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A Political Economy Analysis of Social Protection Programmes in Botswana

Botlhale, Emmanuel
University of Botswana

Mogopodi, Lekorwe
University of Botswana

Mothusi, Bashi
University of Botswana

Motshegwa, Baakile
University of Botswana

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Author contact information:

Emmanuel Botlhale
University of Botswana
BOTLHALE@mopipi.ub.bw

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Nairobi, Kenya

info@pasgr.org

www.pasgr.org

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Abbreviations

BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BCWIS	Botswana Core Welfare Indicator Survey
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BNF	Botswana National Front
BPP	Botswana Peoples Party
DFID	Department of International Development
EDD	Economic Diversification Drive
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoB	Government of Botswana
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Deficiency/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty
MLG&RD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
NDPs	National Development Plans
NDP	National Development Plan
RoB	Republic of Botswana
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SP	Social Protection
SRM	Social Risk Management
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Abstract

Certain groups within society such as children, older persons and the physically challenged are more vulnerable to poverty, lack of access to social amenities, poor health and poor nutrition compared with the rest of the citizens. Despite being an upper middle-income country, Botswana is not an exception to this problem. While the country's development indicators have continued to rise, owing to the discovery of minerals in the 1970s, Botswana still experiences development challenges such as poverty, unemployment and income inequality. Consequently, the government has put in place a nationwide self-funded Social Protection (SP) regime to address these challenges.

This study seeks to establish whether socio-economic, historical, political and institutional factors and actors support the drive or resistance to the SP policy and programmes, and whether this has any implications on its sustainability. A mixed data-collection approach sampled 200 actors, both state and non-state, to represent the general views of all involved. A political economy (PE) analysis was then carried out to establish the distribution and contestation of power and resources among the various groups and within different contexts.

The study found out that policy-making for social protection in Botswana is carried out in several arenas, both at community and national levels, and involves a wide range of actors including government ministries and departments, political parties, civil society and others. Further, that SP is not a political tool but rather that its provision is borne of social contract obligations. The SP policy-making process is done under the age-old Tswana democracy tenet of consensus seeking (*therisanyo*) as well as the principles of social justice as outlined in the country's long-term vision plan (Vision 2016).

Presently, the government has declared its commitment to continue funding SP programmes, thus, guaranteeing its sustainability. However, given current revenue challenges, the implementation of the policy cannot be universal; thus, beneficiaries of SP programmes will have to be selected based on a means-testing evaluation.

Key words: social protection programmes, political economy analysis, Botswana

1 Introduction to Social Protection in Botswana

Social protection has been defined in various ways by different organisations such as the EU, ILO, UN and the World Bank.¹ For example, UN (2001:4) states that “social protection is broadly understood as a set of public and private policies and programmes undertaken by societies in response to various contingencies to offset the absence or substantial reduction of income from work; to provide assistance for families with children; as well as provide people with health care and housing.” According to Norton et al. (2001:7), SP programmes are “public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation, which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society.” The World Bank (2003) defines social protection from a social risk management (SRM) perspective. Since this paper is anchored on vulnerability (read risk), it will adopt the World Bank’s (2003) definition.

Norton et al. (2001) hold that social protection fulfils many functions, including promoting dynamic, cohesive and stable societies through increased equity and security. According to GSDRC (2014), social protection is provided through four approaches: (i) social assistance (resources, either cash or in-kind, are transferred to vulnerable individuals or households); (ii) social insurance (beneficiaries make contributions to health insurance or unemployment insurance schemes to mitigate risk); (iii) labour market interventions (programmes such as minimum wage legislation are designed to protect workers); and (iv) community-based or ‘informal’ social protection (mechanisms by which social safety nets and coping strategies are provided and sustained at the community level).

As part of the social contract,² the government is obliged to provide social protection to vulnerable groups most affected by poverty, lack of access to social amenities, poor health and poor nutrition. Understanding this contractual obligation, the Botswana government has in place an active SP regime.

1.1 The Political Economy Context of Social Protection in Botswana

In Botswana, SP programmes have a long history dating back to pre-independence when traditional informal social protection schemes such as *mafisa* (the rich loaned cattle to the poor), *go tshwara teu* (the rich gave cattle to the poor as a token of appreciation for looking after their herds) and *majako* (the poor worked in the fields of the rich in exchange for part of the harvest) were in force. After independence, in 1966, Botswana Government decided to institutionalise a formal state-funded SP regime as part of its public policy. A community development programme, mostly involving food-for-work and feeding programmes, was established in the 1970s (Ntseane and Solo, 2004). This was followed by the Bushman Training and Settlement Programme (later renamed Remote Area Development Programme), the Social Welfare Unit (1973–81), Public Works Programme (1978) and National Destitute Policy (1980). Over time, the SP regime has grown considerably to include delivery of food packages to the poor, supplementary feeding programmes for vulnerable groups and primary school children, old-age pension scheme and World War II veterans’ grants, provision of food and clothing, education and protection of orphans and vulnerable children (Mupedziswa and Ntseane, 2011) and disability allowance (Botswana Press Agency, 2015).

Although the SP regime has been in operation in Botswana for 49 years (1966–2015), so far no political economy analyses (PE) have been carried out to analyse the design, implementation and outcome of the safety nets with a view to enhancing their impact. This, therefore, is the first PE analysis study, which will, undoubtedly, contribute to the literature.

Botswana’s Macroeconomic and Political Development

Like many other African countries, Botswana was colonised by the British as Bechuanaland territory from 1889 until she was granted self-rule in 1965 and full independence in September 1966. The colonial government applied indirect rule by using the traditional structures of governance that were in place. Expenditure was limited to keeping law and order since most

¹ See EU, 2010; ILO, 2008; Norton et. al, 2001; UN, 2001; van Ginneken, 1999; World Bank, 2003

² See Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1689/2003; and Rousseau, 1762/1987 on the social contract

of the colony was a desert land. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at the time was estimated at USD 60 million, consisting mostly of beef exports to Britain and South Africa (Tsie, 1998). Additionally, there was a dearth of both physical and social infrastructure (Acemoglu et al., 2001).

Recognising the dire state of the country's underdevelopment, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) decided to adopt a developmental model to accelerate economic growth. The model was centred on an agrarian-based economy, mainly cattle production, which was at the time dominated by political elites and bureaucrats (Picard, 1979; Tsie, 1998). Thus, post-independence Botswana was a typical developmental state of a convergence of interests between the elites and bureaucracy. To a large extent, local elites³ had an economic interest in the development policy of the new state because their interests were also being promoted. Power relationships between these players defined the policy-making process, including development planning, budgeting and SP policy-making then and this is still the case today.

The parameters of the country's development were contained in a formal roadmap, the first of which was inaugurated in 1963: the National Development Plan, 1963–69. Several development plans have followed since.⁴

Overview of Economic Development in Botswana

An SP regime does not operate in a vacuum, but within a given socio-economic and political environment. Botswana graduated from the list of 24 least developed countries as at independence in September 1966 (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Edge, 1998; Tsie, 1998) to a middle-income economy in 1992 (Mmegi, 2006). This was as a result of the exploitation of diamonds from 1971 coupled with prudent management of resources. UNDP reports indicate that Botswana's Human Development Indices (HDIs) have since been on an upward trend. Between 1980 and 2013, the country's HDI value grew at an annual average of about 1.14 per cent, increasing by 45.4 per cent from 0.470 to 0.683 (UNDP, 2014). Poverty levels are reported to have decreased between 2002/03 and 2009/10. For example, the percentage of the population living below the poverty datum line was 19.3 per cent in 2009/10 compared to 30.6 per cent in 2002/03 (Statistics Botswana, 2013).

