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Promoting liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa: How liberal politicians in the Democratic Alliance approach social welfare

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Abstract

South African liberals find themselves in a particularly challenging context for the promotion of a political ideology that promotes the centrality of the market in the maximisation of individuals' well-being. This paper examines how self-identified liberal politicians in South Africa adapt liberalism to the country's ideological, political and socio-economic context in order to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment through social welfare. It relies on data collected from semi-structured interviews with 17 Members of Parliament (MPs) and party officials in the Democratic Alliance (DA). It also draws from content analysis of official party documents. The paper demonstrates that South African liberals recognise that the context in which they are operating requires a more concerted effort from the state in the realisation of individuals' minimum well-being. The presence of widespread poverty, extensive unemployment and horizontal inequalities rooted in the legacy of apartheid means that there is both a political and moral imperative for liberal politicians in South Africa to acknowledge and embrace the strategic role of the state in the provision of social welfare.

1. Introduction

South African liberals find themselves in a particularly challenging context for the promotion of a political ideology which places emphasis on the role of the market in maximizing individuals' welfare, faced with widespread poverty and unemployment and the lasting legacy of apartheid. The existing literature on liberalism in South Africa (and on the Democratic Alliance) considers the history of liberalism and its prospects for the future, but does not consider how liberal politicians have adapted liberalism from its geographical birthplace to address the challenges facing South Africa (Butler et al., 1987; Shain, 2006; van de Berghe, 1979).

This paper examines how liberal politicians in the Democratic Alliance adapt liberalism to the ideological, political and socio-economic context of South Africa in order to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment through social welfare. Social welfare is defined as basic social services such as health care and education as well as the provision of social assistance. The study draws from semi-structured interviews with 17 Members of Parliament (MPs) and party officials in the DA (see Appendix) in addition to content analysis of official party documents.[1] It approaches the analysis of liberalism in South Africa from the theoretical perspective of the morphology theory of ideology, which argues that all political ideologies consist of an internal structure of core concepts. The ways in which these concepts are interpreted is shaped by the spatial, temporal and cultural context in which the political ideology is being defined (Freeden, 1996, 2013). Any variant of liberalism is thought to be made up of seven core concepts – liberty, individualism, role of the state, general interest, sociability, progress, and rationality. This paper considers how liberal politicians in the DA have interpreted and adapted these concepts to the South African context by examining their ideas about 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 whether non-contributory transfers should be made in cash or in kind and if social grants should be conditional.

Liberal politicians in South Africa operate in a landscape shaped by the political imperative of overcoming the historical legacy of apartheid (see Table 1). This has created an ideological space, largely defined by the governing African National Congress (ANC), that is characterised by a pro-poor developmentalism which incorporates both nationalist and socialist elements. The emergence in 2014 of the radical-leftist and African nationalist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has only served to strengthen the leftist and nationalist components of the hegemonic ideology. One of the DA's primary challenges in expanding the party's reach has been convincing the public (and even members of its own leadership) that liberalism, and the embrace of the primacy of the individual in particular, is compatible with attempts to empower previously disadvantaged groups and overcome the legacy of apartheid. This is not helped by the ANC's (and more recently the EFF's) portrayal of the DA as a 'racist party' solely driven by the pursuit of furthering white, elite interests. This image is rooted in the fact that the DA (and its predecessors) has historically gained a disproportionate amount of its support from white, middle- and

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

upper-class South Africans; associations of liberalism with imperialism; and the common perception that liberals were sympathetic to the apartheid regime, despite the fact that the DA's predecessors actively opposed it.

Table 1. Ideological, political and socio-economic context of South Africa

Ideological	
Hegemonic ideology	Developmentalism, interventionist, pro-poor, African nationalism
Political	
The DA's major support base	Urban, middle-class, primarily white
Socio-economic	
Institutionalisation of social welfare	Strong (legislation and popular discourse)
Coverage of social welfare	High
Driver of social assistance	Government-initiated (building on the system implemented in the 1920s-1940s)
Unemployment	High
Informal employment	Low
Formal employment	Medium
Mode of production	Wage-labour
Poverty	High
Inequality	High, racial lines

The lasting legacy of apartheid has meant that poverty and unemployment disproportionately affect black South Africans (Seekings & Nattrass, 2015; Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2017). Approximately 56 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line and 27 per cent is unemployed (Stats SA, 2017, 2018). According to the World Bank (2019), South Africa has the highest income

inequality in the world. This is largely divided along racial lines, with 47 per cent of black-headed households living in poverty while only one percent of white-headed households live in poverty (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD] & World Bank, 2018). This provided the impetus for the ANC to dramatically expand the country's social welfare system upon being elected into government. The party set out to de-racialise the existing social grant system and universalise the provision of basic social services such as health care and education. As of 2018, one-third of the South African population receives a social grant every month (South African Social Security Agency [SASSA], 2018; World Bank, 2017). The ANC government has been less successful in delivering on promises to ensure the universal provision of quality health care and education, but the normative commitment has remained the same. It is in this context that the DA has little choice but to support an interventionist stance when defining the role of the state in tackling poverty and unemployment.

Interviewees expressed that the state is responsible for the provision of basic social services such as health care and education and the provision of means-tested social assistance for *all* individuals in need. The large majority of interviewees stressed that social welfare is (and should be) a constitutional right. The large majority of interviewees dismissed fears about dependency, stressing that South Africans want to work and emphasising the dignity provided when one is involved in wage-labour. Interviewees also expressed that the poor and unemployed population should be covered by the social grant system, pointing to the belief that all citizens in need, even able-bodied adults without children, have the right to a minimum income. Interviewees stressed that non-contributory transfers should be paid in cash and that transfers should be unconditional in order to maximise grant beneficiaries' individual agency.

The paper suggests that South African liberals have adapted liberalism to the South African landscape by recognising that the context in which they are operating brings about a moral and political imperative to embrace a more concerted effort from the state in the realisation of individuals' well-being than in countries, like those where liberalism first emerged, that are characterised by low levels of poverty and near-full employment, and do not face the challenges associated with the history of apartheid.

Liberal politicians in the DA stressed the importance of positive liberty, defining it as having the capabilities to access and create opportunities. It was clear that social welfare, especially education, health care, and social grants, were perceived as capabilities that would enable individuals to access and create opportunities. Individualism meant that the individual should be the unit of focus. It was also

largely thought of as non-racialism in light of the country's racial history. The role of the state was perceived as ensuring basic negative freedoms, creating the right economic conditions for growth and job creation, and, especially, providing individuals with the capabilities to access opportunities, regardless of race. General interest was thought of in the sense that the party should strive to create a 'caring society'. Sociability was interpreted in relation to non-racialism. It meant that policies targeted towards the individual would have a positive impact on poverty, unemployment and inequality, regardless of one's race.

2. Conceptual framework

This paper presents the findings of one of three case studies conducted for a larger project on liberalism in three Southern African countries – South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. It relied on semi-structured interviews with 45 political elites in all three countries in addition to content analysis of official party documents. The study addressed how liberalism is adapted by self-identified liberal politicians to contexts outside of the global North in order to tackle the socio-economic challenges facing their countries. In the global North, the birth place of liberalism, these questions were centered around the role of the state in the provision of social welfare and the embrace of socio-economic rights (Gordon et al., 2014). It was asking these kinds of questions around 'the social' that ultimately led to the emergence of social liberalism and the formation of the liberal welfare state. It is the same kinds of questions that are pushing the frontiers of social liberalism in the 21st-century and forming what might be referred to as contemporary liberalism.

The literature on the diffusion of liberalism in Africa is extremely limited, particularly with regard to issues surrounding the social aspects of liberalism. Much of the literature that does exist is concerned with the spread of neo-liberalism and the resulting economic (and sometimes social) impacts (see Ashman & Fine, 2013; Lim & Jang, 2006; Moore, 1999; Robinson, 2006); and the spread of ideas commonly associated with liberalism such as individual rights and constitutional democracy (see Alford, 2000; Carothers, 1999; Levitt & Merry, 2009; Mutua, 2002; Seekings, 2018). Liberal thinkers in Africa (and individuals who undergo academic inquiry into liberalism in Africa) are often criticized as 'neoliberal', 'agents of western imperialism', and 'apologists of white monopoly capital' (Ngwenya, 2018). This has certainly played a role in limiting academic inquiry into the diffusion of liberalism outside of the global North.

