-bodied caregivers, suggesting that able-bodied individuals should have to work in order to receive social assistance.

While media reports have demonstrated that individuals in the public view Ipelegeng negatively due to poor work conditions and its ability to erode individuals' desire to look for 'proper employment', it is unclear what the public thinks about how best to protect the unemployed (Botswana Guardian, 2017; The Voice, 2016). However, given the prevalence of concerns about dependency, it is probable that the preference for workfare among the ruling elite is also prevalent in society.

7.3.1 The BMD and ideas about assistance for the unemployed

All but one of the BMD interviewees believed that unemployed able-bodied individuals should have access to some sort of assistance, either through public works or unemployment benefits. Although all interviewees were critical of the current Ipelegeng programme, the majority of interviewees believed that unemployed individuals should be assisted through public works as opposed to unemployment benefits. This was motivated by the belief that people must work for their money so as to prevent them from becoming 'dependent' and 'lazy'. For some, the importance of work was associated with ideas about dignity. One of the BMD interviewees supported both workfare and unemployment benefits, recommending the use of unemployment benefits when workfare is not an option.

When asked how best to protect unemployed people, one interviewee responded:

> You must work for something. It's a good culture you create for people. If you give them everything then you are creating a dependency syndrome. They must work.[26]

This participant feared that providing assistance to unemployed individuals for 'free' would erode their desire to work and make them 'dependent'. This interviewee stressed that workfare should be used.

One interviewee was concerned about the dignity associated with work:

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[26] BMD 7

> I don't think able-bodied people should be given money for nothing.
> But give them work to do and give them a decent living wage in public
> works… They must be engaged in something. It must not come for
> nothing, not to able-bodied people. I think it's not good for you
> spiritually, it's not good for you emotionally, it's not good for you
> intellectually, that you should get anything for nothing. Yes. Also, your
> self-esteem, very important.[27]

Although in favour of public works, this interviewee was critical of Ipelegeng in
its current form, arguing that the participants do not receive enough remuneration
and are forced to do meaningless tasks. This interviewee argued that if Ipelegeng
workers were tasked with building roads and dams 'like they used to', referring
to the original drought-relief programmes, it would be much more meaningful and
worthwhile.[28]

There was one interviewee who did not support the use of workfare or the
provision of unemployment benefits. Instead, this interviewee argued that efforts
should be focused on job creation:

> I don't think we have reached a stage where we could be thinking about
> unemployment benefits. Like I said earlier, I think people are just lazy
> to think about ways to create employment…. maybe then it will not be
> necessary to come up with all these fancy programmes… because look,
> opportunities are there.[29]

This interviewee went on to say: 'Instead of Ipelegeng, where you have 10 people
slashing whatever, why don't you encourage companies to employ more people…
Then you create more employment'.[30]

Another interviewee argued that both workfare and unemployment benefits
should be used.[31] This interviewee believed that, when possible, people should
work for their assistance through Ipelegeng, albeit an improved version where
people are doing productive work. Unemployment benefits should be used for
people living in areas where Ipelegeng is not operational.

There was one interviewee who preferred the use of unemployment benefits over
workfare:

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[27] BMD 1
[28] BMD 1
[29] BMD 5
[30] BMD 5
[31] BMD 4

We need to get them unemployment benefits, because our budget is saying that we can do that, our foreign reserves are saying that we can do that, our population is allowing us to do that. So, first and foremost, unemployment benefits, unemployment allowance until this person gets a job.[32]

When asked about Ipelegeng, this interviewee responded:

So, it's essentially… it's a waste of money, it's a nuisance. It's nonsensical. It's stone age, you know. We should not be doing things like that. Because how much these people are getting clearly defines how desperate they are. They work from 7 up to 12 then they go home, then they give them a piece of bread, it's inhumane, it's inhumane. It's very inhumane.[33]

7.3.2 The AP and ideas about assistance for the unemployed

The interviewees in the AP shared the BMD's preference for public works. Unlike the BMD, however, all of the interviewees in the AP supported the use of social assistance for unemployed able-bodied individuals. While no interviewees supported the use of unemployment benefits in isolation, two interviewees supported the use of both unemployment benefits and workfare. Support for workfare among the AP interviewees was motivated not only by the belief that social assistance can make people lazy, but also by the idea that workfare can serve as a way to skill people and help them get into the market, pointing to the concept of capabilities prevalent in the South African case study. Interviewees in the AP were similarly dismissive of the current Ipelegeng programme, arguing that workers are given poor remuneration and are tasked with 'meaningless' jobs such as cutting grass.

