IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL PROTECTION IN COMPETITIVE CLIENTELIST POLITICAL SETTLEMENTS: A CASE STUDY OF THE LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT AGAINST POVERTY (LEAP) PROGRAMME IN GHANA

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, and will not be, in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature………………………………………………………………….

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SUMMARY

Since the early 2000s, transnational actors promoted cash transfer schemes as solutions to extreme poverty in the global south. In the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region, three transnational actors, the World Bank, DFID[1] and UNICEF were instrumental in persuading governments to adopt and implement cash transfer programmes. Research on the politics of social protection policy has to date focused primarily on the promotion and adoption of cash transfers in southern and eastern African countries with dominant-type political settlements. However, not much attention has been given to why and how cash transfers have been adopted and implemented in western African countries with competitive clientelist political settlements. This thesis addresses this knowledge gap, using the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme in Ghana as a case study.

Employing a qualitative case study design, the study examines the influence of domestic and transnational politics on the implementation of the LEAP programme. Specifically, three research questions guide this study. First, how have the ideas and interests of transnational actors influenced the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme? Second, how do local government actors and institutions in Ghana's competitive political setting impact on the implementation and expansion of LEAP? Third, how does Ghana's competitive democratic politics drive implementation and expansion strategies of LEAP?

Using Lavers and Hickey's Adapted Political Settlements framework, the study finds that the programmatic ideas and organisational interests of the WB, DFID and UNICEF were instrumental in the design and strategy for implementing Ghana's LEAP. However, the political interests of domestic elites exerted as much influence especially in how the programme expanded, often in unintended ways. The interests of political elites were instrumental in determining which districts the LEAP expanded to and who was targeted.

The study makes three contributions to the literature on political settlements and its intersection with social protection. First, an empirical contribution documenting how transnational and domestic politics shape the implementation of social protection in the context of competitive clientelist political settlements. Second, a theoretical contribution, in identifying how socio-cultural values and norms play a key role in shaping targeting decisions at the local government level. Third, a methodological contribution by using a multi-level data collection and analytical strategy to analyse the politics of implementing social protection. The thesis concludes with implications for redesigning social protection and recommendations for future research.

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[1] DFID is now integrated into a new department called the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

List of Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
APSF	Adapted Political Settlement Framework
BFP	Bolsa Familia Programme
CCTs	Conditional Cash Transfers
CFP	Community Focal Person
CLIC	Community LEAP Implementation Committee
CPP	Convention People's Party
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CTM	Common Targeting Mechanism
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFID	Department for International Development
DLIC	District LEAP Implementation Committee
DSWO	District Social Welfare Officer
EC	Education Capitation Grants
ERP	Economic Recovery Reform
FSUEB	Free School Uniform and Exercise Books
GHIS	Ghana Health Insurance Scheme
GOG	Government of Ghana
GSF	Ghana School Feeding Programme
GSOP	Ghana Social Opportunities Project
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPC	International Poverty Centre
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
LIPW	Labour Intensive Public Works Programme
LMS	LEAP Management Secretariat
MDBS	Multi-Donor Budget Support

MCE   Metropolitan/Municipal Chief Executive

MDG   Millennium Development Goal

MESW   Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare

MMDCE   Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executive

MMYE   Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment

MOGCSP   Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection

NDC   National Democratic Congress

NDPC   National Development Planning Commission

NLC   National Liberation Council

NPP   New Patriotic Party

NRC   National Redemption Council

NSPS   National Social Protection Strategy

OFY   Operation Feed Yourself

OVC   Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

PAMSCAD   Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment

PNDC   Provisional National Defence Council

PP   Progress Party

PRSP I   Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (Part 1)

PRSP II   Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (Part 2)

PSIA   Poverty and Social Impact Assessments

PSNP   Productive Safety Net Programme

PSSN   Productive Social Safety Net

SAGE   Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment

SAP   Structural Adjustment Programme

SSA   Sub-Saharan Africa

TNAs   Transnational Actors

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

V&SWG   Vulnerability and Social Exclusion Sector Working Group

VUP   Vision Umurenge Programme

WB   World Bank

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Chapter 1   Introduction, background and rationale for study

Introduction

Since the late 1990s, social protection, described as targeted state interventions in response to unacceptable levels of vulnerability and deprivation (Norton, Conway and Foster, 2001), has become an important policy agenda in the global south.

The effects of droughts on food consumption (Ellis, Devereux and White, 2009) and inadequate human capital to move vulnerable households out of poverty (Babajanian, Hagen-Zanker and Holmes, 2014) in the global south, have progressively provided grounds for governments to implement social protection programmes. Since its implementation in Ghana, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme has become a lifeline for many beneficiaries, as the following narratives indicate.

Zinabu, a widow in the Upper East region[2] of Ghana, recounted:

> *'Life was unbearable after I lost my husband. I relied on the benevolence of the community chief and support of community members for survival, until I became a beneficiary of LEAP. I am now able to take good care of my children, send them to school and take care of their health needs. LEAP has also given me the opportunity to generate a livelihood in pig-rearing. I thank the government for giving me this opportunity'* (LEAP, 2016).

Similarly, severely disabled Awenuma, in the same region, described the challenges she faced prior to being enrolled on the LEAP programme.

> *'My sister and I had no meaningful source of income and so we were unable to have regular meals. But since enrolling on the LEAP, the grant has enabled us to meet daily food needs, provided education opportunities for my sister and I have been able to enrol on a dress making apprenticeship course'* (LEAP, 2016).

The life-changing experiences of Zinabu and Awenuma show the importance of the LEAP programme to the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals and demonstrate that, extending LEAP to many vulnerable households in the poorest communities of Ghana could potentially reduce the risk of hunger and over time provide livelihood opportunities to enable households to exit extreme poverty. However, as this thesis will show, the implementation of such a targeted

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[2] The Upper East region is one of the poorest regions in Ghana. It is also home to the highest number of LEAP beneficiary households in Ghana (Hamel, 2018).

programme in a democratically competitive environment in which multiple actors, including transnational actors[3] (TNAs), are actively involved is not without its challenges (Thomas and Grindle, 1990). It raises the stakes on exertion of control over implementation and risks the use of the programme for unintended purposes. Transnational ideas and interests as well as domestic political elites' interests and agendas become important in shaping decisions on programme design, implementation and subsequent expansion.

1.2 Background to the study

In 2008, the World Bank (WB), UK's Department for International Development (DFID)[4] and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) persuaded the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government in Ghana to introduce a cash transfer programme targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable households in Ghana (Foli, 2016; NDPC, 2009). The LEAP programme emerged as a policy alternative to growth-enhancing and broad poverty alleviation programmes which previously had failed to reduce extreme poverty and inequality in Ghana (Debrah, 2013; Foli, 2016; NDPC, 2008).

The WB's recommendation came after a Poverty and Social Impact Assessment (PSIA)[5] study indicated the inadequacy of existing poverty alleviation programmes to lift vulnerable populations out of poverty (Foli, 2016; MMYE, 2007). Cash transfers instead of in-kind transfers were recommended as the main mechanism of social assistance based on the belief that the former had achieved greater impact in reducing extreme poverty and inequality in low-income countries, particularly in Brazil (Foli, 2016; MMYE, 2007). This was strongly supported by DFID and UNICEF, both of which had a history of promoting social cash transfers in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region (Foli, 2016; Hickey and Seekings, 2017).

Although cash transfers for poverty reduction were entirely new to the social protection discourse in Ghana, political elites of the NPP government embraced the concept after attending conferences, workshops and study tours organised and sponsored by DFID and UNICEF about cash transfer experiences in low-income countries (Foli, 2016a). This culminated in the introduction of the LEAP cash transfer programme, which was designed with the assistance of technical experts from Brazil and Mexico (Foli, 2016; MMYE, 2007), and which had two main

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[3] International policy actors who influence social welfare and social protection across borders. They include international organisations and donor agencies such as the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation.

[4] DFID is now integrated into a new department of the government of United Kingdom called the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

[5] Studies that assess the distributional and social impacts of policy reforms on the well-being of different groups of the population, particularly on the poor and most vulnerable (World Bank, 2015)

objectives. First, to respond to the short-term consumption needs of households in extreme poverty through the provision of regular cash grants. Second, to link targeted households to existing social services in ways that enabled them to move permanently out of extreme poverty (Abane, 2017; Debrah, 2013; Foli, 2016).

The LEAP cash transfer programme was first piloted in 2008 under the administration of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government just weeks before the 2008 national elections in Ghana (Foli, 2016). The initial pilot implementation reached 1,645 households in 21 districts (Abane, 2017; Debrah, 2013; Foli, 2016). Following the electoral victory of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party in the national elections, LEAP continued its implementation with the programme reaching a further 72,000 extreme poor households in 100 districts by the end of NDC's first term in office in 2012 (DFID Ghana, 2013). By the end of the NDC's second term in office, LEAP had expanded to an additional 20,000 households, for a total of 92,000 extreme poor households in 144 districts out of a total of 216 districts in Ghana (Foli, 2016a).

1.3   Research problem and questions

When I decided to research the LEAP programme, its implementation and further expansion by NPP and NDC governments of a cash transfer programme pushed by TNAs aroused my interest.

I was particularly interested in understanding why and how three TNAs actively promoted a cash transfer programme and used 'soft power' mechanisms to gain support from domestic political elites in Ghana. I was also intrigued by the active involvement of the TNAs in the design of the programme and wanted to understand why these three TNAs aimed to replicate a targeted model of poverty reduction from a global south country like Brazil in Ghana.

It seemed from reading the literature that there was a close alignment of the overall goal of the LEAP programme with the organisational goals of the three TNAs, although each had adopted a slightly different approach in meeting the programme's goal (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). The WB's approach was to use regular cash grants in response to short-term needs of extreme poor households, including consumption, but placed emphasis on the development of skills to enable them to move out of poverty. As a United Nations agency which advocates welfare provisioning as a basic human right, UNICEF focused on assisting governments in improving the delivery of social services like healthcare to enhance the welfare of the most disadvantaged children and their families (UNICEF, 2019). DFID, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of supporting low-income and disadvantaged households with small but regular cash grants without the need to comply with specified actions as was the policy of the UK's Labour

government at the time (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). What I was puzzled by was that, despite what could be described as differences in ideas among the three TNAs, they collaborated to encourage and support the NPP government in adopting a new social protection programme that was consistent with their organisational interests.

Another issue of interest was how a new social protection programme proposed by the WB as an alternative to poverty reduction programmes was so effortlessly adopted. Given the active role played by political elites in the NPP government in conceptualising and embracing the new programme, I was interested in understanding whether their role in the adoption process was simply a passive one, or whether they saw in it, at a deeper level, an opportunity to further their political interests. The NPP government showed no resistance to the recommendation of the WB to implement an entirely new social protection programme which directly offered cash grants to the poorest households, even though it was a liberal democratic government more inclined towards the use of liberal market policies to support a poverty reduction agenda (Ayee, 2017; Grebe, 2017). It enthusiastically embraced, adopted, and implemented a new form of social assistance programme which, on the face of it, seemed inconsistent with its ideological leanings. This heightened my interest in the topic of this thesis.

In addition, why did an opposition government significantly expand the LEAP when it took over the reins of power from the incumbent government? The NDC government, which was in opposition at the time of LEAP's launch, gained political power after the 2008 elections and continued to implement LEAP, although it had criticised the NPP government for using LEAP as a ploy to buy votes to retain power (Public Agenda, 2008). Like the NPP government, NDC also worked closely with the three TNAs to expand LEAP to new districts and communities. As a social democratic political party, the NDC is seen as a party which prioritises the welfare of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society (Ayee, 2017; Grebe, 2017). Thus, it could be argued that its interests were much more aligned than the NPP's with the objectives of LEAP.

What further fed my curiosity was why the NDC chose specific electoral periods during which to expand LEAP, in the same way as the NPP had in the programme's pilot implementation. This raised questions about whether the choices it made were driven more by political interests than by needs on the ground. For the two opposing political parties, the LEAP programme appeared to have become part of a game of 'political football' played to gain political advantage over each other. I was therefore also interested in the interests of national actors, specifically the NDC and NPP elites, and why both governments used the same local government actors and institutions

to expand the LEAP programme to vulnerable households. This also suggested that the TNAs' interests were not the only interests driving the implementation and expansion of LEAP.

In terms of expansion of the programme, a critical issue of interest was whether and how TNA support for the LEAP programme changed or remained the same as LEAP expanded under different political administrations. These issues were worth researching to understand how, in Ghana's competitive democratic political environment, TNA ideas and interests as well as domestic political elites' interests play out and influence the implementation of the LEAP cash transfer programme. Thus, the overarching research question I investigated in this study was:

How have transnational and domestic politics shaped the implementation of the LEAP programme in Ghana?

To address this main question, I posed three sub-questions.

Research question one:

How have the ideas and interests of transnational actors shaped the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme?

To answer this question, I explore how the ideas and interests of the WB, DFID and UNICEF have shaped the design and implementation of LEAP under two ideologically different governments.

*Research question two***:**

How does Ghana's competitive democratic politics drive the expansion strategies of LEAP?

This question focuses on how Ghana's competitive clientelist settlement, characterised by intense and constant competition for power between the NPP and NDC, has influenced the expansion strategies of NPP and NDC elites.

*Research question three***:**

How do local government institutions and actors in Ghana's competitive political setting impact the expansion of LEAP?

This question investigates how Ghana's local government system and powerful actors within local government shape the expansion of LEAP as political power has alternated between NDC and NPP governments.

1.4   Motivation for study

My interest in this topic was driven by two factors. The first was what I came to see as a gap in the existing literature on political settlements and its intersection with social protection. Most

research to date focused primarily on the promotion and adoption of cash transfers in southern and eastern African countries, where domestic politics is characterised by the dominance of a political party or political leader. For example, Hickey and Bukenya (2016) demonstrated how the WB and DFID promoted cash transfers in Uganda and how these were adopted by political elites to design a social assistance programme for elderly and labour-constrained households[6]. Similarly, Lavers (2016b) explained how the WB and DFID promoted direct income support grants and cash-for-work programmes[7] for extremely impoverished and labour-constrained households in Rwanda. These two cases exemplify cash transfer promotion and adoption experiences in east African countries that exhibit the characteristics of dominant party-political settlements.

While research in such contexts abounded in the literature, little was known about the politics of implementing cash transfers in contexts of competitive clientelism where domestic politics is characterised by intense competition for power between political parties. Ghana provided a unique opportunity to explore and fill this gap.

The second driving factor was an analytical gap. The use of a case study design utilising a multilevel analytical strategy to analyse data on implementation of cash transfer programmes was also rare. Previous studies focusing on the politics of promotion and adoption of cash transfers more commonly employed a process tracing methodology to explore the adoption process at a single/national level of governance (see Hickey and Bukenya, 2016; Lavers, 2016a; Lavers, 2016b). In the most recent literature on the politics of adoption of the LEAP programme in Ghana, Abdulai (2020) explored adoption at the national level and concentrated on issues such as the influence of donor finance. Although Abdulai (2020) discussed some implementation issues, he limited the discussion to policy issues such as the employment of technical assistance and its impact on the implementation of LEAP. He did not analyse the implementation of LEAP at the subnational or local government levels. In this study, I argue that analysing the implementation experiences of key actors at different levels of governance has the potential to provide deep insights into how political influences at different levels of governance work to explain the implementation and expansion of social protection.

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[6] The social assistance programme in Uganda comprised a direct income support grant for two groups of vulnerable households: persons aged 65 years and above and extremely vulnerable families that lacked labour capacity.

[7] A cash-for-work programme involves the payment of a wage (in cash or food), often but not always provided by the state, in return for the provision of labour. The objective(s) can either be to alleviate poverty or to enhance employment (Carter *et al.*, 2019).

The multilevel implementation of LEAP is analysed with attention to the political context out of which LEAP emerged, using Lavers and Hickey's Adapted Political Settlement framework (APSF), an analytical tool which combines transnational factors with domestic politics to explain the uptake of social protection.

1.5 Significance of the study

It is my expectation that the findings of this study will add to knowledge on the politics of social protection in two ways. First, regarding the implementation of social protection in competitive democratic contexts where TNAs are actively involved, a broad understanding of the prevailing political settlement and how the underlying interests of domestic elites interact with TNAs' interests to shape implementation will provide deep insights into not only the influence of TNAs on implementation but also the limits of this influence on the outcome of implementation.

Second, this study will make a unique methodological contribution to the approach employed in analysing data on the politics of implementing social protection. As I noted earlier, in section 1.4, multi-level analysis of data in a competitive political environment where implementation is carried out by elected governments at different levels of governance will provide deep insights into the complexities of social protection implementation and expansion.

1.6 Thesis structure

Including this chapter, this thesis is comprised of 8 chapters.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of social protection provisioning by governments in Ghana. It highlights domestic and global political developments which laid the foundation for the introduction of the LEAP programme. Significant developments following the adoption of Ghana's fourth republican constitution, including the emergence of a de facto two-party political system, Ghana's prevailing political settlement and the institutionalisation of local government systems, are discussed.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the politics of social protection and of political settlements and its intersections with social protection. It problematises issues relating to the politics of social protection in low-income countries in the West African sub-region and in Ghana more specifically. Chapter 3 also presents the conceptual framework which guides this study.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and research methods employed in this study. It includes discussion of data collection and data analysis methods and of the validity and reliability of

findings. Reflections on my positionality as an insider and an outsider regarding the Ghanaian political culture is also discussed.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the empirical chapters of this study. Chapter 5 focuses on the role of transnational actors in the implementation of the LEAP programme and on the limits of their influence. Chapter 6 emphasises the role of Ghana's political settlement in expanding LEAP. Chapter 7 examines the expansion of LEAP at the local government level. It demonstrates how Ghana's local government system and powerful actors within the local government direct the expansion of LEAP. Using the multilevel analytical strategy and guided by Lavers and Hickey's APSF, each of the empirical chapters answers one of the three research questions outlined in section 1.3.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter. It discusses the main research findings in relation to the existing literature and the conceptual framework utilised in the study. It considers implications for redesigning implementation and discusses the contribution of the study to the broader literature.

Chapter 2   A historical overview of social protection provisioning in Ghana

Chapter purpose and structure

In chapter 1, I introduced the main topic of interest in this study, the politics of implementing social protection in a competitive democratic context, using the LEAP programme in Ghana as a case study. In this chapter, I provide a historical overview of social protection provisioning in Ghana, with a focus on the political and macroeconomic developments which laid the foundation for democratic politics from which the LEAP programme emerged. This contextual information will provide the reader who is unfamiliar with Ghana's social protection landscape a sense of the political and macroeconomic developments which led to the introduction of LEAP. It will also help to inform discussions in subsequent chapters.

The chapter broadly discusses social protection provisioning in three political periods. It highlights the political and macroeconomic developments of the era, their effects on poor households and subsequent responses by governments. It comprises four main sections, beginning in section 2.1 with a discussion of social protection in the early independence era and the period of military rule. Next is a discussion of social protection in the pre-democratic era in section 2.2. This is followed in section 2.3 by a discussion of social protection in the democratic era. In this section, I pay attention to the domestic and global developments of the era, including the introduction of multi-party politics and a transnational poverty reduction agenda which culminated in the adoption of a cash transfer programme named LEAP. In section 2.4, I summarise the key issues emphasised in the chapter and conclude the chapter.

2.1   Social protection in the early independence era and the era of military rule: 1959- 1975

The early independence era and the period of military rule in Ghana spanned over twenty years and featured six governments, five of which were military regimes with a short period of civilian rule (Berry, 1995; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). For the purposes of this study however, I focus on three governments, one civilian and two military, which governed over a sixteen-year period. Both civilian and military governments made efforts to improve Ghana's macroeconomic performance but did not introduce social protection policies or targeted programmes to address welfare concerns of the poorest households. At the time, ruling governments' incentive to tackle poverty was influenced much more by political priorities and ideology (Luiz, 2013), which did not particularly identify the poorest households or address their particular welfare concerns. In addition, this period is significant for a gradual decline in macroeconomic performance

indicators, an increasing risk of hunger and poverty among vulnerable populations and a reliance on informal social protection programmes administered by non-state actors.

2.1.1 Political and macroeconomic developments and effects on poor households

Following the declaration of independence[8] from British colonial rule, the Convention People's Party (CPP), led by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, moved towards a one-party state, with the argument that political pluralism or multi-party regimes were divisive and undermined economic and social progress (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Widner, 1993). Nkrumah's CPP government centralised political power and also embraced strong socialist ideology in an attempt to move away from colonial imposition of Western political and economic models of development (Grebe, 2015; Grebe, 2017).

Nkrumah inherited a relatively stable economy characterised by reasonable growth in the cocoa and mining sectors and a well-developed infrastructure including ports and harbours to serve the export trade (Berry, 1995). Nonetheless, he also inherited the effects of a growing development gap between the northern and southern parts of Ghana left by the British Colonial administration (Fosu and Aryeetey, 2008). To strengthen the economy and reduce growing unemployment caused by north to south migration, Nkrumah diversified Ghana's economy from a primarily agricultural economy to a mixed agricultural-industrial one (Berry, 1995). His strategy was based on the idea that economic growth and development would only result from industrialization and through surplus from the agricultural sector including from cocoa (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). Nkrumah thus adopted an import-substitution industrialisation strategy (ISI) and established industries that produced import substitutes for the mining and cocoa sectors[9] (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016).

Guided by his socialist ideology, Nkrumah ensured that the state's revenue generated from cocoa exports was used to provide essential services such as healthcare and basic education for the benefit of *all* (my emphasis added) Ghanaians (Oduro, 2010). There was no attempt to target the poorest households with services which would improve their wellbeing, although issues of vulnerability to extreme poverty were not uncommon at the time. In terms of macroeconomic performance, Nkrumah's strategy achieved little success. Falling cocoa prices on the international market meant that the cocoa industry failed to generate export revenue for

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[8] Gold Coast was renamed Ghana after gaining independence from British rule.
[9] Cocoa was Ghana's highest-earning foreign exchange commodity.

industry to expand as planned (Berry, 1995). Nkrumah's ISI policies thus negatively affected macroeconomic indicators as rising unemployment, soaring trade debts and food price inflation characterised his regime (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016).

Although, on the positive side, Nkrumah introduced free basic education[10] and healthcare policies to ensure _all_ (my emphasis added) households accessed essential social services, these policies were not particularly targeted at the poorest households. The real problem for poor households at the time was their inability to afford food items and the lack of formal social protection such as income and non-income support schemes to cushion them against the effects of price shocks. As food prices rocketed, poor and low-income households were increasingly at risk of hunger and malnutrition (Fosu and Aryeetey, 2008).

While informal social protection, comprising the provision of food items and cash grants, administered by chiefs and family networks, respectively, remained the main source of support during the immediate post-independence era (Oduro, 2010), such schemes were less regularly provided by family members (Bhattamishra and Barrett, 2010), and had limited impact on the wellbeing of vulnerable households. The resulting economic hardship and associated unrest was used by coup plotters to overthrow Nkrumah's government in a military coup in 1966. The 'National Liberation Council' (NLC), a military government, then took over the reins of power.

The NLC ruled from 1966 to 1969, but in 1968 it encouraged political party activity (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). With plans to restore Ghana to democratic governance, the NLC government promoted political competition (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). Five political parties contested the national elections. The Progress Party (PP), led by Dr K. A. Busia, won the elections and Busia became Ghana's prime minister in the second republic from 1969 to 1972 (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016).

Like the CPP government, Busia's administration aimed to generate domestic revenue through the protection of domestic industries and raising employment in order to reduce Ghana's soaring trade debt (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). However, unlike the CPP government, which had strong socialist leanings, Busia's government subscribed to a liberal democratic philosophy (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). Economic policies including a devaluation of the domestic currency and privatisation were promoted to boost foreign investments. Busia also protected small-scale

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[10] In Ghana, basic school covers school years from pre-primary to the end of junior high school. This relates to children aged between 5 and 16 years (MOE, 2019).

businesses from foreign-owned competitors with his unpopular Aliens Compliance Order of 1969, which saw the expulsion of a large number of Asian and Middle-eastern businesses from the retail sector (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016).

Despite these policies, domestic revenue generation to offset Ghana's trade debt incurred by the previous administration did not materialise as planned (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). Ghana's internal debts owed to commercial banks in the country mounted and fuelled inflation, particularly food price inflation. The effects of privatisation of state-owned enterprises were mostly felt by small- and medium-scale farmers who lost their livelihoods to the private sector (Killick, 2010). But most important was the effect on subsistence farmers with no form of income security and little support from family networks. This group was particularly affected by high prices of imported food items as soaring inflation left them out of pocket (Hutchful, 1987; Killick, 2010). Even though inflation dipped from double to single digits and jobs in the manufacturing sector began to increase, the recovery was not uniform (Hutchful, 1987). Poorer groups including subsistence farmers did not feel the economic recovery in the same way as formal sector workers in manufacturing did.

In addition to the effect of privatisation was the effect of devaluation of the Ghanaian cedi on the livelihoods of poor households. Not only were households with subsistence farmers priced out of the food production sector because of the significant increase in the cost of production, but devaluation also increased the demand for certain exports while excluding vegetables often produced by subsistence farmers. Thus, the livelihoods of subsistence farmers were affected. A combination of soaring inflation and the collapse of private sector resulted in another military takeover and effectively ended the NLC government and the Busia regime.

From 1972 to 1975, the National Redemption Council (NRC), a military government led by Colonel Acheampong which had overthrown Busia's government, took over the reins of power. Colonel Acheampong's NRC government nationalised foreign firms as a strategy to boost economic progress (Berry, 1995). However, persistent shortfalls in domestic food production, exacerbated by a prolonged drought and bush fires that hit the country in the early to mid-1970s, resulted in widespread inflation (Fosu and Aryeetey, 2008). An increased cost of living which affected the quality of life of all households but hit the poorest groups the hardest (Fosu and Aryeetey, 2008) followed.

However, like the previous NLC, PP and CPP governments, the NRC government did not introduce a social protection policy to enable the poorest households to manage economic hardship. Informal social protection in the form of food support from family networks and microcredit from community self-help groups such as rotating savings clubs[11] remained the primary source of support (Oduro, 2010). Such informal social protection interventions coexisted with a limited social security scheme initiated by the CPP government (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). In addition to social security, a poverty alleviation programme was launched by the military NRC for all households in Ghana (Girdner *et al.*, 1980).

2.1.2 The social security scheme and poverty alleviation programme

Although the civilian and military governments did not prioritise targeted intervention programmes for the poorest, they focused on implementing some programmes to protect their political constituents. While the CPP provided income security to protect its supporters in the media sector, the military-led NRC government concentrated its efforts on securing political support from small- and medium-scale farmers with a poverty alleviation programme (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016).

The CPP's social security scheme, targeted at public sector workers, comprised a contributory pension scheme modelled on the previous colonial government's pension scheme (Kpessa, 2011). Also called the Provident Fund, it involved contributions made by employees over a period of their working life which they received in the form of a lump sum payment when they retired (Dixon, 1989). In contrast to the colonial government's 'CAP 30' pension scheme which was exclusively funded by the colonial government, the Provident Fund Scheme had both contributory and non-contributory components of 5% and 12.5% by the employee and employer, respectively (Kpessa, 2011). The aim of this scheme was to protect public sector workers against post-independence risks such as illness, unemployment and old age (Kpessa, 2010; Kpessa, 2011). The scheme was initially administered by the Department of Pensions through the State Insurance Corporation, a government commercial insurance institution. However, from 1972, implementation of the fund changed hands to the Ghana Social Security

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[11] Rotating savings clubs are also called susu clubs. In this scheme, each member of the group makes an agreed contribution to a common fund over a time period. The total contributions are then disbursed to a single member of the group. The recipient changes each period in a rotating fashion such that all members of the group are eventually recipients (Alabi, Alabi and Ahiawodzi, 2007).

and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT), (Kpessa, 2011). The Provident Fund Scheme operated until the late 1980s when a decline in the Ghanaian economy resulted in hyperinflation and a significant fall in interest rates which affected the value of funds (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016).

As I noted earlier about ruling governments' protection of their political constituents, an underlying motive of the NRC government was to protect small- and medium-scale farmers in exchange for political support (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). The NRC government's programme dubbed *Operation Feed Yourself* (OFY), comprised three components. First, subsidised seedlings for small-scale farmers; second, microloans targeted at small- and medium-scale farmers; and third, self-help food production projects for all households in the country. Regarding self-help food production, the entire country was divided into nine zones to represent the nine administrative regions at the time, and each zone was directed to concentrate on growing the crop it was best suited to produce (Girdner *et al.*, 1980).

The OFY scheme, it could be argued, had social protection inclinations because it was a targeted scheme. However, the scheme was targeted at small- and medium-scale farmers, not subsistence farmers who comprised the majority of the most vulnerable and poorest households (Girdner *et al.*, 1980) at the time. Thus, food insecurity and its associated hardships remained a threat to subsistence farmers and other vulnerable groups throughout the early independence and military periods and well into the pre-democratic era (Berry, 1995).

2.2 Social protection in the pre-democratic era: 1981-1991

Ghana's pre-democratic era began with the military government of Flight Lieutenant Rawlings and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Rawlings's government faced significant macroeconomic challenges which called for assistance from international donors including to support the PNDC government in implementing targeted intervention programmes. The pre-democratic era thus marked the beginning of transnational actor involvement in social protection provisioning in Ghana. Targeted initiatives for the most vulnerable groups primarily comprised non-income support schemes (supplementary feeding, nutritional supplements, and skills training) implemented with support from international aid agencies and faith-based organisations. Such initiatives aimed at enabling vulnerable groups to manage economic hardship as well as build their capacity to acquire relevant skills for the labour market. Arguably, the political and macroeconomic developments of the era facilitated these initiatives.

2.2.1 Political and macroeconomic developments

Ghana's economy had almost collapsed by the time the PNDC government took over the reins of power (Grebe, 2015 ; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). The declining state of the economy, particularly falling production levels, was the outcome of failing economic policies of previous governments including export and import restrictions and overexploitation of the cocoa sector to finance industrial development (Pickett and Shaeeldin, 1990). There was no growth in the agricultural or industrial sectors, domestic savings were negative and foreign exchange reserves were non-existent (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). The country suffered from hyperinflation and every conceivable item was in short supply (Grebe, 2015).

Poor households were living considerably below the poverty line as their yearly calorie intake declined from 88 percent in 1979 to 68 percent in 1983 (Krauss, 1991). Rawlings's attempts to recover the economy from decline through a state-led industrialisation strategy did not work (Grebe, 2015). As a result, his government sought advice and financial assistance from the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) even though his socialist ideology as the leader of a military government did not particularly align with their capitalist values (Foli, 2016; de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). This was a significant development because it set the scene for donors, including transnational actors, to make significant input in national policies on economic growth, poverty reduction and social protection provisioning in Ghana.

2.2.2 Austerity measures of the WB and the IMF and their effects on poor households

In response to the economic crisis in Ghana, the WB and the IMF introduced a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of economic stabilisation also known as the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP)[12]. The ERP comprised liberal economic policies aimed at reducing the size of the public sector and promoting private sector activity to restore Ghana's economy (Grebe, 2015; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). Economic stabilisation measures for Ghana consisted of cutbacks on budgetary allocation to education and health sectors, abolition of price and import restrictions and devaluation of the domestic currency to boost private sector development (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). These policy recommendations were based on IMF's principle that limited government intervention in the macroeconomy worked best to improve economic decline (Boafo-Arthur, 1999).

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[12] ERP and SAP are used interchangeably in this chapter.

In the first four years of its implementation, the ERP resulted in significant improvements in Ghana's economy as the agricultural, manufacturing and trading sectors grew by large margins between 1984-1989 (Killick, 2010). In addition, Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which had fallen between 1981-1983 from 0 percent to minus 0.8 percent, began to recover and reached an average growth of 5.7 percent from the mid to late 1980s. Inflation dropped from 123 percent in 1983 to 10.4 percent in 1991 (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). Thus, the ERP programme began to have a positive impact on the macroeconomy. However, alongside improvements in macroeconomic indicators were painful impacts on the welfare of already disadvantaged households (Gayi, 1991). This was because the ERP was not designed to cushion poor households against economic hardship.

For example, cutbacks on the education budget in Ghana meant the cost of education was no longer subsidised. Subsequently, households had to absorb the costs of textbooks and examination preparation. The immediate outcome was that primary education was no longer affordable and school attendance rates in the entire country fell from 76.4 percent in 1984 prior to the implementation of the ERP to 73 percent in 1987 soon after the introduction of user fees in education (Boateng *et al.*, 1990). Similarly, cutbacks in the healthcare budget increased the cost of healthcare for poor households and led to an immediate decrease in outpatient attendance among the rural poor by 50 percent (Boateng *et al.*, 1990).

In addition to already disadvantaged households, a 'new poor' category made up of redeployed public sector workers emerged because of the massive public sector retrenchment recommended by the IMF (Gayi, 1995). Concerned about the effect of the SAP on the microeconomy, the PNDC government sought support from UNICEF and the WB. They designed and implemented appropriate programmes that addressed the welfare concerns of already disadvantaged groups and the 'new poor'.

2.2.3   Targeted interventions: supplementary feeding, food-for-work and skills training projects

The ERP period saw the emergence of two transnational actors who would later become key partners with the government of Ghana to implement the LEAP programme. In 1988, UNICEF and the WB supported the PNDC government to implement targeted interventions for households affected by the ERP reforms. A programme of interventions referred to as the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) was thus introduced to address specific health and economic challenges such as malnutrition, food

insecurity and unemployment which left households vulnerable to extreme poverty (Gayi, 1991). PAMSCAD interventions, unlike previous programmes launched by governments in the immediate independence and military eras, could be described as social protection measures because they were designed to affect specific vulnerable groups.

Interventions comprised supplementary feeding projects for primary school-aged children in deprived communities whereby rations of wheat and non-fat powdered milk were provided at specified nutrition centres in selected communities (Gayi, 1995). In addition, a food-for-work project distributed small quantities of grain to subsistence food crop farmers in the northern region of the country[13] in exchange for constructing community irrigation dams (Gayi, 1995). Moreover, skills training projects such as tailoring and baking for unemployed men and women respectively in urban areas were introduced to provide employable skills to the 'new poor' (Gayi, 1995). These targeted measures co-existed with interventions introduced by non-state actors such as faith-based international non-governmental organisations. The Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) were two organisations which emerged in Ghana[14] in the mid-1980s and provided welfare support in this regard (Gayi, 1991). As vulnerability to extreme poverty took on different forms, the two non-governmental organisations launched several poverty-related projects including the provision of agriculture extension services and delivery of food staples to farmers in impoverished communities (Gayi, 1991). PAMSCAD continued alongside the ERP reforms with mixed impacts on welfare (Gayi, 1995) until lack of financial commitment from donors and mismanagement of some projects led to its eventual collapse in 1995 (Overseas Development Institute, 1996).

The ERP reforms of the PNDC government, however, continued into the 1990s until constitutional reforms ushered in an era of democratic reforms and a re-instatement of multiparty politics from 1992 (Grebe, 2015).

2.3   Social protection in the democratic era: 1992-2009

In contrast to the previous periods, where political and macroeconomic developments and political ideology of governments shaped ruling governments' plans to support poor households, the implementation of targeted intervention policies by elected governments in the democratic era was shaped by domestic and transnational political developments as well as

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[13] The northern region is one of the poorest regions in Ghana.
[14] The ADRA and CRS initially provided humanitarian assistance to drought-stricken households in Ghana.

poverty reduction trends. Significant features of the democratic era which laid the foundation for implementing social protection for the poorest households in Ghana are discussed. They comprise the re-instatement of multi-party politics and a de facto two-party system (Grebe, 2017; Osei, 2013), the development of Ghana's political settlement (Grebe, 2015), the institutionalisation of a local government system (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2003; FES and ILGS, 2016) and a commitment by governments to implement social protection for the poorest (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Grebe, 2017). These are discussed in detail in section 2.3.1. Following these developments, several targeted programmes combining cash and in-kind support for targeted households and financed exclusively by the government of Ghana or with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, have benefitted poor households in Ghana.

2.3.1 Domestic political developments from 1992
Constitutional reforms, multiparty politics and a de facto two-party system

Following more than a decade of quasi-military rule under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government, there were strong internal and external pressures, particularly from external aid agencies, to reform Ghana's constitution and introduce multiparty democracy (Adjei, 2013). This gave way to the promulgation of a liberal constitution in 1992 and the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1993 (Adjei, 2013; Grebe, 2015) whereby multiple political parties contested national elections for presidential and parliamentary positions every four years.

While parliamentary candidates were elected on the basis of a 'First Past the Post' voting system[15] (Adjei, 2013; Osei, 2013; Whitfield, 2009), the president was elected by direct popular vote, meaning to be elected as president, the candidate was required to obtain above 50 percent of valid votes from the electorate (Adjei, 2013). Following the election of the president, the constitution allowed the president to appoint ministers of state to take responsibility for government decisions in key sectors of the economy (Government of Ghana, 1992).

The political system which resulted from the 1992 constitutional reforms thus represented a shift from the administration of military governments which focused much more on political

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[15] In a 'First Past the Post' voting system, a candidate is voted into power when they receive the most votes compared to their political opponents, even if this is not necessarily the majority of total votes (Adjei, 2013).

ideology and their associated policies to strengthen the macroeconomy, to a democratic system in which elected officials represented the interests of the electorate including the welfare needs of the poorest households. The outcome of this political system was that it allowed Lieutenant Rawlings's military PNDC government to transform into a civilian political party, renamed as the National Democratic Congress (NDC), contested with other political parties and won the national elections of 1992 (Grebe, 2015; Grebe, 2017; Osei, 2013) .

Since the adoption of the fourth republican constitution of 1992 in Ghana, political competition has intensified, with more than ten political parties contesting national elections, but with only a handful making it to the parliamentary level (Osei, 2013). For example, in the 2008 national elections, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) were the two political parties that won nearly all seats in parliament, with a combined total of 223 out of 230 seats, leaving only 7 seats for the remaining contesting political parties (Osei, 2013). The introduction of multi-party democratic politics in Ghana resulted in the dominance of the NDC and NPP on Ghana's political scene (Grebe, 2015; Grebe, 2017).

Multi-party politics in Ghana has to date, been overshadowed by the institutionalisation of a *de facto* two-party system in which the NDC and the NPP are the major political parties between which power alternates. Moreover, with each four-year electoral cycle, the NDC and NPP become increasingly competitive (Appiah and Abdulai, 2017) as the development of patron-client politics remains a significant feature of Ghana's democratic politics.

Ghana's democratic politics: a competitive clientelist political settlement

As sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 indicate, Ghana's political developments from the early independence era to the era of democratic governance have been characterised by political competition. This was demonstrated by how civilian, military and quasi-military governments competed for power to shape macroeconomic policy. Nonetheless, competition for power was and remains strongly characterised by clientelism. This was exemplified by how governments in power formed strong clientelist networks with political constituents who, in return, were rewarded through some form of protection. For example, Nkrumah relied on public sector workers in the media industry for political support and rewarded them with social security (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016) while the military NRC protected small- and medium-scale farmers with microcredit (Luiz, 2013) in exchange for political loyalty. This political arrangement in which competition for power necessitates the use of clientelism to secure political control describes competitive clientelism (Appiah and Abdulai, 2017; Idun Arkhurst, 2013). Since the fourth

republican constitution, democratic politics and the way power is distributed in Ghana have remained competitively clientelist in character, and Ghana is described as having a competitive clientelist political settlement (Abdulai, 2020; Appiah and Abdulai, 2017; de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Idun Arkhurst, 2013; Oduro, Mohammed and Ashon, 2014; Whitfield, 2011).

Competitive clientelism in Ghana is characterised by an intense and constant vulnerability of elites to loss of power in competitive elections (Abdulai, 2019). Elites' fear of losing power to opponents threatens the rule of governments and increases the likelihood that they will distribute government resources in ways that serves their political interests (Whitfield, 2011).

In addition to competitive clientelism, constitutional reforms facilitated the institutionalisation of a local government system (Ayee, 2003).

Ghana's local government system: The District Assembly

Following the introduction of multi-party democracy, Ghana adopted a decentralisation policy which began in 1988 under the previous PNDC military government. The decentralisation policy primarily involved the establishment of local governments, called District Assemblies[16], which were transferred political power as well as financial and administrative resources from the central government (Ahwoi, 2010). The establishment of the District Assembly was backed by various legislative instruments including the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462) (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2003; Botchwey, 2017). District Assemblies were in effect, created to become key players in development at the local government level. They were entrusted by law to initiate, co-ordinate and deliver the central government's policies and programmes to communities (Ayee, 2003; Bebelleh and Nobabumah, 2013).

The establishment of the District Assembly system, thus represented a slight departure from the previous governance system of the British colonial administration, where chiefs and elders of towns and villages were appointed by the colonial government to form traditional councils, enforce customary law and administer the colonial government's policies (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2003; Botchwey, 2017; FES and ILGS, 2016). In the established local government system, the administration of central government's policies was no longer the responsibility of chiefs, but that of the head of the local assembly as prescribed by the 1992 republican constitution. However, the chief's role as community leader and a custodian of traditional laws and norms remained (Asamoah, 2012).

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[16] The District Assembly is equivalent to a local council in England.

The presence of a District Assembly backed by various legislative instruments marks the difference between Ghana's democratic local government system and the colonial government's local government system.

The District Assembly which operates today comprises various local governments demarcated by population size. For example, a 'Metropolitan' Assembly describes a local government with a population of over 250,000, a 'Municipal' Assembly describes one with a population of between 95,000 and 250,000, and a 'District' Assembly is a local government with a population of between 75,000 and 95,000 (Ahwoi, 2010). For the purposes of this thesis, the various local government units, regardless of size, will be referred to as District Assemblies.

As stipulated by the 1992 constitution, heads of local authorities referred to as Chief Executives were to be nominated by the ruling government and endorsed by members of the Assembly through local elections (Ahwoi, 2010; FES and ILGS, 2016). Chief Executives thus owe direct allegiance to the government that nominated them. Members of the District Assembly, referred to as Assembly members on the other hand, are elected into office to represent an electoral area and to present views, opinions and proposals of the electorate to the District Assembly (Ahwoi, 2010; Bebelleh and Nobabumah, 2013).

The 1992 constitutional reforms also strengthened the commitment of elected governments to implement formal social protection for the poorest.

Commitments by governments to implement social protection.

Since the 1992 constitutional reforms, elected governments in Ghana have been obligated to implement targeted programmes for the poorest households. Article 17, subsection 4(a) of Ghana's fourth republican constitution proposes the implementation of policies and programmes to correct economic, social and economic imbalances in Ghanaian society (Government of Ghana, 1992). Similarly, Article 37, subsection 2(b) of Ghana's constitution establishes that *'the state shall enact appropriate laws to ensure … the protection and promotion of all basic human rights and freedoms, including the rights of the disabled, the aged, children and other vulnerable groups in the development process'* (Government of Ghana, 1992, p. 34).

This requirement became much stronger when the Kufuor-led NPP government signed treaties and protocols expressing Ghana's commitment to implement social protection. In 2000, the NPP government signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration, pledging to combat extreme poverty and associated problems of vulnerability through social protection interventions

(MOGCSP, 2015). The NPP government further signed the Ouagadougou Declaration of 2004 as a partner country of the African Union and pledged its commitment to implement social protection systems to fight extreme poverty, reduce inequality and promote growth (MESW, 2012). This renewed commitment gave rise to legal frameworks including the Persons with Disability (PLWD) Act 2006 (Act 715) enacted by the NPP government (MOGCSP, 2015).

The commitment by governments to implement formal social protection increased towards the end of the second millennium, when rising levels of extreme poverty and vulnerability in the global south, exacerbated by the effects of climate change and structural adjustment economic policies, brought in transnational policy actors (Hickey and Seekings, 2017).

2.3.2   A transnational poverty reduction agenda

From the early to mid-2000s, transnational actors, notably representatives of the WB, DFID and UNICEF, embarked on a global poverty reduction agenda and began to promote particular forms of cash transfers as possible solutions to the deepening vulnerability and extreme poverty in the global south (Grebe, 2015; Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Inspired by the economic and human development experiences of Latin American countries which had used targeted cash transfer programmes to reduce extreme poverty, the WB and DFID began advocating these innovative policy ideas in middle-income countries in the southern American region and low-income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Grebe, 2017; Foli, 2016; Hickey and Seekings, 2017).

The WB focused its attention on replicating Mexico and Brazil's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) model of social assistance (Holzmann, 2008). In this model, the WB assumed that limited access to education and healthcare in the poorest households contributed to intergenerational poverty and exacerbated social and economic inequalities. Thus, small and regular transfers of cash were required to target poor households with children, but on the condition that the latter complied with two requirements: enrolling children in school and attending regular immunisation clinics for age-appropriate children (De Britto, 2004; Hellmann, 2015). The CCT model emerged as a 'neighbourhood policy transfer model' (Hickey and Seekings, 2017, p. 11) because policy ideas were transferred from the southern American region to its neighbour in the same region. This model was promoted by WB technocrats, usually through conferences and workshops in Brazil and Mexico to allow cash transfer experiences of implementing governments to be shared with other countries in the southern American region (Foli, 2016; Hickey and Seekings, 2017).

Similarly, DFID promoted cash transfers as a policy for reducing vulnerability to extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, in contrast to the WB, DFID's focus was on unconditional cash transfers, also referred to as social cash transfers (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). DFID's model of poverty reduction reflected the philosophy of the UK Labour government at the time, which placed value on regular income support for vulnerable and needy groups in society (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Also, in contrast to the WB's policy transfer approach was DFID's policy translation approach (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). The latter allowed countries to adapt aspects of policies that were relevant to the needs of governments in different policy contexts (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Thus, for DFID, even though targeted beneficiaries in one context comprised mainly poor households with school-aged children, targeted beneficiaries in other contexts comprised disabled groups.

Like the WB and DFID, UNICEF sponsored conferences and workshops to enable countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to learn about the experiences of pioneering countries and adopt cash transfers to support the most vulnerable households (Foli, 2016). Encouraged by research evidence that CCTs had the potential to reduce the effects of malnutrition in children (Hickey and Seekings, 2017), UNICEF went on to design and sponsor cash transfer programmes for vulnerable children in the eastern African country of Kenya and the Southern African country of Mozambique (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012).

With the growing commitment to implement cash transfers backed by financial resources, the WB, DFID and UNICEF stood in a strong position to influence the design and implementation of cash transfer programmes in low-income countries, including Ghana.

Not only did the global poverty reduction agenda characterise the democratic era in Ghana, but macroeconomic developments in the early 2000s and vulnerability to extreme poverty created the right conditions for social protection programmes to take centre stage in the poverty reduction discourse in Ghana.

2.3.3 Macroeconomic developments and extreme poverty trends: 1991-2006

From 2000 to 2009, Ghana began experiencing macroeconomic stability resulting in strong economic growth which increased from 5.8 percent in 2002 to 7.2 percent in 2008 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015; Molini and Paci, 2015). This was the outcome of the continued ERP reforms including the devaluation of the national currency and a reduction in corporation taxes (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). Private sector growth followed, and there was a reduction in

unemployment, a fall in the cost of living and a general improvement in living standards (Molini and Paci, 2015). Macroeconomic stability helped to reduce the incidence of extreme poverty and enabled Ghana to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the incidence of extreme poverty (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015; Molini and Paci, 2015). This is shown in figure 2.1. below.

Figure 2.1 Extreme poverty trends, 1991- 2006
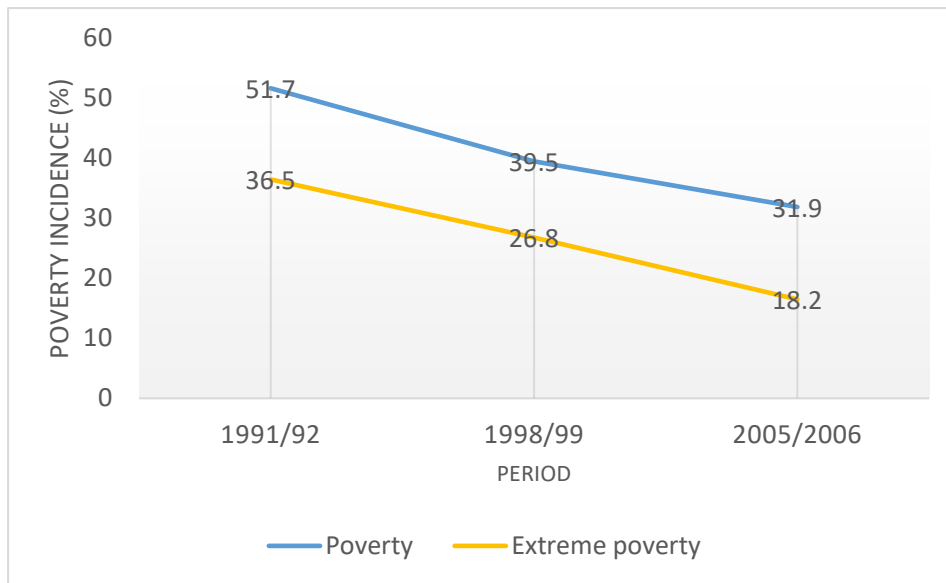
Source*: Adapted from Ghana Statistical Services, 2007*

Figure **2.1** shows a decline in the incidence of poverty[17] from 51.7 percent in 1991 to 31.9 percent in 2006 and a significant decline in the incidence of extreme poverty[18] from 36.5 percent to 18.2 percent over the same period. It can be argued from these trends that Ghana managed to half the percentage of its population who lived below the $1-a-day income poverty line (Ghana Statistical Services, 2007).