From the perspective of the morphological theory of ideology, the analysis of liberalism in this study was guided by Freeden's (1996) work on the emergence of

liberalism in Great Britain and its transformation throughout the 19th- and 20th-centuries. It was further guided by the critical works of liberal thinkers from J.S. Mill (1885, 1929) to Amartya Sen (1999). Three main variants of 'global', Anglo-rooted liberalism were then identified: classical, social, and what is broadly referred to as 'contemporary'. Egalitarian liberalism, as manifested by Sen's (1999) *Development as Freedom*, was used to illustrate one variant of contemporary liberalism.

The study incorporated Freeden's (1996) seven core concepts of liberalism to define the variations between the three main variants of liberalism (see Table 2). It argued that the primary differentiating factor between the three main variants of liberalism is the specific interpretations of liberty and the role of the state. Classical liberals defined liberty in a negative sense, understanding it as the freedom *from* constraint or compulsion in order to develop the self. State intervention was only thought to be justified in order to protect individuals from harm. With the reform movement beginning in the late 19th-century, liberal thinkers embraced the concept of positive freedom. This meant that liberty was not only thought to mean the freedom *from* but also the freedom *to*, especially the freedom to live a life worth living (Green, 1881; Hobhouse, 1923; Hobson, 1909). The reinterpretation of liberty necessitated a revaluation of the role of the state. Liberal thinkers recognized that in an age of industrialisation the state needed to take a proactive role in the realisation of individuals' well-being. (Fraser, 2009). This contributed to the embrace of socio-economic rights and a shift away from reliance on private philanthropy. Egalitarian liberalism has again led to a reinterpretation of liberty. Sen (1999) argues that freedom has five core components, which, unlike social liberalism, has an explicit emphasis on the right to a social safety net and a minimum income (see Table 2). The role of the state is to help realise these five substantive freedoms.

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)		

The four ideological dilemmas mentioned above were used in order to identify how liberal politicians in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia adapt liberalism in order to address poverty and unemployment through the provision of social welfare. These ideological dilemmas are not only pertinent to liberal politicians in Southern Africa but also to politicians across the global South and, to varying degrees, the global North. For each case study, the approach of the governing party and prominent opposition parties, civil society organisations, the public and all other relevant players were considered in order to better place the analysis in its ideological, political, and socio-economic context. Social welfare was defined as basic social services such as health care and education and the provision of non-contributory social assistance.

Each of the three main variants of liberalism has approached (or would approach) each of the four ideological dilemmas in different ways (see Table 3). It was not until the reformed movement that liberal thinkers embraced the role of the state in the provision of social welfare and the maximisation of positive freedom and the associated socio-economic rights (Beveridge, 1942, 1944; Green, 1881; Hobhouse, 1923; Hobson, 1909). Liberal thinkers accepted that able-bodied adults needed protection when the market had failed to provide them with the means to live, and pushed for the adoption of contributory insurance plans and workfare. With the shift from charitable assistance to state provision, concerns about 'dependency' and 'laziness' prominent among classical liberal thinkers became less significant. For egalitarian liberals, the state is also thought to be responsible for the provision of social welfare, including for the unemployed. However, there is an explicit emphasis on the importance of a social safety net. Across the global South, this has increasingly taken the shape of Social Cash Transfers (SCTs) or other forms of non-contributory transfers. Unemployed individuals are generally excluded from these programmes and instead often receive assistance through workfare programmes. Contributory insurance plans only help a small proportion of the population in countries across the global South, given low levels of formal employment.

Table 3: Responses to the four ideological 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 South Africa's political landscape

In the 1994 general election, the ANC and its tripartite alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), led by party president Nelson Mandela, secured 63 per cent of the national vote. The DA is the ANC's largest opponent, despite securing less than 25 per cent of the vote in all general elections since 1994. The EFF, which was formed in 2014 after Julius Malema was expelled from the ANC, has gained considerable support in only a few short years, securing 11 per cent of the vote in the 2019 general election. It has been considered as 'the most tangible like-minded threat to the ANC' (Robinson, 2014: 73), taking a similar (albeit often more radical) stance towards affirmative action and redress to the ANC. The ANC is defined ideologically as a 'broad church', embracing elements of pan-Africanism, socialism, communism, liberalism, and black consciousness (Memela, 2008). The party draws most of its support from the country's black majority. A large part of the ANC's agenda since 1994 has been redressing the injustices of apartheid. This has led to the implementation of race-based affirmative action programmes, such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).

The history of the DA dates back to 1959 when a group of individuals broke away from the United Party, which they criticised for not taking a strong enough stance against the apartheid policies of the National Party and subsequently formed the Progressive Party. The DA in its modern form was established in 2000, when the Democratic Party (successor of the Progressive Party) joined with the New National Party (NNP) to create a coalition party. The alliance fell apart shortly after its inception, with the NNP formally leaving the coalition, although many individual NNP leaders chose to remain in the DA and the DA retained the support of most former NNP voters. In the DA's first general election in 2004 it won 13 per cent of the national vote, mainly targeting white, coloured and Indian South Africans. This was followed by an increase in 2009, with the DA securing 17 per cent of the national vote after including black South Africans in its target population (Jolobe, 2009; Leisegang, 2017). The same year, the DA secured the majority of the vote in the Western Cape and became the province's governing party. In 2014, the DA's share of the national vote increased again to 22 per cent with a reasonable increase in its share of the 'black vote' (Jolobe, 2014).

The DA's 2009 general election campaign, with Helen Zille as the party's new leader, represented an important shift in the DA's approach, characterised by an attempt to gain support among South Africa's black population, after having only

focused on the white, coloured and Indian populations in the 2004 campaign (Jolobe, 2009; Leisegang, 2017; Southall, 2014). While seeking to extend its support to other populations in the country, the DA also sought to expand and diversify the party itself. While this had a positive impact on the party's electoral support, the expansion of the party has also led to increased ideological debate among the upper echelons of the party (Sicetsha, 2018). The DA has had to attempt to reconcile the primacy of individualism and calls for race-based policies like BEE.[2] However, this has not only been to appease the so-called 'nationalist' faction within the party but also the black majority that has historically voted for the ANC.

4. The political ideology of the DA

The DA identifies itself as a liberal democratic party with members ranging from self-identified classical liberals to egalitarian liberals. From 2004 until 2014, the party emphasised that it was guided by three core values: freedom, fairness, and opportunity (DA, 2004, 2009, 2014).[3] These core values were designed to be broad enough to be able to bind all members of the party regardless of their specific strand of liberalism, while being narrow enough to ensure congruency with the liberal tradition.[4] In the 2019 election campaign, 'diversity' was added as a fourth value, likely due to the controversial debates that erupted between the so-called liberal and nationalist factions within the party regarding the use of race as a proxy for disadvantage, in addition to the public's long-held perception of the DA as a party for white interests (DA, 2019).

Since the DA's first general election, the first three key values were expressed in the party's slogan 'open, opportunity society for all' (DA, 2004, 2009, 2014). The first value, freedom, cuts across both the idea of an 'open society' and the idea of an 'opportunity society'. As a result, the first and third values (freedom and opportunity) are intimately linked. The concept of an open society is synonymous with the concept of negative freedom. It requires that the state adheres to freedoms such as the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association (DA, 2014). The concept of an 'opportunity society', on the other hand, espouses the idea of positive freedom. It entails the ability of all citizens to 'live a life he or she values', pointing to Sen's idea of a life that one has 'reason to value' (DA, 2014: 8; Sen, 1999). The DA's idea of an opportunity society was influenced by Sen's 1999 *Development as Freedom,*

[2] 'Black' with regard to Black Economic Empowerment includes the Indian, Coloured and Chinese populations. In the rest of the chapter I use 'black' to refer specifically to black South Africans.
[3] DA 7; DA 9
[4] DA 9

introduced to the party in the early 2000s by former chief strategist Ryan Coetzee.[5] The DA perceives 'capabilities' as a vehicle for accessing opportunities. The remaining value, fairness, is represented in the slogan's inclusion of 'for all'. This value seeks to ensure that all citizens enjoy the first and third values (freedom and opportunity), regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or religion. Since 2009, there has been a growing focus on fairness as it relates to non-racialism. The addition of 'diversity' to the party's core values in 2019 does not seem to add anything substantive to this but simply emphasises the party's embrace of non-racialism and points to the party's attempt to counter the narrative of it as a party for white interests in light of attempts to gain the support of black voters.

Therefore, in promoting an 'open, opportunity society for all', the DA is emphasising the importance of providing all individuals, regardless of race, with the capabilities to access and create opportunities while also ensuring negative freedoms (DA, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019). 'Liberty' is thus conceptualised by the DA as including both positive and negative freedom, with a particular emphasis on positive freedom.

