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"A lean cow cannot climb out of the mud, but a good cattleman does not leave it to perish": The origins of a conservative welfare doctrine in Botswana under Seretse Khama, 1966-1980

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Abstract

By the early 2000s Botswana had acquired an extensive but conservative welfare state that combined food aid, workfare for working-age adults and modest cash transfers for the elderly, orphaned children and other ‘destitutes’. This paper examines the origins of the corresponding welfare doctrine during the presidency of Seretse Khama between 1966 and 1980. Khama, together with his Vice-President (Quett Masire) and their Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), developed a doctrine that was to provide the normative foundations for a conservative welfare state: The poor were both the responsibility of the community, via the state, and responsible for themselves, through their own labour. The doctrine reflected the congruence of ideas between BDP leaders who were committed to conservative modernisation, expatriate British and South African advisers, and international agencies (notably the World Food Programme). The doctrine resulted from the challenges of drought (in the mid- and late 1960s), political conditions in Botswana in the decade following independence as elected politicians sought to transfer powers and responsibilities from chiefs to new state institutions, and the interaction between indigenous Tswana and British ideas about ‘development’ and governance.

Introduction

Between the mid-1960s and 2000s, Botswana not only experienced rapid economic growth but also built a welfare state. In the 1990s and 2000s, especially, Botswana not only continued to expand its public education and health care, but also steadily expanded its provision for the poor. It provided a safety net for the poor that was extensive and, in at least four respects, conservative: impoverished households were supported primarily through

institutionalised public employment programmes (i.e. 'workfare') paying low wages to each household's breadwinner; selected categories of 'deserving' people who were no longer being supported adequately by their families – including especially the elderly and orphans – were assisted; other poor households where no one could work were assisted, subject to a stringent means test; benefits were generally parsimonious, and often in kind (including feeding programmes) rather than cash (Seekings, 2016b). Reforms were framed by the adoption, in 1997, of *Vision 2016*, which set out principles for national development in what Werbner characterises as the founding 'ideological manifesto' of the country's leadership (Werbner, 2004: 17).

Whilst this welfare state was consolidated in the 1990s and 2000s, its programmatic and ideological foundations were laid between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s. The key features of the design of the country's conservative welfare programmes dated back to the response by both the late colonial and initial post-independence governments to the devastating drought in 1965-66 and the enduring challenges of destitution over the following fifteen years (Seekings, 2016a). This paper examines the corresponding process of ideological production, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the country's founding president (Seretse Khama), vice-president (and successor as president, Quett Ketumile Masire) and their BDP responded to the challenges of drought, political competition and state- and nation-building by elaborating a doctrine of welfare provision that was integral to a broader modernising ideology of democratic government and development. Drought shaped how the BDP leadership understood not only poverty[1] but also more broadly the roles of state, market and kin in meeting people's basic needs in the new Botswana. Drought thus served to define the social contract between the new state – a state very much under construction – and its citizens.

Examining what political leaders said and wrote about the normative bases of public policy and state-building is not a common approach to the study of African politics. Politics and hence public policy making in Africa are generally understood to revolve around competition over patronage rather than either ideological or programmatic difference. Political parties have generally been seen to have been weak or personalised without distinctive ideologies. This view has changed somewhat in the 2010s, due in part to evident changes accompanying re-democratisation in African politics and in part to a re-examination of the more distant past. Competitive elections have provided impetus to some (but not all) parties and leaders to brand themselves, most obviously in general populist terms (as Resnick, 2013, shows for Zambia), but also in terms of distinctive ideological and even programmatic positions (see, for

[1] See Werbner (2004: 19-20) for a general discussion of 'understood poverty' in Botswana.

example, Hamer [2016a, 2016b] on Malawi and Botswana in the 2010s, and Kabandula & Seekings [2016] and Siachiwena [2016] on the Zambian case). New historical scholarship on the decades immediately preceding and following independence has also revealed a much more ideologically complex and contested political landscape (see, for example, Petersen, 2012; Hunter, 2015; and Lal, 2012, 2015). Both the contemporary and historical literatures suggest that political leaders in Africa can and do act as ideological entrepreneurs, using ideas to legitimate themselves and their policies.

In examining how Khama, Masire and the BDP in Botswana acted as ideological entrepreneurs, developing a distinctive welfare doctrine, I do not mean to put forward an idealistic version of history. Ideas shaped how political leaders in Botswana responded to the challenges facing them, but at the same time the salience of ideas reflected local conditions. Khama, Masire and the BDP developed a welfare doctrine that fitted the kind of social contract they advocated for their new state and nation. Crucially, they sought to legitimate themselves with reference to Tswana tradition as the same time as they systematically stripped traditional leaders of their powers and responsibilities, transferring these to new state institutions that pursued a modernisation agenda that benefitted the rising class of educated cattle-owners that dominated the BDP. The ruling class in Botswana thus developed a conservative but modernising ideology. My analysis in this paper builds on long-standing literatures on the stripping of powers from the chiefs, the rise of a new economic and political elite, and state-building in Botswana. In particular, I build on Ørnulf Gulbrandsen's analysis in *The State and the Social* (2012), showing how the experience of drought was integral to the articulation of a welfare doctrine and a broader ideology of social contract that accompanied and shaped these already well-documented changes in the political economy of Botswana in the decade after independence.

This paper draws on Khama's speeches, the BDP's election manifestos and other public documents, public documents produced by the new institutions of the new state, and archived material in both Gaborone and London. The analysis is of a discourse as much as an ideology, and this begs questions about the origins of this discourse. At least from the late 1960s Khama's speeches as well as BPD documents were usually written by personal assistants working closely with Khama (and Masire). Foremost among these between 1969 and 1973 was a young Labour Party activist from the UK, John Syson. In the penultimate section of this paper I examine BDP discourse as the product of a transnational process of loose congruence between the BDP leaders and their expatriate advisors, and perhaps also the officials of the World Food Programme who were providing most of the food used for drought relief in Botswana in the 1960s and 1970s. In the final part of the paper I compare the welfare doctrine developed in

Botswana with some of the other ideologies circulating in East and Southern Africa at the time.

Khama, Masire and the BDP

Seretse Khama was elected as the first Prime Minister of Bechuanaland in March 1965 and became the first President of Botswana at Independence in September 1966. He continued as president until his death in 1980, when he was succeeded by the long-term vice-president, Quett Masire. Khama came from an aristocratic background, and Masire form a privileged one. Both were conservative in important respects, but they were also aggressive modernisers with paternalistic commitments. Khama and Masire dominated the BDP during this period. Their approach – or more precisely the success of their approach – came to define the party.

Khama, born in 1921, had succeeded his grandfather and (at the age of four) his father as chief of the Bangwato.[2] His uncle Tshekedi Khama served as regent whilst Seretse went to school and then the South African Native College (at Fort Hare). Seretse Khama was in no hurry to assume the responsibilities of chieftaincy. After graduating from Fort Hare, he spent six months at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and then, as soon as the war ended, went to Britain to study law at Oxford. He left Oxford after only one year, to continue his legal studies in London. In 1947 he met and the following year married a young English woman, Ruth Williams. This precipitated political crises in both Bechuanaland itself and in Britain. Within Bechuanaland, the marriage was strongly opposed by Tshekedi, and by most Bangwato at two *lekgotla* (assemblies), but Khama prevailed at a third *kgotla* in 1949. He failed, however, to stop the British authorities acceding to pressure from the South African government, which was strongly opposed to such a high-profile inter-racial marriage. The Labour Party government in London banned Seretse from the Bangwato Reserve (within Bechuanaland) and forced him into exile in the UK. The subsequent Conservative Party government upheld its predecessor's position. Only in 1956 was Seretse Khama allowed to return to Bechuanaland on condition that he renounced the chieftaincy. Khama slowly immersed himself in the swirling politics of the then Bechuanaland Protectorate (as well as his growing cattle business). He soon became pre-eminent in first the (racially segregated and advisory) African Council and then (from 1960) the (integrated and more powerful) Legislative Council. After more radical activists formed a Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP), Khama enlisted the African members of

[2] This account of Khama's life is drawn from the biography by Tlou, Parsons & Henderson (1995).

the Legislative Council to establish the rival BDP. The BDP won decisively the pre-independence elections in March 1965, and Khama became Prime Minister. At independence, in September 1966, he became President.

Khama came from a privileged background but his political worldview and loyalties were eclectic. In South Africa he had been educated in missionary institutions and involved in student protests, but was neither politically-minded nor religious. He was close to the liberal Professor Z.K. Matthews (whom he later appointed as Botswana's Ambassador to the United States and United Nations), but preferred the non-racialism espoused by the All-African Convention's Professor D.D.T. Jabavu to the Africanism of the African National Congress. In South Africa and Britain he acquired an eclectic mix of friends: Harry Nkumbula and Joshua Nkomo from Northern and Southern Rhodesia respectively (i.e. Zambia and Zimbabwe), the Kenyan Charles Njonjo, Joe Appiah (from the Gold Coast, later Ghana) and the aristocratic British socialist Anthony Wedgwood-Benn (Tony Benn, who himself later described Khama as "hopelessly aristocratic"). In Britain, "the coming together of so many students from the colonial world, at a time when India was advancing rapidly to independence, and while the heady enthusiasm of the Labour government for setting up a welfare state in Britain persisted, made a profound impression on Seretse", wrote Tlou *et al*. of the late 1940s. "It is not clear if one could call him either a nationalist or a socialist at this stage", but he was clearly "left of the Conservative Party" (Tlou *et al*., 1995: 67-8).

One of the primary institutional homes for centre-left intellectuals from the colonies was the Fabian Society, and in particular the Fabian Colonial Bureau. Although his biographers do not record any contact between Khama and the Fabian Colonial Bureau, his friend Nkumbula – who briefly studied at the London School of Economics (LSE), founded by the Fabians – did have links to it.

