

# The Expansion of Basic Social Protection in Low-income Countries

An analysis of foreign aid actors' role in the  
emergence of social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa

Cécile Cherrier



# **The Expansion of Basic Social Protection in Low-income Countries**

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Cover illustration: a poetic description by MotherTongues® of the traditional African concept of Ubuntu, a term for humaneness, for caring, sharing and being in harmony with all of creation.

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DISSERTATION

to obtain the degree of Doctor at the Maastricht University,  
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# Publications Arising From This Thesis

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## Working Papers

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Cherrier, Cécile, Franziska Gassmann, Andrés Mideros and Pierre Mohnen. 2013. *Making the Investment Case for Social Protection: Discussion Paper on the Methodological Challenges with Lessons Learnt from a Recent Study on Cambodia*. Working Paper 2013-06. UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

## One Pager

Cherrier, Cécile. 2015. *Aiding Social Transfers in Low-Income Countries: Is there a Catalytic Effect?* One Pager No. 289. International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Brasília/Geneva.

## Abstract

Non-contributory social transfers present a great potential to help tackle poverty and inequality, and support inclusive socioeconomic development. Yet, they represent a long-term financial commitment, and in environments where they are most needed, national policy makers are often reluctant to introduce them. In reaction to this situation, foreign aid actors have been allocating resources to support the expansion of social transfers in low-income countries. This research investigates the extent to which, and the mechanisms through which, foreign aid actors have influenced the emergence of permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa. Empirical evidence drawn from a dozen case studies establishes foreign aid actors as important players, and shows that aid can have a catalytic effect on the mobilisation of domestic resources for social transfers. A people-centred analysis reveals original understandings into social transfer policy-making processes. In particular, it uncovers the importance of personal leadership and trust as critical, yet often underestimated, factors favourable to the uptake of social transfer policies. Findings further suggest that today, perhaps more than political will or even fiscal space, the lack of implementation (and absorption) capacity appears to be a major bottleneck in the expansion of social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, fresh insights brought by this research invite to view the process of national policy making in a new way, and to revisit the role of foreign aid actors towards the expansion of social protection in low-income countries.



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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABND	Assessment Based National Dialogue
ADePT	Automated Development Economics Poverty Tables
AGIR	Sahel and West Africa's <i>Alliance Globale pour la Résilience</i> (Global Alliance for Resilience)
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BEAM	Zimbabwe's Basic Education Assistance Module
BIG	Basic Income Grant
BWI	Bretton Woods Institution
CARD	Cambodia's Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CDGP	Nigeria's Child Development Grant Programme
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CILSS	<i>Comité permanent Inter-États de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel</i> (Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSEY	Cambodian Socio-Economic Survey
CT-OVC	Kenya's Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
CTR	Cost-Transfer Ratio
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DALY	Disability Adjusted Life Year
DFID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCFA	<i>Franc des Communautés Financières d'Afrique</i> (CFA Franc)
FISP	Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme
G20	Group of Twenty

GB£	Great Britain Pound
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	General Equilibrium Model
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i> (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
HEA	Household Economy Approach
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HSNP	Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme
IDA	International Development Association
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Office/Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LEAP	Ghana's Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty
LEWIE	Local Economy-Wide Impact Evaluation
LGE	Local General Equilibrium
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Country
MBB	Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks
MCDSS	Zambia's Ministry of Community Development and Social Services
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGLSD	Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MGSoG	Maastricht Graduate School of Governance
MPSLSW	Zimbabwe's Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
MMAS	Mozambique's <i>Ministério da Mulher e Acção Social</i> (Ministry of Women and Social Action)
MMYE	Ghana's Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment
MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPV	Net Present Value
NSPS	Cambodia's National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable

OAP	Old Age Pension
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
OVC	Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
PMT	Proxy Means Test
POVNET	DAC Network on Poverty Reduction
PROGRESA	Mexico's <i>Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación</i> (Education, Health, and Nutrition Programme)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Mozambique's <i>Programa Subsídio de Alimentos</i> (Food Subsidy Programme)
PSM	Cabo Verde's <i>Pensão Social Mínima</i> (Minimum Social Pension)
PSNP	Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme
PSSB	Mozambique's <i>Programa de Subsídio Social Básico</i> (Basic Social Subsidy Programme)
PWAS	Zambia's Public Welfare Assistance Scheme
RAP	Rapid Assessment Protocol
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RHVP	Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme
RoR	Rate of Return
RPCA	West African's <i>Réseau de Prévention des Crises Alimentaires</i> (Food Crisis Prevention Network)
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAGE	Uganda's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
SAM	Social Accounting Matrix
SCN	UN Standing Committee on Nutrition
SCT	Social Cash Transfer
SDA	Social Dimensions of Adjustment
SPER	Social Protection Expenditure Review
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SQ	Sub-Question
UGX	Ugandan Shilling

UK	United Kingdom
UEMOA	<i>Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine</i> (West African Economic and Monetary Union)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollar
VfM	Value for Money
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WH	Working Hypothesis
WHO	World Health Organisation

# Chapter 1

## Introduction & Overview: Unlocking the Catch-22 of Social Protection

Most African governments are facing what might be called ‘the Catch-22 of social protection’—the greater the need for social protection, the lower the capacity of the state to provide it.

*Stephen Devereux (2003, p. 4)*

Providing direct resources to poor and vulnerable people in a predictable and regular manner has a proven track record of effectiveness in fighting poverty and inequality. Brazil saw a massive reduction of poverty and hunger following the introduction of *Bolsa Família*, its national social transfer programme.<sup>1</sup> Could similar success stories spread all over Africa? Nothing could be less certain. In environments where social transfers are most needed, such as low-income countries where poverty is widespread, national policy makers are often reluctant to introduce them. One common apprehension concerns the significant budgetary commitment that such a policy represents over the long run. It also has to do with a general reserve attitude towards the innovation that such a pro-poor policy instrument still represents in these countries. How to end this deadlock situation, offer basic social protection to all, and help unleash the socioeconomic potential of low-income countries? As a response, donor-funded pilot projects have flourished throughout sub-Saharan Africa in an attempt to demonstrate the value of the approach and convince national decision-makers to adopt and finance pro-poor social transfer policies. After a decade, however, the prospects for these efforts to translate into sustainable policy changes remained unclear. Scholars alerted on what they perceived as severe shortcomings of the most common approaches foreign aid actors had pursued.<sup>2</sup> Where do we stand today? Have foreign aid

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<sup>1</sup> *Bolsa Família* reaches almost a quarter of the population, mainly women, transferring above US\$100 every month to each family, as long as they sent their children to school (IPC-IG 2009). It is estimated to be responsible for approximately 28 per cent of the total poverty reduction in Brazil—from 8.8 to 3.6 per cent between 2002 and 2012 (Campello and Côrtes Neri 2014). It has also contributed to decrease hunger from 22.8 million people in 1992 to 13.6 million in 2012 (FAO 2013).

<sup>2</sup> See, in particular, Devereux et al. (2010) and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

actors' efforts been in vain, or have they eventually paid off? What may explain their failure or success in convincing recipient countries to invest domestic resources in social transfers? These are the core questions this research investigates. Looking at them from the eyes of front-line practitioners is a notable aspect of it, which brings fresh insights into understanding the role of foreign aid actors (or lack thereof) in national social policy formation.

## 1.1 Research Topic

Sub-Saharan African has recently broken with a historical trend of limited economic growth, but this is yet to translate into massive improvements in human development outcomes. The continent has showed a high degree of resilience against global economic turbulences and its economic outlook is promising (IMF 2012, 2014a). The region's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate has been impressive since the mid-nineties. For the group of low-income and fragile countries in particular, the annual real GDP growth rate has exceeded six per cent in recent years, and the annual growth rate of real per capita GDP has remained above 3.5 per cent since 2010 (IMF 2015a). In contrast, progress in terms of human development has been slow. The vast majority of sub-Saharan African countries continue to show low human development (UNDP 2013). Two-thirds of the sub-Saharan African population (67 per cent in 2012) live with less than US\$3.10 a day, and over two-fifths of them (42.7 per cent in 2012) live in extreme poverty, with less than US\$1.90 a day (World Bank 2016a).<sup>3</sup> A quarter of the population (24.1 per cent in 2010-12) suffer from hunger (FAO et al. 2015). More than one third of sub-Saharan African countries have very high stunting prevalence (UNICEF et al. 2012). Higher economic growth has not yet benefited people trapped in poverty. In some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, income inequality is widening, and education and health indicators are deteriorating (Africa Progress Panel 2012). The region is faced with a major development challenge, that of sustaining the pace of economic growth and making it more inclusive.

Social transfers present a great potential to tackle poverty and inequality, and support inclusive socioeconomic development. The term 'social transfers' shall refer here to a specific subset of social policy and social protection instruments. As understood in this dissertation, social transfers are a non-contributory form of social protection. They are non-contributory,<sup>4</sup> publicly financed, direct, regular and

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<sup>3</sup> In October 2015, the World Bank updated the global poverty lines that had been set at US\$1.25 and US\$2 a day since 2008 to US\$1.90 and US\$3.10 respectively (using 2011 prices).

<sup>4</sup> Meaning no direct personal financial contribution is required from individuals as a condition of entitlement to receive benefits—in contrast with the contributory benefits of social insurance schemes.

predictable resource transfers (in cash or in kind) to vulnerable individuals. Such a definition differs with that of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which considers all social protection<sup>5</sup> benefits to represent social transfers (Behrendt et al. 2014), but is consistent with the way the term is used in various countries and international organisations.<sup>6</sup> Thus defined, social transfers can take many different forms, ranging from school feeding to food vouchers to cash transfers.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the frequent predominance of the informal sector coupled with high rates of poverty and inequality calls for alternatives to formal social insurance systems that rely on withholding contributions and earmarked taxes on employment income. Despite impressive economic growth, the share of the working age population in active employment has remained virtually unchanged over the last 20 years—around 65 per cent (Sparreboom and Albee 2011). Social transfers can protect the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable, and mitigate the effects of uninsured risks for those outside the formal labour markets. These direct transfers of resources can reduce or prevent deficits in consumption, and in some cases, strengthen the capacities of recipient households. Their predictability and regularity can encourage greater risk-taking and higher-return activities. Ultimately, social transfers contribute to the central objective of ensuring that all people enjoy at least a basic level of social protection guarantees.<sup>7</sup>

But social transfers also represent a long-term financial commitment for governments, and in environments where they are most needed, national policy makers<sup>8</sup> are often reluctant to introduce them. In sub-Saharan Africa, public investments in social transfers, and social protection in general, remain relatively

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<sup>5</sup> In this dissertation, the terms ‘social protection’ and ‘social security’ are used as synonymous. There has been a tendency to refer to ‘social security’ to primary refer to contributory schemes and ‘social protection’ when primary referring to non-contributory schemes. This is exemplified in this quote: “The mandate on the Social Protection Floor as defined by the [International Labour] Office extended beyond social security, comprising to a large measure social assistance.” (ILO 2011b, p. 15) While the ILO has tended to refer to ‘social security’ benefits, this has evolved following the adoption of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202) by the International Labour Conference in June 2012 as well as the restructuring of the International Labour Office decided by the Director General, Guy Ryder, and the transformation of the former Social Security Department into the Social Protection Department.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004), DFID (2005) and Grosh et al. (2008).

<sup>7</sup> In this dissertation, the terms ‘social transfers’ and ‘basic social protection’ both refer to benefits exclusively managed and funded (usually with tax money) by the state that protect individuals and households against the worst forms of poverty and deprivation independent of whether they have made an advance payment. The term ‘basic social protection’ is here used to focus on the policy objective/result, while the term ‘social transfers’ is used to focus on the policy instruments.

<sup>8</sup> The term ‘policy maker’ will be used to refer to a wide range of policy makers and influencers including the various civil servants who support top-level decision makers.

small in low-income countries, where social assistance<sup>9</sup> interventions tend to be ad-hoc and temporary (AU 2008; ILO 2010b). Near negligible resources are allocated to income support measures such as cash benefits to families with children, to those unemployed or to the poor. Low-income countries allocate on average less than 0.1 per cent of their GDP to child and family benefits (ILO 2014). Limited fiscal space, lack of political will (no pro-poor ideology, or lack of awareness and knowledge of social transfer instruments) and low implementation capacity are factors commonly cited to explain this underinvestment in social transfers (Samson et al. 2006).

Many studies though have shown that basic social protection in low-income countries not only can be made affordable but also can be a pathway to development.<sup>10</sup> It is argued that low-income countries with high poverty incidence and large informal economies actually need social protection even more than other countries; particularly in the form of social transfers, which provide an opportunity not only to alleviate poverty but also to quickly fill a large part of the sizable existing coverage gaps in basic social protection (ILO 2010b).

In reaction to this situation, foreign aid actors have been allocating resources to promote and support the expansion of social transfers in low-income countries. This trend accelerated in the aftermath of the 2008 global food, fuel and financial crisis, notably with the launch of the global Social Protection Floor initiative and the subsequent adoption at the 2012 International Labour Conference of the Recommendation 202 (ILC 2012; ILO and IMF 2012). For over a decade now, development partners have conducted a range of activities to promote the use of social transfers in low-income countries, such as capacity-building events, feasibility studies, pilot projects to generate context-specific evidence of social transfer effectiveness, and direct financial support to emerging social transfer schemes.

These aid initiatives have brought mixed results. On one hand, social transfers have been gaining importance in low-income countries. While a contraction was observed in high and middle-income countries from 2010 onwards, low-income countries have kept expanding social protection (ILO 2014). In sub-Saharan Africa, public social protection and health expenditure increased from 2.4 per cent of GDP in 1990 to 4.2 in 2010-11 (ILO 2014, p. 297), and social transfer schemes are on the rise (Garcia and Moore 2012; Monchuk 2014). But on the other hand, many recent

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<sup>9</sup> In this dissertation, the term 'social assistance' shall refer to non-contributory forms of social protection. It encompasses (non-contributory) social transfers as well as services provided by social workers.

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, ILO (2008), OECD (2009a) and Townsend (2009).

social transfer initiatives have remained limited in time and space. There has been concern over the likelihood for these aid-supported advances to translate into sustainable policy change. Several studies suggested serious limitations in the capacity of aid actors to promote local ownership around social transfers, and encourage a shift away from time-bound foreign aid grants towards sustainable domestic funding. These studies recommended paying more attention to the politics of national policy making, looking beyond purely technical solutions, and better understanding the dynamics of power that drive decision-making.<sup>11</sup>

If it has become commonplace to accept that politics matters for the mobilisation of domestic revenue for social transfers in low-income countries, it is much less clear what actual political processes are at play, and what this means for development partners. There is a need to further investigate the extent to which foreign aid can encourage sustainable and equitable mobilisation of domestic fiscal revenue for progressive social transfer policies to contribute to positive social change, poverty reduction and more inclusive development patterns. Better understanding why governments may adopt certain types of social transfers—examining in particular the role and effects, if any, of foreign aid—can usefully inform the formulation of strategies towards the expansion of basic social protection in countries where the process appears to have stalled.

## 1.2 Research Questions and Variables

The overall research question this dissertation addresses is:

**To what extent, and through which mechanisms, do foreign aid actors influence the emergence of permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer schemes in a low-capacity African country context?**

The main sub-questions that this research seeks to answer are:

- SQ1. Can foreign aid actors successfully enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country context?**
- SQ2. What role does the production of scientific evidence play in the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?**

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<sup>11</sup> See Devereux et al. (2010), Hickey et al. (2009), Holmqvist (2010) and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

**SQ3. What other factors determine foreign aid actors' influence on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?**

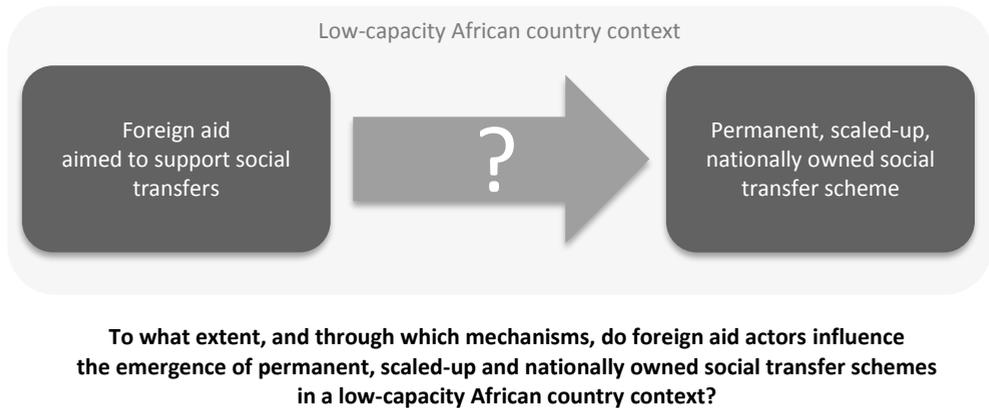
In this research, the **dependent variable** is the emergence of a **permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme**. Again, the term 'social transfers' refers here to non-contributory resource transfers explicitly targeted at vulnerable individuals or households, and financed by public resources. Common types of social transfers include: cash transfers (such as, child benefit, family allowance, and old age pension); near-cash transfers (such as, food stamps, and commodity vouchers); in-kind food transfers (such as, school meals and take-home rations); public works in which the vulnerable work for food or cash; conditional transfers (that is, transfers in cash or in kind to vulnerable households subject to compliance with specific conditions in relation to education and/or health); and targeted subsidies meant to benefit households, often for food, energy, housing, or utilities. Social transfers may take many different forms and this list is not exclusive. For the purpose of this research, the term shall however exclude: universal social policies providing access to health care or education; resource transfers provided to communities and associations; social insurance and microinsurance schemes; and informal solidarity transfers such as migrant remittances.

With these defining features in mind, the term 'social transfer scheme' refers to any national programme or isolated project that provides such resource transfers to vulnerable individuals or households. As the overall research question above suggests, this research focuses on three specific dimensions of a social transfer scheme, namely:

- *Permanency*—Because social transfers are meant to be regular and predictable, they are to be provided within well-established schemes with a multi-year/long-term perspective;
- *Scale*—If social transfers are to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction, they need to benefit a sizable portion of the population;
- *National ownership*—Social transfer schemes need to be nationally owned and anchored in national legislation and regulation or in well-established government programmes for their sustainability to be maintained or enhanced.

For the purpose of this research, the main **explanatory variable** is **foreign aid aimed to provide, promote or support social transfers**. The term 'foreign aid' is taken here in its broad sense. It encompasses both humanitarian aid and development assistance, and includes technical cooperation in addition to financial flows. The scope of this research is however limited to foreign aid explicitly aimed

at delivering social transfers (project-related grants), promoting their use (policy and advocacy work) or supporting existing schemes (technical assistance and funding). Because this research is concerned primarily with process, emphasis is put on aid strategies rather than volumes—that is, on quality rather than quantity.



**Figure 1-1** Overall Research Question and Variables

For ease of reference, the generic terms ‘aid for social transfers’ and ‘policy uptake’ are used in this dissertation to refer respectively to the explanatory and dependent variables. Gaining conceptual clarity over these two variables is an integral part of the research. Variable dimensions, along with suggested measurement indicators, will be further examined at the beginning of the dissertation (Chapter 2).

### 1.3 Research Boundaries

Deliberate choices were made to delimit the scope of the research within our broader topic of interest—namely, the role of foreign aid in the expansion of basic social protection in low-income African countries. First, we did not seek to conduct any systemic review of common aid strategies. Assessing the effectiveness, in terms of policy uptake, of specific intervention strategies used by foreign aid actors to promote social transfers would have been challenging. What may appear as a case of failure (that is, a case where the recipient country does not expand its social transfer policies) and lead to the conclusion that aid initiatives are ineffective may later turn, unexpectedly, into a success case. As shown in this research, success may be a matter of time, and at the time of the evaluation, it may just be too soon to say whether aid attempts have failed.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore—and this is another aspect

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the case of Zambia’s Social Cash Transfer scheme presented in this dissertation.

highlighted by this research, there certainly is an aspect of ‘bandwagon effect’ whereby it would often be the accumulation of attempts that leads to success.

Linked to the previous point, the research did not seek to offer a comprehensive assessment of the effects (positive and negative, direct and indirect, intended and unintended) of aid for social transfers on the capacity of a country to institutionalise social transfers. Measuring the impact of aid for social transfers on institutions is problematic for a number of reasons. To start with, isolating aid for social transfers from a more general assessment of the impact of aid in general presents considerable problems—beginning with the challenge of quantifying aid for social transfers, as will be discussed in Section 2.2. In addition, while it would be possible to come up with a set of core capacities for recipient countries to have to be able to institutionalise social transfers,<sup>13</sup> there appears to be no standard or easy way to measure changes in institutions. Lastly, there are intervening variables in the political environment that would complicate any assessment of the direct relationship between aid for social transfers and domestic institutions.

Finally, the scope of the research has been deliberately confined to policy features and not policy outcomes—that is, we did not consider the impact of adopted social transfer policies. Development policies have recently been defined as ‘successful’ if they “have demonstrably [...] improved the human capabilities of a significant population of otherwise disadvantaged people,” and lasted for at least ten years (McCourt and Bebbington 2007, p. 4 cited in Hickey 2009). Here, we rather looked at cases of ‘success’ as defined by Stephen Devereux and Philip White (2007) as “progress towards social protection systems that have nationwide coverage, can be sustained into the long term, have broad political support and institutional buy-in, and can ultimately make a significant impact on deprivation and vulnerability.” (p. 2) One important caveat is thus that a case defined as successful in terms of policy uptake may, in practice, fail to contribute to the actual expansion of basic social protection—if the policy has been poorly designed or implemented.

## 1.4 Research Strategy

Within the boundaries described above, the flow of investigation has been as follows. First, considering the explanatory variable, a **theoretical investigation** was conducted into major direct and side effects ‘aid for social transfers’ may have on the capacity of a country to adopt a sustainable social transfer policy. An initial

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<sup>13</sup> For instance, building on the discussion presented in Section 2.3, considering core capacities in each of the three following dimensions: law and policy dimension, financial dimension, and operational dimension.

scoping review established the set of strategies commonly used by aid actors to support the emergence of social transfers in low-income countries. It also provided a summary of salient factors attributed to success and failure in terms of policy uptake. The theory of change behind each of these common strategies was examined, and their underlying assumptions identified. One specific strategy that has recently gained traction among development partners, ex-ante cost-benefit analysis, was subject to a closer examination. This has consisted in an analytical review of methodological approaches used by international organisations and donor agencies to conduct ex-ante cost-benefit analyses aimed at defining which forms of social transfers are worth the investment in developing countries. For this, interviews with informed practitioners were carried out to gain further insights into the usefulness of this approach. This first step of the research process helped better delineate the contours, conceptual bases and core dimensions of the explanatory and dependent variables, and draw initial hypotheses about the relationships between the two.

Then, turning to the dependent variable, research efforts consisted in conceptually exploring why the government of a low-income country may adopt certain types of social transfer policy. This second step built on the literature on welfare states, which is largely informed by the experience of industrial countries, as well as the literature on social protection in developing countries. This led to the formulation of working hypotheses around the role and effects of aid actors in the emergence of social transfer schemes in low-income countries. Next, a simple **analytical framework** was developed in view of empirically examining the drivers to social transfer policy uptake in a low-income country context, and among them, the role, if any, played by aid actors.

At this point, the research moved to its empirical phase. Twelve cases of (at least partial) success were selected: cases where a permanent (that is, multi-year) social transfer scheme is delivered at scale in a low-income sub-Saharan African country. Working hypotheses and the analytical framework informed the design of an online survey aimed to capture practitioners' own views on the genesis of the selected schemes. In parallel with this, an extensive desk review was conducted on each case, along with in-depth key informant interviews designed to capture personal experience and reflections on how processes took place. This led to the elaboration of causal narratives describing and analysing early development processes, and investigating key factors that had motivated policy choices. The comparative analysis was geared towards identifying common trends and specificities to gain insights into the three main research sub-questions introduced above. This **multiple-case study** apprehended the role actually played by foreign

aid actors in that process, and uncovered important factors determining their degree of influence.

Subsequently, using primary data collected through interviews, an inductive investigation<sup>14</sup> was carried out into practitioners' personal experience in the policy-making processes that had led to the adoption of a social transfer policy in a low-income country. While the multiple-case study had put the emphasis on facts (providing an historical narrative), this exploratory study focused on the personal experiences of individuals involved in these policy processes. The unit of analysis was no longer a social transfer scheme but an individual practitioner. This **people-centred analysis** revealed original understandings into individual decision-making processes behind social transfer policy uptake.

