

BOTSWANA'S DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM: *Determinants in the Decision to Vote for the Ruling Party*

Batlang Seabo and Kesaobaka Molebatsi

Batlang Seabo is a lecturer in the Department of Political and
Administrative Studies, University of Botswana
email: batlang.seabo@mopipi.ub.bw

Kesaobaka Molebatsi is a lecturer in the Department of Statistics,
University of Botswana
email: kesaobaka.molebatsi@mopipi.ub.bw

ABSTRACT

The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has dominated other political parties in every election since independence in 1966. Debates on factors that account for the dominance of the BDP typically point to weakness of opposition parties, lack of party funding, the electoral system and advantages of incumbency enjoyed by the ruling party. Using performance-based theory, this article contributes to the debate by empirically examining if citizens' vote for the BDP is based on some selected variables. It aims to find out if Botswana's voting intentions are determined by an assessment of the economy, democracy, corruption perception, and institutional trust, among others. The study makes use of the 2014 Afrobarometer data, and logistic regression models were used to analyse the data. Therefore the main contribution of this article is the utilisation of empirical data to explain the vote for the ruling party. Theories of voting behaviour suggest that incumbent governments are likely to be voted back into office when they are perceived as performing well in the economy, are trustworthy and not corrupt. This begs the question why some incumbent governments are voted back into office despite poor performance in the economy, declining institutional trust and rising corruption. The article finds that the BDP's dominance is attributable to its good performance in governance and economic management. The data reveals that Botswana are rational voters, whose voting intentions are based on a careful assessment of the economic performance of BDP government, attitudes towards corruption level and trust in institutions. The paper also

shows that even though Botswana enjoys some good international scores on governance and corruption, citizens perceive that there has been an increase in the number of leaders and organisations involved in corruption. The study has also found that trust is high but decreasing for the ruling party, and low but increasing for opposition parties.

Keywords: Botswana, voting behaviour, voting intentions, political parties, party system, institutional performance theory

INTRODUCTION

Voting behaviour is an area that remains largely unexplored in Botswana's dominant party system. Previous research surrounding the dominant party system of Botswana centres on a weak opposition, focusing on the internal organisation of parties, intra-party democracy and factionalism within parties. The dominance of the BDP has also been attributed to the lack of political party funding and the unfair nature of the electoral system. Although the veracity of these explanatory variables is undeniable, the underlying attitudes determining voting for the BDP have escaped the attention of researchers working on the party system of Botswana. This article acknowledges that research on this subject and its conclusions (reviewed briefly in the next section) are in the main valid, but little has been achieved in terms of individual voter choice. What the article seeks to achieve in this subject is to empirically explain the vote for the BDP based on an assessment of citizens' attitudes on selected variables.

Until the early 20th century, economic models of voting had not been studied and the work of Matsheka and Botlhomilwe (2000) possibly represents the first attempt to explore the relationship between economic evaluations and electoral behaviour in Botswana. In their work, Mattes and Norris (2003) explored the influence of ethnicity on support for governing parties in Africa. They found that ethnicity determines the vote for the governing party in heterogeneous African countries rather than homogenous countries like Lesotho and Botswana. Recent studies include the work of Michael Bratton, Ravi Bhavnani and Tse-Hsin Chen (2012) that focuses on voting intentions in Africa. We note that these studies were conducted at a macro-level of analysis and as such do not sufficiently capture country-specific circumstances.

This article therefore departs from the conventional analysis of Botswana's dominant party system to examine the underlying attitudes for voting in favour of the BDP rather than opposition parties. Based on institutional performance theory, and Round 6 of the Afrobarometer survey data, we present the results of regression models of the intention to vote for the BDP on demographic variables

(level of education and employment status), and also an evaluation of economic conditions while controlling for gender, age and locality. The first section of the article is an overview of the literature on voting behaviour in Botswana's dominant party system. The next section reviews the different theories on voting behaviour followed by data analysis and results. The last section discusses the broader implications of the results on voting behaviour and Botswana's party system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Unlike most African countries that abolished multiparty politics and outlawed opposition parties after independence from colonial rule, Botswana maintained plurality politics and has held free and relatively fair elections since independence in 1966. However, a change of government has yet to occur as the Botswana Democratic Party has dominated every election, with the opposition only coming close to posing a threat to the BDP in 1994 and 20 years later in 2014.

Research on political parties has thus focused mainly on the dominant party system in the face of a weak opposition in Botswana, (Osei-Hwedie, 2001; Selolwane, 2002; Maundeni et al, 2006; Poteete, 2012; Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2013); party internal democracy; and factionalism within parties (Maundeni & Lotshwao, 2012, Lotshwao, 2011; Lekorwe 2005; Maundeni & Seabo, 2014). This research links the dominance of the BDP to:

- fragmentation of opposition parties
- factionalism and weak intra-party democracy
- unfairness of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system
- lack of state funding of parties
- economic performance of past BDP governments
- incumbency advantages
- the Seretse Khama factor.

For instance, Taylor (2005) claims that Sir Seretse Khama enjoyed legitimacy because of his former position as chief of the Bangwato and his charismatic leadership, integrity and the system of governance introduced at independence which earned BDP success at the polls. The implication therefore is that the BDP enjoys popular support and votes primarily because of the popularity of the founding president Sir Seretse Khama. It is undisputed that sound governance introduced post-independence (especially after discovery of diamonds) also gained votes for the BDP.