However, despite the high HDI scores, Botswana still faces a number of challenges such as unemployment (Statistics Botswana, 2013), gender inequality and HIV and AIDS. According to the *2013 Human Development Report*, Botswana recorded a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.485 (UNDP, 2013).⁵ The income inequality, based on the Gini coefficient, increased from 0.573 in 2002/03 to 0.645 in 2009/10 (Statistics Botswana, 2013)—one of the highest in the world. With regard to unemployment, an estimated 17.6 per cent of women and youth age 18 years and above are unemployed (Statistics Botswana, 2013); Matambo, 2012). These are some of the challenges the SP regime seeks to address.

Public Policy-Making in Botswana

To fully understand the SP policy and related programmes, a PE analysis is vital in order to show how power and resources are distributed and contested for within different contexts and the implications for development outcomes (DFID, 2009). PE analysis comprises three components: institutions, actors, and ideas.

a. Institutions

Institutions are systems of rules that regulate behaviour by establishing norms, rewarding compliance and punishing violations (UNDP, 2012). In Botswana, the institutions that deliberate on SP policy formulation include village assemblies (*kgotla*), district councils,

³ See also Molutsi's (1988:105) classification of the elite group: (i) elected representatives [Members of Parliament, Councillors, etc.]; (ii) traditional rulers; (iii) bureaucracy; (iv) business elite; and (v) livestock and crop farmers.

⁴ Botswana is on the tail-end of the National Development Plan 10 (2010/11–2015/16).

⁵ More statistics on Botswana's gender inequality and HIV and AIDS situation can be found in the 2013 Botswana Core Welfare Indicator Survey report.

Parliament, Cabinet and the High Level Consultative Council, which is chaired by the country's president. Decisions on SP programmes in these forums are made through consensus.

b. Actors

These include a wide range of international, regional, national and local participants. The different actors currently involved in SP policy-making and implementation in Botswana are government ministries and departments, and non-state actors such as political parties and civil society. Others are elected bodies (councils and Parliament), courts, and village committees such as Village Development Committees.

c. Ideas

This refers mainly to the process of developing content for the policy as well as strategies for implementing the programmes. Even though SP policy is often either a tool for patronage or subject to elite capture in Africa (Hickey, 2005, 2007), this is not the case in Botswana. What underpins SP policy-making in Botswana is a social contractarian obligation. SP policy-making is done under the age-old *therisanyo* (consensus seeking), which is one of the principal tenets of Tswana democracy. This tenet predates colonialism and has normally been practised through the *kgotla* system (village parliament) (Botlhale, 2012a). Other consultative forums include *pitso* (opinion-gathering public meetings), councils, Cabinet, the High Level Consultative Council and Parliament. Although the *kgotla*, the primary base for *therisanyo*, encounters problems related to engendering participation such as apathy (see Follett 1920; King et al., 1998; Macedo et al., 2005; Stivers, 1990 on apathy and participation) and time-wasting (Hollnsteiner, 1977), the benefits of participation need not be oversold in a democracy because they outweigh the costs.

Botswana's SP policy-making is a deliberative process that incorporates dialogues in decision-making. Additionally, it is guided by the principle of social justice. Other key principles include *botho* (humanness); *kutlwelo bothoko* (compassion feeling); *ipelegeng* (self-help) and pillars of the Vision 2016. In particular, Vision 2016's Pillar 3⁶ talks about a "compassionate, just and caring nation". The inauguration of Ian Khama as president in 2009 has strengthened the SP policy's impetus. He has made SP his flagship project (Khama, 2009) and, consequently, ensured that SP programmes receive favourable budget allocations even during tough economic times.

1.2 Research Problem and Objectives

Research Problem

Although Botswana Government has recognised the vulnerability of certain groups among its citizenry, it is important to establish to what extent the various factors at play and actors involved support the drive or resistance to the SP policy as it stands, and if this has any implications on the sustainability of the programmes.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were therefore:

- i. To find out if the socio-economic, historical, political and institutional factors and actors support the drive or resistance to SP policy uptake in Botswana.
- ii. To establish whether support or resistance have any policy implications on the sustainability of the current Botswana SP programmes being advocated for and supported by donors and the African Union.

1.3 Research Methodology

The case study method was used to collect primary data because it enabled in-depth analysis of the institutions, factors and actors involved in social protection and to gather and elaborate information on SP programmes even from a small sample of interviewees. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources including personal interviews, focus

⁶ "By 2016, Botswana will have realised a more equitable income distribution that ensures that the majority of its people participate in economic activities. As a compassionate and caring nation, Botswana will have the poor and underprivileged considered in their daily activities. Poverty will be alleviated..." (Botswana Vision Council, 2010:1).

group discussions, official and working documents as well as archival records. Interviews were conducted through personal administration of structured questionnaires and through guided questions. Setswana language was used during interviews in the rural areas because of the extent of low literacy levels.

A sample of 200 interviewees (both implementers and SP beneficiaries) was drawn from five districts: Central (in Serowe), Ghanzi (in Ghanzi), Kweneng (in Letlhakeng), North West (Maun) and North East (in Francistown). Data were also collected in areas surrounding the Capital City of Gaborone, specifically in Tlokweng, Gabane, Mogoditshane and Odi. Additionally, focus group discussions were held with pensioners, destitute and *Ipelegeng* workers in Mahalapye, Kanye and Gaborone (in Old Naledi, a very economically depressed part of Gaborone). The data gathered were triangulated as well as qualitatively analysed.

2 Literature Review on Political Economy Analysis and Implication for Social Protection Policy and Programmes in Africa

2.1 Introduction

The importance of introducing social protection in Africa is necessitated by pervasive poverty, which afflicts the majority of the population. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is faced with many challenges such as HIV and AIDS, food insecurity and conflict. However, in most countries, the expenditure on social protection is usually meagre (below 2 per cent or even 1 per cent of the GDP). Across the continent, social protection is now becoming a prominent component of long-term development strategies and priorities, therefore, has been incorporated into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

2.2 Developmental State and the Political Economy of Social Protection

The role of a democratic state is to establish a society where citizens are economically, socially and intellectually empowered (Marwala, 2007). To achieve this empowerment, certain conditions have to be in place. According to Chang (1999), one of the mechanisms for achieving the different levels of empowerment is to reorient the state as a developmental one so that the government is directly involved in the macro and micro planning with the aim of growing the economy. Bagchi (2000) also argues that a developmental state puts economic development as the top priority of government policy and is also responsible for designing instruments to achieve that goal. These instruments would, among others, include establishing new formal institutions, creating formal and informal networks of collaboration among citizens and officials, and the productive use of new opportunities for trade and profitable production.