However, the real challenge for the NPP administration was reducing vulnerability to extreme poverty. As figure 2.1 illustrates, 18.2 percent of the population remained in extreme poverty and could not escape the conditions that made them vulnerable to extreme poverty. Also, extreme poverty across administrative regions in the country was very uneven and much more widespread in the northern sector of the country (Cooke, Hague and McKay, 2016). For example, while the Upper East region, located in the eastern part of the northern sector experienced an increasing share of extreme poverty, households in the Eastern region and Central regions

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[17] Individuals who lived below a national upper poverty line of $380 per year were considered poor.
[18] Individuals living below a lower poverty line of $288 per year were considered extremely poor.

located in the southern sector of the country, experienced the opposite, having disproportionately benefitted from economic expansion. Figure 2.2 below illustrates these trends.

Figure 2.2   Extreme poverty in Ghana by administrative region 1998/99-2005/06

	Upper West region	Upper East	Northern region	Central region	Eastern region
■ 1998/99	84	88	69	48	44
■ 2005/2006	88	70	52	20	15
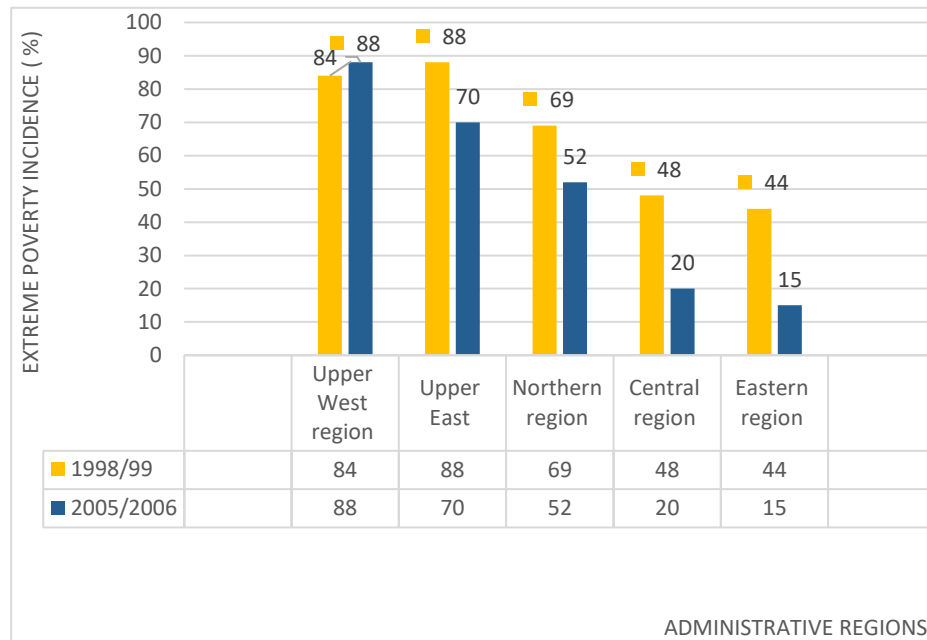
Source: Adapted from Ghana Statistical Services, 2007

Figure 2.2 shows that the incidence of extreme poverty was more pronounced in the Upper East region where 88 percent of the population were extremely poor in 1998/1999 compared to the Eastern and Central regions, where 44 and 48 percent of the population, respectively, lived in extreme poverty in the same period.

The regional distribution of poverty exhibited in figure 2.2 suggests that pockets of extreme poverty persisted and was widespread in regions of the northern sector despite an overall reduction in the incidence of extreme in the country. The concentration of extreme poverty in the northern sector of the country can be traced to a number of factors. The northern sector of the country is landlocked and has a poorly developed infrastructure including transport which limits access to markets and social services (Fosu and Aryeetey, 2008; World Bank, 2016). In comparison with regions in the southern sector, it has less rainfall, greater land and soil degradation, and a predisposition to droughts and floods which forces subsistence farmers to adopt low-input strategies, creating a low farm output, irregular household income and a virtual cycle of extreme poverty (World Bank, 2016). There is also considerable and deepening inequality in service delivery, with much worse access to quality education and health care in

the northern regions than the rest of the country having inherited an unequal development gap created by the colonial government (Abdulai and Hulme, 2014 ; de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Fosu and Aryeetey, 2008).

In the late 1990s to mid- 2000s, a combination of factors contributed to a high incidence of extreme poverty in the Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana (Bierderlack and Rivers, 2009). Poor soils and an unusually low rainfall between 2002 and 2004 in the Upper East region resulted in a prolonged lean season of five to seven months and an exceptionally low level of food production which increased poor households' risk to food insecurity (Bierderlack and Rivers, 2009). Similarly in the Upper West region , food insecurity was visibly evident in child malnutrition cases as 12.4 percent of under-five year olds were described as malnourished and wasted[19] in 2003, compared to cases in the southern regions of Greater Accra where a significantly low rate of 2.7 percent of children were malnourished (Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, 2003).

In the Central and Eastern regions of the southern sector of Ghana where the incidence of extreme poverty was relatively lower than in regions of the northern sector of Ghana, factors which contributed to extreme poverty were markedly different. The HIV epidemic in Ghana between 1999 and 2006, threatened the quality of lives of households in the Central and Eastern regions, although prevalence rates were highest in the Eastern region of Ghana (Adjei- Mensah, 2006). Evidence from both sentinel surveillance survey data obtained from health centres as well as the Demographic and Health Survey data from households, showed that Eastern region persistently recorded high HIV prevalence rates with a 5.3 percent in 2000 compared to an overall 1.4 percent recorded for Ghana in the same year (Adjei- Mensah, 2006 ; Ulasi et al., 2009). Although there is very limited data on HIV/AIDS related deaths in the Eastern region of Ghana, there is evidence that children orphaned by the HIV epidermic could not enrol in schools because of the fear of being stigmatised (Adjei-Mensah, 2006; Ulasi *et al.*, 2009). In addition to children who were excluded from education, their caregivers and adult members of households affected by HIV/AIDS could not access essential services such as healthcare (Ministry of Health, 2001) thus widening economic and social inequality gaps and remain Ghana.

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[19] Wasting means low- weight-for height, among children under five. It is usually the result of acute significant food shortage that requires urgent response.

In addition to climate and HIV/AIDS, economic and social inequality contributed to the uneven nature of extreme poverty across administrative regions of Ghana between 1996 and 2006. The per capita income of households in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions of the northern sector [20] was GH 130[21], while the per capita income of households in Greater Accra region, in the southern sector of Ghana was GH 544[22], about four times the per capita income of households in the northern sector of the country (Cooke, Hague and McKay, 2016; Ghana Statistical Service, 2007). Differences in the net primarily enrolment rates between poorest regions in the north and the rest of were evident. Despite improvements in primary net enrolment rate from 59.6 percent in 2004 to 77.5 percent[23] in 2007, the net primary enrolment rates in the poorest regions of the north remained low, at an average of 75.4% (Ghana Statistical Services, 2007). To address these problems, the NPP government employed growth-enhancing measures intended to stimulate demand for social services and poverty alleviation measures to address extreme poverty. These measures however had limiting impacts on households that lived in extreme poverty.

2.3.4 Limits of growth-enhancing policies

From 2000 onwards, the NPP continued with the NDC government's objective of stabilising the macroeconomy and implementing growth-enhancing policies to achieve poverty reduction. These policies were outlined in Ghana's first Poverty Reduction Strategy document, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy framework (GPRS 1), and were intended to illustrate to donors how Ghana would achieve poverty reduction over a specified timeline (International Monetary Fund, 2002; Whitfield, 2005).

Healthcare policies were introduced to stimulate demand for healthcare (Oduro, 2010). They included the Ghana Health Insurance Scheme (GHIS)[24], launched in 2003 to make basic healthcare affordable for all households including the poorest (Abebrese, 2011; Sultan and Schrofer, 2008). In addition to healthcare policies were policies that stimulated demand for basic education[25] for all households in Ghana. This saw the introduction by the NPP government of

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[20] Extreme poverty is concentrated in the three northern regions. See Cooke *et al.* (2016) for characteristics of households in these regions.
[21] Equivalent to $22.1 as of December 2020.
[22] Equivalent to $92.75.
[23] World Bank data via http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR
[24] The GHIS replaced the previous cash and carry health care system in which all patients paid the cost of healthcare (consultation, medication etc.) on demand.
[25] Basic education in Ghana comprises primary school (years 1-6) and junior high school/middle school (years 7-9).

the Education Capitation grants (EC) in 2004. The EC was designed as a per capita subsidy to reduce the direct costs of basic education, such as costs of stationery, which had become barriers to accessing education, especially for poor households (MOGCSP, 2015). The EC started as a per capita subsidy of GH 4 and is currently GH 9 (equivalent of $1.88) per head given directly to all basic schools (MOGCSP, 2015). However, as these two programmes were not directly targeted at extremely poor households, they had limited impacts on the 18.2 percent of households in Ghana that remained in extreme poverty (Oduro, 2010).

In addition to the GHIS and the EC, the NPP in 2005 launched a poverty alleviation programme called the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSF) as part of its efforts to achieve the MDG targets regarding extreme poverty and hunger (Oduro, 2010). The GSF provided one hot meal a day for children in deprived rural communities (MOGCSP, 2015). Although the GSF had social protection inclinations, it cannot be described as a social protection programme, because it was not particularly targeted at the most vulnerable children at the time. It was designed stimulate demand for certain agricultural crops and subsequently reduce hunger (Oduro, 2010).

Despite incorporating growth enhancing measures in the GPRS 1, vulnerable households were unable to escape conditions of extreme poverty (Cooke, Hague and McKay, 2016). As a result, the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), a government body mandated to advise the government on development planning policies and strategies, initiated a review of GPRS 1 to assess the effectiveness of existing pro-poor programmes on vulnerability and poverty reduction (NDPC, 2008). As part of the GPRS 1 review, a Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) conducted by the WB revealed three problems which contributed to the inability of existing programmes to affect extreme poverty (NDPC, 2008).

First, earlier poverty reduction measures had not sufficiently identified and targeted households who lived in conditions of extreme poverty. Second, the specific needs and risks of extremely poor households were not sufficiently clarified nor integrated into national development planning. Third, the government had not made any budgetary allocation to deal with the risks that pushed households into extreme poverty (NDPC, 2008). Based on the findings, the WB suggested the need for a different approach to poverty reduction. With an emphasis on the most vulnerable groups, the key recommendation was that the NPP government consider providing 'support for those who are unable and may never be able to help themselves' (NDPC, 2005, p. 60). This implied a targeted approach to poverty reduction. In addition, the WB advised the formulation of a National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) to guide the implementation of all

targeted intervention programmes in the country. These WB proposals were intended to guide the design of Ghana's second Poverty Reduction Strategy framework, GPRS II, implemented between 2006 and 2009 (NDPC, 2008; NDPC, 2009).

2.3.5 A targeted poverty reduction approach: The National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS)

The NSPS framework was incorporated into the second Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) which emphasised accelerated growth and poverty reduction (NDPC, 2009). As the primary aim of the NPP government was to ensure that the 18.2 percent of households who remained in extreme poverty were lifted out of the conditions that trapped them in poverty, a targeted approach was required. The NSPS thus became the key framework which guided the government's approach to poverty reduction and provided a much more structured and targeted approach to poverty reduction (MMYE, 2007b) than broad poverty alleviation programmes had previously offered.

In effect, the NSPS framework epitomised a shift from the less targeted approaches of previous governments to an approach with a focus on the most vulnerable groups. It created space for state and non-state actors to participate in implementing social protection programmes. The NSPS also allowed for a combination of instruments such as cash grants with essential services like education and healthcare to complement cash grants and respond to the multi-dimensional challenges of extremely poor households (MMYE, 2007b).

To ensure that a draft NSPS was finalised and a cash transfer programme incorporated into the GPRS II, three transnational actors (TNAs), namely the WB, UNICEF and DFID, actively promoted cash transfers to reduce vulnerability to extreme poverty in Ghana (Foli, 2016). The three TNAs were instrumental in persuading governments in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hickey and Seekings, 2017), including Ghana, to use cash transfer programmes as a policy alternative to broad growth enhancing and broad poverty alleviation programmes which had previously failed to affect extreme poverty. The cash transfer adoption process and the subsequent emergence of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer programme is presented next in section 2.3.6.

2.3.6 The cash transfer adoption process and emergence of LEAP

Following the WB's recommendation of a cash transfer programme as an alternative policy to reduce vulnerability to extreme poverty in Ghana DFID and UNICEF intensified their efforts to get Ghanaian policymakers to adopt a new policy idea regarding social protection, with cash

transfers as the main instrument of delivery. This new policy idea informed the design of Ghana's second Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II).

The new policy idea's adoption process started with identifying a local champion who would promote it and play a leading role in translating it into a social protection programme. The then deputy minister of the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE), in charge of social welfare issues, became an ally to champion this new policy idea (MMYE, 2007). She set up and chaired several stakeholder meetings including a Vulnerability and Social Exclusion Sector Working Group[26], which met regularly to discuss the potential of cash transfers to reduce extreme poverty in Ghana. She was also able to use her background in academia and experience in working on poverty and vulnerability related issues to convince national and subnational level stakeholders of the effectiveness of a cash transfer programme to tackle extreme poverty and related vulnerability issues in Ghana (Foli, 2016).

As part of their efforts in promoting cash transfers, UNICEF in 2005 started implementing a small cash transfer programme for about 2500 Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in HIV-prevalent communities (Foli, 2016). As an international development organisation with the welfare of children at the centre of its work, UNICEF's intention was to demonstrate to policymakers in Ghana how cash grants conditional upon healthcare access could induce demand for health services of children disadvantaged by HIV/AIDS (Foli, 2016; MMYE, 2007). The one-year programme comprised UNICEF paying health insurance premiums for OVCs and their caregivers who were not yet beneficiaries of the Ghana Health Insurance Scheme. Small but regular cash grants were provided to OVCs on the understanding that their caregivers would ensure regular health check-ups including immunisations (Foli, 2016). The programme was then monitored by UNICEF's technocrats to ensure fulfilment of the conditions (MMYE, 2007). Later, UNICEF teamed up with DFID to continue promoting their brand of social protection. This was done primarily through study trips and conferences to expose Ghanaian policymakers to social cash transfer programmes in other countries of the global south.

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[26] The Vulnerability and Exclusion Sector Working Group was a consultative group chaired by the deputy minister of Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment. It comprised local technocrats (academics) and representatives of local Non-Governmental Organisations such as Help Age International. Among the TNAs who were consulted for their cash transfer ideas were policy advisors from World Bank, DFID, UNICEF and social policy advisors from the Luxembourg Trust, International Labour Organisation (ILO) (de-Graft Aikins, *et al.*, 2016 ; Foli, 2016)

In 2006, DFID and UNICEF, with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support, facilitated study trips for Ghanaian policymakers to Brazil to learn from the experience of policymakers there, how cash transfer programmes had been used to reduce vulnerability and extreme poverty (Foli, 2016).

In March of the same year, DFID organised an African regional experts meeting in Zambia to share further evidence on the role of cash transfers in response to specific risks and challenges of different target groups (Foli, 2016). In this meeting, dubbed the *Livingstone Call for Action*, social protection experts from thirteen African countries including Mozambique, South Africa and Lesotho who had previously implemented cash transfer programmes shared their experiences of delivering cash transfers to vulnerable groups such as the disabled, children and the elderly.

In August 2007, DFID organised a study trip to Brazil for Ghanaian policymakers and technocrats, this time to build technical capacity for implementing Ghana's cash transfer programme. This was to be achieved through the establishment of a cooperation programme, dubbed the '*Brazil - Africa Cooperation'* Programme. In this cooperation programme, representatives from Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and Mozambique, as well as from the African Union's development agency, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), shared insights on how Brazil's *Bolsa Familia Programme* (BFP) was implemented. The study included visits to social assistance reference centres to provide new participating countries including Ghana with relevant technical information about the implementation of cash transfers more broadly (Foli, 2016) and specifically enlightening countries about enrolment of beneficiaries, monitoring conditions and developing policies for graduation' (IPC, 2008, p. 1). To develop further technical expertise, the Brazilian officials responsible for social protection engaged new participating countries in bilateral dialogue to address country-specific issues (IPC, 2008). This learning experience is a classic example of South-to-South policy transfer facilitated by northern transnational actors to convince countries of the effectiveness of conditional cash transfers as a strategy to address extreme poverty in their countries.

In the case of Ghana, the study tours paid off because policymakers, including the then deputy minister, and politicians at the time wholeheartedly embraced the new policy idea on how to reduce extreme poverty. In addition, they incorporated it into the GPRS II development blueprint which focused much more on policies to accelerate growth and poverty alleviation in contrast to the GPRS I which focused attention primarily on programmes and measures to address poverty alleviation (NDPC, 2009).

Following the acceptance by the Ghanaian team of introducing a cash transfer programme, DFID arranged a three-day mission of technocrats from Brazil, Mexico and Turkey to Ghana to support local consultants in designing Ghana's first National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) in line with the WB's recommendations (MMYE, 2007). With this agenda, Ghana requested financial assistance from international donors. As the global aid architecture at the time favoured a budget support form of development assistance (Abdulai, 2020), nine multilateral donors including the WB and the European Investment Bank (EIB) planned to support the implementation of Ghana's GPRS II, which included the NSPS (Woll, 2008). However, to ensure that the money was used to implement targeted poverty alleviation programmes, donors conditioned the release of credit from the Multi-Donor Budget Support[27] (MDBS) initiative on certain triggers, one being the completion of a draft National Social Protection Strategy (Woll, 2008). In addition, the donors emphasised the importance of including and implementing a targeted cash transfer programme to reduce vulnerability to extreme poverty in Ghana (NDPC, 2008). Thus, to access credit for implementing GPRS II, the NPP government had to comply with the conditionality of launching a National Social Protection Strategy and introducing the first ever cash transfer programme to meet the objective of the NSPS (Abdulai, 2020). The outcome of the triggers and policy requirements of donors was the emergence of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) social cash transfer programme.

 In effect, LEAP was a response to a policy conditionality imposed by donors, including TNAs, on Ghanaian policymakers who made financial assistance a condition for implementing the NSPS from which LEAP emerged. The NSPS, together with the new cash transfer programme LEAP, was officially approved by Ghana's cabinet and launched in 2008 (Foli, 2016).

LEAP was targeted at four vulnerable groups. First, extremely poor households with severely disabled persons without productive capacity. Second, extremely poor households with persons aged 65 years and above without any form of support. Third, extremely poor households with OVCs and fourth, extremely poor households with pregnant women and mothers with infants aged under 18 months. The design of the LEAP cash transfer programme and how the programme was to be implemented, including the most effective approach to targeting

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[27] The Multi-Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS) mechanism comprised grants from nine donors including multilateral agencies (EIB and AFDB) and bilateral donor agencies (USAID and Norway) to support the poverty alleviation programmes. The MDBS initiative involved a matrix of triggers, a list of policy requirements and reforms that the government of Ghana had to implement so that funds could be released.

households, the disbursement of cash grants and graduation of beneficiaries were primarily the ideas of DFID, WB and UNICEF.

Since the launch of LEAP, other targeted intervention programmes have been implemented. In 2009, the NDC government launched the Free School Uniform and Exercise Book (FSUEB) programme, primarily to absorb the indirect costs of education which limited access to basic education for children in chronically impoverished households (MOGCSP, 2016). The programme provides free school uniforms to needy children in selected deprived communities. It also distributes free exercise books to all children in public primary schools in the ten regions of the country (MOGCSP, 2016; World Bank, 2016). The FSUEB programme is entirely funded by the government of Ghana and implemented by the District Assemblies[28], which are given the responsibility of targeting and enrolling children on the programme (MOGCSP, 2016).

In 2010, another social assistance programme, this time funded entirely by the WB, was introduced under the administration of the NDC government (MOGCSP, 2016; World Bank, 2016). The Labour-Intensive and Public Works (LIPW) programme involves the payment of a wage, in the form of cash, in return for participation in community development projects (Carter *et al.*, 2019). Ghana's LIPW targets extremely poor adults in rural communities whose livelihoods are threatened by drought and crop failure. The LIPW programme began in 49 deprived districts, mainly concentrated in the three northern regions of Ghana (World Bank, 2016) with the aim of mitigating shortfalls in consumption during the lean season with cash grants and building households productive capacity with skills to allow them to participate in economic activities (World Bank, 2016a). As a WB initiative, Ghana's LIPW was informed by policy ideas of similar WB initiatives, such as Rwanda's *Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme* implemented in 2008 and Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme* implemented in 2009, which provide small amounts of cash in exchange for community development projects.

Table 2.1 below provides a summary of poverty alleviation and social protection programmes by governments in different political periods in Ghana. It shows that the PNDC era and PAMSCAD interventions ushered in TNA involvement in social protection provisioning in Ghana. The democratic era, however, was the period which during which TNA involvement in the provision

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[28] Ghana's decentralised local government system, equivalent to a council in England.

of social protection intensified. A glance at the instruments of social protection from the table, shows how the forms of social protection have evolved over time.

Table 2.1   A trajectory of poverty alleviation measures and social protection programmes 1960-2009

PROGRAMME	ERA	GOVERN-MENT	FUNCTIONS /RISKS ADDRESSED	INSTRUMENT/S	TARGET GROUPS	ACTOR/S
Provident Fund Social Security Scheme / Reformed CAP 30)	Post-independence 1965	CPP	Post-independence contingencies e.g unemployment, disability, poor health, retirement	Income support	Public and private sector workers	Government of Ghana through the Department of Pensions + State Insurance Corporation
Operation Feed Yourself	Military 1972-1975	NRC	Food insecurity	Agricultural input subsidies eg. seedlings, farm implements	All Ghanaians – but particularly small and medium scale farmers	Government of Ghana- through Ministry of Agriculture
**PAMSCAD	Military 1987- 1990	PNDC	Nationwide economic hardship; unemployment; food insecurity	Microcredit; food support; supplementary feeding; skills training in tailoring and brick layering	Chronically poor subsistence farmers (Northern + Volta regions 'New poor' (retrenched public sector workers) Malnourished children	Government of Ghana + UNICEF+ World Bank + International Non - Governmental Organisations e.g ADRA and CRS
Pay-AS-You-Go Statutory pension/ SSNIT pension	Democratic 1992	NDC	Post -PAMSCAD unemployment risks; retirement	Income support	Public and private sector workers	Government of Ghana, through the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT)
National Health Insurance Scheme	Democratic 2003	NPP	Equitable healthcare access	Subsidised healthcare	All Ghanaians	Government of Ghana through the National Health Insurance Authority

Capitation grants	Democratic 2004	NPP	Barriers to educational access i.e indirect costs	Subsidised education	All public-school aged children (5-15 years)	Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education
Ghana School Feeding	Democratic 2005	NPP	Food insecurity; rural poverty	Supplementary feeding	School aged children in deprived communities	Government of Ghana (Ministry of Gender and Social Protection) + Netherlands Development Agency (SNV) + World Food Programme through the District Assembly
LEAP	Democratic 2008	NPP	Food insecurity stigmatisation, disability; child labour	Cash grants + complementary linkages to government programmes e.g health insurance	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children; People Living with Disability; People Living with HIV/ AIDs; Elderly with no productive capacity; Lactating mothers with infants aged < 18 months	Ghana Government (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection) +WB + DFID + UNICEF through the District Assembly
FSUEB	Democratic 2009	NDC	Indirect costs of education	School Uniforms + Exercise and textbooks	School aged children from the most deprived communities +	Ghana Government (Ministry of Education) through the District Assembly
LIPW	Democratic 2010	NDC	Seasonal unemployment, hunger	Cash grants + community development projects	Chronically poor subsistence farmers	World Bank through the Ministry of Local government and rural development

Source: *Author*

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented a historical overview of social protection provisioning in Ghana. It highlighted the political and macroeconomic contexts from which the LEAP cash transfer programme emerged.

The chapter argued that prior to the democratic period, responses that addressed the welfare concerns of the poorest households in Ghana were shaped by the political priorities and ideologies of ruling governments. Informal social protection remained the primary source of support for the poorest households. However, as Ghana democratised, constitutional reforms gave way to a governance system which allowed elected governments to implement formal social protection programmes for the most vulnerable households. Democratic politics has since created the political expediency of social protection provision. In addition, the institutionalisation of a local government system has facilitated the delivery of social protection, while a global poverty reduction agenda involving TNAs has since driven the discourse and practice of social protection implementation in Ghana.

The next chapter presents a review of the relevant literature on the politics of social protection. It explores gaps in the literature which this study focuses on. The chapter also presents the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter 3   Review of literature and conceptual framework

Chapter purpose and structure

In chapter 2, I presented a historical overview of social protection provisioning in Ghana over three political periods. I argued that the democratic era saw an increased transnational actor presence on the social protection scene in Ghana. Elected governments have since introduced social protection for the poorest and most vulnerable households either singlehandedly or with support from international aid agencies including transnational actors.

In this chapter, I present a review of the literature on the politics of social protection. I also introduce the conceptual framework which will guide my analysis in this study. The chapter is divided into three main sections. In section 3.1, I present the literature on the politics of social protection. I highlight the role of transnational actors in the policy process in section 3.1.1 and discuss their tools of influence, ideas and interests in sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 respectively. I also discuss national actors' (domestic political elites) interests in social protection policy in section 3.1.4.

In the second section, 3.2, I present a review of the small but growing literature on social protection, political settlements, and their intersections. The definition and purpose of political settlements is presented in 3.2.1, before turning to the types of political settlements and their implication for the implementation of social protection in section 3.2.2. Subsequently, the characteristics of competitive clientelist political settlements like patronage and ethnic politics which have relevance for the implementation of LEAP are discussed. The purpose of these two sections is to identify gaps in the literature which this study addresses.

The third section, 3.3, presents conceptual frameworks for analysing social protection. It first reviews the frameworks which explain social protection in 3.3.1, before focusing attention on Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements framework (APSF) in section 3.3.2. The usefulness of the APSF and its limitations for this study are subsequently discussed. The purpose of this third section is to present a lens through which the politics of implementing the LEAP programme will be analysed. Section 3.4 summarises and concludes the chapter.

3.1   The politics of social protection

As I noted in the introduction to this thesis in chapter 1, social protection describes a range of targeted actions employed by state or non-state actors in response to socially unacceptable levels of vulnerability and deprivation (Norton, Conway and Foster, 2001). An area of focus in

the social protection literature is the politics of addressing extreme poverty and vulnerability in low-income countries.

The literature on the politics of social protection involving international development actors in global poverty reduction has evolved. As the nature of vulnerability to extreme poverty changes across the global south, forms of social protection delivered by international development agencies and organisations similarly change. The outcome on the literature has therefore been shifts in debates around responses that work.

In the mid-1990s when extreme poverty was primarily driven by drought, food insecurity and poor macroeconomic performance in the global south, international development agencies including United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) responded by providing emergency food assistance to affected households and communities. Social protection was then administered in the form of emergency assistance. The politics of social protection literature thus focused on emergency and short term assistance to affected households and communities in low-income countries in SSA (Ellis, Devereux and White, 2009; Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). Studies did not focus on how responses by international development agencies interacted with domestic politics in drought-stricken countries for example, to shape poverty reduction approaches.

In the late 1990s to early 2000s, as factors driving households into extreme poverty became multi-dimensional and complex, international aid agencies and development organisations who were involved in the delivery of emergency assistance regarded emergency responses as ill-equipped to move households permanently out of the conditions that held them in poverty, although they did address their short-term challenges (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). Efforts were thus made to dissuade affected governments from providing emergency assistance (Ellis, Devereux and White, 2009; Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012) and to shift to much more regular social cash transfers[29]. Subsequently, the literature on the politics of social protection focused attention on the pilot implementation of social cash transfer programmes across much of SSA (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2010; Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). Studies on the pilot implementation of cash transfers such as Malawi's *Mchinji Cash Transfer* programme and Zambia's *Palomo Cash transfer* programme, focused on the role of regular cash grants in improving child wellbeing and

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[29] Social cash transfers comprise non-contributory transfers in cash, vouchers, or in-kind payments (including school feeding) to individuals or households in need (Carter *et al.*, 2019).

food security (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). The literature then did not focus attention on how the innovative ideas of international development agencies which financed the pilot schemes interacted with domestic politics in low-income countries of Africa to shape poverty reduction approaches. This is a gap in the literature that my study explores.

From the early 2000 onwards, when extreme poverty deepened across SSA amidst the HIV/AIDS pandemic, international aid agencies and organisations pushed for a new poverty reduction agenda involving targeted social cash transfers (Pino and Confalonieri, 2014; Whitfield, 2009). Aid agencies including transnational policy actors played active roles in designing and financing national social protection strategies, as evidenced in the development of country-level Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers[30] (PRSPs) (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012; Pino and Confalonieri, 2014; Whitfield, 2010). Cash transfers were then proposed and adopted in the design of PRSPs (Pino and Confalonieri, 2014), although in some cases the inclusion of donor ideas in country-level PRSPs was enforced through policy conditions (Abdulai, 2020; Whitfield, 2010). In this era, the role of donors in designing and financing poverty reduction programmes with their 'tried and tested ideas' was documented. The literature on the politics of social protection concentrated on the practical challenges of turning these ideas into actual programmes. Consequently, debates centred around the affordability and sustainability of pilot programmes (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). There was not much literature on how domestic politics interacted with transnational actors' ideas to shape the design and implementation of programmes. This gap in the literature relates directly to the overarching focus of this study.

Since the mid-2000s, even when transnational policy actors like the World Bank (WB) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) acknowledged the role of domestic politics and engaged powerful domestic elites in social protection policies (Hickey and Seekings, 2017), much of the literature focused unproblematically on promoting and ensuring the adoption of targeted social cash transfer programmes. There has been limited literature on the politics of implementation particularly beyond the pilot phase. The scholarly works of Lavers (2016b) on Ethiopia's *Productive Safety Net Programme[31]* (PSNP) and on Rwanda's *Vision Umurunge Programme[32]*

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[30] PRSPs were official documents required by major multilateral donors such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank prior to debt relief and receipt of further development assistance (Whitfield, 2010).

[31] A social assistance programme which delivers cash and/or food transfers to chronically food insecure households through public works or in the form of direct income support (Lavers, 2016a).

[32] A social assistance programme which delivers cash grants, public works and financial services to extremely poor households (Roelen, 2017).

(VUP) (Lavers, 2016a) and of Ulriksen (2016) on Tanzania's *Productive Social Safety Net[33]* (PSSN) programme focus on the politics of promotion and adoption of transnational ideas, primarily cash transfers. Moreover, such studies concentrated mostly on eastern and southern African countries with dominant party type governments. There have not been many studies on the politics of implementing social protection in competitive democratic contexts in west Africa. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the politics of implementing social protection using Ghana's LEAP programme as a case study.

Although Abdulai (2020) has recently documented the politics of adoption and implementation of the LEAP programme in Ghana, the elements of implementation he discusses relate to geographic targeting and limited technical capacity. Abdulai's (2020) analysis pays little attention to how domestic politics interacts with the ideas and interests of transnational actors to shape the implementation of LEAP at national and subnational (local government) levels. This is an area where my research questions pay attention to and which this thesis explores in greater depth.

In the emerging literature on the politics of implementing social protection in the context of low-income countries in SSA, the ideas and interests of transnational actors can be viewed as relevant to social protection implementation. This is because of how transnational actors exert influence on social protection policy to achieve their organisational aims and how in turn domestic political elites respond to transnational influences in the realisation of their political interests. These issues reflect the overarching research focus and the research questions which this study aims to answer. At this stage, it is useful to outline what each research question seeks and to examine which bodies of literature are reviewed as a result.

The first research question seeks to examine how the ideas and interests of transnational actors shape the implementation of the LEAP programme. This question provides justification for reviewing the literature on transnational actors in social protection policy process. The second research question examines how Ghana's competitive democratic politics shapes the implementation and subsequent expansion of the LEAP programme. The third research question investigates how local government institutions and actors in Ghana's competitive political environment shape the expansion of LEAP. As the second and third research questions focus on the interplay of political power and elites' interests in the expansion of LEAP at national and

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[33] A social assistance programme that combines conditional cash transfers with public works and aims to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty (World Bank, 016).

local government levels, the literature on political settlements and their intersection with social protection is reviewed.

3.1.1 The role of transnational actors in the policy process

Transnational Actors (TNAs) are broadly defined in international politics as actors who influence policy across state borders (Uhlin, 2009). Categories of TNAs include transnational civil society organisations, such as Save the Children, who advocate for and provide services to disadvantaged people around the world and transnational epistemic communities who seek to influence policy in multiple countries through well-elaborated policy proposals (Béland and Orenstein, 2009; Haas, 1992; Uhlin, 2009). In this thesis, I explore the influence of transnational epistemic communities on the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme, focusing on the most active actors - the WB, DFID and UNICEF. The emphasis on these organisations is because they play leading roles in shaping social protection policies in many low-income countries in SSA (Foli, 2016; Hickey and Seekings, 2017). They are referred to as TNAs in this thesis.

TNA ideas in the policy process are defined as beliefs and opinions about how society should solve its problems (Béland,2005). Ideas are 'specific policy solutions' (Schmidt, 2008 p. 306), comprising recommendations for specific social problems.

Béland and Orenstein (2009) stress that as external policy actors, TNAs can influence domestic social policy, but they 'lack formal veto-powers' which would allow them to exercise the right to make policy directly (p. 9). Nevertheless, they are able to make a strong case for policy ideas during policy meetings with domestic political elites (Béland and Orenstein, 2009; Foli, 2016). TNA ideas, thus can end up as policy proposals, programmes or worldviews reflecting philosophies about how social problems should be resolved. Indirectly, however, when presenting ideas, TNAs have to contend with the interests of domestic elites (Hickey and Seekings, 2017) as these determine whether or not the ideas will be adopted or resisted (Lavers and Hickey, 2015).

A mechanism which facilitates the adoption of TNA ideas is policy diffusion (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Policy diffusion describes the process whereby local policy choices are influenced by policy choices made elsewhere (Gilardi and Wasserfallen, 2019). This contrasts with policy translation, which explains how policy ideas from one context are modified with new meanings and designs to suit other contexts.

Gilardi and Wasserfallen (2019) explain that 'in an interconnected world, policy diffusion has become a defining feature of politics' (p. 1245), and that 'policy makers are influenced by a number of factors among which are (a) the success or failure of policy elsewhere (learning), (b) the pressure from international organisations or powerful countries (coercion) and (c) the perceived appropriateness of policies (emulation)' (p. 1248). While all three factors apply in the case of TNAs' influence in social protection policy in SSA, there is evidence to suggest that TNAs selectively emphasise learning as a mechanism to gain advantage in the struggle to get their ideas accepted. TNAs present successful cases of social protection programmes, particularly of social assistance schemes like cash transfers, through conferences, seminars, and publications to persuade domestic political elites in a different country to adopt them (Hickey and Seekings, 2017; Foli, 2016). A case in the literature is the WB and DFID presenting Ethiopia's social assistance programme, which combines cash transfers and cash-for-work programmes, as a model for Rwanda to follow (Lavers, 2016b).

In exploring how LEAP's TNAs have used policy diffusion, I will examine which cash transfer programme has been presented to Ghana's political elites' as a model to follow. Furthermore, I will explore the forms of pressure they use to present their ideas. In the policy process, TNA ideas are presented in various forms. Transnational actors present ideas as proposals, programmes or core worldviews.

3.1.2   Transnational ideas in social protection policy

TNA ideas as proposals

TNA ideas tend to be presented as proposals in response to defined problems (Béland, 2005). According to Béland and Orenstein (2009), policy proposals are often inspired by researchers in academic institutions whose work involves defining policy problems, identifying possible solutions and offering appropriate solutions for consideration. TNA proposals are often presented at the agenda setting phase of the policy process, where problems are identified and defined (Foli, 2016; Hickey *et al.*, 2018). However, TNAs do not expect that policy proposals once presented will be adopted by domestic political elites. Two mutually reinforcing factors determine whether and how proposals which end up on the policy agendas of national governments will be adopted (Béland 2005; Béland and Orenstein, 2009). The first is whether there is domestic political support for a policy proposal (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993), and the second is whether there is validation from technocrats in the field of social policy (Hall, 1989).

Goldstein and Keohane (1993) argue that, without the support of powerful domestic elites, TNA policy proposals might not get on policy agendas in the first place. Hall (1989), however, argues that it is validation by technocrats with expert knowledge which is critical for policy adoption. Hickey and Bukenya's (2016) study of the adoption of social cash transfer for Uganda's *Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment* (SAGE) programme shows how representatives of DFID, WB and Irish Aid relied on expert knowledge from bureaucrats to champion the policy idea of a social cash transfer. In the case of Ghana, Foli (2016) argues that ideas for reducing vulnerability to extreme poverty in Ghana were first sold to the deputy minister in charge of social welfare, who then became the conduit for promoting the policy in government. What Hickey and Bukenya's (2016) and Foil's (2016) studies show is that political support from domestic political elites was much stronger than the validation of policy proposals by technocrats working in the field of social protection in global south contexts.

Identifying domestic political elites who can be convinced of the importance and impact of TNA policy proposals can strengthen the case for adopting such proposals. However, Gilardi and Wasserfallen (2018) dispute the idea that TNA policy proposals are devoid of politics. They argue that 'policy adoption is not a mere technocratic act', but is political, and 'processed through ideological lenses'. They also stress that, at the domestic level, policymakers are interested not only in what works, but also in what is popular. Thus if policymakers observe that a certain policy is popular elsewhere, they are more likely to adopt it, regardless of the policy consequences (Gilardi and Wasserfallen, 2019). In this thesis, I will explore how TNA proposals were adopted by political elites, the extent to which they served a national policy agenda and whether this agenda was in turn used to realise the political interests of elites.

Transnational ideas as programmes

In the public policy literature, ideas of policy actors are sometimes referred to as programmatic ideas (Campbell, 1998; Mackinder, 2020; Schmidt, 2008). According to Hickey and Seekings (2017), TNAs often promote social cash transfer programmes in fulfilment of their mission statements and organisational goals of reducing vulnerability to extreme poverty. The WB, for example, presents its ideas in the form of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes in response to social problems that require bridging economic and social vulnerability (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Their programmatic ideas are based on the strong belief that receipt of cash grants conditioned upon regular health checks and school attendance helps to bridge economic and social inequalities, enabling beneficiary households to break out of the cycle of intergenerational poverty over time (World Bank, 2004). This belief has been supported by the

experiences of conditional cash transfer programmes like Mexico's *Opportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* (Hickey and Seekings, 2017).

DFID's ideas are also presented as social cash grant programmes, inspired by national social protection ideas from the UK (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). There is an understudied political dimension of this strategy, of adapting global north welfare programmes to meet the welfare needs of the poorest households in global south contexts. Thus, in this thesis I will also explore whether political elites in Ghana are open to global north 'best practices' of addressing poverty and vulnerability.

In presenting programmatic ideas, the politics of social protection literature suggests that TNAs diffuse or translate policy into other contexts (Hickey and Seekings, 2017; Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). For the WB, most of its conditional cash transfer programmes which emanated from Mexico and Brazil were diffused across Latin America before reaching countries in SSA (Hickey *et al.*, 2018; Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). However, many countries in SSA have found it more appropriate to translate or adapt specific components or elements of programmes to suit their development priorities (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016) rather than simply adopting programmatic ideas thought to have been successful in other contexts (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Nevertheless, programmatic ideas are welcomed in contexts that are deemed to be similar. For example, the Rwandan government's social protection implementing partners like the WB borrowed work-based elements of Ethiopia's cash transfer programme to design the *Vision Umurenge Programme* (VUP) (Lavers, 2016b).

However, DFID used policy translation, as opposed to policy diffusion, to promote its ideas. DFID allowed countries to borrow elements of other programmes to formulate specific programmes. For example, differences in the causes of extreme poverty and inequality between Ghana and Brazil meant that Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* Programme was not entirely diffused in the Ghanaian context, but conditional elements of the *Bolsa Familia* programme were adapted to suit the formulation of Ghana's LEAP programme (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Foli, 2016).

The experience of Rwanda and Ghana's adoption of programmatic ideas suggests that transnational actors may present programmatic ideas tested in one context to countries that they wish to diffuse similar ideas. However, in reality, these ideas are adapted or recontextualised to meet local policy needs.

Programmatic ideas of TNAs are not simply diffused or translated into a country after successful implementation of ideas in other contexts. According to Hickey *et al.*, (2018) despite calculated efforts to negotiate programmatic ideas, there are also pushbacks from domestic political elites, particularly when programmatic ideas of TNAs do not fit with the political interests or development philosophies of ruling governments (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). An example is the resistance shown by Ethiopia and Rwanda's ruling elites because TNAs' programmatic ideas were exclusively in the form of social cash transfer programmes and did not have work-based elements. The latter were crucial in reflecting the ruling elites' development philosophy (Lavers, 2016a; Lavers, 2016b). In other cash transfer programmes cited in the politics of social protection literature, TNA ideas were initially resisted before being accepted for similar reasons of not fitting with the development ideologies of ruling elites. The expansion of Uganda's *Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment* (SAGE) programme (Hickey and Bukenya, 2016) and Tanzania's *Productive Social Safety Net* (PSSN) programme (Ulriksen, 2016) are typical cases.

Transnational ideas as worldviews

Ideas of TNAs sometimes represent the worldviews of policy actors (Béland, 2005; Schmidt, 2008; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). TNA beliefs about how households should be lifted from conditions of extreme poverty or which is the 'best' way to address vulnerability to extreme poverty reflects their worldviews about vulnerability and poverty reduction. TNAs' worldviews also illustrate how to respond to development challenges (Béland and Orenstein, 2009; Devereux and White, 2010; Hickey and Seekings, 2017).

According to Devereux and White (2010), since development thinking in the last two decades has shifted from implementing social protection as a mere development activity to a rights-based development policy, TNAs have promoted the implementation of social protection on the basis that it is a right. Thus, for TNAs, enrolling vulnerable households on a cash grants programme was not simply to be interpreted as governments providing income support and linking them to services which respond to welfare concerns. Instead, cash grant programmes for vulnerable households were to be viewed as entitlements which ought to be provided by governments, although only a few countries in the global south, including South Africa, have implemented cash transfer programmes as a right for beneficiaries (Béland and Orenstein, 2009).

Social protection as a fundamental right has implications for who gets targeted. Abdulai (2019) explains that in the case of Ghana's LEAP programme, there were debates at the national level

about whether it was right to give the poorest households cash and whether it would get them out of poverty. In section 5.3.3 of chapter 5, I will discuss the politics around TNAs' push for a social protection bill in Ghana.

3.1.3 Transnational actors' interests in social protection policy

In social protection policy, TNA interests are not explicitly defined, but gauged through their mission statements and organisational goals (Hickey and Seekings, 2017; Hickey *et al.*, 2018). As political actors, their interests can be described as 'their desires, aspirations and goals they hope to achieve' (Mukand and Rodrik, 2018, p. 23). A goal of transnational actors is to support the budgets of governments in low-income countries to implement targeted intervention programmes.

Supporting the implementation of targeted programmes

The WB, DFID and UNICEF share a common goal of assisting low-income countries to design and implement targeted programmes that reflect the interests of their respective development agencies and organisations (Hickey and Seekings, 2017; Pino and Confalonieri, 2014; Whitfield, 2009). This interest finds its way into the design of country-level Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (Temple, 2010; Whitfield, 2009; Whitfield, 2010) which, as I mentioned earlier in section 3.1 on the politics of social protection, comprised the new poverty agenda which featured targeted cash transfer programmes intended to reduce extreme poverty. Also in sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 of chapter 2 regarding the adoption of TNA ideas, I indicated that TNAs recommended targeted cash transfer programmes in almost all poverty reduction plans in West Africa, including that for Ghana (Pino and Confalonieri, 2014). In the context of low-income West African countries, targeted intervention programmes were aimed at 'prioritising the needs of the poor and protecting them from deprivation through access to basic social services' such as education and health' (Pino and Confalonieri 2014, p. 137). This did not seem different from what TNAs intended for Ghana's cash transfer programme.

TNAs had different motivations for focusing on programmes targeted at the poorest. For the WB, it was in response to criticisms of the negative impacts of its structural adjustment programmes and the long-term effects that their austerity measures had on the welfare of the poorest households (Whitfield, 2009b). The WB's aim therefore was to mend and clarify its primary position as a development aid agency with one of its major aims being to improve the living standards of the poorest populations. UNICEF and DFID's interests in targeted programmes were in response to deepening poverty and rising social and economic inequalities

which followed the era of structural adjustments (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). Both the WB and DFID sought to address and meet the immediate needs of households hit hardest as a result of the WB's austerity measures (Whitfield, 2009 b). In this thesis, I intend to explore the extent to which the WB, DFID and UNICEF were able to maintain this agenda in a competitive democratic context.

According to Hickey and Seekings (2017), as epistemic communities, TNAs were inspired by different philosophies and frameworks that underpinned poverty reduction in specific periods. For the WB, it was the Post-Washington Consensus framework which highlighted the role of governments rather than markets in tackling the welfare concerns of households disadvantaged by structural adjustment economic policies (Mosley, 2001; Williamson, 2005). The WB believed that state welfare policies had a role to play in lifting disadvantaged and low-income households out of poverty (Williamson, 2005).

DFID on the other hand applied the 'third-way' ideology, a development framework which advocated a combination of right-wing (free market) and left-wing (state interventionist) policies to improve the wellbeing of disadvantaged households (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). The third way ideology was characterised by an unswerving belief in the merits of the free market but also in democratic socialism, and thus called on the state to enact some socialist policies to reduce economic inequality (Hay, 2018). Thus, to improve the wellbeing of the most disadvantaged households in society, DFID believed in entrepreneurship and wealth creation but was also in favour of increasing social justice and saw state interventionist policies as playing a major role in bringing this about.

In contrast, a human rights philosophy underpinned UNICEF's idea of improving welfare of disadvantaged groups. Crucially, social protection was recognised by UNICEF as a right to be provided by the state (Hickey and Seekings, 2017; Hickey *et al.*, 2018).

Thus, although the WB, DFID and UNICEF shared a collective goal of using targeted cash transfer programmes to reduce vulnerability to extreme poverty, their approaches to realising this goal had slight variations. In this thesis, I will explore the similarities and differences in their approaches and the extent to which this helped domestic political elites to pursue their political interests while at the same time adhering to the overarching poverty reduction interests of TNAs.

In the social protection policy process, when TNAs provide financial resources to implement targeted programmes, they also expect that domestic political elites will implement programmes as intended (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). TNAs often achieve this by enforcing certain policy prescriptions, couched as programme conditions (Gould, 2005; Temple, 2010).

Preserving organisational interests

The literature on TNAs in policy notes that in providing financial assistance to aid-recipient countries, TNAs, particularly the WB and the IMF, apply coercive strategies in ways that allow them to preserve their organisational interests (Gould, 2005; Temple, 2010; Whitfield, 2010).

Coercive strategies involve the use of force, threats and sanctions to ensure specific recommended policies are adhered to (Gould, 2005; Temple, 2010). Coercive strategies of the WB and IMF are cited in the aid literature in relation to requests for donor finance to strengthen the macroeconomy of poor countries. They date to the structural adjustment era of the 1980s, where a set of macroeconomic stabilisation policies were enforced by the WB and the IMF in such a way that aid-recipient countries risked losing requested loans if they did not comply (Temple, 2010; Whitfield, 2010). Left with no option, governments of low-income countries had to comply with implementing conditional economic policies such as the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and liberation of international trade (see Boafo-Arthur, 1999; Gayi, 1991; Whitfield, 2010).

Since the 1990s, however, when participatory approaches and country ownership of policies were promoted by the WB and other aid agencies, less coercive and more consensus-oriented strategies have been employed (Lateef, 2016). The WB and other TNAs in social policy employed less coercive strategies like attending conferences, seminars and workshops to promote and persuade governments to adopt specific programmes or policies (Foli, 2016). A number of cases exemplify the use of less coercive strategies by TNAs on policy adoption, including Uganda's *SAGE* programme (Hickey and Bukenya, 2016) and Ghana's LEAP programme (Foli, 2016) where seminars, conferences and lobbying were employed. These have been described as 'soft power' tactics, in contrast to the previous use of 'hard power' in which policy conditions were enforced (Abdulai, 2020). The two cases also demonstrate situations where coercive strategies have been employed in the implementation of cash transfer programmes to enable the WB and DFID to realise their organisational interests. In this thesis, I aim to explore how TNAs employ hard and soft forms of power.

As noted earlier, in section 3.1 of this chapter, most analyses of the politics of social protection do not adequately explore how the interests of domestic political elites affect the outcome of implementation. As I indicated earlier, this is a gap in the literature that my second and third research questions aim to answer.