Moreover, political commentators and opposition parties have pointed to the unrepresentative nature of the FPTP electoral system that unduly benefits

the BDP. Much as the FPTP electoral system has produced an alternation of power in countries such as the United States of America (US), United Kingdom (UK), Nigeria and Ghana, in Botswana the system has worked to the advantage of the ruling party, barring other factors at play. As instanced by Poteete (2012, p.75), 'features of the electoral system, fragmentation of the party system, and obstacles to strategic voting behaviour contribute to the BDP's continued legislative dominance'. Botswana operates the FPTP electoral system commonly known as the winner-takes-all or majoritarian electoral system. This confers electoral advantages to the BDP in terms of disproportionate representation in parliament for the popular vote. For Molomo (2000, p. 34), 'the predominant party system that has been evident in Botswana's political practice is a result of the FPTP electoral system and vote splitting between the opposition parties'. Opposition parties have decried the unfairness of the electoral system and made fruitless calls for reforms to make the electoral system more representative. The criticism levelled against the majoritarian electoral system is that the popular vote of a party does not translate into the number of representatives or seats in parliament. It is a winner-takes-all system that does not represent small parties.

For Osei-Hwedie (2001), the dominance of the BDP has more to do with a fragmented and weak opposition that has struggled to wrest power from the ruling party. Osei-Hwedie notes that electoral weakness stems from, among other factors, a lack of organisational capability, inadequate financial resources and a lack of intra- and inter-party cohesion. In 1998, a year before the national elections, all conditions in the political opposition seemed ripe for the Botswana National Front to stage an electoral challenge to the BDP. However, internal political factions split the party leading to the formation of the Botswana Congress Party (BCP). Such a fragmentation, though not the first of its kind, has worked against opposition efforts to unseat the ruling BDP and has helped the ruling party to consolidate its dominance. Lotshwao (2011) thus observed that the weakness of opposition parties provided more justification for the ruling BDP to consolidate its power.

In their work, Lotshwao and Maundeni (2012) blamed the lack of constitutionalism in the Botswana National Front (BNF) as a sign of weakness, arguing that non-adherence to its constitutional rules weakened the party. As such, the lack of constitutionalism in the BNF troubled the party and resulted in suspensions and expulsions of some party members. Ultimately, some observers have argued that BNF troubles affected its vote as some disgruntled members voted for the BDP. Factional divisions have also perpetuated the dominance of the BDP. Unlike opposition parties the BNF and the Botswana Peoples Party (BPP), and prior to its split in 2010, the BDP was able to remain united because it managed intra-party divisions through negotiated compromise resolutions (Maundeni &

Seabo 2014). As a sign of protest, disenchanted factions in opposition either voted with their feet or cast a vote for the BDP.

But besides these cited works, there is scant empirical research on attitudes that explain the vote for the BDP and for opposition. Scholarship should move beyond the common structural explanations of the electoral system, party funding and intra-party dynamics, to explore attitudinal variables affecting the individual's decision to vote for a party. A vote for the BDP may be a function of attitudes on the economy, corruption level, and institutional trust. Against this background, this paper considers:

- whether Batswana are rational voters whose voting decisions are predicated on the assessment of party performance
- why people vote for the BDP and not the other parties
- who and where those voters are who prefer the BDP over other political parties.

Within the framework of institutional performance theory, this article contributes to the dominant party system debate by examining Batswana's underlying attitudes to voting for the BDP. Many studies on dominant parties, particularly in third world countries (for instance De Jager & Du Toit, 2013; Mozaffar & Scarritt, 2005; Bogaards, 2004) focus more on non-attitudinal factors to explain why some parties dominate others. These studies often cite structural reasons such as the relative strength of parties insofar as campaign resources are concerned, the unfairness of electoral system and 'rules of the game', institutional weaknesses of opposition parties, and the fragmentation of parties due to ideological polarisation. Taylor (2003, p. 216) succinctly summarises these mainstream explanations in the case of Botswana thus: 'Opposition parties are generally weak due to interminable intra-party faction-fighting, internal splits, an unfavourable electoral system (i.e. "first past the post"), feeble organisational structures, and poor capacity to promote alternative policies'.

This paper acknowledges that in the literature of dominant parties, there are very few empirical studies that examine the relationship between dominant parties and citizens' attitudes, particularly on the determinants of their intentions to vote for established parties. For instance, a study by Bratton et al. (2012) on voting intentions in Africa was a first attempt to explore the relationship between Africans' intended vote choice and economic performance, ethnic affiliation and partisanship. This paper seeks to make a contribution to dominant party literature from an empirical assessment of the determinants of citizens' intended vote choice in Botswana. More importantly, this paper shows that in some instances party dominance has more to do with voters' reward for performance, which is based on citizens' rational assessment of an incumbent's past performance in governance.

This conclusion must however be viewed with some scepticism as dominant parties do engage in unscrupulous political strategies to retain state power.

VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Lipset and Rokkan's work on party systems and voter alignment in Europe cited in Mattes and Norris (2003, p. 3) represents a classic account of how religious, economic and social cleavages structured Europe's party systems. Their work 'highlighted the regional cleavages of center periphery, the class inequalities of workers-owners, and sectarian cleavages over church and state that split Christendom between Catholics and Protestants'. They posit that Western Europe's party system froze in the 1920s as parties formed along salient social cleavages like class in Britain and religion in France.