It has generally been observed that successful developmental states are able to advance their economies faster than those that rely only on regulations. In the case of Botswana, the formulation and implementation of social protection policies has been aided by the existence of a strong developmental state, which possesses all the relevant characteristics (Swilling et al. as quoted by Meth, 2007:33):

- A 'determined developmental elite committed to the modernisation project;
- A powerful, competent and insulated economic bureaucracy that enjoys the highest possible political support but operates without too much political interference;
- A 'weak' and 'subordinated' civil society so that there are no rival centres of alternative policy formation;
- Effective management of non-state economic interests via formal structured compacts, incentives and penalties;
- Accessible and usable institutions of repression, legitimacy and performance.

2.3 The Benefits of Social Protection

Social protection is the help and assistance given to those in need or at risk of hardship. It is concerned with managing, preventing and overcoming situations that unfavourably affect the citizens' well-being. It consists of programmes and policies that are designed to reduce vulnerability and poverty by limiting people's exposure to risks, and enhancing an individual's capacity to manage social and economic risks such as exclusion, old age, unemployment and disease. It also promotes efficient labour markets and provides a decent standard of living (Bradley et al., 2003).

Social protection policies, among others, are therefore important in the social sphere as they contribute substantially to equality by reducing gaps in inequalities and social exclusion. According to Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004), social protection has four main functions: (i) protection, (ii) prevention, (iii) promotion, and (iv) transformation. The protective function refers to measures that are introduced to save lives and reduce levels of deprivation, for example, cash transfers to children, older persons and people with disabilities. As a preventive function, social protection seeks to help people from falling deeper into poverty or becoming vulnerable as a result of national disasters such as accidents, illness or crop failure. Examples of programmes designed to prevent vulnerability include unemployment and

health insurance, subsidies to farmers and community saving schemes. With regard to the promotive function, attempts are made to enhance the capabilities of individuals, groups, communities and institutions to take part in different activities. Examples include enabling participation in public works programmes and conditional cash transfers such as forcing parents to take children to school and clinics. Finally, the transformative function reduces inequalities and vulnerabilities with particular emphasis on changing policies, budgetary allocations, laws, as well as redistributing benefits (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004; Taylor, 2008).

2.4 Actors, Institutions and Ideas Influencing Social Protection Policy-Making in Africa

Various actors and institutions are involved in the process of policy-making, but the level and nature of involvement differs depending on the degree they influence the process. Additionally, the features of the actors and institutions involved may be formal or informal. This study examines the role of political party systems, elections and the world of patron–client politics.

The significance of elections in determining public expenditure, especially in relation to social policies, reveals a strong tendency for governments to reduce interest rates and raise public expenditures during election years as a way of appealing to different constituencies. In Africa, these expenditures are mostly in the form of subsidies to investors and pay rises for public sector workers. As a result, welfare programmes do not necessarily target the needy sections of the population, but the ones critical for the political survival of the regime (Hickey, 2007). With specific reference to social protection policies and their relationship to political systems, democracies with stable party systems and elected authoritarian systems are deemed to be more progressive in the design and implementation of social protection policies, whereas non-elected systems and democracies with fragmented party systems are less likely to embrace the same (Hickey, 2007).

In most African countries, the political elites, who set the terms for policy and political debates, dominate the political actors and agencies. Whether or not political elites consider certain groups ‘deserving’ of social assistance is likely to be a significant factor in the establishment, targeting and size of the social protection programmes (Hickey, 2007). It is striking that political elites tend to be biased towards the productive or economically active poor, who could be categorised as more ‘deserving’ than others. In Botswana, for example, the official policy has been: “rewards should go to those who make the greatest contribution to Botswana’s growth economy” (Good, 1999:199). This represents a model of economic citizenship, as opposed to social citizenship, where individuals attain citizen status based on their ability to attend to their economic needs (Fraser and Gordon, 1994).

Other actors and agencies associated with social protection in Africa include administrative/bureaucratic agencies largely responsible for either lobbying or implementing social protection initiatives. Hickey (2007) argues that once social protection measures are in place, they tend to attract heated debates between and among different elites. South Africa is a typical example where attempts to extend social protection to blacks attracted many heated debates with the argument that this would create a dependency syndrome (Devereux, 2001). Subsequent research, however, demonstrated that social protection transfers were put to good use (Devereux, 2004).

Bureaucratic agencies continue to perform the most important function of providing social protection. It has been argued that social protection cannot be possible without bureaucratic integrity (Hickey, 2007, citing Besley et al., 2003; Iglesias and Palacios, 2000). Furthermore, the success of social protection is not determined by the presence of financial and administrative capacity alone; the capacity of bureaucrats, political commitment and organisational culture are essential for successfully implementing and advocating for social protection initiatives and welfare programmes (Hickey, 2007).

Donor agencies also play an important role in shaping national forms of SP policies, especially in highly indebted poor countries. Given these countries’ limited capacity, coupled with limited financial resources, the involvement of multilateral and international organisations in the design and delivery of universal social policies becomes imperative and unavoidable. Their involvement in Middle Africa is much stronger as evidenced by the fact

that they have exerted significant influence on the emergence of social protection strategies and social protection programmes (Niño-Zarazúa et al, 2010:16) such as GTZ's involvement in Zambia's Kalomo Social Transfer Pilot and DFID's in many of the social protection programmes in the developing countries, particularly Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty.

Others include UNICEF, which has been the main player behind pilot schemes in Zambia, Malawi and Kenya and the Japanese Aid Agency that is supporting a pilot pension scheme in Tanzania. The ILO has been involved in providing technical support for social pension schemes and community health insurance schemes in West Africa and the World Bank, which provides technical assistance in several countries, is quite active in social protection in many sub-Saharan African countries (Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2010).

It is important to note that in some countries, international organisations may strongly influence and determine how things must be done, while in others, they partner with local public institutions based on mutual trust and respect geared towards achieving a common goal. Under the latter, the local institutions determine the policy goals whereas international agencies play a supportive and advisory role. According to Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010:16), the influence of external actors works best where engagement with domestic political and policy processes enables stronger ownership of social protection programmes by national governments, public administrations and political constituencies, and where external knowledge is framed as learning, rather than policy transfer.

It should, however, be noted that cash transfer programmes in Botswana have been initiated, implemented and financed by the government. Thus, donors do not play a significant role in the financing of these SP programmes.

2.5 Politics and Economics of Social Protection

Political regimes and politics are critical in shaping and determining the success of social protection. For example, in times of crisis, government's capacity to respond to its citizens adequately can make or break its image. However, social protection issues are implemented in the politics of patronage, constituency building and electoral competition. Cook and Kabeer (2009) submit that the dualist model of social security that was pervasive across many African countries was partly a part of their colonial past and the precedents that this created. The development role assumed by states, and the commitment to import-substituting industrialisation and support groups to maintain social stability, ended up underpinning employment-based public support for selected employees and excluding the majority (ibid).

Some authoritarian governments have introduced social programmes as a way of buying social legitimacy or fending off pressures for the implementation of democracy. However, democratic politics opens space for actors and a wider range of options for evaluating strategies that accord the priorities and needs of the population. Political parties are increasingly vying for power, and mandates like social protection are top in their agenda. This has increased the size of populations covered and served by the state. Research shows that the lack of social protection is a costly economic and political nightmare (Cook and Kabeer, 2009).