Individualism is largely shaped by the embrace of non-racialism. It is an active attempt to avoid race-based, or group-based, policies. In attempting to grapple with the perceived contradiction between race-based policies and individualism, some individuals in the DA have emphasised that the 'group' will benefit from policies centered around the individual, particularly with regard to race-based affirmative action (Leisegang, 2017).

This has been a constant ideological struggle for the DA (Zille, 2006). The most recent example of this was a 2018 party debate that became public surrounding discussions about 'ditching' BEE. In a related debate about a proposed amendment to the DA's constitution which would see the addition of racial quotas, Michael Cardo and Gavin Davis – both of whom were interviewees for this study – stressed in an article that:

> Diversity … is rooted in the liberal notion of the primacy of the individual. In the DA, we don't believe that people are the mere sums of their demographic parts. Instead, we believe that people have personal agency and autonomy that transcends the colour of their skin, the language they speak or the circumstances into which they were born. Diversity is about drawing on the contributions of people with different backgrounds,

[5] DA 9

> perspectives and life experiences while recognising that no two people have the same point of view on all things, even if they share certain ascriptive traits (Cardo & Davis, 2018).

As has been suggested elsewhere (Zille, 2006), one of the DA's most pressing ideological (and practical) challenges is reconciling the focus on the individual with calls for groups rights, both within the DA's own ranks and from the public.

5. South Africa's social welfare system

In 1994, the ANC campaigned on the promise that poverty reduction would be the party's first priority if elected into government (ANC, 1994). A big part of the ANC's efforts to reduce poverty would be the expansion and modification of the existing social welfare system. In its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the ANC outlined its vision for South Africa's social welfare system:

> The RDP aims to transform the existing social welfare policies, programmes and delivery systems so as to ensure basic welfare rights are provided to all South Africans, prioritising those who have been historically disadvantaged… Social welfare includes the right to basic needs such as shelter, food, health care, work opportunities, income security and all those aspects that promote the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of all people in our society, with special provision made for those who are unable to provide for themselves (Republic of South Africa, 1994: 55).

Social welfare, and the corresponding socio-economic rights, were thus thought of as key parts of the country's developmental programme (see Table 4). The 1996 constitution included the right to health care, education, food and water, and social assistance for individuals who 'are unable to support themselves and their dependents' (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 27(1), 27(2)). Given the wide range of socio-economic rights, South Africa's constitution is regarded as one of the most 'liberal' and 'progressive' constitutions in the world (Seekings, 2018; Seepe, 2006; Shain, 2006).

Table 4: South Africa's historical programmatic approach to the four ideological dilemmas

	Programmatic response to the four ideological dilemmas
Role of the state	Means-tested cash transfers for children, elderly, and disabled; workfare for able-bodied adults without children; goal of universal health care and education
Dependency	Widespread concerns about dependency; fears about laziness
Unemployment assistance	Workfare (EPWP)
Conditions and Transfers in kind	EPWP 'conditional' on work; transfers in cash

Following the ANC's election, it made strides in delivering on these promises, especially with regard to the provision of income security through the social grants system. As of 2018, the South African government provides seven different grants: the old age pension (now known as the older persons grant), disability grant, war veterans' grant, grant-in-aid, Child Support Grant (CSG), foster child grant, and the care-dependency grant. The system reaches over 17 million beneficiaries every month and accounts for over 3.5 per cent of Gross Democratic Product (GDP) (SASSA, 2018; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2017). Social assistance for the unemployed is limited to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which provides participants with minimal short-term remuneration and only reaches a small proportion of the unemployed. Under 1 million individuals benefit from the EPWP programme each year (Republic of South Africa, 2018).

South Africans have access to free education and primary healthcare, but these are poor quality, and wealthier individuals (and even some poor individuals) end up turning to the private sector. State health facilities are overwhelmingly characterised by long wait times, poorly trained staff, and a shortage of materials (Seekings & Nattrass, 2015). South African students have 'notoriously poor' school performance despite considerable spending on education, and rank among the lowest performing internationally (*ibid.*: 170, 174).

6. The official stance of the DA towards social welfare

In all election campaigns from 2004 to 2019, the DA has emphasised the fact that the state's primary responsibility in the realisation of individuals' well-being is creating a conducive environment for economic growth and job creation, and providing individuals with the capabilities to access and create opportunities. This, the DA contends, is a key part of ensuring individuals' positive freedom. The DA has also included the unemployed in those it believes should have access to the social grant system. The promise to extend the grant system to this population, however, has become increasingly vague over the years and was absent in the 2014 election campaign. The party has been inconsistently supportive of EPWP, failing to mention it in the 2004 and 2019 campaigns but promising to expand the programme in the 2014 election campaign. In 2009, the party proposed the addition of behavioural conditions for the CSG but changed this to 'soft conditions' in 2014 and removed it entirely in 2019.

6.1 The 2004 general election

In his introduction to the 2004 election manifesto, the then leader of the DA (Tony Leon) pointed to Sen's (1999) concept of development as freedom:

> The Democratic Alliance, together with the people of South Africa, can create an open, opportunity society in which every South African enjoys freedom and security and prosperity. No one must be left behind: every man, woman and child must be given a chance to fulfil his potential and to reach her destination (DA, 2004: 1).

In order to ensure that all citizens would be able to access opportunities, the DA pledged that it would work to create the right economic environment for growth and job creation to take place. As the manifesto stated, 'Providing opportunities to work is the surest way of empowering the marginalised and the poor' (DA, 2004: 9).

The DA also embraced the fact that the state is needed to intervene where the market has failed to protect the most vulnerable, both in terms of social assistance and the provision of basic social services. One of the DA's ten key proposals was the Basic Income Grant (BIG) of R110/month which would be made available to all individuals earning an income of under R7500 a year who were not already receiving another social grant. Whilst a BIG is usually understood as a universal grant, the DA interpreted it as a minimum income guarantee that would be means-tested. The DA

also pledged that it would work to improve access to education and affordable health care for all South Africans through cooperation with the private sector. The DA's inclusion of 'affordable' suggests that while the party recognises the need to provide all individuals with access to health care, it should not be free to all, specifically individuals who have the means to pay, or that the costs incurred be relative to one's income. The unemployed would be assisted through the BIG. The DA made no mention of EPWP.

6.2 The 2009 general election

In the 2009 manifesto, the DA again recognised the role of the state in ensuring universal access to affordable basic social services and emphasised the importance of a social safety net. The DA reintroduced the BIG proposal, but changed the name to the 'Income Support and Unemployment Grant' (DA 2009). In addition to the BIG, which would cover poor and unemployed adults, the DA stated that it would continue to use EPWP but would ensure that the work opportunities offered would provide participants with 'marketable skills' so they could later join the labour market (DA, 2009: 12).

The manifesto did not explicitly express concerns about dependency. It did state, however, that the party imagines 'a country where citizens are not satisfied with handouts from the state, but are helped by their government to make the most of their individual talents and take charge of their own lives', implying that citizens are currently 'satisfied' with receiving grants instead of being employed (DA, 2009: 11).

The manifesto also expressed concerns about the responsibility of grant beneficiaries. The manifesto stated that it would introduce developmental conditionalities to the CSG in order to ensure that caregivers were spending the money 'constructively'. The conditions would include taking the child for health check-ups and ensuring the child is attending school. The manifesto also pledged to ensure that teenage parents would not be able to receive the CSG on behalf of their child but would need to get it from an adult family member. While the DA did not provide any insight into its stance on vouchers, concerns about the responsibility of grant beneficiaries implies that vouchers may have had some support from the party.

6.3 The 2014 general election

In the 2014 election campaign, the DA re-emphasised the importance of a safety net for the vulnerable, stating that the party is committed to 'protecting all citizens from poverty and hunger' (DA 2014: 42). For the 2014 election, the DA published a social policy document outlining the party's stance on social welfare. The document emphasised the need for the South African government to implement a 'social floor' which would use a set minimum income in which no citizen would be able to fall below.

Similar to the 2009 manifesto, the DA did not explicitly express concerns about dependency. It did, however, state that 'We will ensure that the social grants system is a means to lift people out of poverty, not keep people trapped there', implying that the current grant leaves people 'dependent' on government assistance and does not provide them with the means to become self-reliant (DA, 2014: 5).

Neither the manifesto nor the policy document explicitly mentioned a BIG or Income Support and Unemployment Grant. The DA's social policy document discussed the importance of a 'social floor' and 'basic income' but was unclear about whether this applied to the unemployed population (see DA, 2013). The DA pledged to expand the number of EPWP opportunities to 2.5 million per annum by 2025, but with the inclusion that these 'programmes can be scaled down as the number of formal and informal sector jobs expand' (DA, 2013: 11).

