

Political party ideology in Zambia: comparing the PF and the UPND on social welfare policies*

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ABSTRACT

This paper challenges existing analyses of party cleavages in Sub-Saharan Africa which over-emphasise the centrality of ethnicity. Parties express ideological positions that reflect the socio-economic interests of specific regions, which, especially in Zambia, coincide with particular ethnic groups. We demonstrate this through an examination of party manifestos, policy documents and semi-structured interviews with members of two political parties in Zambia – the Patriotic Front and the United Party for National Development. These parties express clear normative ideas about social welfare, especially the role of the state in providing social assistance to the poorest. These ideological positions reflect the socio-economic interests

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of the ethnic groups and regions where support for each party is dominant. These are shaped by the ways in which these regions were historically incorporated into the colonial economy. In order to gain a better understanding of African politics, ethnicity must be conceptualised as a socio-cultural construct and situated historically.

Keywords—African politics, party cleavages, Zambia, ethnicity, ideology, social welfare, Patriotic Front, United Party for National Development.

INTRODUCTION

In Western countries, political party cleavages are typically viewed on a left–right ideological continuum, with parties on the left deriving support from labour unions and those on the right from organised business (Hibbs 1977; Rathgeb & Busemeyer 2021). By contrast, the literature on political parties in Africa typically considers ethnicity and regionalism as the primary political cleavages. It is argued that African voters support co-ethnic parties and politicians in anticipation that there will be a mutually beneficial exchange between their ethnic group and the party (Kim 2017). Some scholars contend that African politicians (in French West Africa for example) also avoid mobilising voters using programmatic policies because of a perception that other issues, including the personalities of politicians, vote buying and ethnicity, are more important (van de Walle & Butler 1999; Bleck & Van de Walle 2011). African parties are also believed to be indistinguishable on policy issues (Young 2012). However, not much systematic analysis exists to understand the relationship between programmatic ideas and electoral competition among African parties (Greene & Rauschenbach 2017). To the extent that the literature recognises political cleavages in Africa, it is mostly limited to the salience of ethnic wedge issues – such as appeals to historically marginalised groups – as a basis for political mobilisation (Gadjanova 2017) and the divide between rural-agrarian and urban-industrial societies (Greene & Rauschenbach 2017). This literature essentialises ethnicity and conceptualises it as a static concept, rather than a collective identity rooted in a particular socio-economic and historical context. This prevents scholars from gaining a deeper understanding of African politics. This paper builds on scholarship that has sought to contextualise the apparent importance of ethnicity and demonstrates that the salience of ethnicity does not preclude the importance of ideology. We argue that while ethnicity is an important political cleavage, African parties express ideological positions on some social issues that reflect the socio-economic interests of ethnic groups which are rooted in the unique geography and shared history of the regions in question. We conceptualise ideology as a set of ideas and values that guide and shape the ways in which individuals, and politicians, interpret and approach particular challenges (Beland & Cox 2011: 3). While ‘social welfare’ can include a broad range of social programmes, we use it to refer to Zambia’s system of social protection (i.e. non-contributory social programmes) as well as health, educational policy and agricultural support.

We exemplify this through an ideological analysis of two political parties in Zambia: the Patriotic Front (PF) – which was the governing party from 2011–2021 – and the United Party for National Development (UPND) – the main opposition between 2001 and 2006, and again from 2015 until forming the government in August 2021. We draw from party manifestos, policy documents and party constitutions, as well as from semi-structured interviews conducted with members of both parties. In order to uncover ideological cleavages between the two parties, we focus specifically on social welfare. We argue that in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the global South more broadly, social welfare is a site of intense ideological debate. The introduction of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank-supported structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) (especially in the early 1990s) led to the abandonment of state-led development planning and the ‘hijacking of key state functions by international financial institutions (IFIs)’ (Mkandawire 2001). The economic policies associated with SAPs were imposed on African countries and reflected the neoliberal ideological positions of the IFIs rather than of political parties. During this period, ruling political parties on the continent that promoted socialist or communist ideologies (for example in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe), quickly began to adopt neoliberal economic reforms.

The post-SAPs era that began in the 2000s, provided opportunities for political parties to express distinct ideological positions on social assistance. From the early 2000s, international development agencies promoted social protection as a strategy for poverty reduction in low-income African countries but were resisted by political leaders who opposed ‘handout’ programmes on ideological grounds. In countries such as Botswana, Malawi and Zambia, political leaders were more supportive of workfare and agrarian programmes as broader strategies for rural development (Kalebe-Nyamongo & Marquette 2014; Kabandula & Seekings 2016; Seekings 2017). However, as social protection programmes began to expand in the late 2000s, normative ideas, including debates about the responsibility of the state towards its citizens, shaped attitudes amongst political leaders about the role of social welfare in achieving development (Hickey 2012; Lavers & Hickey 2016). In other regions, such as Latin America, anti-poverty policies such as cash transfers have been implemented by politicians since the 1990s to expand electoral support amongst poorer classes, demonstrating the significance of social assistance for political competition (Fairfield & Garay 2017; Araújo 2021). In Zambia, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), for example, resisted the implementation of donor-funded cash transfers in the 2000s but implemented generous farm subsidy programmes that benefitted small-scale farmers instead (Kabandula & Seekings, 2016). Therefore, social welfare policy, including the provision of social services and social assistance (non-contributory transfers funded by government revenue or external funds), can bring to light key ideological divergences between political parties.