Hickey (2007:8) emphasises that social protection initiatives are closely shaped by political reasons and contracts between states and citizens. For example, the social pension programmes in South Africa and Namibia, which were adopted with the main aim of reversing discrimination against the Blacks, were linked to changes in the broader social contract as a result of the two countries embracing democratic rule. Consequently, the absence of a binding contract between the state and citizens may result in SP policies being used for other reasons such as promoting the politics of patronage (Hickey: 2007:9). Hence, the issue of 'contractualism' is viewed as a conceptual means of establishing the state's long-term rationale for dealing with the challenges of inequality and injustice including social protection (ibid: 9). It is on the basis of 'contractualism' that a beneficiary can be framed as an actor rather than a passive recipient.

Ultimately, no universal SP policy or any other policy can yield its intended goals and objectives without the active engagement of the citizens. Citizens know best what their needs are and how they can be addressed. But most importantly, they are the ones who will be affected directly or indirectly by the policies that are implemented.

It must be noted that community participation in the formulation and implementation of universal social policies has many advantages, especially as resources are usually mobilised towards poverty reduction. The involvement of ordinary citizens goes a long way in promoting ownership of the policies and a spirit of self-improvement. But, at the same time, as Mansuri and Rao (2004), as cited by Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010) caution, community involvement tends to reproduce and/or reinforce social disparities and power relations at the local level. This is mainly because, in most cases, community organisations simply replace resource-poor or absent public agencies, which basically results in community engagement being restricted to delivering programmes that have fixed parameters.

2.6 Challenges of State Social Protection

Several key challenges hinder the implementation of social protection in many African states (McCord, 2013; World Bank, 2001). These, among others, include exclusion errors, conditionalities, targeting, sustainability and financing. Other issues relating to the selection and design of instruments addressing social protection are linked to the framing of the social protection debate by different institutions and interest groups, nationally and internationally. Among the issues is that the poor do not benefit from the social programmes. This remains a key challenge which has not yet been readily addressed either in the discourse or in terms of practical instrument design or the development of programming responses.

Regarding the challenge of conditionalities, the World Bank, for example, has defined a set of conditions that must first be fulfilled prior to accessing the Bank's funding. These present a challenge because they are also costly and have implications of compliance monitoring. Additionally, transfer programming is sometimes reframed as a means to stimulate particular service utilisation rather than provide a social minimum for the poor to use at their own discretion (Dornan and Porter, 2013).

The challenge of targeting questions whether social protection should be universal or targeted towards the beneficiaries. Ellis (2012) appraised the implications of the distribution of poverty in many low income countries for extreme poverty targeting and found that in such countries the income differences among the bottom five deciles were marginal. It rendered any targeting of the poorest 10 per cent or 20 per cent (or the 'extreme' poor) problematic in terms of feasible targeting approaches, social justice and also social divisiveness. This is because, generally, it is not possible to differentiate with certainty between the extreme poor and the poor (McCord, 2013). In countries like South Africa and India, large national programmes are domestically financed as a key plank of national policy. Nationally developed and implemented SP programmes tend to be more sustainable than those supported by donors, which tend to adopt externally developed models that negatively affect ownership and sustainability (McCord, 2013).

Regarding financing, political will, resource availability and policy prioritisation influence the amount spent on the associated initiatives (Hagemejer and Behrendt, 2009). Recent evidence shows that even low income countries can afford basic packages of social protection (Hagemejer and Behrendt, 2009). The ILO has conducted a costing exercise that quantifies the costs of a basic package of social protection under a number of alternative scenarios (Hagemejer and Behrendt, 2009). The baseline scenario includes a modest universal social pension, grants for people with disabilities and child benefits. It has further documented the affordability of this package even for low income countries (Pal, 2005; van Ginneken, 2005) and suggested that costs can be kept at a minimum by starting with a limited programme and scaling up as impact is demonstrated and as resources increase.

3 Political Economy Analysis of Social Protection in Botswana

3.1 Evolution of Social Protection Policies in Botswana

The first social security programme was launched in 1965 with the assistance of the World Food Programme (WFP) to reduce the adverse effects of drought. According to Ntsabane (2007:2), “Vulnerable groups such as lactating mothers, pregnant women, pre-school children and children aged 6–10, TB patients, malnourished children and school children were the primary beneficiaries of this drought relief program”. Other members of the community were supported through food-for-work programme, *Ipelegeng* in Setswana (food given in exchange for labour towards community developmental projects such as construction of dams, school classrooms, maintenance and construction of rural roads and others).

It was in the third National Development Plan (1970–1975) that the government clearly articulated the need to promote social justice and equality of opportunity focusing, inter alia, on improving medical facilities, housing, education, water supply, creating new industries and equipping the youth with skills in bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing and others. Youth clubs such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movements were also introduced for purposes of character-building.

Various social welfare activities introduced in the late seventies and early eighties were aimed at ensuring that citizens were cushioned against the negative effects of drought, destitution, increase in single parenthood and urbanisation. According to Ntsabane (2007), in 1975 Government expanded the Bushmen Training and Settlement Project, which was started by the Dutch Reformed Church in D’Kar to assist Basarwa children to play positive and productive roles in society. The programme was renamed Remote Area Development Programme and covered all the poor and marginalised people residing in remote areas. Also in 1978, the Labour Intensive Public Works Programme was introduced with the assistance of ILO and the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Further, during the national planning period 1973–1981, a Social Welfare Unit was established within the Department of Community Development to improve the implementation of existing SP policies (Ntsabane, 2007:3). Additionally, in 1980 the destitute policy was introduced and gradually expanded during the NDP 7 period (1992/93–1996/97).

Due to the weakening of the extended family, which is partly attributed to the rural–urban migration, older persons (aged 65 and above) were left without reliable care and protection. This prompted the introduction of the Old-Age Pension programme during the 1996/97 financial year (MFDP, 1997:438). The Community Home-Based Care was also introduced in 1997 with the objective of providing nutrition to people suffering from HIV and AIDS. Additionally, the Short-Term Plan of Action for Care of Orphans was launched in 1999 to provide for the needs of orphans (Botlhale, 2012b; Ntsabane, 2007).

3.2 Legislation and Policy Documents for Social Protection

Constitution of Botswana

The Constitution of Botswana’s Bill of Rights does not provide for socio-economic rights to cater for the needs of vulnerable people such as people with disabilities, orphans, the destitute and older persons and other members of society who need social protection.⁷ On the other hand, SP is not expressed as directive principle of state policy. Therefore, SP provision arises out of social contractarian obligations.

Public policy, including SP policy, is primarily initiated by the Cabinet, which initiatives come to Parliament in the form of bills.⁸ If a bill is agreed to by the Cabinet, it is subjected to *therisanyo* (consultation), beginning at the *kgotla*. Once the consultation process is finished, a bill is brought to Parliament for debate. The same process applies to policies that, eventually, have to be adopted in Parliament unless they fall under subsidiary legislation (matters that can be handled at ministerial level without the sanction of Parliament).

⁷ See Constitution of Botswana in RoB (1966).

⁸ However, there is a provision for private members’ bill.