When asked if unemployment benefits or workfare is better for helping unemployed individuals, one interviewee stated: 'I don't think [unemployment benefits are] necessary, handouts … People want to work… If you don't give them handouts you are making them responsible also…'[34] This interviewee went on to say, 'You have got to teach them how to fish rather than give them a fish'.[35] This interviewee pointed to the belief that public works will provide people with the skills to gain proper employment.

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[32] BMD 2
[33] BMD 2
[34] AP 4
[35] AP 4

Echoing this interviewee's dislike for unemployment benefits and the importance of work, another interviewee responded, 'I don't think it is the right way to go. I prefer some sort of something to do to warrant or to qualify for the [assistance]'.[36] This interviewee argued that if people do not do anything to 'warrant' the assistance, they will become lazy.[37]

Other interviewees were more welcoming of unemployment benefits, suggesting that both public works and unemployment benefits can be used. When asked how best to help the unemployed, one interviewee responded:

> I think public works is very useful. I think we need to expand it, to broaden it to ensure that there is some capacity, there is some skills transfer that comes through so that there is also a path to improvement. Because not as it is you are stagnant. You are just stuck there with that thing.[38]

Then, when asked if they thought public works is better than unemployment benefits, they explained:

> I don't think it is an issue of either or. All of these programmes can be used as a complete system that is geared towards creating capacity in our people to take part in a meaningful way and what they think is necessary.[39]

Another interviewee provided a similar answer, arguing that workfare should be prioritised but unemployment benefits can be used for people who are not able to get workfare positions. This interviewee stated:

> For people that are in between jobs there are different aspects to it, there should always be an aspect of public works. That could include major infrastructure and that public infrastructure could b[40]e building highways, building drainage systems, building different areas… they should always be linked to up-skilling people… To the extent possible, people should work. But, I don't think it's possible to implement a programme where everyone will have an opportunity to work in order to secure their allowance… there is no avoiding circumstances where people have to get allowances…

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[36] AP 3

[37] AP 3

[38] AP 2

[39] AP 2

[40] AP 1

For these interviewees, public works was not only about ensuring that people work for their money but also about providing individuals with skills to enter the labour market. Unemployment benefits should be used when public works is not available to an individual for whatever reason.

7.4 Conditions and transfers made in kind

The BDP government has long preferred transfers made in kind. It is unclear, however, where the governing party stands on behavioural conditions. The Ipelegeng programme is conditional in the sense that assistance is contingent on working, but all other programmes remain unconditional. The 2013 World Bank and BIDPA report proposed implementing behavioural conditions, but this was rejected by the BDP government. Whether this proposal was rejected on ideological, political, or administrative grounds is unclear.

The social democratic opposition parties have been silent on these issues. In a discussion with BCP 1, the interviewee said that beneficiaries of social assistance should be given cash in order to give them the freedom of choice. This interviewee did not comment on the use of behavioural conditions. BNF 1 said that behavioural conditions should be used and that beneficiaries of the destitute and orphan programme should receive assistance in kind rather than in cash in order to ensure that the money is being spent responsibly.

When proposing the Family Support Grant in 2013, BIDPA, along with the World Bank, suggested that the grant be attached to behavioural conditions (World Bank & BIDPA, 2013). The report also argued that the government relies too heavily on transfers made in kind, which is not only more difficult administratively but also limits the choices of beneficiaries in comparison to cash. It proposed that the government provide cash as opposed to food in programmes such as the Destitute Persons Program and the Orphan Care Program.

The stance of the public on these issues is unclear. However, given the prevalence of fears about dependency, it is likely that individuals in Botswana would support the use of behavioural conditions and resist the use of cash to ensure that social assistance is being used in a 'productive' or 'responsible' way and so that it does not create 'dependence'.

7.4.1 The BMD and ideas about conditions and transfers made in kind

All but one of the BMD interviewees believed that conditions should be added to social assistance programmes such as the Orphan Care Programme and the Destitute Persons Programme, specifically for destitutes looking after children. This would ensure that the money is spent on the child and that the assistance has a positive impact on social development. The large majority also stated that social assistance to destitutes and orphans should be paid primarily in kind. Some interviewees argued that recipients should receive both food and cash while others just spoke about food. One interviewee argued that transfers should be made completely in cash. None of the interviewees questioned the provision of cash for the elderly or people in Ipelegeng, suggesting that individuals who have worked, or are currently working, are deserving of, or responsible enough for, cash. The support for transfers paid in kind and the use of behavioural conditions seems to undermine the core liberal concepts of individualism and rationality.