This paper shows that the leading political parties in Zambia express normative ideas about social welfare, especially regarding the role of the state in

providing income assistance to low-income individuals. These distinct normative values are associated with the historical political and economic context and geography of the regions where support for parties is strongest and regions where party leaders are from. In other words, Zambian political parties adopt policies that reflect the economic interests of the regions where their support is dominant. The distinct policies that parties adopt can also be placed on a left-right continuum, with some parties promoting social welfare ideas that correspond with policies of leftist or social democratic parties and others promoting ideas that fall more to the centre-right of the spectrum, such as the liberal parties. The Patriotic Front emerged as a party that articulated an anti-elitist and anti-neoliberal agenda in opposition to the implementation of structural adjustment reforms under the MMD that governed from 1991–2011. It instead promoted a leftist pro-poor agenda rooted in normative ideas of statism and ‘Zambianisation’ similar to the socialist political ideology promoted by President Kenneth Kaunda and the United National Independence Party (UNIP) during Zambia’s immediate post-independence era. The PF’s ideological positions were initially popular among low-income urbanites in the two economically strategic provinces, Lusaka and Copperbelt, and in the northern region, where support for the party is strongest. The UPND, on the other hand, articulates a ‘ruralist liberalism’ that prioritises individual economic achievement and self-reliance, drawing support from some rural areas in Zambia, especially Southern and Central Provinces. It is a direct continuation of Zambia’s African National Congress (ANC) led by Harry Nkumbula.

The argument we make builds on the work of Mkandawire (2016) who demonstrated that welfare states in southern Africa were shaped by the colonial state and the ways in which regions were incorporated into the colonial economy. For example, cash crop economies produced economic systems that revolved around the interests of subsistence agriculture and required less assistance from the state. On the other hand, labour reserves produced economies that revolved around the interests of migrant labourers who had moved from the countryside to cities and were more likely to require state social welfare provision to supplement low-wages or to cover periods of unemployment. While Mkandawire concluded that Zambia was a labour reserve economy, we argue that Zambia provides a unique case study of a country that historically incorporated both cash crop and labour reserve economies. This provided opportunities for political parties to mobilise the different regions and the ethnic groups within them using distinct policy appeals (Sishuwa 2021). The labour-reserve economic system dominated the Copperbelt, which attracted labourers who were typically migrants from the northern region (which includes present day Luapula, Muchinga and Northern Provinces) while cash-crops dominated Southern Province and parts of Central Province (Momba 1985). We argue that these prevailing economies in turn shaped the ways in which people from these different regions think about social welfare. Individuals in the Copperbelt and northern regions who relied on remittances and migrant labour were more likely to agree with the

PF's interventionist approach, while wealthy cash crop farmers from the south were more inclined to concur with the UPND's views on self-reliance.

ETHNICITY AND AFRICAN POLITICS

Since the democratic wave of the early 1990s, most African countries have held regular multi-party elections. Scholars of African politics have routinely interrogated whether voters on the continent are motivated by ethnic considerations when electing leaders (Bratton *et al.* 2012; Hoffman & Long 2013). This contrasts with the study of Western societies where voters are believed to vote based on ideological positions. For Western societies, the main party cleavage is generally perceived on a left-right ideological continuum (Lipset & Rokkan 1967). According to Lipset & Rokkan (1967), the conflicting societal interests that emerged in Western societies were often shaped by the extent of industrialisation. By contrast, in African societies where levels of industrial development remain low, African party cleavages are believed to be driven by ethnic differences. Van de Walle & Butler (1999: 15), for example, argue that:

ethno-regional identities play an important role in the creation and differentiation of parties in most countries. For a variety of reasons, few African parties have sought to distinguish themselves through policy stances; cultural identities have been a major, if not the only, factor in differentiating parties.

Much of the focus on ethnicity and voting is informed by the understanding that in multi-ethnic African societies, ethnic identities are not only salient, but are also a source of conflict between members of rival ethnic groups (Horowitz 1985). It is further argued that where societies are deeply divided because of ascriptive affiliations, including ethnicity, such divisions make democracy difficult to practice and produce ethnic-based parties that seek to rule by mobilising ethnic majorities (Horowitz 2014). By implication, African elections, it is contended, are an 'ethnic census' rather than a contestation of programmatic ideas or ideology (Horowitz 1985).