National Strategy for Poverty Reduction

The Government of Botswana has always been visionary on poverty reduction. In 2003, the country adopted the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction whose functions are to: a) Set poverty reduction as its overarching goal consistent with the country's commitment to 'build a compassionate, caring and just nation'; b) Chart the strategic pathways for poverty reduction primarily through broad-based labour-absorbing economic growth, the provision of basic quality social services to the poor, the promotion of cost-effective pro-poor social safety nets, an enhanced effective response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic and strengthening of institutions for the poor, and; c) Provide a multi-sectoral approach for overseeing the design, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction interventions (RoB, 2003:53). The main objective of the strategy was to provide a policy framework of enabling the poor to move out of poverty (RoB, 2003:53–54). Table 1 gives the status of key policies and frameworks created so far for social protection and geared towards reducing poverty in Botswana.

Table 1: Policies and strategies that constitute the National Social Development Policy framework

Vision 2016

Tenth National Development Plan

National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (under revision)

Revised National Policy on Rural Development

Community-Based Strategy for Rural Development

Strategic Framework for Community Development (in preparation)

National Population Policy

National Policy on Gender and Development

National Strategy for Promoting Good Social Values

National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (not yet approved)

National Youth Policy

National Policy on Needy and Vulnerable Families (not yet approved)

National Policy on Disaster Management

Revised Remote Area Development Programme

National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (not yet approved)

National Policy on Sport and Recreation

National Policy on Culture

Revised National Policy on Education

National Health Policy

Labour Legislation

National Policy on HIV/AIDS and Employment

National Strategic Framework for HIV/AIDS

National Policy on Non-Governmental Organisations

Source: (RoB, 2010:9)

3.3 Social Protection Programmes in Botswana

Income Support for Children

In Botswana, a child is a person below the age of 18 years (RoB, 2009). Recognising that children are a vulnerable group, the Government of Botswana established a children-specific SP programme in 1999 in pursuance of its obligations to children's rights and as an affirmation to instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The government, in collaboration with the UNICEF, developed an orphan care programme commonly known as the Short Term Plan of Action on the care of orphans (STPA), which was supposed to run from 1999

to 2003 but was extended until 2010⁹ when the government came up with a permanent plan in the form of National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (Botlhale, 2012b). It should be noted that the children's social programme does not make direct cash transfers to them¹⁰ but supports them in terms of goods and services (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development MLG&RD, 2010b).

The Department of Child Protection, under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLG&RD), is responsible for children's social protection. The National Plan of Action aims to facilitate identification, assessment and registration of orphans, regardless of the cause of death of parents, and to ensure an efficient and effective system of providing material and emotional support services to them (MLG&RD, 2007:2). Before a child is admitted into the OVC programme, they must first be registered with the council social worker (GoB, 2011a).

Also, there's the Needy Children Programme, which, although it receives almost similar support as the OVC programme, does not have a stand-alone legal institutional framework like the OVC programme. Its beneficiaries are, therefore, provided for under the framework of the National Policy on Destitute (MLG&RD, 2002).

In terms of funding, both the OVC and needy children programmes are centrally funded. To this end, implementing agencies or councils make budget requests to MLG&RD, through the Department of Child Protection, which are then subjected to the normal national budgetary process before funding is disbursed.

Income Support for Older Persons and People with Disabilities

The Botswana Universal Pension and Orphan Care Scheme provides for the residents of Botswana above the age of 65 years. The beneficiaries are currently paid a sum of P250¹¹ a month, although the amount is adjusted periodically according to changes in the cost of living (GoB, 2011b). As of 1 April 2015, the government provides a disability allowance to people living with disabilities (Botswana Press Agency, 2015).

Social Assistance to the Unemployed and the Poor

Statistics show that poverty in Botswana has been steadily decreasing from 1985 from an index of 59 per cent to 47 per cent in 1993 and 30.6 per cent in 2002 (MFDP, 2009). However, according to the Millennium Development Report (MFDP, 2010:20), about a third of the population lives below the national poverty line. Unemployment was estimated at 26.2 per cent of the labour force in 2008, up from 17.6 per cent in 2005. In 2013, it was estimated at 17.5 per cent, which is still quite high.

The BDP manifesto of 2009 showed that the total domestic employment had increased by 59 per cent from 225 500 jobs to 550 000, while unemployment had declined from 24.6 per cent in 2004 to 17.5 per cent in 2006 (BDP, 2009:4). The labour-based Drought Relief Programme was changed to the current Public Works Programme (*Ipelegeng*) in 2008 with a target to engage 50 000 beneficiaries per month and increasing to 55 000 in 2012.

The *Ipelegeng* programme's aim is to provide short-term employment whilst facilitating development (MLG&RD, 2014: para 1). The programme targets unskilled and semi-skilled people who use simple tools and machinery to maintain public facilities such as drift fences, primary and secondary school facilities, health facilities, staff houses and government facilities, and dams and storm water drains. The Ministry of Local Government is responsible for the overall implementation of the programme, through the Department of Local Government Planning, whilst in the rural and urban areas local authorities are responsible for implementation. Communities initiate projects with the help of local authorities, and these projects are approved by the ministry.

⁹ See MLG&RD (2010a).

¹⁰ The opposite is true of adult beneficiaries.

¹¹ One Botswana Pula = US Dollar 0.089

Beneficiaries to the programme, appointed at the village *kgotla* by village development committees, are paid P480 and the supervisors P560 per month each. The local leaders have suggested that the workers be employed on permanent basis like other government employees.

With regard to destitute people, in 1980 the government introduced the National Policy on Destitute Persons (NPDP) whose main objective was to ensure that government provided minimum assistance to those who needed to change their livelihoods. This policy was devised after government realised that the family support system had been weakened as a result of increased urban migration. The 1980 policy was revised in 2002 to take into consideration new economic challenges facing the poor.

Beneficiaries of the scheme are provided with food baskets worth P524.25, a cash component of P90 per month, psychosocial support, rehabilitation, funeral expenses and shelter where required. In 2008, the government introduced a smart card that allows food basket recipients to swipe for food at convenient times.

Other cash-related social assistance programmes

Other cash social assistance programs available to vulnerable Botswana citizens do not necessarily exclude those covered by the above programmes. Some of these include Self-Help Housing Agency (SHHA) programme, Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agricultural Development (ISPAAD), various youth programmes, support to non-governmental organisations, community development programmes, Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development (LIMID) programme and Backyard Gardening' (Matambo, 2012:9). Table 2 below shows the number of beneficiaries of major SP programmes over the years.

Table 2: Beneficiaries of major SP programmes (2009–10 to 2013–14)

Programme	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Destitute Programme	40 295	31 969	30 915	30 518	31 114
OVC programmes	40 457	42 069	41 324	41 927	37 402
Old-Age Pension Scheme	96 118	94 252	91 385	90 822	97 998
<i>Ipelegeng</i> programme	233 172	418 376	538 754	55 000	72 528

Source: MLG & RD (2013)

3.4 Key Actors Promoting Social Protection

In Botswana, during campaigns preceding the five-yearly general elections, various political parties normally present their manifestos proposing their policies for poverty alleviation, unemployment and other social challenges. NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), faith-based organisations, district development committees (DDCs), village development committees (VDCs), mass media and citizens at large also play an important role in raising awareness on the existing and proposed policies. They also facilitate the delivery of SP policies.

All actors agree that the State should take the lead in formulating and implementing SP policies. Thus, all programmes highlighted in the previous section were introduced and are wholly funded by the Government of Botswana. Given their proximity to the citizens, the village and district development committees also play an important role in identifying potential beneficiaries.