When asked about attaching behavioural conditions to the existing social assistance programmes, one interviewee reflected on a personal experience:

> I believe we need to put in place a check and balance mechanism. Having been in the local authority, where those programmes are really working, I was there for 10 years, I have realised that people are fighting to take custody of the orphans, not really to take care of the orphans, not that they have the welfare of the orphans in their hearts, but simply because they need to get that food… And, we had experiences where people were getting the food every month and that food did not end up with the destitute child or the orphan child, the food would be sold, the food would be taken to support the caregivers' family, etc., etc. We have seen such situations, very pathetic, and as soon as the child graduates, they are no longer eligible for government assistance, because they have turned 18. So, definitely, I believe that mechanisms should be in place so that this food package, this assistance benefits the child directly.[41]

By implementing conditions, this interviewee argued, the government could ensure that the assistance provided is spent on the child.

Only one interviewee was opposed to behavioural conditions, arguing that, 'Whether you have a child going to school or having a child who is not going to school they still need some sort of basic cash… because the demands of life are

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[41] BMD 4

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always there…'[42] This interviewee pointed to the idea everyone needs assistance regardless of how they behave.

The large majority of interviewees were also in favour of providing food instead of cash, arguing that transfers in kind would ensure that people do not abuse the assistance. As one interviewee explained:

> I think that the system as it is today, that ensures that people get a food basket is much better. You must understand that poverty comes along with other social ills. People will be encouraged to drink, people will find solace in drug abuse and my belief is that give them cash, they will not be able to survive because as soon as they get the cash, they go for alcohol, as soon as they get the cash, they go for drugs. So, food package in my view is better, that is the route we have to follow.[43]

This particular interviewee argued that people living in poverty are not responsible enough to receive cash, as poverty comes along with 'other social ills', suggesting that poor individuals are not rational actors.[44]

Another interviewee reflected similar concerns:

> If we are to give them cash, [I] suspect that their guardians will not utilise it effectively, they will pay for debts and owe banks and all these things… Of course, we do have cases where people are selling this, but these are rare cases and we cannot paint the whole society for a few trouble makers…[45]

While expressing these concerns, some interviewees also acknowledged the fact that cash is required to purchase non-food items. These interviewees stated that cash should be in addition to food rather than in the place of food. As BMD 6 argued:

> I think that cash should supplement the food they are given. That provides for making sure that these people… that they use the cash for the welfare of the family. Because you'll find that, I don't know if it's due to their circumstances, they spend most of their time drinking… But, I believe that every individual does need some sort of cash over and above the food.

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[42] BMD 6
[43] BMD 4
[44] BMD 4
[45] BMD 2

Another interviewee explained:

> I think we should combine the two, because it depends where the person is. In some places there may be abuse of the money, or misuse. Because you give people money, he goes and blows the money at the pub, tomorrow there is nothing. But, if you give them food and then a little bit of money so they can buy something that they themselves choose, I think that is a good combination...[46]

One interviewee argued that cash should be provided instead of food. This interviewee stated that providing people with food was disrespectful, as it does not allow people to make their own decisions. This interviewee stated, 'It's disrespectful to make these decisions for people'.[47]

7.4.2 The AP and ideas about conditions and transfers made in kind

Unlike the BMD, all of the AP interviewees believed that transfers should be paid primarily in kind. However, like the BMD, interviewees in the AP also promoted the idea that individuals should receive food with some cash. All of the AP interviewees except for one supported the use of behavioural conditions. The AP interviewees were happy with the provision of cash for the elderly and individuals in Ipelegeng.

All of the interviewees supported the provision of food with a little bit of cash. This would allow people to buy essential non-food items. As one interviewee explained:

> I don't believe in giving food and nothing else because you know, look, if you need sanitary pads, you need them that's it. Food will not buy you that. If there is no financial element, there will always be the temptation to sell some of the food that you get in order for me to buy other things. So, it should always be a combination.[48]

The AP interviewees were also supportive of the use of behavioural conditions. This would again ensure that people are using the assistance responsibly. As one interviewee outlined:

> Yes, I think that is where the programmes [are] lacking… some of the people who are looking after children, they are not really looking after

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[46] BMD 7

[47] BMD 1

[48] AP 3

them properly, you see… we need some sort of evaluation to see that these people are doing the right thing. If you are living with an orphan, this is what you have to do, make sure that they got to school, check on them … Some of the parents who are supposed to look after them, they are not doing that properly.[49]

As AP 3 explained:

> It helps for conditions to be laid… because otherwise it is just a bottomless pit, and then, for instance, the child not going to school, that's a serious concern… I agree with putting conditions. You are safeguarding the people you are trying to help, isn't it?