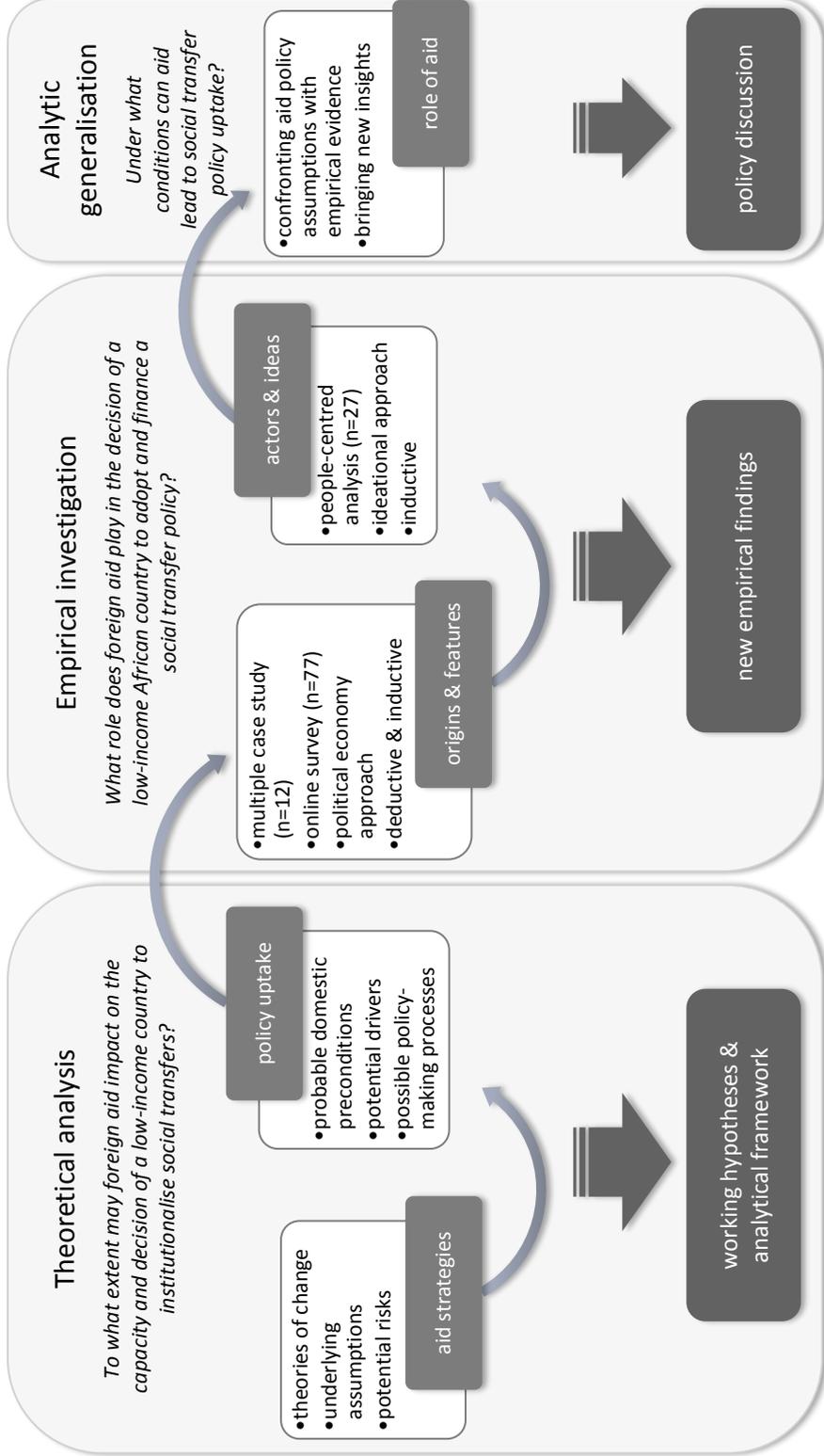
Finally, the last step of the research process consisted in confronting initial theoretical propositions with empirical findings, as well as bringing out new insights revealed by the empirical investigation. This included confronting the theory behind aid actors' mainstream thinking around the "politics of influencing" with evidence gathered around the "politics of what works" (Hickey et al. 2009). It also implied articulating lessons learned that go beyond the setting of the specific cases studied, and examining the broader implications of the findings—what Yin (2014) describes as "**analytic generalisation**" (pp. 40-41). Ultimately, this meant defining how findings contribute towards a theory of donor influence in social protection policies. Figure 1-2 provides a schematic view of the overall research process.

Throughout the research process, evidence-informed policy making<sup>15</sup> has been a crosscutting theme. This dissertation has intended to shed light on what informs policy decisions around social transfers in low-capacity contexts, in theory (as reflected in commonly used aid strategies) and in practice (as revealed by an examination of actual processes that led to policy uptake). In order to find answers to the three main sub-questions this research has aimed to investigate, the overall research study has been at times descriptive (to unpack policy-making processes), explanatory (to examine the influence, if any, of specific aid strategies) and exploratory (to identify other crucial factors).

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<sup>14</sup> An inductive investigation starts with the observation of empirical data; there is no theory at the beginning point of the research. Inductive research "involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations—theories—for those patterns through a series of hypotheses." (Bernard 2011, p. 7)

<sup>15</sup> Evidence-informed policy making is "an approach to policy decisions that aims to ensure that decision-making is well informed by the best available research evidence." (Oxman et al. 2009)



**Figure 1-2** Overall Research Process

## 1.5 Relevance of the Research

A key objective for this research is to critically appraise the validity of common aid strategies aimed to support the emergence of social transfer schemes in low-capacity countries. Donors today spend millions promoting social transfers; this research contributes to the assessment of the efficacy and efficiency of that investment. The further advance in the promotion of social transfers in developing countries by foreign aid actors calls for an examination of associated opportunities and risks, especially in low-capacity country contexts. Having social transfers higher on development partners' agenda and consequently on national governments' agenda could translate into poverty alleviation for millions, if supported by efficient strategies and sufficient resources. It also presents the risk of an excessive policy push from aid actors that would jeopardise the ability of recipient countries to develop their own social policies, thus hampering their overall development into aid *independent* countries.

Aid to promote social transfers is still relatively new.<sup>16</sup> The burgeoning literature on social transfers in developing countries has primarily focused on the study of their impact on poverty and vulnerability.<sup>17</sup> Much has been written on the types of social transfer schemes that have emerged in sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of policy design (targeting, conditionality, etc.) and effectiveness for poverty reduction and human development.<sup>18</sup> Much less has been said about how and why these schemes came off the ground in the first place. This is important in a context of increased consensus around the need to ensure a minimum level of basic social protection to all. Better understanding why and how capacity-constrained states (may) mobilise public revenue for social transfers—and the role, if any, foreign aid actors (may) play—can usefully contribute to discussions on how to bridge the funding gaps for expanding basic social protection in countries that most need it.

Furthermore, a recent ILO report concludes that the main challenge ahead is to “strengthen the institutional basis of social transfer programmes within the social protection systems in developing countries.” (ILO 2010a, p. xi) There is still little literature on the effectiveness of aid to strengthen the institutional basis of social

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<sup>16</sup> Aid for humanitarian assistance and health care is not new of course. Aid-supported food transfers have been provided for decades. What is new is aid for the development of institutionalised social (cash) transfers within a national social protection system. This point will be further developed in Section 2.1.

<sup>17</sup> This has been feeding a number of hot debates on social transfer design, particularly around: providing transfers in kind or in cash; imposing conditionality or not; adopting poverty targeting or not.

<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, Barrientos et al. (2010), Garcia and Moore (2012) and Monchuk (2014).

transfer schemes. A few authors have started studying the politics of social protection in developing countries, looking into the ability of aid actors to promote the idea and use of social transfers.<sup>19</sup> At the global level, the FLOOR group<sup>20</sup> has been studying the emergence of social cash transfers as a new instrument of global social policy and development policy. Under that research project, Moritz von Gliszczyński (2013) studied how the idea of social cash transfers entered global development agendas. A natural next step is to investigate how far global discourses shape the activities of global development organisations, and how far they are translated into development practice.

This research crosses more than one academic discipline. It is mainly concerned with foreign aid actors' influence on national social policy formation, as a specific case of global influence on national policy making (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). As such, it builds on and incorporates insights from the literature on global social policy<sup>21</sup> to consider how changes in the global idea of social protection, with the recent momentum for social transfers, are transferred to national policy making. To further study the interactions among global and national actors in national policy dynamics around social transfers, the research connects to the literature on the politics of social protection in developing countries—in general<sup>22</sup> and with specific reference to sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>23</sup> The research then draws on the literature on public policy making<sup>24</sup> and, in particular, on the use of knowledge in policy-making processes<sup>25</sup> to examine the specific role of foreign aid actors. This interdisciplinary research investigates other academic terrains, notably aid effectiveness and change leadership, to fill specific gaps in regard to developing an initial theoretical framework (in a deductive approach) and making sense of empirical observations (in an inductive approach).

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<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Devereux and White (2010), Hickey (2008), Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale (2012) and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2011).

<sup>20</sup> FLOOR is an interdisciplinary research group led by the University of Bielefeld and Dortmund University of Technology—FLOOR is short for Financial Assistance (Social Cash Transfers), Land Policy, and Global Social Rights. For more information, visit <http://www.floorgroup.de>.

<sup>21</sup> See, in particular, Deacon (2011, 2013), Deacon et al. (1997), and Deacon and Stubbs (2013).

<sup>22</sup> See, in particular, Graham (2002), Hickey (2009, 2011, 2013), Hickey et al. (2009), and Pritchett (2005).

<sup>23</sup> See, in particular, Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2011), Hickey (2008), Hickey et al. (2009), Lavers and Hickey (2015), and Ulriksen (2013).

<sup>24</sup> See, in particular, Hall (1993), Lindblom and Waterhouse (1993), and Taylor (2014).

<sup>25</sup> See, in particular, Carden (2009), Epstein et al. (2014), Jones et al. (2013), and Powell (2006).

## 1.6 Outline of the Dissertation

The core of the dissertation is organised as a series of chapters that each examine one specific aspect of the central research question ‘to what extent, and through which mechanisms, do foreign aid actors influence the emergence of permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer schemes in a low-capacity African country context?’ Each chapter opens with an introductory paragraph that describes how the chapter contributes to answering the question, and ends with concluding remarks that offer a reflection on the implication of findings in regard to the theory and practice of policy making, introduce follow-up questions and how these are addressed in subsequent chapters.

**Chapter 2** sets the scene. It provides a broad understanding of the rationale and evolution of foreign aid aimed to support the expansion of social transfers in low-income countries. It then examines the notion of ‘policy uptake’ and builds on the theoretical and empirical literature to formulate working hypotheses around the influence of aid for social transfers (explanatory variable) on policy uptake (dependent variable).

**Chapter 3** outlines the methodology employed to study the relationship between aid for social transfers and policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context. It describes the different research methods and techniques used to conduct the research, along with the rationale for choices made. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the approach.

Research findings are presented in the three subsequent chapters, which each examines one of the three sub-questions introduced above. The specific question **Chapter 4** scrutinises is whether foreign aid actors can enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country. The chapter elaborates on the multiple-case study of the origins and features of sizable social transfer schemes operating in sub-Saharan Africa. It brings initial insights into the triggering, supporting and catalytic roles of foreign aid actors in social transfer policy uptake.

**Chapter 5** explores the specific role of the production of scientific analysis in the influence foreign aid actors may have on social transfer policy uptake. It focuses on the case of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses as one strategy that has recently gained traction among foreign aid actors for it holds the prospect of accelerating social transfer policy uptake. The chapter draws on results from the different studies conducted as part of this doctoral research—methodological review of the main

cost analysis models used in the social protection field, multiple-case study (including online survey), and people-centred investigation.

To delve into the decision-making processes behind social transfer policy uptake, and further investigate key factors, other than the production of scientific evidence, that appear to determine foreign aid actors' influence on social transfer policy uptake, **Chapter 6** presents findings from the inductivist investigation into the personal experience of front-line foreign aid practitioners involved in social transfer policy-making processes. The unit of analysis is no longer a social transfer scheme, but an individual practitioner. This chapter thus brings a people-centred perspective on social policy formation, and fresh insights into the role of foreign aid actors in the emergence of social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Chapter 7** is a discussion chapter. Findings presented in previous chapters raise important follow-up questions that this chapter examines. Doing so, it highlights critical points in terms of promising practices and possible perverse effects. It then considers those in the specific context of Sahelian West Africa, a region that has been lagging behind in terms of social protection. This brings additional insights and sets out a few avenues for further reflection on the role of foreign aid in the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries.

**Chapter 8** concludes. It provides a summary of the main arguments and evidence presented throughout the dissertation. Building on those, it formulates a few policy directions that should be primarily of importance for development practitioners. Finally, it suggests areas and opportunities for further research and analysis.

## Chapter 2

# Theoretical Framework: Foreign Aid and Social Transfer Policy Uptake in Low-Income Countries

The main challenge ahead is to strengthen the institutional basis of social transfer programmes within the social protection systems in [low-income] developing countries.

*Armando Barrientos and Miguel Niño-Zarazúa  
(in ILO 2010a, p. xi)*

This chapter establishes the conceptual and theoretical foundations for the research. It helps better understand crucial research and policy issues that motivated the research. It also enables gaining conceptual clarity over the main research variables. The reflexion presented here is grounded in an extensive review of the theoretical and empirical literature on aid effectiveness and social protection, as well as the literature on policy transfer and diffusion, and policy-making. It is articulated in four parts. It first offers an overview of the evolution of foreign aid aimed to promote social transfers in low-income countries (Section 2.1). It then considers core dimensions of aid for social transfers (Section 2.2). The reflexion proceeds with an examination of the concepts of policy uptake, national ownership and institutional basis of social transfer schemes (Section 2.3). This leads to the formulation of working hypotheses around the effects of aid for social transfers (explanatory variable) on social transfer policy uptake (dependent variable) in a low-income country context (Section 2.4). Concluding remarks outline how the subsequent chapters will contribute to investigating these hypotheses.

## 2.1 Social Transfers in Development Cooperation

The overview that follows helps put aid for social transfers in perspective. Considering what prompted foreign aid actors to engage in social transfers, we distinguish three main dynamics that started in the 1980s: first, the introduction of safety net measures to mitigate the adverse effects of structural adjustment policies on poverty, which set the stage for permanent social transfer policies to address

chronic poverty; second, efforts to put Amartya Sen's entitlement theory into practice and better respond to food crises, which made the case for regular and predictable cash-based transfers to tackle seasonal food insecurity; third, the global debate that led to the recommendation to all countries that they should establish a social protection floor, and subsequent efforts by foreign aid actors to support the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries.

### **From social funds to conditional cash transfers**

Following the exceptional international debt crisis that became apparent in 1982, much of the developing world engaged in substantial economic reforms. Many countries followed the prescriptions promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, known as the "Washington Consensus"—a term coined by John Williamson in 1989 to refer to ten specific economic policy prescriptions promoted by the Bretton Woods Institutions in response to the Latin American debt crisis. Loans were provided conditional on the adoption of structural adjustment policies aimed at reducing, or even minimizing, the role of government, and at promoting market competition as part of the neo-liberal agenda followed by the Bretton Woods System.

The market-oriented measures prescribed were focused on achieving basic macroeconomic equilibrium. But the important deterioration of human welfare observed in the 1980-1985 period called for an alternative adjustment policy. In 1987, Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Richard Jolly and Frances Stewart, all working at the time for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), proposed a radical change of emphasis, an "adjustment with a human face", a strategy which sets that poverty alleviation must be an integral part of adjustment policy. Partly in consequence, the World Bank started to focus on poverty. Its 1990 World Development Report states: "A comprehensive approach to poverty reduction, therefore, calls for a program of well targeted transfers and safety nets as an essential complement to the basic strategy." (World Bank 1990, p. 51) The report distinguishes between: those unable to participate in the growth process, who need a system of transfers that will ensure them an adequate standard of living; and those who may be temporarily in danger when events take an unfavourable turn, and are best served by a variety of safety nets. This set the stage for the World Bank's involvement in poverty reduction, social protection and social transfers.

Safety net components were incorporated into structural adjustment programmes to provide short-term and temporary relief as governments adjusted to new economic conditions. As Carol Graham (1994, p. 5) notes, safety nets rarely provided direct transfer payments due to weak administrative systems in

developing countries. More commonly, they provided services (such as employment and basic infrastructure) or targeted subsidies (such as food coupons or stamps). The World Bank championed in particular demand-based social funds.<sup>26</sup> These were established as semi-autonomous budgets made up of donor funding and operating outside government social assistance departments to respond directly to proposals originating from people living in poverty. These were subsequently criticised for: often not reaching the poor but only proactive non-governmental organisations (NGOs); not being mainstreamed into government anti-poverty policy; being substitutes for government expenditure (crowding out); and not being linked to sustainable funding sources (Hall and Midgeley 2004 cited in Deacon 2013, p. 16). In some countries, safety net programmes were further criticised as vehicles for patronage politics and ruling party vote buying (Sugiyama 2011, p. 253).

### Box 2-1 Brazil and Mexico's First Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes

In Brazil, two local governments established the first conditional cash transfer programmes in January 1995. The city of Campinas, in the state of São Paulo, established the *Programa de Garantia de Renda Mínima Familiar* (guaranteed minimum family income programme); and the federal district of Brasília established a CCT known as *Bolsa Escola*. Both programmes targeted families in extreme poverty with children, providing regular cash transfers to help reduce short-term poverty, while giving households incentives to invest in the human capital of their children. These programmes became a model that multiplied in many municipalities and states in Brazil. In 2001, the Brazilian federal government under the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration adopted a national version, *Bolsa Escola Federal*. Two years later, under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the programme evolved into *Bolsa Família*, with a broader set of aims with corresponding conditionality for beneficiaries. It now reaches over a quarter of the total Brazilian population.

In 1997, under President Ernesto Zedillo, Mexico introduced PROGRESA *Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación*, an education, health, and nutrition programme aimed to support poor households with young children in rural areas. A rigorous impact evaluation undertaken in the first three years of the programme produced evidence that it worked and helped its continuity when the government changed. In 2001, President Vicente Fox transformed it into *Oportunidades*, broadening its objectives and accelerating its expansion to include urban areas throughout the country. In 2014, under President Enrique Peña Nieto, *Oportunidades* was transformed into PROSPERA *Programa de Inclusión Social*. It reaches today over 25 million people, that is, over 20 per cent of the population.

Source: Author's compilation based on Sugiyama (2011) and World Bank (2015).

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<sup>26</sup> In 1987, to cushion the adverse effects of the stabilization and structural adjustment programmes on the poor, Bolivia, with the support of the World Bank, put in place the first Emergency Social Fund aimed at providing emergency relief by creating temporary employment and improving income. After the Bolivian experience, a wave of social funds spread to more than 60 countries (IEG 2011, App. A).

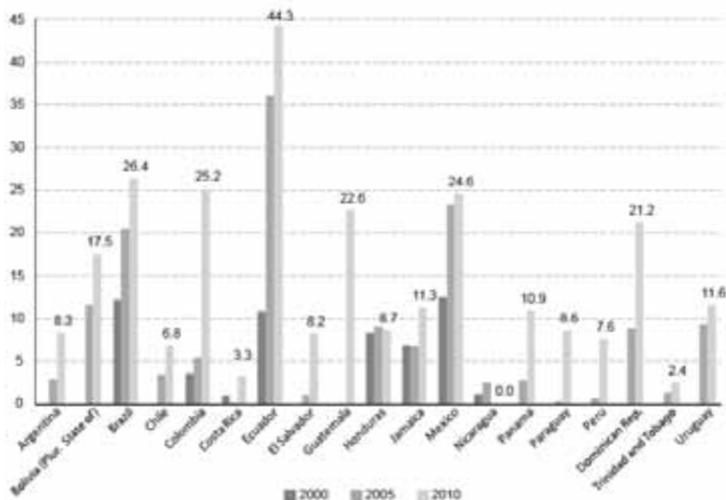
Once developing countries achieved economic stability, the question became what governments should do to address persistent and extreme poverty in a way that would address the criticism levelled at the previous safety net programmes. Two Latin American countries experimented with innovative strategies that eventually became a model for non-contributory social protection and social sector spending more broadly. Brazil's *Bolsa Família* and Mexico's PROGRESA/*Oportunidades* remain the most well-known examples of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes (Box 2-1). Both schemes integrated a solid programme evaluation component. At the outset, the Mexican government committed to facilitate an experimental design and contracted with independent researchers, such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), to evaluate the effects of PROGRESA. The widespread distribution of published reports on PROGRESA's outcomes and active advocacy conducted by Brasília's then governor furthered the notion that Mexico and Brazil had developed model social programmes (Sugiyama 2011).

The economic and political instability and high social costs induced by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the global financial crisis that hit East Asia and Brazil in the 1997-1998 encouraged the World Bank to support the creation and scale-up of safety nets as a mitigating measure. In its World Development Report 2000, the institution highlighted the need for permanent safety nets that could serve a countercyclical role when countries are hit by a macro shock—financial or natural. In the same year, the World Bank launched its first social safety net core course. The following year, it adopted its first social protection strategy paper “From Safety Net to Springboard”. Its Social Risk Management framework has become the most influential approach to social protection in recent years, not least because it has been heavily promoted by the World Bank through its financing, research, training and policy advice (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2007). According to Robert Holzmann and Valerie Kozel, the approach was “innovative in placing particular emphasis on risk and risk management as a complement to social protection's more traditional emphasis on equity and basic needs” (2007a, p. 8), and contributed to shift the social protection discourse from advocacy toward evidence-based policy (2007b).<sup>27</sup> Also in 2001, the World Bank provided for the first time financing for CCTs in Colombia, Jamaica, and Turkey (IEG 2011).

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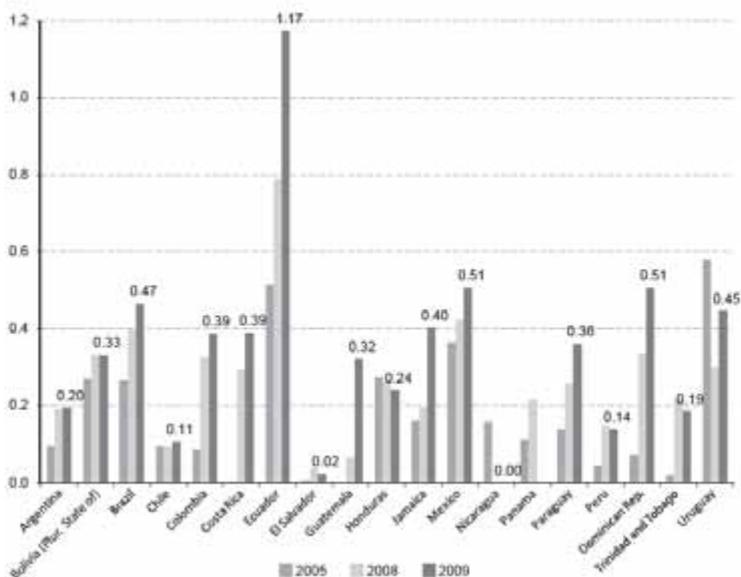
<sup>27</sup> Yet, the Social Risk Management framework has been criticised for its bias toward economic interpretation and narrow conceptualisation of risk, which leads to interventions that focus on transitory income shocks rather than on structural determinants of poverty, and a failure to engage with other disciplines, such as politics, anthropology, geography, sociology and psychology (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2007).

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (19 COUNTRIES): COVERAGE OF  
CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMES, AROUND 2000, 2005 AND 2010  
(Percentages of total population)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information provided by the respective countries.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (19 COUNTRIES): INVESTMENT IN  
CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMES, AROUND 2005, 2008 AND 2009  
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official information provided by the respective countries.

Source: Cecchini and Madariaga (2011).

Figure 2-1 Expansion of CCTs in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2005-2010

In the decade and a half that has passed since the first CCTs were implemented in Brazil and Mexico, these non-contributory social protection programmes have grown at a steady pace in Latin American and Caribbean countries in terms of both population coverage and investment.<sup>28</sup> Figure 2-1 illustrates how rapidly CCTs expanded in the following years. By 2008, nearly every Latin American country had adopted a CCT programme. In 2010, CCTs were reaching over 25 million Latin American and Caribbean families, including 12.6 million Brazilian families and 5.6 million Mexican families. They covered around 19 per cent of the population, with an investment effort representing 0.4 per cent of GDP (Cecchini and Madariaga 2011). Globally, the number of countries with CCTs increased dramatically from 27 in 2008 to 64 in 2014, including 18 African countries (World Bank 2015). Within the international development community, CCTs tend to become the new norm. CCT schemes share common features such as targeting the extreme poor households, providing cash directly to mothers, and imposing (hard or soft) conditionalities to encourage investment in human capital (health, education, etc.). Their objective is two-fold: alleviating poverty, and breaking the intergeneration transmission of poverty. Still, they differ with regard to the relative emphasis in these two objectives, and with regards to their place in the social protection system: as permanent welfare policy, or as short-term safety net.

### **From food aid to cash-based assistance in humanitarian responses**

Success stories drawn from the experience of Mexico's *PROGRESA/Oportunidades* and Brazil's *Bolsa Família* fed the movement towards cash-based responses in the humanitarian sector. The rationale for cash-based responses in humanitarian crises derives from Amartya Sen's explanation of contemporary famines. Sen (1981) identifies the key problem as lack of access to food, rather than failures in food supply. Sen's entitlement approach emphasises the links between poverty and famine, with the implication that income transfers that protect people's purchasing power and increase food entitlement can be an appropriate, if not preferable, alternative to general food distributions to mitigate famine. Cash-based responses were also praised as a more dignified way, and possibly more cost-effective approach, to provide assistance (Creti and Jaspars 2006, pp. 6-9) (Box 2-2). In contexts of recurrent food crises, such as the Horn of Africa, this pushed some humanitarian actors to advocate for government-led multi-year social (cash-based)

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<sup>28</sup> In the statistics for public finances and national accounts, 'social spending' is used to refer to all resources allocated to finance social policy, programmes and projects. Here, however, the term 'investment' is preferred, in the light of the returns it generates in terms of socioeconomic development (Martínez and Collinao 2010 cited in Cecchini and Madariaga 2011). This point is further developed in Chapter 5.

transfers as a viable and preferable alternative to ad-hoc food aid (Cherrier and Leather 2006).

## Box 2-2 Cash-Based Transfers in Humanitarian Responses

The term 'cash-based transfers' is used here to refer to cash grants, cash-for-work and vouchers:

- *Cash grants* refer to the provision of money to targeted individuals/households, either as emergency relief intended to meet their basic needs for food, non-food items or services, and/or as grants to buy assets essential for the recovery of their livelihood.
- *Cash-for-work* refers to payment for work on public or community works programmes. Cash-for-work differs from casual labour in that it is targeted at the poorest, most vulnerable or most food-insecure members of a community.
- *Vouchers* refer to the provision of predefined commodities or services through the market. They can be exchanged in designated shops, in fairs or markets. The vouchers may be denominated either in cash, commodity or service value. These are described respectively as value-based, commodity-based or service-based vouchers. Combined vouchers also exist. Tokens provided to access a set of goods at a distribution point set up by a humanitarian agency do not qualify as vouchers, as understood here.

Depending on the circumstances, cash-based transfers may offer the following advantages over in-kind distributions: greater degree of choice for beneficiaries; more dignified assistance; better value-for-money by lowering transaction costs; enhanced communities' economic recovery and resilience; greater flexibility of use; and greater empowerment of vulnerable groups.

Source: Author's compilation based on Creti and Jaspars (2006) and Freeland and Cherrier (2012).

Despite their frequent portrayal as new and innovative, cash-based responses have a long history. Clara Barton, one of the founding figures of the American Red Cross, helped to organise cash relief following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 (Harvey and Bailey 2011, p. 3); in 1948, the British colonial administration distributed cash to famine-affected people in Sudan (Peppiatt et al. 2001); in the early 1970s, famine responses in India included what would be called today cash-for-work programmes (Drèze and Sen 1990); cash relief was also used to respond to the cyclone disasters of the 1970s in Bangladesh (Peppiatt et al. 2001). The list is far from exhaustive; it simply shows that providing disaster-affected people with cash is not especially new or exceptional. Yet, there has been resistance to the idea of just giving cash to disaster-affected people, despite growing evidence of the (cost-)effectiveness of cash-based responses (Gairdner et al. 2011). This is largely due to a culture of in-kind assistance, within donor and implementing organisations, among taxpayers in donor countries and even among beneficiaries. Fears associated with cash-based responses concern in particular the capacity of the market to satisfy beneficiaries' needs, the risk of the injection of cash into

markets to have inflationary effects, and the capacity of beneficiaries to use the money as intended (Creti and Jaspars 2006, pp. 11-14). With direct cash transfers there is an added fear of creating dependency on free handouts (Creti and Jaspars 2006, p. 32).