Their work undoubtedly carved a path in the analysis of voting behaviour, despite the rise of the de-alignment thesis decades later that challenged the core of Lipset-Rokkan's theory. The de-alignment thesis perceived voters as rational individuals, not party-bound, their voting preferences not determined by alignment to specific social groups. The rise of issue voting in the 1960s based on the individual's evaluation of government performance tended to render group voting irrelevant. This was partly as a result of people's reliance on their own cognitive ability, among other factors. As a result of post-industrial changes in societies there was less need for people to rely on social groups like the church for information. Argues Enyedi (2008, p. 289) comments that 'traditional providers of information, such as, for example, churches and trade unions, have ceased to serve as important points of reference for the contemporary voter who is able to rely on her own cognitive skills, developed by education'. With the decline of group voting, there was a rise in issue voting as people increasingly relied on their own judgement. In this vein, Mattes and Norris (2003, p. 6) state that 'better-educated and more cognitively sophisticated citizens, it is argued, have less need to rely upon the traditional social cues of ethnicity in electoral choices'.

Taking the institutional performance based theory as a point of departure, this article examines Batswana's decision to vote for the BDP based on their attitudes towards the economy, institutional trust, levels of corruption, satisfaction with democracy, party identification and views on opposition parties as an alternative to the BDP.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE-BASED THEORY

It is of critical importance to appreciate that at the heart of voting behaviour lies the problem of political agency. Wolfers (2002) argues that voters cannot

observe politician's actions and efforts and this results in the pursuit of personal interests at the expense of constituents. Voters, being principals, are assumed to make rational decisions in their transaction with politicians who are agents in this relationship. In the exercise of rationality during voting, voters, according to the institutional performance theory, evaluate institutions in terms of their performance. Writing on political trust in institutions, Hutchison and Johnson (as cited in Landmark, 2016, p. 36) posit that the performance-based or institutional theory of trust is based on the idea that the citizen's trust in the state is decided by how well public institutions perform to meet their expectations. It is widely recognised that performance bestows legitimacy on institutions. As such it is pertinent for institutions to perform in the delivery of basic amenities such as health care, sanitation, jobs and education. According to Mishler and Rose (2001, p. 32), performance-based theory can be categorised into micro and macro perspectives, wherein the former refers to individual personal preferences and the latter has more to do with government's management of the economy, job creation and low levels of corruption.

Macro-institutional theories emphasize the aggregate performance of institutions in such matters as promoting growth, governing effectively, and avoiding corruption. ... By contrast, micro-institutional theories emphasise that individual evaluations of institutional performance are conditioned by individual tastes and experiences, for example, whether a person thinks that political integrity or economic growth is more important and whether that individual personally has experienced the effects of corruption or the benefits of economic growth.

(ibid)

Accordingly, rational voters will link their vote to observable outcomes that reflect competence and effort (Wolfers, 2002, p. 3).

This leads to the conclusion that poor institutional performance would result in a negative assessment by voters and could by implication even affect their party preference at the polls. In light of this logic, Norris and Newton (2000) contend that when institutions perform well in accordance with citizens' needs and expectations, they will probably gain trust and support, while poor performance and ineffectiveness will generate low trust or even distrust.

Therefore, issue voting based on retrospective evaluations of the performance of the governing parties, the role of party leaders, and policy platforms offered by each party, could all be expected to become a more important component of voting decisions (Norris & Mattes, 2003, p. 10). With this framework in mind, we generate the following testable hypotheses based on citizens' attitudes towards

the economy, political or institutional trust, and democratic performance as well as views on corruption.

Hypotheses

Economic performance

In terms of the theory of institutional performance, voter preference is a function of individual evaluation of past economic performance of government (Key, 1964; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000 as cited in Bratton et al, 2012). This argument has been advanced by rational choice theory that views voting as an expression of individual choice amongst available options (Himmelweit, Humphreys & Jaeger, 1985). In this sense, voters are perceived as rational consumers behaving as though they are in a market place where they compare goods and make informed choices. As Brennan and Buchanan put it (1984, p. 194), 'the notion of rational behavior applied by public choice scholars to voting derives from a direct extrapolation of individuals "choosing" within a given market among consumption items in the market, which is – the standard case of consumer choice'. In this instance, citizens tend to vote for the incumbent government if economic times are good; otherwise, they vote against it (Key, 1964; Tufte, 1978; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000, as cited in Bratton et al, 2012).

In African societies rapid urbanisation also contributed to a shift from voting based on social cues to individual voting preferences. Norris and Mattes (2003) observed that in Africa, geographic mobility and urbanisation generate crosscutting cleavages based on location, occupation and communication, weakening linkages with local communities, extended family networks, and tribal groups.