The DA did not remove its 2009 proposal to introduce developmental conditionalities for the CSG but changed it so that the CSG would have 'soft conditions' where a social worker would intervene if a child was not attending school or had not been for a health check-up. Similar to 2009, there was no inclusion of vouchers as a replacement for cash.

6.4 The 2019 general election

In preparation for the 2019 general election, three notable proposals were presented to the Federal Council (the DA's highest decision-making body outside of the Federal Congress). The first was a proposal (by Karen Jooste, an MP on the Portfolio Committee on Social Development) to increase the CSG in line with the food poverty line, which is R547 as of 2018 (Stats SA, 2018). The second proposal was to re-introduce the Income Support and Unemployment Grant presented in the 2009 manifesto, but framing it as an 'empowerment grant', linking it to capabilities and opportunities. Another proposal was made by the DA's national head office to introduce a system of food vouchers to complement the existing CSG while keeping

the monetary value of the grant the same. This proposal received some support from the Federal Council but was ultimately rejected.[6]

The party also spoke about the importance of having a decent standard of living for the realisation of an individual's freedom. More specifically, the manifesto stated 'People cannot be free without a respectable standard of living, which requires access to education, healthcare and quality basic services. Government must free people from the chains of poverty…giving meaning to the Bill of Rights' (DA, 2019: 5). The manifesto spoke about the dire need to improve the quality of basic education and to ensure that all South Africans have access to quality health care. In order to improve access to basic health care, the DA stated that it would strengthen the quality of existing health care facilities and build new ones. It also stressed that it would work with the private sector to make private care more affordable to lower- and middle-class South Africans. The party also pledged to increase the CSG so that it is in line with the food poverty line.

The party reintroduced (although ambiguously) the idea of a basic income that was absent in the 2014 manifesto, stating that,

> The new social assistance system envisioned by the DA aims to set a basic income floor with the initial focus on children. The system will be expanded over time to ensure that every South African can enjoy their rights and live a life of dignity as envisioned in our Constitution (DA, 2019: 50).

However, the party did not include the proposal for an 'Empowerment Grant' in the manifesto, pointing to some reservations in adopting a distinct grant for unemployed individuals. There was no mention of EPWP, suggesting a shift from the party's previous election campaigns.

6.5 2004-2019

In all of its election campaigns, the DA has demonstrated that the party embraces a key role for the government in the realisation of individuals' well-being. The party perceives the primary role of the state as creating the right economic conditions for job creation and economic growth, and providing the capabilities required to access opportunities. This, it is believed, is a crucial component of realising one's individual freedom. Education, health care, and targeted social assistance are all thought of as

[6] DA 4

'capabilities'. The 2019 election manifesto reintroduced the idea of a minimum income that had been absent in the 2014 campaign. Thinking about the removal of the BIG from the 2014 election campaign, one interviewee explained that as the party gained more support and started to govern in the Western Cape, it had to ensure that its policy proposals were more 'realistic', pointing to concerns about the administrative viability of a BIG.[7] In the 2019 election campaign, however, the party did stress more than ever the importance of social assistance, in addition to basic social services, as constitutional rights.

7. Ideas about social welfare among liberal politicians in the DA

7.1 The role of the state in realising individuals' well-being

The role of the state in providing access to basic social services appears to be widely embraced among the government, civil society and the public in South Africa. Since 1994, the ANC has continuously pledged to ensure universal access to education and health, and other services such as electricity. Since its establishment, the EFF has made similar pledges, promising to provide free, universal access to quality health care and education (EFF, 2013, 2014). The DA recognises the right to basic social services but values cooperation with the private sector, especially with regard to health care (DA, 2013, 2019).

Civil society organisations have continuously pushed for universal access to health care and quality education. In terms of public attitudes towards the provision of social services, the 2015 Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) survey found that over 70 per cent of respondents thought public expenditure on health care should be increased (Democracy in Africa Research Unit [DARU], 2015). Similar results were also found when asked about education, with 72 per cent of participants stating that more should be spent on education.

The provision of social assistance (through social grants) has been far more controversial. Despite the rapid ANC-led expansion of the social grant system, the ANC has continuously decried the growth of the social grant system, arguing that country must reduce the number of people 'depending' on the state. As early as 1994,

[7] DA 2

President Nelson Mandela, in his State of the Nation Address, stressed that what South Africa needed was development and job creation, not 'handouts' from the government (South African History Online, 1994). It is not surprising, then, that the ANC-government rejected the 2002 proposal for a BIG. The EFF has adopted the opposite approach, pledging to introduce a BIG upon election (EFF, 2013).

Civil society organisations (CSO) have also historically supported the expansion of the country's social grant system. CSOs played a key role in the successful extension of the CSG to children up to the age of 18. Although unsuccessful, CSOs also pushed for the adoption of the BIG in 2002.

Despite concerns about grant recipients being 'lazy' and irresponsible, considerable support for the social grant system appears to exist among the public. The 2015 CNEP survey, for example, found that 61 per cent of respondents said that public expenditure on social grants should be 'much more than now' and 'somewhat more than now' while only 12 per cent said 'somewhat less than now' or 'much less than now' (DARU, 2015). The 2016 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) found slightly less widespread support. 52 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'the government should spend less on benefits for the poor' while 34 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (SASAS, 2016).

7.1.1 The DA and ideas about the role of the state in realising individuals' well-being

All of the interviewees in the DA expressed that the state's primary responsibility in realising individuals' well-being is creating a conducive environment for economic growth and job creation while also providing individuals with the capabilities required to access and create opportunities. All of the interviewees emphasised that the state has a responsibility to provide access to basic social services and targeted social assistance. Interviewees spoke about the benefit of private-public partnerships in the provision of health services. One interviewee argued that rather than striving to provide public health care, the state should focus on ensuring all citizens have a basic income which they can then use to access private health care if needed. The large majority of interviewees argued that the provision of social welfare is (and should be) a constitutional right.

All interviewees argued that the state's first responsibility is to create a conducive environment for job creation and economic growth. As DA 1 explained:

> The most powerful impact government can have on maximising welfare and reducing poverty is by creating an enabling environment for the economy to grow. Only a thriving, growing economy can create jobs and produce tax revenue on the scale required to reduce poverty in South Africa.

All interviewees also argued that the state has a responsibility to provide access to social welfare. DA 7, for example, described the role of the state as a 'balancing act' between creating the right economic environment and establishing a 'welfare net':

> The state has to find a balance between kick starting the economy so that it grows at rates high enough to create jobs and lift people out of poverty while at the same time putting in place a welfare net for the most vulnerable, and that is a delicate balancing act, and how you do that is a subject of debate…

DA 2 spoke about the need to provide a 'safety net' in the form of social assistance for the most vulnerable:

> The state has to provide a safety net for people who are not able to, who fall on hard times and are not able to take care of themselves. There has to be that safety net … people must be allowed to flourish…

This interviewee pointed to the idea that social welfare, and cash assistance in particular, is perceived as a capability which provides individuals with the means to access or create opportunities and 'flourish'.

The large majority of interviewees also emphasised that social assistance is, and should remain, a constitutional right. As DA 2 stated, 'Social assistance should be a right that everyone who is unable to provide for themselves and their families deserves, be it because they are handicapped, aged, ill, a child, or unemployed'. Similar to other interviewees, DA 2 included the unemployed as part of those who should have a right to social assistance.

In terms of the provision of basic social services, education and health care were the two services that interviewees stressed should be universal. Speaking about the provision of education, one interviewee stated:

> If we took over, we would focus a lot more on education. We spend a huge amount of GDP on education, one of the highest in the world, but our

> return is dismal… We are really not getting value for money. And apart from all of that we are hurting our children because they leave school and can't read or write properly. The way we sell it is no matter where a child grows up or what school they go to, they should have the same opportunities available to them… So, if you are in the middle of Soweto or in the middle of Sandton and going to a government school, you should be afforded a decent education that gives you opportunities that you can take advantage of when you're older.[8]

This interviewee spoke implicitly about education as a capability required to access opportunities.