But if the dominance of in-kind assistance has prevailed until today, there are numerous signs of an increasing shift towards more cash-based assistance. The growing interest in cash-based responses has now reached traditional providers of in-kind assistance. In 2008, the World Food Programme (WFP) officially introduced cash-based transfers in its toolbox. Its Strategic Plan 2008–2011 called for the use of vouchers and cash transfers when appropriate, as an alternative or addition to food commodity responses. The share of WFP’s food assistance provided through cash transfers or vouchers has expanded since, reaching 21 per cent in 2014.<sup>29</sup> Several factors have encouraged this trend. Western food surpluses are much smaller today than in the 1960s when the WFP was created—cash donations allow greater flexibility to innovate.<sup>30</sup> The response to the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004 showed that cash-based humanitarian responses were possible on a large scale, and helped lift some of the fears associated to cash transfers (Adams 2007).<sup>31</sup> The success story drawn from the experience of the Productive Social Safety Net Programme (PSNP) launched in Ethiopia in 2005 as a national programme (supported by various foreign aid actors, including the World Bank and the WFP)<sup>32</sup> reinforced the idea that cash-based assistance could be an appropriate and more cost-effective manner to respond to recurrent crisis needs. Today, a growing number of humanitarian donors are adopting a ‘cash- first’ policy, that is, considering using cash- based mechanisms first, before considering other delivery options if cash is deemed inappropriate.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> In 2014, cash transfers and vouchers for food-insecure individuals and households expanded to reach 8.9 million people in 53 countries, a 13 per cent increase compared to 2013. The approved cash and voucher budget increased by 80 per cent from the 2013 level to US\$1.49 billion in 2014, representing 21 per cent of WFP’s operational costs for food assistance (WFP 2015a).

<sup>30</sup> In 2014, cash contributions to WFP reached an all-time record in both absolute and relative terms: they increased by 22 per cent compared to 2013, and represented 73 per cent of WFP’s total funding (US\$4.1 billion out of the US\$5.6 billion) (WFP 2015b).

<sup>31</sup> This was made possible by large unearmarked funding along with early and unequivocal signs of market recovery, which gave humanitarian actors the confidence to make cash a central element of recovery.

<sup>32</sup> The origins of Ethiopia’s PSNP are presented in Chapter 4.

<sup>33</sup> The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) are among the most visible donors using cash- based mechanisms in emergencies (Gairdner et al. 2011). Yet, there is a lack of reliable data on how much is actually spent, by whom and where (GHA 2015).

The shift from in-kind to cash-based humanitarian assistance has profound implications that go beyond the humanitarian sphere. It is widely accepted that preparedness greatly improves prospects of having a timely and effective humanitarian response. With the growing interest for cash transfers, there is a paradigm shift from prepositioning essential goods (such as food) to prepositioning data, such as registries of vulnerable households, or inventories of possible payment networks. Besides, the tendency towards ‘multi-purpose cash transfers,’<sup>34</sup> that is, cash transfers used to ensure access to essential goods and services across humanitarian sectors/clusters, is changing the way targeting and monitoring and evaluation are approached. In a cross-sectoral approach, targeting, for instance, would be based on socioeconomic criteria, rather than, say, food security indicators alone. This may encourage greater linkages and alignment between humanitarian assistance and national social assistance systems. In some contexts, emergency cash transfers can build on and link to existing government-led social assistance schemes, which are increasingly cash-based—as is already happening in Kenya, Ethiopia, Pakistan, and the Philippines (High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers 2015). Conversely, in contexts of chronic and long-running crises, such as seasonal food crises in the Sahel of West Africa or the Syrian refugee crisis, which are soaking up the majority of scarce humanitarian resources,<sup>35</sup> the establishment of long-term cash-based social assistance could free up humanitarian resources and capacity to focus on the acute and short-term needs that the humanitarian system is best suited to meet.<sup>36</sup> The Council of the European Union (2015) recently endorsed ten “common principles for multi-purpose cash-based assistance to respond to humanitarian needs,” whose principle 9 states that “[l]inkages with national social protection systems need to be exploited whenever possible.” This has also appeared as one of the central themes in the preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Initially driven by the food security and livelihoods departments, the debate over cash-based assistance has progressively reached other sectors (water, hygiene and sanitation; shelter; etc.). There is now a tendency towards interagency multi-purpose cash assistance as a cross-sectoral modality—as exemplified by the experience in Lebanon as part of the response to the Syrian refugee crisis since the onset of winter 2013-2014 (Pelly 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Most humanitarian aid is spent in protracted crises: 89 per cent of humanitarian aid goes to places that have required humanitarian funding for more than three years, and 66 per cent of humanitarian aid is spent in places that have needed it for eight years or more (GHA 2015).

<sup>36</sup> However, social transfer schemes designed for a given purpose (such as poverty reduction) may not be easily used for another (such as humanitarian assistance). This point is further discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>37</sup> For more information, visit <https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/>.

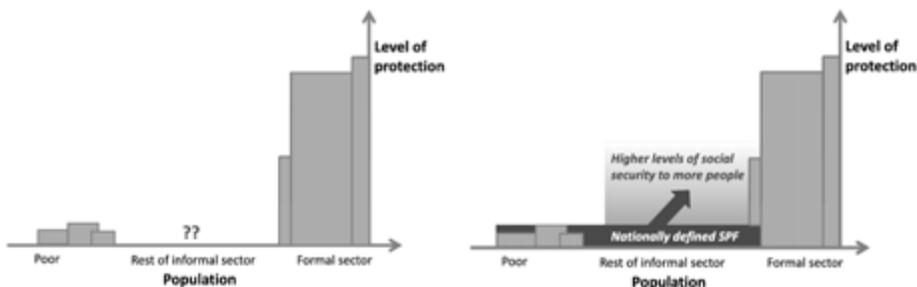
## **Beyond safety nets towards social protection floor guarantees**

Partly for the above-mentioned reasons, social protection and social transfers have been moving up the global development agenda since the early 2000s. The trend grew further after 2008 when social transfers were identified as key instruments to mitigate the effects of the food, fuel and financial crises (World Bank 2008). In 2009, the United Nations (UN) system launched the Social Protection Floor initiative, a conceptual catalyst for the international community to advocate for the development of a “set of basic social rights, services and facilities that the global citizen should enjoy” (CEB 2009; ILO and WHO 2009, p. 4). A new turning point was reached in June 2011 during the International Labour Conference’s 100<sup>th</sup> Session which concluded its discussions on the role of social protection with a commitment to establishing national social protection floors aiming at extending at least a minimum level of social protection to all, as part of comprehensive social protection systems (ILO 2011a). In October 2011, the Group of Twenty (G20)<sup>38</sup> also recommended “intensifying measures to promote resilient growth in developing countries, particularly [low-income countries], by supporting the implementation or expansion of national social protection floors” (G20 2011, para. 53). This led to the adoption in 2012 of the International Labour Organization’s Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202), which calls for the establishment of “nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion” (ILC 2012, p. 2; ILO and IMF 2012).<sup>39</sup> Government, employer and worker delegates of the ILO’s 185 member States adopted the recommendation nearly unanimously.

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<sup>38</sup> The Group of Twenty (G20) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union).

<sup>39</sup> See Deacon (2013) for an account of the foundations of the Social Protection Floors agenda, looking at how the ILO came to adopt Recommendation 202 (Ch. 3), and how the idea was sold outside the ILO and the UN system (Ch. 5).



Source: Schmitt and De (2013).

**Figure 2-2** Horizontal & Vertical Dimensions of the Extension of Social Protection

As illustrated in Figure 2-2, the Social Protection Floors (SPF) framework encourages countries to progressively build and maintain comprehensive and adequate social protection systems. According to the social protection floor concept, countries should guarantee at a minimum the following four nationally defined sets of basic social protection guarantees to all their populations (this is the horizontal dimension): (a) access to essential health care, including maternity care, at a nationally defined minimum level that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality; (b) basic income security for children at a nationally defined minimum level, including access to nutrition, education, care, and any other necessary goods and services; (c) basic income security at a nationally defined minimum level for persons of active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in the case of sickness, unemployment, maternity, and disability; and (d) basic income security at a nationally defined minimum level for older persons.<sup>40</sup> The social protection floor is not a ceiling, which means that once the SPF has been established, countries should also work towards the provision of higher levels of benefits to more and more people (this is the vertical dimension). The objective is to progressively develop higher levels of protection, rather than just the basic level. As economies grow and fiscal space is created, social protection systems can and should move up the ‘staircase,’ extending the scope, level, and quality of benefits and services provided (Schmitt and De 2013).

The utility of the SPF approach in combating poverty has been increasingly recognized at the international level since the onset of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008. Social protection systems, including social protection floors, figure prominently among the set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by

<sup>40</sup> The four guarantees set minimum performance or outcome standards with respect to the access, scope, and level of income security and health care, rather than prescribing a specific architecture of social protection systems, programmes, and benefits.

the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, which set the United Nations' development agenda beyond 2015. Under SDG 1 "End poverty in all its forms everywhere," Target 1.3 is to "[i]mplement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable" (DESA 2015).<sup>41</sup> Several development partners, including the European Union (EC 2012), the World Bank (2012) and UNICEF (2012), now promote a systems approach to social protection in their policies.<sup>42</sup> Yet, translating such an approach into action remains difficult. As described below, donor funding for social transfers and social protection has tended to be focused on projects rather than on coordination and systems, often undermining policy coherence. Differing donor views and divergent practice are among the numerous challenges involved in taking a systems approach.

## **2.2 Current Trends in Aid for Social Transfers**

The historical overview above has explained the emergence of what has been qualified in this research as 'aid for social transfers,' our main explanatory variable. It is now interesting to further uncover the reality behind it: What aid volumes does it represent in practice? What aid strategies are commonly used to support an expansion of social transfers? And, in the end, which specific activities do foreign aid actors tend to support to encourage the use of social transfers in low-income countries?

### **The challenge of measuring the volume of aid for social transfers**

Following commitments made by donors on several occasions to support social protection initiatives,<sup>43</sup> the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has sought to assess the extent to which this expressed intent has been reflected in official development assistance (ODA) expenditures on social protection. This effort was envisioned as a necessary first step towards a greater ability of bilateral donors and multilateral institutions to measure, monitor and harmonise aid for social protection. Currently, the coding structure of the OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting

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<sup>41</sup> Social protection policies feature elsewhere in goals to achieve gender equality (Target 5.4) and to reduce income inequality both between and within countries (Target 10.4).

<sup>42</sup> A systems approach to social protection aims to provide a coordinated and harmonised response to the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities through the life-course whilst also improving the efficiency and sustainability of social protection schemes (World Bank and UNICEF 2013).

<sup>43</sup> In the OECD DAC's High Level Meeting in May 2009, at the ILO Labour Conference in 2011, in the EU when adopting the communication on social protection in May 2012, and at the G20 meeting in Mexico in June 2012.

System (CRS) makes donor spending on social protection difficult to distinguish from other types of funding.<sup>44</sup> The CRS has no sector code for social protection; only a purpose code labelled “Social/Welfare Services” (16010) whose definition broadly covers categories that can be defined as social protection.<sup>45</sup> Aid flows registered with that purpose code represented only 1.3 per cent (US\$2,037 million) of all committed ODA in 2008, and 1.5 per cent (US\$2,588 million) of all ODA committed in 2011 (OECD 2013a). The recent effort by the DAC Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET) to produce more accurate estimates of ODA for social protection suggests this is largely underestimated (OECD 2015).

The POVNET survey focused on the evolution of ODA for social protection between 2008 and 2011, in terms of volumes and delivery mechanisms. In aggregate, the eight donors who responded to the survey<sup>46</sup> significantly increased their support for social protection, both in terms of value and as a proportion of their total ODA, over the period from 2008 to 2011 (OECD 2015). Among the eight respondents, the total amount of ODA in support of social protection increased by 24 per cent in absolute terms between 2008 and 2011.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, despite budgetary pressure on overall ODA budgets since the onset of the global economic crisis, reported social protection expenditures have grown faster than ODA. This is most strikingly exemplified by Australia, Finland and the United Kingdom, where increases in social protection expenditures outstripped significant increases in overall ODA, by factors of between 7 and 15. Even in the case of Ireland, where overall ODA dropped by 31 per cent, social protection expenditures were reported to have increased by 91 per cent (Figure 2-3). Furthermore, the survey responses show that donors have allocated significant amounts of their support for social protection to least developed countries compared to lower middle-income countries, despite their relatively weak institutional capacities and structures and limited fiscal space for social transfers (Figure 2-4). This finding further confirms the relevance of focusing the present research on the role of foreign aid actors in the expansion of basic social protection on low-income countries specifically.

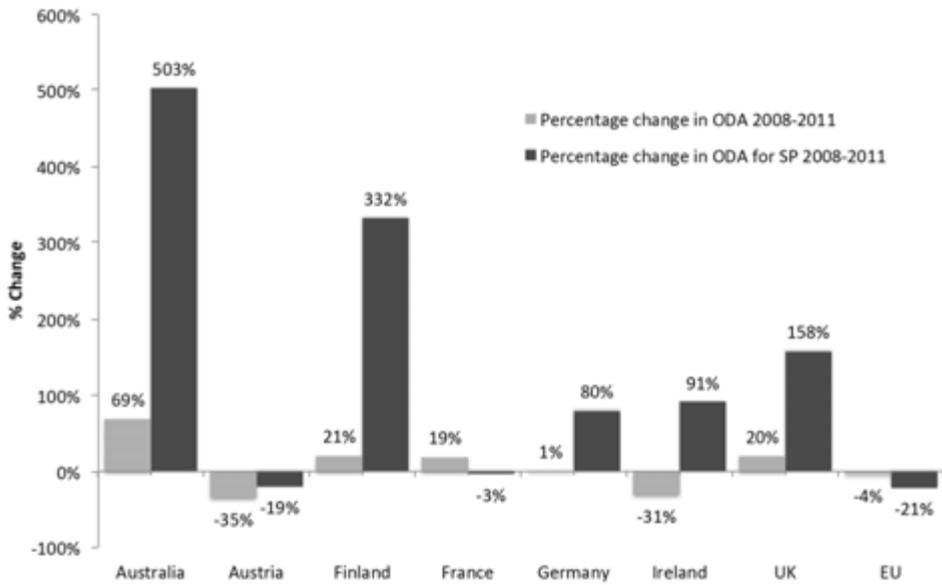
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<sup>44</sup> For information on the OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting System, visit [www.oecd.org/dac/stats/data](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/data).

<sup>45</sup> Namely: “Social legislation and administration; institutional capacity-building and advice; social security and other social schemes; special programmes for the elderly, orphans, the disabled and street children; social dimensions of structural adjustment; unspecified social infrastructure and services, including consumer protection.” (OECD 2013b)

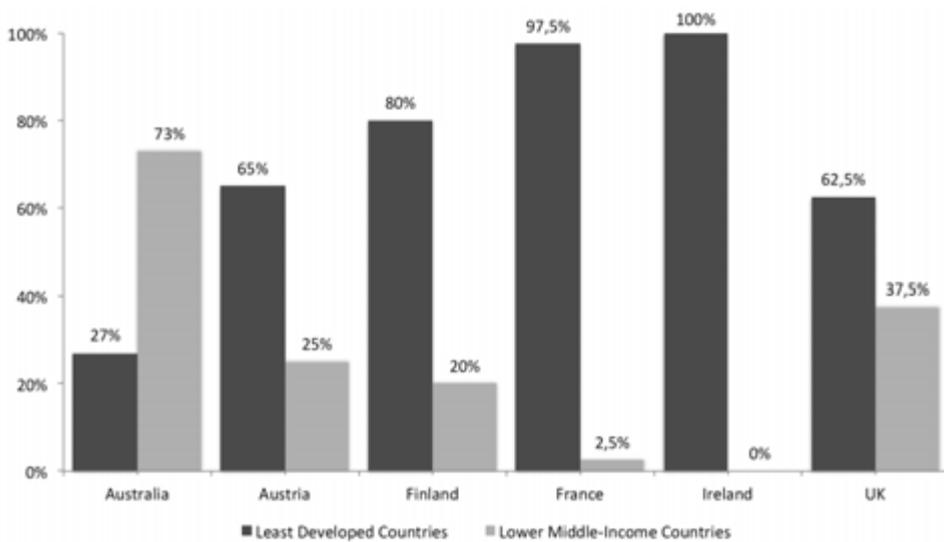
<sup>46</sup> Australia, Austria, Finland, France, Ireland, Germany, United Kingdom, and the European Union.

<sup>47</sup> A trend that the CRS fails to capture; over the same period, the CRS reports a stagnation of donor spending if one considers the three sectoral codes that best relate to social protection: 1240 (basic nutrition), 16010 (social welfare services) and 16050 (multi-sector aid for basic social services).



Source: OECD (2015, p. 9)

**Figure 2-3** Change in Total ODA and ODA for Social Protection, 2008-2011



Source: OECD (2015, p. 15)

**Figure 2-4** Allocation of ODA for Social Protection per Income Group, 2011

There is still no agreement as to how to measure ODA for social protection, let alone social transfers. The POVNET exercise revealed the difficulty of producing accurate estimates of ODA for social protection. Most importantly, there is no consensus on how to approach and define social protection (Brunori and O'Reilly 2010). Donors record and report their expenditure in different ways. Respondents felt that the figures they reported in the survey underestimate what they in fact spent in this area. The reasons cited include difficulties of defining and extracting social protection spending, and the 'invisibility' of social protection spending within sectoral programmes. For example, expenditure on a child-feeding programme in a poor rural area that is part of a larger budget committed to basic education, while relevant, might not be captured as social protection. Another complicating factor is that many bilateral institutions channel much of their support to social protection as unearmarked core contributions through multilateral agencies, such as, the ILO, the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and the World Bank, which makes it difficult to quote the exact bilateral contributions in this area (OECD 2015).

Any attempt to assess the extent to which the increased interest for social transfers in development cooperation has been reflected in ODA expenditure would face the same challenges. As a specific subset of social protection instruments, social transfers may be slightly easier to conceptualise: even if definitions vary slightly among development partners, there would usually be a consensus on seeing social transfers as non-contributory, regular and predictable, targeted (in some manner) to poor and vulnerable individuals or households, financed by public resources (national or local government, or official development assistance), and aimed at reducing deficits in consumption (Freeland and Cherrier 2012). But even then, views vary on the actual range of instruments that qualify as social transfers. Table 2-1 presents a typology of social transfers, and illustrates the wide variety of instruments that may qualify as social transfers, as understood here.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> As understood in this dissertation, social transfers are non-contributory, publicly financed, direct, regular and predictable resource transfers (in cash or in kind) to vulnerable individuals (Section 1.1).

**Table 2-1** A Typology of Social Transfers



Main objective	Form	Increasingly relying on markets		
		In-kind transfers	Near-cash transfers <sup>(a)</sup>	Cash transfers
Providing direct access to food	Take-home rations Targeted food transfers Food-for-work <sup>(b)</sup> Supplementary feeding		Food vouchers <sup>(a)</sup> Food subsidies	--
Providing direct access to cash	--	--	--	Cash transfers Cash-for-work <sup>(b)</sup> Public works <sup>(b)</sup>
Supporting livelihoods	Agri. input distribution Livestock transfers Food-for-asset <sup>(b)</sup> Food-for-training <sup>(b)</sup>		Asset/input vouchers <sup>(a)</sup>	Cash-for-asset <sup>(b)</sup> Cash-for-training <sup>(b)</sup> Lump sum grants
Building human capital	School feeding		Health fee waivers	Conditional cash transfers <sup>(c)</sup>

Notes: This typology is illustrative only; there is a lot of overlap between the different categories suggested above. <sup>(a)</sup> ‘Food vouchers’ refer to the provision of in-kind commodities through the market, allowing beneficiaries to redeem vouchers for instance at a local retailer to retrieve their food entitlement or at a seed fair to choose and access entitled agricultural inputs; <sup>(b)</sup> These types of social transfers may aim to immediately provide food or income, but another important objective (sometimes primary) is to support livelihood in the medium term through the creation of productive assets, acquisition of new skills in training session, etc.; <sup>(c)</sup> Conditional cash transfers, as a specific form of cash transfers, also aim to provide direct access to cash.

Source: Author.

But even with a clear definition, quantifying the resources that aid actors have allocated to date to support national policies on social transfers would be extremely difficult. Indeed, this would not only include financial support to social transfer schemes, but also soft strategies to influence policies. Considering the level of support provided by the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) to social transfers in various African countries, Samuel Hickey et al. (2009) report:

DFID’s financial commitment to [social transfer] projects varies between £93m over 4 years in Ethiopia to £10m over the same length of time in Zambia. Other activities (e.g. commissioning studies, facilitating study tours) have amounted to between £100-150,000 in each of Zambia and

Uganda in the past 2-3 years. The human resource input is harder to quantify. The process has taken up about 15-20% of one Adviser's time in Uganda since 2006, while in Zambia, the attendance of external meetings alone is estimated to have involved one advisor for one day of every week over nearly a three-year period. The advisor in Ethiopia initially devoted about 90% of his time to the process of influencing and supporting the [Productive Safety Net Programme], with this declining to about 60% over a three-year timeframe. (p. xiii)

Regardless of the measurement challenges, the level of aid allocations for social transfers (in monetary terms) is unlikely to be a good indicator of the intensity of aid actors' efforts to promote social transfers. Soft influencing by in-country high-calibre advisors might cost much less but be much more effective on the long term than implementing a social transfer pilot project. Hence, for the purpose of this research, we adopt a qualitative approach and consider the aid strategies and practices adopted to support an expansion of the use of social transfers in low-income countries.

### **Common aid strategies for encouraging the use of social transfers**

The historical overview presented above (Section 2.1) already suggests different types of aid actors interested in seeing an expansion of social transfers in low-income countries: traditional actors, such as the ILO, as part of their mandate to promote social protection for all; financial institutions, such as the World Bank, as part of their poverty reduction agenda; but also humanitarian actors, such as the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), seeing in well-established social transfer schemes a possible exit strategy in recurrent crises. When examining strategies deployed by these actors to promote the use of social transfers, a broad distinction can be made, on the one hand, between interventions at a supranational level (global or regional level) and interventions at a country level, and on the other hand, between 'hard' project-based approaches (for instance, setting up/financing a social transfer scheme) and 'soft' policy-oriented approaches (such as, offering training, providing technical support to draft policy documents, networking, etc.).

At the global level, development partners have created policy space for social protection and social transfers, and their efforts have largely aimed at setting standards—as exemplified by the ILO Recommendation to all countries that they should establish social protection floors. Similar efforts take place at regional and sub-regional levels. For instance, DFID and the NGO HelpAge International supported the organisation of an intergovernmental conference on social

protection in March 2006 in Livingstone, Zambia, at the end of which delegates from 13 African countries called for “[s]ocial transfer programmes, including the social pension and social transfers to vulnerable children, older persons and people with disabilities and households to be a more utilised policy option in African countries”—in what is known as the ‘Livingstone Call for Action.’ This event was one of a series aimed at defining, and somehow shaping, an African Union agenda for social protection. The African Union Social Policy Framework for Africa outlined in 2008 is based on the ILO model of basic social protection provision.<sup>49</sup> Looking at social cash transfers specifically, Gliszczynski (2013) identifies four policy models that development actors have advocated globally: family allowances, conditional cash transfers, social pensions, and general household assistance. He goes on to suggest that “each organisation which advocated a specific model had a strategic interest to do so, be it discursive dominance in the case of the World Bank or drawing attention to its organisational mandate as in the case of HelpAge International.” (p. 248)<sup>50</sup>

At a country level, development partners have developed various strategies to advocate for the introduction of a new social transfer scheme or the reform of a poorly performing policy. A whole range of arguments have been advanced in favour of social transfers, including social justice and human rights, poverty reduction and risk management, economic growth, as well as political stability and state-building (Freeland and Cherrier 2012, Ch. 3). These have informed advocacy strategies that have usually revolved around three main discourses:

- The human right argument: ‘basic social protection is a (universal) human right;’
- The demonstrative approach: ‘social transfers can work in low-income countries;’ and
- The economic discourse: ‘social transfers are a necessary prerequisite for social and economic development.’

The human rights argument is at the core of the Social Protection Floor initiative, for social protection is a human right, as stated in articles 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948) and article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN 1966). The rights-based

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<sup>49</sup> This agreement, also known as the Windhoek declaration, aspires to the provision of a minimum package of social protection provision, comprising of grants for children, informal workers, the unemployed, older persons and the disabled, together with broader social policy provision, including basic health care, and an implied commitment to ongoing contributory pension schemes for civil servants.

<sup>50</sup> See, for instance, Leutelt (2012) for an analysis of the role of HelpAge International as an agent of transmission for the policy model of universal social pensions.

justification for non-contributory social transfers implies seeing social assistance as an entitlement eligible citizens can claim, and no longer as handouts provided on a discretionary basis (Devereux 2011). In this perspective, social protection is no longer a political *option*, but rather an *obligation* for the states and the international governance structures. In this sense, the case for basic social protection can be made from the responsibility of states to provide social protection (Cichon et al. 2011). But human rights arguments alone have rarely been sufficient to influence policy makers in countries. Limited domestic resources do not allow ensuring all basic human rights at once, and priorities necessarily need to be set. Often, additional arguments would be needed to move social protection higher up the national development agenda.

Another strategy for making the case for basic social protection has been to present theoretical arguments and empirical evidence on the impact of social transfers on poverty reduction and human development. The international evidence base on the multidimensional impacts of social transfers is growing quickly, in particular for social cash transfers.<sup>51</sup> But while such generic advocacy messages may be useful to raise awareness on the potential of non-contributory social protection, they present obvious limitations. Because social protection remains fairly new in many parts of the developing world, empirical evidence often has to be drawn from experiences in other countries. To date, most of the high quality studies on social transfers come from Latin America, a quite specific context. Although social transfers have proven to be an effective mechanism to reduce income deprivation, inequality and access to basic social services, their effects largely depend on programme design features (transfer form, benefit level, targeting strategy, etc.) as well as implementation arrangements, administrative capacity and complementary policies. For instance, a recent systematic review of studies linking nutritional status to interventions involving cash transfers in Latin American, Asian and African developing countries reported mixed evidence: the weighted average of all impact estimates was very close to zero (Manley et al. 2012).