Like Nkumbula (who went on to lead the African National Congress in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia, see Macola, 2010), Appiah (who came from the Ashanti aristocracy and went onto be a prominent leader of the opposition to Nkrumah in Ghana; see Appiah, 1990; Allman, 1993) and Njonjo (who became Attorney-General and a prominent conservative 'big man' within the ruling Kenyan African National Union; see Medard 2012), Khama went on to embrace a much more conservative worldview.[3] This may have been shaped by his second spell living in Britain – in exile, from 1950 to 1956 – under rather different circumstances. In the late 1940s he had been a student, during the exciting years when the post-war enthusiasm for a more equitable Britain pushed the country's

[3] Like Khama, both Appiah and Njonjo married British women and were strong Anglophiles.

first majority Labour Party government to expand greatly the welfare state. When he returned to London in 1950, however, Khama surely felt betrayed by the Labour Party government, which not only expelled him from the Bangwato Reserve but also lied about the details (see Tlou *et al*., 1995: 100). The Conservative government elected in 1951 maintained his exile, but Khama and his family spent most of this time in suburban Surrey, living a genteel life that included horse-riding, cricket and tennis. The Khamas became close friends with the also-exiled old-Etonian Kabaka of Buganda (*ibid*: 135-6). The Fabian Colonial Bureau seems to have avoided involvement in Khama's long-running dispute with the British Government between 1950 and 1956, perhaps alienating Khama. Tlou *et al*. (1995: 148) record that, at this time, his closest allegiance in Britain was with the small Liberal Party.[4] Given that he was in Britain during both the 1951 and 1955 general elections, it is unlikely that he was not exposed to the reworking of conservative doctrine associated with the 'One Nation' group of MPs. As we shall see below, the ideology that he helped to articulate in the late 1960s and 1970s resembled closely the 'One Nation' conservatism articulated by young Conservatives such as Ian Macleod and 'Cub' Alport, as well as by somewhat older notables including Harold Macmillan – all three of whom later went onto occupy important positions that brought them into direct personal contact with Khama.[5] Khama may have been to the left of the Conservative Party in the late 1940s, but by the mid-1950s the Conservatives' turn to the centre probably coincided with his own rightward turn. By the late 1960s, Seretse was seen as much more conservative than Masire (according to Masire himself; 2005: 258-9).

Masire was Khama's right-hand man in the BDP. The son of a minor Ngwaketse headman from south-eastern Botswana, Masire followed Khama to Tiger Kloof – the missionary school near Vryburg in South Africa that had been founded in large part to educate the Tswana elite. He declined to take over from his father as headman, and instead spent the 1950s working first as a secondary school teacher and principal, then as a full-time farmer, and finally as the founding journalist-editor of the first Botswana news sheet, *Naledi ya Botswana* (Morton

[4] His friends from Oxford included Eric Lubbock, who was elected Liberal MP for Orpington in a famous by-election in 1962. He was also said to be friendly with Jo Grimond, who was elected MP for Orkney and Shetland in 1950 and was leader of the Liberal Party from 1956 to 1967.

[5] Macmillan (as Prime Minister) visited Botswana in 1960, en route to Cape Town where he made his famous 'winds of change' speech (Tlou *et al*., 1995: 180-1); he met with local political leaders including Khama. Macleod served as Colonial Secretary from 1959-61. Alport, author of *Hope in Africa* (1952), served as Minister of State in the Commonwealth Relations Office (1959-61), and then (from 1961 to 1963) as British High Commissioner to the short-lived Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland from 1961. Alport was later president of the Britain-Botswana Parliamentary Group, whose secretary was another, much younger One Nation member, Kenneth Clarke (Tlou *et al*., 1995: 356).

& Ramsey, 1994; Masire, 2006). Masire prided himself on his farming. His memoirs include a detailed description of his 'improved' methods (such as the use of fertiliser, mechanisation, fencing, and artificial insemination of cattle) that massively raised productivity (2006: 14-19).[6] Masire unsurprisingly declined to join the BPP but joined enthusiastically with Khama to form the BDP. Whilst Khama provided charismatic leadership, Masire built a strong party organisation that reached across the new country.[7]

Unlike many of its contemporary parties in East and Southern Africa, the BDP was not a broad-based nationalist movement but was rather formed in response to the imminence of independence (Wiseman, 1977: 77). As a result it did not have a grassroots organisation comparable to Nyerere's Tanganyika African National Union or Kaunda's United National Independence Party on the Zambian Copperbelt (Gillett, 1973: 184). Khama, Masire and the BDP did not fit the conventional literature on nationalist elites and political parties in Africa at the time of independence. The BDP conformed to neither the 'one-party tendency' identified by Coleman and Rosberg (1964) (see also Wiseman, 1977) nor Collier's analysis of elite competition (Collier, 1984). They were not populists in the supposedly 'socialist' vein of Nkrumah, Kaunda or Nyerere in the 1960s and 1970s. Like Nyerere, the BDP leaders embarked on nation-building, but in contrast to Nyerere, they never felt the need to prohibit opposition parties.

The BDP was the party of the educated, cattle-owning elite that was beginning to take over the bureaucracy and economy from white expatriates. Whilst dominated by this elite (as emphasised by a long line of scholars, including Parson, 1981; Tsie, 1996; Good & Taylor, 2008), it was also paternalist, ensuring that sufficient benefits from growth and redistribution reached the rural poor to maintain a strong electoral base (e.g. Holm, 1987; Gulbrandsen, 2012). The BDP wielded patronage, but on occasion took action against egregious corruption. Its patronage was much more programmatic and less personalistic than patronage politics in some other countries. Its organisation was also less personalistic than most contemporary parties (including the fragmented opposition parties within Botswana).

Some scholars point to the weakness of clear ideological differences between the BDP and opposition parties. Writing in the 1990s, Danevad suggested that

[6] Pierre Landell-Mills (interview, London, December 2016) recalls travelling in a taxi in London in early 1966 to negotiate financial arrangements for the soon-to-be-independent Bechuanaland, when Masire energetically began to write in his notebook. The notes were not about the negotiations, however, but were rather about how to improve his farm back in Bechuanaland.

[7] In his memoirs he also admits to being "a difficult and strong-willed person" and "often troublesome to deal with" (Masire, 2006: 103)

"ideologies matter far less than personal antagonisms from the 1960s, partly rooted in ethnic loyalties" (Danevad, 1995: 399). A survey in 1987 found that most voters could not identify differences between the BDP and main opposition party (Somolekae, 1989, cited in Danevad, 1995: 400). The BDP may have been an often conflictual coalition rather than a tightly cohesive party (Gulbrandsen, 2012), but it nonetheless developed and articulated a clear programme in the 1960s and early 1970s. The lack of pronounced differences between it and the opposition parties was in part due to its success in combining developmental and welfare-ist ideas alongside conservative ones.

The BDP was indeed the party of the educated elite which for the most part embraced economic and political modernisation – which was clearly in its economic and political interests. The educated elite had become strong advocates of democracy (Parsons, 1988), pitting them against more the traditionalist chiefs (or *dikgosi*) who wielded considerable powers under colonial 'protection'. The BDP's modernisation project was liberal in relation to the chiefs, but was conservative in comparison with the ostensibly 'socialist' projects of Kaunda and others. As Gulbrandsen (2012) shows, the BDP employed developmental and welfare-ist discourses, blending together indigenous Tswana cosmology with Western ideas and practices. The ideology of the BDP was most similar to the liberal conservatism of political leaders such as Khama's friends Nkumbula, from just the other side of the Zambezi in Northern Rhodesia (see Macola, 2010), and Appiah (and other Asante leaders) in the Gold Coast (Ghana) (see Allman, 1993). Unlike Nkumbula and Appiah, however, Khama and Masire outmanoeuvred their critics on the left and governed Botswana for thirty years. The BDP won a majority of the vote in every election for almost fifty years between 1965 and 2009. It was only in 2014 when, for the first time, the BDP failed to win a majority of the vote, although (faced with a divided opposition) it again won a majority of the parliamentary seats, ensuring that it was still governing Botswana on the fiftieth anniversary of independence. As of 2016, the BDP is undoubtedly the most successful political party in post-colonial Africa.

The political success of Khama, Masire and the BDP was fuelled by the extraordinary economic growth that accompanied the successful exploitation of mining from the 1970s. GDP per capita in Botswana rose tenfold in the thirty years following independence in 1966. Economic growth enriched the elite and widened inequality. It also financed the expansion of public education and health care, and the construction of infrastructure, expanding opportunities for the less privileged. It provided the resources that the BDP-controlled state could use to sustain the party's image of the protector of the rural poor as well as the guarantor of economic growth. The BDP thus built and retained a bedrock of support in the rural areas.

The BDP's ideology of paternalistic conservatism was elaborated just as economic growth accelerated. Botswana's GDP grew in real terms by about 6 percent p.a. in the mid-1960s. In 1968 it grew by 10 percent, in 1969 and 1970 by more than 15 percent p.a. and between 1971 and 1973 by about 25 percent p.a.. Over the six years between 1967 and 1973 the economy almost tripled in real terms, admittedly from a very low base.[8] Whilst data on public finances for this period are not readily available, foreign aid rapidly declined in importance. Total 'overseas development assistance' (ODA, i.e. foreign aid) peaked at about 30 percent of GDP in 1966 and 1967, before dropping rapidly to about 15 percent.[9]

Like many of their contemporaries in post-colonial Africa, Khama and Masire were preoccupied with decolonisation and nation-building. Khama and Masire staked out a strong position on the abolition of racial discrimination and the appointment of Batswana to positions in government. They were also repeatedly distracted by the immense challenges of being on the apartheid frontline: Botswana was surrounded by settler states (South-west Africa, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia), with only a ferry connecting it across the Zambezi to Zambia.

To a much greater extent than most of their contemporaries, however, Khama and Masire had to build a new nation and a new state in the face of powerful chiefs. The BDP's project required stripping chiefs of their powers. Chiefs in Bechuanaland had enjoyed unusual power under colonial rule, occupying a 'hegemonic position' (Jones, 1983; see also Makgala, 2012). The educated elite – many of whom (like Masire) had come from the families of headmen or minor chiefs – had begun to challenge chiefly power prior to the 1960s. Masire himself clashed repeatedly with the Ngwaketse Chief Bathoen II (Masire, 2006: 24-9). This new cattle-owning, educated elite had both the motivation and strength to stand up to the chiefs (Gulbrandsen, 2012: 82). The imminence of independence and democratic elections, and the consequent formation of political parties, resulted in a more forceful challenge, assisted by the British before independence. Whereas the eight primary chiefs had been ex officio members of the Native (later African) Advisory Council, they held no ex officio positions on the more powerful Legislative Council established in 1961. Khama – who would have been the most important chief in Botswana had he not been removed from the position as part of the deal with the British allowing him to return from exile in Britain in 1956 – threw his weight behind what the educated elite saw as the modernisation of the new country's political institutions. The new BDP's 'Aims and Objectives' in 1962 included commitments to substitute "constitutional rule

[8] WDI variables NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG and NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.

[9] WDI variable DT.ODA.ODAT.GN.ZS. The proportion is in fact of gross national income.

for the exercise of arbitrary powers by *dikosi*" and to introduce "proper elections" for tribal councils (reproduced in Masire, 2006: 60). Through the early 1960s, Masire reportedly mobilised support for the BDP with the call to end tribal divisions and curb the chiefs' powers (Morton & Ramsay, 1994: 54-5).[10] An essentially advisory House of Chiefs was established under the 1965 constitution in preference to either ex officio membership of a unicameral legislature or of a fully empowered upper house in a bicameral legislature; either, it was feared (by colonial and BDP leaders), would frustrate modernisation (Proctor, 1968).