In the last two decades, however, conventional analyses about ethnicity have been interrogated further and even challenged. Cheeseman & Ford (2007: 1) examine 'ethnic voting' across African countries using Afrobarometer data – a public attitude survey carried out in close to 40 African countries. They demonstrate that 'the vast majority of political parties in Africa are not "ethnic parties"'. They show that ruling parties are actually becoming 'increasingly diverse and less ethnically polarised' (Cheeseman & Ford 2007: 2). They attribute this to the 'need for ruling parties to build large coalitions in order to retain power', which is '[encouraging] the development of ethnic political alliances which are becoming increasingly representative of the national population' (Cheeseman & Ford 2007: 2). Scarrit (2006: 235) has arrived at similar conclusions, arguing that, in Zambia, 'few parties receiving their support overwhelmingly from a single ethnic group have emerged, and those parties [that] have had very limited electoral success and have been short lived'.

By implication, political parties also incorporate policies that appeal to regions outside of their traditional strongholds (Horowitz 2022).

In the last decade, debates have emerged linking African politics to programmatic ideas. Elischer (2012) showed that programmatic ideas – as conventionally understood with the left-right cleavage model – do feature in African politics. However, his discussion on programmatic ideas was reduced to studying a few issues: democracy, human rights, corruption and social harmony. These are arguably all valence issues. In order to identify ideological cleavages, it is important to analyse issues that are highly contested. For example, social welfare and redistribution is a contentious field in Latin America (Haggard & Kaufman 2008; Huber & Stephens 2012; Araújo 2021) as well as North America (Skocpol 1995) and Europe (Esping-Andersen 1990), and these contested ideas are often polarised along political party lines. There is an emerging literature that shows there is contestation about social welfare in the African context (Hickey *et al.* 2020) but these debates have rarely extended to debates about party cleavages and ideology.

There have also been debates linking policy issues and ethnic or regional party mobilisation. This includes studies which argue that the main cleavage in African politics is the rural/urban divide (Greene & Rauschenbach 2017). These authors state that ruling parties tend to promote pro-rural policies while opposition parties promote pro-urban policies (Greene & Rauschenbach 2017). However, there are key exceptions to this. For example, the United Party for National Development in Zambia was a pro-rural opposition party (until forming government in 2021) while the then ruling Patriotic Front was pro-urban.

Scholars linking ethnicity, regionalism and policy issues present arguments that demonstrate that incumbent political parties in Africa typically promote policies that target the economic interests of a party president's homeland which include issues such as agricultural subsidies for rural farmers or narrower policies targeted at specific groups of farmers, such as maize farmers in Zambia (Kim 2017). However, such policies have the potential to alienate urban workers and rural non-farmers who may be mobilised by other political parties using policies such as wage reforms or social assistance. We extend this debate and argue that both ruling and opposition parties promote policies that reflect the norms and values associated with the regions or ethnic groups where support for each party is dominant. Moreover, we also argue, with reference to ideas on social assistance and social welfare more broadly, that ruling and opposition parties demonstrate distinct ideas on the same policy issues which reflect the economic interests of voters who belong to regions or ethnic groups where support for a party is dominant.

We conceptualise ethnicity not as a static concept, but as a dynamic one that is rooted in shared identity and history, which necessarily shapes socio-economic interests. In line with scholars such as Mafeje (1971) and Breman (1998), we challenge the conventional ontological approach to African politics which views topics through an analytical lens blurred by an 'ideology of tribalism',

limiting the resulting analyses' explanatory power (Mafeje 1971; Breman 1998). We acknowledge that we are not the first to make this argument and are simply building on the arguments put forth before us.

ZAMBIA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

At independence in 1964, Zambia's political landscape was steered by two competing ideological strands that continue to shape broader ideas about development. The first strand has revolved around normative ideas of statism or strong state intervention, particularly with regard to the copper mining industry. Political parties and leaders that advanced normative ideas about statism typically drew support amongst urban voters in the two economically strategic provinces, Copperbelt and Lusaka. Such leaders were also known to use populist appeals to mobilise electoral support (Sishuwa 2021). Kenneth Kaunda, who led the UNIP government from independence in 1964 until the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1991, emphasised ideas of Zambian nationalism (also referred to as 'Zambianisation') (Money 2019). Kaunda's nationalist ideas were rooted in UNIP's socialist ideology known as *Humanism*, which advocated state ownership of strategic economic sectors such as mining, preference for Zambian nationals in public sector employment, and public provision of essential services such as education, health and public welfare assistance (Noyoo 2021).

The second strand has revolved around agrarian issues and has been dominated by political parties and leaders from the Southern Province, where commercial and subsistence agriculture is the mainstay of the local economy. By independence in 1964, cash crop production was more developed and widespread in Southern Province than any other province (Momba 2007). The economic interests of commercial and individual farmers in the province, contrasted with those of the UNIP government, that favoured an interventionist approach to crop production, including holding down the price of cash crops such as maize, which benefited urban workers (Momba 2007). Therefore, political parties and leaders from Southern Province were more supportive of capitalist ideas regarding the management of the economy. The ANC which was led by Harry Nkumbula (who was from Southern Province) from 1951 until 1972 when it was banned following the creation of a one-party state, favoured liberal economic policies that contrasted with Kaunda's interventionist ideas (Macola 2010).