Responding to the lack of national empirical evidence, many international aid actors have launched social transfer pilot projects in an attempt to demonstrate that innovative forms of social transfers can be implemented and can generate very positive results, and eventually influence national policies. Experience in eastern and southern Africa suggests that this pilot-project approach has limitations in promoting the institutionalisation of social transfers (Devereux et al. 2010; Niño-Zarazúa et al. 2010). Misalignment with national policy priorities, weak impact evaluation methods, disconnection with the national policy-making process are

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<sup>51</sup> See, for instance, Arnold et al. (2011), Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa (2010), Bastagli et al. (2016) and EPRI (2010).

among the factors that may explain this disappointing situation. Furthermore, even confronted with a very efficient pilot project, policy makers would often argue that they need more information on the scalability and financial sustainability of the piloted model. Demonstrating efficacy (whether an instrument works or not) or even efficiency (how well it works) alone cannot be enough.

In a context of global recession, policy makers (either in developing countries or donor agencies) are required to present ever stronger and more convincing arguments to justify public spending. They need to demonstrate value for money to taxpayers (either donor-country or national taxpayers). Furthermore, securing sustainable financing for social protection has become a critical area of concern, given the generally limited fiscal space in many developing and emerging countries and recent fiscal consolidation that many countries are undergoing following a period of fiscal expansion and stimulus in response to the economic crisis (IMF 2011b). The prospects of making initial commitments that cannot be sustained over time raise social, economic and political risks. This situation pushes basic social protection advocates to engage more actively in national fiscal and economic debates and develop the ability to analyse the fiscal sustainability and comparative cost-effectiveness of social transfers. This has led to an increased interest in ex-ante cost-benefit analyses, which is not without challenges, as we will uncover in Chapter 5.

## **Usual aid delivery mechanisms for social transfers**

In response to the reluctance of many governments of low-income countries to consider social transfers, much donor emphasis has been placed on building an evidence base on the effectiveness and efficiency of such instruments. Specifically, activities have included, among others: producing briefs to share experiences from Latin America; convening events to raise awareness on the need for basic social protection and the potential of social transfers; commissioning studies to assess their affordability and technical feasibility; running pilot projects to test (and demonstrate) their effectiveness; offering specialised courses;<sup>52</sup> encouraging South-South learning; and supporting policy dialogue. In southern Africa, for instance, DFID and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)<sup>53</sup> instigated a regional programme, known as the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability

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<sup>52</sup> Two such courses are worth citing for they have reached many African technicians and policy makers: the two-week 'Social Safety Net Core Course' run by the World Bank; and the two-week course on 'Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes' delivered by the Economic Policy Research Institute.

<sup>53</sup> AusAID was the agency responsible for managing the Australian Government's overseas aid programme until 31 October 2013, when it ceased to be an executive agency and was integrated into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Programme (RHVP), to support policy makers and practitioners concerned with food security and vulnerability with a special focus on the role of social protection (Rook et al. 2010). In its first phase (2005-2008), the programme focused on consolidating existing evidence from within the region on the impact and efficacy of social transfers as an instrument for reducing chronic hunger and poverty, and translating evidence-based research findings into less technical, more accessible material, and clear policy advice to build awareness, knowledge and understanding of the new policy agenda. But it soon became evident that what was needed was not more research, but rather more attention to the adoption of existing research findings by policy makers. Hence, in 2008, the RHVP entered into an agreement with the Parliamentary Forum of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)<sup>54</sup> to deliver a two-year capacity building programme aimed at increasing parliamentarians' and parliamentary staff's knowledge and understanding of the role of social transfers in hunger and poverty reduction in order to enable them to better engage in, and ultimately drive, national social protection agendas. This type of approach, however, has remained quite an exception.

Over the past decade, a significant part of donor support has gone to funding small-scale pilot projects. These would typically be fully funded by donors, implemented by international actors, evaluated by Western researchers, and more often than not, disconnected from the national policy making process. As John Rook (2010) points out, far more attention has been put on generating evidence than on enhancing research uptake by policy makers to ensure research findings do translate into tangible policy change. Many factors may explain this, including, short funding cycles and the need for aid agencies to report measurable results rapidly, a lack of understanding of national policy-making processes, reluctance to meddle in politics, an obsession with technocratic solutions, or maybe simply a misconception of the true nature of political decision-making, having in mind a purely rational model of decision-making. The proliferation of pilot projects has become problematic, even more so when the number of actors is multiplying. To give just one example, an inventory of social protection projects in Malawi in 2006 revealed as many as 24 actors engaging in social protection. As the study notes, "if finding out who is doing what, when and where on social protection in Malawi is difficult, coordinating all these activities is a challenge of much greater magnitude" (World Bank 2007, p. 45).

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<sup>54</sup> The SADC Parliamentary Forum—established in 1996 and formalised by the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government in 1997, is a regional inter-parliamentary body composed of 14 SADC Member Parliaments representing over 3,500 parliamentarians. For more information, visit <http://www.sadcpf.org>.

The policy momentum (and funding opportunities) for social protection, along with the elusiveness of related terms, has allowed certain agencies (particularly within the UN), although formerly quite unfamiliar with social policy work, to position themselves as key players in social protection. Nicholas Freeland (2012) deploras, for instance, that the WFP has made too many semantic leaps in its 2012 safety nets policy update: it rebranded its predominantly humanitarian interventions as safety nets; and in turn, because some people (notably the World Bank) use the term ‘safety net’ as being synonymous with social assistance, and social assistance is a component of a government’s overall social protection strategy, the WFP has claimed an expertise in social assistance and therefore in social protection. But, as an in-house strategic evaluation already underlined, this may catapult the WFP beyond its mandate, its experience, its capacity and its areas of comparative advantage (Majewski et al. 2011).<sup>55</sup>

The year 2012 marked, at least on paper, a possible departure from a primary focus on social cash transfer projects towards broader and better-coordinated action to ensure basic social protection for all. The ILO Recommendation 202 was adopted. Several key aid actors defined or revised their social protection policy, including the EU, the World Bank and UNICEF, with the stated intent to help developing countries move from fragmented approaches to more harmonized systems. The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) was established, upon the request from the G20 Development Working Group, to enhance global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues—the mechanism brings together representatives of 36 international organisations and bilateral donors.<sup>56</sup> In January 2013, the World Bank, infamous for its go-it-alone approach, defined with UNICEF a common ground for helping build social protection systems. In June 2015, the ILO and the World Bank articulated in a joint statement their shared vision to advance universal social protection, and in September 2016, they launched the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The case of the WFP is only one example. The same may apply to other foreign aid actors. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), for instance, has also recently step up its engagement in social protection.

<sup>56</sup> See Deacon (2013, pp. 131-140) for an account of the establishment of the SPIAC-B.

<sup>57</sup> The ILO defines ‘universal social protection’ as including: “adequate cash transfers for all who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons. This protection can be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security.” (World Bank 2016b)

In line with broader efforts to make international development cooperation more effective,<sup>58</sup> aid for social transfers has experienced changes since the early 2000s, characterised in particular by an evolution from grant aid to technical cooperation, and a push towards more budget support. It has also seen the entry of new players from the global South, and the expansion of South-South cooperation—like the Africa-Brazil Cooperation Programme on Social Protection launched in 2009. In a recent report on aid for social protection, the OECD (2015) notes that a trend can be detected among large donors (such as, the UK and the EU) in favour of supporting national programmatic approaches and moving away from stand-alone projects implemented by international NGOs (INGOs).<sup>59</sup> Smaller donors, however, appear to keep channelling most of their support through the UN system and larger NGOs.

In the field, despite the good high-level intentions cited above, the tendency to see short-term and fragmented initiatives by an increasing number of players continues to prevail. Further confusion is brought by the muddle of humanitarian transfers, safety nets and social transfers. Indeed, the same instrument, cash transfers for instance, may be used under many different operational frameworks to achieve many different objectives. The fact that cash transfers have been a praised modality for non-contributory social protection has led many actors to consider that any cash-based transfers are de facto social transfers. But a distinction is to be drawn between social transfers and humanitarian transfers. This distinction rests principally on the objective underscoring the intervention, with social transfer schemes designed to promote and sustain national social development, and humanitarian transfers meant principally to save lives in the short term. In the context of food security for instance, social transfer schemes are developed primarily to tackle long-term, chronic food insecurity, but may also be designed to address (low to moderate) transient, acute food insecurity whenever it occurs. Humanitarian transfers are normally delivered when, due to inadequate food consumption, compromised livelihoods or extreme coping strategies, excessive

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<sup>58</sup> For an overview of the successive High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness since 2003, visit <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelforaonaideffectivenessahistory.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> When asked with whom they implemented their social protection projects and programmes in 2008-2011, responses varied among the eight donor respondents to the POVNET survey mentioned above: the smaller donors (Finland and Austria) both answered that their main implementing partners belong to Group A (NGOs, the UN and private companies); Ireland and Germany reported that their main implementing partners belonged to Group B (themselves and other bilateral partners); France, Ireland, the UK and the EU answered that their main implementing partners belong to Group C (national governments and local authorities); Australia reported a mix of the three groupings (OECD 2015).

mortality<sup>60</sup> or emergency rates of malnutrition<sup>61</sup> have been reached, or exceeded, or are reasonably anticipated (EC 2010). This implies a certain severity and scale of need which exceeds the national disaster management capacities. Humanitarian transfers come as a complement to any existing social transfer schemes but they are framed by humanitarian principles, rather than by national development agendas, and need to be flexible and responsive (and therefore not necessarily regular and predictable over the longer term, like social transfers). This research focuses on social transfers, recognising that the more effective (nationally owned) social transfer schemes are in fighting hunger and mitigating shocks, the less need there will be for (internationally funded) humanitarian assistance.<sup>62</sup>

In practice though, there remains a grey area. As illustrated in Table 2-2 with the case of cash transfers, different operational frameworks can be distinguished, including for example:

- *One-off project of humanitarian transfers*, funded and administered by international actors on an ad hoc basis in response to, or for recovery from, a distinct shock, mitigating its negative impacts and preventing a large-scale humanitarian crisis from developing;
- *Multi-year project of regular transfers*, under which resource transfers are provided on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly) to reduce households' consumption deficit— beneficiaries may be informed of the expected duration of the project, but there is no guarantee by law, and transfers may stop if funding dries up or political priorities change.
- *Integrated social transfer schemes*—under this desirable operational framework, social transfers (social pensions, child benefits, disability grants, etc.) constitute an entitlement guaranteed by law that (eligible) citizens can claim; the state has an obligation to deliver these social guarantees to all its eligible citizens, and to ensure it maintains the required administrative and financial capacities to do so; social transfers are provided under an integrated scheme and linked into other services (such as, home-based care), programmes (such as, nutritional education) or sectors (such as, education and health).

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<sup>60</sup> 'Excessive' is considered to combine absolute measures in relation to established emergency thresholds, as defined by the Sphere handbook, UNICEF and the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, and relative measures in relation to context-specific baselines.

<sup>61</sup> As defined by the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and the World Health Organisation.

<sup>62</sup> We shall come back to the links between humanitarian assistance and state-led social protection systems in Chapter 7 in the specific context of the Sahel of West Africa.

**Table 2-2** Spectrum of Application of Cash Transfers: From Humanitarian Aid to Social Guarantees

	Humanitarian aid		Social protection
<b>Operational framework</b>	One-off project of humanitarian cash transfers	Multi-year project of regular cash transfers	National social transfer system
<b>Features</b>			
Regularity and predictability	None	Moderate	High
Guarantee by law	No	No	Yes
Financial sustainability	No (largely aid-based)	Fair (based on predictable aid and/or domestic budget allocations)	Strong (largely tax-based)
State regulation	Very weak (administered by humanitarian actors)	Moderate to strong (often co-administered by State and aid actors)	Strong (fully regulated by the State)
Policy framework	Humanitarian aid to save lives	Social protection or food security strategy	National social protection policy
Example	Emergency transfers after an earthquake	Mali's seasonal social transfer project	South Africa's Child Support Grant Scheme
Main challenge	State building: International community to assist populations in need without weakening state legitimacy and capacity	Institutionalisation: To strengthen financial viability, national delivery capacity and legal basis	Dynamism: To ensure permanent adjustment of the system to maintain effectiveness and sustainability, and its integration within broader social and economic policies

Note: This spectrum is illustrative only. It does not necessarily imply a sequence. A one-off project does not necessarily need to evolve into a multi-year project, any more than a multi-year project would necessarily evolve into a social guarantee.

Source: Author.

Ideally, social transfers are institutionalised (that is, regulated, although not necessarily administered, by the state), guaranteed by law, provided on a regular and/or predictable basis, and financed in a sustainable manner. Such transfers differ from charity-based handouts or humanitarian transfers by the fact that they

constitute an entitlement to citizens and an obligation on the state. When fully institutionalised, social transfers may be qualified as a social protection guarantee. They are (implicitly or explicitly) part of a country's social protection (or social development) policy and contribute to ensuring a basic level of social protection for all. While this is highly desirable, all these principles cannot be achieved overnight, and the operational framework for social transfers will necessarily follow different institutional trajectories in different countries.

## 2.3 Assessing Social Transfer Policy Uptake

After having provided greater conceptual clarity on our main explanatory variable, we turn to our dependent variable, that is, the 'emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme.' This variable may be seen as a proxy for policy uptake, which is about moving policy recommendations (such as, the ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors) onto the governments' policy agenda. The choice of this variable responds to a concern that policy recommendations are not only uptaken in strategic documents but are also translated into concrete action on the ground. The concept of social transfer scheme has been explained above, and we indicated earlier the relevance of directing attention to three specific dimensions of a social transfer scheme (Section 1.2):

- *Permanency*—Because social transfers are meant to be regular and predictable, they are to be provided within well-established schemes with a multi-year/long-term perspective;
- *Scale*—If social transfers are to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction, they need to benefit a sizable portion of the population;
- *National ownership*—Social transfer schemes need to be nationally owned and anchored in national legislation and regulation or in well-established government programmes for their sustainability to be maintained or enhanced.

The first two dimensions are pretty straightforward. The degree of permanency of a scheme would range from very low, when the scheme is introduced as a project with a short time span (as would often be the case for donor-led initiatives), to very high, when the scheme is established as a claimable right. The scale of coverage can be measured as the share of the total eligible population benefiting from the scheme. When data is missing (for example, if there is no statistic on the number of disabled people in the country), or simply to appreciate the visibility of the scheme, an alternative measure would be the share of the total national population receiving the transfer. Assessing the degree of national ownership of a scheme in the country where it operates appears much more complex. To gain conceptual

clarity over this critical dimension, we return to the actual rationale behind it, study how other scholars have approached it, and examine a few related concepts. This provides the basis for the formulation of a set of primary indicators.

## **The quest for institutionalisation and national ownership**

Social Protection Floor initiators have called for strengthening “the institutional basis of social transfer programmes within the social protection systems” (ILO 2010a, p. xi) and “institutionalised systems of social transfers” (ILO and WHO 2009, p. 3). There are several rationales for this attention to institutional aspects. When institutionalised, social transfers offer the prospect of both improving individual and household welfare, and strengthening the capacity and legitimacy of the state: to be effective in reducing the vulnerability of the poor, it is argued that social transfers need to be provided in a reliable and sustainable manner (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004); it is also theorised that social transfers provided by a state can contribute to the (re-)establishment of a social contract with its citizens and build its legitimacy by demonstrating pro-poor policy priorities (Davies and McGregor 2009). Only by being institutionalised can social transfers even evolve into social guarantees.

Partly in reaction to scalability and sustainability issues associated with donor-driven social transfer projects (discussed in Section 2.2), greater consideration has recently been paid to national ownership as an essential aspect of success for aid-supported initiatives. In 2012, several of the main development partners engaged in the sector developed or revised their social protection strategic frameworks. Notably, UNICEF, the World Bank and the EU stated in their new strategies that their aim is to support the development of “nationally owned,” “country owned” and “nationally led” social protection policies and programmes:

UNICEF supports nationally owned and led systems. There is no ‘one size fits all’ blueprint for social protection policies; the most effective and appropriate mix of programmes and financing strategies must be identified in each context. (UNICEF 2012, p. 23)

[One objective of the World Bank in the Africa region is to] support country-owned national SPL [Social Protection and Labor] systems, by scaling up effective SPL programs in coordination with other development partners. (World Bank 2012, p. 68)

The EU should support the development of nationally-owned social protection policies and programmes, including social protection floors,

while seeking to promote good practice in policy formulation and the design and development of social protection systems. (EC 2012, p. 7)

If the development of nationally owned social protection is a stated objective of development partners, one needs to be able to appreciate the status or degree of national ownership of a social transfer scheme. But before examining possible indicators of national ownership, it is useful to clarify what lies behind this concept. Like the notion of institutional basis, the concept of national ownership is imprecise and difficult to grasp.

## Operationalizing national ownership

As understood in this research, the terminology ‘nationally owned social transfer scheme’ is intended to encompass three related yet distinct ideal attributes of a social transfer scheme: (i) the fact that the scheme has a strong institutional basis that turns it into a social protection guarantee (*ownership as a condition for sustainability*); (ii) the fact that the policy change (possibly induced by foreign aid actors) that the introduction of the scheme has represented has taken root in the soil of the nation (*ownership as appropriation*); and (iii) the fact that the scheme is (or has become) independent from donors (*ownership as opposed to donorship*). In the literature, these aspects are studied in different fields, including political sciences, policy transfer and diffusion studies,<sup>63</sup> and aid effectiveness studies. Each field sheds particular light on the notion of ownership and its related concepts. Common concerns also emerge from this multi-disciplinary literature review. We discuss those below with a view to clarifying how to approach the concept of ownership in the specific framework of our research, considering in particular any proposal put forward on how ownership can be measured.

The concept of ownership is not new in development cooperation. While during several decades the presumption was that donors should lead the design and implementation of assistance programmes, it was realised in the early 1990s that this attitude deprived recipients of ownership over these interventions, making them “unlikely to make the kind of commitments needed to ensure the realization of the intended long-term results of donor assistance.” (Ostrom et al. 2001, p. 12) Empirical studies have since demonstrated the relationship between lack of

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<sup>63</sup> Social transfer studies and social diffusion studies have a similar research objective but differ in terms of methodologies applied: “Whereas policy transfer studies are generally qualitative in orientation focusing on ‘process-tracing’ as a method to describe (and to a lesser extent) explain policy transfer, policy diffusion studies are mostly quantitative studies aiming at assessing the existence of policy transfer and explaining its underlying reasons.” (Bender et al. 2014, p. 5)

ownership and unsustainability.<sup>64</sup> Today, there is consensus on the fact that ownership is essential for development, both in foreign aid agencies and academic literature.<sup>65</sup> In 2005, over one hundred donors and partner countries established 'country ownership' at the centre of the new paradigm for foreign aid embodied in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD 2005).<sup>66</sup> Yet, "the question of what 'ownership' means in development assistance is not clearly answered either in the scholarly literature or by donor agencies." (Braütigam 2000 cited in Ostrom et al. 2001, p. 13)

When it was first introduced in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, the idea was primarily that partners "set the agenda," whereby "partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development action" and donors align with these strategies (OECD 2005, p. 3) Subsequent high-level forums have broadened the concept of ownership to recognise the roles of other development actors such as civil society organisations, parliaments and local governments. This led to the concept of inclusive ownership that recognises that, "[l]inking leadership and participation, ownership is the result of the interaction of several societal groups." (Leutner and Müller 2010, p. 48) While the country ownership agenda had initially focused on enhancing the control and responsibility of developing country governments (Booth 2011), the inclusive ownership agenda implies a devolution of ownership to the actual target populations (Ostrom et al. 2001).

Lindsay Whitfield and Alastair Fraser (2009) further underline that "two competing, and potentially contradictory, concepts coexist: *ownership as commitment* to policies, however they were arrived at; and *ownership as control* over the process and outcome of choosing policies." (p. 3) The former can be seen as referring to the willingness to accept responsibility for implementation (Johnson 2005). It is suggested that such political commitment can be measured along four dimensions:<sup>67</sup> (a) expressed commitment—verbal declarations of support for an issue by high-level political leaders; (b) policy commitment—government programmes and policies, or organisational infrastructure, created to support an issue; (c) budgetary commitment—allocation of financial resources to an issue, in absolute terms or relative to a particular benchmark; and (d) legislative commitment—legal framework relating to an issue.

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<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, Shivakoti et al. (1997) cited in Ostrom et al. (2001).

<sup>65</sup> See, for instance, Beier (2009), Ostrom et al. (2001), Stiglitz (1998), and Whitfield and Fraser (2009).

<sup>66</sup> The Paris Declaration sets five core principles: country ownership, alignment, harmonization, results, and mutual accountability (OECD 2005).

<sup>67</sup> See Fox et al. (2013), Fox et al. (2011), Shiffman (2007), and te Lintelo et al. (2013).

Assessing the degree of control recipient countries are able to exercise over policy-making processes involving foreign aid actors is a more complex question. Whitfield and Fraser (2009) suggest three levels reflecting “the degree of control recipient governments are able to secure over implemented policy outcomes” (p. 3). Specifically, they consider how much of the implemented policy agenda of a government (a) “is decided by the recipient government without factoring in what donor preferences might be;” (b) “results from a compromise between recipient and donor with each taking into consideration what they think the other’s preferences might be;” and (c) “is accepted reluctantly by recipient governments as a necessary price to pay to access financial aid in spite of conflicting policy preferences.” (p. 3) This approach, though, is explicitly restricted to governments’ ownership. Adopting a multi-stakeholder perspective, the work of Elinor Ostrom and colleagues (2001) suggests that

ownership is best thought of as a set of rights and responsibilities, including: the right to determine whether an initiative is required and to request assistance for it; the responsibility to make a tangible commitment; the right to exercise some control over the resources available and the benefits created; and the responsibility, together with donors, to determine whether an initiative has been successful and should be continued. Accordingly, some countries may exhibit high ownership in one dimension, but little in another. (GICHD 2014, p. 99, based on Ostrom et al. 2001)

Building on this, we propose to assess the degree of ownership of a social transfer scheme along four dimensions: (i) *provision*—demand for the introduction of the scheme and implication in its initial design, (ii) *production*—commitment to its implementation, (iii) *consumption*—ownership of the obtained results, and (iv) *alienation*—control over its continuation or discontinuation.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, we focus the analysis on the (groups of) national stakeholders, governments and citizens, which are at each side of the social contract. Indeed, social acceptance and appropriation (and not just by governments) appear key for the long-term sustainability of a social transfer scheme (Davies and McGregor 2009; Hickey 2011). The next question is to identify measurable indicators for each of these aspects.

### **Empirically assessing the degree of ownership of a social transfer scheme**

National ownership can be considered a continuous rather than discrete variable. There is certainly an aspect of ‘we know it when we see it;’ and maybe national

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<sup>68</sup> The terminology ‘provision, production, consumption and alienation’ is drawn from Ostrom et al. (2001).

ownership is best approached in a comparative sense where social transfer schemes can be ranked against each other. In an initial attempt to define clear parameters that could guide such a comparative analysis and approximate the notion of national ownership, we sought to identify a set of indicators easily measurable from any set of basic project data. Among the dimensions identified above, this implied focusing on simple indicators of government’s commitment—as opposed to less easily measurable aspects, such as social appropriation. In line with the discussion above, we focus on three dimensions: the legal dimension, the budgetary dimension, and the operational (or policy) dimension.<sup>69</sup> In this initial approach, we thus leave out the expressed commitment dimension, which would typically not be reflected in project documents. The proposed set of indicators and related thresholds is presented in Table 2-3. Using this simple tool, an aid-driven pilot project funded by a bilateral donor and implemented by an INGO would rank very low, and a fully institutionalised scheme would rank very high.

**Table 2-3** A First Approach to Assessing the Degree of National Ownership

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Thresholds</b>	<b>Values</b>
Legal commitment	Nature of the document setting eligibility & operational rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law/decreed</li> <li>• Adopted national policy only</li> <li>• Project document only</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
Budgetary commitment	Percentage of scheme budget covered by domestic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100%—Fully domestically funded</li> <li>• &gt; 60%—Mainly domestically funded</li> <li>• 40-60%—Domestic &amp; aid funds</li> <li>• &lt; 40%—Largely aid funded</li> <li>• 0%—Fully funded by aid resources</li> </ul>	Very high High Moderate Low Very low
Operational commitment	Profile of the main bodies responsible for the delivery & oversight of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National bodies only</li> <li>• Both national &amp; international bodies</li> <li>• International bodies only</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low

Source: Author.

In this first approach, the thresholds for the budgetary commitment indicator were arbitrarily set—their appropriateness was however subsequently empirically confirmed.<sup>70</sup> It is difficult, particularly in low-income country contexts, to define

<sup>69</sup> This choice of dimensions echoes the three pre-requisites to the introduction of a social transfer scheme Samson et al. (2006) distinguish: political will, fiscal space, and technical and administrative capacity.

<sup>70</sup> They were tested in the multiple-case study. The different co-funded schemes reviewed could be distributed between the suggested low, moderate and high categories. See Table 4-3, column 3 in Chapter 4 for an overview of results.

what level of domestic funding would constitute a ‘decent’ degree of ownership, or in other words, what would be a fair share of shared responsibility. In that respect, the case of the Global Fund to fight AIDS is interesting for its recent experiences in transitioning from donor funding to domestic reliance (Burrows et al. 2016; Vogus and Graff 2015).<sup>71</sup> By way of comparison, a model estimating future domestic AIDS spending by 2018 in a set of African countries predicts that, in a maximum effort scenario, Ethiopia and Mozambique, for instance, will not be able to cover a quarter of their programme needs by 2018 (Resch et al. 2015). Beyond thresholds, what the Global Fund’s experience indicates is that ‘good practice’ transitions require a phased roadmap over a period of several (5-10) years with built-in monitoring and evaluation to assess progress against the roadmap targets. It also necessitates a strong alignment of such a transition schedule with national policies as well as with the national context—if projects are to be absorbed by domestic taxpayers, and commitment at the highest political levels—to avoid seeing it jeopardised by changes in staffing, in political parties, in economic circumstances, etc. (Burrows et al. 2016) This suggests adopting a dynamic view over the share of domestic funding, considering how this share has evolved over time, or is expected to evolve in the coming years—as per an agreed transition schedule, for instance.