Only one interviewee was opposed to conditions. This interviewee argued that assistance should be unconditional so that people who are truly in need of assistance are not excluded. This interviewee explained:

> They should be unconditional. The reason why right now a lot of people who are supposed to be assisted are not… There is this grey area of who is supposed to be helped and who is not supposed to be helped. For example, I know you were talking earlier about children, I also know that there is this subsidy that is given to people with disabilities and they have this qualification that says we give it to somebody who is completely helpless. And I have had people in my constituency who are blind, they can't do anything, they have no access to a computer, and whatever, and they can't be assisted, they are turned down. So, that's why I am saying that interventions have to be adequately targeted and not too traditional cause then we are going to help a few to the detriment of the many.[50]

8. Conclusion

This paper showed that interviewees in the BMD and AP supported the provision of universal basic social services such as education and health and the use of targeted social assistance. Most interviewees argued that social welfare should be a constitutional right but they did not feel particularly strongly about it. Interviewees expressed concerns about non-contributory cash transfers and preferred the use of workfare for unemployed individuals. Interviewees feared dependency in light of concerns about welfare instilling a sense of laziness in beneficiaries. They also preferred transfers made in kind and the use of

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[49] AP 4
[50] AP 2

behavioural conditions in order to ensure that beneficiaries are using the assistance provided in a constructive manner.

The approach of the BMD and AP stands out from the historical approach of the BDP in that interviewees embraced the primacy of the individual to a greater degree and criticised the universality of the Old Age Pension, arguing that it should be means-tested. Ideas about the role of the state reflect similarities with the egalitarian liberal approach in that interviewees recognised the importance of non-contributory social assistance in assisting the poor. Like the BDP historically, interviewees in the BMD and AP were widely concerned about a dependency culture. The BMD and AP interviewees, however, were more concerned about social assistance making people lazy than about the significance of contributing to society. This seems to reflect the weak embrace of social assistance as a socio-economic right and the classical liberal idea that 'charity' makes people lazy. It is not surprising, then, that, like the BDP, the BMD and AP preferred the use of workfare over non-contributory unemployment benefits. This represents similarities with the social, and, to some extent, the egalitarian liberal approach. Finally, the BMD and AP's preferences for the use of transfers paid in kind reflects the historical approach of the BDP. The support for the use of behavioural conditions seems to represent a departure from the country's historical approach given that all transfers are currently unconditional. However, little is known about the BDP's normative ideas towards the use of behavioural conditions. The BMD and AP's ideas about this ideological dilemma points to similarities with the social and egalitarian liberal approaches.

It is clear that individuals in the BMD and AP conceptualise liberalism largely in relation to negative liberty. This results in a greater emphasis on democracy and constitutionalism rather than social welfare and socio-economic rights. Individualism simply means that liberal politicians in the BMD and AP recognise the centrality of the individual. The role of the state is perceived as ensuring basic negative freedoms, like constitutional democracy and civil liberties, in addition to the creation of the right economic conditions for the creation of opportunities. Nevertheless, BMD and AP also embrace the role of the state in the provision of social welfare. General interest reflects the idea that liberal politicians in both parties seek to promote a sense of national unity. Sociability means that the well-being of the nation is reliant on the well-being of its individual members. Progress is interpreted as economic growth and the creation of opportunities, pointing to ideas about developmentalism. Rationality means that individuals have creativity and drive. However, the liberal concept of rationality seems to be undermined when thinking about the use of behavioural conditions and transfers paid in kind (see Table 4).

Table 4: The BMD and AP's interpretation of the seven core values of liberalism

	BMD & AP
Liberty	The ability to be who you want to be (in a negative sense); access to opportunities
Individualism	The individual as the unit of focus
Role of the state	To ensure negative freedoms and to create the right conditions for opportunities
General interest	A sense of national unity
Sociability	'Our Movement's efforts are of no use if our country's national policies do not touch each life in our communities…' (BMD, 2010b: 7)
Progress	Economic growth and opportunity creation
Rationality	Individuals possess initiative, creativity, and drive