The chiefs were stripped of most of their powers. The Chieftainship Act of 1966 provided for the appointment, removal and payment of chiefs and headmen, and defined their functions. More stringent controls were introduced under Chieftainship (Amendment) Acts in 1970 and 1973. Chiefs initially retained control of land allocation, but most of their other executive and legislative functions were transferred to the popularly-elected district councils established under the Local Government (District Councils) Act of 1966. The District Councils assumed responsibility for public health and primary schools, public works and (under the Local Government Tax Law of 1966) local taxes. Powers over the disposal of stray livestock were transferred from chiefs under the Matimela Act of 1968. In 1968, even the allocation of land was transferred to new 'land boards' under the Tribal Land Act. The chiefs' legal roles in relation to customary law were also circumscribed. By 1973,

> 'virtually every one of their former powers has been transferred to an elective or government-appointed body, to which they usually belong and on which they may play a major role, but which operates in accordance with regulations and by a system of majority decision that almost entirely eliminates the personal autocratic character of their rule in the colonial period' (Gillett, 1973: 181; see also Vengroff, 1977: 124-7; Proctor, 1968).

The chiefs' powers over popular deliberation and consultation in the *kgotla* were transferred to the state, which the BDP controlled, rather than to political parties per se (Gulbrandsen, 2012). Crucially, mining was controlled by the state not by chiefs (*ibid*: 103-4). As successive ministers made clear, chiefs had become 'civil servants'. Chiefs themselves, unsurprisingly but unsuccessfully, resisted their new subordination (Jones, 1983: 134-6).

[10] Masire acknowledges in his memoirs that there was no agreement within the BDP over the role of chiefs (2006: 49) but does not elaborate.

In practice, many chiefs and headmen retained considerable legitimacy and hence power. Vengroff concluded that

> 'central control over traditional leaders is limited by the high regard in which chiefs are held by the people … Although their power to initiate programs is often limited, their ability to delay or tacitly veto local or central government programs is sufficient' (1977: 72).

He provides an example of villagers who refused to build a storeroom, agreed by the Village Development Committee and endorsed by the local Member of Parliament, because the traditional leader was opposed to it. "The villagers instead concentrated on the building of teachers' houses at the primary school, a project endorsed by the traditional leaders" (*ibid*: 68). Gulbrandsen (2012: Chapter 4) goes so far as to suggest that allowing the chiefs (or *dikgosi*) to continue to exercise some authority was functional to the BDP's project of modernisation, by legitimating it.

The chiefs had acquiesced in the design of the House of Chiefs, but from its first meetings pressed for substantial reforms or even replacement by a full upper house. Veteran Chief Bathoen II (of the *BaNgwaketse*) – sometimes supported by other chiefs – criticised much of the legislation brought to the House of Chiefs. The BDP government accepted many of Bathoen's proposed minor amendments to bills, but did not accept the most important ones concerned with the underlying distribution of power (Proctor, 1968). Bathoen opted to resist the BDP government through the new party political system. Chief Linchwe II (of the BaKgatla) was already closely aligned with the opposition BPP, whose strongholds included Mochudi (as well as Francistown). In 1965, following the BDP's landslide electoral victory, Linchwe and Bathoen were party to the formation of a Botswana National Front to unite opposition to the BDP. Bathoen himself stepped down as chief and joined the BNF. The opposition parties failed to unite, however. The 1969 elections returned a BDP government with a reduced majority. Led by Bathoen, the BNF won the three Ngwaketse seats; Bathoen himself defeated Vice-President Masire (whom Khama then had to appoint as a special Member of Parliament). The BDP also lost control of the Southern District Council. The BPP retained its three seats, and the breakaway new Botswana Independence Party (BIP) won a single seat in the north-west (Ngamiland) (Picard, 1985). The 1969 elections – combined with disputes within the Bangwato Tribal Authority in 1970-71 – seem to have persuaded the BDP leadership that it needed a more pro-active strategy to retain its hitherto broad support base. Vengroff, who conducted his research in 1970, reports several incidents that illustrate the BDP's vulnerability to chiefs endorsing opposition parties (1977: 142-3).

The conflict over chiefly power reflected the rise of the new elite of educated cattle-owners (Wiseman, 1977). Although both governing and opposition parties brought together the old chiefly elite with the new commercial and professional elite (as noted by Stevens and Speed, 1977), the latter as a class needed to break the power of the former in order to develop opportunities for accumulation and the state institutions required to maintain their control. This is not to say that all chiefs resisted 'development': Many had played important roles prior to independence with respect to schooling, animal husbandry, irrigation and (during the war) collective production on the so-called 'warlands' (Makgala, 2012; see also Jackson, 1999). But the chiefs collectively posed an obstacle to both the kind of individualist agricultural and other economic opportunities championed by the new elite and the BDP's embrace of modernist planning.[11] Masire and most of the BDP leadership were invested in challenging chiefly power. Khama and Masire seem to have understood that nation-building required challenging tribal divisions. In addition, his fight with his uncle Tshekedi – which contributed directly to his exile and then exclusion from the chieftaincy – left him with strong personal reasons to reel in chiefly power.

Khama and his BDP's response to these challenges was framed by the crisis of drought and famine that accompanied independence and persisted into the late 1960s. Poor rains in the early 1960s led to "the worst drought in living memory" in 1965-66, as Khama himself told the BDP at its annual conference in April 1966 (Khama, 1966). More than one-third of the population relied on food relief, and one-third of the country's cattle had died before emergency animal feed arrived. The proportion of the population receiving food aid rarely dropped below one-fifth and was often more than one-third over the following ten years, i.e. the first decade of independence (Seekings, 2016a). In conjunction with a new international agency – the World Food Programme (WFP) – the government of Botswana moved towards a three-fold approach to drought, comprising food-for-work programmes for the able-bodied (forming the basis of 'self-help' projects), feeding programmes for school-children and 'vulnerable groups', and (at least in principle) 'destitute' relief for the elderly poor who had been abandoned by kin. The cost was the equivalent of at least 2 percent of GDP

[11] It is important to emphasise that the Khama, Masire and BDP's modernizing agenda entailed classic modernist planning to facilitate opportunities for Tswana entrepreneurs in an essentially capitalist system. Planning in Bechuanaland dated back at least to 1941, when the colonial administration had to produce plans for how it would spend funds provided under the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The most important of the Tswana chiefs, Tshekedi (Khama's uncle and regent), was enthusiastic, because he saw planning as a route to economic independence from the UK as well as South Africa (Jackson, 1999). After independence, Masire – who was Minister of Finance as well as Vice-President – embraced planning, establishing in 1967 a new Ministry of Development Planning to bypass uncooperative senior officials in the Ministry of Finance and then in 1970 merged the two ministries into a new Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

in drought years and at least 1 percent of GDP on average, with direct benefits reaching a substantial minority (at least) of the population.

Hitherto, drought relief had been primarily the responsibility of the chiefs, using funds raised through local taxes. Even into 1965 the colonial District Commissioners worked with chiefs and headmen on a largely ad hoc basis. The administration of drought relief was among the powers transferred to the new District Councils in 1966, and then delegated to District and Village Development Committees.

Drought compelled the BDP government to confront urgently the issues of poverty and destitution. Social and economic change forced the BDP government to consider what kind of a society it hoped Botswana would become. These issues were integrally linked to the issues of chiefly power and state-building. In combination, drought and the struggle over chiefly power – personified by Bathoen – pushed Khama, Masire and the BDP to elaborate an ideology of social justice linked to the set of public policies that were being institutionalised within the new state. Moreover, the need to proceed against the chiefs cautiously, so as not to unite other chiefs behind Bathoen or one or other opposition party, provided Khama and the BDP with a strong incentive to adopt a conservative position, albeit one that embraced modernisation. Proctor reports that the BDP government treated the House of Chiefs with respect, even when Bathoen was using it to irritate the government. Khama and the BDP's strategy was to embrace as much of a conservative position as possible without conceding any significant powers to the chiefs. Khama and the BDP thus celebrated rural life, self-help and community, weaving these into a conservative ideology of social justice that decried excessive inequality and legitimated targeted interventions – through the new state. Explicitly rejecting foreign ideologies – but replicating elements of the 'One Nation' conservatism articulated within the Conservative Party in Britain through the 1950s and 1960s – the BDP sought to strike a balance between public and private responsibilities. Both the emergency policies and the emerging doctrine provided foundations for the subsequent institutionalisation of a conservative welfare state.

The development of BDP ideology

Between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s Khama, Masire and the BDP developed a distinct ideological position that included a clear doctrine of public and private responsibilities for the welfare of the poor. There is little readily available evidence on the political and social thinking of either Khama or Masire in the early 1960s, but between 1965 and 1968 they seem to have been grappling with the construction of a clear BDP doctrine. They clearly stood for non-racialism

and liberal democracy and were opposed to the perpetuation of white privilege within Botswana itself and over the border in apartheid South Africa, its satellite South-West Africa (Namibia) and its close ally Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). They were also strongly opposed to the populist socialist ideology propounded by the BPP. They hinted at an idealised version of rural society, although they were committed to modernisation and wary of traditional leaders. Beginning in 1969, with the assistance of speechwriters, Khama and Masire began to articulate a clearer doctrine of shared public and private responsibility. In the mid-1970s, amidst improved revenues and good rains, they embraced more fully a vision of both privately-led economic growth and public provision.

The doctrine developed over this period entailed several connected themes. First, and most important, was the articulation of a rural ideal and ambivalence over urbanisation. Integral to rural culture were supposed traditions of self-help, harmony and equity. These could be adapted to counter drought and famine. The risk of division and conflict arising from inequality would be reduced through the maintenance of social cohesion and the balancing of public with individual responsibilities. These values were presented as indigenous ones, not foreign imports.

The BDP's rural ideal

From the outset the BDP made evident its wariness of social change and distaste for urban life. In its manifesto for the 1965 election, alongside commitments to multi-party democracy and non-racialism (and an end to racial discrimination), the BDP outlined a vision of agrarian development. This emphasised increased agricultural production and improved productivity, together with expanded education and health facilities. The revitalisation of the rural economy was necessary in order to slow down migration to towns:

> 'The development of townships and the opening of industries must, as it has always done, draw more and more people away from the land to urban or semi-urban areas, with the consequent depopulation of the rural areas. This development always has the detrimental effect of robbing the vital farming activities of the necessary manpower, and of building up such problems as unemployment, housing shortage, crime, lawlessness and delinquency in urban areas. The policy of the Democratic Party would be to make provision for the solution of this problem in the over-all development and not by the remedial measures when its social and economic effects begin to make themselves felt' (BDP, 1965).

The BDP proceeded to note that it would not impose apartheid-style influx control measures, but would rather develop agriculture to provide "both food and cash and in that way curb the movement to urban areas to earn money for every day requirements" and would make "rural community life attractive, by providing a variety of diversions and communal occupations, by planning the layout of villages, providing such amenities as water taps at convenient points in the villages, and by organising market places in all rural settlements". Copying colonial policy, the BDP promised to train Community Development Officers (*ibid*). The National Development Plan for 1970-75 emphasised that investment in towns must not be to the detriment of the villages (Botswana, 1970).