3.1.4 National actor interests in social protection policy

National actors in public policy comprise groups that are variously referred to as policy elites (Grindle and Thomas, 1989) and political elites (Hickey, 2008). In democratic contexts, they include elected ministers of state such as ministers of finance and ministers of social protection who make or have oversight over major policy areas. They also include influential government representatives elected to act on behalf of the government (Hickey, 2008). In this thesis, they are referred to as domestic political elites or political elites. As this thesis explores how interests of domestic political elites converge or diverge from TNA interests in the implementation of the LEAP programme, I review literature on national actor interests as well.

In dominant party political contexts, where political power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of a dominant party or leader, elites' interests lie in upholding their own development philosophy (see Lavers, 2016a; Lavers, 2016b) while in competitive political contexts democracies where multiple strong factions compete for political power through electoral processes, the interests of political elites focus on maintaining positions of power.

Upholding the development philosophy of the government

The literature suggests that decisions taken by domestic political elites can be politically motivated or result in benefits for the ruling coalition or government (see Hickey and Bukenya, 2016; Lavers, 2016a; Lavers, 2016b). For example, prior to adopting the Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW) model of the WB, political elites in Ethiopia ensured that the design of the programme aligned with the government's development philosophy. This meant that beneficiary households were not left dependant on government support, but their productive capacity was built as a result (Lavers, 2016a). This led to the development of a programme which did not simply provide grants but where beneficiaries engaged in community development projects in exchange for the cash grant as is typical of LIPW programmes. However, to strengthen the programme's alignment with the dominant development philosophy of the Ethiopian government, complementary linkages, including the extension of microcredit to food insecure beneficiary households, were included in the design of the programme (Lavers, 2016a).

Similarly, in Rwanda, social cash transfers promoted by the WB and DFID had to be redesigned to fit with the inclusive socioeconomic development philosophy of the government (Lavers, 2016b). This meant that the *Vision Umurenge Programme* (VUP) did not exclusively offer unconditional cash grants to those unable to work but included a financial services component to allow beneficiary households to manage their grants and other sources of income received from microcredit institutions. The cases of Ethiopia and Rwanda demonstrate how in dominant party-political contexts, the adoption and subsequent implementation of social protection is used to uphold the development philosophy of ruling elites. In political contexts characterised by intense competition, the interests of elites are different. In democracies such as Ghana's, the result of intense competition for power among political elites' and the constant vulnerability to the loss of power (Levy, 2014; Khan, 2010) means that social protection is used to preserve ruling elites' positions of power once they are elected.

Preserving positions of power to retain office

In their discussion of policy elites' interests, Grindle and Thomas (1989) argue that, in developing countries where democratically elected governments use electoral processes to determine the terms of office of policy elites, the latter become 'overwhelmed with remaining in power' (p. 218). This implies that domestic political elites are driven to execute certain policies and take actions including enlisting their supporters and party sympathisers on social protection programmes in order to gain the continued support and protection they need to secure their positions of influence (de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016). I will discuss this issue in the context of Ghana's LEAP programme as I examine the degree to which the programme has become a conduit through which the NPP and NDC governments prosecute their political interests of retaining power as competition for power has become intense and power alternates between the two governments.

How power is distributed and exercised in ways that allow social protection decisions to be taken could be understood from a political settlement analysis. A review of the political settlement literature and its intersection with social protection is what I next turn to.

3.2   Political settlement and social protection

In this section, I review relevant literature on political settlement and its intersections with social protection in low-income countries.

3.2.1 Definition and purpose

As a concept, political settlement does not lend itself to a single, universally accepted definition, although there is common agreement among scholars about its focus and relevance in development policy.

Slight differences exist in the way political settlement is defined and applied in different policy contexts. DFID's working definition of political settlement describes the concept as the '*common understanding usually forged between elites about how power is organized and exercised'* (DFID, 2010, p. 22). It also has to do with how formal and informal power arrangements play out between influential groups in a country (Park and Cole, 2010). For Khan (2010), political settlement focuses on how the distribution or the balance of power in a polity between different groups shapes the types of institutions that emerge and how such institutions function in practice.

In the definitions presented, there is an emphasis on the distribution and exercise of power at the domestic level, which resonates with this study. I find Khan's (2010) explanation useful because it highlights the distribution of power between contending groups (domestic political elites). In this thesis, I make the argument that the distribution of power and the political interests of elites are interrelated and that to understand how Ghana's LEAP is implemented and subsequently expanded at the local government level, it is important to adopt a political settlement framework.

A political settlement framework is an analytical tool (Di John and Putzel, 2009; Lavers and Hickey, 2015; Parks and Cole, 2010) used to explain the outcome of development interventions. It provides a lens through which to understand how development programmes are influenced by powerful groups (Parks and Cole, 2010). Studies that have adopted a political settlement framework include that of Abdulai and Hickey (2014), who focus on the politics of resource allocation in Ghana, and Abdulai and Hulme's (2014) analysis of the politics of regional inequality in Ghana. Although TNAs may have a big input in the formulation of social protection policy, the prevailing political settlement can influence the outcome of social protection.

3.2.2 Types of political settlement and implications for social protection

The political settlement literature identifies two broad political settlement types, differentiated on the basis of concentration of power, which have significance for the implementation of social

protection. There is the dominant party or dominant ruler type of settlement and the competitive clientelist type of settlement (Levy, 2014).

Dominant Party and Competitive Clientelist Settlements

According to Levy (2014) in a dominant party political settlement, power is highly concentrated among a narrow ruling elite, political party or political leader who have/has very little chance of losing power. Domestic elites are thus less vulnerable to threats from opposing groups and are more likely to develop strong implementation and enforcement capabilities (Khan, 2010). However, a long time horizon of elites in power is not always guaranteed and power could be lost to opposing factions through violence or military coups (Hickey *et al.*, 2018). Public bureaucracy is governed by personalised norms such as clientelism and patronage (Khan, 2010).

There is also commitment to uphold the dominant philosophy or vision of the ruling coalition (Lavers, 2016a; Lavers, 2016b). As a result, domestic political elites in dominant type settlements are more likely to make policy decisions, including those regarding social protection policies, based on beliefs and values that they subscribe to rather than be open to views from external actors (see Grebe and Mubiru, 2014) Lavers, 2016a).

The commitment to a dominant philosophy implies that elites can resist social protection ideas from transnational actors if it these do not align with their own dominant ideologies. According to Lavers and Hickey (2015), to promote buy-in of TNA ideas for social protection implementation, TNAs try to 'persuade dominant actors that their ideas are in line with what elites perceive to be their interests' (Lavers and Hickey, 2015 p. 13). A notable case of dominant ruler type settlement is Uganda's current political settlement where, despite a re-introduction of multiparty politics in 2015, the party system is characterized by a de facto hegemony of the ruling National Resistance Movement Party, which remains in power to date, with president Museveni as the head of the party (Hickey and Bukenya, 2016).

In contrast, competitive clientelism is a type of political settlement which emerges when political power is dispersed more widely among multiple strong factions (Levy, 2014). Political competition between and among factions is intense and elites form coalitions with lower-level groups, together with which they contest their hold on power with powerful groups excluded from the ruling coalition (Levy, 2014). The lower-level groups are like insider clients, as I note in section 2.3 of chapter 2 regarding the nature of power distribution in Ghana. They protect the interests of elites in the ruling coalition (Oduro, Mohammed and Ashon, 2014). In exchange for

their clients' support, political elites' allocate public in ways that strengthens their relationship with their supporters and secure their return to power (Khan, 2010). Thus, like dominant party settlements, there is a transfer of patronage resources to insider clients in competitive clientelist political settlements (Khan, 2010).

In contrast to dominant party settlements which are more likely to be displaced through conflict (Khan, 2010), elites in competitive clientelist political settlements are likely to be displaced in electoral processes. The short time horizon of governments in competitive clientelist settlements means political elites are less likely to hold strongly to particular ideas for development or stick to a particular development ideology (Lavers and Hickey, 2015) in the way that elites in dominant party settlements do. Competitive clientelist settlements are therefore more likely to consider and adopt the ideas of TNAs for social protection implementation, particularly if they have the potential to enable them to retain power.

Despite the short time horizon for elites in competitive clientelist settlements, there is some room for implementation of certain types of social protection programmes, especially ones that can produce quick results. Social cash transfer programmes which are relatively quick to implement and offer short-term gains to political constituents in return for votes are popular (Abdulai, 2019; Whitfield, 2010). As Ghana's political settlement has remained competitive clientelist since the early 2000s (Abdulai, 2020; Osei *et al.*, 2015), in chapter 6 I will explore how the LEAP cash transfer programme has been used by elites to buy political support to retain political power. This feeds into the narrative that political elites are not only interested in what works, but also in what is popular and that electoral consequences affect political parties' attitudes and responses to international programmes (Gilardi and Wasserfallen, 2019). In the case of Ghana, there is little research which unpacks how the implementation of LEAP has been manipulated to reflect political interests. Thus, in chapter 6, I will discuss how elites of the NPP and NDC have pursued aspects of the LEAP programme that are not entirely consistent with the objectives of the programme as promoted by the WB, DFID and UNICEF.

Competitive clientelist settlements, patronage politics and ethnic politics

The political settlement literature highlights patronage and ethnic politics as features of competitive clientelist settlements in low-income countries in SSA (Abdulai, 2020; Khan, 2010; Seekings, 2019).

Patronage politics derives from neo-patrimonialism (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994), a political regime which existed in the post-colonial African continent where governments which democratised but inherited weak state institutions attempted to gain legitimacy from their citizens through offering governmental positions in exchange for loyalty (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994). In contemporary democratic political systems, patronage politics is exemplified by domestic elites offering governmental appointments to specific groups in exchange for their loyalty (Driscoll, 2018 ; Kopecký, 2011).

As competition for electoral power intensifies, political parties build support through relationships of patronage, as I note in section 2.3 of chapter 2, and elites use state resources including social protection to secure the loyalty of specific groups, often referred to as 'clients' (Abdulai, 2020; de-Graft Aikins *et al.,* 2016). In chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis, I will explore and discuss how patronage politics finds its way into the implementation and subsequent expansion of the LEAP programme. My aim is to produce insights into how patronage politics especially at the local government level encourages implementation behaviours meant to retain the political power of elites at the national level of governance.

In addition to patronage politics, ethnic politics is a characteristic of contemporary democratic politics (Berman, 2012;de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Seekings, 2019) that affects distribution of social protection. Ethnic politics refers to a situation in which political elites tend to mobilise support on the basis of appeals to ethnic identity and where political constituents tend to support leaders from the same ethnic group (Lynch, 2015). In Ghana's intense and competitive clientelist settlement, where political elites strive to stay in power, mobilisation of political support is often channelled through ethnic voting (Berman, 2012; de-Graft Aikins *et al.*, 2016; Grebe, 2015; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). What is less clear, and what I intend to explore in this thesis, is how the two main political parties in Ghana have expanded LEAP and whether they have done so along ethnic lines to secure electoral support. The use of ethnic politics to secure electoral support is not unique to the Ghanaian case. For example, Seekings (2019) demonstrates how ethnic politics is exemplified in voter behaviour in Zambia and points out that there is often a 'strong regional pattern of ethnicity in support for political parties and their presidential candidates' (p. 11).

The reliance on ethnic politics in mobilising political support can be problematic, particularly when decisions about the allocation of state resources including social protection are key items on the policy agenda. Allocation decisions are based less on the programme's objectives and

much more on the interests of political elites (Seekings, 2019). As a result, households who do not belong to particular ethnic groups of influential elites are excluded from the benefits of social protection. Ghana's competitive political settlement context presents an ideal situation for exploring how patronage and ethnic politics affects targeting.

As I previously mentioned in section 3.1 regarding the purpose of a political settlement framework, it is used as a lens through which the outcome of social protection is analysed. I next turn to conceptual frameworks which are employed to analyse social protection.

3.3 Social protection conceptual frameworks

This third section first reviews conceptual frameworks which explain the provision of social protection before the conceptual framework for this study is presented.

Among the conceptual frameworks are the transformative social protection, human capital and human rights frameworks (Barrientos and Hulme, 2008). These frameworks explain social protection through the lens of objectives and impact and not through the lens of the politics of its implementation.

The transformative social protection framework of Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) builds on the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) functions of social protection: that social protection provides relief from deprivation, averts deprivation and enhances incomes and capabilities of beneficiaries. Devereux and Sabates Wheeler (2004) add a fourth function, the transformative function, arguing that social protection also transforms the lives of beneficiaries especially when appropriate policies that address the causes of vulnerabilities are pursued.

Barrientos and Hulme (2008) also explain that social protection builds up the human capital of beneficiaries and is intended to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The way in which social protection contributes to human capital is either directly, through skills and services, or indirectly, by providing cash and productive assets to enable households to invest in their own development.

In addition, social protection is regarded as a basic human right and an entitlement that must be provided by the state to address unacceptable levels of deprivation and vulnerability within a given society (Jones and Shahrokh, 2013).

Although the application of these social protection frameworks can provide insights into the effects of social protection on poor households and who benefits from social protection, they are not as useful in analysing implementation of social protection through a political power lens. Crucially, they omit how asymmetric power relations and political interests of domestic political elites affect the implementation of programmes. To explain how Ghana's LEAP was first implemented and the directions in which it has subsequently expanded, the objective of this thesis is to understand the extent to which TNAs have used their positions of power to influence the general direction of LEAP's implementation and also how national and local government-level configurations of power allow other goals that are not consistent with the objective of LEAP to be pursued. Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements Framework, which combines transnational influences with political settlements to analyse the implementation of social protection, is just the framework to help us understand these issues.

3.3.1 The Adapted Political Settlement Framework (APSF)

In this subsection, I describe Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF) and explain how it works. I also underline its usefulness for this study as well as its limitations.

Lavers and Hickey's (2005) Adapted Political Settlements framework (APSF) is an analytical tool that can be used to explain elite commitment to expand social protection in low-income countries. It combines transnational and domestic politics to explain how social protection expands in low-income countries. According to the framework, transnational actors are able to influence government adoption and commitment to social protection by aligning their ideas with the interests of domestic elites (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). The framework thus draws attention to the dynamics of power between transnational and domestic political elites and how that impacts the expansion of social protection in developing country contexts.

Lavers and Hickey (2015) build on Kahn's (2010) original political settlements theory which focuses on political power dynamics by adding transnational factors to explain social protection expansion. Thus, the APSF starts on the premise that adoption of social protection programmes in low-income countries is not simply influenced by power dynamics between political parties but also on the ideas (paradigmatic, philosophies and policy frames) advanced by TNAs. Furthermore, the APSF is based on the premise that social protection expansion in low-income countries is not solely based on political power dynamics but can be influenced by the financial contribution of TNA especially if transnational finance forms a major part of the social protection

budget in low -income countries (Hickey *et al.*, 2018). In other words, transnational actors can use their ideas and financial muscle to influence the actions or behaviour of domestic political elites with responsibility for social protection policy and implementation.

Figure 3.1 is a modified version of Lavers and Hickey (2015) original APSF. In this modified version, I have replaced global actors with transnational actors and shown the key channels of TNA influences which are through **(1)** political settlements **(2)** policy coalitions and **(3)** funding. As is the case of the original version of the APSF, the components of the framework are main channels of TNA influence. First, political settlements reflect the political power dynamics in the implementing country and comprise formal and informal institutions of power. To achieve their organisational goals of reducing extreme poverty and improve wellbeing of vulnerable groups, TNAs engage primarily with actors in formal institutions of power to influence the adoption and expansion of social protection. Next, TNAs in social protection policy contexts comprise a strong policy coalition as they combine their paradigmatic ideas, philosophies and frame problems in ways that make for the adoption of ideas by domestic political elites. Finally, TNA funding is important in terms of how much control they can have on social protection implementation and expansion. The channels of influence shown in the modified version of the APSF below and how such influences affect the uptake of social protection is explained below.

Figure 3.1   A modified version of Lavers and Hickey's (2015) APSF
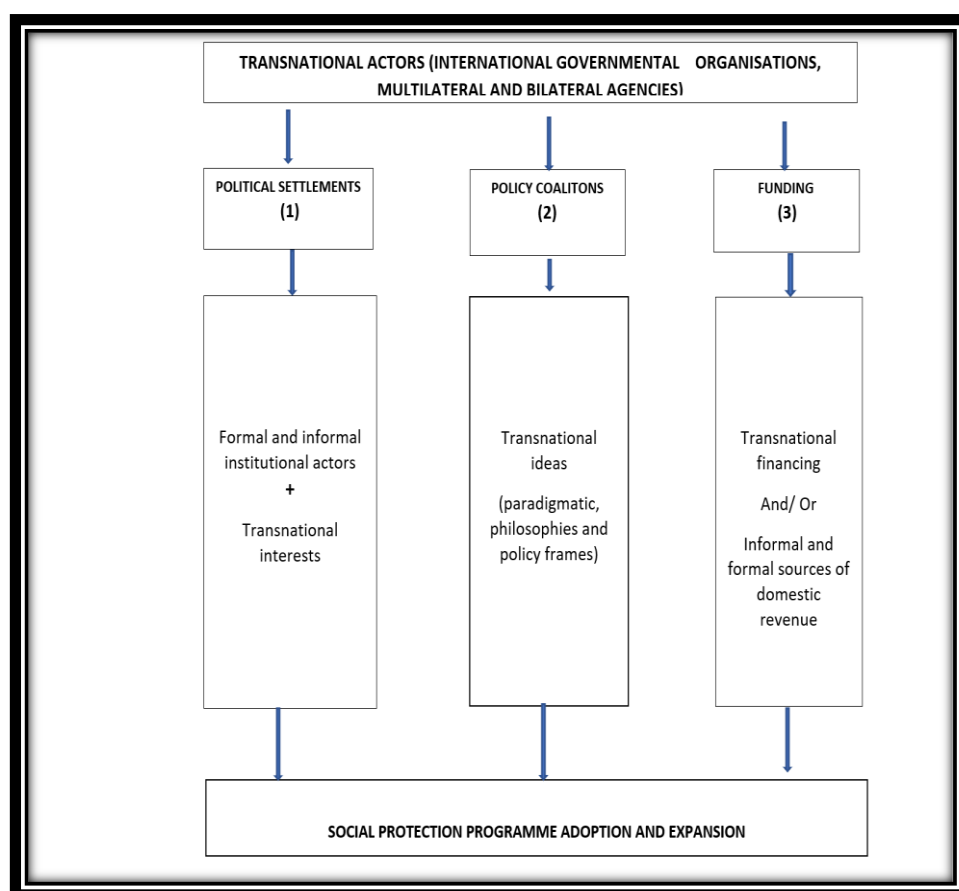
Source: *Adapted from the Adapted Political Settlements Framework.*

An explanation of the APSF framework

As noted earlier, TNAs channel their influence through formal and informal institutional actors as reflected in the political settlements **(1),** through policy coalitions **(2)** and through funding **(3).** From figure 3.1 these channels of influences are illustrated by the downward pointing arrows from each of the numbered textboxes through to the social protection adoption and expansion rectangle. Transnational interests interact with interests of political elites in formal institutions of power to shape social protection adoption and expansion. Second, as they constitute a strong policy coalition, transnational actors approach the policy table with tried and tested ideas, world views and policy frames to influence the adoption of social protection programmes. They frame solutions to social problems in ways which fit with the interests of the political settlement. If their framing aligns with the ideology and political interests of ruling coalitions, then social protection programmes are more likely to continue expanding. Social protection adoption and expansion is also influenced by either transnational actor financing or resources generated at domestic level. For example, where domestic taxation forms a significant source of revenue for

social protection, then domestic elites rather than transnational actors are likely to assume greater ownership in driving the expansion of social protection programmes. On the other hand, where there is a relatively large informal economy as opposed to a formal economy then enough revenue cannot be generated from domestic taxes to distribute social protection. Transnational financing then takes on an influential role. When this happens, transnational actors can use their financial strength to drive social protection expansion.

The appropriateness of the APSF to this thesis

The APSF has relevance for each of the research questions of this study.

In a democratic political environment where multiple actors approach policy with different interests, TNAs are a powerful group who push for the adoption of specific ideas. These are normally tried and tested ideas and models of social protection which are known to work in similar policy contexts. They are also guided by their organisational goals and mission statements which emphasise poverty reduction and improvement of the welfare of vulnerable groups. The APSF will help to analyse and explain how ideas proposed by three TNAs, DFID, the WB and UNICEF, and their organisational goals combine to shape the design and implementation of the LEAP programme. The analysis will be presented in chapter 5 and responds to research question one.

Second, the APSF places emphasis on political settlements. It argues that transnational actors' ideas combine with political interests of domestic elites to explain commitment to social protection. In Ghana's competitive clientelist settlement where elites are highly vulnerable to the loss of power in competitive elections, retaining power is a priority of elites once they are elected into office (Abdulai, 2020). The APSF will help explore the different ways in which elites retain power and how their strategies for re-election influences LEAP's expansion. The analysis will be presented in chapter 6 and addresses the second research question.

Third, the APSF framework, with its emphasis on the distribution of power, will be useful to explain political power dynamics in the context of LEAP's expansion at the local government level. In a competitive political environment where the period during which power is shifted to local government heads coincides with the term of office of the ruling government, local government elites become as vulnerable to losing their positions of power as the elites at the national level who appointed them. In such contexts , personalised norms such as patronage remain strong (Levy, 2014) and political elites form patronage networks with insider clients in

exchange for political support to retain power. The APSF will help to analyse and understand how these power dynamics play out in the expansion of LEAP at the local government level. The analysis will be presented in chapter 7 and responds to the third research question.

Limitations of the APSF

Despite the relevance of the APSF to this study, it is also important to point out that the APSF may not identify and explain important insights regarding the politics of implementing LEAP that emerge from the data analysis. These insights may reveal gaps in the APSF which will require further elaboration. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I will revisit the framework and draw on the additional insights from the study to review the APSF in order to make suggestions for its improvement and how it might be applied in future research on the politics of social protection in the context of SSA.

According to Gray (2019), 'political settlement analysis starts with the observation that in low-income countries, economic and political power frequently lies outside formal institutions' (p. 3). This means that powerful groups frequently use groups that operate outside formal institutions and manifest themselves in clientelism. A limitation of the APSF is its lack of engagement with the informal networks that operate outside formal institutions where relatively powerful actors within those institutions can exert influence on expansion decisions and ultimately impact outcomes. In revisiting the framework in Chapter 8 of this thesis, I will explore how the framework can be used to identify informal institutions, the sources of power of the actors therein and how they influence the implementation of social protection.

3.4 Conclusion

This literature review has revealed the gaps in the politics of social protection literature which this thesis is focused on. It has directed attention to the relatively thin and limited literature on transnational and domestic politics of social protection implementation, areas that this research focuses on. The discussion in this chapter has also highlighted the concepts of TNA ideas and interests as critical tools of TNA influence in the policy process as well as of political settlements. These concepts are used to frame the research questions of this study. The chapter also presented Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF), pointing out its relevance for this study and its limitations.

The next chapter presents the methodology and methods of data collection employed in this study. It focuses attention on the methodological decisions I took including the research approach and design which helped me collect and analyse data to answer the overarching research question of this study.

Chapter 4   Methodology and Methods

Chapter purpose and structure

In the three chapters preceding this one, I focused the discussion on the overarching research topic of this study: how transnational and domestic politics shapes the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme. I began with an introduction to the problem in chapter 1, the context within which the topic of interest emerged in chapter 2 and a review of the relevant literature in chapter 3. I also introduced the conceptual framework that will be employed in analysing findings from the data collected.

In this chapter, I explain the methodological decisions I took, including the tools of data collection and analysis employed to gather and analyse evidence, to address the overarching research question of this study.

I start in section 4.1 by re-stating the research questions this study will address. In section 4.2, I describe the research approach and orientation adopted for this study and justify its appropriateness. In section 4.3, I detail the research design, the selection of sites and explain reasons for the choices made. In section 4.4, I discuss the data collection procedures followed in 4.5 by data collection methods for addressing the three research questions. In section 4.6, I discuss the data analysis tools and go on to discuss the reliability and validity of my data in section 4.7. In section 4.8, I present reflections on my positionality as a researcher, and in section 4.9 I summarise and conclude the chapter.

4.1   Research questions

In section 1.3 of the introduction chapter, I indicated the purpose of this study as aiming to understand how, in Ghana's competitive democratic political environment, transnational ideas and interests as well as domestic political elites' interests play out and influence the implementation of the LEAP cash transfer programme. I focused this objective on the overarching research question re-stated below as:

How have transnational and domestic politics shaped the implementation of the LEAP programme in Ghana?

To answer the overarching question, I posed three sub-questions.

Research question one:

How have the ideas and interests of transnational actors shaped the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme?

To answer the above question, I explore how the ideas and interests of the WB, DFID and UNICEF have shaped the design and implementation of LEAP under two ideologically different governments.

Research question two:

How does Ghana's competitive democratic politics drive the expansion strategies of LEAP?

This question focuses on how Ghana's competitive clientelist settlement, characterised by intense and constant competition for power between the NPP and NDC, has influenced the expansion strategies of NPP and NDC elites.

Research question three:

How do local government institutions and actors in Ghana's competitive political setting impact the expansion of LEAP?

This question illustrates how Ghana's local government system and powerful actors within local government have shaped the expansion of LEAP as political power has alternated between NDC and NPP governments.

As the research questions above were intended to gather data that produced in-depth insights into issues around the ideas, interests of transnational actors (TNAs) and interests of domestic elites to explain how LEAP is implemented, I found the adoption of a qualitative research approach useful.

4.2 Research approach and orientation

Two major research approaches widely recognised in the social research literature are quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research is employed to test or confirm theories about social phenomena and to establish generalisable facts about a topic (Bryman, 2012). In contrast, qualitative approaches are employed when the research is focused on interpreting the meanings of concepts and thoughts and on understanding the experiences of research participants. In addition, a qualitative research approach aims to gather deep insights from multiple perspectives on topics that are not very well understood (Bryman, 2012; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). In this study, I adopted a qualitative rather than a quantitative research approach because the objective of the study was to provide deep insights into the politics of implementing the LEAP social protection programme.

A characteristic of qualitative research which applies to this study is the source of knowledge construction. In contrast to the quantitative researcher, who aligns with the positivist tradition and constructs knowledge from describing observed patterns, the qualitative researcher identifies with the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivists construct knowledge with those they study and work closely with (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). I located this study within the interpretivist paradigm because of its tradition of enabling the researcher to co-construct knowledge with research participants (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). This meant that I did not assume simple causal relationships with predictive outcomes as the quantitative researcher would do. Instead, I approached and probed conversations with research participants to understand how and why two major governments, which had competed for and alternated power in the last two decades, expanded the LEAP programme as soon as they assumed office. To achieve this goal, my role as an 'instrument' was crucial. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point out that in constructing knowledge, the qualitative researcher should themselves be a 'key instrument' in data collection because of how their research orientation could unearth understandings of the phenomena being studied.

In addition to the qualitative researcher's source of knowledge construction, the ontological position, or how they view social entities, is important in gaining deep insights into social phenomena (Bryman, 2012; Punch, 2003). The qualitative researcher draws on multiple experiences and perspectives of research participants (Bryman, 2012; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) to understand the topic under investigation. To understand how LEAP was implemented and expanded by two major governments, I explored the realities of multiple research participants, whose perspectives were reflected in their experiences with LEAP and what they understood as contributing to its implementation and expansion. The qualitative case study design which I applied in this study is discussed next.

4.3   Case study

Bryman (2012) notes that a qualitative researcher employs a case study design to gain specific and in-depth knowledge about a real-world subject. Not only was the goal of the study consistent with the purpose of employing a case study design, but most characteristics of a case study design were particularly suited to this research.

A case study lends itself to the use of more than a single source of data in contrast to other designs, such as a survey, which use one data source (Yin, 2003). Accordingly, in this study, a combination of interview and documentary sources was used.

In comparison with other qualitative designs like an ethnographic study, a case study design has the advantage of allowing the unearthing of knowledge through dialogue with participants without necessarily immersing oneself into the life and work of research participants (Creswell, 2014).

In addition, the researcher using a case study design explores the event being studied over a defined period (Yin, 1989). In this study, I focused on the implementation and expansion of Ghana's LEAP programme over a ten-year period as political power alternated between New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) governments as follows: From 2008 LEAP was launched by the NPP government and expanded by the NDC government between 2009-2016. From 2017-2018 LEAP expansion continued under the administration of the NPP government.

Furthermore, a case study can be employed to conduct an in-depth study of a single phenomenon or multiple events depending on the objectives of the study (Mason, 2002; Yin, 2003). In this study, I employed a single case study design because my research focused solely on the politics (transnational and domestic) of implementing the LEAP programme, even though I conducted detailed case studies of LEAP's implementation in selected districts, to gain a much broader and deeper understanding of implementation as implementation occurred under the NPP and NDC governments.

Despite the depth of insights gained in studying a single case, one limitation is the inability to generalise from it and replicate it in other contexts (Bell, 2005; Creswell, 2014). This view, however, is challenged by Bassey (1981), who argued that although generalisation of single events is not possible, relatability should be the guiding principle, and that specific details of a case study could relate to similar studies or contexts. As I explore how transnational and domestic politics shape the implementation and expansion of the LEAP programme, aspects of the politics (transnational ideas and domestic political interests) can inform the implementation of social protection programmes in similar political contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.3.1 Selecting the case study sites

Choosing a research site for qualitative study involves a great deal of planning to connect with prospective research participants (Patton, 2002). In this study, two main factors were considered in selecting case study districts. First, the type of districts which implemented LEAP, and second, factors which facilitated the data collection process.

The type of district which implemented LEAP: Pilot and Expansion districts

Two types of districts which implemented LEAP are described as pilot and expansion districts in this thesis.

Pilot districts in this thesis refer to the first 21 districts selected by NPP government, initially to test the cash transfer model proposed by the Brazilian mission team and endorsed by V & SWG. The pilot districts were not restricted to particular regions but comprised districts across the nine geographical regions of the country which had a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (GOG, 2007). The pilot implementation period lasted a period of five years from 2008-2013. Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly in the central region and Akuapem South district in the eastern region were among the pilot districts for the LEAP programme. LEAP was first implemented in 2008 in Cape Coast under the NPP administration and in 2012 in the Akuapem South district under the NDC administration. During the period, the LEAP Operations Manual which outlined the role and responsibilities of district and community actors was not yet operational. Assemblymen and social welfare directors were thus responsible for identifying and selecting households for the programme.

Following the pilot implementation period, LEAP was not abandoned in these districts but continued under the NDC government from 2009. Implementation continued in the pilot districts as the programme expanded to three new vulnerable households which comprised the disabled, old people and pregnant women in addition to OVCs across the country in accordance with the LEAP design plan (GOG,2007 ; World Bank, 2016). Districts which benefitted from LEAP under NDC's administration beginning from 2009 and beyond the pilot period when NDC was re-elected for a second term, from 2013 are described as expansion districts in this thesis. In addition, districts which were selected for LEAP under the NPP government when the latter gained power from the NDC in 2017, fall into the category of expansion districts in this thesis. Mfantseman Municipal and Akuapem North districts in the central and eastern regions of Ghana were expansion districts both of which began LEAP operations in 2017 under NPP's administration.

Table 4.1 below summarises the LEAP pilot and expansion case study districts, year of implementation in districts and government in power.

Table 4.1 Selected pilot and expansion districts, year of implementation and government in power

DISTRICT NAME	DISTRICT TYPE	GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION	YEAR OF LEAP IMPLEMENTATION IN DISTRICT	GOVERNMENT IN POWER
Akuapem North Municipal	Expansion	Eastern region	2017	NPP
Akuapem South District	Pilot	Eastern region	2012	NDC
Cape Coast Metropolitan	Pilot	Central region	2008	NPP
Mfantseman Municipal	Expansion	Central region	2017	NPP

Source: *field work data*

My decision to select two pilot and two expansion districts, was to detail in my analysis, the genesis of LEAP's implementation and how implementation of LEAP compared between pilot and expansion districts. My aim was to get a deeper sense of the nuances in implementation through the experiences of research participants under NPP and NDC administrations in pilot and expansion districts as power alternated between the two governments.

In addition to the type of districts, I considered factors which facilitated the data collection process in my choice of case study districts.

Factors which facilitated the data collection process

Three factors, geographical accessibility of the district, familiarity with the culture of the district and the political status (stronghold or non-stronghold) of the district, were crucial in my decisions regarding the choice of case study districts.

Geographical accessibility was key in choosing districts. Since the design of my research was not suited to prolonged periods of stay in any particular setting (Bryman, 2012), I had to think of districts with easy accessibility to social welfare offices and LEAP communities, ideally by public transport. Districts in the eastern region were my first choice because there were several pilot and expansion districts that I could choose from and interview participants could be easily reached by public transport from a town where I stayed. Akuapem North Municipal was therefore selected as an expansion district and Akuapem South District as a pilot district.

Another factor that influenced my choice of case study districts was familiarity with the culture of the district. It made more sense to me to select research sites in districts where I was more familiar with the cultural norms, practices and local dialects. Bryman (2012) notes that cultural

connections of the researcher can help the trust building process, which in turn enables data to be gathered by the researcher. Growing up and working in Ghana taught me the importance of societal values and emotional attachment people have towards cultural practices such as greeting in the dialect of a community. Having the ability to communicate reasonably well in the dialect of a community meant that, as I conducted interviews, I would understand specific vocabulary used and would not need an interpreter. An added advantage for me was that I would maximise the time I spent with research participants but could also direct the conversation in ways that still allowed participants to express their views on their own terms. Based on this, LEAP districts in the central region of Ghana were selected. My familiarity with the Fante language spoken in many districts in the central region stems from my formative years, tertiary education as well as my early years of teaching in three different districts in the central region. Thus, I chose Cape Coast Metropolitan as the pilot district and Mfantseman Municipal as the expansion district.

Lastly, the political status of the district was also important. I had been thinking hard about the sensitivity of my topic and how it could affect the quality of data I collected. As I indicated in section 3.2.2 of the literature review chapter, historically, districts in the Ashanti and Volta regions of Ghana are recognised as political strongholds of the NPP and NDC parties (Ayee, 2011) while districts in other regions of the country including Eastern, Central and Greater Accra were recognised as swing voting regions from time to time. My concern was that in sampling a district which was known to be a political base for either party, I would be expected to direct the interview in ways that only produced strong and positive views about implementation experiences with the result that my research questions might not necessarily be answered. Therefore, I selected districts in swing voting regions. The Central and Eastern regions of Ghana were not known to be political strongholds of either the NPP or the NDC at the time of my data collection.

The result of these decisions were the pilot and expansion districts case study districts I selected summarised in table 4.1 above. The location of the case study districts in relation to the map of Ghana is shown in Appendix 1.

4.4. Data collection preparation

Having decided on the case study sites, I next focused on the procedures and protocols to prepare me for data collection. First, I planned the different sampling strategies I would apply in the selection of research participants. Second, I followed up the necessary protocols in Ghana

to gain permission to conduct research. Third, I developed and tested an interview guide. Fourth, I ensured that relevant research ethics in terms of consent and anonymity were addressed prior to data collection. These procedures were all considered in the light of my timeframe for data collection, which is presented below.

Table 4.2 Fieldwork time frame

Period	Activity
November - December 2017 December 12th, 2017	Arrival in Ghana Ethical approval application received. - Mapping out and planning research sites; commute; research participants
December 20th, 2017 - January 15th, 2018	Preparation for data collection - Sampling - Data collection protocols - Developing an interview guide - Ensuring compliance with ethical procedures
January 16th - April 30th, 2018	Interviews and documentary data collection
May 1st - June 30th, 2018 July 2nd - 3rd, 2018	- Interview data validation - Return to Sussex University

Source: *Author's compilation from fieldwork*

4.4.1 Sampling strategies

A number of sampling strategies were considered in this study. Purposive and snowball strategies were employed prior to data collection, while opportunistic sampling was applied during interview data collection.

Purposive sampling

Bryman (2012) and Creswell (2014) note that most qualitative researchers emphasise the importance of purposive sampling to their work, particularly when the aim of the study is to gain detailed knowledge rather than make statistical inferences about the phenomena being studied. Research participants are therefore selected 'in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed' (Creswell, 2014, p. 146). Considering this criterion, I sampled five broad groups of research participants. Two groups at the national level were LEAP advisors representing TNAs and relevant officials of government ministries and departments and civil society groups. The three groups sampled at the local government level comprised LEAP officials at the district and community levels and beneficiaries. All groups

sampled had some exposure to the implementation of the LEAP programme over the ten-year period which this study covers.

To allow for variation in my sampling frame as recommended by Patton (2002), I also selected those who were indirectly involved in LEAP's implementation but could provide some insights into the transnational and domestic politics of implementing LEAP. Representatives of civil society groups including research fellows fit into this category. My intention for selecting this group was that, in addition to the political lens which policy officials provided, technocratic perspectives would provide varied and enriched data on the politics of implementing the LEAP programme. I also considered snowball sampling to draw in hard-to-reach research participants.

Snowball sampling

Bryman (2012) describes snowball sampling as a technique employed in purposive sampling when the researcher is trying to sample hard-to-reach populations. As a democratic country, changes in political power in Ghana are often associated with changes in political appointments and sometimes changes in public servants' positions. This meant that policy officials and public servants who held relevant information regarding the adoption process or aspects of implementation might have moved on to other positions. Snowball sampling was just the strategy to reach such participants.

Snowball sampling helped me trace two technocrats who were part of the V&E SWG formed prior to the adoption process. As well as hoping to get background information, my plan was to enquire about up-to-date documentation on the implementation of LEAP.

To add to my sample size, I also embraced opportunities to sample individuals whom I had not planned to interview but nonetheless could provide data to answer my research questions.

Opportunistic sampling

Patton (2002) notes that opportunistic or emergent sampling occurs when the researcher makes sampling decisions during the process of collecting data. My decision to interview an official from a LEAP support institution, such as the Ghana Single Household Registry, a government department which managed Ghana's household poverty data, was unplanned at the onset of my study. Nonetheless, an understanding of his role through informal conversations with policy officials suggested he might have views and experiences which could potentially answer my research questions.

The result of the sampling strategies employed, considering other methodological decisions including the research approach (qualitative), orientation (interpretivist) and design (case study), was the sample size of 53 I obtained. Research participants sampled for this study were grouped under national and sub-national or local government levels and ranged from Ministry officials and transnational policy advisors at the national level, to community LEAP implementing committees at the community level. This is summarised in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3   Research participant groups

LEVEL	RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	
NATIONAL	DFID, World Bank, UNICEF advisors	3
	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) officials	2
	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning officials	2
	LEAP Management Secretariat (LMS) officials	6
	LEAP support institutions co-ordinators	4
	Civil Society groups	3
LOCAL GOVERNMENT /SUB-NATIONAL	**DISTRICT**	
	District Social Welfare Officers	5
	District LEAP Implementation Committee members (DLIC)	3
	District LEAP Support Workers	4
	COMMUNITY	
	Community LEAP Implementation Committee members (CLIC)/ Community Focal Persons (CFPs)	11
	HOUSEHOLD	
	Beneficiaries	10
TOTAL NUMBER		**53**

Source*: Author's compilation from fieldwork*

Having selected the research participants for this study, the next task was navigating access to research participants.

4.4.2   Gaining permission to conduct research in Ghana

As is the requirement of data collection in Ghana, identifying the right person to grant permission for data collection was necessary. Thus, prior to starting my fieldwork in Ghana, I formally wrote to the administrative head of the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection,

setting out the broad parameters of what my research would focus on and the duration of the research. During my meeting with him, I discussed potential research participants and he made suggestions including specific individuals to speak to, which I found very useful. Permission was granted following my meeting with the Chief Director, allowing me to conduct research at both national and subnational (local government) levels. A copy of this letter is attached in Appendix 2.

As part of the data collection process, follow up letters on the Chief Director's approval were issued by the deputy director of LEAP to social welfare officers in my case study districts. The aim was to make a formal request to access relevant data. To quicken the data collection process, I personally sent copies of the letters, shown as an attachment in Appendix 3, to District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs). These processes were necessary as they allowed me to meet with, introduce myself to and explain the purpose of the research to local government staff ahead of the actual data collection process. After I gained permission to conduct my research, I next thought of developing an interview guide.

4.4.3. Developing an interview guide and testing questions

As a qualitative researcher looking to make sense of participants' experiences regarding the politics of implementing the LEAP programme, I found developing an interview guide necessary. Generating relevant data based on my conceptual framework and research questions for different groups of participants was a task that required some planning to get the most out of research participants' experiences.

A key principle in developing an interview guide is that broad topic areas guide the researcher in ways that do not require the researcher to follow the order of interview questions as would be the case in survey research, for example (Bryman, 2012). Consequently, I developed a less rigid schedule that provided some structure to my study but at the same time kept track of the broad themes that I needed to investigate. The interview guides I developed to generate relevant data were tailor made to fit the varied roles and experiences of the research participants but did not deviate from the overall goal of the study. Thematic areas ranged from design and implementation challenges for LEAP advisors and officials at the national level to the socio-cultural politics for community actors at the local government level. The guide was not intended to be followed, but only to help focus and re-direct questions when the need arose.

I followed the rules of writing interview questions suggested in the social research literature. One was to avoid leading questions as these direct the respondent to answer in a particular way

and do not give enough latitude to the respondent (Bryman, 2012; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). In addition, I avoided writing very general questions that produced a range of interpretations and kept away from writing double barrelled questions (May, 2011; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Instead, I designed questions that required only one response at a time.

All questions were open-ended to allow research participants the freedom to express their views whilst keeping in mind the broad research questions (May, 2011) of this study.

Guided by the conceptual framework and research questions of this study, I developed interview guides for four groups of research participants in line with the multilevel analytical strategy employed in this study. One for actors at the national/policy level comprising transnational and domestic elites and three different guides for participants at the local government level comprising district and community actors and beneficiaries. Samples are attached as Appendix 4.

To ensure the reliability of the interview questions, the draft interview guide was first given to my supervisors to review and provide feedback. It turned out that some questions were too general and would do little to answer my research questions. Accordingly, I revised them and got them reviewed a second time by a colleague PHD candidate who had employed semi-structured interviews and was in his final stages of data collection. He advised that I clarify some questions before testing them. Following a second revision to the guide, the interview questions were ready to be tested.

I tested the guide first on a retired public-sector official who had previously worked with transnational companies including Nestle and Unilever, and later on a government official whose line of work involved the management of social intervention programmes including the Ghana School Feeding programme. Although both pilot interviews gave me a sense of the policy area I was about to investigate, I still felt handicapped because the pilot interview sessions did not adequately produce the in-depth answers I was looking for. Looking back on questions and their corresponding answers, it seems that I was not asking 'why' and 'how' things were happening. Thus, I had to adapt my interviewing technique.

What I learnt through the pilot interview sessions was that in some cases, more information was needed to get a deeper understanding and, in such situations, I had to probe and follow up in order that I sufficiently address the broad areas and themes of my research questions. A number of social research scholars including May (2011) and White and Drew (2011) highlight the importance of probing in qualitative interviewing, noting that the researcher can probe beyond

the responses and follow up on issues that emerge for a deeper understanding of the social phenomena being investigated. Once I was confident that I could alter my questioning techniques and had a draft interview guide, I was ready to collect data. However, I had to address the ethical issues associated with collecting empirical data.

4.4.4. Ethical considerations

All research with human participants involve some degree of risk to the researcher and research participants (Bryman, 2012; May, 2011). As a result, I followed all the ethical guidelines before and during the data collection process to minimise potential risks to myself and to research participants. This comprised gaining ethical approval prior to the start of data collection and addressing consent and anonymity issues.

First, I had already gained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Sussex to conduct fieldwork. This was necessary to ensure that I had considered the possible risks of conducting research to myself and research participants involved in this study and was confident that I had taken steps to minimise possible risks. The date I received ethical clearance and the start date of data collection are indicated in my fieldwork timetable in table 4.2 above.

Second, consent forms designed by the Ethics Committee of my university were given to research participants prior to interview data collection. This form outlined the title of my research project, the rights of research participants to participate voluntarily in the study and measures I intended to take to maintain confidentiality of research participants. In cases where research participates were unable to read and sign, I explained to them and gained their consent before the start of interviews.

Another ethical issue was maintaining confidentiality. Prior to interview data collection, I assured research participants of the confidentiality of their responses considering the sensitivity of the topic I was investigating. I explained that data analysis would not contain any personal details or names. Instead, their identities would be concealed in interviewee reference codes. However, as total anonymity was impossible, I gained consent to use their roles and positions in order to provide some context to the analysis of the interview data. Furthermore, I hinted that the names of the two major governments and their political manifestos were in the public domain, so it was impossible to anonymise them. The reference codes I developed were a combination of the interviewee's organisation or administrative level from which they were sampled, the sequence in which they were interviewed, and the rank or position of the interviewee. This is explained briefly in three stages as followed.

First, I assigned codes to the organisation or administrative level from which interviewees were sampled. For example, DP was used to represent transnational actor, M for ministry official and D for district official. Table 4.4 below outlines the codes adopted for broad participant groups at national and local government levels. An explanation of the coding system follows.

Table 4.4.   Research participant codes

ORGANISATION/ ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL	CODE
TRANSNATIONAL/DEVELOPMENT PARTNER UNICEF DFID World Bank	DP UN DF WB
MINISTRY	M
LEAP Secretariat	LS
LEAP Support Institutions	LSI
Civil Society Organisations	CS
DISTRICT	D
Akuapem North	AN
Akuapem South	AS
Cape Coast	CC
Manya- Krobo	MK
Mfantseman	MF
COMMUNITY	C
LEAP BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS	LB

Source*: Author's compilation from field data*

Next, I added a number to represent the sequence in which participants were interviewed. For example,

- DP 1   First Development Partner official interviewed
- M 2   Second Ministry official interviewed

Third, I assigned codes to the rank or position of the research participant. This was indicated by a forward slash and in the case of district level, due to the relatively high number of research

participants interviewed, the forward slash was followed by a dash representing the initial of the district.

For example,

- /DSW- MF   stands for District social welfare director of the Mfantseman Municipal
- /HME   stands for Head of Monitoring and Evaluation
- /DLIC-AN stands for District LEAP Implementing Committee member of Akuapem North district

To summarise, a quotation from D5/DSW- MF can be traced to the fifth person I interviewed at the district level, in the person of the District Social Welfare Director at Mfantseman Municipal. A table showing an interviewee list together with their reference codes can be found as an attachment in Appendix 5.

4.5   Data collection methods

As previously noted in section 4.3 regarding the features of a case study, multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 2003). In this study, three data collection sources were utilised to answer the research questions. These were semi-structured interviews, observations specific to LEAP events and documents.

While semi-structured interviews and documents were employed to generate relevant information from policy officials at the national level to answer research questions 1 and 2, a combination of interviews, documents and LEAP event-specific observations were employed to gather data from LEAP officials and beneficiaries intended for research question 3. The participant groups that I administered the interviews to, observed and collected documents from, allowed me to gather insights into my topic of interest. The data collection methods, corresponding research questions, and research participants are thus summarised in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5   Data collection methods, corresponding research questions, and research participants

Data collection methods	Research questions and research participants
Semi-structured interviews, documents	**RQ 1** • LEAP programme advisors of the WB, DFID and UNICEF • Social Protection Ministry officials • LEAP directors at the LEAP Management Secretariat • Officials at LEAP Support Institutions • Civil Society Organisations
Semi-structured interviews, documents	**RQ 2** • Social Protection Ministry officials • Ministry of Finance officials • LEAP directors at the LEAP Management Secretariat • Officials at LEAP Support Institutions • Civil Society representatives
Semi-structured interviews, LEAP event-specific observations, documents	**RQ 3** • Civil Society Organisations • District Social Welfare Officers • District LEAP Implementation Committees • Community LEAP Implementation Committees/ Community Focal Persons • Beneficiary households

Source: *Author's compilation from field work*

4.5.1   Semi-structured interviews

I selected semi-structured interviews as one of the methods to investigate my topic of interest. In contrast to highly structured interviews which adopt closed-ended questions and restrict the responses of interviewees, semi-structured interviews employ open-ended questions and allow some flexibility in interview responses. The flexibility in interview responses allows the researcher to follow up on specific issues raised, to dig deeper and understand the realities of research participants (Bryman, 2012; May, 2011). These characteristics suited my research design.

While most of my semi-structured interviews involved face-to-face interaction, there were a few instances where skype interviews were suggested by research participants because of their inability to honour scheduled interviews. The suggestion for an alternative means of data collection draws on Deakin and Wakefield (2014), who posit that conducting skype interviews provides 'an opportunity to talk to otherwise inaccessible participants' (p. 5). At first, I was a bit apprehensive about using skype to collect interview data since I entertained concerns that I would lose the non-verbal cues normally interpreted in face-to-face interaction. However, with the use of the camera facility in skype interviews, I could interpret the winks and frowns of research participants. Berg and Lune (2007) note that the use of the video facility in a skype interview enables the researcher to capture gestures and other non-verbal language in much the same way as face-to-face interviews allow.

As well as one-to-one semi-structured interviews, there were unplanned group interviews. Group interviews were conducted with research participants at both national and local government levels. At the national level, a group interview resulted from two research fellows in the same institution sharing their experiences of exposure to LEAP. At the district level, group interviews were unavoidable, particularly in situations where the open plan layout of social welfare offices did not allow for privacy in conversations. As district level LEAP officials including social welfare directors shared their space with implementing officials, it was difficult to single out and have a one-to-one interview with an official without colleagues sitting close to the research participant listening and providing their views on questions not directed at them. This situation confirms May's (2001) explanation that group interviews can occur in circumstances over which the researcher has little control.