Historically, there has also been an overlap between the two political strands and ethnic and regional support. Parties that have supported statist ideas and used populist mobilisation strategies have also courted support of ethnic Bembas and other ethnic groups in the three northern region provinces i.e. Luapula, Muchinga and Northern. This was certainly true for Kaunda and UNIP. The forerunner to UNIP was formed in the Copperbelt Province with support among mine workers and trade unions, which drew most of their membership from migrant workers from Bemba speakers in the northern region

(Sishuwa 2016). The labour-sending northern region was itself overwhelmingly rural, low-income and dependent on a form of subsistent crop production known as shifting cultivation (Stromgaard 1985; Boone *et al.* 2022). Most shifting cultivators lived close to the minimum subsistence level to the extent that the monetary resources required for commercial farming were unattainable (Stromgaard 1985: 40). Because of the low subsistence levels, most households in the region were dependent on remittances from kith and kin based on the Copperbelt (Boone *et al.* 2022). Over time, the gradual decline in mining activity and subsequent privatisation of the Copperbelt mines under the MMD changed the nature of the Copperbelt and northern region from labour reserves to a greater emphasis on small-scale agricultural production. This has resulted in the expansion of small-scale maize farming in parts of Northern Province and non-maize subsistence farming in rural Copperbelt and the rest of the northern region (Kim 2017).

Support for UNIP remained limited in Southern and Western Provinces, among ethnic Tonga and Lozi voters respectively, during the early days of UNIP and much of Kaunda's presidency (Macola 2010; Sishuwa 2016). In 1971, Kaunda's Vice President, Simon Kapwepwe, broke away from UNIP and formed the United Progressive Party (UPP). Although the UPP won only one parliamentary seat in its short existence (like the ANC, it was banned in 1972 following the introduction of a one-party state), its leadership consisted mostly of ethnic Bemba speakers (Larmer 2006). Its party structures were also concentrated in the two urban provinces and the northern region (Larmer 2006). Similarly, the ANC leadership and support base revolved around ethnic Tonga speakers in Southern Province. The party also incorporated support of minority ethnic groups and non-Bemba speaking rural provinces such as Western, North-Western and parts of Central (Macola 2010; Sishuwa 2016).

The reintroduction of multiparty democracy and the liberalisation of the Zambian economy in 1991, following the election of Frederick Chiluba and the MMD, united most regions and ethnic groups in the country around a neoliberal development agenda supported by the World Bank and the IMF. This agenda resulted in a limited role of the state in favour of the markets, and the abandonment (or drastic reduction) in state provision of social services, including public welfare assistance (Rakner 2003). However, by the end of the 1990s, the failures of Chiluba's economic reform agenda resulted in the formation of breakaway parties from the MMD that either drew support from distinct ethnic groups or regions or emphasised distinct ideas regarding development. This included both the UPND formed in 1998 by Anderson Mazoka and the PF, formed by Michael Sata in 2001. Despite several members defecting from the party and the subsequent creation of new opposition parties, the MMD would hold on to power for another 10 years before it was replaced by the PF.

It was over the course of the MMD's final decade in power that social assistance became a more central issue in Zambian politics. Between 1999 and

2000, the government, with the help of the European Union, redesigned a colonial-era Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS), which provided in-kind transfers to low-income households (Kabandula & Seekings 2016: 4; Pruce & Hickey 2020). A few years later, in 2002, the government adopted the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) (then known as the Fertiliser Support Programme (FSP)), which provided small-scale farmers with input subsidies. FISP is now the largest social assistance programme in Zambia based on the number of beneficiaries and budgetary allocations (Republic of Zambia 2018).

In 2003/04, a donor-funded pilot project using Social Cash Transfers (SCTs) was introduced. After the completion of the pilot, the SCT programme continued to expand with the help of transnational organisations, despite considerable resistance from the anti-statist MMD-dominated government – especially the then Minister of Finance, Ng’andu Magande (Kabandula & Seekings 2016). The MMD’s opposition to cash transfers boded well for the PF’s pro-poor, statist campaign. The party was able to capitalise on the MMD’s reluctance to expand the SCT programme and use the donor-funded programme to target rural poverty.

POLITICAL PARTY IDEOLOGIES AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Patriotic Front

The PF was formed in 2001 and emerged as Zambia’s largest opposition party after the 2006 elections. Sata first rose to prominence as Member of Parliament for Lusaka’s Kabwata constituency and Governor of Lusaka in the 1980s as a member of UNIP before becoming a senior ranking member of the MMD during its first 10 years in office. When Sata formed PF in 2001, the party adopted an anti-elitist and anti-neoliberal agenda. The party emphasised its opposition to the World Bank and IMF supported structural adjustment programmes, including the privatisation of strategic economic sectors such as copper mining, despite Sata having been a senior MMD leader in the 1990s (Larmer & Fraser 2007; Cheeseman & Hinfelaar 2010; Resnick 2013; Sishuwa 2016).