This theme remained central to BDP ideology despite rapid urbanisation. On the tenth anniversary of independence, in 1976, Khama spoke to the rural identity of the Batswana:

> 'I need not emphasise that the future of Botswana lies in the rural areas, in the land, where our forebears eked out a living, where the majority of our people still eke out a living and where we must make life more attractive not only for ourselves but for many future generations. To do this – to develop our rural sector – we must first and foremost, appreciate the dignity of labour and be instilled with a clear social conscience. We must come to grips with our true identity as a traditionally rural people who are being lured to the towns by the largely false promise of a better style of life and a more secure standard of living. For only a few privileged people can enjoy these urban benefits while the rest are caught in the spiral of poverty and misery. Needless to say, this is not the kind of society we would like to create in Botswana. The society of our dreams is a society characterised by equal opportunities and social justice' (Khama, 1976b).

He returned to this theme in a speech to the BDP in 1978:

> '[W]e are determined to do more for the rural areas – to build more schools, and clinics, and to establish rural industries in the hope that in the long run the young people will not be lured to the towns in search of employment which does not exist' (Khama, 1978).

Wage restraint through an incomes policy was intended in part to avoid creating a privileged urban group in the midst of rural poverty (Khama, 1976a).
This 'ruralism' was not unique to the BDP: his friend from London, Nkumbula, had advanced a similar discourse as leader of the African National Congress in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Nkumbula himself and much of his support came

from successful Tonga-speaking farmers just across the Zambezi from Botswana (Macola, 2010). In Botswana, however, in contrast to the Tonga Plateau in Zambia, rural areas had long ceased to be self-sufficient in practice. Many members of the BDP elite prospered as cattle-ranchers, benefitting from government-supported borehole and other agricultural programmes; the cattle population rose rapidly, despite intermittent drought (Peters, 1994). Even in good years, however, few rural households could eke out more than a minimal livelihood from the land. The 'rural' economy was dependent on wages earned by migrant Batswana on the South African goldmines. About one quarter of the male labour force was working outside Botswana, and about 40 percent of rural households were temporarily or permanently without adult men (Botswana, 1975: 68, 70). Inequalities in rural areas deepened, as a distinct class of successful commercial farmers accumulated at the same time as the proportion of farming households without *any* cattle grew (Solway 1994: 477). This meant that the BDP's prioritisation of the countryside pushed the party and government to embrace a modernisation agenda. The Batswana might have been essentially rural, but the BDP leadership viewed their agricultural practices as backward. The BDP was idealistic not because of an unduly rosy understanding of the existing rural economy, but because of an unduly optimistic assessment of the prospects for a general improvement in rural production.

Drought and 'self-help'

Drought forced the BDP to be go beyond their initial denunciation of the evil of towns. Drought exposed the weaknesses of the agrarian ideal: The rural population could not provide for themselves. At the same time, the state had few resources, and depended heavily on British aid up until the early 1970s. Masire later wrote that "economic experts thought there would never be a time when Botswana would be off the international dole" (referring to the benefits or 'dole' provided to the unemployed in interwar Britain) (2006: ix) – pointing to the parallels between the situations of the new country as a whole and poor or destitute individuals within it. "Self-help" may have been "a practical necessity" given the government's budgetary constraints, as Vengroff writes (1977: 151), but it was the drought that pushed the new BDP government into urgent action: Poor, unemployed Batswana needed urgent assistance (the 'dole'), and this could be provided in a developmental form by requiring that the beneficiaries worked on public works programmes, building schools, accommodation for teachers, granaries, and so on.

The BDP's grasped for a solution that conformed with its rural ideology, at the same time as acknowledging implicitly the limits to this ideology. The experience of food-for-work programmes (see Seekings, 2016a) led to the

BDP's embrace of 'self-help'. In his foreword to Botswana's first full National Development Plan, in 1968, Khama emphasised the importance of 'self-help': "The time has come for everyone to realise that immediate improvements in living standards can be achieved through individual effort and initiative, rather than through the charity of others" (Khama, 1968a). He elaborated in a presidential address to the National Assembly in December 1968:

> 'We must work harder and husband more carefully the resources which we do possess. We must become more self-reliant. So much more could be achieved with greater individual effort and imagination. As a nation we should not become too accustomed to depend on others; too used to charity from foreigners' (Khama, 1968b).

Khama would have had in mind not only dependency on the British, but also dependency on the WFP. The WFP itself was reluctant to provide sustained 'emergency' assistance, and demanded that the Government of Botswana apply for continued support on developmental grounds.

In his address to the National Assembly, Khama continued with a warning that Batswana should not count on handouts: "If, in a few places, farmers have abandoned their lands – preferring to rely on free food distributed by Government – let me warn them now that there will be no free food for them next year" (*ibid*). Dependency was undesirable, whether by individuals on state charity or the country as a whole on foreign charity. Khama went on to praise "communities" that had built classrooms or accommodation for teachers through "self-help or *Ipelegeng* efforts" (*ibid*).

This warning about the conditionality of 'free food' reflected disagreement between government departments. At the start of 1968 the Ministry of Agriculture had argued that famine was being perpetuated in part because of "the attitude of the people":

> 'A further factor was the attitude that had developed that in times of hardship there was no need to make an effort to overcome the hardship; people had become dependent upon Government to feed them. This was particularly so in the Bakwena where the attitude was "Government has fed us once and will do so again"'.[12]

Various senior bureaucrats opined at a meeting that "people had become conditioned to being helped out by Government and were not therefore very anxious to help themselves". In May, the Ministry of Agriculture reported that

[12] BNA: OP 18/3 1968-70.

crops had not been planted in some areas because of complacency (or 'apathy') or because adults were working on the WFP programme:

> 'It is apparent that last year's food relief programme had severe repercussions on both the people's will to work and the actual mechanics of the harvest – the feeding of destitutes leading to an absence of casual labour which in its turn lead to an even later harvest. The people's return to the villages was delayed until the new season's rains had arrived. The acreage of winter ploughing fell by half and the people expecting either another bumper season or some form of relief did not take advantage of the November rains, the only really effective ones of the season'.[13]

In July and again in September 1968, the Ministry of Agriculture complained that famine relief (by "an ever beneficent government") was deterring farmers from planting.[14]

The Ministry of Agriculture's concerns were addressed directly in December, when a small team (headed by the future president, Festus Mogae, at the time Planning Officer in the Ministry of Development Planning) investigated food-for-work drought relief projects. Whilst they found serious flaws, which contributed to the completion of few projects, they were generally positive.

> 'As to whether food-for-work has a disincentive effect on people's attitudes to ploughing, the impression we got was that the disincentive effect is non-existent. Wherever we went *Ipelegeng* workers said they were anxious to go to plough; in several instances, a few had already left. In some cases, women had been replaced by their daughters of about 17 or 18, and the explanation given was that mother had gone to join father to plough and the daughter must earn rations for them whilst they plough'.[15]

Khama's injunction to farmers to plough stopped a long way short of the denunciation of dependency that became commonplace later (as we shall see below). The lack of any explicit anxiety about dependency may have been in part because drought relief was understood to be temporary, not least because it was financed substantially by external agencies (especially the World Food Programme) rather than through Botswana's domestic revenues. Good harvests

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13 *Ibid*: Report signed by R.E.H. Atkinson, dated 15th May 1968.

14 *Ibid*: letters, P/S Min of Ag to P/S Presidency (Archie Mogwe) *et al*., dated 29th July and 13th Sep 1968.

15 BNA: OP 18/2 1966-70, Festus Mogae *et al*., 'Report of Appraisal Team on Progress of Ipelegeng Food for Work Projects' (dated 19th December 1968).

through most of the 1970s dissipated anxieties. The question of public provision for 'chronic destitutes' raised some concern over the possible consequences of public programmes for familial self-reliance, but the Presidency seems to have sided with the Ministry of Local Government and Lands (which favoured provision) against the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (which expressed concern).[16]

Khama emphasised 'self-help' and 'self-reliance' rather than their opposite, dependency. Speaking to the teachers union in 1969, he asserted that 'self-reliance' was an indigenous concept that grew out of drought relief:

> '[T]he term self-reliance was popularized in Tanzania by President Nyerere, who has written a wise and constructive essay on Education and Self-Reliance, which I commend to you. But we in Botswana have not just borrowed a slogan from Tanzania. Our self-reliance has much in common with Tanzania's but it has essentially developed from the need to apply the spirit of *Ipelegeng* to all aspects of life in Botswana' (Khama, 1969b).

Khama told the BDP in 1970 that "our dedication to self-reliance stems from the self-help efforts of the famine period, which we called '*ipelegeng*'" (Khama, 1970a). And, later that year, he told a foreign audience that "communal self-help", which "characterised our traditional life", had been revived through the food-for-work schemes implemented during drought: "It was these schemes which reminded our people that change could come through their own efforts, and there has been no decline in enthusiasm since independence. This effort has led to the wider application of self-reliance" (Khama, 1970c).

Self-help remained very firmly on the agenda in the 1970s, despite improved public finances and good rains.

> 'Now mining revenues make it possible for us, over a period, to provide basic necessities for most villages. Water, roads, school-building and clinics are all provided for in our current rural development programme. But this does not mean that every village in Botswana will get these facilities immediately or even in the near future, nor will they be supplied entirely free. Above all it does not mean that self-help is any less necessary than it has been in the past. There is still plenty of opportunity for villagers to improve the quality

[16] See successive drafts of a cabinet memorandum on 'Social Welfare: "Chronic" Destitutes', February and September 1974, and accompanying correspondence, in BNA: MLGL 25/2. The government's 'destitutes' policy was finally clarified after the recurrence of drought, in 1980.

> of their lives by their own efforts, and those communities who help themselves will progress most rapidly'.

Revenues from mining and elsewhere meant that basic infrastructure would now be improved regardless of self-help: "Self-help will no longer be made a condition for getting such basic items of physical and social infrastructure as roads, schools and clinics". But self-help would enable communities to develop faster, going beyond the bare essentials (BDP, 1974: 51).

Whilst there was no explicit public discourse of 'dependency' at this time (it was to surface later, as we shall see below),[17] when drought recurred in 1979 Khama felt the need to reiterate his criticism of 'hand-outs'. In his official declaration of drought in May 1979, he emphasised that the expanded feeding programmes were "not going to be hand-outs to the able-bodied people and those capable of looking after themselves, but drought relief provisions necessary to ensure the survival of the disadvantaged sections of our society".[18]

Harmony amidst inequality

In their 1969 election message and manifesto, Khama and the BDP spelt out for the first time the "fundamental principles which will guide our National Development": Democracy, development, self-reliance and unity (BDP, 1969; Khama, 1969b). These "cardinal principles" provided the foundations in which were rooted the country's three objectives: "Firstly, we wish to strive for *social justice*; secondly, we are concerned to provide wherever possible *equality of opportunity*; thirdly, we intend to use *persuasion rather than compulsion* in order to achieve change in a democratic and constructive way". This meant that "People must be *persuaded* to adopt new ideas toward land and cattle, not forced" (Botswana, 1970). Khama and Masire were fervent modernisers, but they seem to have viewed modernisation in terms of expanding opportunities for improved livelihoods (and for accumulation among the elite). They explicitly rejected the coercion practiced by both colonial and independent states (including the apartheid state in South Africa). They were also very wary of the social changes that might follow economic change. What they seemed to have in mind were hard-working, more productive peasants who might also take

[17] Subsequent elite anxiety over dependency seems to have broadly coincided with empirical research among academics – and presumably discussion in the media also – that dependency had shifted from kin to the state (e.g. Solway, 1994). There was little such research in the 1970s. As Gulbrandsen notes (2012: 127-8), it was the new elite that most dependent on the state, for access to opportunities for accumulation and massive hand-outs in the name of business development.