Although unplanned, group interviews saved me the time and cost of planning one-to-one scheduled interviews. However, the challenge for me sometimes was my inability to keep conversations focused on my thematic areas. Often the topic generated other interesting topics which pulled responses into other directions. However, I often managed to steer the discussion in the direction of my research questions.

To maximise the outcome of interview responses, warm up questions and a variety of communication and listening techniques (Bryman, 2012) were employed. Warm up questions were often used in the first few minutes of the interview but differed for various groups of research participants. Questions like '*tell me about your role as a community LEAP official*' for community LEAP officials and '*what would you say is the number one cause of extreme poverty*

in this district', for district social welfare directors were intended to put research participants at ease and allow the conversation to flow more naturally (Bryman, 2012).

I also employed verbal techniques to push the conversations into directions that allowed research participants to provide more detail on the topic. Verbal cues, such as '*Oh, I see*', '*wow*' and '*that is interesting*', and non-verbal cues (Bryman, 2012), such as raising my eye-brows, nodding and tilting my head (which I was not always conscious of), were strategies that produced more detailed responses from my interview participants than I anticipated. Silent probing was also a skill which I developed, particularly as I interviewed research participants at the national level, and which appeared to improve over time. This was particularly useful when research participants shared their views on the political interests of domestic elites. Often, I allowed them to talk, tolerated their pauses and was careful not to interrupt them with questions other than ones related to what they were focused on addressing.

Notetaking of interview responses was an essential part of my data collection. Most interview data at the district level was collected through notetaking to remind me of what was said and by whom. However, where I could not take down so much information in a short period of time, I gained the consent of interview participants to use a Dictaphone. The use of the Dictaphone proved useful, particularly at district and the community levels where interview data was recorded in the Akan (Akwapim Twi) language and later played back to retrieve exact quotes and then written out. Although the Dictaphone enabled me to retrieve specific quotes and words which I could not quickly write down, it was impossible to disguise voices. Thus, when interview participants expressed apprehension about the confidentiality of information they provided, I did not use it. Another disadvantage of the use of the Dictaphone at the national level was that interview participants were a bit more guarded in what they said, 'especially when sensitive material is being discussed' (Vulliamy, Lewin and Stephens, 1990, p. 105).

In addition to the specific challenges associated with the use of the Dictaphone were practical challenges in accessing interview participants. Accessing community officials and beneficiaries was not a straightforward task. Most community LEAP officials and beneficiaries not only lived far from the district social welfare offices where I could conduct interviews, , but they were also often only available for interview on scheduled LEAP payment days, which were planned for two to three days in a specified week throughout the country (MESW, 2012). This meant that when I missed the opportunity to interview community officials and beneficiaries, I had to make efforts to schedule meetings outside LEAP payment days.

For example, as I could not interview LEAP community officials in the Central region at the same time as I interviewed their counterparts in the Eastern region, I offered a little financial incentive to each participant in recompense for travel costs and for giving up their time. Besides this, I did not offer any monetary incentive in exchange for interview data.

In addition to the challenge of accessing community actors, I was mindful of the busy schedules of policy officials and directors of LEAP at the national level of governance. Despite scheduling and often re-scheduling meetings to suit them, research participants did not always commit to arranged times, which was quite frustrating for me. This realisation sometimes led me to replace scheduled appointments with walk-in interviews, meaning that interviews were unarranged. In such circumstances, I often arrived at their office premises early, before their busy days began, and stayed at the reception to be noticed on their arrival at the office. Where this did not pay off, I prompted receptionists to remind officials of my presence until I was called in to conduct my interviews. Although this arrangement was not the most ideal, there were some positive outcomes. It appeared that the quality of data I collected in unarranged interviews was at times better than when interviews were planned, as participants were less tense, less guarded and engaged on the spot.

Interview location also affected the power dynamics of data collection and consequently the quality of data generated. Elwood and Martin (2000) note that the interview site can be crucial in determining the outcome of the interview. They further argue that the interview location shapes the social interactions and power relations between the researcher and the research participant. What I noticed with interviews conducted away from an office setting was that research participants often appeared somewhat less defensive and more relaxed, as the interviews felt like conversations. In contrast, interviews carried out in offices felt slightly unnatural and a bit rigid. While these differences made me aware of the role that the location of the interview could play in the outcome of my data, it was not always feasible to schedule a meeting outside the office.

4.5.2 LEAP event-specific observations

In social research, observation as a method of data collection involves the researcher watching, listening, and taking down notes on behaviour and activities as they take place (Bryman, 2012). In qualitative research, observation can be used as a stand-alone method or in combination with other methods such as unstructured interviews and document collection. Although my research design did not lend itself to observing the behaviour of research participants, there were notable events in the implementation of the LEAP programme that I found myself paying close attention

to. They were events that took place in LEAP communities which I felt had the potential to unearth some insights, including into power relations at the local government level, which could help answer my third research question.

One such event was a LEAP sensitisation exercise where district LEAP officials sensitised selected communities about the LEAP programme. In these engagements, my role could be described as a participant observer as I listened and noted interactions between community officials and social welfare officers without partaking in the event. In contrast was the LEAP bi-monthly payments where I did not merely watch as a non-participant researcher would do (Creswell, 2014; May, 2011), but also asked beneficiaries and community LEAP officials questions about certain practices that occurred on payment grounds.

Observing LEAP events and following up with interviews gave me an opportunity to understand the power relations that underpinned certain actions at the community level. In addition, I understood the effect of cultural values such as respecting the views of elders and the potential implications that cultural values had for the selection of beneficiary process in communities. Although I was able to document data that I could not possibly access exclusively from a formal interview setting, intertwining observations with interview data this way was quite exhausting.

As well as complementing interviews with event-specific observations, I found documents a valuable source of data to complement my interview data.

4.5.3 Documents

Scott (1990) describes documents as written texts produced by individuals or groups during their everyday practices. In social research, written texts comprise policy documents, annual reports and newspaper reports from both public and private sources (May, 2011). LEAP programme documents authored by LEAP's TNAs and Ghana government ministries which had relevance for the research questions and conceptual framework of this study were selected to complement interview data. These documents and the corresponding research questions they are focused on are outlined in table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6   Documents and corresponding research questions

Document name	Research question
LEAP Business Case	RQ 1
LEAP Memorandum of Understanding	RQ 1
LEAP Finance Agreement between Ghana and World Bank	RQ 1
LEAP Budget, 2013-2018	RQ 2
Political Manifestos	RQ 2
(1) NPP: 2007/2008; 2016/2017	
(2) NDC: 2007/2008; 2016/2017	
A guide to district assemblies in Ghana	RQ 3
Local government and decentralisation in Ghana	RQ 3
Fourth republican constitution	RQ 3
LEAP Operations Manual	RQ 3

Source: *Author's compilation from field data*

All LEAP policy documents listed in table 4.6 to complement the interview data have relevance for the research questions of this study and the conceptual framework that guides analysis in this study. For example, the 'LEAP Business Case', authored by DFID, outlines DFID's poverty reduction ideas borrowed from global south contexts, as well as its mission statement, with which it aimed to support the Ghanaian government's plans to reduce extreme poverty. This had relevance for research question 1. In contrast, the 'guide to district assemblies', which explains the origins of Ghana's local government and the discretionary powers of institutional heads of local government, directs attention to the relationship between the national and local governments. This document has relevance for research question 3. Besides their theoretical significance, documents had practical relevance.

A benefit of using policy documents is that they 'tell us about the aspirations and intentions of the periods to which they refer' (May, 2011, p. 177). The political manifestoes of NPP and NDC governments, listed in table 4.6, directed attention to policies and programmes which NPP and NDC intended to implement to enable them to maintain their hold on power.

Additionally, documents 'can allow comparisons to be made between the researcher's interpretations of events and those recorded in documents relating to those events' (May, 2011, p. 175). In this regard, documents, offered me an opportunity to compare what was documented and what happened on the ground.

Document collection was painfully slow and frustrating. The main challenge for me was inaccessibility of documents due to the sensitive nature of the topic I was researching. It appeared that although LEAP documents authored by relevant ministries were available, policy officials who accessed them were unauthorised to disclose them to the public. This was particularly the case with the LEAP budget. As I sensed research participants felt slightly uneasy about releasing these documents, I no longer pursued their procurement from the LEAP Management Secretariat but planned to speak to directly to policy officials from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Relevant documents in relation to the draft Social Protection Bill were also not made available to me, similarly because of the sensitivity issue.

In addition to the sensitivity issue was the poor record keeping of the Ministry, which made it difficult to pin together specific events and get a clear sense of the emergence of the LEAP programme. As a result, I had to rely on the limited narratives of elites and technocrats who were involved in policy dialogue with TNAs and complement their narratives with secondary literature.

Despite the challenges at the national level, electronic copies of documents like the LEAP Operations Manual and the LEAP budget from the Ministry of Finance were made accessible to me, but only after persistent phone calls, email messages and finally a skype interview with an official who held them.

At the district level, the situation was similarly grim, although the problem was with unavailability of relevant policy documents rather than sensitivity around certain documents. District level officers admitted they did not have access to LEAP policy document but had only limited data on beneficiary payments provided them by participating financial institutions[34] (PFIs), although such information differed markedly between district types. While pilot districts often had detailed and up-to-date information on payments in specific districts, expansion districts had very limited information regarding beneficiary household payments. Notwithstanding these challenges, I was happy with the limited documents I accessed and the

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[34] Participating Financial Institutions are the designated financial institutions, mostly rural banks, who were instructed by LMS to disburse beneficiary grants.

maximum cooperation I received from nearly all research participants. In both interview data and documentary data collection, I sincerely acknowledged my appreciation for the time research participants gave up and the valuable information they provided.

4.6. Data analysis

As I point out in section 4.5 above, a major data source for this study was semi-structured interviews. However, I concurrently undertook event-specific observations with interviews. As a result, observation memos and fieldwork notes were analysed together with interview transcripts, while documents were analysed separately.

I applied a thematic approach in analysing interview data and a combined thematic and content analysis approach for documents.

4.6.1 Interviews

According to Bryman (2012), thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data and involves the search for common themes comprising topics and issues that come up repeatedly in the data. This contrasts with discourse analysis which is focused on analysing written and spoken language in real life situations. A thematic approach is most suited to data analysis which seeks people's views, opinions and experiences (Bryman, 2012), hence its adoption here.

In generating themes from interview data, I followed Bryman's (2012) steps required in analysing qualitative data. I thus first familiarised myself with the data. Next, I re-read to find out if key phrases and remarks used by research participants had some theoretical significance to my topic and research questions I set out to investigate. Third, I identified key words and concepts that came up repeatedly and applied open coding to organise and label the data. Fourth, using NVIVO data analysis software to ensure consistent coding, I began to highlight and label sections of interview transcripts that contained key phrases of significance to my conceptual framework and research questions. Yin (2003) maintains that relying on theoretical propositions is one of the strategies for analysing case studies to develop explanations of social phenomena. The codes, or nodes (the term used to describe labelled text in NVIVO language), ranged from '*electronic targeting'* in TNA transcripts to '*scaling up LEAP',* associated with domestic political elites' transcripts. Codes that did not have relevance for my research questions were discarded. Finally, I reviewed the codes or themes I had generated to ensure that they would be useful and were sufficiently backed up by the data I had. Sometimes, when I was unsure whether codes, I had generated accurately represented the data I had, I returned to the data and re-labelled.

Although developing themes using NVIVO software was subjective and often time-consuming (Bryman, 2012), the themes that I developed were well supported by my data.

4.6.2 Documents

A content analysis approach is used to analyse the presence of concepts, phrases and meanings of certain words in given qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). In the use of content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyse certain words and themes that are frequently used in policy documents. In this study, I was guided by my research questions to code and interpret sections of documents where phrases which had some relevance for my research questions frequently appeared.

Using NVIVO's word frequency and visualisation tools, I examined the frequency and importance of key words from the nodes or themes I had previously developed. I found the word cloud visualisation tool useful, as the size of the words (how big they were) and their location (how close they were to the centre) drew my attention to their importance. Words such as '*continue'* and *'sustainable'* in relation to LEAP's implementation, which recurred in the NDC's 2016 political manifesto, were key to understanding the expansion of LEAP and helped me to examine the implications of such key concepts for the political interests of NDC's elites.

4.7 Reliability and validity of the findings

Reliability and validity are concepts used to assess the quality of collected data (Bryman, 2012). When research is valid, then its findings measure what it claims to measure. On the other hand, research that is reliable can be reproduced under the same conditions (May, 2011). Data needs to be reliable as well as valid if they are to be of any value and use. Nonetheless, reliable data does not necessarily make for valid data.

Although reliability and validity are concepts originally developed by positivists to measure the consistency and accuracy of quantitative data, some scholars of qualitative research have raised concerns about their effectiveness in qualitative research. Subsequently slight adaptations have been made to their use. Guba (1985) and Lincoln and Denzin (2005) proposed that different criteria be used for testing the consistency and accuracy of research findings in qualitative studies. Trustworthiness and authenticity are two primary criteria that have since been used to assess qualitative data. These two criteria resonated with my research.

In establishing that my research findings were accurate and credible, I designed my research in a way that allowed for perspectives from a diverse group of research participants, hence my adoption of a case study design. Bryman(2012) explains the importance of different perspectives

for the credibility of qualitative research, noting that 'if there can be several possible accounts of an aspect of social reality, it is the credibility of the account that a researcher arrives at that is going to determine its acceptability to others' (p. 390).

In addition to my research design, which allowed for perspectives from multiple levels of governance, conducting a respondent validation as indicated in table 4.4, was necessary to check the accuracy of data from selected research participants. As well as respondent validation, triangulation which involves utilising multiple data sources to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln and Denzin, 2005) was a method I employed. The use of interviews and LEAP event-specific observations allowed me to check the accuracy of the primary data collected against information from policy documents. I also cross-checked the accuracy of respondents' accounts by asking different respondents' similar questions.

4.8 Positionality

Merriam *et al.* (2010) explain that the positionality of the researcher is where the researcher stands in relation to the researched. Researcher positionality thus relates to the identity of the researcher. It includes their background and experience in relation to the researched topic. In qualitative research, a reflection on the positionality of the researcher is important because it not only influences the researcher's interpretation and understanding of the research topic but also impacts the outcome of the data gathered (Cotterill and Letherby, 1994).

In this study, the way in which research participants perceived my positionality, comprising my ethnicity (Akan speaking), citizenship (British-Ghanaian) and socioeconomic status (lower-middle class), were factors I recognised were going to be important in the data collection process. These background factors also had potential to affect the outcome of the data I collected. However, my positionality in this regard did not affect data collection in the way that I expected.

Surprisingly, a crucial factor that cropped up particularly at the local government level and had the potential to ruin or enhance the outcome of the data I collected was the 'insider-outsider' element of researcher positionality. The 'insider' versus 'outsider' component of the researcher's status relates to whether the researcher is or is not a member of the group being studied (Merton, 1972). In researching the politics of implementing LEAP, I perceived myself as both an 'insider' and an 'outsider'. As a Ghanaian, I approached data collection with a deep understanding of the socio-cultural and political environment of LEAP's implementation. Thus, I

was able to present myself in a way that allowed me to access and discuss information relating to how LEAP was implemented by two competitive governments. This put me in the 'insider' space. Nonetheless, I also considered myself an outsider to the Ghanaian political culture, with no affiliation to any of the political parties in the country, having stayed outside of Ghana for over ten years. This 'outsider' position distanced me from the political environment and allowed me to bring 'fresh eyes' to the political influences of elites and local government actors on the implementation of the LEAP programme.

However, it was my 'outsider' rather than the 'insider' position which presented some challenges, particularly in relation to responses I anticipated from some participants. The knowledge by some research participants in some districts, that I was a Ghanaian who had lived abroad and then returned to conduct research on a topic that many viewed as having political intentions raised suspicions about my intentions and affiliation to a particular political party. As noted by Cotterill and Letherby (1994), suspicion of the researcher's intentions in any study may be less pronounced where research participants consider the researcher to be an insider. In my situation, suspicions about my intentions were more pronounced because I was perceived as an outsider. Some local government officials were a bit hesitant and guarded when it came to providing what was often regarded as 'sensitive information'. This was because, it was not clear to them if I was a card-bearing member of the opposing political party. This suspicion was even more noticeable when as I used non-verbal cues to get a bit more detail on domestic elites' actions regarding the direction of expansion – towards their political stronghold areas. Often during the interviews, some research participants would ask, 'You know in Ghana, everything wears a political colour, so what is yours?' In response to questions like this, I assured them I was only a researcher, trying to learn and understand how LEAP is implemented. Despite suspicions about my position, I still managed to get the required data as some research participants were convinced that I required the data purely for research purposes.

4.9 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological decisions I made to help obtain relevant data to answer the overarching research question of this study. I learnt that a qualitative research design rather than a quantitative design would help to provide deep insights into how transnational and domestic politics shaped the implementation of the LEAP social protection programme.

I shed light on the data collection processes and methods I employed in this study as well as the challenges I encountered in data collection and how I addressed them. I explained my position as both an insider and an outsider and understood how being in the insider space presented less challenges in terms of data collection than being in the outsider space.

The next chapter, chapter 5, presents findings from the analysis of fieldwork data in response to the first of my research questions. It is focused on the ideas and interests of TNAs.

Chapter 5   The role of Transnational actors' ideas and interests and domestic elites' interests in implementing Ghana's LEAP.

Chapter purpose and structure

This chapter presents an analysis of the ideas and interests of three transnational actors (TNAs), the World Bank (WB), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme. It also analyses domestic elites' interests in shaping the implementation of LEAP. Analysis in this chapter aims to address the first research question of this study: 'How have the ideas and interests of transnational actors shaped the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme?'

In terms of the methodological approach utilised in this chapter, data was sourced primarily from semi-structured interviews and documents as I indicate previously in section 4.5 of chapter 4. Interviews were analysed using a thematic approach while document analysis combined a thematic and content analysis approach as I note earlier in section 4.6 of chapter 4. Furthermore, the multilevel analytical strategy adopted in this study, which involved analysing data from a tiered governance level, implied that in answering research question 1 (RQ1), analysis of ideas and interests of transnational actors and interests of domestic elites was conducted primarily at the policy or national level as summarised in figure 5 below.

Figure 5.1: Analytical strategy for chapter 5
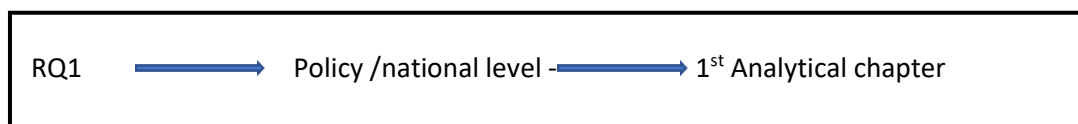
Source: *Author*

Analysis of findings is guided by Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF) which, as I indicated earlier in the literature review chapter, emphasises the ideas of transnational actors in influencing the uptake of social protection in low- income countries. The framework makes two propositions which I test in this chapter. First, that successful social protection uptake depends on how well TNA ideas fit with the ideas of existing political settlements and their underlying interests (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). In this chapter, I examine whether and how TNAs ideas for design of the LEAP programme align with those of Ghana's political elites'. I also examine the circumstances under which TNA ideas and interests lose prominence in implementing the LEAP. Second, Lavers and Hickey (2015) propose that

TNAs operate as a distinct faction with their own holding power, interests and ideas with which they influence social protection uptake (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). In this chapter, I investigate how transnational actors manage to influence social protection uptake in a highly competitive political context where multiple actors approach social protection implementation with different interests.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 5.1 presents an analysis of TNAs ideas. The programmatic ideas of the WB, DFID and UNICEF employed to design LEAP are analysed. Section 5.2 examines TNA interests. Implementation strategies recommended by TNAs to facilitate the realisation of their organisational interests are analysed. Section 5.3 examines the limits of TNA ideas and interests. The political interests of domestic political elites, which predominate over TNA interests and limit TNA actions, are discussed. Section 5.4 summarises the key findings from the analysis, highlights the insights offered and concludes the chapter.

5.1   TNA programmatic ideas for the design of LEAP

Programmatic ideas refer to programmes or measures that underpin specific policy ideas and are intended to achieve long -term goals (Campbell, 1998; Schmidt, 2008). Programmatic ideas are often proposed at the formulation stage of the policy process (Hickey and Seekings, 2019). In the implementation of LEAP, the programmatic ideas of the three TNAs were evident in the specific programmes that were proposed and subsequently adopted by domestic political elites (GOG, 2007). Two interrelated programmatic ideas were proposed by a consultative group made up of the TNAs, local consultants and a Brazilian mission team prior to the adoption phase of LEAP (GOG, 2007; see also section 2.3.6). First, a cash transfer programme which linked beneficiaries to existing health and education programmes, and second, a cash transfer programme with complementary government-sponsored productive economic activities. These ideas contributed significantly to how LEAP programme is designed and how it currently operates. The adoption of the ideas means that LEAP operates as a cash grants programme which links all beneficiary households to existing health and education programmes. The LEAP programme is also intended as a programme which complements cash grants with productive economic activities to help beneficiaries exit poverty in the long-term.

As the analysis will show, development ideologies and frameworks which explained poverty reduction in the early 2000s underpinned the programmatic ideas of TNAs (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). It is therefore important to explain these development ideologies and approaches here.

DFID's approach to poverty reduction was heavily influenced by the "Third Way Ideology" which combined minimum social welfare programmes with market-driven economic policies (Giddens, 2013). The basic principle behind this ideology was that governments support disadvantaged and vulnerable groups with market-driven policies such as skills-focused programmes with which they build human capital and lift themselves out of poverty.

For the WB, the Post-Washington consensus ideology was the development framework which guided their poverty reduction strategy in the late 1990s (Hickey and Seekings, 2017). The Post-Washington consensus ideology emphasised the role of state and non-state institutions like civil society organisations in delivering social welfare services such as health care to vulnerable households (Stiglitz, 2001). This ideology contrasts with the Washington consensus ideology in which there was an exclusive reliance on the adoption of market-focused programmes by the private sector to improve welfare (Williamson, 2005).

In contrast, UNICEF adopted a rights-based approach to welfare. As a United Nations agency, its mandate was to ensure that the delivery of social welfare programmes like education and healthcare for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations was considered a right by governments (Hickey and Seekings, 2017; UNICEF, 2019). How these ideologies and welfare approaches revealed themselves in the programmatic ideas of TNAs is discussed in the following sections. Section 5.1.1 discusses a cash transfer programme with linkages to health and education programmes and section 5.1.2 analyses the other programmatic idea, a cash transfer programme which complements productive economic activities.

5.1.1 A cash transfer programme with linkages to existing health and education programmes

In response to how the LEAP programme addressed the welfare needs of the most vulnerable households in Ghana, DFID referred to its support for programmatic ideas proposed by the consultative group and then adopted by Ghanaian political elites. The idea of the LEAP programme to operate as a cash transfer programme which linked beneficiaries to existing healthcare and education programmes was strongly endorsed by DFID.

From the perspective of DFID's LEAP advisor:

> *'DFID supports a programme which provides cash grants to vulnerable groups, and then they are linked to complementary services such as the Ghana Health Insurance Scheme (GHIS) to reduce health and economic inequalities and to enable them stand on their feet'* (Interview with DP1/ DFAd, 19th January 2018).

DFID's goal, to reduce extreme poverty and improve the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups (DFID Ghana, 2012) aided its support of the LEAP programme. As I previously noted in section 2.3 of chapter 2 regarding the failure of economic growth to address extreme poverty (Oduro, 2010), Ghana's political elites pursued programmes which directly targeted vulnerable households and empowered them to exit extreme poverty (Abane, 2017; Debrah, 2013; MMYE, 2007; Peprah *et al.*, 2017). Accordingly, a cash transfer programme which linked targeted households to health and education programmes proposed by TNAs was adopted by domestic elites.

DFID emphasised the potential role that such a programmatic idea played in reducing the challenges which made households vulnerable to extreme poverty. The goal of the LEAP programme is to build the capacity of extreme poor households so that they were empowered to contribute to economic growth (GOG,2007). In achieving this goal, the NPP government then, saw as important linking beneficiaries to previously established social welfare programmes particularly in health and education (GOG, 2007). Thus, in support of this programmatic idea, DFID emphasised the investments the Ghanaian government had made in implementing the Ghana Health Insurance Scheme and the Ghana School Feeding programmes. This meant that the wellbeing of the targeted households were improved in the short-term, but also in the long-term, the human capital of poor households was built so they contributed to economic growth.

This programmatic idea supported by DFID reflects the Third Way Ideology which, as earlier mentioned, emphasised the role of government in providing welfare support for vulnerable groups (Giddens, 2013). The Third Way approach to welfare differed from a socialist ideology in that it did not intend for governments to provide extensive welfare support to create dependency. Instead, the Third Way philosophy was that, with minimum welfare assistance and linkages to government programmes, governments helped vulnerable households to pull themselves out of poverty. DFID advisor's response above, which describes linking LEAP beneficiaries to health and education programmes to enable vulnerable groups to stand on their feet, aligns with this thinking. By linking LEAP beneficiaries to healthcare and education programmes, their productive capacity was built, productivity levels were likely to increase and so was growth in future incomes.

The idea of a cash grants programme linking beneficiary households to existing government programmes was borrowed from the design of Brazil's *Bolsa Familia Programme* (BFP). The BFP had a human capital focus. It was designed to allow beneficiaries comply with specific education and health conditions (Hellmann, 2015; Lindert *et al.*, 2007). However, not all the conditional

elements were borrowed. LEAP is currently implemented as a quasi-conditional cash transfer programme and not typically as a conditional cash transfer programme as in the case of the BFP programme. This is because not all beneficiary households are required to comply with health and education programmes as is the case with the BFP programme. For example, the elderly with no productive capacity do not have to comply with education conditions (MMYE, 2007). However, all beneficiaries of LEAP are automatically linked to the existing Ghana Health Insurance Scheme (GHIS) (Abane, 2017; Jaha and Sika-Bright, 2015; Roelen *et al.*, 2017). In addition, children in LEAP beneficiary households who reside in districts that implement the Ghana School Feeding (GSF) programme are enrolled to benefit from the programme if they are eligible (MESW, 2012).

This LEAP-GHIS linkage, established in 2013 by the NDC administration, was intended to allow beneficiaries to access basic healthcare at no cost. It is to date the formal link between LEAP and other social intervention programmes (Roelen *et al.*, 2017). With reference to the government's healthcare programme, DFID's advisor stressed its importance in DFID's approach to reducing vulnerability to extreme poverty.

As well as DFID, UNICEF endorsed LEAP's design as a cash transfer programme with linkages to healthcare and education. UNICEF's mission is to promote the rights and wellbeing of children and improve the communities in which they live (UNICEF, 2019). As a short-term objective of the LEAP programme was to improve consumption of vulnerable households through regular cash grants (GOG, 2007), it can be argued that UNICEF aligned its ideas with the objectives of the LEAP programme. However, for UNICEF, the role of cash grants went beyond simply improving wellbeing. As UNICEF's LEAP advisor pointed out:

> *'UNICEF's philosophy is to use cash and complementary services to reduce poverty. By supporting the government of Ghana to implement LEAP as a cash grants programme which links beneficiaries to social welfare programmes like health and education, the message of UNICEF is that access to the LEAP grant and its complementary programmes is their right'* (Interview with DP2/UNAd, 26th February, 2018).

Thus, from UNICEF's point of view, the LEAP programme was a mechanism through which vulnerable children and their households exercised their rights, especially in accessing social intervention programmes in relation to healthcare and education. The rights-based approach of UNICEF (UNICEF, 2012), emphasised in the response above, directed policy attention to make access to LEAP a right for beneficiary households and through that, ensure beneficiary households accessed other social intervention programmes. Ensuring that the LEAP programme was a right for targeted households was thus crucial. UNICEF's position was that the Ghanaian

government would be held to account if this right were denied beneficiaries. However, at the time of my data collection (between January and June 2018), a social protection bill which backed up this right and committed ruling governments to ensure this right had yet to be established. As a result, LEAP and other targeted intervention programmes were not yet understood as a right by their beneficiaries. However, there were plans to pass the social protection bill, although this was not without its challenges. The challenges of establishing a legal framework to guide social protection in Ghana, and the politics around its passage, will be discussed later in section 5.3.3 of this chapter.

From the analysis of the interviews with the key TNAs, it emerged that it was crucial for LEAP to be designed in ways which enabled the goal of the programme to be achieved. By supporting this programmatic idea, DFID and UNICEF directed policy attention to focus on welfare programmes which improved the wellbeing of poor households in ways that contributed to the goal for which LEAP was intended. Although the WB shared this focus, its emphasis was different. WB placed much more emphasis on programmatic ideas which enabled poor households to access opportunities to generate income directly and lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

5.1.2 A cash transfer programme with complementary productive economic activities

On her views about the WB's ideas for designing LEAP, the WB's social protection specialist referred to its recommendations following the outcome of the PSIA study in 2004. A cash grants programme complemented by productive economic activities was recommended with the aim of eliminating extreme poverty in the long-term. These ideas were primarily what the WB singlehandedly recommended as an alternative to growth-enhancing programmes (NDPC, 2004; NDPC, 2008) and adopted by NPP's elites following further consultations with the Vulnerability and Social Exclusion Sector Working Group (V&SWG) group (see section 2.3.6 of chapter 2) which deliberated on ideas to reduce extreme poverty (GOG, 2007).

To clarify how the programmatic ideas of the WB were utilised by the programme, the World Bank's social protection specialist emphasised the importance of complementing cash grants with skills as she referred to a WB sponsored project for selected LEAP households:

> *'What the WB is doing to get beneficiaries out of poverty, is give them more than cash. We have therefore selected some LEAP beneficiary households and are trialling productive economic activities. By this I mean economic activities which generate skills, like basket weaving and shea butter production'* (Interview with DP3/WBAd, 21st March 2018).

The World Bank's mission statement, which is to end extreme poverty and improve living standards by investing in people (World Bank, 2012), seems to have guided its programmatic ideas. For the WB, LEAP was designed as a cash grants programme with complementary activities intended to build beneficiaries' productive capacity and enable them to exit extreme poverty. In terms of objectives, the WB's ideas for LEAP were thus not very different from what was endorsed by DFID and UNICEF. While both programmatic ideas were intended to allow targeted households to exit extreme poverty, the analysis suggests that their emphasis was slightly different. For DFID and UNICEF, it was investments in healthcare and education, while skills-focused activities were prioritised by WB.

The World Bank attached value to skills-based programmes because of its belief that building the productive capacities of vulnerable households was key to enabling vulnerable groups to exit poverty (World Bank, 2012). This belief was consistent with the Post-Washington Consensus ideology of the WB which also emphasised building the human capital of households through the development of skills (Williamson, 2005).

Like the programmatic ideas of DFID and UNICEF, which were borrowed from BFP's design (GOG, 2007), programmatic ideas of the WB which emphasised the role of productive economic activities were similarly borrowed from the BFP. The BFP had design components which comprised skills-based programmes intended to reduce reliance on government support and instead increase reliance on market-oriented activities to help vulnerable households exit extreme poverty (Hellmann, 2015). Similarly, Ghana's LEAP programme was designed with an exit strategy in mind. Projects such as 'micro-credit schemes and rural enterprise' (GOG, 2007, p. 31) were examples of this.

Some of the programmatic ideas of the WB, however, required testing. This was to assess their appropriateness as sustainable poverty reduction measures. As was explained by the social protection consultant:

> *'we want to make sure that we are giving caregivers of beneficiaries something to do which will lift them out of poverty in the long term. But we first have to test the possibility of some skills like basket weaving and soap making that will wean beneficiaries off the programme'* (Interview with SI3/ GHR 4th April 2018).

This view suggests that traditional economic activities such as those cited similarly provided a potential route out of poverty. However, testing these ideas highlighted a 'fear' that beneficiaries could become dependent on the cash grant element of LEAP and not acquire the productive skills that would break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The importance of testing the programmatic ideas was similarly stressed by the WB's social protection specialist. However, she argued against applying this programmatic idea to all beneficiary households as she noted: '*We need to be careful [about] the skills we advise for LEAP beneficiaries. I'm also a big proponent to say not everyone is an entrepreneur so let's not bunch everyone up and say let's start a small shop. It's not going to work*" (Interview with DP3/WBAd, 21st March 2018).

From the analysis, programmes providing poor households with skills to move out of conditions of extreme poverty were a priority for the WB. Testing these programmatic ideas was necessary to find out if entrepreneurial activities were a route out of poverty for all households or if alternative strategies needed consideration. This was because putting some households on an 'entrepreneurial' route out of extreme poverty risked failure for other beneficiaries.

The programmatic ideas outlined above, based on skills, were also subscribed to by DFID. In establishing DFID's position on skills, the LEAP advisor noted: '*In line with UK's thinking, poverty reduction is much more sustainable when cash grants complement trade and other productive inclusion activities, than when cash grants are exclusively transferred to disadvantaged groups*' (Interview with DP1/ DFAd, 19th January 2018).

DFID's view on exiting extreme poverty reflected the Third Way ideology which, as I noted earlier in the introduction to this section, emphasised government-supported programmes (Hay, 2018), in this case skills-focused programmes, to allow vulnerable populations to acquire jobs and secure stable incomes. This meant that in the long-term, vulnerable groups lived without government support.

The analysis presented so far in this second subsection focuses primarily on the views of the WB and DFID in relation to exiting extreme poverty and does not include perspectives from UNICEF. This is because their approaches to poverty reduction have slight variations. While WB and DFID emphasise programmes, UNICEF places more emphasis on rights to access these programmes. Thus, in later analysis on the passage of a legal framework to protect the rights of vulnerable households (section 5.3.3) UNICEF's perspective will feature.

As regards the views of the WB and DFID, it can be inferred from the analysis that both TNAs believed that cash grants programmes played a role in reducing vulnerability to extreme poverty and in eliminating extreme poverty. However, they were not convinced that cash transfers alone would fulfil this objective. There was a sense that exclusive cash grants would not deliver effective poverty reduction unless it was accompanied or complemented by other programmes,

in this case, skills-focused programmes that built beneficiaries' human capital. This belief explains why in more recent times the idea of a 'cash plus programme' (Roelen *et al.*, 2017), in which beneficiaries of cash grants are linked to services, has become relevant. However, although there is evidence from the global south that 'cash plus programmes', particularly those that link cash transfer programmes to health services, improve wellbeing (Bastagli *et al.*, 2016), there is not as yet adequate evidence to suggest that such cash grants programmes which link beneficiaries to productive economic activities will enable households to exit from extreme poverty. Factors such as the type of economic activity and whether such programmes are conditional or unconditional could determine the outcome of such programmes on vulnerability and poverty reduction (Bastagli *et al.*, 2016).

In addition to programmatic ideas which shaped the design of LEAP, the analysis suggests that the organisational interests of the three TNAs played an important role in shaping how the LEAP programme was implemented.

5.2 The WB, DFID and UNICEF's organisational interests

There was some indication from the interview and documentary data that achieving their organisational interests provided strong motivation for all three TNAs to participate in the implementation of LEAP. To ensure their goals were realised, the three TNAs invested in strengthening institutional and human capacity, discussed in Section 5.2.1, and in improving LEAP's delivery systems, analysed in section 5.2.2.

5.2.1. Strengthening institutional and human capacity

The WB seemed particularly concerned with institutional capacity. According to a director of the LEAP programme:

> *'World Bank …saw institutional weakness. They felt the programme should have its own secretariat and management. So, this LEAP Management Secretariat (LMS) as you see, was fully funded and established by the WB. The vehicles and office equipment were all provided with World Bank's funds'* (Interview with LS2/LND, 7th February 2018).

One of the key elements of the WB's Post-Washington Consensus ideology was promoting the government's role in improving mechanisms used to deliver social programmes, rather than diminishing the role of government, as was the case with the Washington Consensus ideology (Williamson, 2005). This would explain why the WB focused a lot more of its resources on strengthening the government's administrative units responsible for managing the LEAP programme.

The research participant in this case was familiar with the priorities of the WB and its mechanisms of support, having previously managed WB projects in various social services sectors in Ghana. The WB prioritized building effective and accountable institutions because it believed that this was the way to maximise the impact of programmes it supported.

In support of the WB's priorities, the WB's social protection specialist stressed the importance of strengthening structures for the effective delivery of government-led programmes such as LEAP. Her argument was that '*management of government programmes was more effective when institutional structures were strengthened'* (Interview with DP3/ WBAd, 21st March 2018).

As an organisation which placed value on strengthening institutions, the WB drew on the principles of the New Institutional Economics (NIE), which views institutions as vehicles for effective governance (North, 1991; Williamson, 2005). Furthermore, from the evidence provided, the WB's emphasis on democratic governance (Rodrik, 2006), which ensured openness and accountability in the management of its financial investments in developing countries, explains why it established a secretariat from which its financial investments could be managed.

Although at the time of LEAP's launch there was a department within the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment with administrative units like human resources and finance which managed social welfare programmes, the WB decided not to use this existing department for the management of LEAP. Instead, it invested in a new structure outside the already existing government department. The result was the establishment of the LEAP Management Secretariat (LMS) which began operations in 2015. The organisational layout of LMS, shown in figure 5.2 is an adaptation of the original organisational structure on the LEAP programme's website.