Speaking about the importance of health care, one interviewee stated that all citizens should have access to free, quality public health care, making private health care a choice rather than a necessity due to the poor quality of the public system:

> All citizens should have access to health care… proper medical assistance that requires a strong network of public health care facilities at the municipal, provincial, and national level where people are able to access these services in an efficient and effective manner … The state has a duty to maintain a solid network of public hospitals, so private health care becomes a choice. If people want to pay and seek private health care, that is their choice to do so...[9]

However, this interviewee, among others, spoke about the benefits of promoting private-public partnerships in the provision of health care in order to ensure universal access to quality health services, reflecting the official stance of the DA party:

> The government should be bringing in as much private health care experience and management, particularly around facilities and services, to assist … Currently, the government has a strangle hold on the training and accreditation of medical students and because the state's resources are limited there is a bottle-neck on people who are able to study medicine and become doctors…[10]

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[8] DA 3
[9] DA 2
[10] DA 2

One interviewee argued that rather than striving to provide free, universal health care, the state should prioritise the provision of targeted income support through social grants in order to give individuals the opportunity to use private health care.[11]

7.2 A 'culture of dependency'?

Concerns about social grants promoting a 'culture of dependency' and instilling laziness in grant beneficiaries has been a characteristic of ANC discourse since 1994. As recent as 2009, at the annual summit of the National Economic Development and Labour Council, President Jacob Zuma stressed that 'There is something wrong in the fact that more than 13 million people depend on social grants. We must do something to correct the situation' (Khumalo, 2009). By contrast, both the EFF and DA have been seemingly silent on the issue of dependency.

Civil society organisations have historically been staunch supporters of the expansion of the social grant system, suggesting that they are not concerned about a 'dependency culture'. Public attitudes, on the other hand, are, again, more complex. Despite the apparent widespread support for social grants (DARU, 2015; SASAS, 2016), public concerns about dependency do exist. Attitude surveys – such as the 2015 CNEP survey, SASAS surveys, and the Afrobarometer surveys – have not enquired about attitudes towards dependency. Qualitative research has had mixed results, suggesting that ideas about dependency are widespread but not universal (Hochfeld & Plagerson, 2011; Surender et al., 2010).

A 2007 study provides insight into the apparent disconnect between extensive support for the public provision of social assistance and concerns about dependency (and irresponsibility). Seekings (2007) argues that support for social assistance is easily 'mutable' and largely dependent on the precise description of the prospective beneficiaries. Participants viewed the elderly and the poor as being the most vulnerable and deserving of assistance. The level of support varied significantly when participants were given further characteristics about beneficiaries (if they had drinking habits or were sick). Support for social assistance also depended on whether increased assistance would require higher taxes. As Seekings (2007) concludes, the South African public is largely supportive of the social grant system – more so than the government – but the support is not 'unconditional'.

[11] DA 4

7.2.1 The DA and ideas about dependency

The large majority of DA interviewees dismissed the idea that social grants create a 'dependency culture' in South Africa. These responses were motivated by the belief that individuals prefer to work over receiving assistance from the state, pointing to the core liberal concept of rationality. The desire to work was strongly related to the idea that work provides individuals with dignity. Some interviewees argued that dependency is not a concern given the limited monetary value of the grants (especially the CSG, where unemployed adults often receive the grant to look after a child), but could become a concern if it was significantly higher. Only a small minority of interviewees expressed the belief that the South African social grant system creates dependency. These interviewees were concerned that the receipt of social assistance could erode an individual's desire to work, seemingly undermining the core liberal value of rationality.

The interviewees who denounced the idea of dependency emphasised that South Africans want to work. As DA 1 explained:

> … the average person possesses talent and is essentially hardworking, responsible and enjoys taking care of themselves and their family… Poverty creates dependence not grants…

DA 1 also argued that social grants, and the CSG in particular (as it is the main grant able-bodied individuals have access to, although targeted towards individuals with children), have actually allowed people to become active in the labour market rather than serving as a disincentive to find work:

> Research on the child grant specifically indicates that apart from the benefits to the child, the stable income allowed mothers to better search for work and find work or start their own business. Since it is paid on a continuous basis it allows caregivers to plan, save, negotiate risks and make investments.

DA 5 provided a similar response:

> I believe that every situation is different, but I believe that people who receive grants, because they are getting a reliable income, they can actually go look for jobs. They know 'I am only getting 260 rand, surely I can get more if I get a job'. These people want opportunities. These people do look for jobs.

This interviewee argued that poor South Africans, and CSG recipients in particular, do want jobs and these grants give individuals the capability to look for opportunities.

Other interviewees were less absolute in their responses, but still denounced the idea of a dependency culture in South Africa. One interviewee, for example, stated that the cash value of the grant in South Africa was not enough to foster a culture of dependency, comparing South Africa's social grant system to the dole in the United Kingdom. This interviewee implied that if the value of the grant was higher, dependency could become a problem in that people would 'opt-out' of work:

> Well, in our country I don't think they chose to because it's not comprehensive… I think in the UK it was a problem where people were becoming professional dole collectors, so it can be a problem… But, here it is nowhere near the majority…[12]

This interviewee also spoke about the importance of dignity and self-worth that work provides adults with: 'I think for the majority of adults they rather be working. It gives you self-wroth. Motivates you. Makes you feel proud. Getting up in the morning, going off to work…'[13] Similar comments about the importance of work for an individual's dignity were made by several other interviewees, among interviewees who both adamantly denounced dependency and those who were less absolute. As DA 1 stated, 'Irrespective of the grant system, having a job is considered the norm. It is associated with a better life, more security, happiness and social integration…'

Similar to DA 3's statement about the value of social grants, DA 7 also argued that a 'dependency culture' is unlikely in South Africa because of the cash value of the grant, specifically the CSG:

> Now, in South Africa I don't think many people will choose a couple hundred rand a month over a job that might pay them 3000 rand a month, so I don't think that there is a big incentive in South Africa…

[12] DA 3
[13] DA 3

This interviewee went on to say:

> I don't think the grants system in and of itself creates dependency, what has created dependency is unemployment, and [social grants] are designed to cushion the blow for the most vulnerable. So, I don't agree with people that say our [social assistance] system creates dependency. I think our unemployment crisis creates dependency.

There was one interviewee who was unsure about whether or not the social grant system creates dependency. This interviewee argued that 'Dependency might happen sometimes but we need factual evidence…'[14]

Only three interviewees expressed serious concerns about dependency. Two interviewees were of the thinking that receiving assistance from the state would erode individuals' desires to find proper employment. While DA 9 dismissed the idea that people would rather receive social assistance than be engaged in proper employment, they feared the ability of social assistance to erode an individual's desire to work once they have begun to receive that assistance: 'I am not sure that it doesn't create a dependency culture … I think it creates kind of a mindset which enables the continuation of poverty in some way'.

DA 2 provided a similar response. This interviewee spoke about dependency as a possible problem if the social grant system was extended to the poor and unemployed population, not with regard to the CSG like other interviewees: 'I certainly do believe it could become a problem in South Africa. I think people would default to 'I am receiving this from government I don't need to seek work…' Yet DA 2 also appreciated the fact that the high unemployment rate in South Africa makes 'expecting people to just go out and find work… very difficult'.

DA 13, on the other hand, did not elaborate on the reasons for why they believe that social grants contribute to a culture of dependency. When asked if social grants create a culture of dependency, DA 13 responded bluntly: 'We are far down this road already'. This interviewee stated that the focus needs to be on job creation as opposed to social welfare 'or we are in for a problem'.[15]

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[14] DA 12
[15] DA 13

7.3 How to assist the unemployed

Since ANC's first election campaign, the party has continuously expressed that the best way to assist the unemployed is through work. The ANC's 1994 RDP emphasised that 'a system of 'handouts' for the unemployed should be avoided…' (Republic of South Africa, 1994: 23). Instead the party pledged to implement a public works programme, now known as EPWP. The ANC has maintained this line, promising every election to deliver more public works opportunities, notwithstanding the fact that the ANC-dominated government has continuously failed to meet its outlined objectives (See ANC, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014). The party's preference for workfare, and opposition to 'handouts', certainly played a role in the later rejection of the 2002 BIG proposal (Meth, 2004). In a survey of political elites in the ANC and DA, Silva et al. (2018: 12) found that 49 per cent of respondents believed that a basic income for all individuals over the age of 25 was a 'desirable policy'. Yet only 32 per cent believed that it would be a viable policy option (*ibid.*). However, they did not disaggregate the results to show the percentage of politicians in the ANC versus the DA that supported the provision of a basic income. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between evaluations of a basic income being desirable versus viable provides useful insight into why the DA seems to have been vague on its proposal to implement a BIG in 2019.

The EFF, on the other hand, has been far more supportive than the ANC (at least discursively) of extending the social grant system to the unemployed. In its 2014 election campaign, the EFF promised to implement a BIG in order to reach all poor and unemployed individuals who do not have access to social assistance. The EFF also emphasised that EPWP needs to be expanded to provide at least one million jobs each year, demonstrating a multi-faceted approach to assistance for the unemployed (EFF, 2014).