This illustrates how additional indicators can be considered to produce a more complex and realistic understanding of ownership. Further indicators are needed for a sharper appreciation of the different levels of ownership among the schemes that fall in the middle range, which are at most interest to us: schemes co-funded, and possibly co-implemented, with foreign aid actors. Moreover, specific indicators are to be considered to appreciate ownership along the other crucial dimensions identified above—that is, beyond *production* and government’s commitment. Building on proposed methods for empirically assessing indicators of national ownership or related concepts, we compiled the tentative list of indicators presented in Table 2-4. These methods notably include assessing the degree of ownership against set criteria based on documentary analysis (Johnson and Wasty 1993), and using a survey to elicit “experts’ subjective opinions” (p. 10) about various aspects of their country’s government commitment to a specific issue (te Lintelo and Lakshman 2015). In Chapter 3, we will see how we have integrated such methods into a multiple-case study in an attempt to measure the primary and secondary indicators suggested here for a dozen social transfer schemes.

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<sup>71</sup> Different terms have been used to describe the process of moving away from donor funding towards a more domestically-funded response, including the terms of ‘graduation,’ ‘transition to self-reliance,’ or ‘handover’ (Burrows et al. 2016).

**Table 2-4** A Refined Approach to Assessing the Degree of National Ownership of a Social Transfer Scheme

Dimension	Indicator	Thresholds	Values
<b>Provision</b> —Demand for the introduction of the scheme			
Government's demand	Locus of initiative <sup>(a)(b)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The initiative for formulating the scheme was clearly the government's</li> <li>• The scheme was inspired and developed in close collaboration between the government and foreign aid actors</li> <li>• The scheme was designed by foreign aid actors and received the government's commitment to adhere to it without major dissent</li> <li>• The scheme was accepted reluctantly by the government as a necessary price to pay to access financial aid in spite of conflicting policy preferences</li> </ul>	Very high High
	Support from foreign aid actors <sup>(a)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No support was received from foreign aid actors</li> <li>• The government requested and specified the type of support needed</li> <li>• The government accepted the support offered by foreign aid actors</li> <li>• The government did not show interest in the support offered</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low Very low
Citizens' demand	Demand by citizens' group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens' groups have explicitly demanded the introduction of the scheme</li> <li>• Citizens' groups have mobilised for related social protection issues</li> <li>• There has been no mobilisation of citizens' groups around the issue</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Involvement of citizens' groups in the conception of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens were actively engaged through a broad public debate</li> <li>• Citizens' groups have actively and spontaneously engaged in the process</li> <li>• Citizens' groups were invited and participated actively in some milestones</li> <li>• Citizens/beneficiaries were invited but their participation has been limited</li> <li>• Beneficiaries were not consulted to inform the design</li> </ul>	Very high High Moderate Low Very low

Dimension	Indicator	Thresholds	Values
<b>Production</b> —Commitment to the implementation of the scheme			
Expressed commitment <sup>(c)</sup>	Expression of political commitment by top leadership either before or at the launch of the scheme <sup>(a)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific and dramatic up-front actions were initiated either before or at the launch of the scheme</li> <li>• There was a very strong and detailed public statement by the top political leadership of its support for the scheme when it was launched</li> <li>• The top political leadership expressed lukewarm commitment to the scheme, albeit the exact nature of some key specific provisions was left for later definition, opening the door for reversals or retrogression</li> <li>• When the scheme started, there was no clear-cut indication by top leadership as to whether the government would actually support it</li> <li>• When the scheme started, the top political leadership expressed clear concerns</li> </ul>	Very high High Moderate Low Very low
Operational commitment	<b>Profile of the main bodies responsible for the delivery and oversight of the scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National bodies only</li> <li>• Both national and international bodies</li> <li>• International bodies only</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	National body assigned to the supervision of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory body</li> <li>• Project steering committee</li> <li>• None</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Inclusion in national development strategy document(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one national development strategy document/action plan makes explicit reference to the scheme</li> <li>• At least one national development strategy document/action plan makes some reference to a form of social transfers similar to the scheme's</li> <li>• No national development strategy document makes reference to the scheme</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low

Dimension	Indicator	Thresholds	Values
Legal commitment	<b>Nature of the document setting eligibility and operational rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law/decree</li> <li>• Adopted national policy only</li> <li>• Project document only</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Claimability of the right to social transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social transfer benefits are judiciable rights: citizens can pursue a case through the national judicial system</li> <li>• Social transfer benefits are managed under a project approach but there is a functioning appeal system in place</li> <li>• There is no (functioning) appeal system in place</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
Budgetary commitment (*)	<b>Typology of funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic resources only</li> <li>• Domestic and aid resources</li> <li>• Aid resources only</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	<b>Share of co-funding, if any</b> —Share of scheme budget covered by domestic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 60%—Largely domestically funded</li> <li>• 40-60% range—Both domestic and aid resources</li> <li>• Below 40%—Largely aid funded</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Trend of co-funding, if any—Trend in share of scheme budget covered by domestic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing over the past five years</li> <li>• Stable over the past five years</li> <li>• Very unstable over the past five years, with no upward trend</li> <li>• Decreasing significantly over the past five years</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low Very low
	Existence of an agreed transition schedule, if relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of a clear transition roadmap endorsed by high-level leadership</li> <li>• Existence of a proposed transition schedule, not yet validated/endorsed</li> <li>• No transition envisioned yet</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low

Dimension	Indicator	Thresholds	Values
<b>Consumption</b> —Appropriation of the obtained results			
Government's appropriation	Inclusion in electoral campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit reference to the scheme has been included in debates/manifestos during the most recent elections</li> <li>• Broader social transfer-related issues have been included in debates/manifestos during the most recent elections</li> <li>• No reference was made to social transfers during most recent elections</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Institutional set up of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme's M&amp;E system is managed by national bodies</li> <li>• The scheme's M&amp;E system is co-managed by national and foreign aid actors</li> <li>• National bodies are not involved in the scheme's M&amp;E system</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
Citizen's appropriation	Media coverage—Level of attention received in independent media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme has received substantial attention in independent media</li> <li>• There has only been some general writing on the topic</li> <li>• Social transfer issues have received no coverage or very little</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Public campaign/mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been a broad citizens' mobilisation around the scheme</li> <li>• There has been some public mobilisation</li> <li>• There has been no public mobilisation around the scheme</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
	Social acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme is largely popular and valued</li> <li>• The scheme has not encountered any major opposition</li> <li>• The scheme is largely unpopular</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Thresholds</b>	<b>Values</b>
<b>Alienation</b> —Control over the continuation or discontinuation of the scheme			
Government's control	Locus of decision-making in regard to the continuation or discontinuation of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decision is in the hands of the government and its partners</li> <li>• The decision is to emerge between the government and foreign aid actors</li> <li>• The decision is in the hands of foreign aid actors</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low
Citizen's control	Locus of decision-making in regard to the continuation or discontinuation of the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens' voices (can) play an important role in the decision</li> <li>• Beneficiaries only (can) play some role in the decision</li> <li>• Citizens are not at all involved in the decision</li> </ul>	High Moderate Low

Notes: The choice of the four core dimensions is based on Ostrom et al. (2001); Indicators in bold are those included in the first approach presented in Table 2-3; <sup>(\*)</sup>What qualifies as domestic resources may include general budget support or debt relief; The choice of indicators and thresholds builds on <sup>(a)</sup>Johnson and Wasty (1993), <sup>(b)</sup>Whitfield and Fraser (2009), <sup>(c)</sup>Fox et al. (2013), Fox et al. (2011), Shiffman (2007), and te Lintelo et al. (2013).

Source: Author.

## 2.4 Hypothesising the Influence of Aid on Policy Uptake

Having gained clarity over our two main variables, we can now theoretically explore the influence ‘aid for social transfers’ (main explanatory variable) may have on ‘policy uptake’ (dependent variable) in a low-capacity African country. This relation is here considered in the light of various academic literatures. The extensive theoretical and empirical literature on the welfare state in advanced economies, together with the small but growing literature on the politics of social protection in developing countries, have offered a starting point to study the main factors advanced to explain social protection expansion. We examined them in view of the salient aspects distinguishing social transfers from other types of social (protection) policies, along with the specificities of low-income country contexts. Next, we reviewed the literature on policy transfer and diffusion to investigate the role of global and transnational actors in policy change. We then turned to the huge literature on aid effectiveness to consider factors affecting the likelihood for aid initiatives to translate into sustainable policy change. Among them, we focused our attention on the approach to policy making adopted by foreign aid actors. Within the vast literature on public policy making, we studied, in particular, insights about the role of knowledge in the policy process. In the end, going back to our sub-questions, this led us to formulate a set of working hypotheses, which are articulated around three aspects: aid as a potential triggering factor of the process of policy uptake; the likelihood for aid initiatives around social transfers to bring about sustainable change; and the limits of a rational approach to policy making focused on scientific evidence, as a possible explanatory factor for slow progress in terms of policy uptake.

### **Aid as a triggering factor in adopting a social transfer scheme**

The literature reveals two competing strands of explanation of social protection development: “the prerequisites explanation, which emphasizes causes of social [protection] development *within* nations, most commonly the level of social and economic modernization; and diffusion, which focuses on the imitation of social protection schemes *among* nations.” (Collier and Messick 1975, p. 1299) International influence in social policy making is not new; the pioneering social protection policies in Britain and Germany already stimulated foreign imitation (Briggs 1961 cited in Bender et al. 2014). Yet, the study of global influence on national policy making only gained momentum in the 1990s, when the wave of

globalisation discourse reached its peak—with “policy transfer<sup>72</sup> studies” (generally qualitative) and “policy diffusion<sup>73</sup> studies” (mostly quantitative) representing the two major research programmes in the field (Bender et al. 2014). This literature distinguishes between direct and mediated policy diffusion: direct diffusion operates through dynamics such as critical mass and tipping points, or the imitation of prestigious countries; whereby mediated diffusion can be understood as the “institutionalisation of policy transfer” by establishing networks for information and communication flows (Busch and Jörgens 2007, p. 70 cited in Bender et al. 2014). Global social policy has emerged as a field of research,<sup>74</sup> which has highlighted the role played by foreign aid actors as global social policy actors who may influence social policy making in various ways.<sup>75</sup> Bob Deacon, in particular, argues that “an epistemic community has emerged around global social policy that recognises the positive relationship between social protection and economic development and has strengthened its persuasive power.” (Kwon et al. 2015, p. 128)

The literature identifies several mechanisms of international policy transfer or diffusion. But if it tends to make a distinction between coercive and voluntary processes, no consistent categorization exists—for instance, policy transfers encouraged by international agreements with foreign aid actors have been classified as coercive transfers and voluntary transfers at the same time by different scholars on the basis of different reasoning (Holzinger and Knill 2007 cited in Bender et al. 2014). In regard to the influential power of foreign aid actors, whereas realists would strongly emphasise the power of money—viewing an organisation like the World Bank as most influential, institutionalists might consider hard standards, as set by the ILO for instance, as influential (Leutelt 2012). Meanwhile, the world society theory (Meyer 2010; Meyer et al. 1997) emphasises the influence of knowledge and norms. Michael Leutelt (2012) shows, for instance, how an international NGO (HelpAge International) has been “using cognitive and normative knowledge utilizing three modes for influencing [a top-down mode of

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<sup>72</sup> The term ‘policy transfer’ was coined Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) and defined as “the process, by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system.” (p. 5)

<sup>73</sup> Maggetti and Gilardi (2013) define policy diffusion as “the process whereby policy choices in one unit are influenced by policy choices in other units” (p. 3).

<sup>74</sup> Its subject area consists of two things: “first, it is the social policy prescriptions for national social policy being articulated by global actors such as international organizations; second, it is the emerging supranational social policies and mechanisms of global redistribution, global social regulation and global social rights” (Deacon 2007, p. 1). It is also concerned with the global governance of these two elements of global social policy.

<sup>75</sup> See, in particular, Deacon (2007, 2011, 2013), Deacon et al. (1997), and Deacon and Stubbs (2013).

influencing the global level, a bottom-up mode of influencing the local level, and a network mode of influencing national policy makers] which are able to have impact when used in a long and steady manner.” (p. 4) It can thus be assumed that various types of foreign aid actors can act as mediators of policy transfer/diffusion. Furthermore, some of these actors, such as the World Bank, may be using a broad set of mechanisms to encourage policy uptake, including coercive mechanisms, such as conditionalities imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs), and voluntary mechanisms encouraging learning, emulation and competition—for instance, through technical assistance, technical courses, international conferences, study tours, etc.

As described above (Sections 2.1 and 2.2), social protection and with it social transfers have gained momentum at the global level. Throughout the last two decades, an acceleration of aid-supported activities around these issues is discernable—these efforts have notably led to the adoption of declarations, policies and strategies (by global actors, intergovernmental bodies, and governments), the establishment of transnational policy networks (including, South-South cooperation), and aid-funded social transfer projects. These initiatives have been largely directed towards low-income countries—as shown in Figure 2-4, ODA for social protection seems primarily directed at least-developed countries. In that context, foreign aid actors can reasonably be expected to have played a role in the emergence of social transfers in low-income African countries. Devereux and White (2010) actually argue that, with some notable exceptions, much of the impetus for social protection in Africa has come from foreign aid actors. In aid-dependent countries, some foreign aid initiatives may be expected to lead to multi-year and sizable social transfer schemes (even if not institutionalised and not sustainable), not least by allocating sufficient resources to make this possible—even if only reluctantly accepted by the government “as a necessary price to pay to access financial aid in spite of conflicting policy preferences” (Whitfield and Fraser 2009, p. 4). Building on our analysis of what has prompted foreign aid actors to engage in social transfers (Section 2.1), we further posit that the influence of foreign aid actors behind the emergence of social transfers may come from three main dynamics:

- WH1. Foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of multi-year and sizable social transfer schemes in a low-capacity country context through three main policy entry points: fiscal policy sphere; social protection policy sphere; humanitarian policy sphere.**

## Likelihood for aid to bring about sustainable policy change

The next critical question for us, then, is whether such aid-triggered multi-year, sizable social transfer schemes could be found to be national owned<sup>76</sup> and sustainable? As highlighted in the introduction to this dissertation, numerous scholars have expressed serious concerns over the likelihood for such aid-supported schemes to translate into sustainable policy change.<sup>77</sup> This is based on a number of observations. To begin with, Devereux et al. (2010) warn, “externally-driven social protection projects have little domestic traction” (p. 3). The initiative for the recent aid-supported social transfer schemes is seen to have largely come from foreign aid actors, who also tend to be directly in charge of the implementation of these (pilot) schemes. This suggests a low degree of national ownership of these schemes—at least, in the provision and production dimensions of national ownership defined above (Table 2-4); yet, as mentioned above, there is a large consensus in the development literature that “ownership is a necessary, though not sufficient condition, for aid sustainability.” (Ostrom et al. 2001, p. 16) A lack of national ownership in the early days of a scheme is thus likely to jeopardise its long-term social, political and financial sustainability. Devereux and White (2008) advance, foreign aid actors’ pilot projects have “creat[ed] temporary islands of access to internationally financed social welfare. [...] but they are unlikely ever to scale up into national programmes, because they are not ‘government owned’ from inception.” (p. 10)

Also, Miguel Niño-Zarazúa and colleagues (2010) note, these new (and small) social transfer schemes are almost entirely funded by foreign aid. With low degrees of national ownership, there appears to be limited prospect for externally driven processes to encourage the mobilisation of domestic financial resources. In a recent study, Isabel Ortiz and colleagues (2015) conclude that fiscal space<sup>78</sup> for social protection exists in all countries, even the poorest ones—previous simulation exercises by the ILO had already suggested that even low-income countries could initially afford some elements of basic social protection.<sup>79</sup> But budgetary decisions are ultimately political decisions. Every country has to follow its own political process and define, through its own budgeting and planning process, which resources to mobilise to finance which type of social transfers (Wildavsky and

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<sup>76</sup> We indicated earlier the relevance in this research of directing attention to the three following dimensions of a social transfer scheme: *permanency*, *scale* and *national ownership* (Section 1.2).

<sup>77</sup> See, in particular, Devereux et al. (2010), Hickey (2011) and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

<sup>78</sup> Fiscal space can be defined as “the availability of budgetary room that allows a government to provide resources for a desired purpose without any prejudice to the sustainability of a government’s financial position.” (Heller 2005, p. 3)

<sup>79</sup> See, in particular, Behrendt and Hagemeyer (2009), Cichon et al. (2004), and ILO (2008).

Caiden 2004). A decisive element is thus the 'political will'<sup>80</sup> of a government to allocate domestic resources to (a given type of) social transfers; and the politics around this are complex. A government may consider a number of financing options to (co-)finance a social transfer scheme;<sup>81</sup> each of these options would mobilise different types of revenue (such as, income taxes, mineral rents, or aid grants). For each type of revenue, decisions would be made by a different set of actors in different bargaining spheres, and social transfer policies can be expected to be determined both by who benefits from them and who pays for them (Ulriksen 2013).

Encouraging a shift away from time-bound foreign aid grants towards sustainable domestic funding would thus require foreign aid actors to connect to these complex decision-making processes, and understanding the dynamics of power that drive them.<sup>82</sup> But, Devereux et al. (2010) note that aid-supported social transfer projects are "rarely fully integrated into local and national policy processes, so they generate little political traction" (p. 4), and taking stock of progress towards the expansion of social protection in Africa, they note, "there is still a long way to go in many countries, while in others progress appears to have stalled, with no clear consensus among domestic and external stakeholders on the way forward." (p. 1) Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010) further deplore that "donors have not engaged productively with the politics of social protection" in Africa (p. 17); they conclude,

there is a pressing need for donors to become more attuned to the politics of social protection in Africa and to align their efforts more adroitly in support of forms of social protection that are likely to foster the growth of political constituencies (elite or mass or combined) that will support the evolution and public financing of long-term social protection policies. (p. 24)

Looking at the first years of social protection promotion, Hickey (2011) suggests that foreign aid actors are unlikely to be able to "promote progressive social contracts around social protection without significant reforms to the way in which aid currently works" (p. 2). In a rather provocative article, Freeland (2013) implies that social protection works where there is a strong government (as in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Botswana or South Africa) and/or a strong civil society (as in South Africa or Bangladesh), but does not work where there are strong donors (as in Malawi or Zambia). All these concerns lead us to formulate the following working hypothesis

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<sup>80</sup> Political will can be defined as "the determination of an individual or a group of political actors to do and say thing that will produce a desired outcome" (Manor 2004, p. 1).

<sup>81</sup> See, for instance, Cichon et al. (2004), Durán-Valverde and Pacheco (2012), Grosh et al. (2008), Ortiz et al. (2015), and Ulriksen (2013).

<sup>82</sup> See Devereux et al. (2010), Hickey et al. (2009), Holmqvist (2010), and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

in regard to the likelihood for aid-supported social transfer schemes to translate into sustainable policy change:

**WH2. In a low-capacity country context, a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a social transfer scheme jeopardises its long-term social, political and financial sustainability.**

### **Limits of a linear, technocratic approach to policy making**

Fiscal space and political will are commonly seen as the primary barriers to the uptake of a social transfer policy by a government (Barrientos and Hulme 2008).<sup>83</sup> It is suggested above that fiscal space may actually exist in any country (Ortiz et al. 2015), and that it may, in fact, be closely linked to political will. The question is thus on what basis, and how, are decisions made regarding how public money is to be spent. While social transfers have a proven track record of effectiveness,<sup>84</sup> governments have not yet acted on this evidence (Devereux et al. 2010). The observation that, after a decade of efforts, foreign aid actors seem to have failed in overcoming governments' reluctance make Devereux et al. (2010) ask, "What's wrong with the way outsiders are engaging in social protection in Africa?" (p. 3) Answers put forward by a number of scholars<sup>85</sup> point to issues with the rather linear, technocratic approach to policy making that is perceived to prevail among foreign aid actors. They appear to have focused their efforts on the production of scientific evidence (notably through simulation studies and pilot projects), whereas Devereux and White (2008) argue, it is the articulation between three overlapping agendas that determines social protection policy choices (and outcomes): a *technocratic* agenda ('what works')—that is, "a concern with building the evidence base about social transfer impacts, cost-effectiveness, implementation and delivery options;" a *political* agenda ('what's popular')—that is, "a concern with the political impacts of social protection, in particular its vote-winning potential;" and an *ideological* agenda ('what's right')—that is, "a growing concern with realising universal rights (to food, health, etc.) for the poor and vulnerable (e.g. older people, or people with disabilities)." (p. 2)

Foreign aid actors have been criticised for having "proposed new initiatives rather than built on old ones, couched their ideas in terms of welfare rather than growth, and failed to identify powerful political actors to work with" (Niño-Zarazúa et al.

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<sup>83</sup> Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010) underline that the institutional capacity needed for the implementation and delivery of the interventions frequently poses an additional challenge.

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, Bastagli et al. (2016), DFID (2011a), and Grosh et al. (2008).

<sup>85</sup> See, in particular, Devereux et al. (2010), Devereux and White (2008, 2010), Hickey (2008, 2009), Hickey et al. (2009), and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

2010, p. 17, based on Hickey 2008). Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010) reckon that “the present focus on the technical designs of social protection programmes needs to be accompanied by analyses that contribute to ‘getting the politics right’ too.” (p. 5) Hickey (2008) stresses that the type and design of aid-supported projects need to be “politically attuned” to political discourse on development and public attitudes on justice. Indeed, as Charles Lindblom and Edward Waterhouse (1993) underline, making “policy solely by analysis would require a harmony of interests and values among all individuals and groups”. Confronting the theory behind foreign aid actors’ mainstream thinking around the “politics of influencing” with evidence gathered around the “politics of what works,” Hickey and colleagues show that this approach is not supported by evidence (Hickey 2009; Hickey et al. 2009). Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010) note, “[g]etting the politics right may be as important, or even more important, than getting the initial technical design of programmes right.” (p. 24)

Furthermore, because social transfers are about redistributing public resources, defining a social transfer policy is “self-evidently about a vision of society” (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2007, p. 2) as it implies clarifying which inequalities a society aims to reduce (or which privileges elite groups aim to maintain) through them. Because public policy choices can be affected by voting preferences and public perceptions (such as, public perceptions of the poor as deserving or not social assistance), citizen’s preferences are found to influence the level of social protection expenditure (Gassmann et al. 2016). Hence, government policies and interventions are expected to be politically more sustainable if they reflect the society’s preferences. But, Devereux et al. (2010) deplore, there tends to be little consultation with beneficiaries (let alone, citizens more broadly) on project selection, design choices, and implementation modalities.

Similarly, there seems to be issues with the way foreign aid actors tend to approach the production and use of knowledge to inform policy. Building the evidence base has been a major focus for foreign aid actors; and “sizeable investments have been made in analysing the impacts of social protection programmes” (Devereux et al. 2010, p. 2). A distinct separation of scientific knowledge production on the one hand and the policy process on the other reflects an understanding of a linear sequence of political problem definition, scientific advice, and political decision-making, and overall, a linear model of science-policy interface; but real world policy processes are much more nonlinear (Weingart 2003 cited in Stehr 2008). Furthermore, different types of knowledge are known to play an important role in policy decision, notably: research-based knowledge, but also, practice-informed knowledge, and citizen (or participatory) knowledge (Jones et al. 2012, 2013).

Some of these concerns find echo in strategic reviews commissioned by different foreign aid agencies to assess their work in regards to social (cash) transfers, or social protection more broadly.<sup>86</sup> Overall, what may be problematic with the way foreign aid actors tend to engage in social protection policy formulation in sub-Saharan Africa would seem to revolve around their approach to scientific knowledge transfer, politics and cultural (or citizens') preferences. Devereux and White (2008) conclude, foreign aid actors "would be well advised to identify and engage strategically with domestic political processes and civil society activism, in order to maximise potential synergies between the technocratic, ideological and political agendas that are driving social protection in contemporary Africa." (p. 11) Hence, another working hypothesis we aim to test is that:

**WH3. Foreign aid actors' initiatives aimed to support the emergence of social transfers tend to reflect linear, technocratic models of policy making and scientific knowledge transfer.**

All three working hypotheses are repeated in Box 2-3 for ease of reference, and Table 2-5 shows how they relate to the sub-questions introduced in Section 1.2. In the next chapter, we will see how the empirical investigation has been designed to test these hypotheses, but also to consider any new hypothesis emerging from the observation of data collected. Indeed, as we shall see, the adopted research design integrates both deductive and inductive approaches.

**Box 2-3** Working Hypotheses on the Influence of Aid on Social Transfer Policy Uptake

- WH1.** Foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of multi-year and sizable social transfer schemes in a low-capacity country context, through three primary policy entry points: fiscal policy sphere, social protection policy sphere, humanitarian policy sphere.
- WH2.** In a low-capacity country context, a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a social transfer scheme jeopardises its long-term social, political and financial sustainability.
- WH3.** Foreign aid actors' initiatives aimed at supporting the emergence of social transfers tend to reflect linear, technocratic models of policy making and scientific knowledge transfer.

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<sup>86</sup> See, for instance, Jaspars and Harvey (2007) on UNICEF, Majewski et al. (2011) on WFP, IEG (2011) on the World Bank, and the upcoming report of the evaluation commissioned by the European Commission "to assess the EU support provided in external action for social protection during the period 2007-2013" (EC 2016).

**Table 2-5** Research Questions and Correspondence to Working Hypotheses

Sub-questions	Working hypotheses
<p><b>SQ1.</b> “Can foreign aid actors successfully enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country context?”</p>	<p><b>WH1.</b> Foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of permanent and scaled-up social transfer schemes in a low-capacity country context, through three primary policy entry points: fiscal policy sphere, social protection policy sphere, humanitarian policy sphere.</p> <hr/> <p><b>WH2.</b> In a low-capacity country context, a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a social transfer scheme jeopardises its long-term social, political and financial sustainability.</p>
<p><b>SQ2.</b> “What role does the production of scientific evidence play in the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?”</p>	<p><b>WH3.</b> Foreign aid actors’ initiatives aimed at supporting the emergence of social transfers tend to reflect linear, technocratic models of policy making and scientific knowledge transfer.</p>
<p><b>SQ3.</b> “What other factors determine foreign aid actors’ influence on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?”</p>	

Source: Author.