Figure 5.2. LEAP Management Organisational Structure


```
                    LMS
                    LND
                          LDD
      MIS    PAYMENTS    CMU    M &E
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LND   LEAP National Director
LDD   LEAP Deputy Director
MIS   Management Information Systems
CMU   Case Management Unit
M & E   Monitoring and Evaluation
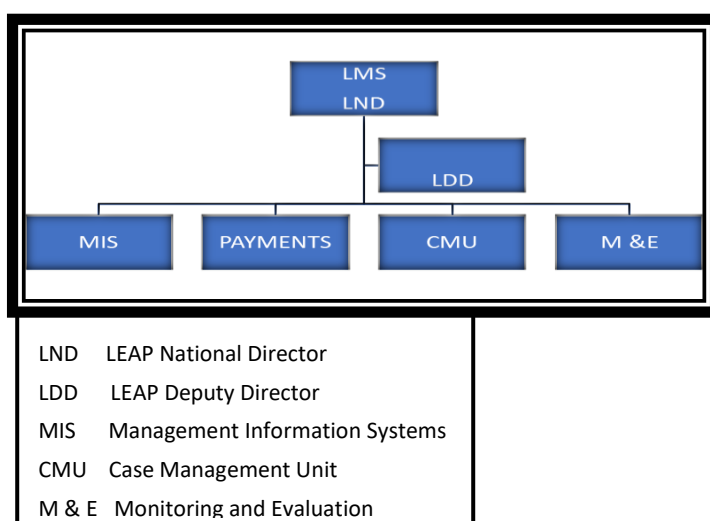
LMS is the management wing of the LEAP programme. As illustrated in the organogram in figure 5.2 above it is headed by the LEAP National Director (LND) and assisted by a LEAP Deputy Director (LDD) who has general oversight over the programme's implementation. The secretariat has administrative units with heads (directors) and support staff who manage different aspects of LEAP's implementation. Organised in no order, the administrative units include but not are not restricted to a Management Information Systems (MIS) unit which holds a comprehensive database of beneficiary households for the purpose of analysing LEAP household data. There is also a Case Management Unit (CMU) which is similar to customer service unit, mandated to investigate and resolve beneficiary complaints, while the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit monitors programme implementation and evaluates programme outcomes and impacts[35]. '*The payments unit works closely with accountants to effect funds transfers from World Bank and DFID through Ghana's Ministry of Finance to designated district financial institutions to make payments to beneficiary households*' (LS2/LND, 7th February 2018). Thus, the WB effectively set up a parallel structure outside the government's ministerial structure to manage its investment in LEAP.

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[35] 'Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection', LEAP Programme Organisational Structure, LEAP Programme Ghana. Accessed 8th January, 2021. Available at Organizational Structure – Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (leap.gov.gh)

In addition to the WB, DFID's interest was in strengthening capacity. However, unlike the WB, which invested in setting up a parallel institutional structure, DFID's investment was directly towards building human capacity within the Secretariat. From the perspective of the LEAP Director,

> '*DFID's interest was in improving the programme's financial records and budgeting processes when it joined LEAP…DFID brought [in] a Technical Assistant because the LEAP Management Secretariat needed an expert who would help in managing its accounts*' (Interview with LS2/LND, 7th February 2018).

From the evidence presented, it seems that simply setting up a secretariat was not enough. DFID had identified a knowledge and skills gap at the secretariat which required attention. This explains why it recruited a financial consultant to support the work of the secretariat. DFID recruiting a financial consultant to manage finance-related issues raises questions about the extent to which both DFID and the WB were genuinely committed to strengthening national institutions in the countries that they supported. The rhetoric did not match the practice on the ground. DFID's practice of transferring knowledge and expertise through its technical assistants (Hickey *et al.,* 2009) reflected the Third Way ideology which emphasised the transfer of skills and capacities to build knowledge capital in the country seeking financial assistance (Giddens, 2013).

As the data suggests, DFID directly invested in transferring knowledge to government institutions which it supported. However, it seems that this practice was aimed at protecting DFID's financial interests. It aligned with its [DFID's] Business Case to support LEAP, arguing that, 'human resources including expert finance knowledge would be needed to improve financial management" (DFID Ghana, 2012, p. 11). This explains why, in practice, it recruited one of its technical assistants from Malawi, instead of drawing on expertise from a government ministry or department in Ghana.

DFID's policy makes it clear that contracted technical assistants will provide quality expertise and work alongside local counterparts (Hickey *et al.,* 2009), thus the expectation was that the financial consultant worked alongside a finance leader or other related personnel at the secretariat. However, the financial consultant did not work alongside a local counterpart in the existing government department to ensure capacity within them could be strengthened. In addition, '*The technical assistant from DFID's Malawian office had been contracted to work over a three-year period from 2015 till 2018'* (LS2/LND, 7th February 2018).

Although the interview data defines the role of the technical assistant, it was not clear who the direct counterpart of the technical assistant was and how the transfer of knowledge was to be carried out over the contracted period for the secretariat to secure transfer of expertise. Furthermore, it was not clear if the contracted period of three years was long enough for any designated local counterpart to learn and develop the necessary skills and build the capacity required to implement specific financial tasks when the consultant's contracted period ended. Thus, in theory, DFID could say it was addressing human capacity, but in reality, because there was no local counterpart working directly with the financial consultant, it is doubtful how this was going to be achieved. It appears more likely that recruiting and sponsoring a technical assistant was more about protecting its financial investments in LEAP than improving the capacity of national institutions to take on the financial management of the LEAP programme.

5.2.2 Strengthening LEAP's delivery systems: targeting and payments

From the perspectives of the WB and DFID, there were many instances of unprofessional conduct of front-line workers at the community level which threatened the effective delivery of LEAP. As I note in chapter 2, section 2.3.6, the front-line workers in communities were members of community committees[36] whose role involved identifying potential households in communities and ensuring grants were disbursed to all beneficiary households in accordance with LMS's regulations. A detailed analysis of their roles will be presented in chapter 7 of this thesis.

The main concern was that community committees manipulated LEAP's targeting and payment systems in ways that undermined efforts to achieve poverty reduction. A shift from manual to electronic systems of targeting and processing payments was thus regarded as a more effective practice.

A shift from manual to electronic targeting

The WB pushed for a shift from the existing manual targeting system to an electronic targeting system because the manual system was flawed and open to the influence of community and national level politics. From the perspective of the WB's social protection specialist:

> *'if you have in place a fluffy mechanism that will select as many people as possible, you will get votes swaying in the ruling government's favour. So, if the government does not make a programme like the LEAP about poverty reduction but instead about staying in power, then*

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[36] Committees established by district LEAP officials to support implementation of the LEAP programme at the community level. The members of these committees serve the programme on a voluntary basis.

it will allow the weak systems to influence votes' (Interview with DP3/WBAd, 21ˢᵗ March 2018).

The response above directly concerns the ineffectual targeting mechanism utilised by LEAP and its potential to affect the goal of the programme. It also indirectly concerns community officials misapplying the carefully designed eligibility criteria used to select households for the LEAP programme. Although there were procedures for monitoring the conduct of front-line workers (MESW, 2012) *'monitoring was weak and irregular'* (LS4/ HP, 22ⁿᵈ February 2018). As will be demonstrated in chapter 7, regarding the selection of households to expand LEAP, community officials often selected those personally known to them. The result was an increase in exclusion and inclusion errors when final beneficiary household numbers were presented to the management of LEAP. This led LMS to conclude that *'community officials manipulated the eligibility rules to suit their own ends'* (Interview with LS4/HP, 22ⁿᵈ February 2018).

Shifting from a manual to an electronic targeting system entailed the migration of beneficiary household data held by the LEAP Secretariat's MIS to a centralised electronic register detailing the poverty characteristics of all households in Ghana. Also referred to as a single household register system, it is,

> *'a database of the socio-economic profile of all poor households. The establishment of the single household registry would make it easier to select beneficiary households for particular targeted programmes. It minimised the effect of community influences on targeting'* (Interview with SI3/GHR, 4ᵗʰApril 2018).

Replacing the manual system with an electronic system of targeting involved collecting and digitally recording primary data on the vulnerability characteristics of all households in Ghana and regularly cross-checking the consistency of this information across social sectors (Ablo, 2016). This new system was a tried and tested targeting approach borrowed from Brazil's BFP (MMYE, 2007). The single household register was intended as a Common Targeting Mechanism (CTM) to be used by all social sectors and from which all social intervention programmes would draw their beneficiary lists. For LMS, its purpose was to identify and prioritise households living in poor and/or vulnerable conditions and to ensure that social protection resources allocated to LEAP effectively reached the people with the greatest needs (Ablo, 2016). This system thus minimised community officials' intercepting of targeting process.

However, this new electronic system involved a carefully planned methodology and *'significant financial outlay which the Ghana government had not made allowance for'* (SI3/GHR, 4ᵗʰ April 2018). As such *'the WB single-handedly invested in the required infrastructure and initiated the process of "building a household register system for LEAP in 2016"'* (SI3/GHR, 4th April 2018).

Beneficiary household data collection for the register, like census data collection, began in the three northern regions of Ghana, with plans to extend data collection to other administrative regions of the country. However, *'changes in government in 2017 stalled the data collection process'* (Interview with S12/GSOP, 3rd March 2018; S13/GHR, 4th April 2018), and by the end of my fieldwork in June 2018, the register of households was still incomplete, rendering the common targeting mechanism ineffectual. Manual targeting involving community committees thus remains to date the main mechanism for selecting households for LEAP.

Concerns about community targeting were similarly raised by DFID. As noted by DFID's financial consultant, '*targeting at the community level can be open to abuse…you hardly know who is selecting who*' (Interview with LS6/FS, 13th March 2018). This view also highlights the effects of community influences on the outcome of targeting. However, as DFID's technical assistant, his perspective went beyond the effects of community influences on targeting. His views pointed to much bigger concerns about potential fiduciary risks borne by DFID. This was clarified by the LEAP Deputy Director:

> *'You see, DFID needed to protect its financial investment in the LEAP and therefore made electronic targeting of LEAP households mandatory. LEAP's donors, DFID and the WB pushed the NDC government to switch from manual to electronic targeting and threatened they will pull out their funding if they did not switch. They were not sure the right persons were being targeted for the programme*' (Interview with LS1/ LDD, 6th February 2018).

The evidence presented demonstrates that DFID as well as the WB had reached a consensus that if the political influences on the selection of households persisted, and financial assistance intended to support households never reached them, this would undermine their financial assistance, hence the push for electronic targeting.

While the literature presented about community targeting indicates that, as an approach, it did not always guarantee the poorest households were reached as intended (Coady, Grosh and Hoddinott, 2004), there is also the view that other alternatives to targeting still presented some inclusion and exclusion errors (Devereux, 2016). In the case of LEAP, the WB and DFID recognised that the switch to an electronic system using the single household registry based on four different categories still risked the chance of including non-eligible groups and excluding eligible groups. However, the perception that inclusion and exclusion errors would be reduced, especially as community officials were eliminated from the process, led the WB and DFID to maintain their preference for electronic targeting to the extent of making the switch to electronic targeting mandatory. DFID also threatened to 'suspend or reduce its financial

assistance to LEAP' (DFID, 2013, p. 10) if the government failed to address structural problems in targeting.

In addition to the WB and DFID, UNICEF saw the need to strengthen LEAP's targeting system. The Head of Payments at LMS recalled the proposal by UNICEF at a meeting with directors over the move from a manual to an electronic selection of households. According to him:

> *'UNICEF's advisor argued that an electronic targeting system ensured that only vulnerable groups who have the right to social protection could be targeted. He proposed the use ESOKO's data entry clerks which UNICEF employed in selecting beneficiaries for the LEAP 1000 project[37]. Household data collected went straight onto the LEAP server without being manipulated and then a final list of selected households was generated'* (Interview with LS4/HP, 22nd February 2018).

For UNICEF, the use of a CTM enable the selection of only the most vulnerable households who had rights to access the LEAP grants. The recommendation to use ESOKO, a private data collection agency, was based on UNICEF's '*experience of using the data entry clerks to collect data for UNICEF-sponsored programmes, including the "LEAP 1000"'* (Interview with LS1/LND, 5th March 2018). Data entry clerks from ESOKO replaced community committees who had previously administered survey questionnaires to select beneficiary households for the LEAP programme.

A benefit of replacing community committees with data entry clerks was that beneficiary data collected on hand-held devices was automatically linked to a LEAP server. This meant that there was a reduced chance that clerks would manipulate data. Moreover, the use of a private company was also meant to convince domestic elites and technocrats of the robustness of an electronic system and its effect on the outcome of targeting (UNICEF, 2012).

UNICEF's recommendation, however, had cost implications. They primarily comprised *'training ESOKO's data entry clerks which were covered by UNICEF in the first year of their three-year contracted period'* (LS4 /HP, 22nd February 2018). With such an arrangement in place, the NDC government in power in 2016 had no option but to use ESOKO to administer PMT. The use of ESOKO not only had cost implications but presented problems for district and community level officials. A more detailed analysis of the effects of ESOKO's involvement in the selection of LEAP households will be presented in section 7.4 of chapter 7.

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[37] A UNICEF-sponsored LEAP extension project in which selected households comprising extremely poor pregnant women and mothers with infants under 18 months were administered cash grants over three years to explore how cash transfers reduced child poverty and improved the nutritional status of infants.

As well as strengthening the targeting system, my analysis showed that the three TNAs recommended strengthening LEAP's payment system.

A shift from manual to electronic payments

Like with the selection of beneficiary households, there were concerns about the manual system of disbursing cash grants, hence a recommendation to shift from a manual to an electronic means of payment. As recalled by the Head of Payments at LMS:

> *'the possibility of paying the wrong person was extremely high especially as numbers of beneficiary households increased. Ghana Postal Services' disbursing clerks were not looking at the photos. It was a simple thumb print, collect cash and go strategy. There was also the time and administrative costs of processing payments. So, the WB and DFID suggested the biometric system'* (Interview with LS4/HP, 22nd February 2018).

The key element in the electronic payment system was the use of biometric technology to verify beneficiary characteristics, such as finger prints and entitlements (World Bank, 2016b) in contrast to the manual system of simply checking recipients' photo identity cards.

The use of such biometric technology to deliver cash grants aligned with both the WB's and DFID's ideologies. The application of biometric technology was consistent with the Post-Washington Consensus ideology because the WB's development ideology placed value on the use of technology to improve the delivery of government services (Williamson, 2005). Similarly, for DFID, the Third Way ideology promoted the renewal of systems through technology to improve public provisioning of services (Hay, 2018).

Like with the electronic targeting system, the switch to electronic payments recommended by DFID and the WB was not only intended to protect beneficiary grants but was also intended to reduce their fiduciary risks. In the case of DFID, as a bilateral aid agency accountable to its taxpayers, the electronic payment system was preferred over the manual system because it ensured that grants went to the right persons. In addition, 'employing electronic payments as the LEAP programme expanded, ensured that DFID's financial investments were achieving value for money' (DFID Ghana, 2012, p. 27). According to the DFID official, electronic payment systems, because they reduced or eliminated errors, would ensure that DFID's financial investment had a higher chance of meeting expected outcomes, hence ensuring the value of its investment in LEAP. For the WB, which prioritised cost-effectiveness in its investments in low-income countries, the use of biometric technology in processing payments was a recommendation for LEAP because it had been tried and tested in Kenya's OVC programme

(World Bank, 2012) and was believed to be a cost-effective method of disbursing cash grants to beneficiary households.

To ensure the LEAP programme implemented an electronic payment system, pressure was brought to bear on the previous NDC government, as the deputy director of LEAP recalled: *'The WB pushed [my emphasis added] the previous NDC government to switch from a manual to electronic payments process or else it will not continue funding. All the development partners, UNICEF, DFID and WB pushed [my emphasis added] for electronic payments"* (Interview with LS1/LDD, February 2018).

So although the literature suggests that TNAs in social protection policy have since the early 2000s employed persuasive mechanisms to achieve their interests (Foli, 2016; Ulriksen, 2016), and that ideas were negotiated rather than enforced (Hickey *et al.*, 2018), the evidence presented here suggests that this has not necessarily been the case in the Ghanaian context. Regarding the strengthening of payments, the WB seems to have forced the electronic payment system on the Ghanaian government rather than negotiating with programme implementers of LEAP regarding how payments could be strengthened.

The use of the word 'pushed' by LEAP's deputy director to describe the attitude of the WB (and DFID) is a reminder of the coercive mechanisms it employed in the 1990s during the structural adjustment lending period. Also, as noted, electronic targeting was used as leverage to ensure it could account for how its funds were used to deliver expected results – in this case appropriate targeting of beneficiary households.

The threat to withdraw its funding if managers of the programme did not implement electronic payments is an example of how the WB and DFID seem prepared to use hard forms of power (Abdulai, 2020) to ensure certain preferred practices are implemented. This is in sharp contrast to the suggestions of some scholars that the use of soft power, comprising persuasive mechanisms like negotiation, is currently the mechanism most TNAs employ to sell their preferred policy choices (Foli, 2016; Hickey *et al.*, 2018).

Although the WB and DFID endorsed the shift from manual to electronic payments, and both organisations were prepared to withdraw their financial support if the government did not make this shift, in reality funding for LEAP was not withdrawn, even when some districts had not yet begun to use biometric technology in disbursing grants. At the time of my data collection, *'about twenty percent of all LEAP implementing districts had not invested in the necessary infrastructure to enable them to use biometric technology to process payments'* (Interview with LS4/HP, 22nd

February 2018)*. This suggests that the threat of withdrawing support as well as continued financing of the programme was perhaps used as a 'carrot and stick mechanism' to protect organisational interests and at the same time influence the behaviour of domestic elites in ways that allowed them to comply with the demands of TNAs.

In the implementation of LEAP, the WB, DFID and UNICEF did not always get an opportunity to promote their ideas in the way they expected. There were situations where the political interests and agendas of domestic elites were prioritised over TNAs' poverty reduction ideas. This in effect placed limits on what was accomplished on the ground. This is the focus of the next section.

5.3   Domestic elite's interests and limits to TNA influence

The evidence presented suggests that the priorities and interests of ruling elites threatened the influence of TNAs on the implementation of LEAP. Three factors which contributed to this are analysed as follows: first, the commitment of the ruling government to a political manifesto promise, discussed in section 5.3.1; second, attempts by the NPP to increase voter support numbers, discussed in section 5.3.2; and third, a political tactic to delay commitment to LEAP, namely in passage of a draft social protection bill, discussed in section 5.3.3. These factors suggest that TNA interests sometimes lost prominence but also conflicted with the interests of domestic elites.

5.3.1   Commitment to a political manifesto promise

While the evidence suggests that all three TNAs wanted to see LEAP implemented as a targeted cash grants programme intended to reduce poverty and vulnerability, the ruling NPP government's immediate priority was to fulfil its political manifesto promise. This attitude was particularly frustrating for the WB, as explained by its social protection specialist:

> '*A recent meeting attended by me and other development partners at the Ministry of Finance indicated the government has currently put the free Senior High School (SHS) programme high on its agenda. So, it's all about the free SHS since the NPP government gained power. Priorities have shifted, and some other programmes must suffer. Of course, children will have to be educated to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. But in the current climate when certain decisions are prioritised over others then it becomes more of a political agenda rather than a development agenda*' (Interview with DP3/ WBAd, 21st March 2018).

For the WB's social protection specialist, commitment to the LEAP programme meant ensuring LEAP was implemented as intended, in this case to reduce extreme poverty, a mission of the WB as a development organisation. However, it seems that the actions of the ruling NPP government threatened this goal because of how it prioritised delivery of a political manifesto promise over the objectives of the LEAP programme.

In the 2016 elections, the NPP promised that, if elected, they would introduce 'free' senior secondary education for all who obtained the minimum entry grades required to access secondary education (GOG, 2018). This political manifesto promise, according to the WB's social protection specialist, risked the government not fulfilling the poverty reduction goal of LEAP because it entailed the government channelling resources and effort to fulfil this political manifesto promise.

The NPP's political manifesto priority was similarly viewed by DFID's LEAP advisor:

> *'NPP government believes the success of the free SHS will win them more votes than the LEAP programme, so the incentive to commit and put resources into the SHS programme is stronger. The current government has not committed to the LEAP as much as it commits to ensuring the success of the free SHS programme, because they know LEAP will not give them as much votes as the free SHS programme'* (Interview with DP1/DFAd, 7th April 2018).

Drawing on the literature on the characteristics of competitive clientelist settlements, it is typical of governments to focus on and prioritise 'projects that cover a broad geographical area which tend to have visible impact rather than targeting public resources to more deprived areas' (Abdulai, 2020, p. 4). It seemed that the launch of the free SHS, which benefited the entire country, overshadowed TNAs' poverty reduction interests of ensuring that 2.2 million households who lived in extreme poverty were targeted using a cash transfer programme. The free SHS programme had visible political payoffs because all school-aged children including those from deprived households who previously could not access public secondary education could now do so. Consequently, with the huge direct costs of education covered, affected households were more likely to vote the NPP back into power. In this regard, it could be argued that the NPP government prioritised the interests of re-election over the poverty reduction interests of TNAs as the success of the free SHS programme had a strong vote-winning potential for the NPP government.

Although the way the importance of the free SHS programme was outlined in its 2016 political manifesto seems not very different from how the NPP intended to implement the LEAP programme, there is a sense from the analysis that the NPP's commitment to the former was greater because the free SHS programme had vote-winning potential.

In their 2016 political manifesto, the NPP promised 'to redefine basic education to include vocational and technical schools and make it available for free on a universal basis to all Ghanaians' (CODEO, 2016b, p. 31). The same was not said about the LEAP programme. The NPP's plan for the LEAP programme was not to ensure that it reached all poor households. Instead, its plan was to 'refocus the LEAP programme by adopting effective, accurate means-testing

mechanisms to properly select beneficiary households' (CODEO, 2016b, p. 37). These were the systems of delivery that were discussed earlier in section 5.2.2. Establishing these systems was rather costly and had less visible impact from the electorate's perspective. Thus, what was most important for the NPP government was to deliver a programme which had much more visibility and yielded immediate returns for the electorate (Whitfield, 2010).

The free Senior High School (SHS) programme was the NPP's trump card in the 2016 elections and fulfilling this promise was interpreted by the WB and DFID as one reason why it did not prioritise LEAP in the same way as the previous NDC government. According to Lavers and Hickey (2015), if social protection does not contribute significantly to the stability of the political settlement, then ruling elites are less likely to commit to its uptake. It seems that the LEAP programme did not have as much significance for the stability of NPP's rule than did the NPP's political manifesto promise.

In addition to fulfilling a political manifesto promise, the NPP's restriction of grants to beneficiary households selected by the NDC similarly limited the influence of TNAs over LEAP's implementation.

5.3.2 Attempts to increase voter support numbers.

In sharing their views on the threats to and challenges of implementing the LEAP programme, DFID's advisor raised concerns about a current issue – the restriction of grants to eligible households selected by the NDC government and processing grant payments for households selected under NPP's administration. He noted:

> *'We the development partners are aware of the politics that is going on and we are not enthused at all. We have so much confidence in the poverty reduction potential of the programme and all we want to see now is the backlog of payments to be addressed before processing payments for the next batch of enrolled beneficiaries'* (Interview with DP1/DFAd, 16th June 2018).

The politics that was going on in this case was a strategy employed to increase voter support numbers. This involved the incentive for NPP's administration to process LEAP grants for households selected under its administration but restrict the processing of grants to households selected under the NDC's administration. According to the selection rules of the LEAP programme, processing grants takes a few months once a beneficiary is enrolled on the programme (MESW, 2012). For DFID however, processing and distributing grants to selected households was one way the cash grants element of LEAP responded to the consumption needs of vulnerable households and prevented them from sliding into extreme poverty. However, this objective was far from prioritised by the NPP's elites because the NPP government had other

agendas than prioritising the short-term objective of the LEAP programme. In a competitive clientelist political setting where vulnerability to the loss of power to opponents was high (Levy, 2010), ruling elites go to great lengths to employ strategies which give them a political advantage over their opponents (Abdulai, 2019; Abdulai, 2020; Appiah and Abdulai, 2017). In the case of LEAP's implementation under the NPP government, processing grants of households enrolled under its administration was a strategy to increase voter support numbers for NPP and thus used to give them a political advantage over NDC.

The conduct of the NPP government in prioritising the processing and distribution of grants to households it selected over households selected by the NDC was confirmed by a research participant at LMS, who noted, '*those beneficiaries enrolled by NPP government in 2018 were paid immediately, while those enrolled in 2017 are still awaiting their grants'* (LS1/ LDD, 16th June 2018). The selective distribution of LEAP grants was in effect NPP government's attempt to buy political loyalty from households it enrolled, to increase its voter support numbers. Cases of political patronage similar to the case described are not uncommon in the expansion of LEAP. Such cases will be discussed in chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis.

There was some sense that TNAs like the WB saw the attitude of the NPP government as a threat to realising the poverty reduction potential of LEAP, but one which they could not control. LEAP's TNAs were also not in much control of the timing around which a draft social protection bill would be passed.

5.3.3   A political tactic to delay commitment to LEAP

Challenges in disbursing regular cash grants to beneficiary households in 2013 (DFID Ghana, 2013) led NDC's elites to draft a social protection bill to secure binding commitments from future governments and protect the rights of all social protection beneficiaries including those of the LEAP programme. However, there were delays in passing the social protection bill when NPP took over the implementation of LEAP from 2017, thus threatening the achievement of TNAs organisational goals. This is because TNAs saw the passage of the social protection bill as aligning with aspects of their respective ideologies.

While the WB approached the benefit of the bill from a governance perspective, DFID and UNICEF saw the passage of the bill through a human rights lens. For the WB, '*a social protection bill, will protect beneficiaries under various governments'* (DP3/ WBAd, 21st March 2018). The protection of beneficiaries by various governments reflected the WB's Post-Washington Consensus ideology (Williamson, 2005) of institutionalising government programmes. The

institutionalisation of legal framework for social protection would ensure that any government in power would be required to manage and allocate appropriate financial resources to address the welfare needs of its most vulnerable and poorest households.

For DFID, passing the bill would signal the government's responsibility to maintain regular cash grants, as explained by DFID's advisor:

> *'a social protection bill in place will protect the rights of all vulnerable citizens to social protection. In addition, it is a wakeup call for the current government, because that legal backing comes with funding, to put in the resources and money for regular funding to protect their rights to access social protection'* (Interview with DP1/DFAd, 16th June 2018).

The emphasis on the protection of citizens' rights by governments reflects an idea promoted by DFID's Third Way ideology (Hay, 2018). The passage of a social protection bill would obligate governments to establish a social contract with their most vulnerable citizens (Devereux and White, 2010). This meant that not only would governments that administered LEAP be expected to support eligible households with regular cash grants but, most importantly, beneficiaries of targeted interventions could also demand their rights from the government.

The protection of the rights of vulnerable households was similarly a position espoused by UNICEF. For UNICEF, the passage of the bill *'ensured that fewer children and women will be vulnerable to poverty'* (DP2/UNAd, 26th February 2018). Since children and their caregivers were regarded as the most vulnerable groups (UNICEF, 2012), protecting their rights to social protection was UNICEF's priority.

Despite the benefits of instituting a legal framework, it appeared that the draft bill was far from its passage. The justification for the NPP administration not passing the draft bill ranged from, '*we are making revisions to budget allocations before we forward to cabinet*' (M2 /ChD, 18th January 2018) to, *'the draft social protection bill is with the lawyer'* (DP2/UNAd, 26th February 2018) to, *'[the] bill is currently under review and it takes time'* (DP3/WBAd, 21st March 2018). These explanations demonstrate that factors beyond the control of TNAs threatened a cause which they [TNAs] defended.

To DFID, delaying the passage of the social protection bill was '*a political tactic to delay commitment to the LEAP programme*' (Interview with DP 1/DFAd, 16th June 2018). It meant that the NPP administration was not very committed to protecting the rights of vulnerable households, focusing instead on popular policies to secure re-election. Programme directors who understood the political context from which LEAP emerged similarly supported this claim, noting that '*the bill will be passed in the third or fourth year so that NPP can take credit for it'*

(LS4/HP, 22nd February 2018; LS1/LND, 11th May 2018; LS2/LND, 7th February 2018). In keeping with the re-election incentive of elites in competitive clientelist settlements, passing the bill later in the third or fourth year of their administration, rather than in the second year (as I collected field data in 2018) drew beneficiaries' attention to a government that would commit to their needs when re-elected into power.

In contrast to DFID's perspective, the WB and UNICEF viewed delays not through a political lens but through a practical lens as signalled by the WB's perspective: *'WB and UNICEF hired a lawyer who led the process of review. We all read it, tweaked it and that took some time'* (Interview with DP3/WBAd, 21st March 2018). Thus, from the evidence, a combination of practical and political factors worked against the passage of the draft bill, although the re-election incentive appears to have been a stronger factor in contributing to the NPP's delay than practical factors. A follow up on the state of the bill, two years after my fieldwork, indicated that at a news conference, the NPP made plans to pass the bill in 2019[38], that is, in their third year in office, as was claimed by programme directors.

5.4   Summary of findings and conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine how the ideas and interests of the WB, DFID and UNICEF as well as domestic elites' interests shaped the implementation of the LEAP programme. The analysis demonstrated that the programmatic ideas and organisational interests of the three TNAs produced the framework for the design and implementation of the LEAP programme. However, domestic elites' interests and agendas placed limits on the extent of TNA influence on the implementation of LEAP.

Three sets of findings from the analysis contribute to the evidence I present above. First, in line with Lavers and Hickey's argument about how the uptake of social protection occurs, the analysis suggests that TNA ideas aligned with the ideas of Ghana's political elites. This is because although the two major governments had one common political interest, which was to retain power, they also ensured that while in power, a national poverty reduction agenda was addressed. Given that both NDC and NPP governments had previously implemented economic growth-focused programmes which did little to reduce extreme poverty, Ghana's political elites did not hesitate to take up the 'tried and tested' cash transfer programmes recommended by TNAs. The adoption and subsequent implementation of TNA ideas and their linkage with ruling

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[38] Information was sourced from, https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Ghana-to-pass-social-protection-law-Gender-Ministry-687002

governments' social programmes gave further weight to the indication that TNA ideas aligned with the national government's policy agenda of reducing extreme poverty.

Second, in line with the APSF's notion that TNAs operate as distinct factions with their own ideas, interests and holding power, the analysis shows that TNAs exerted significant influence on the implementation of LEAP. This was possible because TNAs utilised hard forms of power such as enforcing specific implementation strategies and threatened to pull out their financial support if the ruling government failed to comply. Despite the threats, TNAs did not pull out their support and often, continued as implementing partners with the government of Ghana even when the government in power could not meet their demands. This suggests that TNAs were prepared to make slight alterations to their approaches and perspectives to ensure that their organisational goals aligned with Ghana's political settlement. In effect their perspectives were not static, and their positions altered slightly as implementation unfolded under NDC and NPP administrations.

Despite TNA directing implementation of LEAP, there were limits to their influence. The analysis suggests that in situations where the interests and agendas of domestic elites were prioritised over LEAP, TNAs influence particularly those of DFID and WB were reduced greatly. Their ideas continued to shape the implementation of LEAP. However, the ruling government's commitment to its political manifesto, for example, endangered its commitment to the LEAP programme and thus placed limits on TNA influence on LEAP's implementation.

Third, in providing the overall framework for the design and implementation of LEAP, TNAs were guided by specific ideologies and development approaches. These ideologies underpinned their recommendations for specific programmes and explained why 'tried and tested' programmatic ideas, which were often borrowed from the design of LEAP-type programmes in global south contexts, were effective in reducing extreme poverty. DFID, WB and UNICEF's focus on approaches to poverty reduction and improving the wellbeing of vulnerable groups did not change much since becoming implementing partners with the government of Ghana. While DFID and UNICEF promoted access to social services and social protection as a right for LEAP beneficiaries, WB kept to strengthening the human capital base and improving access to markets for vulnerable groups.

The next chapter provides an analysis of the expansion of LEAP by elites of NPP and NDC governments. The chapter investigates how Ghana's intense competitive democratic politics shapes the expansion of the LEAP programme.

Chapter 6 Competitive clientelism in the context of LEAP expansion.

Chapter purpose and structure

This chapter illuminates how the nature of competitive politics in Ghana influences the behaviour of political elites in expanding LEAP to enhance their positions of power. Analysis of the data also shows that the influence of domestic political elites become more prominent, and that of TNA actors less so, in the actual implementation process. The chapter discusses how this comes about in response to the second research question of this study: "How does Ghana's competitive democratic politics drive the expansion strategies of the LEAP programme?"

Like chapter 5, data for this chapter drew primarily on semi-structured interviews and key documents as I indicate previously in section 4.5 of chapter 4. Interviews were analysed using a thematic approach while a thematic and content analysis approach was used in the analysis of documents as described earlier in section 4.6 of chapter 4.

In keeping with the multilevel analytical strategy adopted in this study, analysis of data focused on responses of research participants drawn primarily from the national level of governance. The analytical strategy for this chapter is thus summarised in figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 Analytical strategy for chapter 6
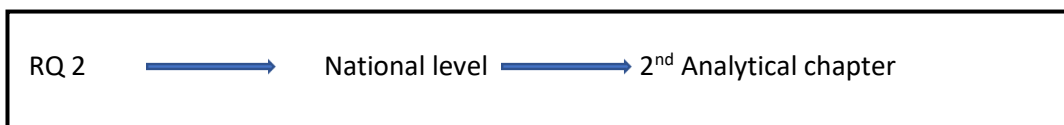
Source: *Author*

The analysis was guided by Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF) as presented and discussed in section 3.2 of chapter 3. Regarding the expansion of social protection, Lavers and Hickey (2015) make two propositions which I test in this chapter. First, the framework indicates that elites in competitive clientelist settlements are more likely to use social protection as a patronage tool, particularly around elections (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). Thus, I examine whether and how NPP and NDC elites use LEAP as a tool of political patronage. Second, the commitment to expand social protection depends on the significance of social protection for the stability of the prevailing political settlement (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). In that respect, I examine whether the expansion of LEAP is of particular significance to the stability of the NDC's or NPP's ruling governments.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. Section 6.1 presents the sequence and scale of LEAP's expansion between 2008-2018. Section 6.2 analyses the strategies used by the NDC and NPP governments to sustain LEAP's expansion. Section 6.3 examines the factors which threatened the effective expansion of LEAP. Section 6.4 summarises the findings that emerge from the analysis and concludes the chapter.

6.1 The sequence and coverage of LEAP from 2008-2018

LEAP was launched by the NPP government as part of its growth and poverty alleviation strategy in 2008, a few weeks before the general elections (Debrah, 2013; NDPC, 2008). However, it was the NDC government which carried out the first expansion when it won power in 2009. This continued until 2016, when the NPP regained power from the NDC and continued scaling up the programme from 2017 (Grebe, 2017).

This is captured in figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2   Sequence of LEAP's expansions from 2009-2018
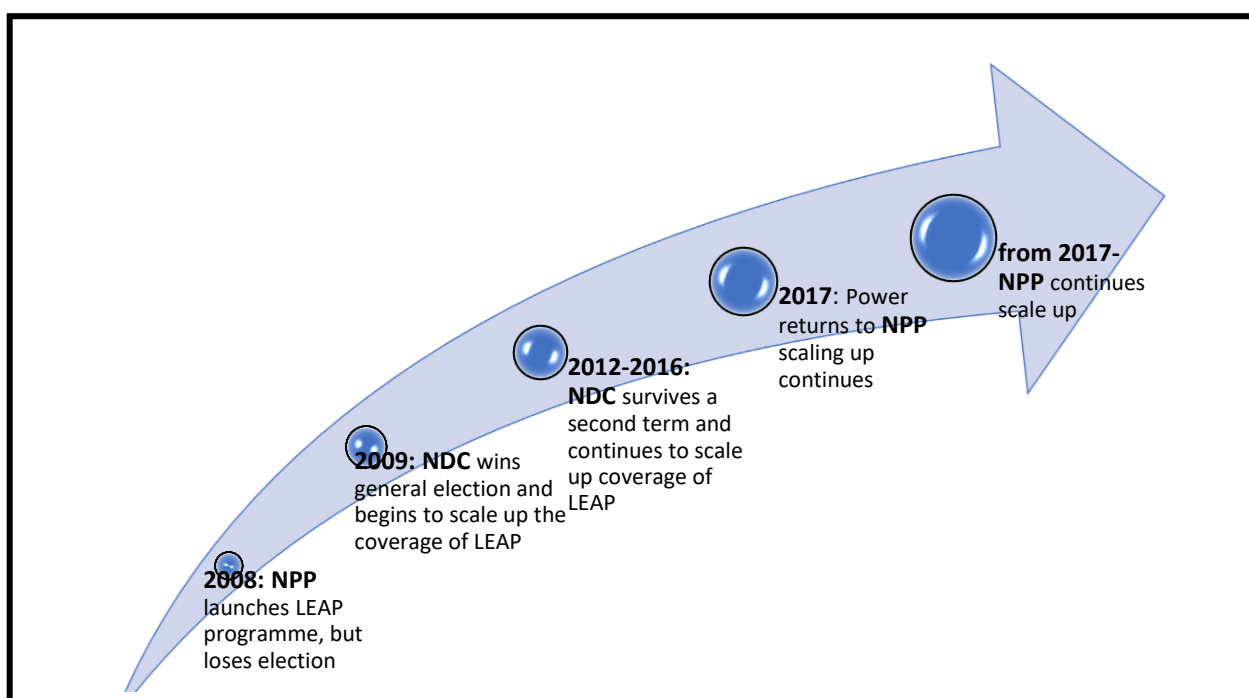
Source: Author's compilation from fieldwork

The expansion plan of LEAP stipulated that ruling governments will continue to scale up its coverage to enable all 2.2 million extremely poor Ghanaians to escape extreme poverty and conditions of vulnerability (MESW, 2012). Both NPP and NDC governments therefore made expansion of LEAP an integral part of their poverty alleviation strategies. From 2009, the NDC

increased the number of beneficiary households[39] from 1,654[40] to 213,044 during its two-term administration. In 2017, when the NPP regained power, it continued with the expansion and added an additional 186,992 households in its first year in government. The total number of households covered by LEAP with each implementing government over the period that this case study covers is illustrated in figure 6.3 below.

Figure 6.3   Expanding LEAP: NPP and NDC, 2009-2018

	NPP (2008)	NDC (2009-2016)	NPP(2017-2018)
■ NUMBER OF BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS REACHED	1,654	213,044	186,992
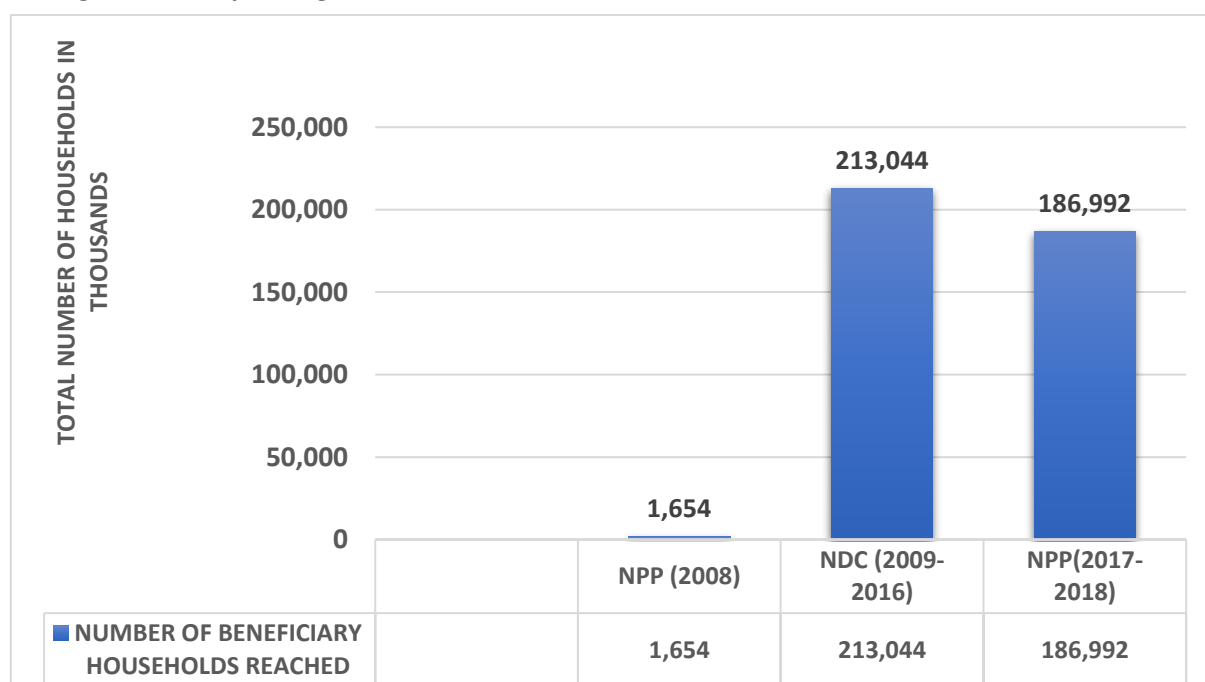
Source: *Author's compilation from field work*

Figure 6.3 shows that over the ten-year period which this case study covers, the LEAP programme saw a significant increase in the number of households benefitting from the programme. It also shows that when the NPP launched LEAP in 2008, a total number of 1,654 households were covered by the programme. Between 2009 and 2016, when the social democratic NDC government was in power, it expanded coverage from an initial 1,654 households to 213,014 households. Thus, the NDC added about 27,000 beneficiaries a year during its 8-year rule, whereas the NPP in its first year alone increased beneficiary numbers seven-fold. Explanations which emerged from my analysis in sections 6.1. and 6.2 will reveal that Ghana's prevailing political settlement is central to understanding how and why NDC and NPP governments expanded LEAP in the way they did during their terms in office. It is important at this stage to reiterate the defining features of competitive clientelism.

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[39] The average number of persons in a LEAP household is 5 (LS1/ LDD, 6th February 2018; LS3/DCM, 7th February 2018)
[40] DP 3/WBAd, 21st March 2018

As I previously defined in section 3.2.2 of the literature review chapter, in competitive clientelist political settlements, there is intense and constant competition for power between strong factions. The vulnerability of ruling governments to the loss of power to other strong factions in competitive elections is high (Levy, 2014), and as a result ruling governments often form strong clientelist networks with lower-level groups like political constituents to hold on to power (Levy, 2014). In effect, the fear of losing power in competitive elections drives elites in competitive clientelist settlements to use their discretionary power to allocate public resources, including social protection, to their loyal supporters. This way, electoral support from loyal supporters is secured to enhance the ruling coalition's ability to maintain power (Khan, 2010). The short time horizon for elites in competitive clientelist settlements means that they are more likely to adopt survival strategies (Levy, 2014) including implementing programmes that can produce quick and visible results and offer short-term gains to political constituents in return for vote-buying (Abdulai, 2019; Whitfield, 2010).

In the analysis which follows in 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, a major reason why NDC and NPP elites expanded the LEAP programme was to secure electoral support and increase their chances of re-election.

6.1.1 Expanding LEAP under NDC, 2009-2016

It emerged from the analysis that the NDC did not simply expand LEAP for the purpose of achieving national poverty reduction goals but considering their vulnerability to the loss of power to NPP, expanded LEAP to serve their short-term political interests of securing voter support to retain power. This factor appears to have driven and sustained expansions as analysis in section 6.1.2 will show.

An official in charge of electronic payments who saw an increase in the number of electronic payments processed prior to the 2016 elections explained that LEAP's expansion was always motivated by increasing vote capture. She explained:

> *'The expansion for either government is good for their campaign figures. The fact that under a particular government, several extreme poor households have been reached is seen as something that will increase voter support for the programme'* (Interview with SI1/ GPs, 20th March 2018).

The interesting point here is that a social protection programme can become a vote-winning social policy and a vehicle for strengthening a party's political base or attracting new supporters. If one party believed the other party was using a social protection programme to make it attractive to voters, then it would be more likely to behave in a similar way.

This perception that the NDC expanded LEAP to secure electoral support was a strongly held view, as expressed by another research participant. According to her:

'The NDC government expanded, expanded and continued to expand till the last month, prior to the elections. The social protection minister made sure beneficiaries will understand that it is their administration that expanded the LEAP and had included them in its coverage. She also made sure they did not vote on an empty stomach. As a result, a campaign team went to some of the poorest households in the country and gave them GHC 5[41] and GH10[42] promising that they will make sure they are not hungry when they are voted back in power' (Interview with D2/DSW-MK, 29th January 2018).

It was not possible to corroborate this claim, but nevertheless, it demonstrates the strength of feeling about the lengths to which political elites would go to ensure that beneficiaries see the LEAP cash transfer as an indication of government commitment to their welfare. Having managed social welfare programmes under both NPP and NDC administrations, the research participant was familiar with the behaviour of elites in relation to expansions, particularly as elections loomed. The offer of monetary incentives in exchange for electoral support is an example of the outcome of political competition in a democratic country (Banful, 2011) where the fear of losing power to a political opponent can trigger behaviours and actions to protect the government's political advantage. In this case, money was being used as an inducement to secure electoral support ahead of the general elections, although earlier research on voter support in Ghana has found very little evidence of electoral dividends in favour of political elites who used financial incentives as a bait for electoral support (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). Yet, the intensity of activities to promote the idea that LEAP was an example of how a government cared for its poor was seen to reap electoral dividends. Cash was concrete and at the time of the elections could be used by the political elite to promote their popularity with poor voters. This issue was expressed or implied in many of the interviews with district-level officials. In particular, it was claimed that the NDC used cash to reassure the poorest households who were also its political constituents of the continuance of the programme if they continued to vote for the party.

In support of the argument that the NDC scaled up LEAP as part of its strategy to increase its voter support numbers, a research participant argued:

"Expansions intensified just before the NDC left office. The social protection minister expanded and carried out more expansions till the last minute. Even in November 2016, she

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[41] Equivalent of US$ 0.87.
[42] Equivalent of US$ 1.73.

was trying to win votes from witch camps[43] in the Northern region (Interview with D4/DSW-AS, 2nd March 2018)

The timing of LEAP's expansions which coincided with preparations for the national elections is consistent with the assumptions of the APSF that competitive clientelist settlements often use social protection as a patronage tool, particularly when elections are looming (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). This is a consistent issue raised by interviewees who saw increased activity around the time of elections as an indication of ruling governments' attempts to use the programme to serve their political interests.

Ghana fits the description of a democratic country whose elites concentrate their campaign activities on their core voters rather than on groups from whom voter support is unlikely (Stokes, 2011). The NDC first concentrated on its core supporters who comprise vulnerable and extremely poor households in the Northern region of the country (Ayee, 2017). In emphasising the party's commitment to its social democratic principles, the NDC party indicated in their political manifesto that it was going to use social protection programmes like LEAP to 'protect and support the vulnerable, the disadvantaged and the marginalized in society' (CODEO, 2008a, p. 3).

Inhabitants of witch camps were disadvantaged and marginalised women who had been accused of using black magic to cause misfortunes in their communities (World Atlas, 2021). They lived in segregated communities and had no access to any kind of government support or social amenities. Such were the groups that the NDC as a social democratic party targeted in the lead up to the elections. While some viewed the NDC elite's focus on disadvantaged groups as a strategy to preserve its party's ideological commitment, other research participants interpreted it as a bait for electoral support.

A contrary view that ideological motive was a stronger driver of the NDC's actions than the short-term political interests of securing electoral support to retain power, was emphasised by a research participant who argued that their actions were '*purely ideological and not to gain votes*' (Interview with M1/ DPME, 16th January 2018). This view was advanced by a bureaucrat who previously worked under the NDC administration and on donor-supported development projects including PAMSCAD. He seemed somewhat sympathetic to the social democratic

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[43] Witch camps are settlement where women suspected to be witches flee for safety. Ghana is the only country in the world with established witch camps, which house more than 1,000 women. The vast majority of these women are widows who have been accused by relatives of using black magic to cause harm including the killing of their husbands. Residents of witch camps do not have access to any government support or social amenities (World Atlas, 2021).

philosophy of the NDC government, which was to 'advance the interests of marginalised and disadvantaged groups' (CODEO, 2016a, p. 26). However, according to political settlement theory, governments that exhibit the characteristics of competitive clientelism are likely to invest in strategies and policies designed to promote short-term political gain (Lavers and Hickey, 2015), in this case, expanding social protection to groups more likely to provide electoral support. Thus, LEAP served a dual purpose for NDC's elite, to preserve the party's ideological commitment and to secure electoral support from marginalised groups loyal to the NDC party, although the intensity of campaign activity close to the time of elections implied that securing electoral support was a stronger factor than preserving political ideology.

6.1.2 Expanding LEAP under the NPP, 2017-2018

As I point out earlier in section 6.1, by comparison, the NPP expanded the coverage of LEAP in its first year in office much more than did the NDC in its first year and on average over its two-term administration. The pace at which the NPP expanded LEAP was explained from both a governance and an electoral support perspective. From a governance perspective, a research participant argued that the NPP had a strategy for maximising the benefits of expansion from year one to the next electoral year:

> "*NPP have a little over three years to demonstrate their commitment to expansions as NDC did. In the first year, they are slowly picking up and begin to plan on where and how to pick up where their predecessors left. In their second year, they implement all the plans and policies which will secure them political support. In the third year they maximise all the strategies that have potential to increase their chance of staying in power and begin to plan for elections"* (Interview with DP 3/ WBAd, 21st March 2018).

The explanation provided above, indicating how the NPP intended to structure LEAP's implementation, contrasts with evidence regarding the speed at which elites in competitive clientelist settlements implement social protection. Studies on elite commitment to LEAP in Ghana suggests that the recognition of elites of their own vulnerability in the short-term means that, once in power, their immediate concern is to maximise ways of securing electoral power with which they can retain their positions of power (Abdulai, 2019; Abdulai, 2020). Thus, the strategy was to secure voter support at their earliest opportunity.

NPP's elite thus employed a strategy in their first year which seemed consistent with the approach outlined by the research participant which could be interpreted through a political patronage lens. As part of this strategy, NPP's social protection minister visited the Upper East region to check the status of a re-certification project initiated by the WB. According to the LEAP Deputy Director who accompanied her on the visit, '*the social protection minister brought back*

a few of the woven baskets the women had made to Accra, promising to find markets for them in the south' (Interview with LS2/LDD, 20th February 2018).

The location of the minister's visit, in the Upper East region of Ghana, and the objective of her visit arguably had political relevance. The Upper East region remains a NDC political stronghold (Ayee, 2017). The promise by the NPP's social protection minister to find markets for the NDC's core supporters could be interpreted as an action to poach NDC supporters, buy their allegiance and increase the NPP's popularity and voter support base. This action is consistent with the behaviour of elites in competitive clientelist settlements aiming to secure electoral support (Abdulai, 2019), in this case by buying allegiance from an opponent's core supporters.

The electoral support argument was further strengthened by a research participant who argued:

> *"Going up to the north and buying woven baskets and other products from vulnerable women who took part in pilot skills project is political patronage. Why will the minister go to the Upper East region? With which money did she buy the products? Why does she have to find markets for them?* (CS2 /IMANI, 17th April 2018).

Although from the perspective of the LEAP deputy director, the choice of the region was not decided on political grounds but *'was a joint decision reached by directors of the programme and World Bank based on cost-effectiveness',* there was an incentive for promising to create livelihoods for supporters of NPP's political opponent. Not only was the Upper East region home to the second largest number of LEAP beneficiary households in Ghana (Hamel, 2018), it was also a political stronghold region of the NDC party (Aryee, 2017).

The actions of the NPP minister illustrate the clientelist nature of relations in competitive clientelist political settlement contexts. In its 2016 manifesto, the NDC pledged to support LEAP beneficiaries with *'diverse economic activities including micro enterprises'* if voted into power (CODEO, 2016a, p. 37). The NPP's social protection minister, it would seem, attempted to support the livelihoods of LEAP households in the Upper East region by promising to find markets for their products. In addition to this competitive behaviour, the visit to an opposition stronghold to personally buy products could be interpreted as an attempt to attract NDC sympathizers to build new clientelist networks. Building clientelist networks with an opponent's supporters was just one of the strategies employed to ensure the survival of her party.

The perception from interviewees was that, for both the NDC and the NPP, expanding LEAP was not simply a fulfilment of social protection policy, but also an opportunity to repurpose LEAP for political gain. LEAP presented a survival strategy for NPP. Therefore, expansion of the LEAP

programme as an opportunity to buy loyalty from core and non-core political party supporters demonstrated the conferral of patronage to insider clients (Levy, 2014) and was a clear reflection of patronage politics.

Retaining power was thus the key factor that drove the NDC and NPP to expand the LEAP programme in succession. This factor was equally crucial in the way that both governments committed to sustain the expansion of the LEAP programme.

6.2   Sustaining expansions: strategies employed by NDC and NPP governments

While in power, both NDC and NPP governments employed strategies aimed at sustaining LEAP's expansion. Four strategies emerged from the analysis and are analysed as follows. Section 6.2.1 discusses the NDC's and the NPP's focus on expanding LEAP to political strongholds areas. This is followed by plans to withhold graduation in section 6.2.2. Section 6.2.3 examines commitment to regular financing of LEAP, and 6.2.4 is focused on rebranding LEAP. These strategies were adopted with one major goal in mind: retaining political power.