In what possibly represents the first account of economic models of voting in Botswana, Matsheka and Botlhomilwe (2000) found that voting behaviour can no longer be explained solely by political and social variables as it has emerged that economic conditions/variables matter during elections. They concluded that the BDP performed well at elections from 1989-1999 due to a healthy economy. But 15 years later in the wake of a global economic crisis, the BDP's popular vote declined while opposition parties made notable strides in popular vote and representation in Parliament. The significant question therefore is whether the decline in popular vote for the BDP was due to people's overall evaluation of the economy or a mere coincidence. We derive the first hypothesis thus: *Individuals who perceive that the economy is performing well are more likely to vote for the BDP.*

Political Trust

When citizens become disillusioned with institutions, turnout is affected or they engage in a protest vote. Schoon and Cheng (2011) define political trust as the

confidence people have in their government and institutions. Therefore citizens would trust political institutions as long as they perceive them performing well. In this sense, Mishler and Rose (2002) write that institutional theories suggest that political trust is a consequence, not a cause, of institutional performance. The expectation then is that there is an inverse relationship between declining political trust and the intention to vote for a ruling party. The decline in public confidence and trust in political institutions may therefore indicate a disconnection between citizens and the state. Norris (1999, p. 7) succinctly states that the populace is increasingly 'mistrustful of political leaders and institutions'.

Declining levels of trust were observed in the US, Canada and Europe as citizens grew disillusioned with their institutions. Bélanger and Nadeau (2005) note that important downward shifts in levels of political trust have been reported and documented since the 1970s in the United States and Western Europe. Africa is no exception to this trend, as Molomo (2006, p. 200) aptly puts it: 'the decline in confidence in the integrity of political institutions and politicians does not emerge in a social vacuum, and it is a result of trying social and economic realities in Africa'. *The second hypothesis is that we expect the decline in trust to reduce the likelihood of voting for the BDP.*

Attitudes on democracy and corruption

More fundamentally, satisfaction with democracy may serve as a yardstick to vote in or reject the ruling party. Growing dissatisfaction with democratic government may produce a decline in electoral turnout and political engagement, but it may also facilitate the rise of protest politics and extreme anti-government parties (Gamson 1968; Muller et al. 1982; Betz & Immerfall 1998 as cited in Bélanger & Nadeu, 2005). Botswana's democracy is widely held as a shining example on the African continent (see Good, 1999; Sebudubudu & Osei-Hwedie, 2006; Molomo, 2000, 2008). But recent media reports on the affront to fundamental freedoms, crises besieging the judiciary, and allegations of elite corruption, put the country's democracy to the test.

Moreover, studies have found that when a regime is perceived to be corrupt, citizens grow weary and reject it at the polls. According to these studies, 'experiences of corruption as well as perceptions of corruption are associated with disengagement from electoral politics and/or defeat of governing parties' (Slomczynski & Shabad, 2012, p. 898). In this vein, Mishler and Rose (2001) caution that institutions ought to refrain from activities that are regarded as negative and unacceptable, for instance corruption.

This trend is worrying in many new and upcoming democracies in post-Communist Europe, Latin America and Africa, where governing parties squander their countries' resources either to maintain power or for the personal gain of

greedy politicians. Botswana is no exception to this trend, as media reports have revealed serious allegations of corruption implicating BDP politicians. Botswana has also lamented the escalating levels of corruption among government officials. Therefore the third and fourth hypotheses are derived as follows: *Higher perceived satisfaction with democracy will increase the odds of voting for the BDP. The higher the perceived corruption levels are among leaders and institutions, the lower the odds are to vote for the BDP.*

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses the Afro Barometer rounds 4, 5 and 6 data collected in 2008, 2012 and 2014 respectively. However, rounds 4 and 5 data sets are used only for examining trends of the variables of interest, where applicable. Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice (Setswana or English in the case of Botswana) with a nationally representative sample of 1,200 respondents and a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Botswana in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2012 maintaining the same methodology (Afrobarometer.org).

Frequencies are reported for categorical variables. For continuous variables, descriptive statistics like mean and standard errors are used for the scores of the constructs created. Table 1 shows in detail how variables have been constructed. Cronbach's alpha statistics are also reported to show the reliability of constructs of interest.

Table 1
Construction of variables

Construct	Questions	Construction of the covariate
Perception of corruption	Q53	Mean (A,B,...,J)
Trust in the ruling party and the president	Q52	Mean (A, F)
Trust in opposition parties	Q52	G
Trust in Parliament	Q52	B
Trust in security agencies	Q52	Mean (H,I)
Perception of current government performance	Q66	Mean (A,B,...,M)
^R Human needs score (food, clean water, etc.)	Q8	Mean (A, B,...,E)

Superscript ^R means questionnaire responses have been reversed.

Logistic Regression

The paper used a simple logistic regression, which is applicable for dichotomous dependent variables as in this case (1 if the individual will vote for the ruling party and 0 otherwise). Simple logistic modelling is necessary in order to avoid the possibility of linear dependencies among predictors. Odds ratios, corresponding confidence intervals, Nagalkerke R^2 and p-values are reported for both unadjusted and adjusted for age, gender and location models to account for possible variations across these variables. The paper adopted a scoring method as indicated in Appendix 1 and regression models were conducted only for Round 6 data.

The odds of voting for the ruling party will be higher if the ratio of odds is more than 1 and less if less than 1. The odds will be equal if the ratio is 1. A p-value less than 0.05 means the relationship between the outcome and covariate is statistically significant (in other words, the odds of the result being obtained purely by chance or error measurement was less than 5%). This result implies that the corresponding 95% confidence interval for odds ratios does not include 1. However, highly significant results ($P < 0.001$) were also recorded for some variables.