Although unsuccessful, CSOs were very active (through the 'Big Coalition') in the push for the adoption of a BIG in the early 2000s (Frye & Kallmann, 2003). The stance of civil society on EPWP is less clear but it is apparent that broadening the coverage of the social grant system to include the unemployed is the first priority.

Public attitudes are, again, less straightforward. In the 2015 CNEP survey, participants were asked about their thoughts on public expenditure for the unemployed. When asked 'Thinking about public expenditure, should there be more or less on – Unemployment benefits?', 61 per cent answered either 'much more than now' or 'somewhat more than now' while only 14 per cent responded 'somewhat less than now' or 'much less than now' (DARU, 2015). Similarly, in the SASAS

survey 75 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 'the government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed' (SASAS, 2016). Neither surveys included questions on the use of public works programmes.

A mixed-methods study by Surender et al. (2010) supported the results of the 2015 CNEP survey and the 2016 SASAS survey. Utilising surveys, focus groups, and interviews with unemployed men in South Africa, Dawson & Fouksman (2017) found contrasting results. They found that there was considerable opposition towards extending the social grant system to poor and unemployed adults among the unemployed themselves. Opposition was largely motivated by the association of dignity with work and concerns that such a grant would disincentivise people from looking for work (Dawson & Fouksman, 2017).

The contrast between the study by Dawson & Fouksman (2017) and the CNEP and SASAS survey data (in addition to the study by Surender et al. (2010)) is perhaps best explained by Seekings' (2007) study discussed previously. As Seekings (2007) suggests, public support for the extension of the grant system to the unemployed is generally widespread, but the level of support quickly changes when individuals are informed about specific characteristics of grant beneficiaries (especially the use of alcohol) and the potential tax increases required to implement the grant. This suggests that while the public may be supportive of broader coverage, conservative ideas about the responsibility of grant beneficiaries and neoliberal ideas about welfare dependency and laziness are also prevalent and impact the extent to which individuals support the extension of the social grant system.

7.3.1 The DA and ideas about assistance for the unemployed

The large majority of interviewees recognised the responsibility of the state to provide social assistance for individuals who are unemployed. The large majority supported the use of unemployment grants with workfare as a secondary option. This was related to the perception of social assistance as a 'capability' the state can and should provide working-age adults. Interviewees supported the use of EPWP for similar reasons, although they were less certain of the effectiveness of workfare as compared to cash transfers in providing individuals with capabilities and opportunities. Only one interviewee stated that they would do away with the country's existing workfare programme and focus solely on unemployment grants. A small minority of interviewees was wary of unemployment benefits and preferred the use of workfare.

The large majority of respondents supported the use of unemployment benefits with workfare as a secondary option. When asked how best to help the unemployed in terms of social assistance, DA 1 explained:

> In terms of social protection, the best way to help the unemployed is through a basic income grant. This is the most effective way, as it is a direct payment that empowers people to spend it as they see fit. As a direct payment, it is cheaper to administer than public works, and so more of the social assistance budget reaches the unemployed. Public works programmes can also be a good way to assist the unemployed, because it has the additional benefits of giving people some training and some work experience, as well as giving them the dignity of having a job. However, it is a less efficient way of transferring money to the unemployed…

This participant compared the idea of an unemployment grant (or what they described as a 'basic income grant') to public works programmes, arguing that a grant would be a more efficient way of targeting the poor and unemployed.

DA 7 provided a similar response, arguing that an unemployment grant is the best way to assist the poor and unemployed, but not dismissing the role of EPWP.

> The big problem with our grant system is there is a big cohort of people who don't get anything. I think there should be a universal grant… Maybe not one universal grant but we need to fill that gap.

When asked about public works, this interviewee explained that they can see the benefits of such programmes but pointed out the fact that they are very costly and are often manipulated by the political elite. This interviewee argued that workfare would be more valuable if it provided people with useable skills, suggesting that South Africa's current EPWP does not:

> It can work but it costs a lot of money which takes away from social welfare programmes. They are often politically manipulated so it becomes a chance for people to gain voter support. The work is often meaningless and it doesn't lead to skills transfers. People end of digging holes and filling them with dirt. There needs to be genuine skills transfer so people can add it to their CVs. So, it can work under those conditions.[16]

[16] DA 7

Interviewees expressed the urgency of providing unemployed people with a basic income through the social grant system in order to ensure that people have the means to at least survive, demonstrating recognition of the dire situation of poverty and unemployment in South Africa and the need for the state to intervene. DA 5 gave a similar response:

> The situation that we are in demands some of us to say 'okay look guys, this is not a normal situation, let's take people to a certain level and make sure their opportunities are there and help them realise their full potential'. You can't just leave them where they are. I would not forgive myself if I did that.

DA 10 stated, 'there really needs to be an unemployment benefit… so people can at least eat… unemployment in this country is massive, so there is a lot we need to do'. DA 10 also spoke about the usefulness of EPWP in relation to the South African context of high unemployment and the shortage of skills:

> Look, I can see the place for it. There can be some value in people working for projects. But, I don't think it's particularly dignified to be doing mindless work for a fraction of what you need to live. If it's properly managed and directed it can be quite helpful to a municipality and a government… In our situation where we have tons of people who will probably never work because they just don't have the skills… And the way the world is going… we are going towards the 4th industrial revolution. So, for people who don't have those skills it's just becoming more and more difficult to participate in the economy…

Only one interviewee argued that public works should not be used. This interviewee explained:

> I don't know how it's empowering anybody to stand in the sun the whole day and wave a flag, I think a machine can do that. So, alternatively, you give someone 500 rand and they say 'okay I do this for a little bit and then I am going to start to do my own thing that I really enjoy' and then you let them be creative instead of forcing people to stand in the sun and getting them to do this pointless work. And EPWP also comes at a cost, because

> now that person has to stand in the sun all day waving a flag, he can't go look for an actual job now, and he doesn't get any skills or anything.[17]

This interviewee spoke about EPWP and a grant for unemployed individuals in relation to capabilities and opportunities, arguing that a grant would be a more effective tool in providing individuals with both.

A small minority of interviewees was wary about the use of assistance for the unemployed in the form of unemployment grants. These interviewees were supportive of EPWP but argued that it needs to be improved in order to provide individuals with skills to find proper employment. As DA 9 said, for example:

> My understanding of it is a cash transfer with no strings, which I would certainly be kind of cautious about in the South African context where you have a huge pool of social grant beneficiaries and a much smaller pool of taxpayers who support that. I think that a whole bunch of unintended consequences and perverse incentives might be produced by a cash transfer scheme like that…

DA 9 then went on to say:

> I support EPWP. But a major challenge in its current form is that employment opportunities are temporary and provide little relief for the long-term unemployment challenge plaguing the nation. So, you need to focus on providing practical skills through EPWP that will allow for further employment opportunities post-EPWP.

7.4 Conditions and transfers paid in kind

South Africa's system of social grants is unconditional and all transfers are paid in cash. Little is known about the ideas of the ANC-government towards conditions and vouchers, yet it is clear that concerns about the responsibility of grant beneficiaries, especially CSG recipients, exist within the ANC's ranks. In 2016, President Jacob Zuma said, while speaking at the South African Social Security Agency's 10-year reunion, 'No one is allowed to misuse social grant income, which is intended to improve the living conditions of intended beneficiaries…' (South Africa News, 2016). The CSG is the most controversial grant in South Africa and also the most

[17] DA 4

widespread. This section thus focuses specifically on the CSG when considering conditions and transfers in kind.

The stance of civil society on this issue is unclear. However, in pushing for the expansion of the social grant system, and the CSG in particular, CSOs emphasised social assistance as a constitutional right (Seekings, 2018). The use of conditions arguably contradicts the acknowledgment of social assistance as a constitutional right. Whether or not transfers made in kind are incompatible with the right to social assistance depends on how 'social assistance' is defined (i.e. if it is defined as cash assistance or if it includes the provision of food and other transfers in kind). The South African constitution does not define social assistance (Republic of South Africa, 1996), yet in the 1994 RDP, the ANC states that social assistance can take the form of cash or benefits in kind (see Republic of South Africa, 1994). Given 'rights discourse' used by civil society, one can reasonably presume that they would not be supportive of conditions. The same cannot be said for the use of transfers made in kind.

No known academic research exists on public attitudes towards vouchers and conditions in South Africa. A DA interviewee, however, revealed that the DA's own research through focus groups has found that the public supported the use of both mechanisms.[18] Who exactly participated in these focus groups was not disclosed. Nevertheless, concerns about the responsibility of grant beneficiaries, especially female recipients of the CSG, do exist (Hochfeld & Plagerson, 2011; Seekings, 2018; Surender et al., 2010). Yet whether or not these concerns are strong enough (or widespread enough) to constitute considerable support for the use of vouchers and conditions is unclear.