The political ideology articulated by liberal politicians in the BMD and AP varies from the country's governing ideology in that it places greater emphasis on the centrality of the individual and less on the family unit. This points to parallels with classical liberals, and other liberal thinkers, who had to define their ideology against calls by conservative thinkers to preserve and strengthen the family unit. The BMD and AP also appear to value negative liberty to a greater degree than their BDP counterparts. Liberalism, as articulated by politicians in the BMD and AP, is similar to the classical liberal variant in this emphasis on negative liberty. The emphasis on negative liberty in the BMD and AP's interpretation of liberalism is largely a result of the origins of the BMD as a breakaway movement inspired by the rising authoritarianism in the BDP (and the later breakaway of the AP from the BMD in light of 'personality differences'). While, liberal politicians in the BMD and AP also acknowledge the need for the state to intervene in the provision of social welfare, pointing to similarities with the social liberal approach, this seems to be more of an acceptance of the status quo than an explicit attempt to apply liberal ideas about positive freedom when thinking about how to tackle poverty and unemployment. It appears that there is little political incentive, even amongst the social democratic opposition parties, to articulate a radical alternative to the conservative welfare system established under the BDP.

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Appendix: Interviewees

Table 5: Interviewees

Code	Name	Position	About
Botswana Movement for Democracy			
BMD 1	Advocate Sidney Pilane	President	Pilane grew up in Soweto, Johannesburg and Mochudi, Botswana. His father was from the Eastern Cape, South Africa and his Mother was a Mokgatla from Mochudi, Botsawna. Pilane started his political career in the BDP youth wing where he served two terms as the Deputy Secretary General. After serving in the BDP youth, Pilane was a Special Adviser to President Mogae between 2001 and 2008.
BMD 2	Rasina Winifred Rasina	Spokesperson	Rasina has been the Secretary General of the BMD since 2010.
BMD 3	Percy Bakwena	Treasurer General	Bakwena left the BNF in 2010 to join the BMD. He attributes his move to the BMD to ideology. As he got older, he started to identify with liberalism and, for that reason, was attracted to the BMD's project.
BMD 4	Gilbert Mangole	Secretary General and MP	Mangole became a member of the BDP in 1984 when he joined the youth wing. In 1999, he stood for a council seat and then stayed in council for two terms. He left the BDP in 2010 to join the BMD and became the party's first Deputy Secretary general. Mangole became the Secretary General in 2015.
BMD 5	Tseleng Botlhole	Deputy Secretary General	Botlhole was a card-carrying member of the BDP before joining the BMD. She became Deputy Secretary General of the BMD in 2015.

Code	Name	Position	About
BMD 6	Tolee Itumeleng	National Executive Committee member	Itumeleng joined the BMD in 2010 and was not active in politics before this. He is now an additional member in the National Executive Committee of the BMD.
BMD 7	Wilson M. Thupeng	Electoral Committee	Thupeng joined the BDP in 1989 while he was a student at the University of Botswana. He left the BDP in 2009 to help form the BMD. Before Wilson left the BDP he was the Secretary for the Gaborone Central Youth Wing.
BMD 8	Lotlaamoreng Malema	Electoral Committee and NEC member	Malema joined the BDP in 1993. He left the BDP in 2010 to join the BMD.
Alliances for Progressives			
AP 1	Ndaba Gaolathe	President	Gaolathe is the son of Baledzi Gaolathe – a former minister of Finance and Development Planning. Ndaba was educated in the United States and obtained two bachelor's degrees from George Brown University. He was a member of the BDP before he formed the BMD. He was an adviser and speechwriter for President Mogae (1998-2008). He then left the BMD to form the AP.
AP 2	Dr. Phenyo Butale	Secretary General and MP	Butale was a practicing journalist before he joined the BMD in 2010. He was in the National Executive Committee in the BMD before the split where he then decided to join the AP. In the 2014 election, Butale won the Parliamentary seat for Gaborone Central.
AP 3	Margaret Nasha	Adviser to the President	Nasha was the speaker of the National Assembly from 2009 to 2014. Nasha left the BDP after having issues with the then-president Ian Khama. She joined the BMD but later left to form the AP.

Code	Name	Position	About
AP 4	Major General Pius Mokgware	Chairperson	Mokgware was not active in politics until joining the AP. He was in the military before he joined the party. He was also a lecturer in political science at the University of Botswana.
Botswana Congress Party			
BCP 1	Dr. Kesitegile Gobotswang	Vice President	Gobotswang was a member of the BNF until a faction broke away from the party and formed the BCP.
Botswana National Front			
BNF 1	Moeti Mohwasa	Secretary General and UDC Spokesperson	--[51]

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[51] Mohwasa did not provide any information on his political career. Limited information is available publicly.