Government Ministries and Departments

As reported earlier, the MLG&RD is the key implementing agency of SP programmes in Botswana. The ministry serves as the central government's arm for local government matters and the focal point for policy and operational matters at the local level (Mothusi, 2010:5). It is therefore a very important actor as it connects various central institutions with the citizens.

The MLG&RD houses various departments such as the Department of Social Protection, which manages the Orphan Care Programme, Community Home-Based Care Programme, Destitute Persons Programme, the Veterans Programme, Old-Age Pension,

Remote Area Development Programme, and the Alternative Packages Programme. The Department of Local Government Finance and Procurement (which includes Food Relief and Procurement Services) is responsible for all the major feeding programmes, while the Department of Local Government Development Planning manages the *Ipelegeng* programme.

The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs is responsible for the major active labour market policies and programmes, while the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture manages major programmes for young people such as the youth empowerment scheme. The Ministry of Education and Skills Development manages the Secondary School Feeding Programme and the Ministry of Health, with the support of the MLG&RD, manages the distribution of food baskets in the clinics and for community home-based care patients.

The Ministry of Agriculture manages the Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agriculture Development and the Livestock Management and Infrastructure Development, which is part of the Alternative Packages Programme. The Non-Bank Financial Institutions Regulatory Authority (NBFIRA) supervises public and private pension plans and insurance, while the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) through its Economic and Financial Policy Division coordinates the financing of SP programmes. Through its Insurance Pension Section, this ministry also oversees the financing of the public pension's programmes.

Coordination of all the actors and programmes mentioned above is a challenge. Previously, MFDP had a prominent role in the coordination of poverty and rural development issues but, at present, the Office of the President has taken a pro-active role in overseeing the policies and programmes of line ministries and has established the National Strategy Office to increase the efficiency of policy and programme design and implementation. The Poverty Eradication Group, which is housed in the Office of the President, also plays a key role in developing SP programmes and ensuring that they are consistent with other broad poverty reduction strategies (World Bank and BIDPA, 2013).

It is important to note that in the *Ipelegeng* programme accountability structures and procedures of the field staff and the Department of Local Government Development Planning Division are clearly established, but the same cannot be said of the other programmes. Local council staff report to the councils' chief executive officers who in turn report to the permanent secretary in MLG&RD. This means, the implementing officers on the ground do not report directly to the departments in the Ministry of Local Government that are responsible for the various programmes. For example, social workers who coordinate the Destitute Persons Programme, the Community Home-based Care, the Needy Children Programme and the Needy Students Programme are accountable to the local authorities and not to the Department of Social Protection which manages the programmes. As a result, this creates problems of coordination and accountability.

Political Parties

In 1984, although the National Development Plan (1970–1975) articulated the need to promote social protection, the ruling BDP's election manifesto did not contain any provision for social protection. The 2004 PACT manifesto from the combined Botswana National Front (BNF), Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) and Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) briefly mentioned social protection and issues of disability (PACT, 2004). Though it garnered majority votes during the elections, the PACT only tangentially touched on unemployment and poverty.

As earlier stated, since independence political parties in Botswana have always presented their ideas and approaches on social protection. However, the crafting and presentation of the country's Vision 2016 document in 1997 has since influenced the way parties discuss issues related to social protection. Through its seven pillars, Vision 2016 seeks to present the envisioned and desired state of the country at 50 years in 2016.

Accordingly, in 1999, the BDP acknowledged that it needed to adopt a much more broader approach when dealing with issues of poverty and unemployment. It was deemed paramount to engage all stakeholders including central and local governments, parastatals, national committees, employers and employees. The aim of BDP's manifesto was to elimi-

nate the dependency syndrome that was slowly creeping into the SP beneficiaries and instead promote a healthy work ethic, a positive philosophy, as well as a spirit of self-reliance (BDP, 1999:6). The ruling party has also shown its commitment to assisting economically vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society by improving on the implementation of existing SP programmes (BDP, 2009:7). In its 2009 election manifesto, the party committed itself to expedite the implementation of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy. Thus, the Rural Development Policy was revised to ensure that poverty reduction is approached in a more holistic manner (BDP, 2009:7).

In the State of the Nation Address to the Second Session of the Tenth Parliament on 8 November 2010, President Khama emphasised the need to continue with social protection schemes for disadvantaged citizens (Khama, 2010). Subsequently, P298 million (\$32.04 million) was disbursed for this purpose.

Interestingly, during the last five years, the BDP leadership has shifted emphasis from poverty alleviation to absolute eradication of poverty—an objective that opposition political parties believe is unattainable. Subsequently, under President Khama's housing appeal scheme, poverty eradication initiatives such as backyard gardens and construction of houses for poor people have been introduced. These initiatives have also been criticised by opposition political parties as a mere strategy by BDP to gain political mileage.

In the 2009 election manifesto, the Botswana Peoples Party (BPP) proposed to progressively abolish the present system whereby the needy are subjected to want and gnawing poverty, and to instead establish a social security provident fund to which the State would allocate grants and subsidies. The BPP also proposed to establish a national lottery whose proceeds would be channelled to the provident fund. Further, it proposed that “there should be a national scheme of compulsory contributory pensions together with sickness benefits, old age pensions, maternity benefits, orphans' benefits, widows' benefits, unemployment benefits and invalids' benefits” (BPP, 2009:10).

With regard to the physically challenged, the BPP proposed that they be educated and developed so they could become economically active and self-reliant. It also proposed primary and secondary schools should cater for children living with disabilities, and special schools should be built for the visually impaired, the deaf and mentally challenged children. Finally, it proposed that special homes for the older persons manned by social workers be built.

The Botswana National Front (BNF), an opposition party, has always criticised the ruling party (BDP) for failing to translate economic growth into economic empowerment of citizens. The BNF contends that the majority of rural populations are experiencing severe destitution as a result of the ruling party's unwillingness to fully exploit the country's natural resources. Against this background, in its 2004 and 2009 election manifestos, BNF proposed to introduce a taxation system designed to equalise incomes and wealth, and to provide social insurance and social services such as health, education and social welfare. The party also sought to introduce comprehensive social security legislation on old age pensions, dependency and orphan benefits, contributory pension and unemployment insurance, pre-school facilities for working parents, and health (BNF, 2009:6).

Since BNF has been the major opposition party since the 1970s, its views on social protection are usually taken seriously by government. Some of the activities proposed by BNF, such as the old age pension scheme and destitute and orphan care programmes, have already been launched by the BDP government. The Ministry of Education and Skills Development in conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development are currently working on a programme to provide pre-school facilities throughout the country as proposed by BNF. This initiative will go a long way in ensuring that children from disadvantaged families also get a good start to education.

The fourth party, the Botswana Congress Party (BCP), has faulted BDP for introducing fragmented and uncoordinated social programmes. It accuses the BDP government of delinking the destitute programme from drought relief whilst HIV and AIDS and orphans are operated as temporary and isolated activities (BCP, 1999:36). Consequently, the BCP stated in its 2009 election manifesto that towards reforming social security and welfare, it would de-

velop a strategy that emphasised both economic growth and equitable distribution of income, and protection of vulnerable members of the society. Further, it proposed that it would increase the amount paid to pensioners to pula 750 per month and align the old age entitlement age with the retirement age of 60 years (BCP, 2009:28).