7.4.1 The DA and ideas about conditions and transfers paid in kind

The majority of interviewees were opposed to both conditions and vouchers. A number of the interviewees argued that both interventions undermine key liberal values, such as individualism and the idea that individuals are rational actors. Interviewees spoke about social grants as a constitutional right and the subsequent inability to condition them. Some interviewees supported the use of one intervention but not the other. A small minority of interviewees supported the use of both interventions in order to ensure that the CSG is used constructively, undermining the idea that individuals are rational, responsible actors with individual agency.

[18] DA 17

A number of interviewees argued against the use of both interventions in light of their incompatibility with key liberal values. DA 12, for example, tied their opposition to conditions to the liberal values that individuals are rational actors and should be given agency to make choices about their own lives:

> The fundamental value of liberalism is that the individual knows best. This is the contradictory [stuff] that comes from some of my colleagues… Conditions are a dehumanising thing… Conditionality is a key indicator of someone's attitude towards social grants.

This interviewee spoke about colleagues in the DA, suggesting that there are individuals in the party who would like to see the use of conditions on social grants. A similar response was given by DA 10, who also expressed concerns about the agency of individuals:

> I don't know if I am so much in favour of vouchers and conditional grants. I think that you give people the money and one knows what they need to survive. You obviously have the problem where you don't know if the money is being spent on the child, so there might be reason there to implement vouchers or whatever, but as a liberal party my view would be more to cash; give people the choice to decide for themselves. At the end of the day, we are not about controlling people. Our default position is to give the individual the choice.

Similarly, when asked about the use of vouchers, DA 3 responded:

> You have got to trust parents. I know some of them do abuse it but it's miniscule, but some do, and you're always going to have that in any system, but you have got to trust parents to know what the priorities of the child are. So, you give them money and they must decide. Parents must take responsibility. You can't have a nanny state that says 'Okay, here is a box full of food'. No, they have to decide. It's about choice and individual rights.

When asked about conditions, DA 3 explained:

> I actually used to, because of the Brazil model, specifically with school attendance and clinic visits, but then there has to be something in place where the child doesn't get penalised. For example, if the mother is

> neglecting the child then social services should step in … But we can't stop the child from getting the grant when parents aren't fulfilling conditions.

Other interviewees attributed their opposition to conditions to the fact that social assistance is a right, arguing that constitutional rights cannot be conditioned. As DA 4 stated, for example, 'I don't see how we could ever do that as a party because we say we uphold the constitution and the constitution says it's a right… You can't link conditionalities to a right'.

When asked about vouchers, this participant responded, 'We can't tell people how to spend their money. The Government would never decide to pay my salary in vouchers to ensure that I spend my money responsibly. Why should we be able to do that to grant beneficiaries?'.[19]

Some interviewees supported the idea of one of the interventions but not the other. Some interviewees, for example, supported the use of vouchers but not conditions. As DA 11 stated:

> There are a lot, a lot of instance where it's not being used for food. There are people who don't see that money every month because they have become victims of loan sharks. I think a food voucher would alleviate some of those problems.

Yet when asked about the use of conditions, this interviewee was concerned about state capacity:

> I go back to where I started about fairness and freedom. One of the founding fabrics of our constitution is choice. People are entitled to choice for what they do, about their lives, how they live it… But, children cannot make these choices. There should be some regulation. But, we just don't have the capacity in this country.

Other interviewees agreed with the use of conditions but not vouchers. These interviewees supported the use of conditions in order to ensure that the CSG is being spent on the child in a constructive way. Both interviewees were opposed to vouchers

[19] DA 4

because of the perceived administrative difficulties that implementing a voucher system would entail.

When asked if grant beneficiaries spend their grant responsibly, DA 2 responded:

> It concerns me around the child support grants that there aren't sufficient safe guards in place to ensure that money is actually being spent on the needs of the child rather than sustaining the habits of the caregiver. It could be conditional on that all vaccinations are done, the child is enrolled in school as part of the requirements… Then you wouldn't have people claiming grants from the state for child support who aren't actually supporting the child.

Yet when subsequently asked about vouchers, DA 2 responded:

> I think what you need to do is streamline the system. I mean having a whole separate system to manage vouchers might be more difficult to manage. And those vouchers would become a form of currency anyway, unless the voucher was linked to an ID number… I think it would add a whole other level of bureaucracy to manage.

One interviewee spoke about the benefits of using vouchers but did not provide insight into their personal stance on conditions. This interviewee argued that vouchers would be useful to ensure that people are spending the CSG on the needs of the child:

> I think we need to look more closely at the use of vouchers so that we can actually nudge people's behaviour… so that people can be nudged to spend their money on things that need to be spent on. I am not saying that there are lots of people using their voucher to buy booze and cigarettes and that sort of thing but child nutrition is something that I am quire worried about.[20]

A small minority of participants supported the use of both vouchers and conditions.

The first interviewee did not explain their support for either mechanisms nor did they point to the possible administrative difficulties that could come along with the

[20] DA 7

implementation of either or both interventions. The other interviewee, while supportive of the idea of conditions and vouchers in theory, was concerned about the practicality of vouchers in the South African context.

When asked about conditions, this interviewee answered:

> I'm in favour of a conditional child grant to various health and educational requirements. I think that it would be a very sensible liberal approach to social welfare – to kind of tie it to the architecture of incentives, especially so far as health and education are concerned… I think that it would incentivise civic responsibility.[21]

This interviewee was less certain about the use of vouchers in light of the perceived administrative difficulties. Yet this interviewee argued that vouchers would be successful in promoting choice:

> As far as cash transfer versus vouchers goes, I would guess the former is simpler and most cost-effective from an administrative perspective. But I certainly think that vouchers have their place in promoting choice and diversity which are desirable from a liberal policymaking point of view.[22]

When asked if vouchers and conditions would actually reduce choice and individual agency among beneficiaries by restricting the items grant recipients are able to buy and 'forcing' individuals to fulfill certain conditions, this interviewee responded:

> I mean surely it's better to have a system of conditionality that includes incentives and reduces a little bit of individual agency than a system of straight cash with no conditions. So, yes, you might have more choices about how you go about spending that money, but that's less my point, my point is that it breeds a kind of dependency on the state and an attitude of entitlement in a way that a system that cleverly crafts a system of incentives wouldn't.[23]

This interviewee's concerns about the responsibility of grant beneficiaries and the importance of 'civic responsibility' seemed to overpower the importance they placed on individualism and rationality.

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[21] DA 9
[22] DA 9
[23] DA 9

8. Conclusion

This paper showed that interviewees in the DA perceived the state as responsible for the provision of basic social services such as health care and education and means-tested social assistance for all in need. These, they argued, are (and should remain) constitutional rights. Interviewees dismissed fears about dependency, emphasising that South Africans have a strong desire to work and aspire to acquire the sense of dignity that is associated with wage-labour, pointing to the core liberal value of rationality. Interviewees argued that the best way to assist the unemployed is through the provision of non-contributory social grants given the limited reach of EPWP and its inability to provide meaningful opportunities that equip individuals with usable skills. Interviewees explained that public works can be used as a complementary option if it can be improved to provide participants with skills that will help them acquire employment in the future. Interviewees stressed that social assistance should be paid in cash (not in kind) and that transfers should be unconditional.

The approach of the DA towards the four ideological dilemmas stands out from the country's historical approach in that the interviewees embraced the role of the private sector in the provision of health care. Ideas about the role of the state were similar to the egalitarian liberal approach in that there was a recognition that due to high poverty and unemployment, and low formal employment, non-contributory social assistance is a particularly important policy tool, contrasting with the prominence of contributory insurance in the social liberal approach. Individuals also dismissed ideas about dependency, setting it apart from the rhetoric about a 'dependency culture' propagated by the ANC. Ideas about dependency reflect the social and egalitarian liberal idea that social assistance as a constitutional right does not create dependency. The DA interviewees also vary from the historical approach of the ANC in that the large majority argued that the social grant system should include poor and unemployed adults. This again points to similarities with the egalitarian liberal approach in the recognition that all individuals should have the right to a minimum income. Liberal politicians in the DA thought of transfers paid in kind and the use of conditions in the same way the ANC has historically. This reflects the approach of social and egalitarian liberals in the use of cash and unconditional assistance.