Sata’s opposition to elitism and neoliberal economic policies despite his long career in Zambian politics and his former association with the MMD, led many scholars of Zambian politics to describe him and the PF as populist (Larmer & Fraser 2007; Resnick 2013; Cheeseman *et al.* 2014; Sishuwa 2016). However, his opposition to market friendly policies and support for statism can be explained by the fact that his politics were shaped during UNIP’s one-party state era. We argue that the PF’s ideology was rooted in normative ideas of pro-poor development and attempts to return to post-independence thinking about statism and ‘Zambianisation’. The PF’s 2011 manifesto described the party in social democratic terms, emphasising that social justice would form the core of its domestic policy (Patriotic Front 2011: 5). These ideas resonated strongly with urban

voters in Lusaka and Copperbelt, who were disillusioned with neoliberal economic policies and the failures of growth under the MMD to translate into a substantive reduction in urban poverty (Larmer 2006).

Sata combined his urban support with ethnic appeals to Bemba speakers by emphasising their exclusion from state and government positions under President Levy Mwanawasa – in power from 2002 until his death in office in 2008 – who was ethnically Lamba and Lenje from rural Copperbelt and Central Province, respectively. Sata further appealed to Bemba speakers by arguing that an anti-corruption drive implemented by the MMD government was targeted at former president Chiluba and his close allies who were predominantly ethnic Bemba speakers (Sishuwa 2016; Banda *et al.* 2020). This claim was significant because Bemba is the largest ethno-language group in Zambia, constituting 41% of the population. In making this claim Sata, who was from Muchinga Province, was demonstrating that he was better placed to advance the interests of Bemba speakers than Mwanawasa. We show below that appeals to the northern region were later expanded to include policy proposals that addressed the economic interests of the region.

The disillusionment with neoliberal economic policies provided an incentive for PF leaders to promote an interventionist ideology which aligned with the electoral interests of urban voters. The interventionist ideas also appealed to voters in the northern region who had previously been dependent on the Copperbelt economy both in terms of employment opportunities and remittances. The three Bemba speaking provinces were also the poorest in the country – ahead only of Western Province – in terms of poverty rates (Kapesa *et al.* 2020: 232). This points to a larger argument about the co-constitutive relationship between ideology and electoral incentives or ‘interests’, which, particularly in the case of Zambia, is strongly regionalised.

As an opposition party from 2001–2011, the PF espoused normative values about development that emphasised a greater role for the state in strategic economic sectors of the economy and in regulating the private sector. The PF did not articulate clear ideological positions on social sectors such as education and health or even on social assistance. Rather, there was a much stronger focus on addressing the concerns of formal sector workers including timely pension payments to retired public sector workers, and labour market reforms to improve employment conditions, especially for workers in foreign-owned enterprises (Patriotic Front 2011). While such policies appealed to urban Zambians, they also resonated with their rural kith and kin who were previously migrant labourers or dependent on remittances. The expectations of most Zambians regarding what the state should provide were shaped by UNIP’s socialist policies that protected the economic interests of urban workers and the rural provinces that were symbiotically connected to the urban economy (Cheeseman *et al.* 2014).

Social welfare did not feature prominently, if at all, during election messaging or party manifestos for the 2001 and 2006 elections. Sata focused on urban poverty and addressed popular social issues that were not regularly addressed

by other political parties (Larmer & Fraser 2007). Sata attacked foreign investors, mainly from China, for abusing their Zambian workforce and for their alleged corrupt relationship with MMD leaders (Helle & Rakner 2012: 10). He also addressed other popular concerns among urban residents such as inadequate housing, disorganised bus stations and a shortage of market stalls for informal traders (Larmer & Fraser 2007). Sata combined his urban messaging with ethnic appeals to Bemba speakers in the northern region, who themselves had strong historical ties to the urban Copperbelt economy (Sishuwa 2016).

In the 2008 presidential by-election, which Sata lost to the MMD candidate by 2%, the PF again campaigned on popular social issues amongst urban dwellers, including Zambia's economic downturn in 2008 (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar 2010). Sata's message focused on rapid inflation which contributed to an increased cost of living. He used effective campaign slogans such as 'For Lower Taxes, More Jobs' and 'More Money in Your Pocket' (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar 2010). Sata's message was popular among mineworkers, informal sector workers and unemployed youth in urban areas (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar 2010).

Social protection more specifically became part of PF's agenda during the 2011 election campaign. The 2011 party manifesto advocated for 'pro-poor economic growth that would benefit poor Zambians in rural villages and poor urban townships' (Patriotic Front 2011: 4). It is also notable that under President Rupiah Banda – who was MMD and republican president from 2008–2011 – the MMD focused its agricultural policies exclusively on support for maize production by distributing maize input subsidies to farmers (Kim 2017: 22). However, maize subsidies disproportionately benefited provinces that were maize producing, mainly Central, Eastern, Northern and Southern. Non-maize farmers in rural Copperbelt, Luapula and other provinces were disadvantaged by the MMD's agricultural policies which allowed the PF to incorporate non-maize farmers into its coalition (Kim 2017: 22). Senior PF leaders were also opposed to the MMD's farm input subsidy programme arguing that subsidised inputs did not benefit the poorest farmers but middle-scale politically connected farmers in MMD strongholds instead (Chenda 2015 Int.; Scott 2015 Int.). As part of its response to address the challenges associated with maize subsidies and to incorporate non-maize farmers into its coalition, the PF promoted social cash transfer programmes as an alternative means of redistributing wealth from the state to low-income citizens.