6.2.1   Focus on political stronghold districts

Research participants felt strongly that a factor in how NDC and NPP governments conducted expansion was the desire to cover political stronghold districts where electoral support was guaranteed. A district social welfare officer observed that:

> '*the NDC government was not just expanding but expanding the LEAP programme to districts in their strongholds… and then they left out all the areas belonging to NPP. So, for example in the Eastern region, they expanded heavily in the Manya Krobo and Yilo-Krobo areas. Others were Keta, Tongu areas in the Volta region, Nsawam and some Greater Accra areas. These are all areas of their stronghold. Which districts are for NPP? Akuapem area, where you have visited, and Saltpond – they totally left those areas out although those areas similarly had poor districts. The NDC social protection minister was just not interested in empowering those who would not vote for her government*' (Interview with D4/DSW-AS, March 2018).

This narrative reflects the intensity of competition which characterises governments in competitive clientelist settlements and of the strength of desire by ruling coalitions to stay in power (Levy, 2014). It is also consistent with voter support behaviour in Ghana which is characterised by strong ethno-regional politics where the two major political parties draw their loyal supporters from particular administrative regions (Ayee, 2017; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). As noted previously, the NDC's core support was in the Volta Region and the three Northern regions comprising the Upper West, Upper East, and Northern regions. Thus, the point raised about areas on which expansion focused (districts in the Volta region) appears to support this claim. On the other hand, the Ashanti Region has historically been a stronghold of the NPP

party (Abdulai, 2019; Ayee, 2011; Ayee, 2017). Other administrative regions including Greater Accra, Central, Eastern and Western regions tend to be swing voter regions of the NPP and NDC parties (Ayee, 2017).

A map showing NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds and swing voter regions is presented in figure 6.4 below.

Figure 6. 4   **NPP and NDC Political strongholds and swing voter regions in 2016**
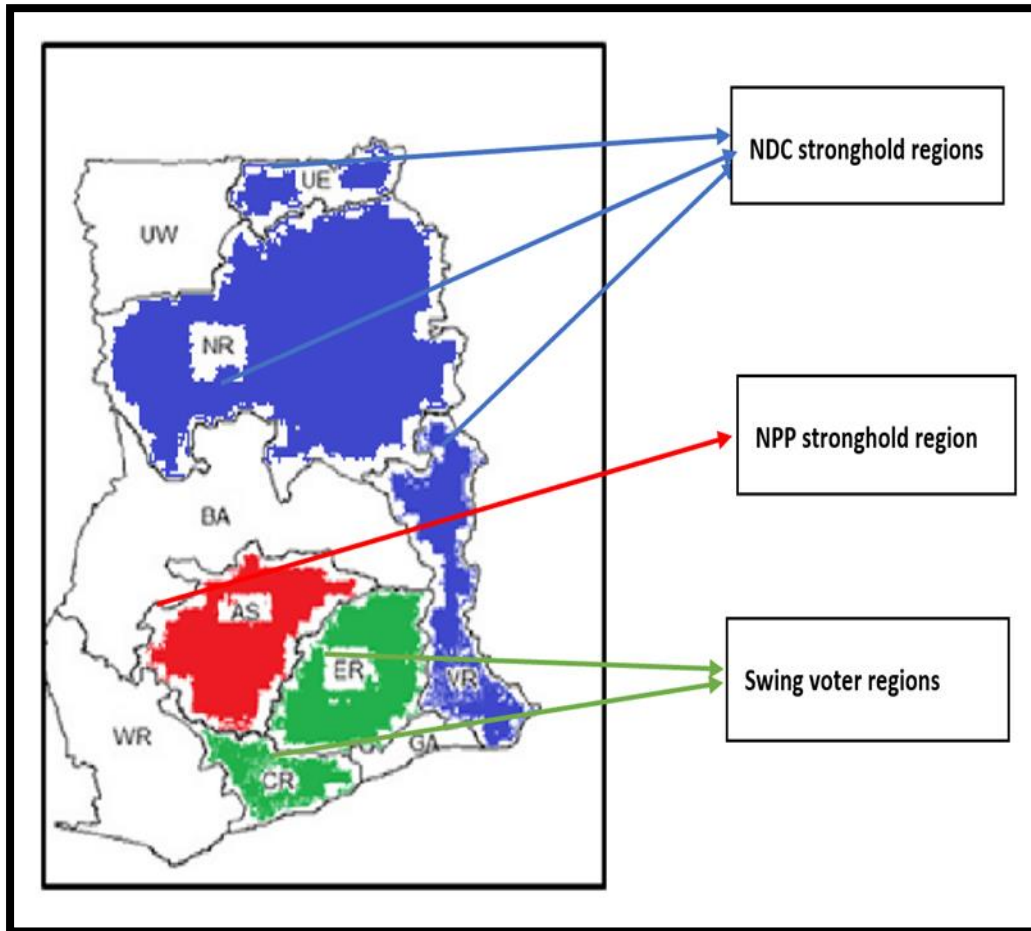
Source: *Author*

From the map above, NR (Northern region), UE (Upper East region) and VR (Volta region) shaded in indigo are NDC strongholds, AS (Ashanti region) shaded in red is the NPP stronghold, while ER (Eastern region) and CR (central region) were swing voter regions during the 2016 elections.

Evidence from the analysis suggests that LEAP expansions were not based purely on a determination of need irrespective of geographical location, as envisaged in the LEAP

programme plan. NDC and NPP governments expanded to their political stronghold regions as they alternated power between 2009-2018. According to the literature on voter support in Ghana, political stronghold regions account for about eighty percent (80%) of the total votes gained, whereas non-stronghold areas account for a relatively low amount, about eighteen percent (18%) (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008), thus the reliance of political parties on stronghold regions.

The way in which the two governments expanded the reach of LEAP, going beyond specific deprived districts and communities to broad geographical areas, reflects the behaviour of elites in competitive clientelist settlements who tend 'to focus on a broader geographical coverage in the distribution of social assistance, rather than target limited public resources to more deprived areas' (Abdulai, 2020, p. 4). Although households targeted by NDC and NPP administrations represented a broad spectrum of potential voters, they both went further to include their political stronghold areas to broaden their voter support base, with the NPP reaching out to even more households than the NDC did in their first year in office.

Documentary data on districts covered by LEAP, the administrative regions of the districts and corresponding incidence of poverty, shown in table 6.1, corroborates the claims made by research participants.

All districts in table 6.1 below were targets of the LEAP programme because their poverty status qualified them for selection according to the eligibility criteria for selecting LEAP districts. For example, their mean monthly income was between $6 and $25, defined by Ghana's poverty map[44] as extremely poor and poor districts (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). In addition to income indicators, qualitative indicators of welfare were suboptimal. Households in districts participating in the LEAP programme had poor school attendance rates, limited access to healthcare and high incidence of child labour (MMYE, 2007). Cape Coast Metropolitan was selected for LEAP expansion because of the rising incidence of child prostitution as of 2009[45]. Similarly, the high incidence of disability among school-aged children, including hearing and vision impairment, in South Tongu (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015) qualified the district for LEAP expansion.

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[44] A map of Ghana which defines regions and districts as extremely poor, poor and non-poor according to district average income.
[45] Information from interview with D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018.

Interestingly, there are striking differences in LEAP expansion districts, suggesting that other factors were at play in where expansion was concentrated during the period in which either the NDC or NPP was in power.

The first is the difference in poverty rates in the NPP's and NDC's districts of expansion. The second is the relatively high number of communities selected for expansion between 2017 and 2018 during the NPP's term in office. The third is the specific regions which were considered political strongholds of either the NDC or the NPP. Table 6.1 below highlights these differences.

Table 6.1   LEAP expansions by NDC and NPP governments in districts of political strongholds: 2009-2018

GOVERNMENT / PERIOD OF EXPANSION	EXAMPLES OF BENEFICIARY DISTRICTS	NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES IN EACH SELECTED DISTRICT	ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF SELECTED DISTRICT	INCIDENCE OF POVERTY IN REGION	STRONGHOLD OR SWING VOTER REGION?
NDC **2009-2016**	* Cape Coast Metropolitan	**25**	**Central**	20-40% (2015)	**SWING**
	Lower Manya-Krobo Upper Manya Krobo	**25**	**Eastern**	30-40% (2015)	**SWING/** **NDC STRONG HOLD**
	** Adaklu ** Ketu South ** South Tongu	**25**	**Volta**	30-45% (2015)	**NDC STRONG HOLD**
NPP **2017/2018**	** Ejisu Juaben ** Adansi North **Sekyere Afram Plains **Asokore Mampong	**42**	**Ashanti**	13-23% (2015)	**NPP STRONG HOLD**
	**Akatsi North **Akatsi South **Adaklu	**20**	**Volta**	30-45% (2015)	**NDC STRONG HOLD**

Source: *Author's compilation from interviews and documents*
* Example of my case study district; ** Extracted from list of expansion districts provided by LEAP Management Secretariat

In terms of the incidence of poverty, districts which benefitted from LEAP during the NDC's term of office were much poorer than districts which benefitted from expansion covered by the NPP's administration. For example, South Tongu in the Volta Region – an NDC stronghold, had a

poverty incidence of between 30-45 percent and a daily household income of between US $0.78 and US $1.30 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). In contrast, Ejisu Juabeng and Adansi North in the Ashanti region, districts which traditionally vote for the NPP, were relatively less poor. On average about 20 percent (2 out of 10) people in the Ashanti Region lived below the extreme poverty line (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015) although disaggregated data shows that some districts in that region, for example Sekyere Afram Plains, had a poverty headcount of 49 percent, which is as high as that of districts covered by the NDC administration (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015).

Under the NPP's administration, 42 communities, which is a relatively high number, were reached in the Ashanti region alone between 2017 and 2018. To put this into perspective, between 2009 and 2016, the NDC administration covered an average of 25 communities in selected districts of each administrative region. Implementing governments were required by LMS to cover up to 50 communities in each administrative region (MMYE, 2007a), so it seems that both governments complied with this requirement.

To understand this pattern of expansion, it is important to restate the political philosophies of each party. As described earlier in section 6.1, the NDC considers itself a social democratic party whose philosophy focuses on the interests of the most vulnerable (Anebo, 1997; Ayee, 2017). Historically, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, particularly in the Volta region of Ghana, have provided electoral support to centre-left parties. Since the NDC became one of the two major political parties in Ghana, their commitment to improving the welfare of disadvantaged groups has been reflected in their election manifestoes. For example, in the 2016 manifesto, the NDC pledged to use '*social protection intervention measures to improve the lot of the most vulnerable and marginalised citizens*' (CODEO, 2016a, pp. 21, 24). The NDC has relied on districts such as South Tongu and Adaklu to strengthen their electoral advantage in the Volta Region. The selection of these two districts for LEAP expansion is therefore consistent with the electoral advantage they enjoy in this region.

In contrast, the more liberal democratic NPP has its political stronghold in the Ashanti region, a relatively wealthy region, derived in part from its rich agricultural lands and industrial mineral wealth, both of which contribute significantly to Ghana's food production and foreign exchange earnings (Berry, 1995). Historically, districts in the Ashanti region have consistently offered electoral support to NPP governments (Ayee, 2011). Thus, the expansion of LEAP under the NPP's administration to include districts such as Adansi-North and Ejisu Juaben would appear to reflect this strong electoral support.

An interesting issue regarding expansion, not captured in table 6.1 and yet with implications for retaining power, is the order in which the parties expanded LEAP for political gain. As expressed by an interview participant, '*the NDC extended LEAP coverage to non-stronghold political areas much later than it did in its own stronghold regions*' (DSW-AS, 2nd March 2018). As party allegiance is more likely to switch between elections in swing voter regions than in political stronghold areas (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008), electoral support is less guaranteed in swing voter regions than in political stronghold regions. It is thus not surprising that the NDC concentrated its expansion efforts first on districts in its stronghold regions, shaded indigo in figure 6.4 above, before extending coverage to other districts. Archived newspaper sources from Ghana Web[46] corroborate evidence that LEAP beneficiary households in South Tongu district began collecting their cash grants in 2011, suggesting that the process of selection and enrolment of beneficiaries began prior to 2011, not long after the NDC began its second term of office. Cape Coast Metropolitan, shaded in green on the map and a swing voter region at the time, was covered much later.

In the same way that the NDC expanded LEAP from 2009, soon after it took office, the NPP also expanded LEAP from January 2017 as soon as it started its term of office. The NPP government concentrated expansion efforts on districts in their stronghold regions before districts in opposition strongholds such as Akatsi North and Akatsi South in the Volta region.

What is noticeable from the secondary data in table 6.1 is the NPP's coverage of a high number of LEAP communities in its Ashanti region stronghold, where districts were relatively less poor. This seemed to contrast with LMS's directive to the local government (district) implementing officers 'to focus on [the] poorest districts out of 50 districts when expanding beyond year one' as indicated in the LEAP design report (GOG, 2007, p. 41).

An LMS official who provided this data could not explain the reason for the abnormally high number of communities covered in relatively less poor districts in the eighth year of LEAP's expansion. The most plausible explanation, therefore, is that district implementing officers responsible for carrying out the directives of LMS[47] might have been influenced by powerful actors at the local government level to select relatively non-poor districts in addition to poor

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[46] See https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/Positive-impacts-of-LEAP-programme-on-its-target-beneficiaries-470277

[47] District Social Welfare Directors and District Implementing Committees are responsible for carrying out the directives of the LEAP Management Secretariat. Much of their role and influence is explored in chapter 7 of this thesis.

districts. This could have opened the door to expand in areas that were relatively richer alongside areas with loyal supporters to maximise the party's chances of securing electoral support and retaining power. In summary, it seems that both the NDC and the NPP attempted to skew expansion towards districts where they had political advantage in terms of voter representation.

As NDC and NPP governments alternated power and expanded the LEAP programme, the incidence of extreme poverty has since fallen in all regions including political and non-political stronghold regions, although the incidence of extreme poverty in the northern sector of the country remains high in comparison with the southern sector and rest of the country.

Figure 6.5 below is a map of Ghana showing the incidence of extreme poverty in geographical areas of Ghana between 2012-2017, including NPP and NDC political strongholds.

Figure 6.5   Incidence of extreme poverty in Ghana between 2012-2017.
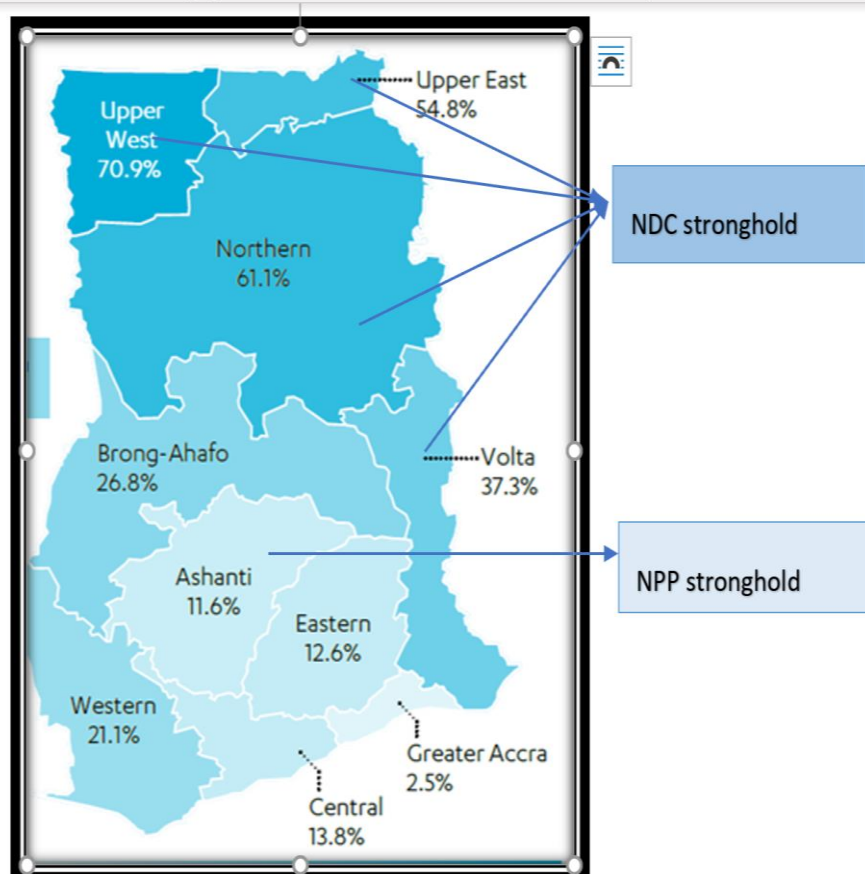
Source: *Adapted from Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) Ghana poverty report*

Another factor which emerged from my analysis as a strategy of the NDC and NPP governments for retaining power was withholding beneficiaries from graduating out of the LEAP programme.

6.2.2 Withholding plans for graduation

From the interviews, there was a strong view that both NDC and NPP governments were reluctant to graduate beneficiaries out of the LEAP programme because *'graduation did not align well with their political interests to retain power'* (interview with CS2 /IMANI, 17th April 2018). For political elites of the two political parties, keeping beneficiaries on the programme rather than graduating them was an indicator of the 'success' of the programme. It provided evidence of the number of beneficiary households reached under their respective administrations and impacted by the LEAP programme, as shown in figure 6.1 above.

Graduation is about creating pathways out of extreme poverty for vulnerable households who are enrolled on a targeted intervention scheme (Mariotti, Ulrichs and Harman, 2016). It involves state or non-state actors implementing sequenced interventions including targeting, providing appropriate measures to reduce vulnerability to poverty and living independently from a government-supported programme. To graduate beneficiaries out of extreme poverty is therefore an indication of the success of a poverty reduction intervention. Graduating beneficiaries out of a social intervention programme also demonstrates that the possibility of beneficiaries slipping back into poverty is limited (World Bank, 2020). One would therefore see graduation as fulfilling the goal of the LEAP programme. However, the way in which both governments shied away from graduating long-term beneficiaries suggests that there could be political factors impeding graduation from LEAP. From the interviews, a general view which emerged was that both NDC and NPP social protection ministers were not committed to developing plans to graduate LEAP beneficiaries, particularly those that had been on the programme for an extended period, as indicated in the LEAP operations manual.

Explanations for why elites withheld plans for graduation differed among research participants. One research participant argued that graduation was simply not a priority of the government: *'no graduation because of the current government's priorities'* (interview with LS1/LDD, 16th June 2018). This research participant had significant experience working in the social welfare sector and managed social welfare programmes, including LEAP, under different governments. He was therefore familiar with the political interests of the governments that alternated power in Ghana's highly competitive political environment. He also recognised that the political interest of staying in power was more of a priority than ensuring that households graduated from LEAP. Similarly, for another research participant, expansion, rather than graduation was a priority. For this research participant, who worked under both administrations:

'the previous social protection minister should have been thinking of preparing beneficiaries for graduation in their third year in office. However, she deviated from the design of the programme which was to re-certify and then graduate beneficiaries who had been on the programme for four years or more. Instead what did she do in her third year? Expand and expand' (Interview with D4/DSW-AS, 2nd March 2018).

It can be inferred from the response above that the NDC's social protection minister's interest and agenda in using the LEAP programme to secure re-election for her government and protect her own ministerial position meant that graduation was not considered a priority. Graduating vulnerable supporters out of LEAP would have endangered her position in office and weakened her government's chances of staying in power. Expansion was instead an interest of both NDC and NPP governments because, as noted in section 6.1, it increased their voter support numbers.

Besides withholding plans to graduate LEAP beneficiary households, commitment to regular funding was important in how the LEAP programme was sustained and thus how both governments secured electoral support to retain power.

6.2.3 Commitment to regular financing of LEAP

Ensuring regular funding for LEAP had significant implications for the programme's sustainability. It also meant that NDC and NPP governments could guarantee voter support from their constituents in ways that increased their chances of retaining power.

However, between 2011 and 2012, irregular funding for the programme and subsequent 'irregular cash disbursements for an eight-month period' (DFID Ghana, 2013; DFID, 2013) raised concerns for DFID about LEAP's performance. DFID had agreed with the government of Ghana (then the NDC) in 2012 to support LEAP expansions with a grant of £36.5 million (DFID Ghana, 2012) and so was unclear as to why the NPP government was unable to disburse cash grants as planned (DFID Ghana, 2012). As part of DFID's contribution to the LEAP budget, the purpose of the grant was to cover fifty percent of LEAP's total budget (DFID Ghana, 2016; DFID Ghana, 2018).

To ensure that the structural causes of irregular financing were addressed by the NDC government, DFID put LEAP on *'a one-year Programme Improvement Plan as part of its annual programme review'* (interview with LS2/LND, 7th February 2018). The purpose was to underline underperformance of the LEAP programme and consequently to compel the NDC government to implement financing reforms. Following this directive, DFID signed an agreement with the NDC government 'to provide financial flows to LEAP in a timely and predictable manner' (DFID, 2013, p. 5), threatening that it would 'withdraw support for the programme and other

associated funds earmarked for budget support' (DFID, 2013, p. 10) if the government failed to comply with these financial agreements.

DFID threatening to withdraw its support illustrates the exertion of hard power, in contrast to the use of soft power, by TNAs to ensure the adoption of policy ideas (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). It demonstrates the lengths to which DFID would go to ensure that its directives were followed by implementing governments. The exertion of power combined with the fear of losing DFID's support for the LEAP programme appears to have driven the NDC government to review and reform the mechanisms for financing the LEAP programme and to improve the performance of LEAP. The effect of the reform was that it moved the financing of LEAP from less stable means based on varying levels of total domestic output to a much more stable and fixed means of financing LEAP. The result was a regular and more predictable disbursements of grants from the government from 2014 (Abdulai, 2020).

To clarify the relevance of the reform and its effects on implementation, the Chief Director at the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection indicated that the threat of losing DFID and other TNA financial support motivated the government to categorise the financing of LEAP as recurrent expenditure to ensure its sustainability. He explained:

> 'we have implemented changes in the way LEAP was financed, from goods and services (expenditure which varies with changes in levels of total domestic output and tends to be irregular) to a much more fixed category called compensations, ensured regularity and sustainability in grant disbursements' (Interview with M2/ ChD, 18th January 2018).

This meant that regardless of changes in total domestic output and governments in power, LEAP payments were treated like salaries and beneficiary households could be guaranteed regular cash transfers on a bi-monthly basis.

The speed at which the LEAP financing reforms occurred (within nine months of the signing of the MOU by the NDC government) seems to contradict elite behaviour in political settlements that exhibit characteristics of competitive clientelism. According to Khan (2010), competitive clientelist settlements are less likely to be incentivised to invest in reforms which strengthen the delivery of public services. However, it seems that losing counterpart funding from DFID would have made it difficult to sustain the LEAP programme, damaged the government's political image – especially among its most loyal supporters, and weakened its chances of retaining power. From the way in which DFID threatened to withdraw its financial support if the government failed to implement funding reforms, it could be inferred that DFID had become part of the political settlement in Ghana, exerting a lot of control over how LEAP was financed.

Their relatively high initial contribution (50 percent) to the total LEAP budget enabled this influence.

When the NPP government gained power in 2017, the newly reformed funding framework, in which LEAP was financed from a more stable revenue source, allowed a continuation of regular financing of the programme and subsequently regular disbursing of cash grants to LEAP households. As was remarked by a research participant, '*there's been consistency in payments and we have never missed a payment cycle since NDC implemented a new funding framework for LEAP*' (interview with SI1/ GPs, 20th March 2018). The behaviour of the NPP in utilising what its political opponent had established demonstrates the competitive nature of power relations between elites. Both governments showed commitment to the LEAP programme in two ways. The first was how the NDC complied with DFID's directive to reform LEAP's funding framework, which was then utilised by the NPP, and the second was how the NDC and the NPP continued to honour financing agreements to sustain expansions.

Figure 6.6 below shows the government of Ghana (NDC and NPP's contribution) and TNA contributions to the total LEAP budget from 2014 to 2018.

Figure 6.6   LEAP financing 2014-2018: Government of Ghana and TNA's Contribution
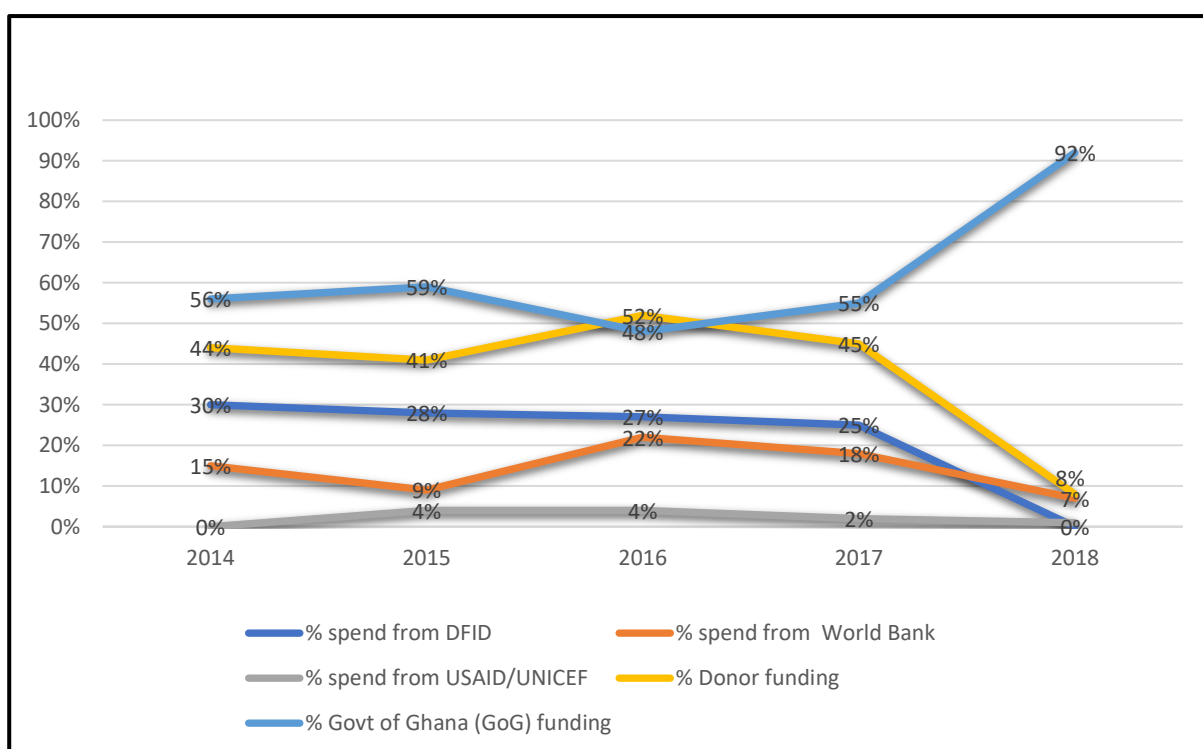
Source: *Ghana LEAP Budget, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Accra, Ghana*

As figure 6.6 shows, except for 2016 when *'preparations for elections resulted in slight reduction of Ghana government's contribution to the LEAP budget'* (interview with DP3/ WBAd, 21st March 2018), the government consistently maintained its 50 percent contribution (DFID Ghana, 2013; DFID Ghana, 2018) and increased its contribution in accordance with DFID's finance agreement with the Government of Ghana. Total contributions of the government of Ghana increased from 56 to 92 percent as the contributions of the TNAs (the WB, DFID, UNICEF) declined from 45 to 8 percent over the same period.

In comparing TNA's individual contributions with the Ghanaian government's contributions to the LEAP budget, there was a decline in the former while there was an increase in the latter. Not only did the WB's contribution fall from 15 percent in 2014 to 7 percent in 2018, but DFID's contribution also declined from an initial 30 percent in 2014 to 0 percent in 2018. UNICEF's support, although the smallest, also declined from 4 percent in 2014 to 0 percent in 2018. On average, donor (TNA) contribution to the total LEAP budget over the period was 38 percent, while the government of Ghana's contribution (under NDC and NPP administrations) was a relatively larger 62 percent. The combined contributions of the two governments confirms the point made by research participants that *'each government that came into power put in the funding* as *was required to sustain expansions'* (interview with LS4/ HP, 22nd February 2018; SI1/ GPs, 20th March 2018). Successive governments made efforts to keep the LEAP programme regularly financed because they both aimed to retain their positions of power. With this focus, governments recognised that sustainable funding for the LEAP programme ensured regularity of cash grants for beneficiaries who would in turn keep them in their positions of power.

An important point about TNAs' financing of social protection programmes in relation to the exertion of their influence needs to be made here. The analysis presented supports the claim that TNA influence on the expansion of social protection is greatest when a significant amount of funding is provided by them (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). This also suggests that TNAs do not exert much influence on social protection when their financial contribution is insignificant. As this study shows, a gradual decline in TNA contributions and an increase in Ghana government's (NPP and NDC) contribution, suggests a decline in TNA influence on the expansion of LEAP. This means that with NDC and NPP governments increasing their funding to expand LEAP, there is a greater degree of political ownership of the LEAP programme, and the two governments are currently much more in control of LEAP than when they contributed a relatively smaller amount to the total LEAP budget. Their increased contributions to the LEAP budget also indicate that NPP and NDC governments can implement LEAP in ways which preserves their political interests.

In addition to maintaining regular financing to sustain expansions, my analysis showed an attempt by the NPP government to rebrand LEAP to ensure a closer identification with its political message and an alignment with the goal of LEAP.

6.2.4   Rebranding LEAP

When the NPP began its term of office in 2017, the LEAP programme was given a new name to emphasise a new goal of the programme, although the design of the programme remained largely unchanged. 'New LEAP', or 'LEAP 2', was in line with the NPP's proposals to rebrand as outlined in its 2016 manifesto. The intention as explained in its manifesto was 'to refocus the LEAP' (CODEO, 2016b, p. 51) due to an alleged perception that the previous NDC government had used the LEAP programme for its own political gains. Thus, in refocusing the LEAP, its emphasis shifted from a cash grants only programme which provided support to address beneficiaries' short-term needs, to a programme that focused on the goal of LEAP: to empower beneficiaries to exit the programme and exit extreme poverty sustainably (MMYE, 2007).

Analysis on why the NPP was keen to rebrand LEAP suggests that it was to characterise LEAP as empowering beneficiaries out of poverty and away from unending dependency. According to the Chief Director at the Social Protection Ministry, the government wanted to get beneficiaries to understand that the overall objective of LEAP was to empower them to access other public services and participate in productive economic activity in order to exit extreme poverty. In explaining the NPP government's position, he argued that:

> *'LEAP has been around for some time, and its perceived as a cash grants only programme. As we expand the LEAP, we also want to stress the empowerment bit. This is the New LEAP that we talk about… It is new because beneficiaries will have the opportunity of accessing other complementary programmes like the productive inclusion activities that will enhance the impact of the cash'* (Interview with M2/ChD, 18th January 2018).

Furthermore, he argued that the previous NDC government did not do enough to move the programme away from being purely a dependency-driven cash grants scheme. In overhauling the scheme, the NPP government therefore emphasised the role of complementary programmes like skills training instead. However, there was also the perception that the name '*New LEAP was suggested by UNICEF and WB to assist the NPP government to distinguish itself from NDC's implementation of the original LEAP*' (interview with DP2/ UNAd, 26th February 2018).

From another perspective, it was not a new idea: '*What they call "New LEAP", or "LEAP 2", has always been there. Empowering households with productive inclusion activities has always been*

there. The current government has done nothing new. It's all politics' (Interview with M1/DME, 16th January 2018).

The original design had envisioned LEAP as a programme which complemented cash grants with specific empowerment projects for different categories of vulnerable groups (MMYE, 2007a). It appears therefore that the NPP government seized upon this dormant element of the programme to appeal to a new category of voters who appreciated the empowerment component of LEAP and would support the NPP government in realising this agenda. The new category of voters would depend less on cash grants and, with the skills gained, contribute to the growth agenda of the NPP government.

By focusing on New LEAP, the NPP aimed to '*dissuade the general public from thinking that LEAP offered free handouts in return for electoral support*' (interview with SI1/GPs, 20th March 2018). It can be inferred from the interview response that the NPP was not happy with the public image of LEAP as an exclusive cash grants programme. The LEAP programme remained, but the emphasis on its empowerment component was to set a new agenda for LEAP, one which aligned much more with the NPP's liberal democratic ideology.

Despite the strategies that sustained expansions, there were some threats to effective expansion of LEAP.

6.3. Threats to effective expansion

There was a sense from the analysis that, although the NDC and NPP elites attempted to re-purpose LEAP's expansion to achieve their political interests, there were factors which threatened their ability to effectively expand the LEAP programme. Two factors which emerged from the analysis were remoteness of communities and inadequate district-level capacity. These two factors threatened the survival of NDC and NPP governments alike.

6.3.1 Remoteness of LEAP communities

Reaching the poorest and most vulnerable households with the LEAP programme added to NPP and NDC parties' voter support numbers and strengthened the possibility of elites' retaining their positions of power. However, for district-level officials, the remoteness of LEAP communities posed a big threat to expanding the LEAP programme. From the perspective of a district social welfare director,

> *'Our communities are scattered, and usually district-level officials have to travel long distances on a combination of motor bikes and on foot to get to these remote villages. Sometimes in planning to sensitise and target households, we find that a remote community*

like Akraman has only one beneficiary household, and then the next community like Kuntu which has only seven beneficiaries may be 8km away. Going to these places becomes so cumbersome if you don't have real passion for the job, you will not do it' (Interview with *D*5/DSW- MF, 12th February 2018)

Drawing on her background during the interview, the experienced social welfare director pointed out that making visits to communities far removed from town centres and locations with geographical accessibility was a challenge. She also appreciated the implications for the political survival of the ruling government when households living in extreme poor conditions in remote communities were supported with the LEAP programme. It projected the image of the government as one that commits to the welfare concerns of marginalised groups. The point about remoteness was similarly made by another district official in the same region.

In narrating her views about threats to the LEAP programme, especially as it had expanded over the previous year, the district official noted remoteness of beneficiary communities, although in relation to accessing grants rather than in targeting, which the other district official had indicated.

'*The real challenge for us, is reaching beneficiary households in very remote areas with the cash grants. The banks cannot go to those communities, but rather beneficiaries have to travel and get to designated pay points to collect their grants. Even though we have been advised to select payment points which are less than 5km from the communities, some communities are very far and there is little you can do about it*' (Interview with D9/ DS- CC, 16th February 2018).

As with most district-level officials involved at the frontline with beneficiary households, the district official in this case recognised how remoteness risked not only the achievement of programme objectives, but also the political interests of governments. An effort by financial institutions to deliver cash grants closest to remote communities where LEAP beneficiaries could access their grants could be interpreted by beneficiary households as a concerted effort by the ruling government to support them. It also signalled an extraordinarily strong campaign message to their opponents.

Nonetheless, it appears that remoteness did not threaten the stability of the ruling NPP government in the same way that other factors did. The communities mentioned did not have much political significance for the NPP at the time of my data collection. They happened to be communities in the Central region, which at the time of my data collection was one of the swing voter regions, shaded in green in figure 6.1 of the previous section. Furthermore, the number of beneficiary households in those communities was insignificant. Remoteness of LEAP communities would have threatened the NPP's political interests if such communities had been

in the NPP's political stronghold regions with a relatively high number of beneficiary households. From my analysis, the real threat was inadequate capacity at the district level

6.3.2 Inadequate district-level capacity

District-level officials, directors of the LEAP programme and TNAs admitted that inadequate district-level capacity threatened the expansion efforts of elites. A LEAP district official described tasks as cumbersome due to having to use less qualified personnel.

> *'We do not have enough trained social welfare officers to support the work we do here at the district. We need personnel who have real passion for the work and are up to the task. But we do not have enough of them. So, in the pilot implementation exercise of the LEAP, I had to quickly train administrative staff to collect beneficiary household data. It was really cumbersome'* (Interview with D5/DSW- MF, 12[th] February 2018).

The experienced social welfare director in this interview shared her frustrations regarding managing implementation tasks without trained and qualified social workers. Inadequate district-level capacity in relation to social protection delivery was not peculiar to Ghana's social welfare sector but seemed prevalent in low-income countries (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012), particularly those with democratic governments supported by DFID (DFID, 2011; DFID Ghana, 2012). The inadequate capacity problem aligned with the notion that in competitive clientelist settlements, 'political elites are less likely to invest in the long-term task of building bureaucratic capability' (Levy, 2014, p. 40). The behaviour of political elites in not investing adequately in capacity at subnational levels of governance is due to their short-term horizon compounded by the fact that, they are likely to be displaced in competitive elections. The LMS thus provided a short-term solution to the capacity problem at the district level, as explained by another district-level official:

> *'we have always had a problem of capacity at the district level. That is why the LMS brings their own people when we carry out expansions. For example, survey questions to identify eligible households for LEAP were administered by data collectors contracted by LMS. Monitoring the data collection exercise was similarly sub-contracted by LMS to a private company called ESOKO'*[48] (Interview with D10/ DLIC-AN, 24[th] February 2018).

The view that inadequate district-level capacity was a permanent threat to the expansion of social welfare programmes suggests that, unless the problem was addressed, expanding the LEAP programme would remain a threat to the political interests of NDC and NPP governments. Without qualified personnel to support expansion activities, the LEAP programme failed to reach the poorest households, including those that provided electoral support to NDC and NPP

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[48] A data collection agency recommended by UNICEF. The challenges associated with employing the services of ESOKO will be analysed further in chapter 7 of this thesis.

governments. Inadequate technical capacity is recognised as a challenge in most low income countries contemplating social protection implementation, and is one reason why TNAs support social protection initiatives in poor countries (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2012). The case of ESOKO, a data collection agency used and recommended to the government of Ghana by UNICEF, shows how TNAs managed to exert influence on LEAP even when domestic political elites seemed in control of LEAP's expansion.

Similarly, in expressing her apprehension regarding capacity constraints at the district level, the WB social protection specialist pointed out what she viewed as the underlying causes of the problem and how inadequate capacity threatened TNAs' efforts to expand LEAP. From her point of view:

> *'The challenge for us is that we are dealing with a social welfare department that manages ridiculous caseloads and are accountable to the local government ministry. The social welfare department works with non-governmental organisations and other ministries on various projects related to children's health, poverty, and education so they have plenty on their plate. Besides, they report to the local government and not to the social protection ministry. There is also the problem of lack of co-ordination in some of the ministries which manage social programmes. So, we can strengthen the systems in those ministries but until we fix that I'm not sure of how we can scale up'* (Interview with DP3/WBAd, 21st March 2018).

The social protection specialist underlined the complexities of strengthening capacity at the district level, which threatened LEAP's expansion. As a WB official, she seemed to prioritise systems strengthening, a shared TNA value (DFID Ghana, 2018; Rawlings, Murthy and Winder, 2013; World Bank, 2016) which enables the facilitation and co-ordination of social welfare programmes. From her point of view, strengthening systems at the local government level was a complex task involving the co-ordination of different sector ministries and was therefore to be resolved by domestic political elites and not by TNAs.

6.4 Summary of findings and conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine how Ghana's competitive democratic politics shaped expansion strategies of NPP and NDC elites. The analysis showed that Ghana's competitive clientelist political settlement was instrumental in driving and sustaining the expansion of the LEAP programme. In particular, patronage politics shaped the direction of expansion and the strategies which were employed by elites to sustain expansion of the LEAP programme between 2009 and 2018.

Two findings which contribute to the evidence presented and have relevance for the APSF are presented below.

First, the expansion of the LEAP programme was used by NDC and NPP elites to secure electoral support. NDC and NPP governments began to expand LEAP soon after entering office and continued expansions well into their fourth year in office. In line with the highly competitive partisan political environment, each government in power focused first on expanding to their political stronghold regions before expanding to non-political stronghold areas. This was to secure their voter-support numbers. In addition, strategies employed to sustain expansions which comprised withholding graduation and a commitment to regular financing of the LEAP programme were intended to maintain voter support numbers and ultimately retain political power.

Second, in line with the APSF, expansion of LEAP was significant to the stability of both NPP and NDC governments, although LEAP's expansion seemed more significant to the survival of NDC government than to that of the NPP. NDC's elite expanded LEAP both to strengthen her party's ideological stance and to secure electoral support from marginalised and disadvantaged groups most loyal to her party. In addition to the findings are insights from the analysis which provide deeper understanding of social protection expansion in competitive clientelist settlement contexts.

One key insight concerns how domestic elites re-purposed LEAP to suit their political interests. The pressures created by competitive clientelism, including the time scale over which elites are incentivised to undertake reforms, means that social protection reforms, in the case of LEAP's funding framework were re-purposed by NDC for political gain. This contrasts with the intentions of elites in some potential developmental coalitions whose interests is to ensure the socio-economic development of the country, but similar to the intentions of elites in much more vulnerable authoritarian type settlements, where social protection reforms are implemented to achieve the long- term goal of the ruling coalition. In the latter dominant type settlement, strong factions excluded from the ruling coalition can destabilise the ruling coalition through force, thus making the elites vulnerable to violent overthrow (Khan, 2010). In this case, social protection reforms, are implemented to ensure the stability and long-term vision of elites to stay in power.

Another insight from the analysis concerns how TNAs managed to exert some influence on the expansion of LEAP even when domestic politics was driving LEAP's expansion. The analysis of LEAP's expansion showed that in situations where TNAs felt their investments were threatened, they were still able to exert influence by using hard power in ways that altered the behaviour of NDC elites. DFID's threats to withdraw its financial support if domestic elites failed to implement

reforms to funding resulted in the NDC reforming the financing structure of LEAP, which has since 2014 been utilised by the NPP to disburse cash grants for LEAP households. This means that although TNAs' influence can be limited in competitive clientelist settlements, they can still manage to exercise some control.

The next chapter continues with an analysis of the expansion of LEAP at the local government level. The analysis is conducted through the lens of the LEAP beneficiary selection process and shows how powerful actors in local government use the beneficiary selection process to buy loyalty from non-elites at the community level to preserve their political interests

Chapter 7   Ghana's local government system and actors in the politics of expanding LEAP

Chapter purpose and structure

This chapter presents an analysis of LEAP's expansion at the local government level. It examines how the local government system and the activities of key institutional actors impact the expansion of the LEAP programme. Analysis in this chapter is conducted through the lens of the beneficiary household selection process. This is because it is the politics of expansion through the selection process which determines whether and how LEAP delivers on its intended goal of lifting vulnerable households out of poverty. Thus, the chapter addresses the third research question of this study: "How do local government institutions and actors in Ghana's competitive political setting impact the expansion of LEAP?"

Like chapters 5 and 6, data for this chapter was sourced primarily from semi-structured interviews and documents. However, in this chapter, community-specific observation data in the form of grant disbursements and community sensitisation events is used to complement the interview and documentary data. In terms of data analysis, observation data was combined with interview data and analysed thematically in conjunction with thematic and content analysis of relevant documents, as was done in previous analytical chapters. In keeping with the multilevel analytical strategy adopted in this study, analysis of data focused on the subnational local government and community levels. The analytical strategy for this chapter is summarised in figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1   Analytical strategy for chapter 7

RQ 3 ⟶ Local government / subnational level ⟶ 3rd Analytical chapter
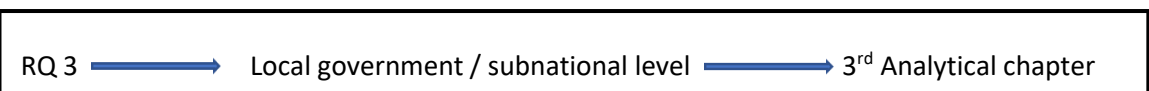
Source: *Author*

As in the two previous analytical chapters, Lavers and Hickey's (2015) Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF) is used to guide the analysis. A proposition of the framework, similar to what is presented in chapter 6, is tested in this chapter. The framework proposes that 'ruling coalitions in competitive clientelist settlements will be more likely to use social protection as a form of patronage to secure the support of relatively powerful lower-level factions that could otherwise defect to powerful opposition groups' (p. 21). This chapter examines how the beneficiary selection process is used to secure the support of powerful groups at the local government level.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. Section 7.1 presents a discussion of the beneficiary selection process using the local government system. Section 7.2 presents an analysis of district level actors, patronage politics and LEAP beneficiary selection in case study districts. Section 7.3 presents an analysis of community level actors, patronage politics and LEAP beneficiary selection in case study districts. Section 7.4 analyses the attitudes of public servants regarding the beneficiary selection process. Finally, section 7.5 summarises the key findings and insights from the analysis and concludes the chapter.

7.1   The LEAP beneficiary selection process using the local government system.

As I noted previously in section 2.3.1 of chapter 2 regarding the outcome of democratic reforms to usher in Ghana's fourth republic, a decentralised local government system has replaced the previous governance system of the British colonial administration (Ahwoi, 2010; Bebelleh and Nobabumah, 2013; Botchwey, 2017). A unique feature of the governance system is its tiered structure and how it is used to administer and allocate the central government's resources to communities through the District Assembly system. Furthermore, as I previously discussed in chapter 2, changes to Ghana's constitution means that community elders such as chiefs are no longer appointed to administer government policies (Asamoah, 2012; Ahwoi, 2010). Instead, the establishment of the local government system has resulted in the appointment and election of local authorities, including Chief Executives, to head local assemblies[49] (Ahwoi, 2010). They are responsible for ensuring the effective delivery of government policies and programmes in their respective assemblies (Ahwoi, 2010; FES and ILGS, 2016).

It is important to reiterate that, although the local government system comprises assemblies of different population sizes as I indicate in section 2.3.6 of chapter 2, the three assemblies – Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies – are all referred to as District Assemblies regardless of population size (Ahwoi, 2010; Ayee, 2003; Bebelleh and Nobabumah, 2013). Since its establishment, the District Assembly system is officially recognised as the main local government system which administers the central government's programmes and policies (Ahwoi, 2010; FES and ILGS, 2016). Thus, from 2009, when LEAP began expanding its coverage, the management of LEAP used the District Assembly system to select eligible households (MESW, 2012). The LEAP beneficiary household selection process is illustrated in figure 7.2. below. An explanation of the stages of selection and analysis of actors' roles in different stages of the selection process is subsequently presented.

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[49] Local assemblies are the equivalent of local councils in England.

Figure 7.2   The LEAP beneficiary household selection process
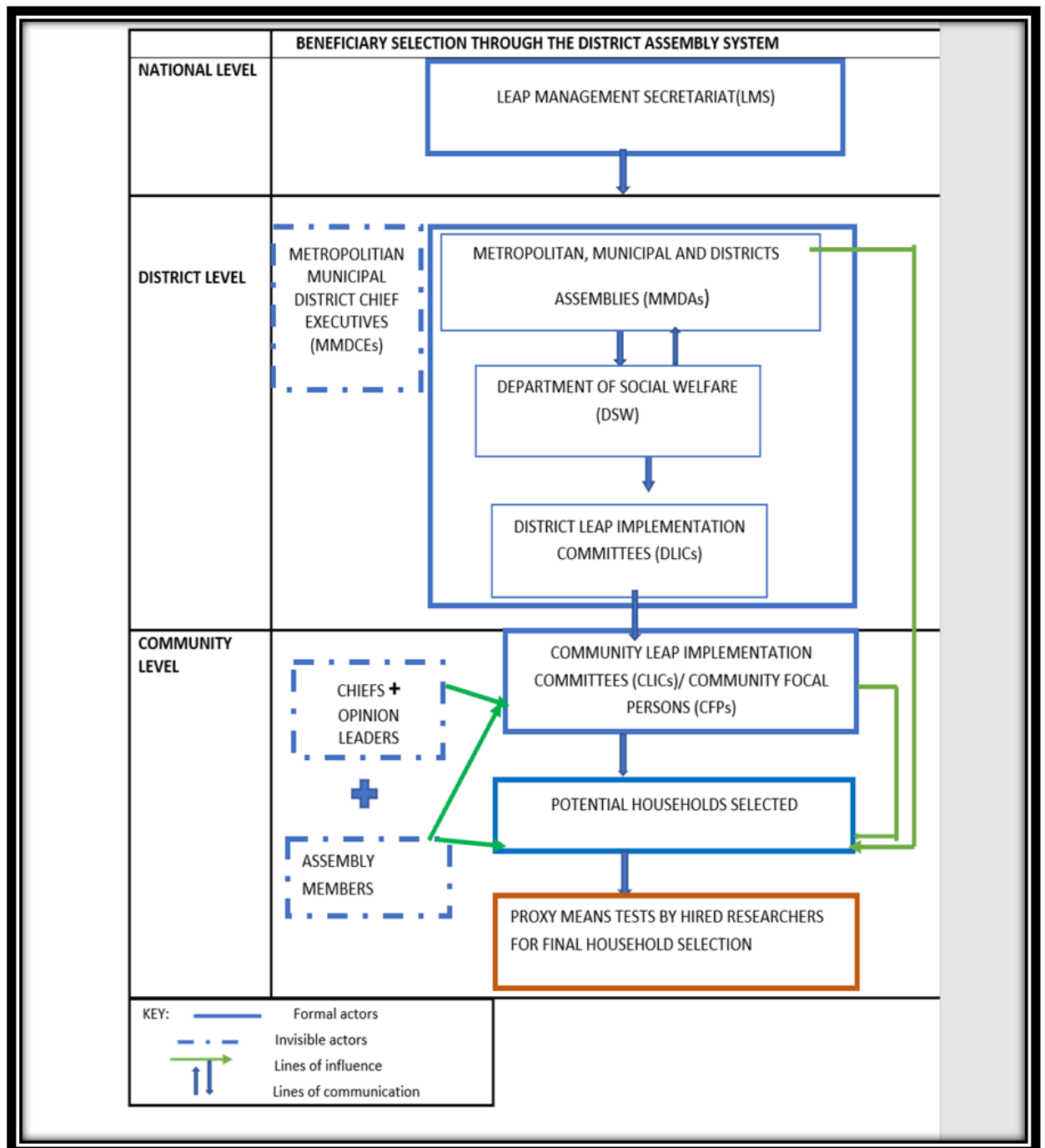
Source: *Author*

The LEAP Operations Manual recognises LEAP as 'a welfare programme which is administered directly to beneficiaries through social welfare departments' (MESW, 2012, p. 10) which operate as support departments within the District Assembly system. Thus, as a first step in selecting LEAP households, LMS at the national level informs heads of the various assemblies, the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), about the objectives of the LEAP

beneficiary selection exercise and subsequent planned activities[50] in communities under their administration (MESW, 2012). This is illustrated in figure 7.2 as the downward pointing arrow from LMS at the national level to MMDAs at the district level. A further responsibility of the heads of MMDAs, or the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs), is to '*endorse the final list of beneficiary households generated by LMS before grants are processed*' (LS1/LDD, 16th June 2018; D3/DS-AN, 29th January 2018; D9/ DS- CC, 16th February 2018). This stage is illustrated by the green arrow that stretches from the MMDAs to the potential household selection. The green arrow also indicates the line of influence.

Next, MMDCEs share details of LEAP's selection exercise with directors of the social welfare department. From interviews with LEAP directors, '*communication between the MMDAs and social welfare directors was very important*' (LS2/ LND, 7th February 2018), '*because the social welfare departments are the pivots around which the implementation of LEAP revolves at the districts*' (LS1/LDD, 20th February 2018). Following communication with social welfare directors, the latter then plan community activities before sharing final plans and schedules with MMDAs. This stage is represented by the upward pointing arrow from the social welfare departments to the MMDAs.

A major responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare in the selection process is the formation and training of District LEAP Implementation Committees (DLICs) by Social Welfare directors who in turn implement sensitisation programmes in selected LEAP communities in preparation for implementation of the LEAP programme (MESW, 2012). This stage is illustrated in figure 7.2 by the downward pointing arrow from the Department of Social Welfare to the DLICs.

At the community level, DLICs form and train Community LEAP Implementing Committees (CLICs) or nominate Community Focal Persons (CFPs) with the help of traditional authorities so that CLICs or CFPs can identify and select potential LEAP households using the programme's eligibility rules (MESW, 2012). This stage is illustrated by the downward arrow from the DLICs to the CLICs.

The formation of CLICs or CFPs is the penultimate stage in the beneficiary selection process. CLICs are recognised by LMS as community actors required to undertake 'the most important training on the identification of potential households for the LEAP programme using the LEAP

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[50] Activities following communication between LMS and MMDAs include sensitisation of the LEAP programme in selected communities and appointment of community officials to represent LEAP communities in the district.

eligibility criteria' (MESW, 2012, p. 13). To reiterate LEAP's eligibility criteria, presented in section 2.3.5 of chapter 2, qualifying households must first be extremely poor, that is, living on seventy cents or less a day[51]. However, not all 2.2 million extremely poor households (Debrah, 2013) can be covered by the LEAP programme. Therefore, to optimise the use of the government's scarce resources, carefully designed eligibility criteria have been developed (MMYE, 2007; MOGCSP, 2016) to select specific categories of extremely poor households who could potentially become beneficiary households. CLICs are therefore trained to identify four categories of extremely poor households. They are, those with disabled persons without productive capacity, households with orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC), households with persons aged 65 years and above without any form of support and extreme poor households with pregnant women and mothers with infants less than 18 months of age (MESW, 2012).

CLICs/CFPs therefore play a crucial role, using the eligibility criteria to determine which households could potentially benefit from the programme. In figure 7.2, this stage is shown by the green arrow linking CLICs/CFPs to the potential household rectangle.

Finally, there are hired and trained enumerators who administer Proxy Means Tests (PMTs) to select beneficiary households after CLICs have identified potential households. The test covers six welfare areas: (a) composition of the household and educational background of household members; (b) health and disability status of household members ;(c) housing conditions including source of water supply, lighting and fuel ;(d) physical characteristics of dwelling units including main materials used; (e) household assets and durable goods owned and ;(f) sources of household income (MESW, 2012). Data generated from PMT surveys is then fed electronically into handheld personal computers which are automatically linked to a LEAP server to generate a final list of beneficiary households for the programme (MESW, 2012).

It is important to note that while the role of actors at the district and community levels in the selection process described above is recognised as official and visible to LMS, interviews and observations revealed that the roles of three groups of actors – MMDCEs at the District Assembly level, traditional authorities represented by chiefs and opinion leaders, and Assembly members at the community level – are 'unofficial' and largely 'invisible' to LMS. As a result, these three groups of actors are indicated by dotted lines to the left of official actors' roles in figure 7.2.

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[51] This was the equivalent average income earned/spent by households described as extremely poor in Ghana in 2008, when the programme was first launched.

As I pointed out earlier in this section, MMDCEs are the first to be notified of LMS's intentions to implement LEAP at the local government level (MESW, 2012). This is because as administrative heads (FES and ILGS, 2016) they are required to provide relevant administrative support to departments including the social welfare department to achieve the intended goals of the central government (Ahwoi, 2010). As part of their administrative role, therefore, MMDCEs are required to endorse the final beneficiary lists of LEAP households before households are formally enrolled on the programme (MESW, 2012). However, in addition to these official responsibilities, MMDCEs are influential in the targeting process, as '*they sometimes actively participated in targeting households for the programme*' (D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018; D9/ DS- CC, 16th February 2018; D11/ DL1C-AS, 9th March 2018). From the analysis in this chapter, this role is described as unofficial. How they exert their authority and the effect on the outcome of beneficiary selection is analysed shortly, in section 7.2.

Chiefs and opinion leaders in the community, also referred to as traditional authorities (Asamoah, 2012; Esantsi *et al.*, 2015) are another group whose role is unofficial and also invisible to LMS. Chiefs as community heads ensure traditional laws and practices are enforced (Asamoah, 2012). Like chiefs, opinion leaders are elders of the community who similarly ensure the practice of traditional norms in communities (Esantsi *et al.*, 2015). In the LEAP household selection process, the official role of opinion leaders and chiefs is to facilitate community sensitisation programmes. Their involvement in LEAP is outlined in the LEAP Operations Manual as follows:

> 'the District Social Welfare Officers and the District Committees shall together with the traditional authorities, assembly man/woman and opinion leaders organize workshops to sensitize community members on the eligibility criteria that has been agreed upon to identify the extremely poor and vulnerable households' (MESW, 2012, p. C11).

However, beyond community sensitisation, my observations of a community sensitisation exercise combined with informal conservations with DLICs and CLICs revealed that chiefs would often extend their influence and become involved in the selection of beneficiary households. This 'unofficial' involvement, shown by the arrow that points from the chiefs to CLICs, and its outcome on the beneficiary selection process is analysed in section 7.3.

Assembly members are another influential group in the selection process. As outlined in the LEAP Operations Manual and indicated above, they assist traditional authorities in LEAP sensitisation activities (MESW, 2012). However, from observation data, it is clear that they are heavily involved in the beneficiary selection process and, unknown to LMS, perform roles

reserved for CLICs and CFPs. The effect of their influence on beneficiary selection is analysed in section 7.3.

It is important to note here that the exertion of influence on LEAP's expansion by the three local government actors, largely through their unofficial roles, is crucial to understanding the potential politicisation of the LEAP beneficiary selection process and its outcome on LEAP's expansion. This is because of how closely they are linked to District Assemblies and in turn how closely District Assemblies are linked to the ruling government. It is therefore reasonable to expect patronage politics at the national level to extend to the district level and further to the community level in ways that influence LEAP beneficiary selection. This is the focus of subsequent sections in this chapter. Sections 7.2 and 7.3 present a comparative analysis of actors, patronage politics and LEAP beneficiary selection in case study districts at the district and community levels, respectively.

7.2 District level actors, patronage politics and beneficiary selection in case study districts

It emerged from my interviews that district level actors, primarily MMDCEs, in case study districts exerted their authority on the beneficiary selection process. MMDCEs focused their influence on the final stage of selection where selected households were administered PMTs.

According to a social welfare officer in a pilot case study district[52], MMDCEs mobilised their own data collectors to collect PMT results instead of following LMS's directives to use trained and hired data collectors. He vividly recounted that:

> *'Municipal Chief Executives in some Assemblies did not use ESOKO's enumerators to collect PMT responses but mobilised their own data collection. And if the Municipal Chief Executive says they are doing their own data collection, what do you do?" But you know what will happen, they only select party members and sympathisers to administer the questionnaires because those are the people who will enable them stay in power'* (Interview with D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018).