### *Concluding remarks*

The origins of aid for social transfers can be traced back to the 1980s and 1990s. Like successive financial crises pushed Bretton Woods Institutions to support social transfers, recurrent crises pushed humanitarian actors to consider alternatives to ad hoc food aid towards more predictable assistance. The global crisis in 2007-2008 served as a reminder to invest more effort and resources in supporting sustainable social protection systems in low-income countries. This translated, a few years later, in commitments by the United Nations, the G20, and other key international actors to support the expansion of universal social protection in developing countries. A significant turning point was reached with the adoption of the ILO Recommendation 202, which provides guidance to countries in building Social Protection Floors within progressively comprehensive social protection systems. In that respect, social transfers, as non-contributory forms of social protection, present a great potential in low-income country contexts characterised by a predominance of the informal economy coupled with high rates of poverty and inequality.

The dramatic increase in interest and funding for social protection over the past decade has resulted in a multiplication of foreign aid actors (IFIs, UN agencies, bilateral donors, INGOs, etc.) engaging in social protection, along with a proliferation of often-fragmented initiatives. Aid efforts aimed at supporting the expansion of social transfers in low-income countries have ranged from the creation of policy space on the international level to the implementation of pilot projects in recipient countries. The most commonly used strategies have tended to reflect a rationale, technocratic discourse, and an idealised process often too distant from the realities of policy making. This led several scholars to stress that what was needed was not more research or pilot projects to generate evidence, but rather more attention to the adoption of existing research findings by policy makers. Meanwhile, several major development partners revisited their social protection strategies to put greater emphasis on national ownership and the development of integrated social protection systems.

If the development of permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer schemes (referred to here as ‘policy uptake’) is a stated objective of development partners, one needs to be able to appreciate the status or level of national ownership. Using a theory-based approach, we have attempted to bring conceptual clarity over what constitutes our dependent variable, along with suggested measurement indicators. In particular, we propose to assess the degree of national ownership of a social transfer scheme through four dimensions (provision, production, consumption and alienation) and considering two groups of national stakeholders (governments and citizens). In a first approximation, we suggest it is relevant to focus on government’s commitment (under the production dimension).

The question this research aims to address is therefore to what extent, and how, foreign aid actors (may) influence social transfer policy uptake (as defined here through the dimensions of permanency, scale and national ownership) in the specific context of low-capacity African countries. A review of the theoretical and empirical literature in various relevant fields of research has led us to formulate three working hypotheses. In substance, we posit the following: foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of sizable and multi-year social transfer schemes through policy dialogue around fiscal, social protection, and/or humanitarian issues (first working hypothesis), but their initiatives are unlikely to translate into (broad-based national ownership and) sustainable policy change in the long run (second working hypothesis), notably because of the limits of the linear, technocratic and evidence-focused approach to policy making foreign aid actors would tend to adopt (third working hypothesis). How to design an empirical investigation into these hypotheses is what we turn to in the methodological chapter that follows.

## Chapter 3

# Research Methodology: An Integrated Multi-Method Investigation of the Influence of Foreign Aid Actors

In the politics of global poverty reduction ‘thinking is action’ and ‘words are deeds’. Not only actors’ material interests but also their professional and organizational ideas and identities drive their action, through worldviews, subject-positions, path-dependencies etc. that can—and should—be recognized and further analyzed.

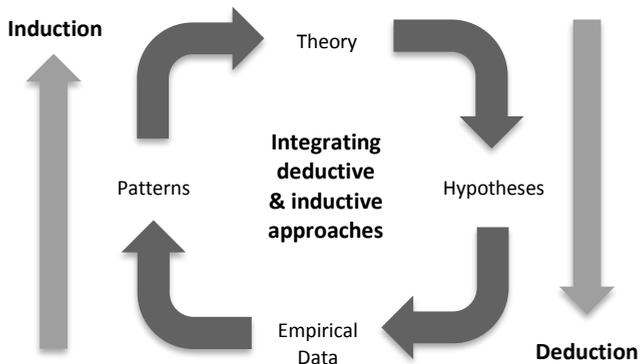
*Timo Voipio (2011, back cover)*

This chapter describes the design of the research and provides information on the various methods used to conduct it. It starts by offering an overview of the research methodology (Section 3.1). It goes on to provide details on each of the research tools used, describing the successive steps conducted in carrying out the research study, along with the rationale behind the choice of research methods. The research essentially consisted in conducting two distinct yet connected studies: one with ‘policy uptake’ as entry point, which investigated the origins of a set of sizable social transfer schemes operating in sub-Saharan Africa, and the role, if any, of aid for social transfers (Section 3.2); and another with ‘aid for social transfer’ as entry point, which examined the use and usefulness of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses to encourage social transfer policy uptake (Section 3.3). Research limitations are discussed at the end of this chapter (Section 3.4).

### 3.1 Overview of Research Methodology

The research adopted a multi-method design, which “is the conduct of two or more research methods, each conducted rigorously, and complete in itself, in one project. The results are then triangulated to form a complete whole.” (Morse 2003, p. 190) The research was largely conducted through qualitative methods with a small quantitative component. Deductive and inductive approaches were combined to better investigate the results (Ali and Birley 1999). Figure 3-1 and

Table 3-1 illustrate what such an integrated approach implies. We describe below how the research was specifically designed to answer each of the three sub-questions introduced in Section 1.2.



**Figure 3-1** Integrating Deductive and Inductive Approaches

**Table 3-1** The Integrated Approach Compared to Purist Versions of the Deductive and Inductive Approaches

Stage	Purist Deductive	Purist Inductive	Integrated Approach
1	Develop theoretical framework	Area of enquiry identified—but no theoretical framework	Develop theoretical framework based on constructs
2	Variables identified for relevant constructs	Respondents identify constructs and explain relationship between them	Some variables identified for relevant constructs—others can be identified by respondents
3	Instrument development	Broad themes for discussion identified	Researcher converts the a priori theoretical framework into atheoretical questions
4	Respondents give answers to specific questions	Respondents discuss general themes of interest	Respondents discuss the seemingly general questions and identify constructs which are meaningful to them and explain the relationships between the constructs
5	Answers analysed in terms of prior theoretical framework	Researcher develops theory on a purely inductive basis	Respondent data analysed according to existing theory OR Theory is developed on an inductive basis—without regard to the existing theory

Stage	Purist Deductive	Purist Inductive	Integrated Approach
6	<b>Outcome:</b> Theory tested according to whether hypotheses are accepted or rejected	<b>Outcome:</b> Theory developed	<b>Outcome:</b> EITHER Existing theory is adapted OR Alternative theoretical framework is presented

Source: Ali and Birley (1999).

## Investigating the catalytic effect of foreign aid

The first sub-question “Can foreign aid actors successfully enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country context?” was approached through a multiple-case study in two steps. First, we considered a set of social transfer schemes introduced in a low-income country context, that are both providing benefits on a permanent or multi-annual basis, and have reached a significant scale (two easily verifiable indicators). We then investigated retrospectively the role, if any, played by foreign aid actors in supporting the introduction of each of these schemes. This allowed us to test our first working hypothesis in regard to the influence of foreign aid actors in the emergence of multi-year and sizable social transfer schemes in a low-income country context. Then, we considered the degree of national ownership and long-term social, political and financial sustainability of each of the selected schemes. For this, we used the three easily measurable indicators introduced in Section 2.3 (Table 2-3) as a basis, and refined the analysis by delving into the details of funding arrangements, considering coverage in the media and inclusion in national political debates, etc. (Table 2-4) Comparing the revealed degree of influence of foreign aid actors with the suggested degree of national ownership enabled us to test our second working hypothesis that, in a low-capacity country context, a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a scheme jeopardises its long-term sustainability. Details on how this multiple-case study was conducted (case selection, analytical framework, data collection tools and process, and data analysis techniques) are provided in Section 3.2 below. The most salient findings of this phase of the research are presented in Chapter 4.

## Examining the role of scientific evidence

The second sub-question “What role does the production of scientific evidence play in the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?” was approached from different angles. First, within the multiple-case study mentioned above, we explored the role that

scientific evidence appears to have played in the decision to introduce a social transfer scheme, and examined the extent to which this evidence has been produced by foreign aid actors. This was done through three methods integrated into the multiple-case study: a documentary analysis to investigate, *inter alia*, the role of knowledge, and scientific evidence in particular, in the decision of policy-makers to introduce the selected sizable social transfer schemes; an online survey inviting individuals directly involved in the early development of a social transfer scheme to estimate, *inter alia*, the function different forms of scientific evidence have played compared to other forms of knowledge; and semi-structured interviews with social transfer practitioners to delve into, *inter alia*, the use they tend to make of scientific evidence.

Second, we studied one aid strategy to encourage social transfer policy uptake specifically focused on the production of scientific evidence. We took the case of *ex-ante* cost-benefit analysis as an approach that has recently gained traction among foreign aid actors. It appears valuable to contemplate the relevance of such an approach and its prospect for success in the light of past experiences as well as the main methodological challenges that it presents. Two methods were applied for this. A methodological review was carried out to better understand the underlying assumptions results of this type of exercise depend upon. In addition, a series of interviews were conducted with practitioners engaged in social transfer policy dialogue to reflect on their past experience with cost analyses and investigate the use (and challenges) they perceive for such studies in the future. Details on how this study on the use and usefulness of *ex-ante* cost-benefit analyses was conducted are provided in Section 3.3 below. Finally, findings that resulted from each of these different methods (online survey, documentary analysis, methodological review, and two sets of interviews) were triangulated to address our second sub-question. Results are presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

### **Exploring other important factors for policy uptake**

The third sub-question “What other factors determine foreign aid actors’ influence on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity country context?” further called for a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. A number of potential explanatory factors for the degree of influence foreign aid actors may have on policy change in an aid-recipient country could be derived from the literature (Section 2.4). These informed the development of the analytical framework that guided the documentary analysis and online survey included in the multiple-case study of sizable social transfer schemes mentioned above. These methods were used to test some of the main propositions derived from the literature. But while

studying documents on each of the selected schemes, or analysing survey data, new patterns also emerged. To push this inductive inquiry further, an exploratory investigation was conducted, based on the narratives revealed during the interviews, to better understand the concrete experience of individual foreign aid practitioners.

Although there has been a resurgence of academic and practitioner interest in social transfer policy uptake, there is a dearth of research on how individual practitioners actually engage in policy-making processes and inform their professional decisions. The humanistic nature of this exploratory inquiry justified building on the interpretive approach that Mark Bevir and Rod Rhodes have developed over the last decade (Bevir 2011; Bevir and Rhodes 2006; Finlayson et al. 2004). This approach relies on studying the social world by using the interpretation of that world by its participants and actors. It rests on a philosophical analysis of the meaningful nature of human action, and the recognition of the constructed nature of social reality. In other words, an interpretive approach encourages understanding social phenomena through telling stories and listening to them (Bevir 2011; Bevir and Rhodes 2006). The emphasis on understanding certain human behaviours required the examination of the policy-making phenomena through participants' perceptions, views and meaning based on real experiences and insider knowledge. Three primary sources informed this investigation: the online survey on the origins of social transfer schemes (n=77); the set of interviews on the use of ex-ante cost-benefit studies in social protection work (n=10); and the series of in-depth interviews with aid practitioners who have been directly involved in the development of one or more of the selected sizable social transfer schemes (n=17). Findings resulting from this integrated approach are presented in Chapter 6.

Overall, the methodology adopted to address each of the three sub-questions required designing and conducting two distinct yet connected studies: a multiple-case study on the origins and features of sizable social transfer schemes (Section 3.2); and a study on the use and usefulness of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses (Section 3.3). It also necessitated the use of different research methods and techniques, including an online survey tool, a documentary analysis process, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, as well as a methodological review process. Each of them is further described below. Table 3-2 summarises how the different research methods were used to investigate each of our sub-questions and test our working hypotheses. Results were then triangulated to contemplate our overall research question.

**Table 3-2** Research Questions and Correspondence to Research Methods

Sub-questions	Specific analysis	Origins of Sizable Schemes	Use of ex-ante CBA	Hypothesis tested
		DA OS SSI (n=77) (n=12)	MR UI (n=14) (n=10)	
<b>SQ1.</b> “Can foreign aid actors successfully enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country context?”	Degree of influence of foreign aid actors in the origins of 12 sizable schemes	***	***	<b>WH1.</b> Foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of permanent and scaled-up social transfer schemes in a low-capacity country context, through three primary policy entry points: fiscal policy sphere, social protection policy sphere, humanitarian policy sphere.
	Degree of national ownership of 12 sizable schemes	***	***	<b>WH2.</b> In a low-capacity country context, a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a social transfer scheme jeopardises its long-term social, political and financial sustainability.
<b>SQ2.</b> “What role does the production of scientific evidence play in the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?”	Role of scientific evidence in the origins of 12 sizable schemes	***	***	
	Use and usefulness of ex-ante CBA to encourage policy uptake	***	***	<b>WH3.</b> Foreign aid actors’ initiatives aimed at supporting the emergence of social transfers tend to reflect linear, technocratic models of policy making and scientific knowledge transfer.
<b>SQ3.</b> “What other factors determine foreign aid actors’ influence on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context?”	Practical experience of front-line foreign aid practitioners engaged in social transfer policy-making processes	***	***	

Notes: CBA: cost-benefit analysis; DA: documentary analysis; MR: methodological review; OS: online survey; SSI: semi-structured interviews; UI: unstructured interviews.  
Source: Author.

## 3.2 Study on the Origins of Sizable Social Transfer Schemes

The multiple-case study on the origins of sizable social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa constitutes the core of the research. In line with the research strategy outlined above (Section 3.1), our intention is to investigate cases of (at least partial) success in terms of policy uptake: cases where a permanent (or multi-year) social transfer scheme is delivered at scale in a low-income country context. Adopting a retrospective process tracing approach, the analysis will then seek to establish whether foreign aid actors have played any role in the decision to adopt these social transfer schemes, and if so, in what way.

### Case selection

To ensure the quality of research design, our case selection strategy had to fulfil the two conditions of appropriateness, which are the fit to both research purpose and phenomenon of inquiry, and adequacy, which is concerned with how much or how many cases is enough (Kuzel 1999; Patton 2014). In this study, a social transfer scheme is treated as the unit of analysis—as opposed to a social transfer system or country. Our methodology implies the selection of cases meeting all three following criteria: the scheme was introduced in a country with a low-income economy (context of the research);<sup>87</sup> it operates on a multi-year or long-term basis; and it benefits a sizable portion of the population.<sup>88</sup> The two last criteria cover two of the three core dimensions of our dependent variable: permanency and coverage (Section 2.3). For this last criterion, the threshold was arbitrarily set at one per cent of the total population. The appropriateness of this threshold was empirically confirmed: setting the threshold much higher would have resulted in a very small set of eligible cases (too small for a meaningful study); setting the threshold much lower would have resulted in including all sorts of small initiatives, including isolated pilot projects. Since recent experiences with social transfers (and foreign aid actors' influence) are of primary interest for this study, an additional selection criterion was used: the scheme was introduced in the 1990s or 2000s (Section 2.1). The study was also restricted to the sub-Saharan African region.

Based on global and regional reviews of social transfer schemes,<sup>89</sup> a long list of cases meeting all these different criteria was established in September 2013. This

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<sup>87</sup> We used the World Bank classification based on estimated gross national income per capita at the time the scheme was introduced—the country's classification may have changed since.

<sup>88</sup> This had to hold true as of September 2013 when the case selection process took place.

<sup>89</sup> Devereux and Cipyryk (2009), Ellis et al. (2009), Garcia and Moore (2012), and Grosh et al. (2008).

long list was then refined into a short list of twelve cases. There is no agreement in the literature on the number of cases to include in a multiple-case study design (Patton 2014), but it is commonly accepted that the number of cases can be determined in a trade-off between the breadth and depth of the inquiry. Twelve was estimated to be the right number to achieve a balance between depth and breadth, that is, to have a sufficient number of cases to establish patterns while keeping the set small enough to allow a detailed analysis of each case within the resources available for this research.<sup>90</sup> Because the aim of the study is neither generalisation nor prediction, the sample need not be representative of a larger population, and it is appropriate to adopt a purposive sampling approach (Kuzel 1999). Maximum variation sampling was used to select cases that are different. In particular, the selected set had to provide a representation of various degrees of involvement on the part of foreign aid actors in order to be able to look into our second hypothesis. In addition, maximum variation had the potential to increase the strength of the results, for “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects” of a case (Patton 1990, p. 172).

Box 3-1 presents the final list of selected cases. This selection was expected to provide a representation of various degrees of involvement on the part of development partners to enable us looking into our second hypothesis. To that end, we purposively included Lesotho’s Old Age Pension, which we suspected to have been introduced without donor support, and Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme that has notoriously benefited from substantial levels of external funding and assistance. Also, we deliberately sought to include at least one case we suspected to be a failed one, that is, a case where foreign aid actors have (to date) failed to support the emergence of a nationally owned/institutionalised scheme. For this purpose, we included, for instance, Zambia’s Social Cash Transfer scheme, which had been criticised for a lack of political support (Freeland 2013; Schüring and Lawson-McDowall 2011). Additionally, we made sure to include different types of social transfers, beyond social cash transfers deemed to be the instrument of choice for most of the foreign aid actors active in social protection (Chapter 2). This intention motivated the inclusion, for example, of Malawi’s Farm Input Subsidy Programme and Zimbabwe’s Basic Education Assistance Module. Thus, as shown in Table 4-3, column 4 in Chapter 4, the final selection includes: poverty-targeted transfers and categorically targeted transfers; public works, fee waivers, and unconditional transfers; food transfers, cash transfers or a combination of both, as well as vouchers to allow subsidised purchases.

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<sup>90</sup> Because it was hypothesized that four types of origin stories could be identified behind the emergence of social transfer schemes in low-income countries (our first hypothesis), we wanted to have at least two cases to illustrate each type, that is, a total of at least eight cases.

### Box 3-1 List of the Selected Sizable Social Transfer Schemes

Case 1.	Cabo Verde's <i>Pensão Social Mínima</i> (PSM)
Case 2.	Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)
Case 3.	Ghana's Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) Programme
Case 4.	Kenya's Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC)
Case 5.	Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP)
Case 6.	Lesotho's Old Age Pension (OAP)
Case 7.	Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP)
Case 8.	Mozambique's <i>Programa de Subsídio Social Básico</i> (PSSB)
Case 9.	Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP)
Case 10.	Uganda's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE)
Case 11.	Zambia's Social Cash Transfer (SCT) scheme
Case 12.	Zimbabwe's Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM)

During the short-listing process, efforts were also made to include different types of country contexts. Consequently, as shown in Table 3-3, country contexts of the selected schemes include: least developed countries<sup>91</sup> as well as resource-intensive countries<sup>92</sup> (columns 1 and 2); various population sizes (column 3)—from half a million inhabitants in Cabo Verde to some 97 million in Ethiopia; various levels of urbanisation (column 4)—over half the population in Cabo Verde and Ghana down to 16 per cent in Malawi and Uganda;<sup>93</sup> various government budget sizes (column 5) and sources of revenue (columns 6 and 7); various levels of poverty and inequality (columns 8 and 9); and various levels of aid dependency ratios (column 10).<sup>94</sup> Moreover, since the introduction of the selected scheme, a few countries have joined the lower-middle income group<sup>95</sup> and/or have been classified as emerging market economies.<sup>96</sup> As much as possible, we also tried to ensure a good geographical distribution of the selected cases. However, as shown in Figure 3-2,

<sup>91</sup> As defined by the UN-OHRLLS (2016) based on the following three criteria: per capita gross national income, human assets and economic vulnerability to external shocks.

<sup>92</sup> As defined by the IMF (2015a) as those for which non-renewable resource exports are 25 per cent or more of goods exports on average over 2009-2012.

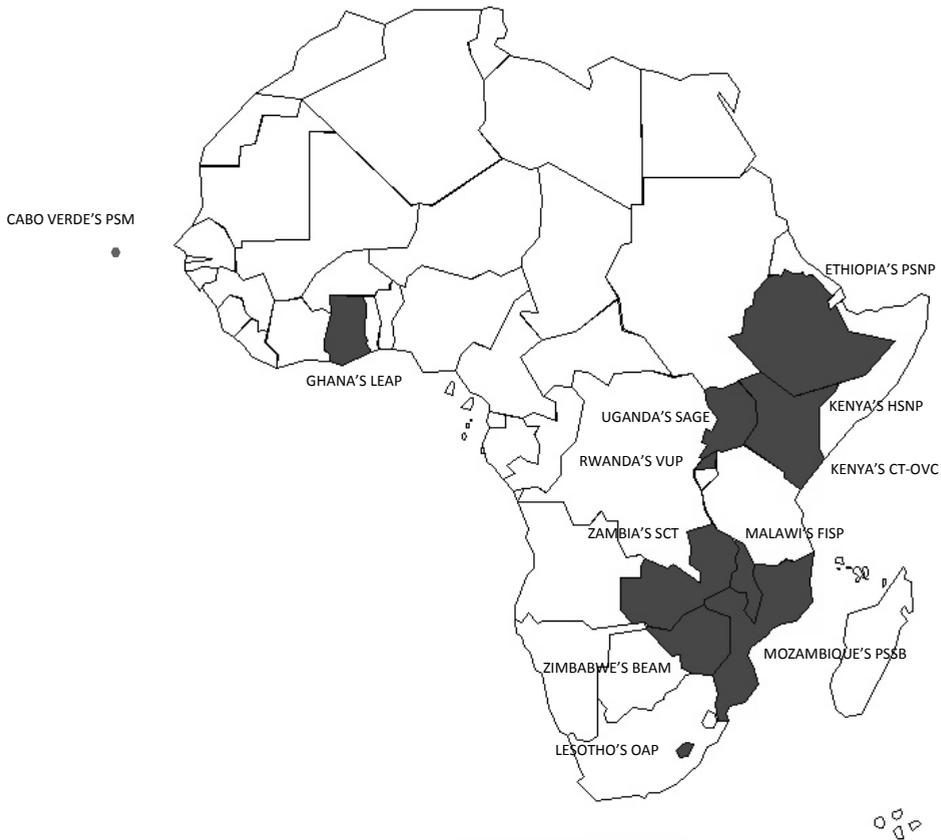
<sup>93</sup> This is interesting to consider the theoretical proposition on the link between urbanisation and mobilisation of civil society movements.

<sup>94</sup> A country is considered aid dependent if the net ODA it receives is 10 per cent or more of gross national income (World Bank 2013c).

<sup>95</sup> Cabo Verde was reclassified as a lower-middle income country in 2006, Lesotho in 2007, Ghana and Zambia in 2011, and Kenya in 2015.

<sup>96</sup> Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia are considered by the IMF as "frontier and emerging market economies" (IMF 2015a).

this proved challenging because, at least at the time of selection (late 2013), most of the scaled-up schemes were to be found in Eastern and Southern Africa, with West and Central Africa still lagging behind in terms of social protection expansion (Niño-Zarazúa et al. 2010). The decision to include two schemes operating in the same country (Kenya) was motivated by the desire to investigate whether there had been any cross-influence, as a possible illustrative case of how foreign aid actors may make their influence snowball within a country.



**Figure 3-2** Geographical Distribution of the Selected Social Transfer Schemes

**Table 3-3** Country Contexts of the Selected Sizable Social Transfer Schemes

Country	Country classification		Population		Government budget			Poverty and inequality			Aid dependency
	[1] Least developed country (year of inclusion on the list, 2016) <sup>(a)</sup>	[2] Resource-intensive country (IMF criteria, 2015) <sup>(b)</sup>	[3] Total population (million, 2014) <sup>(c)</sup>	[4] Urban population (% of total 2014) <sup>(c)</sup>	[5] Expense (% of GDP, 2011) <sup>(c)</sup>	[6] Tax revenue (% of GDP, 2013) <sup>(d)</sup>	[7] Total grants (% of GDP, 2013) <sup>(d)</sup>	[8] GDP per capita (current US\$, 2014) <sup>(c)</sup>	[9] Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of pop.) <sup>(c)</sup>	[10] Inequality (GINI index) <sup>(e)</sup>	
<b>Cabo Verde</b>	-	-	0.51	65	(2009) 22.7	18.04		3,641	(2007) 26.6	(2002) 50.5	12.9
<b>Ethiopia</b>	1971	-	96.96	19	10.6	12.38		574	(2010) 29.6	(2011) 30.5	6.5
<b>Ghana</b>	-	Yes	26.79	53	21.1	13.99		1,442	(2012) 24.2	(1999) 40.8	3.1
<b>Kenya</b>	-	-	44.86	25	18.3	16.32		1,358	(2005) 45.9	(2006) 45.9	4.4
<b>Lesotho</b>	1971	-	2.11	27	(2008) 51.1	50.71	2.06	1,034	(2010) 57.1	(2003) 52.5	4.0
<b>Malawi</b>	1971	-	16.69	16	n/a	23.90		255	(2010) 50.7	(2011) 49.1	22.8
<b>Mozambique</b>	1988	-	27.22	32	(2012) 24.3	22.88		586	(2008) 54.7	(2008) 36.7	13.4
<b>Rwanda</b>	1971	-	11.34	28	(2013) 13.0	14.52	7.49	696	(2010) 44.9	(2011) 49.0	13.3
<b>Uganda</b>	1971	-	37.78	16	(2012) 12.1	11.29		715	(2012) 19.5	(2009) 37.5	6.2
<b>Zambia</b>	1991	Yes	15.72	40	15.3	14.72		1,722	(2010) 60.5	(2004) 57.0	3.9
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	-	Yes	15.25	33	(1997) 33.2	25.31		931	(2011) 72.3	(2011) 42.3	5.8

Source: Author's compilation, based on <sup>(a)</sup> UN-OHRLS (2016), <sup>(b)</sup> IMF (2015a), <sup>(c)</sup> World Bank (2016c), <sup>(d)</sup> IMF (2015b), and <sup>(e)</sup> UNU-WIDER (2015).

## Analytical framework

A simple framework was developed to guide data collection and analysis through a retrospective process tracing approach (Collier 2011; George and Bennett 2004) aimed at tracking the pathways that led to the introduction of the selected social transfer schemes. The starting point for this within-case analysis is the introduction of the selected scheme at scale, or in its current form if it is still at an early development stage. The framework first invites to examine the following key aspects of the adopted policy or programme (*policy features*): funding arrangements; technical and institutional design; and level of national ownership. It then considers the triggers and conducive factors (*policy process*) that have led to the resulting shape of the social transfer scheme, categorising them into: events, actors, ideas, institutions and structural features. Doing so, it focuses on distinguishing, as much as possible, between influencing factors of national, regional or global nature.<sup>97</sup> Figure 3-3 illustrates this analytical framework.