This paper demonstrated that liberal politicians in South Africa conceptualised liberty as entailing both positive and negative freedoms, but with a greater emphasis on positive liberty (see Table 5). Individualism, in addition to the idea that the individual should be the unit of focus, was largely interpreted as non-racialism. The role of the state was thought of as ensuring basic negative freedoms, creating the right environment for economic growth and job creation, and providing individuals

with the capabilities required to access and create opportunities. General interest meant that the DA is dedicated to creating a caring society that embraces the concept of sociability. Sociability was used to justify the primacy of the individual. More specifically, sociability meant that policies that benefit and are targeted towards the individual will benefit the South African society as a whole. Progress was perceived as economic growth and job creation and the expansion of capabilities and opportunities, pointing to an embrace of developmentalism. Rationality meant that the average individual is hardworking and strives for self-development.

Table 5: The DA's interpretation of the seven core values of liberalism

	DA
Liberty	Having the capabilities required to access or create opportunities
Individualism	The primacy of the individual; non-racialism
Role of the state	To ensure negative freedoms; create the right conditions for economic growth and to provide individuals with capabilities and economic opportunities
General interest	A caring society
Sociability	Policies targeted at the individual will have a positive impact on reducing poverty, unemployment, and racial inequality in society as a whole
Progress	Economic growth; expansion of capabilities and opportunities
Rationality	'The average person possesses talent and is essentially hardworking, responsible, and enjoys taking care of themselves and their family'[24]

The conceptualisation of liberalism articulated by the DA interviewees contrasts from the governing ideology in that it recognises the individual as the unit of focus, rather than the group. The DA also takes a more pro-market stance than the ANC, both in the management of the economy and in the provision of basic social services, especially health care. Nevertheless, it is clear that, like the ANC, the DA is similarly guided by a developmentalist outlook that embraces the provision of social welfare. Liberalism in the DA is similar to egalitarian liberalism, depicted by Sen (1999), in that it stresses the importance of access to a minimum income for all in need as a

[24] DA 1

socio-economic right. For liberals in South Africa, however, social grants for the unemployed are prioritised over workfare in order to realise this right, contrasting with egalitarian liberals like Sen. This is likely due to the fact that workfare in South Africa has been far less successful in providing individuals with opportunities than in, for example, India (under its Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme). Placed in South Africa, egalitarian liberals like Sen might prefer the use of non-contributory cash transfers for the unemployed.

Widespread poverty, unemployment, and horizontal inequalities rooted in the legacy of apartheid, have meant that liberal politicians in South Africa are faced with both a moral and political imperative to promote a strategic role for the state in tackling poverty and unemployment through the provision of social welfare. This is furthered by the pre-existence of a vast social welfare system that is bound by the constitution and the pro-poor, interventionist ideology of the governing ANC that draws its support from the black majority. In order for the DA to grow its support beyond its traditional stronghold of white middle- and upper-class South Africans, it too has to support a pro-poor, interventionist agenda. Despite the importance of race in the DA's interpretation of liberalism, it does play an explicit role in thinking about the four ideological dilemmas. While race is operating in the background of this due to the demographics of the poor in South Africa, very few interviewees made this connection in their responses. This is likely because of the recognition that social welfare is a constitutional right for *all* South Africans and not just specific racial groups. As the DA's 2019 manifesto emphasised, 'Redress must not be conflated with social support. Every state has a duty to protect its vulnerable citizens and this protection must never be provided on the basis of race…' (DA, 2019: 17). Nevertheless, as Mkandawire (2016) argues, the existence of inequality along racial lines in post-colonial countries across much of Africa necessitates considerable support for the provision of social welfare.

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Appendix: DA Interviewees

Table 6: DA Interviewees[25]

Code	Name	Position	About
DA 1	Mmusi Maimane	MP (since 2011); Federal Leader (since 2015)	Maimane was born in Krugersdorp and grew up in Soweto. He has studied at the University of Witwatersrand, University of South Africa, and Bangor University. He was elected as the DA's leader in 2015.
DA 2	John Steenhuisen	MP (since 2011); Chief Whip (Since 2014)	Steenhuisen was born in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. He matriculated from Northwood Boys High School. He became a member of the National Assembly in 2011. He then became the DA's Chief Whip in 2015.
DA 3	Michael Waters	MP (since 1999); Deputy Chief Whip (since 2014)	Waters was born in an industrial town called Middlesbrough in the North East of England. His parents immigrated when he was 4. He went to Wits Technicon. He has worked in the DP/DA for all of his adult life in different positions. He became a municipal councillor in 1995 and was elected to parliament in 1999. He has served various portfolio committees: Communications, Home Affairs, Public Service and Administration and Health.
DA 4	Karen Jooste	MP (since 2014); Portfolio Committee on Social Development (since 2014)	Jooste is from the Northern Cape. She was elected to the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature in 2009. She was elected to the National Assembly in 2014. She has also been a member of the Portfolio Committee on Social Development since 2014.

[25] The bios of the interviewees is a combination of information provided by the interviewees themselves and information provided on https://www.pa.org.za/organisation/national-assembly/ (People's Assembly, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

Code	Name	Position	About
DA 5	Anonymous	N/A	N/A
DA 6	Belinda Bozzoli	MP (since 2014); Portfolio Committee on Higher Education (since 2014)	Bozzoli studied at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Sussex. She taught at Wits, becoming a Professor and later Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Bozzoli became an MP in 2014 and has served on the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education since.
DA 7	Gavin Davis	MP (2014-2018); Shadow Minister of Communications (2014-2018)	Davis was born in London, England in 1977. He grew up in the suburb of Edgemead in Cape Town completing his schooling at Pinelands High School in 1995. He studied at Rhodes University and at the University of Cape Town. He is currently doing an MSc in economic policy at the University of London (part-time). Davis stepped down as an MP in 2018 and is now the CEO of Resolve Communications, Tony Leon's communications firm.
DA 8	Anonymous	N/A	N/A
DA 9	Michael Cardo	MP (since 2014); Portfolio Committee on Economic Development (since 2014)	Cardo completed a BA at the then University of Natal and also holds an MPhil and PhD from the University of Cambridge. He joined the DA in 2003 and served as the National Director of Research from 2004 until 2006. In 2009, he became Helen Zille's speechwriter. From 2011-2014, Cardo worked in the DA-controlled Western Cape government as the Director of Policy and Research. Cardo was then elected to Parliament in 2014. He is the Shadow Minister of Economic Development.

Code	Name	Position	About
DA 10	Patrick Atkinson	MP (since 2014); Portfolio Committee on Economic Development (since 2014)	Atkinson was elected to parliament in 2014 and has since been in the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development. Atkinson has been a supporter of the DA (and its predecessors) since he was 12-years-old.
DA 11	Lindy Wilson	MP (since 2014); Portfolio Committee on Social Development (since 2014)	Wilson was born and grew up in Zimbabwe. She moved to South Africa in 1983. She has worked in public relations, advertising, and marketing. She joined the DA in 2010 as a Constituency Operations Manager in Mopani, Limpopo.
DA 12	Gordon Mackay	MP (2014-2018); Portfolio Committee on Energy (2014-2018)	Mackay completed his BA and Honours degree at the University of Johannesburg. He then completed his MA at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London and later obtained a diploma in humanitarian assistance at the University of Liverpool. Before joining the DA, he worked at UNICEF. He was elected to the National Assembly in 2014 and became a member of the Portfolio Committee on Energy. He stepped down as an MP in 2018 and is now the Secretary General of Liberal International, based in London in the United Kingdom.
DA 13	Dean Macpherson	MP (since 2014); Shadow Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry (since 2014)	Macpherson was born in Durban. He became the councillor for Durban North at the age of 24. He was elected to the National Assembly in 2014 and became the Shadow Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry.

Code	Name	Position	About
DA 14	James Selfe	Federal Executive Chairperson (Since 1999); MP (since 1999); Shadow Minister of Correctional Services (since 2004)	Selfe was born in Pretoria and went to boarding school in Cape Town from an early age. He was elected to parliament in 1999 and became the Shadow Minister for Correctional Services in 2004. He has served as the DA's Federal Executive Chairperson since 1999.
DA 15	Gwen Ngwenya	Head of Policy (since 2018); MP (since 2018)	Ngwenya studied at UCT. She joined the DA as the head of policy in 2018. She also became an MP in the same year. Before joining the DA, Gwen was the Chief Operating Officer of the South African Institute of Race Relations.
DA 16	Stephens Mogkalapa	MP (since 2009); Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (since 2014)	Mogkalapa was born in Tshwane and graduated from the University of Pretoria. He joined the Democratic Party in 1999. He was elected to the National Assembly in 2009. He has been a member of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Co-Operation. Mogkalapa has also served as the president of the Africa Liberal Network since 2017.
DA 17	Anonymous	DA Head Office	N/A