During the PF's first three years in office with Michael Sata as president, major reforms were made to expand the cash transfer programme as part of the party's agenda to implement pro-poor reforms. Two-thirds of the districts that were added to the national cash transfer programme by Sata's administration were in rural Bemba speaking provinces, among Sata's co-ethnics (Siachiwena 2016). The districts in these provinces also accounted for some of the highest poverty rates in the country, demonstrating an overlap between cash transfers as a policy instrument and the economic interests of the beneficiaries (Siachiwena 2016). When Sata died in October 2014, he was replaced by

Edgar Lungu who won a presidential by-election in January 2015 as the PF candidate. Under Lungu (whose ethnic roots are among the Nyanja of Eastern Province), the PF continued to support a pro-poor agenda but with a shift in policy preference. Although cash transfers were still implemented by the government, the new administration focused more on support for empowerment programmes which took the form of interest-free loans to informal economy workers in urban provinces and the northern region, where PF support was strongest. Lungu's administration also poured more funds into existing empowerment programmes targeting women in the informal economy and unemployed youth, especially in urban areas (Siachiwena 2017). Lungu's political background provides some explanation for this shift in policy preferences. He was born and raised on the Copperbelt and traced his political career to Lusaka's Chawama constituency which covers a large urban slum. Lungu contested and lost the Chawama parliamentary seat as an independent in 1996 and PF member in 2001, before winning the seat for the PF in 2011. This background exposed Lungu to the economic interests of low-income and urban informal economy workers who dominate the populations of both Chawama and Lusaka.

By the end of Sata's presidency in 2014, the PF's political ideology was less focused on Zambian nationalism. The party's normative ideas regarding neo-liberal economic policies and anti-elitism that became popular from 2001–2011, were not expressed in party documents or speeches by party leaders such as the president in subsequent elections. Nonetheless, the PF's 2016 and 2021 manifestos demonstrated that the party remained committed to leftist or social democratic ideas including pro-poor development. The party continued to view the state as essential for achieving national development and addressing social welfare including through the implementation of programmes such as social cash transfers for the rural poor and empowerment funds for urban informal economy workers (Patriotic Front 2016).

The United Party for National Development

Since the United Party for National Development's inception in 1998, the party has articulated what has previously been defined as a 'liberal-democratic, ruralist' ideology (Macola 2010; Hallink 2019). The party built upon the tradition of the country's first nationalist party – the ANC – led by Harry Nkumbula. The ANC drew most of its support from Southern Province before joining UNIP in the 1970s after Kenneth Kaunda's declaration of a one-party state (Macola 2010; Beardsworth 2020). The ANC pushed for limited state intervention and welcomed individual economic achievement (Beardsworth 2020). This ideological approach resonated specifically with ethnic Tongas in Southern Province given the province's history of wealthy cash crop farmers dating back to the colonial period (Momba 1985). Momba (1985) argues that farmers in Zambia can be broken down into three categories: rich commercial or cash crop farmers; medium-scale farmers; and small-scale farmers who farm

for subsistence only. At independence, Southern Province was characterised by all three types, but the wealthy cash crop farmers had become the dominant political class, as medium-scale and subsistence farmers aspired to be like them (Momba 2007). Central Province also had wealthy cash crop production but not to the same scale as in Southern Province. Western Province and North-Western Province are instead dominated by medium-scale and subsistence farmers. As Mkandawire (2016) argues, the ability of cash crop farmers to maintain access to their own land resulted in fewer demands for public social welfare provision. This is in contrast to obvious labour reserve economies such as South Africa, where subsistence farming became increasingly scarce and greater state interventions in public welfare provision were required (although, in the South African case, were racially exclusive and disproportionately benefitted white South Africans). The ethnic groups from Western¹ and North-Western² provinces also have long-held grievances on matters relating to representation and recognition, and have therefore aligned themselves electorally with Tonga, and not the Bemba and Nyanja (from Eastern Province) who have dominated political power since Zambia's independence (Gadjanova 2017).

In forming the UPND, the party's founders sought to build on the ANC's legacy and give political life to the distinctive culture of Southern Province. Jack Mwiimbu, who was the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament from 2016–2021, the UPND's longest serving MP (since 2001), and Minister of Home Affairs (since 2021), explained that:

Nkumbula's roots are individualistic in nature ... [in Southern Province] each person looks after himself. The government doesn't give everyone everything. The government must provide an enabling environment to sell produce ... Nkumbula was capitalist in nature because of his upbringing in Southern Province. The ANC had to be revived through a new form. (Mwiimbu 2019 Int.)