[18] 'Official Drought Declaration', 25th May 1979 (Botswana National Archives, OP/21/2).

advantage of expanding opportunities for off-farm wage labour but would remain, at heart, peasants.

The ensuing ambivalence about social and economic change was evident again in a speech Khama made in Parliament in December 1971. Concluding his discussion of the fourth 'national principle', unity, he warned about inequality:

> 'Above all we must guard against the greatest danger of all that development presents for our social cohesion – that of a society divided rigidly between rich and poor. We must not shackle the innovator, but we cannot let the weakest go to the wall. It would be tempting for the fortunate, the able and the articulate to grab more than their fair share of the rewards that development will bring. But in all our decisions, – in siting a factory, in planning our education system, in providing social services, – in all these areas and many others we must consider the needs of the majority. If we do not, then the unity which is our greatest strength will be imperilled' (Khama, 1971).

The distribution of income need not be equal, but it must be "fair" (Khama, 1972). Khama repeatedly reiterated his determination "to avoid the new divisions of class and occupation which have developed in industrialised societies" (Khama, 1970c). This was reiterated also in the 1970-75 National Development Plan: "[T]he reforms which are implemented must not favour the wealthy and deprive the poor. On the contrary the interests of the small man must always be paramount" (Botswana, 1970).

In practice, differentiation was becoming more and more pronounced, even within rural areas themselves. In Botswana, cattle were fundamental to production as well as status, providing the power required for ploughing. By the late 1970s access to oxen (for ploughing), boreholes (for water) and grazing land was becoming commodified, with the diminution of claims and entitlements associated with kinship (Peters, 1984b; Solway, 1994). Khama's elaboration of these 'national principles' reflected the political imperative of managing processes of economic and social change.

Three years after first identifying the four 'national principles', Khama began to discuss in more detail the concept of *kagisano* (or *kagisanyo*) that united the four principles. *Kagisano* was routinely translated as 'unity, peace, harmony and a sense of community'. In 1972 Khama elaborated on the meaning of *kagisano* in a speech to the BDP:

> 'It [*kagisano*] is not anything new. Everybody here knows what it means. … It has always been an essential part of life. It has always

> been part of our custom that members of an [sic] family should help each other face and overcome the problems of life. The well-known proverb *kgetse ya tsie e kgonwa ka go tshwaraganelwa* accurately sums up our approach to national policy and to life in general. What we are trying to do in the new Botswana is in fact nothing new. We are simply applying a well-established value, applied in the family, the ward and the tribe to the wider concept of nationhood' (Khama, 1972).

He proceeded to discuss also "other beliefs that we must reject":

> 'Those are the beliefs which are based on the idea that men, or groups of men, must inevitably struggle against each other. Such beliefs assert that, rather than uniting to overcome common problems, men must be divided, and set one against the other. Thus there are beliefs which are based on the idea that certain groups are faced with an inevitable and irreconcilable conflict of interest – that, for example, there must be an inevitable and irreconcilable struggle between the rich and the poor' (*ibid*).

Khama listed some of the other groups that were said to have conflicting interests.

> 'Men who hold beliefs based on the inevitability of conflict argue that these differences can be resolved only by the triumph of one dominant group. The most extreme of such beliefs argue that such differences can be resolved only by bloodshed, violence and civil strife. Such dangers do exist in societies where rapid change is taking place, but we believe that these dangers and conflicts are not inevitable and can be avoided if we assert and apply in practice our belief in *Kagisano*' (*ibid*).

Belief in *kagisano* also led the BDP to reject racism, apartheid and tribalism. Khama insisted that he was not glorifying the past (in that *kagisano* was often not practiced) nor was he claiming that *kagisano* was unique to Botswana. Crucially, he explained at length, *kagisano* meant that excessive inequalities must be avoided. The benefits of economic growth must be shared widely, with everyone receiving a "fair share" (*ibid*).

Fundamental to this discourse was the idea that the BDP – and hence the state – would ensure equitable distribution. Implicitly, there was no need for either chiefs or opposition parties. The BDP government proceeded to adopt an Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP). In 1973, President Khama

directed that ARDP construction projects should be evident before the elections scheduled for the following October (Picard, 1985: 194-5). Sixty new health clinics were built (Munemo, 2012: 143).

Khama and the BDP also sought to build a Tswana nation, nurturing a new national identity and loyalty above existing tribal or ethnic ones. In this, they may have been influenced especially by Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda, who visited Botswana in 1968.[19] His 'one Zambia, one nation' message may have informed Khama's own efforts. In Botswana, as in Zambia, national unity entailed three things: standing together against undemocratic neighbours, standing together as citizens of a new country, and standing together despite social and economic inequality.

Individual and public responsibility

The expansion of public responsibility led to the BDP leaders insisting on the need for a balance between individual and public responsibilities. In his 1969 election message, Khama declared that "the real meaning of independence" was "responsibility" (Khama, 1969a). In his 1974 election message, he reiterated the four national principles and the overarching "national ideology" of *kagisano*, spoke at length about economic growth, peace and nation-building, and then turned to the imperative of hard work:

> 'WORKING FOR PROSPERITY: Not everyone understands that prosperity has to be worked for … [I]f everyone is to enjoy the new prosperity and if the benefits of economic growth and development are to be fairly distributed, everyone is going to have to work hard, and some are going to have to show restraint and sacrifice' (Khama, 1974).

Individual responsibility needed to be balanced with public responsibility to ensure social justice:

> '*MOKODUWE GO TSOSIWA OO ITEKANG*: At the same time our belief in the unity and mutual assistance which must exist inside a family, a tribe or a nation, has never made us tolerant of idlers. Although where there is food, nobody is allowed to starve, it has always been a matter of great shame for an able-bodied man who can

[19] Sandy Grant (personal communication) recalls this to have been a momentous visit, with Kaunda speaking out against apartheid in a for more forthright way than Khama had ever done.

> help himself to try and rely on others for his livelihood. *Mokoduwe go tsosiwa oo itekang*. But in modern conditions when everyone does not have equal resources on which to base his efforts to improve his lot, we must beware of assuming that everyone who is poor is poor because he is lazy. A lean cow cannot climb out of the mud, but a good cattleman does not leave it to perish' (*ibid*).

Khama proceeded to discuss "social justice":

> 'Similarly in our national development policies we must recognise our obligations to the under-privileged and help them to help themselves. For the first time Botswana commands the resources, both in the form of the proceeds of mineral development and in external aid from many sources, to help our people help themselves. We must therefore at this stage think even more carefully about the objectives of our development policies. Above all we have to guard against extremes of wealth and poverty. The Botswana Democratic Party will not encourage idleness, but it is pledged not to leave the weak and poor to their own devices' (*ibid*).

In private, Khama and Masire disagreed over whether people who did not participate in self-help projects should be allowed to benefit:

> '[F]or example, when a school was being built and some people don't want to work, should their children be allowed to attend that school? Opinion was divided, with some feeling that yes, they should be allowed, since the children were not the parents – a view held by the late president [Khama]. And others said no, citing the scriptures that even the good God had said: "I am a jealous God who will visit the iniquities of the parents on the children even unto the third generation," and I held that view! Much as I was usually in sympathy with Seretse, I felt people would ask themselves: "Why should I work on the projects when my children can get the benefit anyway?" Critics said that food should be given out without conditions. But people had no work to do in the fields, so we decided that it was appropriate for people to be expected to work for their food' (Masire, 2006: 80).

The BDP stood for giving people the opportunity to help themselves. This was especially important for people in rural areas. "[A]t the root of our development strategy lies the need to give every Motswana the opportunity to uplift himself or herself by honest work", including especially "eking out a livelihood" from the land, explained Khama (1978). In practice, the BDP saw economic growth as the primary mechanism for improving opportunities for the poor. The

government would spend money on water supplies in villages and rural clinics, and aspired to providing free and universal primary education. It was also deeply paternalist: Family Welfare Educators would be employed to educate villagers on improved nutrition, child care and family planning (BDP, 1974). Its pro-poor welfare policies kept starvation at bay. But the BDP's supposed commitment to equality of opportunity did not extend beyond very limited opportunities. Masire wrote later that Khama and he had "always believed we should provide people with the opportunity to better themselves" – a distinctly Victorian phrase – "but we could not try to guarantee they would do so" (2006: 244).

The social contract between the state and its poorer citizens was highly conditional: If poor people did not help themselves, then they should not count on public support. Speaking in 1978, Khama followed a long discussion of *kagisano* with a clear warning to small farmers, who appeared to have neglected to take full advantage of the previous three years of good rains.

> 'I may add that some of our people do not even bother to go to the lands during the rainy season either because they have migrated to the towns where they live on the crumbs that fall from the tables of those who work or because they look down upon rural life. Although Government has no power to force people to go back to the land to produce food for themselves and for the country, Government cannot be expected to feed people who would otherwise feed themselves if only they would use their land which is in abundance … [and] heed the advice tendered to them by agricultural demonstrators' (Khama, 1976a).

This emphasis on balancing individual with public responsibility was continued after Khama's death by his successors, with the addition of explicit references to dependency. The BDP 1994 election manifesto insisted that "mutual social responsibility means that self-reliance should take precedence over dependence on government for assistance". Mutual social responsibility entailed, the BDP explained, long-term planning, socially responsible behaviour, discipline and sacrifice, care and compassion (BDP, 1994: 7). Masire bemoaned the fact that Botswana had "developed into a society where most people expect to be given things by government" and therefore were not motivated "to improve themselves" (2006: 244-5). He prided himself on being an innovative, industrious and entrepreneurial farmer, and regretted that too few Batswana were like him (*ibid*: 323). His successor as president, Festus Mogae (president from 1998-2008), cited the Tswana proverb '*Mokodua go tsosiwa o o itsosang*' and emphasised that the BDP advocated "a healthy work ethic, a positive philosophy and in particular a life of self-reliance as opposed to the dependency

syndrome" (Mogae, 1999). In articulating this discourse, successive BDP leaders were perpetuating a discourse that predated independence (Makgala, 2015), whilst adding references to dependency.