Data Analysis and findings

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Afrobarometer Respondents in 2014

Characteristic	Frequency (Percentage)
Sample (N)	1 200
Gender (Female)	600 (50.0)
Age ^a	39.68 (32.16)
Employed	376/894 (42.1)
Unemployed	518/894 (57.9)
At least a post-secondary qualification	266 (22.2)
Completed high school or less	934 (77.8)
Which Party would you vote for?	
BDP	623 (60.8)
Opposition Parties	401 (39.2)
There is another party that can solve the most important problem, other than BDP	434/1049 (41.4)

Opposition presents a viable alternative vision and plan for the country	535/984 (54.4)
Satisfied with democracy	825/1140 (72.4)
Closer to opposition parties/ party identification	315/840 (37.5)
Closer to the ruling party	525/840 (62.5)

Subscript^a means the variable (age) is continuous. Mean (standard error) and frequencies (percentages) are reported for continuous and categorical variables respectively.

According to Table 2, half of the respondents were females (as also dictated by Afrobarometer protocol), the average age was 39.68 years, and only 42.1% were employed. The majority (77.8%) had completed high school or less.

Respondents were asked which party they would vote for if national elections were to be held on the following day. About 60% said they would vote for the ruling party, as opposed to 40% who said they would vote for the opposition. Out of 1 049 individuals who responded to the question about an alternative party that could solve their most important problem (i.e. other than the ruling party), only 41.4% said such a party exists. More than half of the respondents believed that the opposition presents an available alternative vision and plan for the country, while 72.4% were satisfied with democracy in Botswana. Most (62.5%) of the respondents who admitted that they felt closer to a particular party admitted that that is the ruling party (BDP).

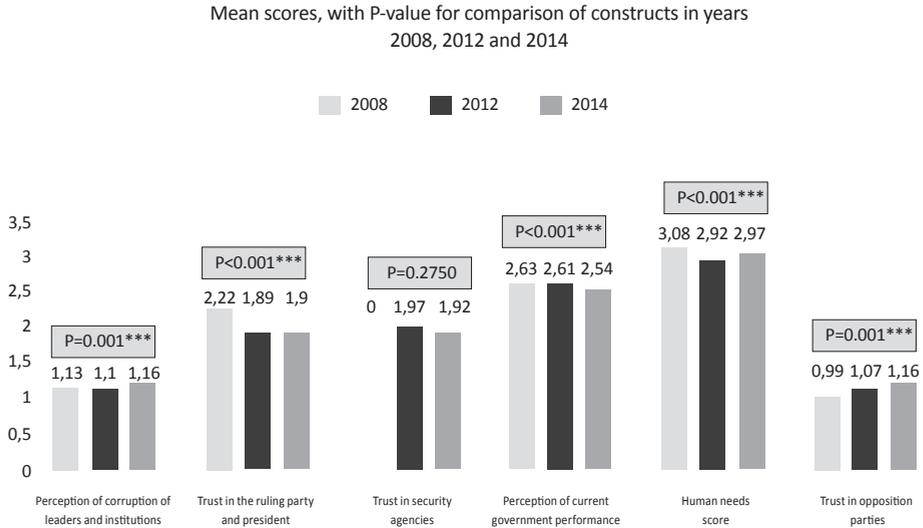
Table 3
Means for Covariates, their standard errors in parenthesis, number of items in the construct and Cronbach's alpha for reliability

Year	Covariates	Mean (Standard Error)	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
2008	Perception of corruption of leaders	1.13 (0.02)	7	0.91
	Trust in the ruling party and the president	2.22 (0.03)	2	0.67
	Trust in opposition parties	0.99 (0.03)	1	NA
	Trust in security agencies	Army not covered in 2008		
	Perception of current government performance	2.63 (0.01)	11	0.82
	Human needs score	3.08 (0.02)	5	0.75

2012	Perception of corruption of leaders	1.10 (0.52)	7	0.87
	Trust in the ruling party and the president	1.89 (0.03)	2	0.74
	Trust in opposition parties	1.07 (0.03)	1	NA
	Trust in security agencies	1.97 (0.94)	2	0.79
	Perception of current government performance	2.61 (0.45)	13	0.81
	Human needs score	2.92 (0.84)	5	0.74
2014	Perception of corruption of leaders	1.16 (1.16)	10	0.90
	Trust in the ruling party and the president	1.90 (0.03)	2	0.78
	Trust in opposition parties	1.16 (0.03)	1	NA
	Trust in security agencies	1.92 (0.97)	2	0.81
	Perception of current government performance	2.54 (0.02)	13	0.90
	Human needs score	2.97 (0.87)	5	0.76

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for hypothesised predictors (constructs) of a party that people would vote for if general elections were to be held the next day; the number of items used for these constructs; and their corresponding Cronbach's alpha for years 2008, 2012 and 2014. All constructs had alphas greater than 0.60, demonstrating adequate internal reliability.

Since the scales for responses were from 0 to 3 (Appendix 1), we expect scores to be 1.5 or more for higher levels of variables (e.g. trust in the ruling party) and less than 1.5 for all constructs except government performance and human needs, of which their half is 2.