The importance of individual economic achievement and limited state intervention is specifically highlighted in the party's approach to social protection. Given the normative importance of individual economic achievement to the UPND, the party has historically promoted social policy interventions that are perceived to promote self-reliance. The party prioritises the provision of health-care and education and the use of agricultural subsidies due to the perception that all three interventions can help individuals to become self-reliant. In opposition, UPND party leaders expressed concern that Zambia's cash transfer would result in increased dependency on the government and have a negative impact on the promotion of self-reliance.

There is a striking continuity in the UPND's ideological outlook from the party's inception until the time of writing. The ideological basis of the party did not change after the death of Anderson Mazoka and the succession of Hakainde Hichilema. The key norms and values that characterise the UPND's articulation of a ruralist liberalism are equally prominent throughout both leaderships. This is seen not only in the language of party manifestos but also in the way that national party leaders articulate the party's ideological outlook.

The UPND first defined its ruralist liberalism with the party's founding constitution. The constitution outlined three core principles that would guide the party's ideological outlook in all subsequent elections: economic development as a means of individual self-reliance and emancipation through good economic policies, health and education, and the promotion of agriculture; good governance and the protection of civil liberties and other negative freedoms; and national unity. These principles were debated amongst the party's top leadership and were said to be influenced by the ideological beliefs of the then leader, Anderson Mazoka (Lungu 2019 Int.). The constitution emphasised the importance of economic and social development and the promotion of socio-economic rights.

Mazoka led the party for a total of eight years (1998–2006) but was only the leader of the party for one general election in 2001. The UPND performed well in the 2001 election, becoming the country's official opposition to the MMD after losing by a fraction of the vote (Beardsworth 2020). Months before the 2006 election, Mazoka passed away and the party had to nominate a new leader. Mazoka was succeeded by Hichilema (often referred to as 'HH'), an ethnic Tonga from Southern Province who made his fortune through his business successes. Becoming party president only months before the general election, HH had little time to campaign and played only a small role in shaping the party's election campaign.

The manifesto for the 2006 campaign reiterated the three core values first articulated in the 2001 constitution (UPND 2001). The mission statement emphasised that 'The UPND seeks to foster accelerated national development through the mobilisation and sustainable use of the available and potential human and natural resources for the empowerment of every Zambian citizen' (UPND 2006: 3). The document then included an exhaustive list of 32 issue areas, with economic development, agriculture, health, education and good governance featuring as some of the key priorities. The section on the economy emphasised the need to promote economic development in order to ensure all Zambian citizens can meet their basic needs. The document acknowledged the potential of agriculture for economic growth and discussed the importance of empowering small-scale farmers. Health and education were also highlighted as essential components of economic development.

Social protection was also an important component of the 2006 manifesto. The UPND's approach to social protection was heavily focused on empowerment and providing individuals with the tools to maximise their well-being through the market rather than through reliance on the state, or 'dependency'. This would be done through the provision of free health-care and education for all low-income children and again, agricultural inputs (UPND 2006).

The succession of another ethnic Tonga as the UPND leader led to charges of 'tribalism' and had a dramatic impact on the UPND's success in the 2006 election (Beardsworth 2020). After nearly winning the 2001 election, the UPND was replaced by the PF as the official opposition party in the 2006 election. It would not be until the 2015 election that the UPND would reclaim its position

as the official opposition and not until 2021 that it formed a government. Following the death of Michael Sata in 2014, a by-election was called with only a few months to prepare. Despite having little time to campaign, the UPND's share of the vote dramatically increased, securing the party's place as the official opposition.

In 2016, another general election was held. The UPND's platform centred the importance of job creation as well as the importance of agriculture, education and health (UPND 2016). The platform pointed to UPND's conviction in a social welfare approach that promotes self-reliance and individual economic achievement.

The importance of self-reliance and individual economic achievement are evident over 20 years later in the ways in which members of the party's national executive justify their support for their party's leader. In interviews with various UPND leaders, individuals spoke about HH's success in business and reminisced about Mazoka's similar achievements. Beyond being impressed by their leaders' economic success, members of the national executive emphasised the fact that because these individuals had made their money in the private sector (and not through involvement in the public sector), they could trust their intentions for wanting to be presidential candidates. In the UPND's 20th Anniversary document, HH is referred to as one of the most 'morally upright politician[s] Zambia has produced since independence' (UPND 2018). Interviews with UPND members suggest that this moral uprightness is largely attributed to individual economic achievement.

Within the first year of the UPND forming the government, the party implemented some of its key policies. In 2022 the party abolished fees charged at public primary and secondary schools and recruited 30,000 teachers and over 11,000 health workers (Musokotwane 2021). The UPND also massively expanded the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to increase resources aimed at addressing the needs of (mostly) rural communities, including empowerment funds for local businesses and bursaries for deserving students located in the local communities (Musokotwane 2021). These policies are consistent with the UPND's support for a liberal economic ideology and programmes that promote self-reliance while also channelling more resources to rural areas including those where support for UPND is strongest. This, again, demonstrates the co-constitutive relationship between ideology (and policies) and economic interests of regions and the ethnic groups within them. In practice, the UPND has also expanded the provision of social cash transfers despite party leaders previously expressing opposition to 'handouts'. It is very likely that UPND leaders recognise that retrenching cash transfers could affect support for the party in the poorest parts of the country, especially the northern region.