It can be deduced from the foregoing discussions that all the political parties in Botswana agree on the necessity for comprehensive SP policies. Also, there is consensus among all the political parties that the state should play a leading role in educating and empowering citizens to enable them get out of the poverty trap. However, there are slight differences in terms of how the various parties' policies should to be implemented. For example, BDP proposes to eradicate poverty while the opposition parties consider poverty alleviation to be more attainable. Opposition political parties also regard all citizens as equal and deserving of access to the country's resources. Further, that all initiatives related to social protection should be linked so they can be delivered in a systematic and coherent manner.

International Organisations and Local Partnerships

When Botswana was still classified as one of the poorest countries in the world, some of the country's developmental projects were funded by international organisations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and *Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers* (SNV) Netherlands Development Organisation. All programmes funded by donor agencies had to be geared towards assisting the government to attain the goals and objectives of the National Development Plan. Development was coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) which was also responsible for signing and administering all financial contracts between the government and donor agencies. Centralisation of aid management was meant to avoid a situation where different ministries entered into contracts with different agencies, thus subjecting them to the undue influence of donor agencies.

Currently, SP programmes are initiated, implemented and financed by the government. Thus, donors do not play a significant role in their financing. However, UNICEF is one of the few international organisations that still provide funding to various NGOs and government bodies to engage in programmes that improve the well-being of children in Botswana. Any form of assistance by international organisations has to be channelled through the Ministry of Finance and Development of Planning, thus limiting the influence of external actors in the planning or management of the programmes.

Local NGO programmes such as the Botswana Christian AIDS Program, Child AID, Maun Counselling Centre, the Ark programme and Masiela Trust provide services to communities in various parts of the country including individual basic needs, counselling, recreational programmes, life skills and day-care for orphans (Maundeni, 2009).

The first residential care facility for children in Botswana was established in 1987. Currently, there exist facilities such as Save Our Souls (SOS) villages, a programme established in 2003 and run by Childline Botswana, and the Mpule Kwelagobe facility which started operating in 2000. The centres are staffed by social workers and only one is funded by the government. Other government-funded NGOs include Marang Child Care Network Trust, Ark and Mark, Ikago School of Industries, Hajee Goolam Mustapha and Lorato House/Love Botswana. Total funding from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to these organisations in 2012/13 amounted to P7.8 million (World Bank and BIDPA, 2013:31).

In Ghanzi, a township in the western part of Botswana which has a high number of economically disadvantaged people, some local NGOs such as Permaculture, Window of Hope, Thuto Isago Trust and Kuru Development Trust are actively involved in activities geared towards improving the standards of living of the destitute and needy children by offering them skills training and education in the production and marketing of artefacts.

Despite the commendable work being undertaken by NGOs, their effort is hampered by the lack of resources, especially financial. According to the coordinator of Camphill Rankoromane, established in 1974 and based in Otse, the centre heavily relies on grants

from government which range from P1 million to P1.5 million per annum, but are issued based on the condition that the centre raises part of the funding required—a condition that is difficult to meet. Thus, inadequate funding has hampered the delivery of much needed services to autistic children, children with Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities.

A careful assessment of the situation in Botswana indicates that the country's approach to social protection is in line with the vision and mission of the African Union (AU), which is "to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa using the best of the continent's human and material resources" (African Union, 2008:4). The AU's programme on social development is based on a human-centred approach that seeks to promote human rights and dignity (ibid, 2008:4). To this end, the AU's Social Protection Forum focuses on 18 key thematic social issues which include health; HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious diseases; migration; education; agriculture, food and nutrition; the family; children, adolescents and youth; ageing; disability; gender equality; and women's empowerment. The Government of Botswana is addressing these issues.

Influential Persons

Ongoing SP policies and programmes in Botswana are also under constant scrutiny by influential persons. The former president of the BPP, who is currently the chair of the Umbrella for Democratic Change,¹² contends that the current implementation system for social protection programmes used by the government is flawed because there was no thorough assessment of potential beneficiaries under the various programmes. He argued that social workers tended to enrol people simply because they were unemployed, and yet their main responsibility ought to go beyond distributing food to assisting destitute people to move out of the poverty trap by organising survival skills workshops for them. Additionally, he stated that the government should educate citizens to become more self-reliant because resources at the disposal of government were limited. Furthermore, he stated that education went hand in hand with employment creation in the high-potential sectors such as agriculture, e.g. the introduction and funding of an irrigation scheme, leather processing plants.

Another influential person, the former mayor of Francistown and former president of Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower, pointed out that a significant amount of money was generated through the sale of diamonds, yet few jobs were created. He attributed the mismatch to political leaders' complacency resulting from accolades showered on Botswana by international institutions such as the World Bank and USAID. He suggested that to empower citizens economically, the government should as a matter of priority buy shares from private companies on behalf of citizens or invest part of the pension funds to make pensioners investors and shareholders in companies. Concurrently, he suggested that citizens should be educated on financial matters so that they do not find themselves trapped in debt. He further noted that consultations with the beneficiaries, which seem to be lacking, were critical and could go a long way in assisting government to reduce the number of people benefiting from social protection.

Ordinary Citizens in Ghanzi and Mogoditshane

All 10 respondents interviewed in Ghanzi, one of the areas with a high number of economically disadvantaged citizens, stated that needy children were mostly affected by poverty because the little support they received from government was not sufficient to sustain them. Three respondents (30 per cent) further stated that the government was neglecting people from the Basarwa ethnic community, most of whom did not benefit from the SP policies. Notwithstanding the different views expressed by different respondents, 8 out of 10 respondents (80 per cent) indicated that the programmes were effective while some further suggested that the government should build houses for orphans to make the policy more effective.

¹² The Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) is a coalition of three political parties: Botswana National Front (BNF), Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD) and Botswana Peoples Party (BPP).

Regarding OVC and needy children, the view of the majority was that government was adequately discharging its primary obligations. Nine out of ten respondents (90 per cent) believed that the benefits received from the government have helped them a lot by providing the basic needs of orphaned children. Further, all the respondents (100% per cent) were of the view that through the provision of social assistance such as old age pension and others, the State had demonstrated its will to support the poor and those most vulnerable. All the respondents appreciated the income support given to them by the government and suggested that government invest more resources in the programmes. Additionally, the majority were appreciative of employment opportunities through the *Ipelegeng* programme. Similar results and suggestions were recorded in Mogoditshane, a semi-urban area located less than 10 kilometres from the capital city, Gaborone.

3.5 Economic Feasibility of Expanding Coverage

Withdrawal of donor funding to Botswana has led to an increase in the government's expenditure on SP policies. As stated by Duran-Valverde and Pacheco (2012:47–48), "Social spending gained considerable space in the public budget, moving from 38 per cent to 44 per cent of total government expenditure. As a result, Botswana's real per capita social investment was multiplied by four between 1991 and 2008 (from US\$283.1 to US\$1,138.6)". They add that: "Social expenditure as a percentage of GDP increased from 15.2 per cent in 1991 to 17.4 per cent in 2000 and then declined slightly to 17 per cent in 2008". Table 3 shows the expenditure on the various SP programmes over the years.