(* = Significant at 10%, P<0.10, **= Significant at 5%, P<0.05 and ***= Significant at 1%, P<0.01)

Source: Afrobarometer Rounds 4,5 & 6, Botswana (2008, 2012 & 2014)

Figure 1: Mean scores, with P-value for comparison of constructs in years 2008, 2012 and 2014

Figure 1 shows scores for constructs over the three periods. We observe that for all the years, perception of the corruption of leaders scored below 1.5. This implies that respondents believe that few leaders are involved in corruption, even though this perception increased significantly ($p=0.001$) from 1.13 (2008) to 1.16 (2014). Low scores were also obtained for trust in opposition parties (less than 1.5) over the three periods. However, there is a significant increase in this variable, (from 0.99 (2008) to 1.16 (2014), $p<0.001$). The remaining variables obtained above average scores even though different trends were observed. Trust in the ruling party and the president has significantly decreased (from 2.22 to 1.90, $p=0.001$). Trust in security agencies was not calculated in 2008 because of lack of data for some questions included under the construct. However, available scores depict an insignificant reduction (from 1.97 (2012) to 1.92 (2014), $p=0.275$). Government performance and human needs scores significantly decreased (from 2.63 (2008) to 2.54 (2014), $p<0.001$) and (3.08 (2008) to 2.97 (2014), $P<0.001$) respectively.

Table 4
Logistic regression results for adjusted and unadjusted odds ratios & Nagalkerke R² for voting the ruling party (BDP) against opposition parties if National Assembly elections were held the following day

Dependent variable: respondent would vote BDP

Independent Variable	Unadjusted for gender, age & locality			Unadjusted for gender, age & locality		
	OR (95% CI)	Nagalkerke R ²	P-Value	OR (95% CI)	Nagalkerke R ²	P-Value
Level of Education	0.39 (0.28, 0.53)	0.027	P<0.001	0.71 (0.31, 1.63)	0.068	0.4236
Employment Status	0.66 (0.50, 0.89)	0.253	0.0064	0.55 (0.26, 1.18)	0.278	0.1265
Other Covariates						
Partisanship	390.87 (203.39, 751.16)	0.779	P<0.001	369.49 (189.29, 721.23)	0.785	P<0.001***
Age	1.03 (1.02, 1.04)	0.032	P<0.001	1.03 (1.02, 1.04) ¹	0.054	P<0.001***
Gender	1.99 (1.54, 2.57)	0.021	P<0.001	2.04 (1.57, 2.65) ²	0.054	P<0.001***
Perception of corruption of leaders & institutions	0.40 (0.31, 0.52)	0.087	P<0.001	0.47 (0.25, 0.89)	0.1231	0.0203**
Trust in the ruling party & president	2.33 (2.04, 2.66)	0.119	P<0.001	2.23 (1.94, 2.55)	0.140	P<0.001***
Trust in opposition parties	0.54 (0.47, 0.61)	0.085	P<0.001	0.55 (0.49, 0.63)	0.118	P<0.001***

Trust in security agencies	1.44 (1.26, 1.65)	0.025	P<0.001	1.25 (0.87, 1.80)	0.073	0.2199
Perception of government performance	4.41 (3.35, 5.80)	0.106	P<0.001	2.70 (1.46, 5.00)	0.146	0.0015***
Human needs score (food, clean water, etc.)	0.93 (0.80, 1.08)	0.001	0.3257	1.20 (0.82, 1.77)	0.054	0.3442
An alternative to solve the most important problem of the economy	0.20 (0.15, 0.27)	0.194	P<0.001	0.40 (0.19, 0.83)	0.234	0.0140**
Opposition as a viable alternative vision & plan	0.18 (0.13, 0.24)	0.254	P<0.001	0.41 (0.15, 0.28)	0.293	0.0134**
Satisfaction with Democracy	4.49 (3.31, 6.08)	0.115	P<0.001	1.54 (0.71, 3.35)	0.156	0.27747

(* = Significant at 10%, P<0.10, ** = Significant at 5%, P<0.05 and *** = Significant at 1%, P<0.01).¹Age is a covariate so the model is not adjusted for age. ²Gender is a covariate so the model is not adjusted for gender.

Table 4 shows the results of unadjusted and adjusted models for gender, age, and locality for voting between the ruling party and opposition parties in 2014. All unadjusted models show significant relationships except for human needs score, which remained insignificant even after adjusting. All models also scored low R^2 (less than 0.5) except for partisanship (which obtained very large odds ratios); however, the statistic improved for all adjusted models.

When adjusting, predictors attributable to a significant increase in the odds of voting for the BDP in the next elections are partisanship, higher trust in the ruling party and the president, as well as a positive perception of current government performance. By contrast, respondents were less likely to vote for BDP when they have a higher perception that corruption exists in government, when trust in opposition parties increases, when opposition parties are considered an alternative to solving the most important problem of the economy, and when the opposition presents a viable alternative vision and plan for the country.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to examine the underlying attitudes of citizens determining their intention to vote for the BDP in Botswana's dominant party system. In addition the article examined the trends of selected variables in 2008, 2012 and 2014. Binary logistic regression models were used to estimate the odds ratios of voting for the ruling party in preference to opposition parties, with adjustment for gender, age and locality. The results show that Batswana are more likely to vote for the BDP when they trust the party and its president. Further, Batswana are more likely to vote for the party when they feel that the party has performed well in managing the economy. Management of the economy specifically considered the following questions: managing the economy, improving living standards of the poor, creating jobs, keeping prices low, narrowing gaps between rich and poor, reducing crime, improving basic health services, addressing educational needs, providing water and sanitation services, ensuring everyone has enough to eat, fighting corruption in government, maintaining roads and bridges, and providing a reliable supply of electricity.