CONCLUSION

This paper challenges the common assumption that African political parties do not promote programmatic ideas, or that they do not offer distinct policy

proposals on the same issues because of the salience of ethnicity. This contrasts with debates about political parties in advanced industrial societies that fit onto a left-right continuum which separates parties that derive support from labour and those from organised business. The post-structural adjustment era has provided incentives for political parties to promote distinct policy solutions to contentious issues such as social welfare. While African parties may derive most of their support from specific regions and ethnic groups, such support is not devoid of ideological positions. Rather, political parties adopt ideological positions on issues such as social welfare that reflect the economic interests of regions where support for a party is dominant. Those interests, we argue, are shaped by the distinct political histories and geographies of specific regions and the ethnic groups within them.

Both the PF and UPND are very clear about the importance of promoting socio-economic development. The PF articulates a more statist and pro-poor ideological outlook that was initially defined against the neoliberalism of the previous governing party, the MMD. It was also influenced by Sata's political background that was shaped during Zambia's immediate post-independence era and UNIP's one party rule, which emphasised socialist ideas. Under Sata, the PF's political ideology was rooted in the perceived importance of pro-poor economic growth and post-independence normative ideas about 'Zambianisation' and statism. These ideas are consistent with those promoted by leftist parties in advanced industrialised societies that address the interests of the working class. After the election of Lungu, the party's ideological outlook no longer focused on 'Zambianisation', anti-elitism or an anti-neoliberal agenda. However, the PF continued to regard the state as the most important actor for achieving pro-poor development and providing social welfare for the poorest citizens. More than 20 years after PF was formed, it still derives most of its support from the two urban provinces i.e. Copperbelt and Lusaka, and the three provinces in the northern region. The Copperbelt and the northern region were historically connected by patterns of migration to the mines. Mineworkers on the Copperbelt had expectations of state-provided social services while their rural kith and kin were dependent on remittances and subsistence agriculture. This conditioned both regions to embrace Kaunda's socialist ideas of statism, an ideological position that the PF sought to recreate.

The UPND, by contrast, emulates the opposite approach of the PF. Despite heavy criticism of the MMD's excessively neoliberal governance, the UPND has continued to articulate its ideological outlook in terms of limited state intervention. It supports interventions that are thought to promote self-reliance, especially agricultural input subsidies, health-care and education, and this has continued in their first year as the governing party. We emphasised the historical and regional roots of these ideologies, with the PF's pro-poor statism being the strongest in Lusaka and the Copperbelt while the UPND's ruralist liberalism resonates with individuals in Southern and Central Provinces, while also incorporating the support of North-Western and Western Provinces by addressing

issues specific to those regions and the ethnic groups that dominate them. We demonstrate that these economic interests were shaped by the ways in which the regions were incorporated into the colonial economy (Mkandawire 2016). We build on Mkandawire's (2016) work by demonstrating that Zambia is better understood not only as a labour reserve economy but also as a cash crop economy. The labour reserve economy in the Copperbelt and the northern region and the cash crop economy in Southern and Central Provinces continue to inform thinking about social welfare in contemporary Zambia.

The existing literature's treatment of ethnic groups as static categories of identity misses the unique political, socio-cultural and economic histories that may bind members of the same ethnic group together along similar political lines. Zambia's leading political parties clearly articulate distinct norms and values about the role of the government and the provision of social assistance which can be situated in the distinct regions and histories where parties draw the bulk of their support (Momba 1985; Mkandawire 2016). Ethnicity, therefore, does not matter in and of itself but is associated with particular economic interests that are informed by regional histories. Future studies on African politics must contextualise the apparent salience of ethnicity when examining political cleavages in African contexts to foster more meaningful understandings of African politics. Connected to this is the assertion that the importance of ethnicity does not preclude the presence of ideological cleavages. We conclude that viewing Western politics on a left-right spectrum while viewing African politics in terms of ethnic and urban/rural cleavages is far too simplistic. The ideological spectrum observed in the West can still provide useful insights into African politics.

NOTES

1. Lozi speakers have long demanded for greater autonomy within the Zambian state based on a pre-independence agreement that guaranteed the Lozi king a high level of local autonomy over the Lozi homeland known as Barotseland. In 1969, Kaunda rescinded the agreement and placed the Lozi homeland under central government control, a matter that has been a salient concern for the Barotse Royal Establishment and Lozi speakers to the present day ((Gadjanova 2017: 501).

2. 'Between the mid-1970s and early 1980s, Adamson Mushala [an ethnic Lunda from North Western province] led the only significant internal armed rebellion against the post-colonial Zambian state ... Mushala briefly advanced an alternative vision of independent Zambia based on revitalized chiefly authority, capitalist free enterprise, and Western democratic values' (Larmer & Macola 2007: 471–3).

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