Indigenous values and expatriate speechwriters

Khama and Masire insisted that the emerging ideology was indigenous and denied that it was socialist (or any other kind of import). Khama elaborated on this on most detail in a speech given in Sweden in late 1970. He noted that socialism was an ideology that meant very different things to different people ("leaders as various as Stalin and Dubcek, Ulbricht and Willi Brandt, Nasser and Ben Gurion, Harold Wilson and Fidel Castro"), and had also been used to justify authoritarian actions. In Botswana, he told his audience, '"socialism" and even "African socialism" had "little meaning for the majority of our people".

> 'We in Botswana have chosen to develop our own guiding principles and describe them in terms readily comprehensible to our people. … Our principles then are democracy which in our main language Setswana is rendered by "*Puso ya batho ka batho*", or rule of the people by the people, and development which we translate in Setswana as "*ditiro tsa ditlabalolo*" which means literally "work for development", a significant rendering as I am sure you will agree' (Khama, 1970c).

The other two principles – self-reliance and unity – were expressed, he said, in various Tswana phrases (and later the BDP used the phrases *boipelego* for self-reliance and *popagano ya sechaba* for unity). "Our principles are summed up in the Setswana word *kagisanyo*, which means unity, peace, harmony and a sense of community" (*ibid*).

These national principles were said to be indigenous and thus supra-partisan. They were for all Batswana, not just the BDP. "They are not an alien ideology borrowed from either East or West", Khama explained in 1970; "they are broadly defined guidelines, which are rooted in our past traditions and culture, widely understood by our people and readily applicable to our present and future plans and policies".

> 'People speak of "capitalism" and "socialism", but neither of these terms has a great deal of meaning for our people. "Capitalist" societies vary greatly, and "socialism", as a policy, has been interpreted very

> differently by different leaders and different governments, not least here in Africa. So, rather than engage in theoretical discussion about whether we are moving towards "capitalism" or "socialism", I feel it is more profitable to promote constructive debate about our objectives within the framework of these four generally accepted national principles' (Khama, 1970d).

Khama concluded this speech by again pointing to the underlying ideal of *Kagisanyo* (*ibid*).

Later, Khama spoke explicitly about the indigneity of the BDP's principles:

> 'There are those who accuse us of having no guiding principles. Others fear that we are falling under the influence of alien beliefs.[20] This accusation and these fears are typical of those who believe that Africa, including Botswana, can only shape its development in terms of beliefs and policies which have been conceived in different circumstances in far-away lands. Such beliefs and policies may be perfectly suitable for the countries and continents in which they have developed, but they can have little meaning for the majority of Batswana. In saying this I do not mean we should ignore the experiences of others. Indeed we should seek to learn from these experiences and there is no reason to reject whatever is constructive and humane in many different systems and creeds. But our aspirations, our goals, our policies, our principles must be identified and expressed in terms which our people understand. This means that we must build them on the foundations provided by Botswana's culture and by Botswana's values and traditions' (Khama, 1972).

Masire makes a similar argument in his memoirs:

> 'We knew what we wanted; and from observing other countries, we knew what we wanted to avoid. We learned from experience and by trial and error as we built the party. No one came with a dogma to be followed. We shared stories, and we learned from each other and from the people we consulted. The party grew organically … This was the fundamental difference between us as a party and the [Botswana] People's Party and its subsequent mutations. They fed their followers

[20] In 1970, the South African media alleged that communists had taken over the Office of the President, naming Syson (whose father-in-law was closely linked to the British Communist Party) and Matthews (a former member of the South African Communist Party) (Tlou *et al.*, 1995: 295).

with slogans and dogmas picked up from elsewhere' (Masire, 2006: 49).

When the BPP split into two factions, these corresponded closely to the differences in neighbouring South Africa between the competing African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress.

Masire repeatedly spoke out against imported 'isms'. "We are not locked into any immutable alien ideology or tied to any 'ism'", he proclaimed in his 1989 election message (Masire, 1989). The BDP was, he said in 1994, a pragmatic party intent on building the nation and achieving development, unlike other parties that "were pre-occupied with which of the numerous 'isms' they would embrace… Botswana's gains under the BDP may not be readily identifiable as the benefits of a particular 'ism', but they are the fruits of goal-directed and sure-footed leadership" (Masire, 1994).

This discourse served a clear partisan purpose. The BDP represented the opposition parties within Botswana as mindless parrots of foreign ideologies and values. In the mid-1960s the BPP was the primary opposition party, but it steadily lost ground to the Botswana National Front (BNF). Both the BPP and BNF employed an explicitly socialist discourse (with the BNF combining this with support for some chiefs). Implicitly also, as we shall see below, the complete rejection of foreign ideologies distinguished the BDP ideology from the versions of African socialism developed elsewhere, including by Nyerere in Tanzania. Emphasising the Tswana roots of the BDP's doctrine also served to consolidate its authority vis-à-vis the chiefs.

Khama and Masire insisted that the values emphasised in this ideology were indigenous, but many of the speeches delivered and documents authored by Khama and Masire were written with the assistance of expatriate speechwriters and other personnel within the bureaucracy. Considerable attention had been paid to aspects of the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats in newly-independent Botswana. At the time, Gundersen (1970) argued that bureaucrats ran the country. Isaksen (1981) and Samatar (1999) argued, however, that they did so within a framework set by the political elite. As Gulbrandsen (2012) argues, the BDP leadership were able to appropriate elements of Tswana culture – i.e. the historic roles of chiefs and of the *kgotla* – so as to represent the BDP as somehow above politics, i.e. to depoliticise state policy so as to serve the interests of the BDP. The appearance of bureaucracy thus suited the BDP.

Most work on the bureaucracy in post-independence Botswana focuses on the technocrats in development planning. Development planning had been initiated under colonial rule, but on a very small scale, with limited ambitions and with

little effect. In 1965-66, in the run-up to independence, Masire began to build planning capacity – first within the Department of Finance, then (following a major disagreement with Khama in late 1966) within a separate Department of Development Planning, and then (from 1970) in a unified Department of Finance and Development Planning. Masire, as Minister in charge of both Finance and Development Planning, was surrounded by a group of young, mostly expatriate technocrats, including Quill Hermans (from South Africa) and Pierre Landell-Mills (from the UK) (Samatar, 1999: 82-96; also, Isaksen, 1981; Danevad, 1993). Samatar summarises the relationship between the political elite (Masire) and the technocrats: "The BDP government sketched the broader outlines of its development plan, but the skilled technocrats crafted the details and then implemented the programs" (*ibid*: 87). He proceeds, however, to quote Isaksen, who writes that the bureaucrats were "usually expected to perceive problems, come out with ideas" and take the initiative (Isaksen, 1981: quoted by Samatar, 1999: 88). In Landell-Mills' account, Hermans (who studied in the USA) and Landell-Mills himself (who was a graduate from Cambridge, and had already worked as an Overseas Development Institute appointee in newly-independent Tanzania) brought technical skills from the new field of development economics and a willingness to stand up to traditional bureaucrats. These technocrats, who wrote Botswana's development plans, injected into them a progressive developmental-ism that had been largely absent hitherto.

Khama himself relied heavily on personal assistants in the Office of the President. The most important of these was probably a young Englishman, John Syson, who worked for Khama between 1969 and 1973. Syson played a key role writing the speeches that branded anew Khama, the BDP and the national ideology. Khama's biographers refer briefly to Syson, citing 'cynics' who coined the term 'Syson socialism' to refer to the emphasis in government and BDP documents on social justice and equality of opportunity in 1969-70 (Tlou *et al*., 1995: 295).

Syson was thirty years old when he arrived in Botswana with his wife and two young children (a third child was born in Botswana). After studying history at Oxford, he had moved to London where he worked for a commercial publisher. According to his then wife, Lucy Gaster:

> 'Living in Islington in the early 1960s, he joined the local Labour Party in 1961 and found a party dominated by Tammany Hall politics and the local "Irish mafia". Very few councillors seemed willing to stand up to the corruption in the housing department especially, but

> one of them became our landlord, and encouraged us to be active in the Young Socialists'.[21]

Syson and Gaster were very active in the Young Socialists. Gaster recalls that "John was a natural social democrat, actively rejecting the politics of the far left as much as those of conservatism and liberalism in the old-fashioned sense". In the Young Socialist branch in Islington, Syson and Gaster 'saw off' "three kinds of Trotskyists". Islington had a growing population of Greek Cypriots, which led to Syson and Gaster becoming involved in the issues of immigration and race relations. They also became active members of the Young Fabians. Meanwhile, Gaster studied at the London School of Economics, where she was taught by the stars of social democratic social policy Richard Titmuss, Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend.[22]

In 1964, Syson was employed in London by the Fabian Society, where he worked on the Fabian Commonwealth Bureau's journal *Venture*. His immediate boss was a South African, Margaret Roberts, who was married to the journalist Colin Legum. Syson was influenced by social democratic Fabian leaders including Shirley Williams and Bill Rogers (who much later defected from the Labour Party to form the short-lived Social Democratic Party). Gaster recalls that "the Fabian Society was an exciting place to be in the mid-1960s". Leaders of newly-independent countries "passed through the doors of the office in Dartmouth Street". There was enormous enthusiasm for 'development', and several of their friends were recruited by the new Overseas Development Institute. In 1966, Syson became executive secretary of the Ariel Foundation, established in 1960 by a bipartisan group of young Labour[23] and Conservative activists[24] to promote ties with nationalist African leaders.[25]

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[21] Gaster, personal communication, 17th October 2015.

[22] Lucy Gaster's father was Jack Gaster, who had been a lawyer for the British Communist Party. Years later, Lucy Gaster's second husband, Nicholas Deakin, edited *Radiant Illusion? Middle Class Recruits to the Communist Party in the 1930s* (2016). Tlou *et al*. (1995: 295) report that Syson was accused of being a Communist in the South African press, perhaps because Gaster had what they called 'leftist family connections'.

[23] The initial executive director of the Foundation was Labour MP Maurice Foley, who was a strongly anti-communist Roman Catholic with a strong interest in Africa. At some point he was director of the Royal Africa Society. Later, from 1968 to 1970, Foley was junior minister in the Foreign Office with responsibility for Africa. The other Labour Party activist to play a prominent role in the Ariel Foundation was Dennis Grennan, who at one point was personal assistant to Jim Callaghan.