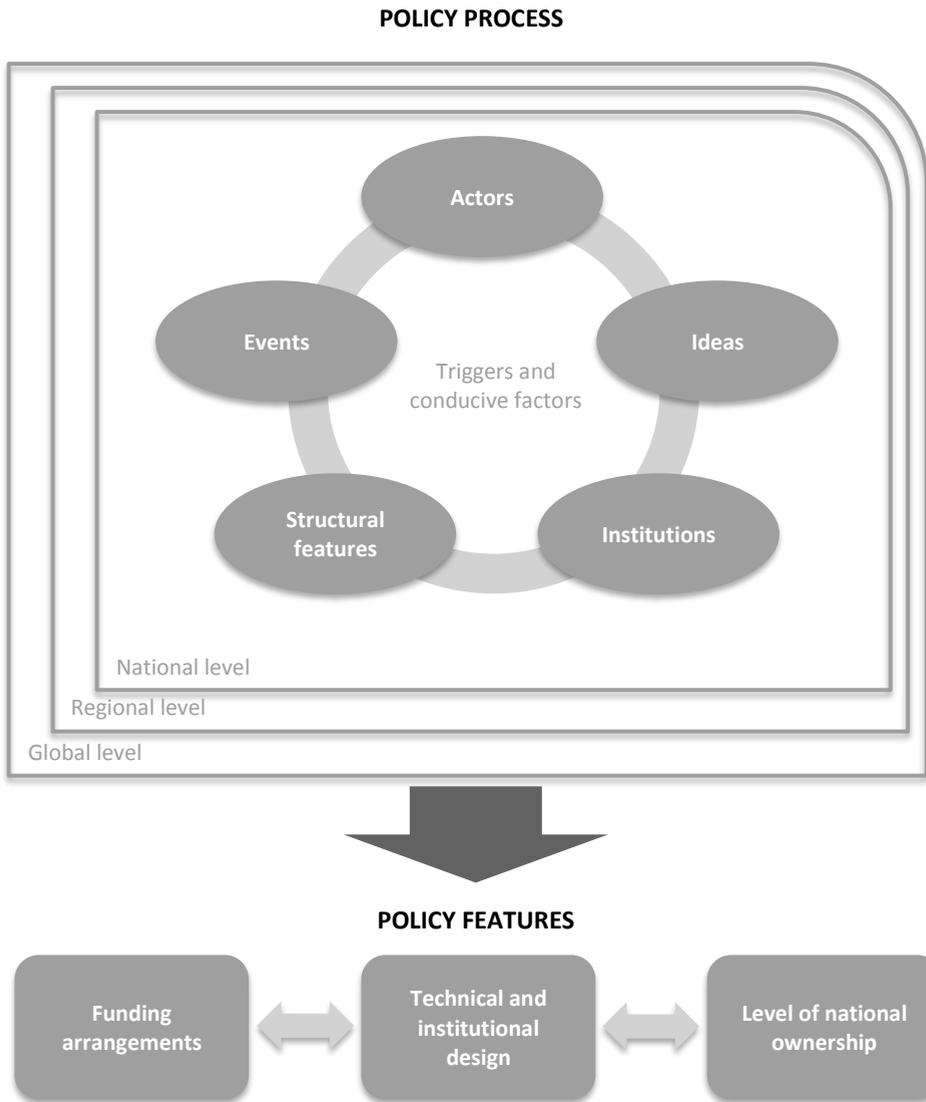
The framework is not intended to be used for predictive purposes, and does not provide a list of all possible conducive factors that could be assessed in a given country context. Rather, it is meant to help organising the different triggers and conducive factors identified during the process tracing analysis. Integrating deductive and inductive approaches (Figure 3-1), the framework was refined in parallel to the first steps of the empirical research.<sup>98</sup> The Drivers of Change approach adopted by DFID (2004) served as a starting point for the development of the framework. This choice was motivated by the fact that it explicitly focuses on ‘what is working’ (rather than ‘what is wrong’) and ‘what is driving change,’ which appears appropriate to study success cases and investigate triggers and conducive factors. In addition, this approach, which was built on the political science literature, was developed from the perspective of a policy maker (Warrener 2004). This makes it suitable, in a demand-driven perspective on evidence, to generate knowledge useful for public policy action. Adjustments were then made to better respond to the specific questions this research aims to address. Two analytical categories (events and ideas) were added to the three core elements of DFID’s Drivers of Change approach (structural features, institutions and agents) to examine policy processes. Parallels can be drawn between the chosen analytical categories and the core elements of an advocacy strategy, namely between: events and ‘windows of opportunity;’ actors and ‘key targets and influentials;’ ideas and

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<sup>97</sup> This is different from analysing processes at national, regional and global levels in a distinct manner. Instead, the framework invites to understand the complex interactions of the global, regional and national. For instance, in a multi-level governance system, global actors would intervene in national forums and shape national agenda.

<sup>98</sup> See Cherrier (2014b) for an initial version of the analytical framework.

‘advocacy messages;’ institutions and ‘scopes for action;’ structural features and ‘preconditions for success.’ This is deliberate, so that empirical findings can best respond to the knowledge needs of aid actors engaged in efforts to support the expansion of basic social protection. Additionally, specific analytical categories were added to look into resulting policy features—namely, funding arrangements, technical and institutional design, and level of national ownership. The choice of these analytical categories is briefly justified below.



**Figure 3-3** Analytical Framework of the Determinants of a Social Transfer Policy

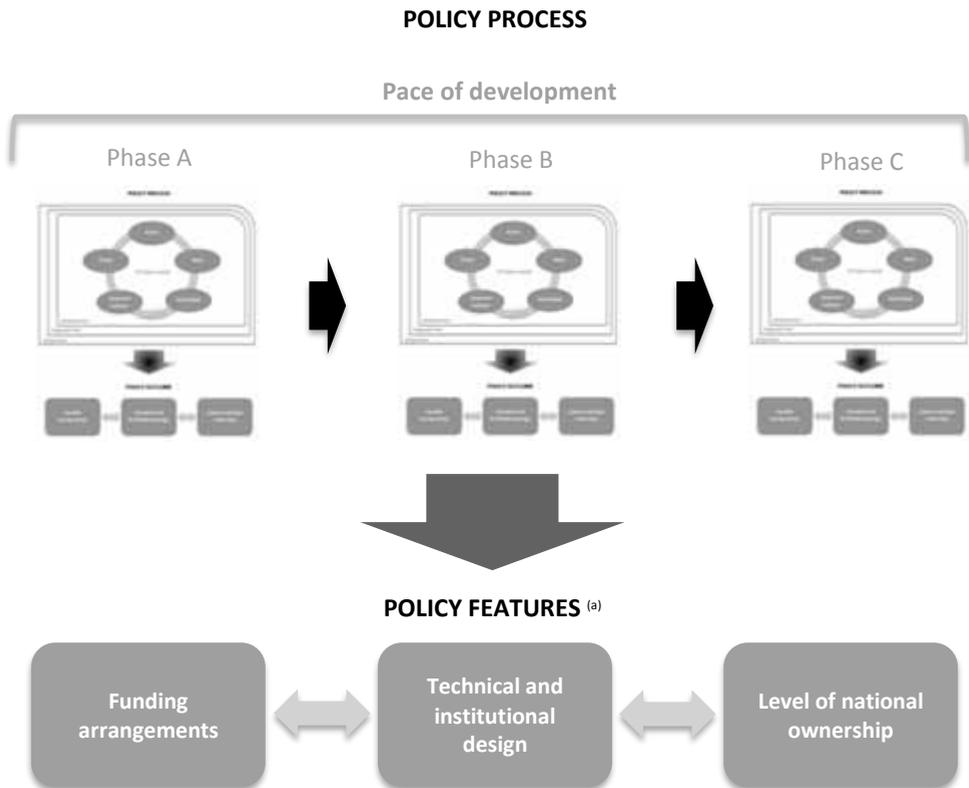
The starting point in the examination of each case is to consider the shape of the adopted social transfer scheme. The framework invites to examine three interrelated aspects, meant to help appreciate the social, political and financial sustainability of the scheme (Figure 3-3, *policy features*). First, when considering the *funding arrangements* for social transfers, it is important to quantify and qualify, as much as possible, the different sources of revenue mobilised. In particular, one may look at the share of budget covered by domestic resources, the sustainability of the different funding sources, and the future prospects—that is, in case of short/medium-term commitments, whether there is likely access to long-term financing. Second, examining the *technical and institutional design* of the scheme, it is particularly interesting to consider the likely stability of its institutional anchorage, along with the likely social and political acceptability of its design on the long run. Third, the *level of national ownership* over the scheme is assessed to appreciate its prospects—since enhanced national ownership would improve the ability to mobilise domestic funding (for instance, through taxation), and thus the sustainability of the scheme. As discussed in Section 2.3, the degree of national ownership can be approached through the three indicators presented in Table 2-3, which are easily measurable from basic project data. For a sharper analysis, additional indicators may be considered, as suggested in Section 2.3 (Table 2-4).

Proceeding with the retrospective process tracing analysis, the framework is intended to help organising the different triggers and conducive factors identified (Figure 3-3, *policy process*). This analysis is meant to clarify whether a country context presented any preconditions for success, what actually initiated the policy-making process (that is, what pushed national decision-makers to consider a social transfer option) and what brought it to a close (that is, what led to the decision to introduce a national social transfer scheme). *Structural features* may explain which types of social transfers are perceived as socially and political acceptable, financially sustainable or administratively deliverable. A specific *event* may be at the origin of the process or accelerate its conclusion. The first (audible) call(s) for social transfers may come from very different *actors*. Different *institutions* may govern these actors' attitudes and interactions—formal and informal rules, power structures, vested interests and incentives, as well as political and public administration processes. Policy choices may be further explained by specific *ideas* and ideational processes that affect the ways actors perceive their interests and the environment in which they intervene.<sup>99</sup> Having ideas as an explanatory factor allows looking into our third hypothesis, which concerns the type of knowledge informing policy decisions.

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<sup>99</sup> In line with Béland and Cox (2011), ideas are here defined as “causal beliefs” that can have both cognitive and normative components—that is, ideas can be as much about “knowledge” as about the “proper action” to take.

The analytical framework presented in Figure 3-3 is focused on the dynamics that lead to the introduction of a social transfer scheme, that is, its conception phase. However, while some social transfer schemes will have been introduced at scale, others will have been developed in a progressive manner, through successive phases of testing and refining, until they reach their intended full scale. The policy-making dynamics are likely to differ within each phase. For example, new actors may get involved, or new ideas, in regard to the result of an initial pilot phase for instance, may inform decisions. In such a case, the framework is used to guide phase-specific analyses. A major change in funding arrangements and/or design would mark the transition from one phase to the next, within the broader conception phase. This introduces *pace of development* as an additional analytical category in policy process. Considering the pace of development may help grasp the role of time in processes leading to an expansion of basic social protection. This is illustrated in Figure 3-4.



Note: <sup>(a)</sup> Scale-up scheme or current status of the scheme if the broader conception phase is still ongoing.

**Figure 3-4** Using the Framework for Within-Case Phase-Specific Analysis

**Table 3-4** Analytical Categories and Correspondence to Interview Questions

Analytical theme/category	Online survey questions	Key informant interview questions
Policy process	5-15	2-5
• Events	12	2b, 2f
• Actors	7, 9, 10, 11	2b, 2d, 2f, 3, 7
• Ideas	8, 14, 15, 26	2b, 2f, 4, 7, 14
• Institutions	6, 7, 13	2e, 4, 14
• Structural features	12, 26	2, 3, 5
• Pace of development	18, 25	2c, 6e, 7c
Policy features	16-31	6-12
• Funding arrangements	16, 17, 18, 19	6
• Technical and institutional design	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27	8, 9, 10, 11, 12
• Level of national ownership	13, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	10, 11, 12

Note: The numbers refer to the questions of the survey questionnaire presented in Appendix A.1 and the interview guide presented in Appendix A.4.

Source: Author.

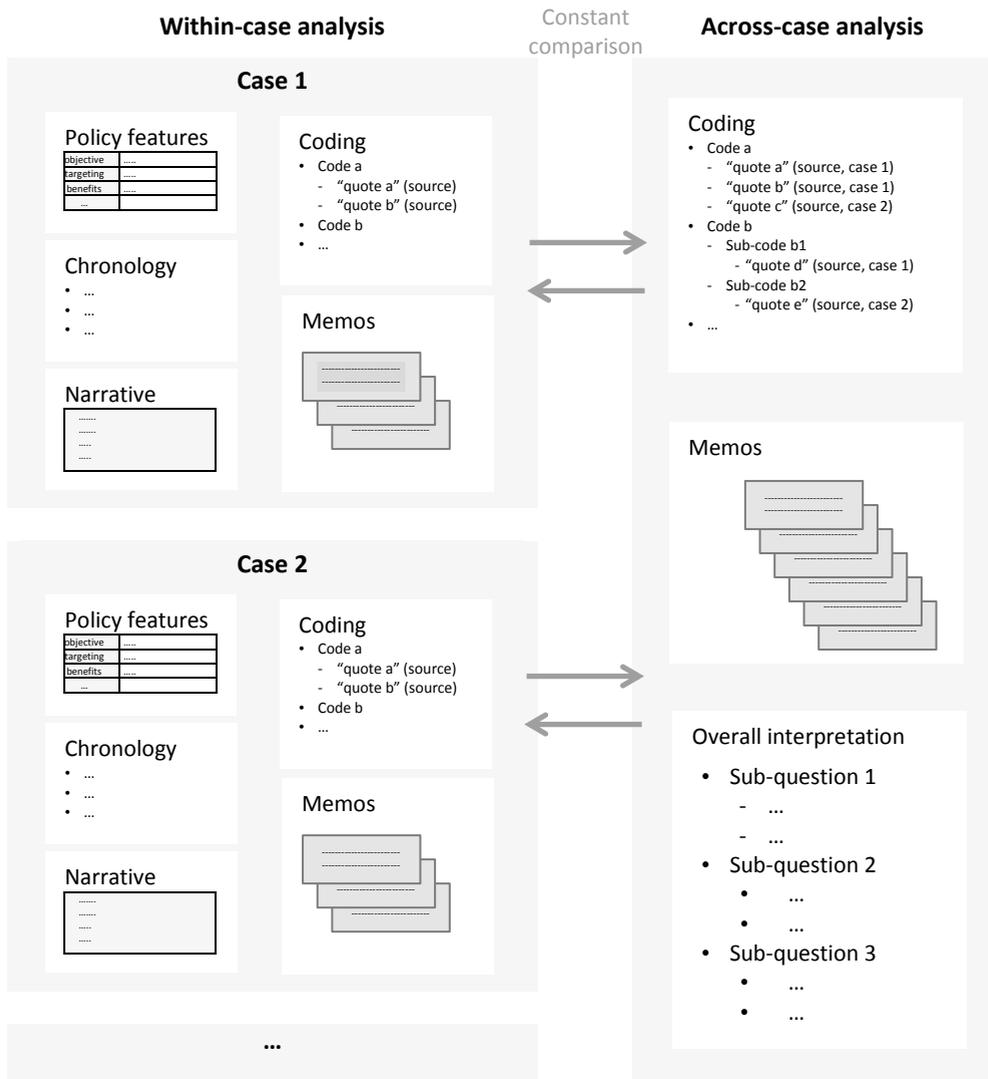
Three methods were used to collect a mix of secondary and primary data. Secondary data was drawn from an extensive review of the white and grey literature—academic publications, evaluation reports, strategy papers, activity reports, operational manuals, media articles, etc. This in-depth documentary analysis was complemented and triangulated with primary data collected through an online survey (66 complete responses collected) and key informant interviews (17 persons interviewed) among individuals directly involved in the development of one (or more) of the selected schemes. Table 3-4 presents the correspondence between the analytical themes and categories introduced above, which guided the documentary analysis, and the survey/interview questions. Of course, adding a survey and key informant interviews allowed for crosschecking information gathered during the documentary analysis, but key informants were also useful in pointing to additional relevant documentation, just like the survey also proved helpful in advertising the research and connecting to key informants that had not been identified through the documentary analysis phase. Overall, this multi-method approach to data collection and mutual corroboration permitted a sharper

analysis of the resulting policy features—especially for assessing the degree of national ownership, and a better understanding of the unfolding of the policy process—helping in particular to capture the interactions between different triggers and conducive factors, and the interplay between the policy process and policy features throughout the different phases of development. We provide below more details on how data was collected and analysed within and across cases through each of these three data collection tools.

## **Documentary analysis**

For each of the selected case, documentary analysis was conducted in five successive steps. The first two steps are descriptive in nature, while the other three are analytical. The purpose of the initial descriptive phase was to: (i) depict the salient *policy features* of the scheme at scale, or in its current form if it is still at an early development stage; and (ii) establish a chronology of events, that is, outlining the *pace of development* and its different phases. This information was recorded in a Microsoft Word document, including a standard table describing the main features of the scheme (objective, targeting, benefits provided, funding arrangements, etc.), and a chronology listing in bullet points key events along the years.

This provided the necessary basis for moving on to the analytical phase. This second phase required phase-specific analyses to: (iii) isolate and classify the main *triggers and conducive factors*, distinguishing among them those related to foreign aid actors; and (iv) relate the latter to resulting policy features. This enabled determining the influence, if any, of foreign aid on the emergence and features of the selected scheme. The final analytical step was to (v) consider each of the sub-questions and related working hypotheses in light of the empirical research findings. The analytical categories introduced above served as a basis for an initial deductive reasoning. During the documentary analysis process, sub-categories were added to progressively refine the analysis (for instance, coding different types of actors or ideas). In addition, codes were introduced to record emerging patterns concerning mechanisms through which foreign aid actors appear to exercise influence (such as, for example, ‘creating alliances’ or ‘individual change maker’). Microsoft Word’s outline view was used to record and organise codes and related incidences (quotes and sources). This inductive reasoning was further supported by the use of memos to record observations on emerging patterns and variations, along with thoughts in regard to the research questions (Corbin and Strauss 2008).



**Figure 3-5** Overview of the Analytical Process Throughout the Multiple-Case Study

Document gathering and analysis were thus conducted in an iterative process. During this documentary analysis process, remaining missing information was highlighted for follow-up in additional documents (or interviews). This list of remaining grey areas was gradually reduced, and a narrative around the origins of the scheme and the influence, if any, of foreign aid actors was progressively

refined<sup>100</sup> This analytical process was repeated for the following case, taking as a basis the new list of codes, thus ensuring constant comparison. This process was repeated for each of the twelve case studies. In the end, this led to the generation of twelve narratives, a structured list of mechanisms through which foreign aid actors appear to have exercised most influence along with their corresponding incidence (case, quote, source), and a series of memos on specific strategies used by foreign aid actors or on emerging insights in relation to the main research questions. This overall process is illustrated in Figure 3-5.

Across-case analysis focused on identifying salient aspects of the influence of foreign aid in the introduction, rollout and popularisation of the selected schemes. It intended to highlight the nuances in the strategies adopted by foreign aid actors that influenced policy adoption, in relation to specific country contexts. For this ultimate analysis, incidents from different cases were grouped under relevant codes in one Microsoft Word document. Using the outline view, it was then possible to view all codes and their corresponding incidents, move them around, and restructure the list. The across-case analysis was structured around the specific sub-questions this research has sought to address and their related working hypotheses. First, it consisted in reviewing the different storylines to test our first hypothesis. Second, the analysis turned to the suggested degrees of national ownership of the different schemes to test our second hypothesis. Third, triggers and conducive factors specifically related to the analytical category 'ideas' were analysed to address our second sub-question. Last, the analysis looked at the other triggers and conducive factors listed to consider our third sub-question.

## **Online survey**

The survey was targeted at individuals directly involved in the early development of a sizable social transfer scheme. It was designed to capture practitioners' own views on the genesis of the twelve selected schemes. The survey has served several purposes. In a first approach, it was used to test some theoretical propositions derived from an initial scoping of the literature on social transfer policy-making in low-income countries (Section 2.4). It allowed testing whether particular trends could be observed in the perception practitioners have about the policy-making processes that led to the adoption of a given social transfer scheme. For instance, the survey invited respondents to state whether they would tend to see decision-making around social transfer issues as open or closed processes; whether they

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<sup>100</sup> Because the analysis is dependent on the availability of secondary data, the list of remaining points to elucidate (such as, for example, the exact role played by a specific national actor, or what exactly happened to be decided in an informal meeting) could not always be exhausted. We shall come back to this point when discussing research limitations (Section 3.4).

perceive personal drive as more, less or equally important as organisational mandate to sustain policy dialogue around social transfer issues; how they appreciate the degree of involvement of citizens; etc. Survey data also fed into within-case analyses, complementing and triangulating data collected through desk reviews and key informant interviews. In addition, the survey served as a snowballing tool in the sampling strategy for key informant interviews.

The survey questionnaire was drafted in January 2014, and tested in February 2014 with four colleagues working on social protection issues and located in sub-Saharan Africa. As shown in Appendix A.1, its structure mirrors that of the analytical framework presented above (Table 3-4). The survey was created in SurveyMonkey®,<sup>101</sup> a convenient software where responses can be saved after each page. Given the length of the survey and the possibly hectic Internet connections of some respondents, it seemed important to ensure that responses would be saved, allowing respondents to leave the survey (voluntary or involuntary) and resume later. Enabling this functionality requires choosing the option to allow only one response per computer/Internet Protocol address. One drawback of this option is that respondents with relevant experience in more than one scheme could not complete several questionnaires, at least not from the same computer. With these setting options, responses returned were anonymous, unless the respondent agreed to indicate his/her e-mail address at the very end of the survey (Appendix A.1, question 44). To collect responses under SurveyMonkey, the 'Web Link' option was selected to allow recipients of the e-mail invitation to forward it with a functioning URL link. This helped further disseminating the survey invitation.

The fact that one objective of the survey was to test some theoretical propositions suggested the use a probability sampling technique. However, probability sampling is only possible when a list of the individuals constituting the population of interest—in this case, a list of all aid practitioners involved in the early development of a given scheme, is available. The inability to attain such a list prevented the use of a probability sampling technique. Instead, purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to recruit survey respondents. As a consequence, the results of the survey cannot be treated as representative of the population of practitioners involved in the development of the selected social transfer schemes. They are only indicative, and at times, revelatory of practitioners' views.

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<sup>101</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.surveymonkey.net>.

**Table 3-5** Overview of Survey Responses Collected

Type of response	Total	Percentage
<b>Complete responses vis-à-vis one of the twelve selected schemes</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>60.0%</b>
Cabo Verde's Minimum Social Pension	1	0.9%
Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme	14	12.7%
Ghana's Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty	10	9.1%
Kenya's Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	6	5.5%
Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme	6	5.5%
Lesotho's Old Age Pension	2	1.8%
Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme	1	0.9%
Mozambique's <i>Programa de Subsídio Social Básico</i>	9	8.2%
Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme	6	5.5%
Uganda's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment	4	3.6%
Zambia's Social Cash Transfer Scheme	5	4.5%
Zimbabwe's Basic Education Assistance Module	2	1.8%
<b>Complete responses vis-à-vis another scheme</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
Ghana's Social Opportunities Project	1	0.9%
Ghana's Social Trust Pilot Project	2	1.8%
Kenya's Tushinde Children's Trust	1	0.9%
Liberia's Pilot Social Cash Transfer Programme	1	0.9%
Malawi's National Social Support Policy	1	0.9%
Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Programme	1	0.9%
Mozambique's <i>Programa de Acção Social Produtiva</i>	1	0.9%
Niger's <i>Filet de Sécurité Sociale</i>	1	0.9%
Senegal's <i>Bourses de Sécurité Familiale</i>	1	0.9%
Bangladesh's Livelihood Options for Older People	1	0.9%
<b>Incomplete responses</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
<b>Disqualified responses (*)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
<b>Total number of responses</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: (\*) Respondents indicated having no personal experience in the introduction of a social transfer scheme.

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

During the documentary analysis phase, a list of potential key informants was assembled (that is, individuals cited as having been directly involved in the early development of one or several of the twelve selected schemes) to serve the following phases of the study, supporting the sampling strategies of the online survey and key informant interviews. Getting hold of the current contact details of these key informants proved difficult at times. Many of them had changed positions several times since the period of their experience relevant for this study. Maximum use was made of the Internet and professional networks,<sup>102</sup> and in the end, it has been possible to send personal invitations to respond to the survey to about 80 individuals identified as key informants. An open invitation was also disseminated within social protection working groups—often thanks to DFID or UNICEF focal points—in most of the countries of interest. In addition, the survey web link was published in the Centre for Social Protection Newsletter in June 2014,<sup>103</sup> as well as circulated to over 400 people known to be working (or to have been working) on social protection (or related) issues in one of the countries of interest and/or in one international organisation engaged in social protection issues—including the World Bank, the ILO, DFID, GIZ, the European Commission, UNICEF, and the WFP, among others. As part of snowball sampling, people were encouraged to invite colleagues (for instance, their department’s staff) to answer the survey. Responses were collected between March and August 2014. Several reminders to complete the survey were sent until two weeks before the survey was closed.

A total of 110 responses were collected, among which 77 are complete,<sup>104</sup> and 66 of them concerned one of the twelve selected cases—as shown in Table 3-5. An overview of the professional profile of the 77 respondents who provided a complete response (referred to as respondents OS1 to OS77) is presented in Table 3-6. Over 70 per cent indicated working for an international organisation (a donor agency, a UN agency, an INGO or an international consultancy firm), and nearly 60 per cent reported being international practitioners (that is, not working in their country of nationality). Survey results shall thus be analysed taking into account this clear bias towards foreign aid practitioners. Additional details on the demographic profile of these 77 respondents, as presented in Appendix A.2, show

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<sup>102</sup> For example, consulting the online professional network LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com>) or consulting lists of participants to relevant conferences.

<sup>103</sup> Newsletter 28, available at <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/CSPNewsletter28formatted.pdf>.

<sup>104</sup> A response was considered complete if the respondent answered the last part of the survey, and responded to most questions. As a strategy to increase the response rate, respondents were given the possibility to skip a question (the answer would then be treated as ‘not specified’). Only a few of these 77 respondents used that option occasionally throughout the questionnaire.

that most of them do not have an African nationality. The fact that a quarter of them indicated being British suggests another possible bias introduced by our sampling strategy towards DFID personnel—since sampling has relied, inter alia, on DFID networks to disseminate information to social protection working groups in relevant countries.<sup>105</sup>

**Table 3-6** Professional Profile of Survey Respondents

Employer	Status			Total
	National	International	Not specified	
National organisation	12	2 (*)	1	15
International organisation	9	40	6	55
Academia	-	2	1	3
Various	2 (**)	-	-	2
Not specified	2	-	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>77</b>

Notes: This table only includes respondents who provided a completed response. (\*) These individuals have been involved as international consultants working within a Ministry's unit to implement an aid-funded programme. (\*\*) These individuals have been involved as national consultants working for various organisations (national and international).