On the other hand, the BDP will realise a lower number of votes when individuals believe that there is widespread corruption in government including the president and most officials in his office, members of parliament, the Independent Electoral Commission, Botswana Unified Revenue Services, individual local government council, the ruling party, and courts of law. An increasing perception that opposition parties are an alternative to solving the most important problem of the economy will also crowd out votes from the BDP. In this regard the majority of respondents mentioned unemployment,

poverty/destitution, education and health as the most important problems. Also important is an increase in the trust in opposition parties and when opposition parties present a viable alternative vision and plan for the country. The results hold regardless of gender, age and locality of respondents; hence we conclude that Botswana's voting intentions are based on an evaluation of economic performance, attitudes towards corruption level and trust in institutions, among others. Theoretical implications of the results therefore suggest that Batswana are economic voters and critical citizens who base their vote on an assessment of public interest issues as analysed in this paper. On this basis, we conclude that the BDP has been dominant because it performed well in governance and the economy.

The following conclusions can be derived concerning the trends of selected variables over the years covered by the study: Citizens generally feel that more leaders (the president and officials in his office, members of parliament, tax officials, judges, magistrates and others) were involved in corruption in 2014 than in 2008. This shows that even though the country is doing well in terms of corruption and governance relative to other countries (Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2015), citizens perceive corruption to be increasing. We also observe that trust in the ruling party and the president has decreased. Batswana also feel that both the current performance of government and human needs scores have decreased between 2008 and 2014 even though they are still above average. A perceived reduction in government performance may be due to high unemployment rates and poor results for public schools. A decrease in the human needs score suggests that in 2014 Batswana felt that they had less access to clean water, cash income and enough fuel to cook than in 2008. This may be a result of shortages like those of electricity and potable water that the country experienced in that period.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Based on the findings of this work, the following implications arise for parties:

- In order for the ruling party to be voted back into power, it should deal with perceived levels of corruption amongst leaders and institutions. The ruling party should also maintain the trust of voters and perform well in terms of managing the economy, for example through the creation of jobs, keeping prices down and reducing crime.
- Opposition parties should concentrate on the following in order to win votes from the BDP: They should win more trust and present alternative solutions to solve the most important problems of the economy; the majority of respondents mentioned unemployment,

poverty/ destitution, education and health as the most important problems. They also need to present a viable alternative vision and plan for the country.

- Theoretically, the results of this study prove that Batswana are rational voters whose voting intentions are based on an assessment of the ruling party's performance as well as perceptions of opposition parties.

LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this paper is that even though significant relationships have been identified, they do not imply a cause and effect association; however this is the subject for subsequent research. Some questions were edited in the latest rounds of Afrobarometer and have affected some of the constructs used in this paper. The question of trust in opposition parties has grouped together several parties which might have been scored differently by respondents in terms of trust. Thus a question on the trust in individual opposition parties could have added more depth to the paper.

— REFERENCE —

- Bratton, M, Bhavnani, R, & Chen, TH 2012, 'Voting intentions in Africa: ethnic, economic or partisan?', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 27-52.
- Bélanger, É & Nadeau, R 2005, 'Political trust and the vote in multiparty elections: The Canadian case', *European journal of political research*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 121-146.
- Bogaards, M 2004, 'Counting parties and identifying dominant party systems in Africa', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 173-197.
- Brennan, G & Buchanan, J 1984, 'Voter Choice: Evaluating Political Alternatives', *The American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 38, no 2, p. 185.
- Brewer, MB & Brown, RJ 1998, *Intergroup relations*, McGraw-Hill, Columbus, Ohio.
- De Jager, N, & Du Toit, P 2012, *Friend or Foe? Dominant party systems in southern Africa*, UCT Press, Cape Town.
- Enyedi, Z 2008, 'The social and attitudinal basis of political parties: cleavage politics revisited', *European Review*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 287-304.
- Himmelweit, HT, Humphreys, P, & Jaeger, M 1985, *How voters decide: a model of vote choice based on a special longitudinal study extending over fifteen years and the British election surveys of 1970-1983*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