Table 3: Expenditure on selected SP programmes, 2009/10–2013/14 in Pula (P8.3=USD 1)

Programme	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Destitution Programme	208 474 046	191 747 138	190 693 566	192 495 744	271 197 600
OVC Programme	312 408 721	266 846 925	431 520 184	301 000 000	368 000 000
Old-Age Pension Scheme	239 316 744	241 024 765	238 160 470	258 267 656	304 267 660
<i>Ipelegeng</i> Programme	83 941 920	150 615 360	215 501 600	22 000 000	29 011 200

Source: OAG, 2014

Meanwhile, the number of beneficiaries under various programmes has increased over the years. For example, the number of vulnerable children rose from 31 300 in 2009 to 37 402 in 2013 and that of old-age pensioners from 89 471 in 2009 to 97 998 in 2013 (Gaolathe, 2009:11; MLG&RD (2013)). This increase, coupled with the rising cost of living, makes it difficult for the government to sustain the SP policies in the long term. For example, in 2000, there were 24 000 registered orphans who were supported at a cost of P28.6 million. In 2006, the number of orphans registered increased to 53 223 while the budget also increased to P181.5 million. Interestingly, the number of registered orphans declined to 39 451 in 2013 while the budget support in the same year doubled to P368 million (MLG&RD, 2013).

4 Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Policy Implications

4.1 Summary of Findings

Financial Affordability

Botswana is one of the few countries in Africa that fully funds its social policy from the country's own resources and dedicates a large part of its GDP to SP programmes (MLG&RD, 2013; World Bank and BIDPA, 2013). That notwithstanding, it is important to appreciate the precarious nature of government finances given that Botswana is a mono-economy. The performance of Botswana's mineral-led economy (Jefferis, 1998) depends on the demand for diamonds by international markets, which has been sluggish. Added to the foregoing is the projection that diamond revenues will plateau in 2025 (MFDP, 2011). Unless another diamond deposit is discovered soon, or other non-diamond sources are discovered, there will be further revenue squeezes that will have serious implications for the funding of SP programmes.

However, in spite of the shrinking revenue envelope, SP programmes have largely survived budget cuts and experienced modest budget increases. For example, when the government increased public sector salaries in April 2014 (GoB, 2014), the same was extended to SP programmes. In this regard, *Ipelegeng* pay was increased by P30 and the old-age pension allowance by P50. This is because SP policies are considered a necessity in Botswana. A significant number of people benefit from the various interventions even though the sustenance of the various programmes may be problematic in the long run.

As a sustainability measure, there is need to introduce training as well as harmonise the interventions with some of the existing policies geared towards enhancing citizen economic empowerment. This will enable the beneficiaries to become economically empowered and thus, reduce heavy dependence on government.

Additionally, all actors involved in the implementation and promotion of these policies, including ministries, departments, NGOs, political parties, influential persons and the beneficiaries, believe that the social contract between the State and citizens can be improved if SP programmes benefit only the deserving.

Political Acceptance and Commitment, and Capacity to Deliver

Political buy-in is vital for the success of any programme and, accordingly, President Ian Khama ensured political buy-in by first ordering a review of the SP policy and programmes, and later launching the Poverty Eradication Programme in 2010. The programme was aimed at ensuring that all able-bodied destitute persons, potential destitute persons and other vulnerable groups were assisted to graduate from poverty to sustainable livelihoods (OP, 2014). Similarly, public policy announcements such as budget speeches and State of the Nation addresses underscore the government's commitment to implementing social protection and anti-poverty programmes.

While the various political parties in Botswana have different interpretations of the causes of poverty and varied strategies of addressing it, the thread that runs through all their manifestos is that SP policies are important and must be maintained. They all believe that the State has an obligation to support her citizens, educate and empower them, as well as create employment opportunities for them.

Role of International Donors

Although key international agencies such as the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Sida and SNV left Botswana in the 1990s, the situation has not remained bleak because other multi-lateral donors such as the European Union and World Bank, and bilateral donors such as Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America continue to support SP policies, mostly in the form of technical cooperation.

National Enthusiasm to Social Protection

It was clear from the interviews that there is national enthusiasm for social protection. There is consensus that the State has a contractual obligation to cater for the needs of the less-

fortunate members of society that cuts across class, political and gender divides. However, there were some significant differences in terms of how to craft an integrated and comprehensive SP policy. While the idea of universal social protection did not garner support across the board, the majority (about 90 per cent) stated that they favoured means-testing for SP programmes' eligibility.

In addition, some respondents stated that they felt a stronger bond with the State due to its 'caring attitude' towards the poor (interview in Kanye, 13 March 2014). Almost 100 per cent of the SP beneficiary respondents shared the sentiment about their bond to the State due to its beneficence. Further, they stated that they would encourage working citizens to demonstrate patriotism and loyalty to the State by undertaking their civic responsibilities such as paying taxes.

4.2 Implications for Social Protection Policy Uptake

Considering the continued decline in the country's revenue, it is unlikely that the government will manage to sustain the SP policy and programmes on its own. Thus, a rethink to review and reform the SP policy is necessary.

The majority of government officials were concerned about the dependency syndrome created by some of the programmes. Although government is now de-emphasising welfare—such as *mephako* (hand-outs)—and encouraging productive economic activities, a majority of beneficiaries are yet to graduate from poverty as planned. Thus, the role of the anti-poverty programmes as half-way stations seems to have been defeated.

Also, whilst the Botswana Government must be commended for playing a leading role in formulating and implementing SP policies, it is regretted that active participation of the citizens in decision-making is quite low. Yet, this is important as citizens best know how their needs can be met. Citizens' participation also gives them the opportunity to understand the country's public policies.

It must be stated further that government, political parties and bureaucrats have more power and strong incentive in terms of initiating and implementing SP policies compared with the NGOs. Thus, there is no guarantee that NGO suggestions will be accepted by policy-makers. It is important for government to increase support to NGOs to enable them undertake civic education on self-reliance.

Finally, this study concluded that the Government of Botswana was fully committed to social protection, as sufficiently demonstrated by both word (official pronouncements) and deed (budgetary allocations towards SP programmes despite revenue challenges). However, there is need for a legal institutional framework to be put in place for more effective delivery of SP programmes.

4.3 Conclusion

Political, economic, social, historical and institutional factors and actors support the drive to SP policy uptake in Botswana. These operate in concert in support of the SP policy uptake although they are centred on government as the lead agency as opposed to being self-directed.

Donors and the African Union do not play a major role in the funding of SP programmes in Botswana due to the blanket policy of not supporting middle income economies. However, there is a general feeling by actors that donor funding is required, especially to help develop institutional capacity and enable the country to attain sustainable development.

4.4 Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

- i. One overarching SP policy is needed as opposed to the current array of policies.
- ii. Efforts should be made to sustain social protection through programme reform and review, largely as a cost containment measure. While it would be ideal to scale up social protection to universal social protection, this is not possible given the chronic revenue stresses that the government has had to contend with since the global economic crisis of 2008–2009.

- iii. There should be a paradigm shift on the part of able-bodied beneficiaries to end their entitlement mentality and, in the traditional spirit of *ipelegeng* (self-help), take charge of their lives. Consequently, SP policy should invest in civic education.
- iv. There is a need to engage with donors to secure support towards SP programmes in Botswana to fund their expansion and effective delivery.

Recommendations for improving this study

The scope of the study should be extended to other vulnerable members of society and social programmes such as public health and education.

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