Ghana's constitution recognises the heads of MMDAs as the 'highest political authority at the local government level' (Government of Ghana, 1992, p. 111). In terms of their relationship with the government, the social welfare officer further stressed that *'the Municipal Chief Executives are very powerful … you know they represent the government in the Municipal Assembly. And*

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[52] In my methodology chapter, I indicate that pilot case study districts denote districts that were first piloted for the LEAP programme. In this thesis, they are Cape Coast Metropolitan and Akuapem South Municipal Assembly.

because they are very powerful, they can do anything' (Interview with D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018).

The way in which the local government system positioned MMDAs, as local authorities with maximum political autonomy and administrative discretion (Ahwoi, 2010; Government of Ghana, 1992) enabled their heads to exercise their authority – in this case, to mobilise specific groups to administer PMTs and not follow the recommendation of LMS to use trained enumerators.

Regarding their involvement in the beneficiary selection process, LMS clarified that 'details of how to select beneficiary households and who to administer proxy means tests were shared with local government heads' to keep them informed of LEAP activities in their respective local assemblies (MESW, 2012, p. C28). So, MMDCEs did not have a defined role in the LEAP household selection process other than providing administrative support as noted earlier. However, ignoring the laid-down regulations on administering PMTs, a process to be carried out by 'hired and trained enumerators' (MESW, 2012, p. C3), and instead using their authority to mobilise specific groups to administer PMTs politicised this important stage of the selection process. It appears to have been a strategy to fulfil their political ambitions.

As I noted previously in section 2.3.6 of chapter 2 and mentioned in section 7.1 above, MMDCEs have a close relationship with the ruling government. They are nominated by the ruling government and then endorsed by members of the local assembly, and therefore owe their allegiance primarily to the central government. The emphasis on their role as '*representing the government in the Municipal Assembly*' thus justified the actions of MMDCEs. The recruitment of party members and sympathisers to administer PMTs to select LEAP households was an important role. It had significance for their position and authority. Considering the nature of Ghana's political settlement and given that elites at the local government level were as vulnerable to the loss of power as their counterparts at the national level, MMDCEs needed to buy the loyalty of some groups to secure their position and influence, and political party foot soldiers of the ruling government were just the group to offer political support. Thus, by mobilising the ruling party's foot soldiers to administer PMTs, MMDCEs intended to recognise and empower them in order to solicit their support in strengthening their own position and influence. Strengthening the position of MMDCEs meant that the position of the ruling government was secured and in turn the power of political party sympathisers who might otherwise have defected to other political parties was also protected.

Narrating a similar experience with an MMDCE, a District LEAP Implementation Committee (DLIC) member in an expansion case study district[53] verified the extent of MMDCEs' authority and the degree of patronage politics that existed at the district level.

> *'District Chief Executives also recruited their own people, to administer PMTs. We DLICs were aware that there were situations where only party sympathisers and foot soldiers were administering the tests…. because we belong to a social media platform and so we share all sorts of information. Mind you, it is not happening here but in other districts, but I cannot mention which districts they are'* (Interview with D11/ DL1C-AS, 24th February 2018).

The DLIC noted that District Chief Executives (leaders of relatively small local assemblies) used LEAP to buy political support from party foot soldiers and party sympathisers. As I previously mentioned in section 7.1 regarding how the position of MMDCEs is determined by the ruling government (Ahwoi, 2010), the use of the ruling government's political party foot soldiers signalled an attempt by District Chief Executives to form strong political alliances and clientelist networks, which according to political settlement theory is crucial for the stability of ruling governments or coalitions (Khan, 2010). The political support gained from relatively powerful groups like party foot soldiers at the community level strengthened the ruling government's position and increased its chances of winning elections.

From the experiences of district officials presented, the practice of MMDCEs recruiting their own enumerators was not uncommon in local government. However, what remains unclear from the evidence is whether the practice was most prevalent in expansion or pilot case study districts. The narrative of a social welfare director in the Akuapem North site provides some evidence that the exertion of MMDCEs influence was widespread in the pilot districts. She recalled her thoughts on the selection process: '*What we did here was different, we did not handle the selection in the same way as the older districts did*' (Interview with D1/DSW-AN, 23rd January 2018).

As the Akuapem North District was a relatively new LEAP district, the social welfare director of this district referred to previous districts as 'older' ones. Her response suggests that the practice of using community volunteers and party foot soldiers by MMDCEs was much more prevalent in pilot districts than in expansion districts where households were enrolled on the LEAP programme in 2017 under NPP administration. A possible explanation is that MMDCEs in pilot districts had more experience with the beneficiary selection processes and could therefore

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[53] In my methodology chapter, expansion districts are defined as districts which benefitted from LEAP under the NDC government from 2009 to 2016 and the NPP government from 2017 when LEAP expanded to vulnerable groups other than OVCs in selected communities.

navigate and influence the selection process using patronage networks in ways that those in expansion districts were unable to.

From the interviews, it seems that the conduct of MMDCEs in recruiting *'political party sympathisers as field researchers was not challenged'* (interview with LS2/LND, 7th February 2018). MMDCEs' constitutional mandate gave them significant discretionary power and autonomy in decision making (FES and ILGS, 2016). Thus, it could be argued, they were exercising their discretionary power regarding how PMTs should be administered. However, the decision on how to administer PMTs was not their responsibility but that of LMS. Given their authority and position in the local government system, it is equally valid to argue that the LEAP household selection process presented an opportunity for MMDCEs to abuse their authority as their decisions usually went unquestioned by the implementing social welfare officers for fear of losing their jobs.

The power of patronage was not restricted to the district level but also extended to the community level where two groups of actors – traditional authorities and assembly members exerted control on the beneficiary selection process. This is the focus of analysis in section 7.3.

7.3.   Community level actors, patronage politics and beneficiary selection in case study districts

While district-level actors focused their influence on data collectors, community-level actors focused their influence on community committees and political party foot soldiers. Both traditional authorities' and assembly members' roles were not visible to LMS and yet were crucial to the outcome of beneficiary selection.

7.3.1 Traditional authorities: Chiefs and opinion leaders

As noted earlier in section 7.1 regarding their official roles, chiefs and opinion leaders facilitated workshops with DLICs to sensitise members of their communities to LEAP. The workshops were intended to inform community members about the effects of poverty and vulnerability in their communities and the need for a targeted programme like LEAP. The purpose of workshops was also to explain the importance of the carefully designed eligibility criteria employed to target specific vulnerable groups and the role of complementary programmes like the Ghana Health Insurance Scheme and the Ghana School Feeding Programme (MESW, 2012).

Thus, the expectation was that the role of chiefs and their elders ended with community sensitisation. However, beyond community sensitisation, my observations as well as interviews

with DLICs and CLICs revealed that chiefs and their elders were actively engaged in the identification and selection of potential households for the LEAP programme although LMS did not formally include chiefs in the selection process.

Chiefs were not included in my sampling frame because I was unaware that they had any exposure to the implementation of the LEAP programme in the way that other groups like DLICs and CLICs did. Besides, my study topic was somewhat a delicate one, and accessing chiefs for interviews would have been extremely difficult due to traditional norms of not 'interrogating' or questioning chiefs. Therefore, I did not interview any chiefs. However, I had the opportunity to observe community sensitisation events involving chiefs and opinion leaders that revealed a lot about their role and influence. My observations corroborated evidence that '*chiefs and their elders wielded a lot of influence in the LEAP beneficiary household selection process'* (interview with CS1/ ISSER, 20th March 2018).

The recognised role of chiefs in the sensitisation of LEAP activities in communities was informed by their leadership role in traditional Ghanaian society prior to Ghana's independence from British colonial rule. As I indicated in section 2.3.1 of chapter 2, chiefs were formally recognised by the British colonial administration as powerful rulers who could be utilised to administer the colonial government's policies. In contrast to formal institutions such as government ministries with designated ministers who have oversight responsibility for the administration of central government policies, the chieftaincy institution which forms part of informal institutions of governance in communities, headed by chiefs and their elders have no defined role or responsibilities within the reformed constitution. Instead, at the community level, chiefs had the major responsibility of ensuring the general well-being of community members and harmonious community living. In this informal community space, unwritten social norms of behaviour, values and practices rooted in culture were enforced in the various jurisdictions chiefs presided over (Ahwoi, 2010; Asamoah, 2012). Chiefs primarily derived their authority from the socio-cultural norms and values which they use to govern their local communities. Thus, the unwritten code of values and norms culturally embedded in traditional society are the instruments of power which allows chiefs to exercise authority similar to what is often is found with formal institutions. The colonial government then, therefore utilised the authority of chiefs which they derive from socio-cultural norms and values to administer the colonial government's policies (Nkrumah, 2000).

However, since Ghana gained its independence, chiefs have not exercised the kind of authority exercised under British colonial rule. Chiefs were banned from active politics (Government of

Ghana, 1992, p. 124) to allow them to concentrate on their community leadership role of promoting community development projects (Asamoah, 2012; Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019), although some have found alternative and subtle ways to participate in politics (Asamoah, 2012). Nonetheless, it seems that the recognition by policy makers in Ghana of the authority of chiefs, both historically and in the post-independence era, led them to exploit chiefs' authority by carving out a role for them in the sensitisation of the LEAP programme.

The recognition by district level officials of chiefs' historical authority allowed chiefs to extend their influence beyond community sensitisation to the selection process. From the perspective of a district official in an expansion district, '*chiefs with the help of opinion leaders nominated CFPs*' (interview with D6/ DLIC -MF, 14th February 2018). The evidence presented regarding the role of traditional authorities in the LEAP Operations Manual outlined in section 7.1 above suggests that they only guide, but do not nominate CFPs, Instead, the nomination of CFPs is the role of district level officials, primarily DLIC members. Furthermore, the LEAP Operations Manual clarifies, 'the District Committee shall facilitate the formation of the Community Committees in each selected community by guiding participants to nominate and validate five (5) community members to constitute Community Committees' (MESW, 2012, p. C12).

In practice, however, informal conversations with DLICs in both pilot and expansion case study districts indicated that '*DLICs partly shifted the responsibility of the formation of community committees onto traditional authorities since they were not very familiar with community members*' (D5/DSW- MF, 15th February 2018; D6/ DLIC -MF, 14th February 2018; CF2/ CC, 14th February 2018). It seems that the alteration in DLICs' role provided opportunities for chiefs and elders to exert some influence on the beneficiary selection process. To deepen their authority, '*chiefs and their elders in LEAP communities are usually given up to a week to nominate persons to form community committees*' (interview with D10/ DLIC-AN, 24th February 2018). It appears therefore that it was during this one-week period, and not the half a day prescribed by LMS, that the formation of community committees came under some influence from chiefs.

The unofficial role of chiefs, which was endorsed by social welfare directors in both pilot and case study districts, became a matter of concern as the nomination of CFPs by chiefs was biased in favour of specific groups. A district-level official in a pilot case study district revealed: '*chiefs are biased when it comes to the nomination of CFPs. They normally choose political party foot soldiers or other loyal supporters of the ruling party*' (interview with D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018). The choice of persons nominated by chiefs suggests that chiefs had once again become

involved in party politics despite the constitutional requirement that 'chiefs were not to be actively involved in party politics' (Government of Ghana, 1992, p. 153).

As community leaders concerned about the welfare of households in their communities (Oduro, 2010), chiefs felt they could utilise the support of specific groups, in this case political party foot soldiers who had a relationship with the ruling government, to support the administration of social services at the district level. Furthermore, as traditional authorities in Ghanaian communities who understood the clientelist nature of democratic politics and the role of political support required by ruling governments to survive, it seems that the nomination by chiefs of the ruling party's foot soldiers to represent the LEAP community was also a strategy to strengthen the presence of the ruling government in LEAP communities in return for welfare support.

While patronage contributed to the conduct of chiefs and elders, there is also the possibility that socio-cultural factors played a much more significant role in the conduct of chiefs and elders. As I observed a community sensitisation exercise in a pilot district, my attention was drawn to the respect accorded chiefs and their elders. The paramountcy and reverence associated with the chieftaincy institution in Ghana (Asamoah, 2012; Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019) required that, on entry into a community or village[54], chiefs were greeted with gestures of respect including bowing and not shaking hands with them (Asamoah, 2012). Additionally, the purpose of the visit was not to be communicated directly to the chief but through the elders or opinion leaders, who were regarded as the chiefs' council of advisors (Asamoah, 2012). The latter then relayed the information to the chiefs. This practice illuminated the significance not only of societal norms but also of Ghanaian values.

In addition to the respect associated with their leadership, the trust (Lyon, 2006; Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019) that community residents and assembly members had in the judgement of chiefs and elders meant that their decisions to nominate whom they deemed appropriate as community committee members or to take the position of a community focal person was rarely questioned. Like MMDCEs, the judgement of community leadership was hardly challenged by community residents, other members of the local assembly, or the social welfare department, but in most cases respected. From this evidence, then, it can be inferred that socio-cultural

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[54] A community or village was defined by district level actors as a settlement in a rural location housing a few tens to hundreds of inhabitants (D6/ DLIC -MF, 14th February 2018; D10/ DLIC-AN, 24th February 2018; CF3/ CC, 15th February 2018).

values of trust and respect which were accorded traditional authorities played a big part in how they exerted influence in their communities. In addition, as chiefs were legally prohibited from participating in partisan politics, it can be inferred that socio-cultural values like respect and trust, from which they derived their authority, played a crucial role in the same way as patronage in their nomination of CFPs to select LEAP potential households at the district level.

The fourth republic constitution of Ghana does not place chiefs in positions of power or accord them a degree of autonomy in decision making in the same way that it does MMDCEs. However, chiefs do have autonomy and make judgements in community-level matters and decisions, which can only be explained in terms of the authority they derive from socio-cultural norms and values deeply rooted in Ghanaian traditional customs.

An understanding and appreciation of Ghanaian values by district-level officials and LMS was implied in the statement that '*raising queries and challenging decisions of chiefs was rather difficult*' (interview with D1/DSW-AN, 23rd January 2018). It was difficult to question why specific groups were nominated and even more challenging to establish whether the conduct of chiefs in nominating political party sympathisers was a subtle attempt to participate in partisan politics and whether such decisions were influenced by chiefs abusing the trust and respect accorded them.

Although the conduct of chiefs was regulated during the colonial era, they are not regulated in the same way today. During the colonial era, the British colonial administration implemented 'a series of Native Jurisdiction Ordinances through the state council which placed limits on the power of traditional authorities' (FES and ILGS, 2016, p. 2). For example, traditional authorities were not allowed to administer justice to the natives of the Gold Coast through indigenous tribunals unless such decisions were authorised by the colonial government (Asamoah, 2012). In modern day (post-colonial) traditional settings, the actions of chiefs are regulated by an independent body[55] of traditional rulers in each administrative region of Ghana (Ahwoi, 2010; Government of Ghana, 1992). However, as there is a lack of clarity in Ghana's fourth republican constitution about the limits of the chief's power, it was difficult for LMS or the official regulatory body to regulate the actions of chiefs in the same way as the colonial authorities had been able to.

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[55] Referred to as the Regional House of Chiefs.

The evidence presented so far reveals that chiefs in both pilot and expansion case study districts influenced the selection process beyond their recognised role, although it is difficult to establish whether this was the case in all LEAP communities throughout the country. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to argue that a combination of two factors, chiefs' indirect involvement in politics and socio-cultural norms and values, seemed consistent in both pilot and expansion case study districts.

7.3.2 Assembly members

As I previously pointed out in section 2.3.6 of chapter 2 regarding actors in local government, assembly members are elected members of the local assembly who represent the views of citizens in particular constituencies at the assembly. They comprise both male and female representatives, although assembly members in all LEAP communities I visited were predominantly male. However, for clarity, this thesis uses the term assembly members.

It emerged from the interviews and observations I conducted that assembly members went beyond their official role of 'assisting traditional authorities to sensitise communities about LEAP' (MESW, 2012, p. C12), also selecting potential households for LEAP. The unofficial role of assembly members in the LEAP programme resulted from a failure of LMS to update and document their roles after LEAP's five-year pilot implementation period. An assembly member in a pilot case study district recollected about his role:

> *'I recruited some retired schoolteachers and community nurses and asked them to select orphans in the primary schools where they previously worked, and a list of names was generated and given to the social welfare director. A year later, the social welfare director and I visited households with vulnerable old people, listed them and then used a questionnaire to do the selection of beneficiaries. Back then, everything was done by us, but now I guess it's all changed'* (Interview with CF10/AS, 4th April 2018).

The evidence points to the role of the assembly member in the final stages of the selection process, where a list of households was generated after potential households for the programme had been identified. This evidence dates to the era when LEAP was first piloted in selected households with HIV/AIDS as the single primary eligibility criteria. As was explained, assembly members, with the help of social welfare directors, identified potential households for the programme and were also involved in generating a final list of beneficiary households for LEAP. From the perspective of a district official in a pilot district, *'Assembly men then, were the key persons used by the local government to support social welfare directors in the administration of the LEAP programme in selected communities'* (D4/DSW-AS, 2nd March 2018).

Prior to the establishment of community committees in 2013, assembly members took on the community targeting role of identifying and selecting households for the LEAP programme. This role was not only recognised by local government but endorsed by the department of social welfare whose key actors, social welfare directors, worked closely with Assembly members to deliver the government's programmes to communities. As the official LEAP Operations Manual was not yet operational, '*Assembly men's role of identifying and selecting LEAP households was not documented*' (CF10/AS, 4th April 2018; D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018), but assembly members recognised and carried out these duties, nonetheless. Since community committees were established in the post-pilot phase of the LEAP programme, their role has been similar to the Assembly members' – identifying potential households using the LEAP eligibility criteria. This was my understanding as I observed LEAP events and interviewed community officials in expansion case study districts. However, as I understood from district social welfare directors in pilot case study districts, assembly members' role of identifying potential households for LEAP remained and, in addition, they facilitated workshops with community residents including traditional authorities. This made them immensely powerful actors in LEAP communities, as an interview participant confirmed: '*As the LEAP programme expands, assembly members have become very powerful*' (interview with CS1/ ISSER, 20th March 2018).

Having conducted studies on the LEAP programme including baseline and impact evaluation, the research participant had engaged with assembly members in selected LEAP communities and so was familiar with their authority and extent of influence. Assembly members possessed deep knowledge of the community including the welfare concerns of households. Additionally, '*Assemblymen were relied upon by MMDCEs to provide them with relevant information about the communities they represent*' (interview with CS1/ ISSER, 20th March 2018).

Assembly members were thus regarded as invaluable actors in the LEAP community who could not be bypassed, as one explained:

> '*Assembly members are familiar with the poorest households in the communities and know what they are doing. However, very often without monitoring, they do their own thing and include their relatives, and other people who can help them maintain their role. But they are our entry points into the community so we cannot bypass them, we only have to monitor their activities*' (interview with D5/DSW- MF, 12th February 2018).

There was a sense of admission by the interview participants in the expansion case study districts that assembly members were indispensable in the LEAP selection process and that this awareness could result in an abuse of power. The assurance that '*Assembly members knew what they were doing*' exemplified a sense of trust and respect for their judgement and presents a

possible explanation of their conduct. As elected officials who represented the views of political constituents, assembly members were regarded not only as statesmen but as elders in their communities. As I discussed earlier in section 7.2.2 about cultural values in Ghanaian society, trust in elders' ability to deliver on tasks (Lyon, 2006) and habitual reverence for leaders' decisions (Akuoko, 2008; Tieleman and Uitermark, 2019) often went hand in hand. In the context of LEAP's implementation, community residents including traditional authorities had a lot of trust in the judgement of assembly members. Thus, the critical decision as to who qualified to be selected as potential beneficiaries was rarely questioned. Assembly members in LEAP communities therefore acted opportunistically to select households not based exclusively on the eligibility criteria but also on factors like family relations, knowing that their decisions would not be challenged.

Social welfare directors were also aware that assembly members selected households based on political alliances, as explained by a director in a pilot case study district.

> *'I am aware that in addition to family networks, Assembly members sometimes select powerful actors, like party people for the LEAP programme and this can skew the selection towards a particular political party. However, as I sit in my office, I do not know the communities as much as those who live there'* (Interview with D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018).

As the social welfare director in the expansion case study district explained, the director in the pilot case study district seemed to be accepting of the conduct of assembly members in selecting political party sympathisers for LEAP. The excuse often given to acceding some responsibility to assembly members in selecting beneficiaries was that they knew community members better than social welfare officials. It can thus be argued that assembly members, particularly in pilot case study districts, went beyond their role of sensitising communities to LEAP. They selected potential households for LEAP based on friendly connections and political alliances in addition to the formal eligibility criteria.

Two possible explanations account for the conduct of assembly members. It could be argued that assembly members were acting in the interest of their constituents, or that assembly members aimed to preserve their political interests and position. Both seem valid, though the latter seems a more convincing explanation given assembly members' role in the District Assembly and their relationship with the head of the Assembly.

Regarding the first explanation, members of the District Assembly are legally required by a local governance act (Act 936) to pay attention to the concerns and interests of their constituents (Ahwoi, 2010; FES and IGLS, 2012), so putting forward the names of households personally

known to them can be seen as an attempt to demonstrate their commitment to protecting their constituents' interests, in this case by improving their wellbeing.

Regarding the second explanation, given the competitive clientelist political context in which LEAP is implemented, which requires ruling governments to make use of clientelist groups to secure positions of power and influence (Khan, 2010), it was not unsurprising for assembly members as part of the political settlement to include political party sympathisers on the list of potential beneficiary households for LEAP. In Ghana, political party sympathisers and loyalists of the ruling government are a relatively powerful and influential group who offer loyalty to the ruling government (Oduro, Mohammed and Ashon, 2014; Idun Arkhurst, 2013). The selection of such groups in pilot and expansion case study districts as potential LEAP beneficiaries was thus a strategy to reward their loyalty in exchange for political support.

While actors like MMDCEs and assembly members were empowered by the LEAP beneficiary household selection because of their political connection to the ruling government, other actors felt disempowered and excluded from the LEAP beneficiary selection process. The attitudes of public servants regarding the selection process are analysed next.

7.4 Public servants' attitudes regarding the LEAP beneficiary selection process

From the interview data, there was a strong sense that two groups of public servants – social welfare directors and DLIC members – both social workers by training, felt excluded from the selection process. Complaints of betrayal and exclusion from selection decisions were consistently expressed by them in both pilot and expansion case study districts.

7.4.1 Betrayal and exclusion from selection processes

According to an experienced social welfare director in an expansion district, feelings of betrayal were the result of changes in the mode of administering PMTs and the failure of LMS to communicate such changes to them. She explained:

> '*Since this government came in, we social welfare directors and our staff have not been involved in the LEAP beneficiary selection process. Who knows and understands the problems of vulnerable groups better than social welfare officers? Someone cannot come from somewhere and administer questionnaires, enrol households, and tell us what to do. You see, bringing in persons other than professionals to administer proxy means tests raises questions about LEAP's political role. The department feels betrayed*' (Interview with D5/ DSW-MF, 12th February 2018).

The social welfare director associated her frustration with changes in the mode of administering PMTs and how data entry clerks administered questionnaires to potential households. As I noted earlier in section 7.1 about the purpose of data in relation to the selection process, data

collected from potential beneficiary households was fed into a LEAP server to generate a final list of beneficiary households for the programme (MESW, 2012). This practice of making targeting processes more effective, as I discussed in section 5.2 of chapter 5 regarding interests of transnational actors, was recommended by LEAP's design team (see MMYE, 2007). Furthermore, the LEAP Operations Manual indicates that the 'administration of proxy means tests was to be carried out by hired and trained data collectors' after potential households were selected by CLICs (MESW, 2012, p. C16). Thus, the administration of PMTs and the collection of data by hired and trained data collectors was official. LMS was therefore implementing what had been documented for the LEAP programme but was not adequately communicating updated targeting decisions to key persons who had previously been entrusted with this role.

Thus, for social welfare directors who were previously in control of the administration of PMTs with the assistance of assembly members, changes to this practice without any formal prior notice from LMS violated their trust in LMS.

This feeling was not limited to the social welfare directors in expansion case study districts but was expressed by social welfare directors in other districts (not one of my case study districts). Narrating her experience with the data collection agency, the social welfare director noted:

> '*the administration of proxy means tests in this recent expansion was completely taken over by a non-governmental organisation. Officials from some charity came to administer the questionnaires to selected households. We social welfare directors had no hand in it. We only advised them to start from the hard- to- reach areas*' (Interview with D2/DSW-MK, 29th January 2018).

Like with other social welfare directors, the feeling of exclusion directly expressed in this case was the result of a lack of control of tasks done previously by social welfare directors. Not only did social welfare directors feel left out, but their implementing staff, comprising DLICs, also complained that tasks they had previously carried out had been taken over by a private data collection agency. An example was monitoring the data collection exercise.

A DLIC member in one of the expansion sites expressed strong sentiments about the take-over of their role by a data collection agency.

> '*Often we DLICs have been side-lined. We were never informed of the LMS' decision to involve ESOKO[56] , although in some cases we met some of their enumerators in our training workshops. We do not do any monitoring when the data collection exercise is being carried out. Right now, ESOKO comes from Accra to monitor the fieldworkers. They only inform us of*

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[56] The name of the data collection agency

their presence, and they report directly to the LMS' (Interview with D10/ DLIC-AN, 24th February 2018).

From the response above, complaints of DLIC members were the result of feelings of powerlessness created by LMS's failure to inform them of changes to the monitoring of data collection. The LEAP Operations Manual indicates that 'an enumerator and a supervisor were required to monitor the administration of proxy means tests' (MESW, 2012, p. 17). Thus, monitoring the data collection process was clearly outlined. However, it was not clear from the manual whose responsibility it was to monitor the administration of the PMTs, although DLIC members had previously carried out that role. The use of ESOKO, a private data collection company recommended by UNICEF, exemplified mistrust in the ability of public servants to carry out effective implementation practices intended to achieve the objectives of the LEAP programme.

Despite social welfare directors' complaints about ESOKO taking over their role, it seems there was flexibility regarding the use of ESOKO's data entry clerks. This flexibility was evident in how some social welfare directors mobilised social welfare staff to collect PMT data instead of using ESOKO's data entry clerks. As explained by a district social welfare director:

'I went personally to talk to the Metropolitan Chief Executive to allow my team [myself and the LEAP Implementing staff in the social welfare department] to get involved in the selection of potential households and in the administration of PMTs tests for selected households and he agreed' (Interview with D8/DSW-CC, 15th February 2018).

In granting the social welfare director's request, the Metropolitan Chief Executive demonstrated trust in the skills and competencies of the director and his implementing staff of social workers. It also demonstrated a belief in the value of their continued support and commitment for ensuring the LEAP programme was implemented as intended. These were qualities of public servants which the LMS should have recognised and promoted through their active involvement in the LEAP selection process. However, as public servants who were trained to ensure that the welfare concerns of vulnerable households in their districts were appropriately addressed (MESW, 2012), social welfare directors and DLIC members did not have a choice. They continued to work with LMS, often providing administrative and emotional support to vulnerable households in LEAP communities as their roles demanded.

An interesting observation I made on LEAP payment days, however, indicated that beneficiaries found ways of reducing the effects of exclusion and powerlessness felt by DLICs. The provision of gifts (typically harvested farm produce) was aimed at compensating for feelings of powerlessness and was done in recognition and appreciation of their continued support.

Photos of examples of farm produce brought from beneficiary farms to payment grounds that I captured on my phone are pictured in figures 7.3 and 7.4 below.

Figure 7.3   Plantain and cassava

Figure 7.4   Sugar cane and pineapples

Source: *Author from fieldwork*

In explaining the purpose of bringing the farm produce, a beneficiary from an expansion case study district remarked:

> '*they work very hard. They come all the way from the office to support us and make sure we all get our grants. When we need anything at all, we go to the office and the DLICs are always there to help us …This is something small, very small to show gratitude and our appreciation to them*' (LB6/AN, 27th March 2018).

This interview response corroborated the observation I had made earlier. A similar encounter in a pilot district was associated with an appreciation of continued support. In an informal

conversation about the gifts, the beneficiary commented about the effort of the social workers involved:

> 'The social welfare director and DLIC at the office have been very supportive. They are all ears to our problems. I went there once to get advice so I am hopeful that when I go again, they can advise. I need to know whether in the next round of expansion, my deceased sister's child who I now take care of can be selected. I already have two orphans in my household. (LB7/AS, 4ᵗʰ April 2018).

This response regarding the commitment of social welfare directors and DLICs is consistent with the views of beneficiaries in both pilot and expansion case study districts. For other public servants from LMS, like the monitoring and evaluation director who occasionally monitored payments, my observation was that such small gifts extended to them by beneficiaries were similarly in appreciation of the support they provided to them and to the LEAP programme. The offering of these gifts was not to be interpreted as a sign of bribery or other corrupt practice, but rather as a culturally appropriate way of recipients of government services showing appreciation for the delivery of services offered to them, even when they were aware that they were entitled to the services.

7.5 Summary of findings and conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine how Ghana's local government institutions and actors impacted the expansion of the LEAP programme. The LEAP beneficiary selection process was used as a lens to analyse LEAP's expansion.

The analysis revealed that Ghana's local government system and socio-cultural values contributed significantly to how the beneficiary selection process was carried out. However, in line with the Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF), which emphasises the role of domestic politics in the uptake of social protection, patronage politics played a much more crucial role in shaping selection decisions in the expansion of the LEAP programme. Key institutional actors at the district and community levels involved relatively powerful groups at the community level in the LEAP beneficiary selection process to reward them for their loyalty and their continued support of the former's positions and influence.

Three sets of findings which centre on the influence of Ghana's local government system, patronage politics and socio-cultural values contribute to the evidence.

First, how Ghana's local government system contributed to how LEAP's beneficiary household selection was carried out. Despite a rigorous set of selection criteria developed by transnational and domestic technocrats to identify and select potential households for LEAP, the discretionary

power and autonomy of heads of local government were instrumental in creating opportunity for the process to be abused.

Second, the analysis revealed that patronage politics was not restricted to the national level where political elites used the expansion of LEAP to secure loyalty from political constituents. It extended beyond this to the subnational levels of government, where the LEAP beneficiary selection process was used to draw political support from clientelist networks to further political interests. Since Ghana's competitive clientelist settlement required that ruling elites draw on the support of clientelist groups for survival, LEAP presented an opportunity to use political party foot soldiers to strengthen the position and influence of powerful elites in local government. The actual selection of LEAP beneficiary households intended to allow a selection of extreme poor households under the administration of both the centre right party (NPP) and centre left party (NDC) irrespective of households' political affiliation was thus supposed to be indiscriminatory. However, the selection mechanism played into the hands of powerful actors at the district and community levels who used the process to include non-poor households especially if these households were likely to increase their support base irrespective of their poverty status. Political considerations thus opened the door for inclusion of both non-poor and poor households from the 'right' political party. The overriding issue was leveraging the LEAP to increase the political base of a party and so although primarily LEAP targeted the poor who were likely to contribute to this political base, it also opened the door for some non-poor groups to be selected.

Third, the analysis revealed that Ghanaian socio-cultural norms and values, of respect and trust deeply rooted in hierarchical authority structures, played a part in how beneficiary households were selected.

An insight gained from the analysis is that, in a competitive democratic political context where social protection is subject to the influence of multiple actors with varying interests, the implementation process is likely to empower some groups but also to disempower others. In expanding Ghana's LEAP programme, key local government actors whose interests were aligned with those of the national government were empowered. In contrast, public servants whose interests and priorities were to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable households felt disempowered and excluded from the selection process and thus from the programme's expansion. Therefore, in expanding social protection in a highly competitive political context with multiple actors with differing interests, it is important for political elites not only to

recognise the public servants who actually deliver the programmes, but also to find ways to empower them, as they could alter the outcome of the selection process.

The next chapter is focused on the overall conclusion of the thesis. It discusses the key findings presented in the three analytical chapters. This is considered in the context of the conceptual framework of the study and the extent to which the findings are supported by previous research on the politics of implementing social protection. The overall contribution of the thesis to the existing literature is also presented.

Chapter 8   Conclusions, Implications and Contribution to Knowledge

Chapter purpose and structure

This study set out to investigate how the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme, a new approach to social protection in Ghana with cash transfers targeted at vulnerable groups with the aim of lifting them out of poverty, was introduced by transnational actors (TNAs), and the politics of its implementation.

The study was also designed in response to the paucity of research on the politics of social protection implementation in the sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) context. Much of the research literature on the politics of social protection in SSA particularly on social cash transfers, has focused on programme impact or the role of transnational actors in promoting and securing their adoption. Implementation of social protection, especially on how transnational and domestic politics impact implementation has not been sufficiently problematized. To address this gap in the literature, the study was guided by an overarching research question:

- How have transnational and domestic politics shaped the implementation of the LEAP programme in Ghana?

To address this question, three sub-questions were formulated. First, how have the ideas and interests of transnational actors shaped the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme? Second, how does Ghana's competitive democratic politics influence the expansion strategies of domestic elites? Third, how do local government institutions and actors impact the expansion of LEAP?

A qualitative case study design was used to provide in-depth answers to these questions. Lavers and Hickey's (2005) Adapted Political Settlements Framework (APSF) was adopted to analyse and understand how transnational and domestic politics influence the expansion of Ghana's LEAP programme. Furthermore, the study adopted a multilevel analytical approach to understand what the experiences of key actors at different levels of governance reveal about the politics of expanding LEAP under two governments with different ideological leanings.

The study revealed that in the implementation of the LEAP programme, the three TNAs – DFID, the WB and UNICEF – focused much of their attention on technical and financial matters, including building a LEAP Management Secretariat to ensure that efficient payment and targeting systems were in place. This focus was in line with how they conceived of effective ways of implementing an impactful social protection programme. The three TNAs did not focus much attention on the actual delivery of the programme, including the processes of selecting

beneficiaries and distributing benefits, areas where domestic politics had the potential to influence implementation and outcomes. In this study, domestic politics, characterised by competitive clientelism, was shown to exert great influence and control over the implementation process, particularly regarding the selection of beneficiaries at the local government level. I argue that the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme has been subjected to strong domestic political influence and that this was not anticipated by TNAs in how they designed the programme.

The analyses behind these conclusions were presented in three empirical chapters. Chapter 5 examined what role the programmatic ideas and organisational interests of the three TNAs involved in Ghana's LEAP programme played in the design and implementation framework of the programme, while chapter 6 analysed how competitive clientelism affected LEAP's expansion. Chapter 7 turned the attention to how the local government system and powerful actors within it influenced the LEAP beneficiary selection process.

In this final chapter of the thesis, I summarise and review the key findings across the three analytical chapters and discuss how the insights produced contribute to understanding of the politics of implementing social protection in a developing country context. I argue that many of the efforts to implement social protection in SSA, have not paid much attention to how politics at the local government level influences the implementation process and produces unintended outcomes. In this chapter, I also reflect on the significance of the findings in relation to the social protection literature and highlight areas for future research on the politics of social protection programmes in the SSA context.

This chapter unfolds as follows. Section 8.1 presents a discussion of the key findings from this study. Section 8.2 presents my reflections on what the findings mean for redesigning the implementation of LEAP. Section 8.3 summarises the main contributions of the study to scholarly knowledge, and section 8.4 concludes by outlining possible areas for future research.

8.1   Key findings

The study produced a number of key findings based on the questions used to frame the research and the conceptual framework used to interpret the findings. From the study, four key findings emerged:

1) TNAs, particularly DFID and the WB, employed hard forms of power to preserve their organisational interests in LEAP and how it was to be implemented. Both pushed the NDC government to introduce reforms in the targeting and payment systems and threatened to

pull out crucial funding if the government failed to comply. This was discussed in section 5.2.2 of chapter 5 and section 6.2 of chapter 6 and is discussed further in section 8.1.1.

2) TNAs exerted a strong influence in designing LEAP and the framework for its implementation, but this influence took a back seat in the actual implementation process, where the dynamics of local political agendas and interests took centre stage and influenced critical implementation decisions and outcomes at the local level. Section 5.3 of chapter 5 and sections 6.1 and 6.2 of chapter 6 present and discuss these findings. Section 8.1.2 discusses the significance of these findings in relation to the literature on the politics of social protection. It also points out the limitations of the adopted conceptual framework in understanding the politics of implementing Ghana's LEAP programme.

3) Patronage politics, a defining feature of competitive clientelism, played a crucial role in determining how Ghana's LEAP programme expanded. Patronage politics was used by Ghana's two main political parties in the implementation process to secure electoral support and preserve their positions of influence. In particular, political elites in the NDC and NPP were able to reframe LEAP's agenda to suit their political interests and adopt strategies intended to further them. I argue that patronage politics is an important tool used by governments in multi-party democracies in developing countries to implement social protection programmes to enhance their political survival. These issues were discussed in sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of chapter 6 and in sections 7.2 and 7.3 of chapter 7 and are elaborated further in section 8.1.3.

4) The thesis also revealed how socio-cultural values and norms acted as vehicles through which community leaders, especially chiefs, exerted influence in the beneficiary selection process to expand the LEAP programme. Although, officially, chiefs had no role in the selection process, nevertheless, because of their position of authority in local communities and their role in enforcing socio-cultural norms and values, they were able to influence the beneficiary selection process unchallenged. I argue that there is a knowledge gap regarding their influence, which should be acknowledged and factored into the design and implementation of social protection programmes in communities where the authority of chiefs and elders remains. This was discussed in Chapter 7.3 and is elaborated in section 8.1.4.

The subsection which follows discusses the key findings in the light of their significance for the APSF and in relation to the relevant literature on the politics of social protection.

8.1.1 The exertion of hard forms of power by the WB and DFID

In section 5.2.2 of chapter 5, I discussed how the WB and DFID in Ghana pushed for a shift from manual to electronic targeting and payment systems and threatened to pull out their loan and grant respectively from the LEAP budget if these systems were not reformed.

As I indicated in the analysis, they argued for this change on the basis that it was a tried and tested implementation practice, and that the use of technology would ensure the unbiased application of carefully designed eligibility criteria for selecting vulnerable households to benefit from LEAP. They also argued that switching from a manual to an electronic payment system would guarantee that the right amount of grant money would be delivered to selected households. These reforms indicated TNA interest in protecting their financial investments in LEAP and ensuring that the intended goal of reducing vulnerability and extreme poverty would be achieved. The threat of sanctions was perceived as a strategy to protect their interests and enforce their recommendations. They were able to use the threats to encourage the NDC government at the time to fulfil their side of the financial commitment to LEAP.

In addition to chapter 5, the analysis in chapter 6 illuminated TNAs exertion of hard power. Section 6.2 of chapter 6 discussed how DFID threatened to withdraw budgetary support for LEAP if the government failed 'to provide financial flows to LEAP in a timely and predictable manner' (DFID Ghana, 2013, p. 5). Such demonstrations of hard power are often associated with the protection of financial investments and contrasts the use of 'soft power', often utilised when TNAs promote cash transfers. Studies which discuss the use of soft power are those of Foli (2016) on the role of TNAs in promoting cash transfers in Ghana, Hickey and Bukenya (2016) on the adoption of social pensions in Uganda, and Lavers (2016b) on commitment to social assistance in Rwanda. These studies examine the use of persuasive strategies such as providing opportunities for local implementing partners to attend international conferences and lobbying government officials to put cash transfers on their poverty reduction policy agenda.

As the findings of this study revealed, in reality, the WB and DFID did not follow through with their threats when governments were slow in fulfilling their obligations regarding LEAP. It appears that the threats were made to encourage compliance and accountability to TNAs. However, it was also evident that domestic politics can limit TNAs' influence on the implementation process. TNAs' hard power fails to extend to the actual implementation process, where domestic political elites' interests become more prominent.

The exertion of hard power by TNAs is not specifically suggested in Lavers and Hickey's (2015) APSF as a mechanism through which commitment to social protection expansion occurs. Instead, the framework indicates how soft power is used by TNAs to promote their ideas. The ability to use coercion and threaten sanctions reflects hierarchical power relations between TNAs and the governments they support in implementing social protection programmes. In the case of Ghana, it was used after domestic political elites had accepted TNA ideas to implement the LEAP programme. As the analysis indicates, the threat of sanctions seemed to be intended to secure TNA investments and protect their ideas about effective ways of implementing cash transfer programmes.

The revelation that the WB and DFID exerted hard power is consistent with previous research. For example, Hickey and Bukenya (2016) show how, in an effort to secure the financial commitment of Uganda's political elites, DFID 'threatened to pull out its funding unless the Ugandan government increased its financial contribution to 10 billion Ugandan Shillings to enable and accelerate a roll out of its social grants programme' (p. 15). Following this threat, the Ugandan Government committed to the programme (in terms of increasing its financial spending) as it found itself in a rather difficult position in which to close a politically popular programme because elections were looming at that time (Hickey and Bukenya, 2016).

On the other hand, the literature cites instances where soft power has been employed by TNAs in different situations to achieve different results. Although Hickey and Bukenya (2016) demonstrate that DFID exerted hard power, they also show that DFID simultaneously tried to 'build a credible evidence base and frame social cash transfers in ways that fit the elites' general understanding that cash transfers were better than food subsidies' (p. 15). Similarly, Hickey and Pruce (2016) note that Zambia's political elites used lobbying opportunities with ministers over breakfast meetings to ensure that transnational ideas were put on the policy agenda at cabinet meetings. The Zambia case shows the importance of local elites championing the ideas of TNAs and supports the arguments of Hall (1989), Goldstein and Keohane (1993) and Béland (2005) that powerful actors in the ruling coalition are able to champion particular ideas of external policy actors in order to increase their chances of adoption. This was the experience of Ghana's deputy minister of manpower and employment in adopting cash transfers to design the LEAP programme (Foli, 2016). My findings suggest that, on balance, TNAs' threats to discontinue financial assistance to the LEAP programme produced more of an effect in terms of government financial support than any soft power approaches. Soft power was used to secure commitment

to the adoption of the programme and hard power was used to ensure compliance and protect TNA interests.

This study shows that both hard and soft forms of power were used in different stages for different purposes. When it was the intention of TNAs to promote buy-in of an idea, then soft power was exerted, but when it came to the protection of TNAs' financial interests, hard power was seen as more effective. In both cases, there was little room for domestic elites to introduce their own framings of social protection that built on knowledge of how extreme poverty could be addressed.

8.1.2   The limits of TNA influence on the implementation of LEAP

In section 5.3, I discussed the limits of TNA influence on the implementation of LEAP, highlighting how local political interests and priorities became more prominent in the implementation process.

I discussed three factors linked to the ruling government's political interests which limited the influence of TNAs on the implementation of LEAP. First, the ruling government's commitment to fulfilling a political manifesto promise; second, an attempt to increase its number of supporters; and third, a delay in the passage of a social protection bill to delay commitment to LEAP. These three factors demonstrate how the political agendas and priorities of governments were prioritised and affected the progress of implementation.

The APSF draws attention to how transnational factors including ideas of TNAs and of the underlying interests of domestic elites explain the way in which social protection expands. Lavers and Hickey's (2015) framework does not explain the extent or limits of TNA influence. Instead, it stresses the role that TNA paradigmatic ideas, policy ideas and financial support play in persuading domestic elites to adopt social protection (Lavers and Hickey, 2015). However, in the Ghanaian context, what this thesis shows is that TNA influence has limits, especially during the actual implementation process. The APSF does not give this much attention.

The literature on the politics of cash transfer promotion and adoption discusses the limits of TNA influence, often through the lens of practical constraints or ideological commitments. Hickey and Bukenya (2016) show how attempts by TNAs to promote social pensions in Uganda were often resisted by bureaucrats, mainly because of concerns over the affordability and sustainability of the programme beyond its pilot phase. Affordability and sustainability concerns thus limited the extent to which TNAs promoted social pensions in Uganda. In another case, Lavers (2016b) shows how dominant beliefs about inclusive socio-economic development, in

which workfare programmes were prioritised over cash grants, limited the ability of TNAs to promote exclusive cash transfers as a solution to socio-economic inequality and extreme poverty in Rwanda.

As the Ugandan and Rwandan cases of cash transfer adoption show, there are limits to TNA influence regardless of the type of political settlement. However, an examination of TNA influences in competitive political settlements, exemplified by the LEAP case, and in dominant party settlements, illustrated by the Ugandan and Rwandan cases, suggests that there are differences in the factors that limit TNA influence. In the case of Ghana's competitive clientelist political settlement, it appears that the threat of losing power in the short term energises political elites and their governments to prioritise political interests and agendas to enhance their chances of retaining power. These political interests and agendas of elites limit TNAs' intended implementation plans for LEAP. In the case of dominant party type political settlements (e.g., Uganda and Rwanda), where elites are likely to commit to the dominant ideas and development strategies of ruling coalitions, the literature suggests that the dominant ideas of ruling coalitions can also limit the extent to which TNAs can influence domestic elites to buy into cash transfer programme ideas.