[24] The two leading Conservatives in the Ariel Foundation were both firmly within the One Nation group. Charles Longbottom (the Foundation's chairman) was elected as an MP in 1959, and from 1961 to 1963 served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Ian Macleod, who had been a founder of One Nation in 1950. Barney Hayhoe worked in the Conservative Research Department before being elected as MP in 1970. Seawright records that they joined

His appointment in Botswana had been arranged through the London-based Ariel Foundation. The Ariel Foundation had already developed a strong relationship with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda:

> 'The Foundation has originally made contact with President Kaunda at a time when he was still officially regarded as a nationalist "wild man". The Foundation had helped him with the training and organisation of his Party. and to train those who later became Ministers in Zambia. After Independence it had helped to train potential members of the Zambian Foreign Service and Civil Service selected from the Party cadres. The need for this kind of assistance was now diminishing, but Ariel were now engaged on similar training for Africans from Rhodesia'.[26]

It is unclear whether the Ariel Foundation's involvement in Botswana came through Masire, Khama or both. Masire (together with BDP leader K.P. Morake[27]) visited the UK in October 1966, through the Ariel Foundation.[28] Masire later wrote that he "went to the UK for a time to observe the Labour Party, and we followed many of the lessons we learned there" (Masire, 2006: 53). Khama also reportedly knew Labour Party activists in the Ariel Foundation (Tlou *et al*., 1995: 273). Gaster later recalled that

> 'John [Syson] built up a relationship with Quett Masire during his time at Ariel. We received him in our house, and I assume that John spent quite a lot of time with him during his visits to Botswana as part of the work for the Foundation. I can't remember whether he met Seretse Khama before we went to Botswana in April 1969, but I would imagine he did'.[29]

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the One Nation group of MPs in 1970 and 1992 respectively (Seawright, 2005: 73), but these dates seem implausibly late.

[25] *The Spectator*, 7th Feb 1964. The Foundation came to be shrouded in controversy. Tlou *et al*. (1995: 222, 273) report that the Foundation channelled funding to the BDP from the British government and also received funds from the American CIA. Other sources point to the Foundation's alleged links to the British MI6 as well as the CIA, but the evidence for these allegations seems thin. The Foundation's work seems to have been more innocuous. Foreign and Commonwealth Office files record the efforts of the Foundation in facilitating visits by British MPs to newly-independent countries, visits by nationalist leaders to the UK, and even study in the UK of students from former colonies (see UK National Archives [UKNA], FCO 95/395, 95/400 and 95/404).

[26] 'Record of a Meeting with Mr Longbottom and Mr Grennan of the Ariel Foundation, 23 January 1967' (UKNA, FCO 95/400).

[27] Morake was executive secretary of the BDP and long-serving Minister of Education. Tlou et al. (1995) describe him as a BDP ideologue.

[28] UKNA, FCO 95/395.

[29] Gaster, personal communication, 17th October 2015.

She recalls also that Masire's South African-born adviser, Quill Hermans, "had a lot to do with it".[30] Khama later wrote that Syson had been appointed "at my request and that of the Vice-President".[31] Pierre Landell-Mills, however, recalls that the initiative seemed to originate in London, not in Botswana.[32] It is possible that the links between Botswana and the Ariel Foundation were strengthened as a result of Kaunda's high-profile visit to Botswana in May 1968. Syson's appointment was funded for two years through a grant from the British philanthropic Dulverton Trust.

In Botswana, Syson "was brought in to work on a day-to-day basis with the President", Khama, playing the kind of role that much later came to be associated with 'political advisers'. "He worked with ministers and permanent secretaries … and he kept a general eye on the political situation and the BDP, especially at election time".[33] Syson was very involved in writing speeches. Gaster recalls that

> 'it was really a collective effort to work out the underlying political philosophy and link it with practical action. John [Syson] did the coordinating and the actual writing, having a considerable input himself, but he worked very closely with Seretse Khama himself and, I think, even more closely with Quett Masire who was, I'm sure, the intellectual driving force at the political level'.[34]

The Ariel Foundation later reported that Syson had (in addition to training his successor)

> 'concentrated particularly on the development of policies, plans and programmes in the domestic field and made a significant contribution to formulating the policies for maintaining an equilibrium between economic growth and social justice which have attracted significant international support for Botswana's development'.[35]

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30 *Ibid*.

31 Khama letter to Dennis Grennan, Ariel Foundation, 16th Dec 1970, attached to Ford Foundation Request no. ID-991, Archives of Ford Foundation (archived at the Rockefeller Archive Center, New York). I am very grateful to Monica Blank for finding and providing this documentation.

32 Interview, London.

33 Gaster, personal communication.

34 *Ibid*.

35 Report by Dennis Grennan (Ariel Foundation) to Ford Foundation on Ford grant no. 710-0301, 17th October 1974.

In 1971, the Ariel Foundation applied successfully to the Ford Foundation in New York for funding for a further two years from May 1971.[36] The Ford Foundation was very positive about Botswana and especially Khama himself. The Ford Foundation was already funding capacity-building for the new government of Botswana, including young economists from the UK recruited through the Overseas Development Institute. The Ford Foundation assessed:

> 'The favorable prognosis for Botswana owes much to the leadership of its President, Sir Seretse Khama. More than the heads of most other states, he is personally involved in day-to-day policy and operational decisions across the whole range of Government activities. However, his ability to encompass the often overlapping or conflicting implications of the many issues on which he has to make decisions'.

Appended to the application was a strong request signed by Khama himself:

> 'Mr Syson has, from the moment of his arrival, provided an invaluable service of analysis and appraisal of information, projects and policies over the whole range of my responsibilities as the Head of State and Head of Government. … I do not need to stress how critical the next few years will be for the future social and economic development of Botswana. … It is therefore quite essential that, during this critical period in Botswana's development, there should be no diminution in the quality of the assistance available to me in analyzing and evaluating past, present and future policies, programmes and events'.[37]

Sheila Bagnall, who worked as a teacher at Sweneng, recorded in her diary-like letters that Syson and 'Grennen' had visited Sweneng in June 1969. Syson, she wrote, was writing Khama's speeches, and was doing a good job of this. A few months later, when one of the (black) South African teachers at the school refused a residence permit in Botswana, Bagnall contacted Syson – whom she now described as "the President's personal advisor" – and travelled to Gaborone to meet with him and to persuade him to intercede (Grant, 2001: 220, 255).

The Ariel Foundation's application to the Ford Foundation provided explicitly for training of two Batswana "to provide the supporting analytical services needed by the President's office over a broad range of Government problems". One of these was Lebang Mpotokwane, who was already working with Syson, and who in 1973 was to succeed Syson.

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[36] Ford Foundation Request no. ID-991.

[37] Khama, letter to Grennan, 16th December 1970.

Syson brought skills to the President's office. In Gaster's recollection,

> 'John fitted well with the general thinking of the President and Vice President at that time about what sort of person they needed in the private office. He had a combination of skills, knowledge and values that were highly suited to the stage and direction of policy development'.[38]

He presumably also shaped the content of the speeches that Khama gave over this period, i.e. on the development of the welfare doctrine outlined above. With his background in the social democratic wing of Britain's Labour Party, and having worked with British conservatives in the progressive 'One Nation' wing of that party. Syson would ideologically have fitted well – and contributed to – the centrist position which Khama was coming to occupy. Syson probably subscribed to the modernizing emphasis associated with Harold Wilson's leadership of the British Labour Party in the mid and late 1960s, whilst being deeply opposed to more radical versions of socialism. He probably also subscribed to the widespread affection within Fabian circles for the emphasis on harmony and cooperation in 'traditional African' society (see, for example, Brailsford, 1945; Scott, 1951), as well as the typically Fabian assessment that (excepting mass education) the British-style welfare state *should* not (as well as could not) be copied in Africa (in part because it would result in undesirable social change) (see, for example, Balogh, 1959). On these issues, there were scant differences between Fabians and One Nation conservatives, and both would have combined comfortably with cautious modernizers in Africa such as Khama and Masire.

The ideology of the BDP and the doctrine of welfare provision in comparative perspective

Khama, Masire and the BDP (with their speechwriters' assistance) elaborated a clear commitment to a concept of social justice based around the ideal of a harmonious rural community. In this idealised society, education and agricultural extension provided the poor with opportunities to improve their lives, the rich assisted them when they faltered through no fault of their own, but the poor had to contribute industriously to self-help. Public and individual responsibilities needed to be balanced. This idealised society was not egalitarian, but inequalities did not lead to conflict. In the eyes of its authors, this normative frame was not ideological, and was certainly not an ideology imported from

[38] Gaster, personal communication.

elsewhere. When Khama spoke of the need to "guard against … a society rigidly divided between rich and poor" (opening parliament in December 1971), he was accused by journalists of dressing up capitalism in the clothes of socialist rhetoric. These critics misunderstood the character of his rhetoric, which was far from socialist. As Tlou *et al*. write, "the BDP assiduously avoided ideological commitment to anything but the vague Setswana concept of *kagisano* (harmony and well-being)" (1995: 296).

Tlou *et al*. assess that "Botswana was a secular state, but it many ways it began to approximate more to the European model of 'Christian democracy' and liberal conservatism than to the models of its neighbours, black or white". In their account, there was a short-lived experiment with "social democracy from above", starting in 1969-70, but this "had certainly ended by 1975-77" (1995: 365), as civil servants and cattle-owners cohered into a new national bureaucratic bourgeoisie (see Parson, 1981). Tlou *et al*. were surely correct to identify a shift in government policies in the 1970s to accommodate better the emerging elite's thirst for accumulation in cattle-ranching, industry and commerce. But they erred in characterising the BDP's rhetoric and policy as social democratic, and they underestimated the continuities between then the later years in terms of the BDP's social policies. The government continued to consolidate its conservative welfare state, providing parsimonious food rations and other benefits for children and the deserving poor and through public employment programmes.

This welfare state resembled the liberal welfare states (such as Britain and the USA) in terms of its general parsimony and targeting on the poor, but the strong emphasis on family was reminiscent of the conservative welfare states built by mostly Christian democratic parties in continental Europe. The underlying ideology was of a progressive, modernising conservatism, in line as much with the 'one nation' conservative tradition in Britain and Christian democrats in continental Europe as with the social democracy associated with the Fabians.

Britain's 'one nation' conservatives invoked the concept of 'one nation' associated with the nineteenth century conservative leader Benjamin Disraeli. Disraeli, who was no egalitarian, warned against the polarisation of society into 'two nations', and pushed British conservatives not only to appeal to voters across class lines but also to contest the desirability of thinking in terms of class. Popular aspirations for a more equitable post-war society, rooted in the inter-war depression, were fuelled by the war and focused by the 1942 Beveridge Report in particular. The Labour Party's landslide election victory in 1945 prompted some conservatives to articulate anew a progressive doctrine that embraced much of the popular new welfare state. 'Rab' Butler, Harold Macmillan and Quinton Hogg paved the way, but it was a new cohort of younger MPs elected in

1950 who seized the initiative and formed the 'One Nation' group of Conservative Party backbenchers (Garnett & Hickson, 2009; Seawright, 2005).