- Hutchison, ML, & Johnson, K 2011, 'Capacity to trust? Institutional capacity, conflict, and political trust in Africa, 2000–2005', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 48 no. 6, pp. 737-752.
- Lekorwe, M 2005, 'Organisation of political parties', in Z. Maundeni (ed.), *40 Years of Democracy in Botswana: 1965-2005*, Mmegi Publishing House, Gaborone.
- Lewis-Beck, MS, & Stegmaier, M 2000, 'Economic determinants of electoral outcomes' *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 3, no.1, pp. 183-219.
- Lotshwao, K 2011, 'The weakness of opposition parties in Botswana: A justification for more internal-party democracy in the dominant Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)' *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 103.
- Matsheka, TC & Botlhomilwe, MZ 2000, 'Economic conditions and election outcomes in Botswana: is the relationship spurious?' *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 36-46.
- Maundeni, Z & Lotshwao, K 2012, 'Internal organisation of political parties in Botswana', *Global Journal of Human-Social Science Research*, vol. 12, p. 9.
- Maundeni, Z & Seabo, B 2015, 'Management and Mismanagement of Factionalism in Political Parties in Botswana, 1962-2013', *Botswana Notes and Records*, vol. 45.
- Mishler, W & Rose, R 2001, 'What are the origins of political trust? : Testing institutional and cultural theories in post-communist societies', *Comparative political studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 30-62.
- Mozaffar, S, & Scarritt, JR 2005, 'The puzzle of African party systems', *Party Politics*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 399-421.
- Mo Ibrahim (2015) *The 2015 Ibrahim Index of Governance*, <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag/>
- Molomo, MG 2000, 'In Search of an Alternative Electoral System for Botswana', *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 109-121.
- Molomo, MG 2006, 'Building social capital and political trust: consolidating democracy in Botswana' *Journal of African Elections*, vol. 5, no. 2.
- Norris, P 1999, 'Introduction: The growth of critical citizens?', *Critical citizens: Global support for democratic government*, pp. 1-27.
- Norris, P, & Mattes, RB 2003, 'Does ethnicity determine support for the governing party?' No. 26, Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), [Pretoria].
- Newton, K & Norris, P 2000. 'Confidence in public institutions', in SJ Pharr & RD Putnam (eds.), *Disaffected democracies: What's troubling the trilateral countries?*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Osei-Hwedie, BZ 2001, 'The political opposition in Botswana: The politics of factionalism and fragmentation', *Transformation-Durban*, vol. 45.
- Poteete, AR 2012, 'Electoral competition, factionalism, and persistent party dominance in Botswana', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 75-102.

- Sebudubudu, D & Botlhomilwe, MZ 2013, 'Interrogating the Dominant Party System in Botswana', in N de Jager & P du Toit, *Friend or Foe? Dominant party systems in southern Africa*, UCT Press, Cape Town.
- Selolwane, OD 2002, 'Monopoly politikos: How Botswana's opposition parties have helped sustain one-party dominance', *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 68-90.
- Schoon, I, & Cheng, H 2011, 'Determinants of political trust: a lifetime learning model', *Developmental psychology*, vol. 47, no. 3, p. 619.
- Slomczynski, K, & Shabad, G 2012, 'Perceptions of political party corruption and voting behaviour in Poland', *Party Politics*, vol. 18, no 6, pp. 897-917.
- Taylor, I 2003, 'As good as it gets? Botswana's' democratic development', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 21 no. 2, pp. 215-231.
- Taylor, I 2005, 'Botswana's Developmental State and the Politics of Legitimacy', in *Global Encounters*, pp. 41-62. Palgrave Macmillan UK, [London].
- Woodward, M 2004, *Epidemiology study design and data analysis*, 2nd ed., Chapman & Hall/CRC, Boca Raton, Fla. USA
- Wolfers, J 2002, *Are voters rational: Evidence from gubernatorial elections*, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford.

Appendix 1 A summary of variables used and how they were measured (Source: Afrobarometer Round 6 Questionnaire, Botswana)		
Variable	Items used	Response Format
Intention to vote for the ruling party	If National Assembly elections were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you vote?	1=Ruling Party (BDP), 0 otherwise
Gender	Respondent's gender	1=Female, 0=male (or other)
Age	How old are you?	Continuous
Locality	Whether its rural or not	1=Urban, 2=Rural, 3=Semi-Urban
Party Identification	Do you feel close to any political party?	1=Ruling party, 0=other. Non-party identifiers are excluded'
Demographic Variables		
Level of Education	What is your level of education?	1=At least post-secondary qualification, e.g. diploma, 0=other
Employment status	Do you have a job that pays a cash income?	1=Yes, 0=No but looking. Housewives and students are excluded..
Perception of corruption of leaders and institutions	How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption? The president and officials in his office, members of parliament, Independent Electoral Commission, Botswana Unified Revenue Services, individual local government councils, the ruling party, courts of law.	0=None, 1=Some, 2=Most, 3=All of them
Trust in the ruling party and the president	How much do you trust the president and the ruling party?	0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot
Trust in opposition parties	How much do you trust opposition parties ?	0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot
Trust in security agencies	How much do you trust the police and the army?	0=Not at all, 1=Just a little, 2=Somewhat, 3=A lot

Satisfaction with democracy	Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Botswana	1=Satisfied, 0 otherwise
Economic Conditions		
Human needs score (food, clean water, etc.)	Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough food to eat; without enough clean water for home use, without medicines or medical treatment, without enough fuel to cook food and without enough cash income.	4=Never, 3=Just once or twice, 2=Several times, 1=Many times, 0=Always
Perception of current government performance	How well or badly would you say the current government is managing the economy, improving living standards of the poor, creating jobs, keeping prices low, narrowing gaps between rich and poor, reducing crime, improving basic health services, addressing educational needs, providing water and sanitation services, ensuring everyone has enough to eat, fighting corruption in government, maintain roads and bridges, providing a reliable supply of electricity	1=Very badly, 2=Fairly badly, 3=Fairly well, 4=Very well
Opposition as a viable alternative vision and plan	Political opposition in Botswana presents a viable alternative vision and plan for the country	1=Agree, 2=Disagree
An alternative to solve the most important problem of the economy	In your opinion, is there any other political party that could do a better job in solving the most important problem	1=Yes, 2=No