8.1.3   Political patronage and the expansion of LEAP

In sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of chapter 6, I presented evidence to suggest that the NDC's and NPP's social protection ministers used LEAP to secure electoral support in three ways. First, NDC's elites targeted some of the poorest households in the country and used the LEAP cash transfer as a financial incentive to buy allegiance and electoral support. Second, as elections loomed, the NDC's social protection minister visited some of the most vulnerable groups in the most deprived communities and promised to enrol them on the LEAP programme if her government was voted back into power. The LEAP cash transfer programme was thus used as bait for electoral support. Third, the NPP's social protection minister attempted to poach its opponents' supporters by buying their products and promising to find markets for their products. These actions exemplify how LEAP was used by the NPP and NDC to buy allegiance and add to their voter support numbers.

In addition to using LEAP to secure electoral support, I showed in sections 7.2 and 7.3 of chapter 7 that elites at the local government level used the LEAP beneficiary selection process to buy the allegiance of party sympathisers and to strengthen their relationship with them. These actions were aimed at retaining their positions of influence and power.

In section 7.2, I discussed how patronage politics at the district level was evident in two ways. First, Chief Executives of pilot districts used party foot soldiers instead of trained data collectors to select potential households for LEAP. This action was intended to recognise their networks of political support and increase their client lists. Second, the nomination of assembly members by traditional authorities in both pilot and expansion districts was an attempt to strengthen the ruling government's support networks, as explained in section 7.3.

Patronage politics is not emphasised by the APSF as an important factor contributing to the uptake of social protection although it explains elite behaviour, particularly how elite behaviour in policy circles affects the outcome of policy. However, as this thesis finds, patronage politics plays a key role in the expansion and outcome of social protection and must be recognised in frameworks for analysing social protection, particularly in the context of low-income countries in SSA. This thesis shows that domestic elites can re-purpose the ideas of TNAs to further their own interests.

Patronage politics is prevalent in democratising polities in Africa. This has resulted in a democratic constitutional order which runs alongside patron-client networks (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994). Patronage politics thus occurs in many African governments irrespective of the level of democratic governance or political competition (Kopecký, 2011). In dominant party political settlements where there is little competition for power as well as in political settlement contexts where competition for power is intense (Levy, 2014), patronage politics features in equal measure. Thus, when Hickey (2008) refers to particular forms of domestic politics, patronage politics is also implied. In the case of Ghana, which has a competitive political settlement, this thesis shows that patronage politics is still a strong factor, influencing the direction of LEAP's expansion.

The literature on the politics of promoting cash transfers suggests that in different political settlement contexts, the adoption of cash transfers is used to expand patronage reach. In their study on extending the senior citizens pensions programme in Uganda, Angucia and Katusiimeh (2017) found that despite his unwavering focus on boosting economic growth, President Museveni bought into DFID's cash transfer ideas because he saw a vote-winning potential in expanding social pensions in a way that investments in infrastructural development did not offer. The extension of social pensions to *Yumbe*, a district which was officially a stronghold of his political opponent (Angucia and Katusiimeh, 2017; Hickey and Bukenya, 2016) showed the lengths to which the President went to increase his client lists and consolidate his support base.

In addition to dominant party type settlement contexts like Uganda's, patronage politics also features in competitive political contexts like that of Kenya. Wanyama and Nyambedha's (2017) study on the pilot implementation of Kenya's cash transfer programme for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) showed that the Kenyan government's expenditure on its cash transfer programme increased not because poverty and vulnerability statistics pointed in that direction, but because of 'the political support that politicians gain by an increase in number of beneficiaries on cash transfer programmes within their constituencies' (p. 40). In this case, patronage politics not only increased the budget for a cash transfer programme but also undermined the programme's use of eligibility criteria in targeting OVC.

These two instances show how political interests are linked to political support to the extent that ruling elites are driven to go beyond or even ignore the eligibility criteria for selection. Examination of Ghana's LEAP also revealed that political elites expanded to stronghold regions and to communities where local elites were likely to consolidate their power base. Thus, in competitive political settlement contexts, the Ghana case suggests that political elites use social protection programmes as part of their arsenal to enhance their electoral chances and political fortunes.

8.1.4 The role of traditional authorities in the expansion of LEAP

In chapter 7, I presented evidence to argue that in expanding LEAP in both pilot and expansion case study districts, traditional authorities played influential roles in the beneficiary selection process. They were able to do so because of the positions of power they occupied in their communities which were accorded to them by socio-cultural values and norms. In the case of LEAP's implementation, socio-cultural values and norms and the power they conferred on local leaders were as important as patronage politics in influencing the beneficiary selection process.

In Ghanaian traditional communities, those at the apex of the authority structure are accorded tremendous respect and trust (Akuoko, 2008; Asamoah, 2012; Lyon, 2006). Chiefs and opinion leaders occupy the highest level (Asamoah, 2012), and they informally used their positions to influence the beneficiary selection process. In the nomination of community officials to coordinate LEAP activities with district officials for example, community residents in both pilot and expansion districts tended to go with the decisions of traditional authorities. When it came to decisions on which households qualified to be listed as potential beneficiaries, traditional authorities used their positions of power and authority to add family members and others known personally to them. The role that chiefs and elders played in this process was clearly seen

as undermining the authority of the LEAP Management Secretariat (LMS) which had issued clear directives on how community committees were to be selected and how they were to operate.

In both pilot and expansion districts, the ways in which chiefs and elders of communities exercised their authority had their origins in systems of indirect rule prior to Ghanaian independence (Asamoah, 2012; Akuoko, 2008; Botchwey, 2017). Traditional authorities at that time were very powerful actors in the local governance system (Akuoko, 2008; Asamoah, 2012). However, constitutional reforms after independence weakened their authority as traditional rulers were not accorded formal roles in governance in the way that they had experienced under colonial rule (Ahwoi, 2010). Nevertheless, this has not diminished their influence in local governance, at least in the communities where they are recognised as authority figures.

The role and influence of traditional authorities which operate outside of formal governance systems such as chieftaincy, forms part of informal institutions[57] as I indicate earlier in section 7.3 of this chapter. Informal institutions are recognised by Lavers and Hickey's APSF as comprising political settlements.

As this study revealed, traditional authorities had as much influence as political elites at the national level of governance. This suggests that attention must be given to key actors in informal institutions in framing social protection implementation processes. Their roles should be clearly reflected in the APSF. In particular, the administration of socio-cultural values and norms from which chiefs and elders derive authority are important characteristics of informal institutions that should be included in the APSF to explain how expansion of social protection schemes occurs in the wider SSA context.

The literature on the politics of social protection, which focuses primarily on cash transfer promotion and adoption, does not explain clearly how socio-cultural values of respect and trust accorded traditional rulers can influence implementation of cash transfer programmes. Although Ellis, Devereux and White (2009) present case studies of cash transfer programmes in Africa and highlight the role of chiefs play in community targeting, they do not explain the sources of their influence. A case in point, similar to what this thesis found, is the pilot implementation of Kenya's cash transfer programme OVCs. According to Wanyama and Nyambedha (2017), chiefs were consulted to nominate community committees and, similar to

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[57] Informal institutions are socially shared rules, usually unwritten, communicated and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004)

the Ghana case, chiefs often nominated family members and close relations as community officials for the OVC programme, thus exerting some influence in the beneficiary selection process. However, their actions are not explained in terms of socio-cultural values and how these enable them to exercise this influence. My study takes account of local politics, particularly focusing on who has authority at the local level. Most studies on the pilot implementation of cash transfer programmes focus on the participation of political elites at national and local government levels (see Hickey and Bukenya, 2016; Lavers, 2016) rather than on the influential role of traditional authorities who sit outside formal institutions. My thesis explains why, although traditional authorities sit outside formal systems of governance, they can still exert considerable influence on social protection programmes, in particular on beneficiary selection. TNAs do acknowledge the challenges of selection at the community level and ensuring that beneficiaries are selected in accordance with official eligibility criteria, but their solutions, such as the establishment of household databases, are technocratic and seek to avoid or sometimes weaken the influence of local politics on the selection process.

The key findings discussed have illuminated the influence of TNAs, domestic political elites, and traditional authorities in the implementation and expansion of LEAP. The analysis has indicated a combined effect of influences which shows that LEAP has not always been implemented in line with the programme's goal but rather in ways that serve the interests of elites at local levels of governance. So what do these findings imply for LEAP and its implementation? The next section explores the implications of these findings for redesigning the implementation of LEAP.

8.2   Key findings and implications for redesigning the implementation of LEAP.

Based on findings from this study, three issues that need to be considered to improve the implementation of LEAP are strengthening institutional capacity at the district level, recognising the role of patronage politics in implementation and recognising informal institutional actors in the administration of LEAP.

8.2.1   Strengthening institutional capacity at district level.

As this study shows, TNAs understand 'working with the grain logic' in competitive clientelist settlements, but also recognise the limits to their influence. The WB, DFID and UNICEF focused their support on strengthening delivery systems at the national level in ways that secured growth in overall beneficiary household numbers. They did not invest in strengthening capacity at the district level to ensure efficient delivery of services directly to beneficiary households. This has led to a situation where TNA support and influence has been limited to the national level. My thesis suggests that strengthening institutional and human capacity at the district level

is crucial if TNA investment at the national level is to produce the intended implementation outcomes. This could be done in two ways.

The first way would be to train social welfare directors and district implementing committees to strengthen their capacity regarding critical aspects such as the selection of beneficiary households, which is often sub-contracted to private data collection agencies. This would equip them with relevant skills to enhance their roles as social workers. Currently, they operate on the periphery of the selection process although they have significant knowledge of the communities and of the poverty characteristics of households in these communities.

The second way would be to strengthen district level management systems and accountability structures. My study suggests that investing in the case management structures of various social welfare departments staffed with relevant personnel would be useful, and that this would reduce dependence on the case management system of LMS, which is often controlled by TNAs.

8.2.2 Recognising the role of patronage politics.

The demands of competitive clientelism require that political elites adopt survival strategies including expanding their patronage reach to districts and communities to retain power. The result was that the LEAP programme did not always reach those most in need and was open to abuse to serve political interests. My study confirms that politics does play a significant role in shaping the scale up of programmes. It also plays a role in shaping their focus – for example, the lack of emphasis on graduation, and decisions regarding which districts would benefit from the distribution of grants.

Social protection programme implementation, in how it is designed, its monitoring, evaluation and learning activities need to take the local politics of implementation into account if it is to have a realistic chance of succeeding on its own terms. However, realistically, politics is part of the terms on which social protection is distributed.

According to the evidence from this study, shifting much of the control of LEAP away from political elites to non-partisan agencies or government departments is unlikely to reduce the influence of the former. This is because as this thesis has shown, elites of the ruling government work primarily through directors at the LMS to protect their interests. At the local government level where powerful government actors and their clientelist networks can shape beneficiary selection of LEAP in ways that protects their interests, directors at LMS do not have much control over the actions of institutional actors. As I have suggested previously in section 8.2.1, strengthening district level system is important, but so is recognising that political influences

(and thus the influence of patronage politics) on LEAP's implementation are critical factors in shaping implementation on the ground. In redesigning the implementation of LEAP, the socio-political context must also be recognised and factored in as much as technocratic inputs.

8.2.3   Recognising informal institutional actors in the administration of LEAP.

Since the era of democratic governance in Ghana, TNAs participating in policy formulation and implementation with governments in low-income countries have focused on engaging with formal institutions like political parties (Grebe, 2017; Jedwab and Osei, 2012; Kpessa and Béland, 2012), but have engaged much less with informal institutions as these are associated with corrupt or collusive practices. However, as Khan (2010) points out, informal institutions are crucial to understanding governance and development outcomes in low-income countries. In the case of Ghana, it is clear that informal institutional actors, comprising chiefs and elders are influential.

In a competitive democratic environment where the previous role of the chief as head of the traditional council has been taken over by a government ministry and their powers further weakened by a series of acts and ordinances (Government of Ghana, 1992), chiefs and their elders dwell on the paramountcy of their institution and use the respect and the level of confidence that people have in their judgement to exercise authority in decision-making. Lyon (2006) notes that in many African societies, the absence of formal rules and mechanisms to guide the decisions and behaviour of those in authority results in the tendency for individuals to resort to socio-cultural values like trust and compliance with authority. In this regard, policymakers must be more alert to how socio-cultural values can merge with the plans of governments to improve welfare among the poorest households. The current exclusion of traditional authorities from the implementation process and/or TNAs' blindness to their role in implementing LEAP prevents the emergence of stronger mechanisms for selection, monitoring and accountability systems for LEAP.

8.3   Contributions of this study to knowledge

The findings from this study makes three significant contributions to the political settlements literature.   First an empirical contribution. This study first documents the impacts of transnational and domestic politics in shaping the implementation of social protection in a competitive political settlement. Second, the study makes a theoretical contribution to the APSF, by adding socio-cultural values and norms as crucial source of influence on the expansion of social protection. Finally, the study makes a methodological contribution by testing a multi-level data collection and data analytical strategy in the implementation of social protection.

8.3.1 Empirical contribution: Implementation of cash transfers in competitive clientelist political settlements

 In chapters I and 3, I discussed how the politics of social protection literature has focused primarily on the politics of promoting and adopting cash transfers in dominant party type political settlements in Eastern and Southern Africa. This scholarly work includes Hickey and Bukenya's (2016) study on expanding social pensions in Uganda, Lavers' (2016) study on elite commitment to Rwanda's social cash transfer programme and Ulriksen's (2016) study on the political drivers of Tanzania's social safety net programme. These studies pay limited attention to the intricacies of implementation, particularly beyond the pilot phase. In the most recent study on the uptake of the LEAP programme in Ghana, for example, Abdulai (2020) discusses issues around the adoption of cash transfers and geographical targeting of households for the LEAP programme, thus making an important contribution to understanding the roles of transnational politics and competitive clientelism, issues that featured in my thesis. However, my study goes an important step forward by exploring the roles of local actors in the implementation of cash transfers.

My study also shows that TNA influence on the implementation of cash transfers is limited in the context of competitive clientelist settlements. The literature presents studies that show the influence of TNAs in the adoption, promotion and pilot implementation of cash transfers and other social assistance programmes in the SSA context. These studies do not adequately indicate the limits or extent of TNA influence. My research suggests that a much more complex picture of influence prevails, which explains some of the limits of TNA influence.

While Hickey and Bukenya (2016) and Lavers (2016) show that in dominant party systems, TNAs exert significant influence on cash transfer adoption, they do not clearly indicate what the limits of TNA influence are. Similarly, Foli's (2016) study on the influence of TNAs in the adoption of LEAP shows various mechanisms of influence, including persuasion. Foli's study, however, says little on the limits of UNICEF, DFID and the World Bank's influence, whereas my study shows that in environments where political elites are constantly vulnerable to loss of power, they are able to prioritise strategies and policies to buy loyalty from their clients in the hope of enhancing their chances of re-election. This effectively puts political elites in a stronger position to influence where programmes extend to and who is targeted. This is a space where TNAs have little or no influence. In effect, TNA influence is limited by the interests and priorities of domestic political elites in a competitive political settlement context.

8.3.2 Theoretical contribution –Extending the APSF to include socio-cultural values and norms

My study also extends the APSF by adding a crucial source of influence- that of socio-cultural values and norms to the political settlement context.

In this study, the APSF has been useful in explaining the sources and forms of influence in the expansion of the LEAP as a social protection programme. It has been instrumental in identifying the role and influence of transnational actors through first, their ideas from which they derive their knowledge power and second through their funding from which they derive their financial power and are able to exert influence on how social protection expands. The APSF also recognises the role that formal and informal institutions play in social protection expansion and has been instrumental in identifying through this study, how the chieftaincy institution which operates outside formal institutions, influence the expansion of social protection programmes.

While analysis in this study revealed that chiefs or traditional authorities exerted significant influence on the expansion of LEAP, their source of influence which is the socio-cultural values and norms is not clearly indicated in the APSF. Nonetheless, my study showed that socio-cultural norms and values of respect and trust in the chieftaincy institution, played a significant role in the selection processes of the LEAP as much as the influence from political patronage. Thus, understanding how chiefs and elders derived their power was crucial in understanding how beneficiary selection occurred under programme implementation. I therefore argue that in low -income countries in SSA because chiefs and elders derive their authority from deep rooted values and norms accorded them in local society, socio-cultural values and norms are significant in political settlements and that they influence social protection expansion in much the same way that patronage politics does. Consequently, in figure 8.1 below I add this important source of authority to the political settlements context. Figure 8.1 thus becomes an extended version of the modified APSF which I presented in the literature review chapter.

Figure 8.1 An extended version of the APSF
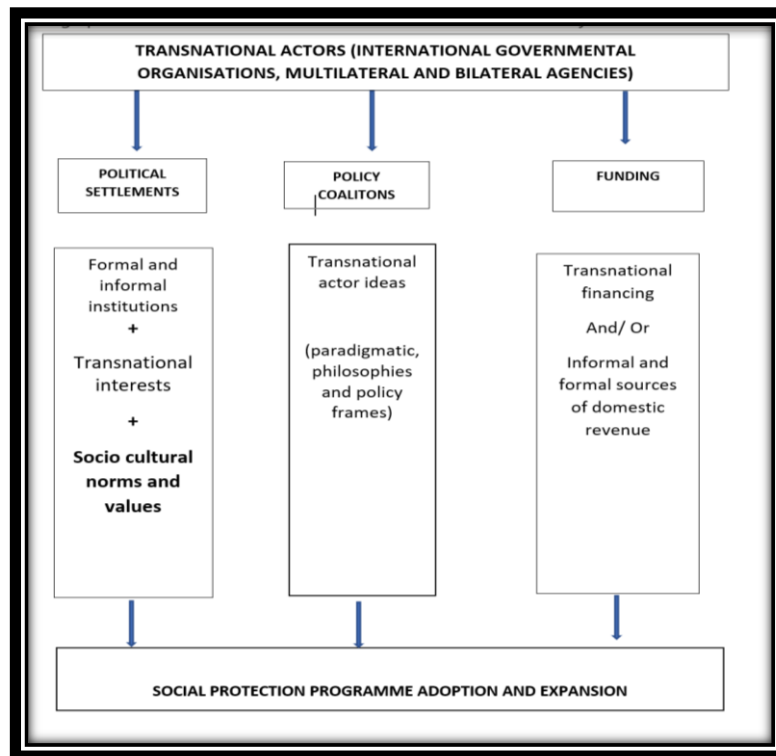
Source: *Author*

My study also shows that formal institutions do not hold full or ultimate power in how social protection programmes are implemented, and that informal institutions like the chieftaincy institution can exert what can be described as 'concealed power' and impact programme implementation processes and outcomes. This additional dimension offers a broader lens through which the complexities of power and politics in the expansion of social protection in low -income country contexts can be explored and understood.

8.3.3   Methodological contribution – A multilevel analytical strategy

Studies examining cases of cash transfer promotion and adoption analyse data mostly at the national level of governance where the adoption of policy occurs (see Hickey and Bukenya, 2016; Lavers, 2016). Similarly, in studies examining cases of pilot implementation of cash transfers, such as Kenya's OVC programme (Wanyama and Nyambedha, 2017) and Uganda's SAGE programme (Angucia and Katusiimeh, 2017), analysis is focused exclusively at a single level, in this case, the community level. These studies do not conduct analysis at multiple levels of governance. My study contributes to this analytical gap.

By adopting a multilevel analytical approach in which I examine implementation issues at more than a single level of governance, I have been able to enrich our understanding of the intersections of power and politics within and across the different levels of governance in the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme. This approach also illuminates the limits of TNA influence and shows that informal institutional actors and powerful elites at the local government level find ways to exert influence that are aimed at serving their interests. This approach also enables me to capture the influence of traditional authorities, from which I argue for implementation that recognises their roles and offers training to align them with the goal of the LEAP programme.

8.4 Possible areas for further research

This study was based on field data collected from selected districts in the Eastern and Central regions of Ghana. Districts which implemented LEAP in other administrative regions of Ghana including the Volta and Ashanti regions, which are political stronghold regions of the NDC and NPP respectively, were not included in this study. Yet, as analysis of data from the selected districts revealed, political elites expanded LEAP to districts in their political stronghold regions before considering districts in other regions including swing-voter regions. Thus, a study which compares how LEAP is implemented in stronghold region districts with how LEAP is implemented in swing voter areas would add to an understanding of the politics of implementing social protection programmes.

This study has focused on Ghana's LEAP cash transfer programme as a case of the politics of implementing social protection. Comparative research in other competitive political settings in SSA would help to understand the extent to which the case in Ghana is theoretically and empirically similar to cases in other contexts. It would also be interesting to explore the politics of social protection in a competitive clientelist political settlement under a federal system of government in Africa, like in Nigeria. Research examining how patronage politics plays out in different states and the roles of informal institutions in the implementation of social protection in different states would deepen and enrich our understanding of how and where political and cultural influences are most likely to affect implementation.

Finally, further research could explore the continued influence of TNAs on the implementation of social protection, once programmes designed by TNAs have transitioned to full government ownership and funding. In such instances, it would be worth finding out whether governments' interests and priorities change or stay the same without the involvement of TNAs. What forms of coercive, hard, and soft power operate under government control of social protection

programmes? Do laws which commit governments to sustaining social protection programmes result in different implementation outcomes? By the time my field research was ending, the government's financial contribution to the LEAP programme had increased substantially and a bill had yet to be passed to commit any government to continue spending on social protection programmes like LEAP. A study which explores similar issues to this thesis in this changed context should deepen our understanding of how transnational and domestic politics continue to shape the implementation process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 : Map of Ghana showing case study districts
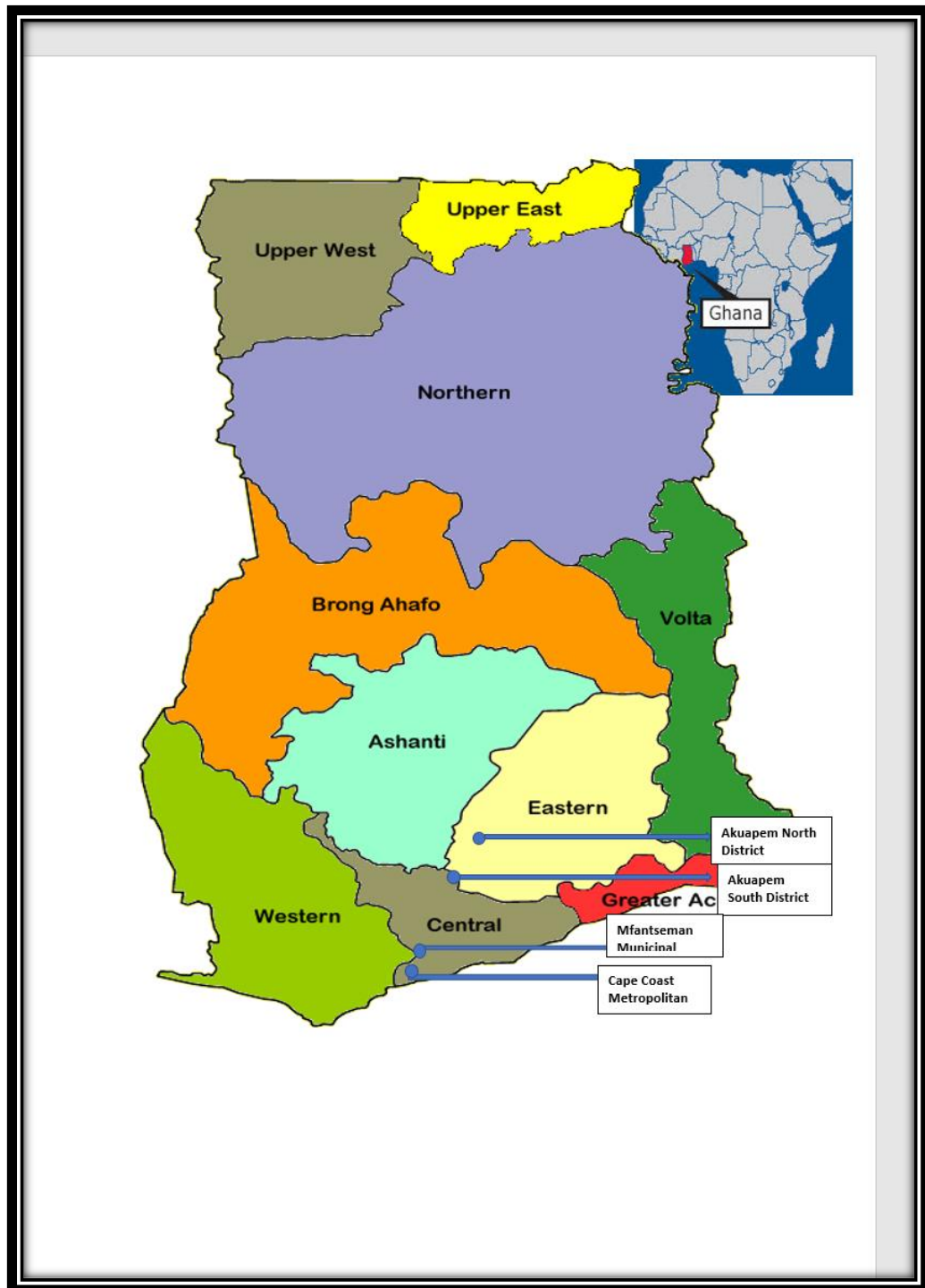
Appendix 2: Permission to conduct research in Ghana

17th October 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RESEARCH ON THE LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT AGAINST POVERTY PROGRAMME IN GHANA

The bearer of this letter, Mrs Betty Akyeampong is a doctoral student at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex in Brighton, UK. She is researching the implementation and expansion of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme under the NPP and NDC governments from 2008 to 2016.

As part of her research, she would be interviewing key officials and current managers of the LEAP at the national and district levels, including grant disbursing officers and some beneficiaries in selected districts in the Accra, Eastern and Central regions.   She is also interested in interviewing any key personnel in your organisation with knowledge and experience of the LEAP for their perspectives on its goals and views about its implementation.
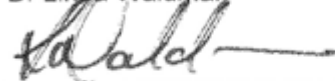
Betty has been granted ethical approval by the Social Sciences and Arts Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sussex which guarantees that her research meets the highest standards of research practice in the Social Sciences. She has agreed to take all the necessary measures to ensure that the views of her research participants are kept strictly confidential to protect their identity and that of the institutions they represent.

She will be collecting data from November 2017 to June 2018.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Linda Waldman

Director of Teaching and Learning
Institute of Development Studies

Tel: +44 (0)1273 915685
Mobile: +44 (0) 7595821210
Email: L.Waldman@ids.ac.uk

Appendix 3 : Permission to conduct research at the local government level.

LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT AGAINST POVER
(LEAP) PROGRAMME

In case of reply, the number and date of this letter should be quoted

PROGRAMME SECRETA...
MINISTRY OF GENDDER, ...LDREN AND
SOCIAL PROTECTION
MINISTRIES - ACCRA

Post Office Box MB 471, Ministries
ACCRA-GHANA

Our Ref. No: ....

Your Ref. No.:...........................

Republic of Ghana

Tel No: 030396970 0/0303969399

E-Mail: leapprog@leap.gov.gh

Date: 7th February, 2018

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO MRS. BETTY ACHEAMPONG
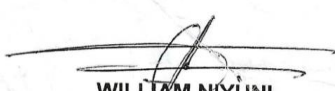
Mrs Betty Acheampong is a doctoral student at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex in Brighton, UK.

Approval has been granted to her by the Chief Director of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) to conduct research on the LEAP Programme in the Akuapim North and South Districts, Mfantseman and Cape Coast Municipality.

Attached to this letter is the introductory letter from the Institute of Development Studies which was approved by the Chief Direction.

Kindly offer her the needed assistance.

Thank you

WILLIAM NIYUNI

Appendix 4 : Interview guides

Interviews were custom designed to each participant's role but based on the following basic interview guides.

FOR TRANSNATIONAL LEAP ADVISORS

KEY THEMES	QUESTIONS	RESEARCH QUESTION ADDRESSED
LEAP design	▪ How long have you been involved in the LEAP programme? ▪ How has your organisation participated in the LEAP programme? ▪ What in your view motivated your organisation to support the LEAP programme? ▪ How has this motivation changed over time? ▪ What does your organisation require Ghana government to do in return for the support? ▪ What is your organisation's approach to poverty reduction? ▪ How does your organisation's approach align with the Ghana government's approach to poverty reduction? ▪ What do you consider to be the objective of government's social programmes which complement the cash grant component of LEAP? ▪ What do you consider to be the key objective of the cash grant component of LEAP? ▪ From your perspective, how have the objectives of LEAP changed over time? ▪ How has your organisation's experiences of cash transfer programmes in other countries informed the design of the LEAP programme?	1
Implementation	▪ Can you share your experiences of implementing the LEAP programme with me? what stood out for you and why? ▪ How has your organisation supported Ghana government departments and agencies which have linkages with LEAP? ▪ As a LEAP advisor, how have you collaborated with other transnational LEAP advisors to support the LEAP programme? ▪ In your view, are there any threats/ challenges to implementation? ▪ What are your views on the eligibility criteria for selecting beneficiary households? ▪ What is your view on community targeting?	1

	▪ What is your view on the graduation plan of the LEAP programme? ▪ What do you consider to be key changes in implementation of the LEAP in the last 18 months? ▪ What do you think accounts for the changes? ▪ Do you think the LEAP has been implemented as intended? Why? ▪ What is your own assessment of LEAP's performance under the two governments? ▪ What do you consider to be the key challenges to the implementation of LEAP?	

FOR LEAP OFFICIALS AT NATIONAL LEVEL: MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION AND MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING, LEAP MANAGEMENT SECRETARIAT, LEAP SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

THEMES	QUESTIONS	RESEARCH QUESTION ADDRESSED
Role of transnational actors	▪ How have the development partners (transnational actors) been involved in the LEAP programme? ▪ How do you think their participation in LEAP has changed in the last 18 months? ▪ Which development partners in your view has been most influential in the implementation of LEAP? Why and how have they been particularly influential? ▪ What in your view do development partners require the government of Ghana to do to continue supporting the LEAP programme? ▪ Did the Government of Ghana request for development partner support or did development partners instead see the need to and willingly provide support? Why?	1
LEAP design	▪ What do you consider to be the key objectives of the LEAP cash grant? ▪ What do you consider to be the objective of the cash grants component of the LEAP programme? ▪ What do you consider to be the objective of the complementary services component of the LEAP programme? ▪ Do you think the intended objective of the programme has changed over time? If so or if not, why do you think so?	1

Role of previous and current governments in LEAP programme	▪ What are your views on expansions carried out by governments in succession? ▪ How differently in your view is the current government (NPP)'s approach to implementation from the previous NDC government? ▪ What is your own assessment of the LEAP's implementation under the administration of NDC and NPP governments?	2
Implementation	▪ How did the previous NDC government involve district actors in the LEAP? ▪ How has the NPP government involved district level actors in the implementation of LEAP? ▪ What are your views on the LEAP eligibility criteria? ▪ What are your views on the switch from manual to electronic payments? ▪ What are your views on the graduation plan of the programme? ▪ What are your views on the productive inclusion activities for beneficiary households of the LEAP programme? ▪ What do you consider to be main changes in the implementation of LEAP in the past 18 months? ▪ What do you consider to be the threats to effective implementation of the LEAP programme? ▪ Do you think there is a future for the LEAP programme? Why? ▪ What do you consider to be the key challenges to the implementation of the LEAP programme?	2 and 3

FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTORS: DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICERS, DISTRICT LEAP IMPLEMENTING COMMITTEES, DISTRICT LEAP SUPPORT WORKERS

THEMES	QUESTIONS	RESEARCH QUESTION ANSWERED
Key actors in implementation	▪ How long have you been in this role? ▪ What are your views on expansions carried out by the two main governments in succession? ▪ How differently in your view is the current government (NPP)'s approach to implementation different from the previous NDC government?	3

	▪ Which actors do you consider key in the implementation of LEAP in your district? ▪ How have the key actors affected implementation processes at the district level? ▪ What is your assessment of NDC and NPP governments in the implementation of the LEAP programme?	
Role in implementation	▪ Can you share your experience of LEAP's implementation with me? ▪ What are the highlights of your experiences and why do you consider them important or significant? ▪ How have you been involved in the implementation of the LEAP programme? ▪ Has your role changed in the last 18 months? If it has, how and if not why? ▪ How was your district selected for the LEAP programme? ▪ How have you involved CLICs/CFPs in LEAP's implementation in your district? ▪ What role did you play in the most recent expansion in your district? ▪ What do you consider to be the key challenges in implementing the LEAP in your district? ▪ How has the LEAP Management Secretariat responded to these challenges?	3

COMMUNITY COMMITTEES: COMMUNITY FOCAL PERSONS AND COMMUNITY LEAP IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEES

THEMES	QUESTIONS	RESEARCH QUESTION ADDRESSED
Socio-cultural values	▪ How long have you been a CFP/ CLIC? ▪ Can you share your experience as CFP/ CLIC with me? ▪ How were you nominated as CFP/ CLIC for your community? ▪ Take me through the process of selecting potential beneficiary households for LEAP.	3

Implementation challenges	▪ How have you used the LEAP programme's eligibility criteria? ▪ How have you been involved in the most recent LEAP expansion? ▪ What do you consider to be the key challenges to your role as CFP/ CLIC? ▪ How has the district supported your role as CLIC/CFP? ▪ How have you addressed the challenges?	3

BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS

Participation in LEAP	▪ How long have you been on the LEAP programme? ▪ How were you selected onto this programme? ▪ Which vulnerable groups do you support in your households? ▪ How do you think the LEAP programme has changed since you became a beneficiary? ▪ What do you think accounts for the changes? ▪ What are your views on the Government supporting you with bi-monthly grants? ▪ Which other government programmes do you benefit from? ▪ What are your views on the government's graduation plan?	3

Appendix 5: Interviewee reference codes

Transnational Actors/ Development Partners

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of interview	Date of interview
DP 1/DFAd	LEAP Programme Advisor, DFID	Adukrom, taxi rank pub	13/01/2018
		Skype interview	23/02/2018
		Second cup café, Accra mall	07/04/2018
DP 2/ UNAd	LEAP Programme Advisor, UNICEF	Conference room, UNICEF, Accra	26/02/2018
DP 3/WBAd	Social Protection Specialist, World Bank	Social Protection Specialist's office, World Bank Office, Accra.	21/03/2018

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

MF 1	Director of Budget	Skype interview	10/09/2019
MF2	LEAP Budget Officer	Skype interview	11/09/2019

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) & LEAP Management Secretariat

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of interview	Date of interview
M1/ DPME	Director, Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME) Former Director of Social Protection	PPME Director's Office	16/01/2018 26/02/2018 04/04/2018
M2/ChD	Chief Director, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	Chief director's office	18/01/2018
LS 1/LDD	LEAP Deputy Director	LEAP Deputy Director's Office Skype interview	06/02/2018 20/02/2018 05/03/2018 11/05/2018 16/06/2018

		LEAP Deputy Director's office	
LS2/LND	LEAP National Director	LEAP Management Secretariat, Car Park	07/02/2018
LS3 /DCM	Director, Case Management and Operations	LEAP Secretariat foyer	07/02/2018
LS4/HP	Head of Payment	LEAP Secretariat foyer	22/02/2018
LS5 /HME	Head of Monitoring and Evaluation	LEAP Secretariat foyer	05/03/2018
LS6 / FS	Finance Specialist	LEAP Secretariat, general office	13/03/2018

LEAP Support Institutions

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of interview	Date of interview
SI1/ GPs	Head of Business Development - Delivery Channels, Ghana Interbank Payment and Settlement Systems (GhIPSS) Business Development Assistant, GhIPSS	Meeting room, GHIPSS	20/03/2018
SI2 /GSOP	National Co-ordinator, Ghana Social Opportunities Project	National Co-ordinator's office	29/03/2018
SI3/GHR	WB Social Protection Programme Consultant, Ghana National Household Registry	Ghana National Household Registry, General office	04/04/2018

Civil Society groups

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of interview	Date of interview
CS1/ ISSER	Senior Research Fellow /Head Statistics & Survey Division, Institute of Statistics, Social and Economics Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon Research fellow, Institute of Statistics, Social and Economics Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon	Meeting room, ISSER	20/03/2018

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of interview	Date of interview

| CS2 /IMANI | Development and Economics Policy Analyst/ Senior Research fellow | Skype interview | 05/04/2018 17/04/2018 |

District Social Welfare Officers / Directors & District LEAP Implementing Committee members

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of interview	Date of interview
D1/DSW-AN	District Social Welfare Officer, Akuapem North District	General Office, Department of Social Welfare and Community development	16/01/2018 23/01/2018
D2/DSW-MK	District Social Welfare Officer, Lower Manya Krobo district	Office of the District Social Welfare Officer	29/01/2018
D3/DS-AN	District LEAP Support Officer, Akuapem North District	Akuapem North District , Staff Cafeteria	29/01/2018
D4/DSW-AS	District Social Welfare Director, Akuapem South District	Office of the Social Welfare Director	08/02/2018 02/03/2018
D5/DSW- MF	District Social Welfare Officer, Mfantseman District/ Former Director of Social Welfare, Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly	Office of the Social Welfare Officer	12/02/2018 15/02/2018
D6/ DLIC -MF	District LEAP Implementing Committee member, Mfantseman Municipal	Conference room, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, Saltpond	14/02/2018
D7/ DS -MF	District LEAP Support worker Mfantseman Municipal	Conference room, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, Saltpond.	14/02/2018
D8/DSW-CC	Director of Social Welfare, Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly/ Former Social Welfare Officer, Gomoa West District	Office of Director	15/02/2018

D9/ DS- CC	District LEAP Support Worker, Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly	Foyer, Department of Social Welfare, Cape Coast	16/02/2018
D10/ DLIC-AN	District LEAP Implementing Committee member	General Office, Department of Social Welfare and Community development,	24/02/2018
D11/ DL1C-AS	District LEAP Implementing Committee member, Akuapem South District	Planning Office, Akuapem South District , Aburi	09/03/2018
D12/DS-AS	District LEAP Support Officer, Akuapem South District	General Office, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development , Aburi	12/04/2018

Community LEAP Implementing Committee members/ Community Focal Persons

CF1/ CC	Community focal person, *Brabeze*, Cape Coast District	Office of the District Director of Social Welfare	15/02/2018
CF2/ CC	Community focal person, *Efutu Koforidua,* Cape Coast District	Office of the District Director of Social Welfare	15/02/2018
CF3/ CC	Community focal person, *Ekon,* Cape Coast District	Office of the District Director of Social Welfare	15/02/2018
CF4/AN	Community focal person, *Osubeto* Akuapem North District	Assembly Hall, Roman Catholic school, *Adawso*	26/03/2018
CF5/AN	Community Focal person, *Sokonye* Akuapem North, District	Church Hall, Church of Pentecost, *Obolokofi*	26/03/2018
CF6/AN	Community Focal person, *Aboagyena,* Akuapem North District	Church Hall, Assemblies of God, *Nkwantanang*	26/03/2018
CF7/AN	Community focal person, *Nsutah Aprede* Akuapem North District	*Huhunya* School grounds	27/03/2018
CF8/AN	Community focal person, *Lakpa* Akuapem North District	*Asefaw* Pentecost Church	27/03/2018

CF9/AS	Community Focal Person, *Oboadaka,* Akuapem South District	*Oboadaka* Pentecost Church	04/04/2018
CF10/AS	Community Focal Person, *Pokrom ,* Akuapem South District	Church Hall, *Pokrom* Pentecost Church	04/04/2018

Beneficiaries

Interviewee Code	Designation	Location of Interview	Date of interview
LB1/AN	Caregiver of disabled child	Assembly Hall, Roman Catholic school, *Adawso*	26/03/2018
LB2/AN	Extreme poor household with vulnerable children	Church of Pentecost, *Aboabo ,* Akuapem North District	26/03/2018
LB3/AN	Extreme poor farmer , 65+	*Church Hall, Church of Pentecost, Obolokofi*	26/03/2018
LB4/AN	Caregiver of disabled woman	Church Hall, Asefaw Pentecost Church	27/03/2018
LB5/AN	Caregiver of vulnerable children	Church Hall, *Asefaw* Pentecost Church	27/03/2018
LB6/AN	Extreme poor farmer, 65+	Church Hall, *Asefaw* Pentecost Church	27/03/2018
LB7/AS	Caregiver of one disabled child and two orphaned children	*Pokrom* Pentecost Church Hall	04/04/2018
LB8/AS	Caregiver of four orphaned children	*Pokrom* Pentecost Church Hall	04/04/2018

Source*: fieldwork data*

Appendix 6: Socio-economic profile of case study districts

Akuapem North Municipal

Akuapem North Municipality is one of the nine municipalities in the Eastern Region of Ghana. It is located at the southern end of the Eastern Region and it is about 58 km from the nation's capital city, Accra. Its capital is Akropong. It shares boundaries to the northeast with Yilo-Krobo Municipality, to the southeast with Shai Osudoku District and to the southwest with Akwapim South District. According to the most recent population and housing census of 2010, the Akuapem North Municipality has a population of 166,700 (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014a). The municipality is currently headed by a Municipal Chief Executive appointed by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government. Employees of the social welfare department in the municipality, including the social welfare director and implementing staff of the LEAP programme, however, are not political appointees but civil servants of the local government ministry. Most residents of the municipality speak Akuapem Twi, one of the major varieties of the Akan[58] language in Ghana.

The local economy of the Akuapem North Municipality comprises agricultural, manufacturing and services sectors, with agriculture employing about 60 percent of the population in small scale crop and livestock production, while manufacturing employs 16 percent of the population in activities such as stone quarrying, among others. Although the exact contribution of the service sector to the local economy of the municipality is not known, services remains a private, informal type sector which features banking, dressmaking and hairdressing and employs predominantly women (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2016).

Although rainfall and temperature distribution in the municipality enhances the cultivation of some food crops, the erratic nature of rainfall and the topography of the region, which features one main hill range that allows only for subsistence agriculture, adversely affects the scale of food production and makes farmers particularly vulnerable to poor income and food insecurity. In addition to the climate, the low human capital development in the municipality, exacerbated by poorly equipped secondary schools and low secondary school[59] enrolment rates, results in very few labour market opportunities for the youth and makes them increasingly vulnerable to

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[58] Akan is the language of the Akan ethnic group of Ghana. Akan comprises three main mutually intelligible dialects: Fante, Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi. Fante is spoken in the Central Region and Akuapem Twi in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

[59] Secondary school age in Ghana is generally from 13 to 18 years old.

income poverty (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2016). According to the most recent statistics, 18.9 percent of all 13- to 15-year-olds[60] attended junior high school, while 8.5 percent of 16 to 19 year olds[61] attend senior high school in the last five years (Ghana Statistical Service , 2014a). Disability is also a challenge in the municipality. Out of the three percent of the population who have various forms of disability including sight and speech disability, a third have never attended school and nearly 60 percent are not economically active. As a result, the youth (16-25) age group, followed by subsistence farmers and then the disabled, remain the most vulnerable groups in the municipality, living in households that earn a very low average of 4.00 Ghanaian Cedis[62] per month (Eastern Regional Co-ordinating Council, 2016), the equivalent of $0.23 per day.

Although the incidence of poverty in the municipality worsened from 12.6 percent in 2006 to 19.6 percent in 2016, (GSS, 2016) the Akuapem North Municipality was not selected for LEAP until much later in 2016, towards the end of the second term of the NDC government. LEAP communities including Nsuta Aprede, Kyekyeku and Akyeremateng are primarily farming communities with about 70 percent of households in these three communities comprising male farmers who engage in the cultivation of small-scale food staples such as plantain and cassava, and women who engage in petty trading including the sale of water, agricultural produce and second-hand clothing. In addition to the LEAP programme, there are government-managed social intervention programmes that address vulnerability and poverty in the municipality like the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), launched in 2009 in the municipality to promote school attendance and improve food security. Although it has since expanded from an initial 11 to 30 kindergartens and primary schools in the municipality, it has not yet reached the LEAP communities in the Akuapem North Municipality. Similarly, the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency Programme (GYEEDA), launched by the NDC government in 2012 to train and provide employable skills to the youth to enable them to take up employment in the police, prison and health care management sectors, has not yet benefited LEAP communities in the municipality.

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[60] Equivalent to secondary school in the United Kingdom.
[61] Equivalent to post-16 or sixth form college level in the United Kingdom.
[62] The equivalent of 0.70 USD as of 14/04/2020.

Akuapem South District

Akuapem South District was carved from Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality to form one of the new districts and municipalities created in the year 2012 by the NDC government. It is located in the south eastern part of the Eastern Region of Ghana, bordered to the west by Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality, to the southeast by Kpone Katamanso Municipality, and to northeast by Akuapem North Municipality. In contrast to Akuapem North Municipality, the population of the district is smaller, with a total of 134,000 inhabitants according to the latest population and housing census of 2010 (Ghana Statistical Services , 2014b). The district is currently headed by a District Chief Executive appointed by the NPP government. Like Akuapem North Municipality, the Akuapem Twi language is the commonest mode of communication in this district.

Food crop subsistence farmers comprise the most vulnerable group, whereas orphans and the disabled constitute the second most vulnerable group in the district. The agricultural sector in Akuapem South District contributes the most, 37 percent, to employment in the local economy, followed by the trade sector, which contributes 28 percent, and industry, which contributes 15 percent (Akuapem South District, MTDP, MLGRD, 2013). As small- and medium-scale farmers engage mostly in pineapple and pawpaw cultivation, there is very little land left for the cultivation of staple food crops. In effect, households that cultivate small food crops are mostly deprived in the lean season and are much more vulnerable to income poverty than are small- and medium-scale pineapple farmers.

The district is located on the main Accra-Kumasi highway, which facilitates the export of pineapples from the region and provides pineapple farmers a regular source of income . However, subsistence farmers in villages such as Kwamekrom and Pepawoeni who cultivate mainly vegetables like tomatoes and garden eggs face a major hurdle. Environmental degradation including sheet and rill erosion makes inter-village travel very difficult. As such, these farmers are forced to market their produce in nearby villages where they get hardly any price for their produce. In addition to poor road networks negatively affecting access to markets for subsistence farmers, road accidents happen to be the number one cause of death in the district. In effect, most households cater for one or two orphans, including those with disabilities caused by road accidents, according to reports by social welfare officials in the district. Like Akuapem North Municipality, Akuapem South District also struggles with school enrolment. Available data indicates low skills development, with 13.8 percent of the total school-aged population (aged 3-19) having never attended school and only 40 percent of the school-aged population attending school in the district in 2016 (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014b).

Although available data suggests that the incidence of extreme poverty in the district was 16.5 percent in 2016, lower than the average for the Eastern Region of 22 percent in the same year, communities in Akuapem South District were targeted for the LEAP programme much earlier by the NDC government, in 2009, compared to Akuapem North district with a slightly higher poverty incidence rate, which was targeted only recently. This is because Akuapem South District was part of the Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality of the Eastern Region then, where LEAP was first launched in 2009. However, in 2012, when the NDC government created new districts, the Akuapem South District was carved out from the bigger Nsawam Adoagyiri Municipality, with LEAP benefitting 14 of its communities. The Akuapem South district has since remained a stand-alone district with its district capital office in Aburi where a District Social Welfare Director has since 2014 managed the LEAP programme. In 2017, as part of the NPP's LEAP expansion programme, eleven more communities including households in Yaw Duodo, Pokrom, Oboadaka and Pepawoenyi were targeted for the programme, with households in farming communities such as Oboadaka and Pepawoenyi containing the highest number of LEAP beneficiary households.

Cape Coast Metropolitan

Cape Coast Metropolitan is in the Central Region of Ghana. It covers an area of 122 square kilometres, with Cape Coast serving as its administrative capital. It is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, on the west by Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipal, and on the east by Abura Asebu Kwamankese District. The population of Cape Coast Metropolitan stands at 190,180 according to the 2010 population and housing census. The official spoken language is Fante, one of the variants of the Akan language in Ghana. The current administrative head is a Metropolitan Chief Executive appointed by the NPP government. However, the staff of the community development and social welfare department in the Metropolitan assembly are not politically appointed, but civil servants.

Like Akuapem North Municipal and Akuapem South District, agriculture is the main economic activity, employing about 65 percent of the population. Crop cultivation is predominantly carried out in the northern area, with small- and medium-scale farmers engaged in the production of seasonal staples such as maize and sweet potatoes as well as cash crops such as cashew nuts. On the other hand, fishing is the main economic activity for southerners living along the coast.

A major challenge for both categories of workers (farmers and fishermen), which also makes households vulnerable to poverty, is seasonality. The seasonal nature of farming and fishing,

together with coastal habitat degradation, results in low levels of household income for the majority of the working poor. While a handful of medium-scale farmers are able to diversify and invest in non-farm income-generating activities such as palm nut processing and soap production, the majority of small-scale food crop farmers in the northern area cannot afford to invest in small enterprises. They also cannot afford to rent farmland to scale up food production. The resulting income poverty affects all categories of workers but particularly impacts fishing communities, where there are no income-generating opportunities besides petty trading of ginger, sachets of drinking water and smoked fish. Seasonality affects not only farmers and fisherman in the poorest communities, but children as well. Newspaper reports indicated that in 2010, a year after LEAP was launched by the NDC government in Cape Coast Metropolitan, children as young 12 years old from fishing communities like Ekon were forced to go into prostitution and had been selling sex for as little as GHC 1 (an equivalent of $0.17) to complement household income. Other vulnerable categories are children and adults with multiple disabilities such as cerebral palsy and deafness as well as the elderly with no family income support for whom LEAP grants are the only lifeline.

The Cape Coast Metropolitan area was first piloted for the LEAP programme by the NDC government. Thirty communities comprising households with vulnerable children, vulnerable farmers and fisherman and groups with disabilities were targeted. In 2017, although the incidence of poverty in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area had decreased significantly from 22 percent in 2009 to 2.6 percent in 2016 (Coloumbe, 2015), some communities had still not escaped extreme poverty, hence 30 more communities including households from farming communities like Brabeze and Efutu Koforidua have since benefited from the NPP's LEAP expansion programme.

In addition to the LEAP programme which supplements household income, the Ghana School Feeding Programme which began in the area in 2008 to address hunger and increase primary school enrolment continues to expand, benefitting 34 schools in 2018 compared to an initial 14 schools (Ghanadistricts.com).

Mfantseman Municipality

Mfantseman Municipality is one of five administrative districts which were elevated to municipality status in January 2008 in the Central Region. Located along the Atlantic coastline of the Central Region of Ghana and covering a total of 612 square kilometres, the municipality shares boundaries with Gomoa West District to the east, Ekumfi District to the west, Ajumaku-

Enyan-Essiam District to the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. As of 2010, the population of Mfantseman Municipality was 211,916. Like Cape Coast Metropolitan, Fante is the main language in the municipality. It is headed by a Municipal Chief Executive appointed by the NPP government.

Fishing is the main economic activity of the municipality, employing about 51 percent of the total population, followed by farming, which employs about 30 percent, and commerce, which employs 19 percent. Besides the availability of lagoons and rivers which promote fishing in towns such as Anomabo and Egyaa, the interaction between the favourable climate, soil and rivers promotes farming, especially in the inland areas of Akobima and Dominase, among others. Crops cultivated include cocoa and palm on small scale, as well as fruits like pineapples. However, like the southern part of Cape Coast Metropolitan, seasonality is a major cause of poverty in Mfantseman Municipality. The seasonal nature of farming and fishing results in underemployment for most able-bodied subsistence farmers and fishermen. In addition to farmers and fishermen, children are vulnerable to child labour and income poverty. This is because the extent of deprivation in some of the poorest households, together with the income-generating opportunities in the central business district of the capital, pulls children out of school to look for seasonal work and earn some income. Often, school dropouts are seen engaging in fishing-related work like sorting and cleaning the catch, carrying loads and selling fish to supplement household income.

Although the incidence of poverty in Mfantseman Municipality is 29.8 percent (Ghana Statistical Services, 2014) – a relatively high poverty incidence compared to the three other case study districts – like in Akuapem North Municipality, the LEAP programme was only launched in Mfantseman Municipality in 2016, just before the NDC left office. Households in communities which benefit from the LEAP programme are located in deprived settlements like Akraman and Hinni, which are remote from the municipality's offices in Saltpond, the capital. Households in these communities are mostly those with adults with no productive capacity or income support from family and those with out-of-school children who are at risk of child labour.