The One Nation group's first (and very successful) publication *One Nation* (Macleod & Maude, 1950) set out clearly the progressive conservative vision of society and the welfare state: The welfare state should concentrate scarce resources on those in most need, ensuring "a minimum standard, above which people should be free to rise as far as their industry, their thrift, their ability or genius may take them" (Macleod & Maude, 1950: 9, quoted by Page, 2014: 20). The group continued its work after the Conservative Party was elected into government in 1951 (although many of its members were quickly promoted into ministerial office and left the group itself). A 1952 publication, *The Social Services: Needs and Means* emphasised the responsibilities of the family and the individual, and the need for means-tests to ensure that resources were targeted on need. "The question which therefore poses itself is not, 'Should a means test be applied to a social service?' but 'Why should any service be provided without a test of need?'" Even health services should be funded largely through contributions. Only education and targeted social assistance should be free, i.e. funded entirely through taxation (Macleod & Powell, 1952: 2). A later volume – *The Responsible Society* (1959) – elaborated on the importance of voluntarism, responsibility and self-reliance (Bochel, 2010; Page, 2014). This progressive strand of conservative thought eschewed abstract ideas and advocated pragmatism, but rested on a clear ideological foundation. It was hostile to not only the core socialist concept of equality but also to the individualism of classical liberalism. In this conservative ideology, individuals were social beings whose self-fulfilment depended on their communal relationships. The welfare state was important to achieving harmony, mitigating class conflict and building a common identity. In Britain, some progressive conservatives decried class altogether, whilst others advocated a balance between classes to ensure both the vitality and harmony of society (Blackburn, 2015).

Almost all of the themes in the ideology developed by Khama, Masire and the BDP resembled closely the major themes in this 'One Nation' conservative political thought. This similarly might reflect similar social origins and challenges in Britain after 1945 and in Botswana twenty years later. Whilst Khama's background was unambiguously aristocratic, Masire was more of a self-made man (albeit from a somewhat privileged background). They were conservative, but not simply traditionalist (distancing the BDP from 'authoritarian rule, whether exercised by the colonial government or by *the arbitrary power of chiefs*' – BDP, 1974: 9). Together, they embraced aspects of change – opportunities for individual prosperity and the imperative of a modernising national project – whilst worrying about its social consequences. They established the BDP in part in response to the more socialist rhetoric of the

BPP (carried forward later by the BNF), but were pushed by the 1960s drought into formulating a compassionate doctrine of public provision. The drought provided an impetus not only to policy reform but also to ideological production, as the experience of the Second World War did in Britain.

The similarity between the BDP's brand of benign conservatism and British One Nation conservatism might reflect also more direct influences. Not only did Khama live in the UK at precisely the time that One Nation ideology was being widely disseminated and discussed, but many of the key figures in the One Nation group played prominent roles during decolonisation.

Benign, paternalistic conservatism in Botswana had – as many scholars have rightly noted – clear limits. Not only was it deeply in-egalitarian, but it was also exclusive, most obviously with respect to the San (Good, 1999; Saugestad, 2001).

The (generally) benign conservatism of Khama, Masire and the BDP invites comparison with the ideological positions of other post-colonial leaders and parties at the time. Perhaps the most studied such leader is Julius Nyerere in Tanzania (who was strongly influenced by contact with Fabians in the UK, and whose expatriate personal assistant, Joan Wicken, had been a Fabian stalwart – see Bjerk, 2015: 32). Nyerere infused his political discourse and ideology with a socialist rhetoric, calling as early as 1962 for a "socialist attitude of mind" in a "socialist society". Nyerere's philosophy of *ujamaa* (literally 'family-hood') was starkly different to the Khama/Masire/BDP doctrines in both this socialist rhetoric and the strategy of forced 'villagisation' (entailing coercion and its justification – see Schneider, 2014) to which *ujamaa* later led. Like its counterpart in Botswana, however, *ujamaa* was (in Priya Lal's words) "simultaneously rooted in indigenous tradition and a humanistic universalism", with an "idealised construction of the harmonious African extended family" providing a model for national (and even transnational) relations. In both Tanzania and Botswana, 'self-reliance' was central to the emerging ideology (Lal, 2012: 214). This enabled the *ujamaa* philosophy to appeal to both radicals and conservatives concerned with responding to social and economic change:

> 'the language of *ujamaa* was compelling not because it was a means of resurrecting "traditional" African values for a modern age, but because it provided a new vocabulary for debating the very real challenges facing society in the era of decolonisation, with the potential to help construct a distinctive form of modernity which balanced progress with the maintenance and recreation of social bonds' (Hunter, 2015: 212, 230).

Nyerere and Khama alike denounced individual laziness as well as collective or national dependency on foreigners. *Ujamaa* was a developmental-ist philosophy. Nyerere envisaged the expansion of public services such as education and health care whilst (as Lal emphasises) denouncing dependency on the state or others (i.e. 'parasitism'). In 1967 the President's Office declared that

> 'the policy of self-reliance teaches us that it is undesirable, indeed shameful for a healthy adult to be fed and looked after by others without himself working for his own welfare… A person of this kind is an enemy of the country's development' (quoted in Lal, 2012: 216).

As in Botswana, and as in late colonial Tanzania also, self-reliance or self-help entailed voluntary labour in the construction of roads and classrooms. 'Idlers' should be sanctioned.[39]

Most of this *ujamaa* philosophy was articulated *prior* to the crucial phase in the development of an ideology in Botswana. Whilst Khama had a cool personal relationship with Nyerere up to the mid-1970s (Tlou *et al*., 1995: 221-2),[40] he (and especially Syson) would have been very aware of the ideological position staked out by Nyerere in the late 1960s.

Much of the BDP ideology resembles Nyerere's formulations of *ujamaa* in the 1960s, excepting the latter's socialist rhetoric. The BDP and Nyerere shared a common antipathy to chiefs, modernist ambitions, enthusiasm for self-reliance and anxiety about idleness. But there were important if subtle differences between them. Nyerere's *ujamaa* philosophy was more communitarian, whilst the BDP ideology had stronger individualistic elements. Whilst Nyerere's socialist rhetoric reflected a wariness of the market, the BDP sought to balance the market with collective responsibilities. Nyerere advocated an alternative to capitalism, which generated inequality, whereas Khama and the BDP sought more to modify and adapt capitalism to the South African context. As numerous scholars emphasised in the 1980s, most of the BDP leaders were successful cattle farmers or businessmen.

Surprisingly, perhaps, Nyerere seemed less sympathetic to the needs of people who were unable to support themselves. Later Tanzanian government policy

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39 Lal points to the influence of the strategy of 'self-reliance' developed by the Chinese Communist Party, whilst at the same time noting that such strategies were widespread across the late colonial and then post-colonial world (Lal, 2012: 217-8).

40 Tlou *et al*. (1995) report that Kaunda brokered an improvement in relations between Nyerere and Khama in 1973-75. Nyerere wrote the foreword to a collection of Khama's speeches published in 1980 (Carter and Morgan, 1980), and he paid generous tribute to Khama at the latter's funeral (also in 1980) (the tribute is included in Tlou *et al*., 1995).

documents reportedly acknowledged that some people could not support themselves:

> 'In a socialist country, the only people who live on the work of others, and who have the right to be dependent on their fellows, are small children, people who are too old to support themselves, the [disabled], and those whom the state at any one time cannot provide with an opportunity to work'.[41]

But there is little evidence of any actual state provision for such people; implicitly, it seems, responsibility was handed to the family, village or perhaps ward (i.e. cluster of villages), relying on their own resources (and without any clear allocation of resources from higher levels of the state). The government of Botswana seems to have accepted responsibility both in practice (through provision for the 'destitute') and ideologically. This difference was, I argue, due to the combination of the scale of drought (which was countrywide rather than regional in Botswana), the need to present a clear alternative to the roles played historically by chiefs (which had played more important roles in Bechuanaland than in Tanganyika) and the challenges of managing the inequalities and other social changes that accompanied economic changes (which was rapid in Botswana but slow in Tanzania).

Conclusion

"A lean cow cannot climb out of the mud, but a good cattleman does not leave it to perish", proclaimed the Tswana proverb quoted by Khama in 1974. This proverb captured the much of the essence of the BDP's doctrine of public provision: The benign, modern state, acting for the community and in place of the chiefs, should assist the disadvantaged through improved opportunities and safety-net, helping the disadvantaged to do what they could not do on their own, but without any suggestion that the disadvantaged were the equals of the advantaged. The state would provide education and basic health care, would feed children and vulnerable groups, and would ensure employment opportunities in times of drought (all at the same time as it ensured opportunities for accumulation by the elite).

Many features of this ideology were echoed across much of post-colonial East and Southern Africa. The explicit recognition of public responsibility (alongside

[41] 1981 Cabinet Paper quoted by Dr Simeon Mesaki, in a presentation at the FES/SASPEN workshop on Social Protection in the United Republic of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, August 2016.

private responsibility) for the poor, at least under the specific conditions of drought, was less common, and reflected the combination of circumstances in Botswana at and immediately following independence. Mud was not the usual reason why lean cattle in Botswana needed assistance. The Khama presidency was bookended by very severe drought, that not only resulted in negligible harvests but also decimated cattle herds (especially in the smaller herds owned by small farmers). The experience of drought shaped the doctrine of benign conservatism developed by Khama, Masire and the BDP. Drought affected the whole of society, including the rich owners of large cattle herds. It required state action, at a time when scarce public resources necessitated 'self-help'. It especially threatened rural society, exposing not only the limits to an agrarian model for society but also the failures of the market. It encouraged policy-makers to worry about – and 'modernise' – agricultural production and productivity, but neither new techniques nor 'villagisation' nor even boreholes would prevent drought in future, which meant that this was an impetus to welfare state-building and not just 'development'. As in the USA, drought was a natural disaster, and the ensuing famine and hardship could not be blamed on the poor themselves.

Drought combined with political competition to drive policy reform. Khama, Masire and the BDP championed the interests of the new economic and political elite. This required stripping the old elite – the chiefs – of most of their powers and responsibilities. Bathoen's support for the opposition BNF and the results of the 1969 elections reminded the BDP leaders of their vulnerability to active opposition from the chiefs. The provision of drought relief through the new state served to shore up political support for the BDP directly as well as indirectly by legitimating the new, BDP-run state. The articulation of a benignly conservative welfare doctrine helped to consolidate political support for the BDP and new state. Modest redistribution was the price to be paid for preserving the political supremacy of the new economic and political elite.

Khama and the BDP were not devoid of ideology, as suggested by scholars such as Tlou, Parsons & Henderson (1995). They may have eschewed formal ideological commitment and discussion, but they nonetheless articulated and practiced a clear welfare doctrine as part of a more general ideology of state-society relations.

Further severe drought in the 1980s, social change, and (in the 1990s) AIDS pushed the BDP to expand further public provision – with electoral competition providing immediate political impetus, especially in the mid-1990s. By the 2000s, Botswana had a welfare state that was both extensive (in terms of its coverage of the poor) and parsimonious (in terms of the value of the benefits, whether in cash or in kind). In contrast to the emerging welfare states in

countries to the north, Botswana's welfare state was not the result of the embrace of social protection by international agencies and aid donors. The pillars of this welfare state, and the doctrine associated with it, were in place by the time of Khama's death (and the succession of Masire to the presidency) in July 1980, and reflected conditions within Botswana during the critical juncture of independence and its immediate aftermath.

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