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

Survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Incomplete responses were too empty to be used, and the analysis focused on the set of 66 complete responses concerning one of the twelve selected cases. When deemed pertinent, it was expanded to the set of 77 complete responses. Within-case analysis was focused on the cases for which at least six complete responses had been collected, which makes an analysis meaningful. It was thus focused on the following six schemes: Ethiopia's PSNP, Ghana's LEAP, Kenya's CT-OVC, Kenya's HSNP, Mozambique's PSSB, and Rwanda's VUP (Table 3-5).

## In-depth interviews

In line with the research methodology presented above (Section 3.1), the objective of the key informant interviews was two-fold: to fill gaps and triangulate data

<sup>105</sup> It may also simply reflect the fact that British citizens tend to be overrepresented among foreign aid practitioners engaged in social transfer schemes in Eastern and Southern Africa, or more generally in English-speaking countries, where most of our cases are located—just like one could probably find an overrepresentation of French nationals among foreign aid practitioners working in francophone West Africa.

collected through the documentary analysis and survey; and, more importantly, to explore the practical experience of foreign aid practitioners engaged in social transfer policy issues. Convenience sampling<sup>106</sup> allowed for the identification of “available and accessible” participants to the study (Salkind 2010, p. 255). The use of convenience sampling is not based on the assumption that the target population is homogeneous in an attempt to select subjects that would be representative of the entire population. Rather, it is adopted because the purpose of the inquiry is mainly illustrative. This narrative inquiry is exploratory and revelatory by nature rather than exhaustive. A sample of convenience is wholly appropriate to uncover (possibly neglected) practical aspects of policy-making from the eyes of practitioners.

**Table 3-7** Profile of In-Depth Interview Respondents on the Origins of Sizable Schemes

Characteristic	Total	Percentage
<b>Position at the time of involvement with the scheme</b>		
International aid practitioner based in country	11	65%
International aid practitioner based outside of the country	2	12%
International researcher based outside of the country	1	5%
National staff of an aid agency	3	18%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	8	47%
Male	9	53%
<b>Total number of interviews</b>	<b>17</b>	

Source: Author’s compilation.

The online survey helped to advertise the research and connect with practitioners directly involved in the early development of a sizable social transfer scheme. Among the 66 persons who completed the survey questionnaire for one of the twelve selected cases (Table 3-5), 35 indicated at the end of the questionnaire (Appendix A.1, question 44) being ready to further exchange on the topic in a phone interview. All of them were subsequently contacted and invited to take part in a live interview, along with a few other individuals identified as having been involved in the early development of one of the selected schemes during the

<sup>106</sup> ‘Sample of convenience’ is the terminology used to describe a sample in which elements have been selected from the target population on the basis of their accessibility or convenience to the researcher (Salkind 2010).

documentary analysis phase. An informed consent statement was sent to all of them along with the invitation (Appendix A.3). In the end, a total of seventeen individuals—referred to as respondents OR1 to OR17 (Appendix A.5), responded positively and made them available to participate in a live interview. As shown in Table 3-7, most of them (83 per cent) are foreign aid agencies' staff based in the country where the social transfer scheme of interest is operating—that is, they can be expected to have (had) the opportunity to interact daily with other stakeholders and engage in national policy processes. However, we can deplore the fact that only 18 per cent of interviewees are national staff—all of them working for a foreign aid agency, as opposed to a national organisation. This bias certainly results from our sampling strategy that has heavily relied on foreign aid actors' networks. As a consequence, findings must be specifically treated as indicative of foreign aid practitioners' views.

These in-depth live interviews were conducted to gain insights into the policy-making experience from the lens of its participants, with the intention to get inside a situation and understand it as much as possible on its own terms, based on real personal experiences and insider knowledge. As such, it has supported a people-centred analysis of policy-making. The conversations revolved around the central question of this research, that is, discussing respondents' personal experiences in aid-supported efforts to institutionalise social transfer schemes, as well as their views or perspectives of these experiences, which is the essence of interpretive studies. In line with the analytical framework introduced above, the discussion guide was structured in three parts: policy-making process, resulting policy features, and respondent's personal experience—as presented in Appendix A.4. Through semi-structured interviews, the meaning of behaviours and events in people's lives were conveyed in the natural flow of a conversation (Patton 2014). For example, the first question following the warm-up question<sup>107</sup> aimed at letting respondents talk freely in order to hear the story in the respondent's own words. In recognition of the importance of meaning and subjectivity, narrated experiences, rather than discrete exchange of questions and answers, enabled apprehending respondents' own constructions of events, each of which is true and unique (Rubin and Rubin 2012). Other questions listed in the interview guide would only be used as needed to encourage participants proceed with their stories.<sup>108</sup> They helped dig beyond top-of-the-mind answers: follow-up questions to inquire about the answer; probing questions to clarify; and prompted questions, as needed, to invite

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<sup>107</sup> "Could you describe how the process unfolded; what was the situation when you started to get involved, and what happened until you left/today?" (Appendix A.4, question 2)

<sup>108</sup> It often took some time before respondents ran out of steam though. For example, it is over 35 minutes into the interview that respondent OR3 finally paused and said: "I don't know what else is useful... [Laugh] I've run out of the Press Play button!"

respondents to talk about an aspect of interest for the research they have not talked about voluntarily. This open and natural discussion format proved useful in establishing a climate of trust and in helping respondents recall about events that happened many years ago—sometimes fifteen years ago. Under favourable conditions, it allowed for in-depth conversations.<sup>109</sup>

The interviews took place between December 2013 and September 2014. All but a few them were conducted via Skype.<sup>110</sup> Each interview took between 40 and 90 minutes. With the consent of respondents, all but four conversations were audio recorded, using the open source software Audacity®.<sup>111</sup> Audio recordings enabled to re-live the interview experience afterwards, and hear things that may have been missed when in the middle of the conversation. Even when recording, notes were nevertheless taken, in case recording went wrong, but also to better engage in the conversation and offer short cuts. In total, over 18 hours of recorded interview were collected. Recordings were not transcribed in full. Instead, based on the recording, an outline of the general points made during the conversation was prepared. Then, going back to the recording, the most relevant and illustrative parts were transcribed, using the software Express Scribe<sup>112</sup> to ease the transcription process. This required listening to each recording several times, which enabled a deeper immersion in the collected data.

Interview data was analysed in two phases. The first analysis focused on filling gaps to better understanding how events unfolded in order to compile individual case studies and outline origin stories. The second phase consisted in an inductivist investigation, using the same set of interview data, to explore how practitioners experienced the whole process. While the within-case study of the first analytical phase focused on facts (historical narrative), this second phase focused on feelings and perceptions (personal experiences and interpretations). The unit of analysis was no longer the social transfer scheme but rather the individual practitioner. The inductive and exploratory nature of the investigation encouraged following the coding procedure proposed by Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss (2008) whereby data gathering and analysis are conducted in an iterative process. An analytical session immediately followed each interview. It aimed at deriving and developing concepts from data, either considering pre-identified themes and categories, or identifying additional concepts emerging from data. This was done by re-reading each interview transcript and listening to audio recordings, and by making constant comparison with previous interviews (McCormack 2000). This process

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<sup>109</sup> Only a couple of interviews proved difficult to convey due to poor call quality and interruptions.

<sup>110</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.skype.com>.

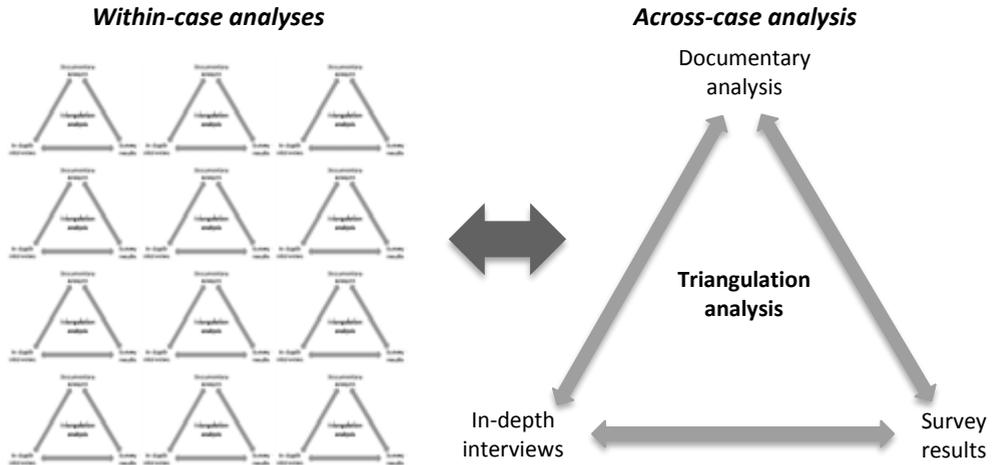
<sup>111</sup> For more information, visit <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>.

<sup>112</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.nch.com.au/scribe>.

involved writing memos, mapping out emerging themes and categories, and using quotes to illustrate them. More data gathering would then follow until a core category emerges and reaches a point of saturation. This approach led to draw fresh insights from the personal interpretations and “story telling” (McCormack 2004) of individuals personally engaged in processes intended to encourage the expansion of social transfers in low-income African countries.

### Overall interpretation

The overall interpretation of results required the application of a multiphase triangulation approach, as illustrated in Figure 3-6, whereby data collected through documentary analysis, online survey and interviews are triangulated both within and across cases. This process has been iterative and has used a combination of deductive and inductive approaches (Figure 3-1). For example, an initial across-case analysis of survey results was later completed to take into account the typology of origin stories that had emerged from the across-case analysis of results from the document review. The overall interpretation of results was guided by our specific sub-questions and working hypotheses (Table 2-5 in Chapter 2). The correspondence between the working hypotheses and the interview questions is presented in Table 3-8.



**Figure 3-6** Multiphase Triangulation Analyses within the Multiple-Case Study

**Table 3-8** Working Hypotheses and Correspondence to Interview Questions

<b>Working hypothesis</b>	<b>Online survey questions</b>	<b>Key informant interview questions</b>
<b>WH1.</b> Foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of permanent and scaled-up social transfer schemes in a low-capacity country context, through three primary policy entry points: fiscal policy sphere, social protection policy sphere, humanitarian policy sphere.	5, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25	2, 3, 7
<b>WH2.</b> In a low-capacity context, a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a social transfer scheme jeopardises its long-term social, political and financial sustainability	10, 13, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	6, 10, 11, 12
<b>WH3.</b> Foreign aid actors' initiatives aimed at supporting the emergence of social transfers tend to reflect linear, technocratic models of policy making and scientific knowledge transfer.	6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 34	7, 14, 15, 16

Note: The numbers relates to the questions of the survey questionnaire presented in Appendix A.1 and the interview guide presented in Appendix A.4.

Source: Author.

The overall interpretation of results followed four main steps. First, considering our first sub-question, data was triangulated within cases to elaborate causal narratives describing and analysing the early development of each of the twelve selected schemes and the specific role, if any, played by foreign aid actors.<sup>113</sup> The comparative analysis of the resulting origin stories was geared towards identifying common trends and specificities in regard to the triggering role, if any, of foreign aid actors in the emergence of the selected sizable social transfer schemes. A typology emerged out of this across-case analysis. This allowed testing our first working hypothesis.

Second, data was triangulated within cases to appreciate the degree of national ownership and long-term sustainability for each of the selected schemes—using, in particular, a measure of the suggested core indicators (Table 2-3 in Chapter 2) drawn from the documentary analysis, as well as additional indicators included in the online survey.<sup>114</sup> Linking this back to the degree of involvement of foreign aid actors within an across-case analysis allowed testing our second working hypothesis.

<sup>113</sup> The twelve origin stories uncovered are presented in Section 4.2 (summarised in Table 4-3, column 1).

<sup>114</sup> The suggested degrees of national ownership and long-term sustainability of the twelve selected schemes are discussed in Section 4.4 (summarised in Table 4-3, columns 2-5).

Third, turning to our second sub-question and in echo to our third working hypothesis, data was triangulated within and across cases to investigate the specific role of scientific evidence vis-à-vis other forms of knowledge behind decisions to introduce the social transfer scheme. Across-case analyses of results drawn from the documentary analysis, online survey and interviews also supported an inductive inquiry into the prospects and limits of a linear evidence-based approach to policy making to encourage sustainable policy change.

Fourth, contemplating our third sub-question, an inductive inquiry was conducted into the way foreign aid practitioners actually engage with national policy-making processes, and factors determining foreign aid actors' role and influence towards social transfer policy uptake in low-income country contexts. This allowed testing our third working hypothesis.

### **3.3 Study on the Use of Ex-ante Cost-Benefit Analyses**

In direct resonance with our second sub-question and third working hypothesis, another study was designed to investigate the use and usefulness of cost analyses<sup>115</sup> specifically, particularly ex-ante cost-benefit analyses, as a strategy to inform policy decisions around social transfers and encourage policy uptake. This represents one way how foreign aid actors try to influence policy decisions, reflecting a rather economic approach. The purpose of the study was thus to reflect on the appropriateness of such an approach, considering the rationale for the increased interest in cost-benefit analyses, the underlying assumptions and inherent limitations of this type of exercise, the risks associated with an increased reliance on cost-benefit analyses, and any alternatives to the traditional approach to cost-benefit studies. Two methods were used to investigate these issues: a methodological review of the main models used for ex-ante cost analyses in social transfer policy, and unstructured interviews with foreign aid practitioners.

#### **Analytical review of methodological approaches**

As part of the process of identifying relevant studies and models, dozens of people working on, or susceptible to be working on, this issue were contacted by e-mail in the following organisations: World Bank, ILO, UNICEF, IPC-IG, DFID, Oxford Policy Management, Overseas Development Institute, Manchester University,

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<sup>115</sup> In line with Levin and McEwan (2001), we use the term 'cost analyses' as a generic term encompassing any form of analyses involving costs estimates, be it a simple analysis of costs alone or a more complex return-on-investment analysis.

Institute of Development Studies, Université Laval, EPRI, WFP, FAO, European Commission, Save the Children and HelpAge International. These individuals were identified through purposive and snowball sampling. Fifteen of them—referred to as respondents MR1 to MR15 (Appendix A.6), responded positively and provided information on the methodologies used in their respective organisations to conduct ex-ante cost-benefit analyses. In addition, all UNICEF senior staff member working on social protection policy in Headquarters or Regional Offices were invited to take part in a live interview on the topic. The methodological review was conducted as part of a study commissioned by the UNICEF Office of Research on approaches for making the investment case for social protection interventions, and this strategy represents a convenience sampling of foreign aid practitioners working towards social transfer policy uptake in developing countries.<sup>116</sup> Seven of them, referred to as respondents CB1 to CB7 (Appendix A.6) agreed and were interviewed—more details are provided below.

Through this process, which took place between December 2012 and January 2013, a total of fourteen models used for ex-ante cost analyses in social transfer policy were identified,<sup>117</sup> and supporting documentation was collected for each of them. The next step consisted in analysing the methodological approach of each of the identified models, looking at the way key methodological challenges are tackled and considering limitations. The review followed the four main steps proposed by Henry Levin and Patrick McEwan (2001) for carrying out a (comparative) cost-benefit analysis: defining the (range of) policy option(s) to be analysed; quantifying costs; quantifying impacts; and comparing impacts and costs. The review focused on key methodological issues arising in each step, and analysed how different authors had approached them. From this process, a number of major methodological breakthroughs and limitations emerged.

### **Interviews on the use of ex-ante cost-benefit analysis for social transfers**

This methodological review was complemented by an examination of the use and usefulness of this type of exercise from the eyes of senior aid practitioners directly engaged in efforts to expand social protection in developing countries.<sup>118</sup> As summarised in Table 3-9, a total of ten persons took part in a live interview around

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<sup>116</sup> Such a strategy, of course, may result in findings suffering from selection bias. As underlined in Section 3.4, findings cannot be interpreted as representative, but are nonetheless of illustrative and revelatory value.

<sup>117</sup> These models are summarised in Table 5-2 in Chapter 5. They range from back-of-the-envelope calculations to advanced expert modelling.

<sup>118</sup> To our knowledge, there had not been any previous study looking specifically at the influence of ex-ante cost-benefit analysis findings in the shaping of national social transfer policy in developing countries, nor had there been any thorough assessment of the needs and demand for such studies.

the use of cost-benefit analyses to inform social protection work in developing countries. They include three of the people working on methodology used in their respective organisations to conduct ex-ante cost-benefit analyses (respondents MR4, MR8, MR11) who spontaneously offered to have a follow-up discussion, and the seven UNICEF senior staff members (respondents CB1 to CB7) who responded positively to the invitation for a live interview on the issue (Appendix A.6).

**Table 3-9** Profile of In-Depth Interview Respondents on the Use of Cost Analyses

Characteristic	Total	Percentage
<b>Position at the time of interview</b>		
Senior social policy specialist at UNICEF Headquarters	2	20%
Senior social policy specialist at UNICEF Regional Office	4	40%
Senior social policy specialist at UNICEF Country Office	1	10%
Senior researcher in another organisation	3	30%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	5	50%
Male	5	50%
<b>Total number of interviews</b>	<b>10</b>	

Source: Author's compilation.

The round of interviews was conducted in December 2012. Discussions took about one hour. These conversations were recorded in the form of notes taken at the time and edited right after the discussion. Three open-ended questions guided the interviews:

- How do you evaluate the demand for ex-ante cost-benefit studies (and rate-of-return studies in particular) among decision-makers?
- Which specific methodological approaches or studies are you aware of? What are their strengths and limits?
- What has been the experience with using such studies in your region/country? What has been the impact? Have you perceived any risks?

An inductive approach was used for the analysis of interview data. This inquiry into foreign aid practitioners' practical experience with using ex-ante cost analyses to encourage social transfer policy uptake focused in particular on the perceived needs for more ex-ante cost analyses, the perceived actual value of ex-ante cost

analyses, and the perceived limits and pitfalls of ex-ante cost analyses.<sup>119</sup> With respect to our second and third sub-questions, findings shed light on the value and limits of scientific evidence to inform social transfer policy, and pointed to other aspects deemed important for foreign aid actors' influence and social transfer policy uptake.

### 3.4 Research Limitations

The choices in research design and methods presented above have implied some limitations. We justify here why these decisions were nonetheless made, and underline how the resulting limitations have impacted the interpretation of the findings from this research.<sup>120</sup> Efforts to collect relevant and reliable empirical data faced several challenges. The analysis of the origins of the selected social transfer schemes has been largely dependent on the availability of secondary data. For some of the schemes, some grey areas have remained around the actual triggers and conducive factors (such as, for example, the exact role played by a given national actor), or their actual influence on the resulting policy features. Nonetheless, enough data could be collected to establish a convincing narrative. Even when it was not possible to uncover *all* the main triggers and conducive factors (including, for instance, what happens behind closed doors or in informal meetings), it was possible to isolate specific mechanisms through which foreign aid actors have appeared to exercise influence. In that sense, the study has revelatory and illustrative value.

Another challenge—which also came up when designing and implementing the survey, has been the difficulty to access and categorise data on the funding sources of a scheme. Ideally, one would want to clarify the funding sources for different types of costs: (one-off) start-up costs, (recurrent) benefit and administrative costs, and (possibly occasional) evaluation costs. In regard to aid funding, it appears important to clarify the contributors, their approach (project, sector or macro approach), their financing modalities (grant award procedures, common pool funds, budget support, concessional loans, etc.) and the duration/permanency of their commitment. In regard to domestic funding, it would be desirable to clearly identify the actual source(s) of funding, that is, whether resources come from a reallocation of spending, an increase in taxes, or (new) domestic natural resources for instance. However, this is close to impossible given that all these different sources contribute to the overall government budget. In the absence of any explicit

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<sup>119</sup> Main findings are presented in Section 5.3.

<sup>120</sup> Suggestions on how these limitations could be overcome through future research are made in Section 8.4.

announcement (such as, the introduction of an additional tax to finance a new scheme), it is not possible to clarify this in an attempt to bring empirical data to feed the discussion connecting the politics of social protection spending and financing.<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, it is useful to clarify whether domestic funding is off-budget or on-budget, as well as the duration of commitment. In the case of short/medium-term commitments, one may then look at future prospects, that is, whether there are some views for long-term financing. Again, this type of information proved difficult to collect within the constraints imposed on this research. In the interviews, many practitioners admitted not knowing exactly how the scheme was financed. While information on the technical features of major social transfer schemes, their efficiency in delivering assistance, and their impact on poverty and vulnerability is today relatively easy to find,<sup>122</sup> there is yet no consolidated database providing updated information on how these schemes are financed. This information remains fragmented and difficult to access—even when it comes to donor funding.

For reasons outlined above, the recruitment of survey respondents and interviewees had to rely on non-probability sampling techniques. Research results are therefore only illustrative and revelatory, but cannot be interpreted as representative. Furthermore, it proved difficult to access national practitioners working in national bodies, even though efforts were made to take as much advantage as possible of new technologies (online survey systems, e-mails, Skype, etc.).<sup>123</sup> Consequently, interviews were focused on foreign aid practitioners—that is, international or national, staff or consultants of foreign aid agencies. Results are to be interpreted accordingly.

Adopting a retrospective process tracing approach—as this research did, seems appropriate to investigate the influence of aid initiatives on social transfer policies. Still, this approach comes with inherent challenges, starting with the difficulty for respondents to recall about events that happened many years ago.<sup>124</sup> Of course, it is possible to triangulate information with documents written at the time. But this may not allow uncovering precisely what has informed key decisions in regard to

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<sup>121</sup> See, for instance, Ulriksen (2013).

<sup>122</sup> See, for instance, del Ninno and Mills (2015), Garcia and Moore (2012), Monchuk (2014), and World Bank (2015) among many others.

<sup>123</sup> Under the budgetary constraints of this research, the decision to conduct a comparative case study (as justified above) ruled out the option of conducting any in-depth case study with extensive fieldwork.

<sup>124</sup> For example, asked, as part of follow-up questions, about the role played by one important national player she had surprisingly not yet referred to, respondent OR12 acknowledged: “Oh my gosh, I completely forgot about him! Oh, gosh... You see, this is the thing. Well, I’ve got very bad memory, so you’re very hostage to my bad memory. Of course! [...] You’re absolutely right.”

social transfer policies. There is no paper trail, and it is hard for any individual to remember or determine exactly what informed his/her decisions. On that very aspect, respondent OR2 commented:

There may be something that somebody heard five years before in a training programme or 10 years before in grad school that influences your decision way down the line but you can't remember the whole path dependency. It's probably there, but that doesn't mean you can elucidate it. And even if you want to do it, often you don't want to. [...] I did a study in Pakistan that the Ministry of Agriculture cited [...] when they reformed their wheat ration system, but of course he would not say that it was done by IFPRI and he should not have said it was done by IFPRI. That was the least of his concerns. He used the data but never attributed it to a team of outside experts, just cited the data. So, many times, I think, when you got another study or another country experience, you wouldn't claim in any public statement the paternity. You know, it's bad politics.

Hence, it was not possible to uncover all the paths that had led to the decisions to approve the introduction, and possibly (co-)finance, the selected social transfer schemes. Still, the research design has allowed uncovering what practitioners perceive, in hindsight, as key in explaining past instances of uptake of social transfer policies. In Section 8.4, we will make suggestions on how the different limitations underlined above could be overcome through future research.

### *Concluding remarks*

The empirical investigation designed to look into the three sub-questions, and their related hypotheses drawn from the literature review and conceptual analysis presented in Chapter 2, consists of a combination of studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods. At the core of it is a multiple-case study designed to uncover why and how governments of a low-income country came to invest domestic public resources in social transfers, and examine the role, if any, played by foreign aid actors. A mix of secondary and primary data was collected to study the early development of a dozen sizable social transfer schemes introduced in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. This was combined with a people-centred investigation to delve into findings and study policy formation from the perspective of field practitioners and as human experiences. Result analysis was in turn descriptive, analytical and exploratory: empirical evidence collected was used to describe the policy development processes (within-case analysis), to analyse emerging patterns in regard to foreign aid actors' influence on policy uptake

(across-case analysis), and to explore any additional patterns from the eyes of front-line practitioners (people-centred analysis). The combination of methods allowed for the triangulation of results, thereby improving the reliability and validity of the findings.

For the purpose of this research, a total of 27 individuals from a cross section of organisations took part in in-depth interviews, in two rounds of consultations: seventeen interviews were focused on the origins of sizable social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa, while ten were focused on the use and usefulness of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses to support the emergence of social transfers. In addition, a total of 77 individuals responded to an online survey on the origins of social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite efforts to approach both domestic and foreign stakeholders, there is a bias in favour of foreign aid practitioners, and among them international practitioners. Results are interpreted accordingly.

Results of each study were compiled into a complete whole. For several methods had to rely on non-probability sampling techniques, results are mainly qualitative and indicative, which makes the value of the research primarily revelatory and illustrative. The approach adopted is well suited for uncovering some important, yet often overlooked, conditions for foreign aid actors to encourage the uptake of social transfer policies in low-income countries. The overall analysis of data collected crosses over many different fields and disciplines. At a more general level, findings also shed light on broader debates in the scholarly literature, notably around the respective role of domestic factors and global influence in policy change, the respective role of the state and citizens in policy making, the role of research evidence vis-à-vis other important factors in policy making processes, and the effects of incentives internal to the aid system on country ownership and the sustainability of aid-supported activities.

Findings are presented in the three empirical chapters that follow. Each of them examines one of our three sub-questions in light of the fresh evidence provided by this research. We will successively contemplate: the triggering and catalytic role of foreign aid actors in social transfer policy uptake in low-capacity African countries (Chapter 4), the role of scientific evidence in foreign aid efforts to encourage social transfer policy uptake (Chapter 5), and other important factors determining the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context (Chapter 6).

## Chapter 4

# Can Foreign Aid Act as a Catalyst? A Comparative Analysis of Sizable Schemes in Sub-Saharan Africa

An invasion of armies can be resisted;  
an invasion of ideas cannot be resisted.

*Victor Hugo (1877, Conclusion, Ch. X)*

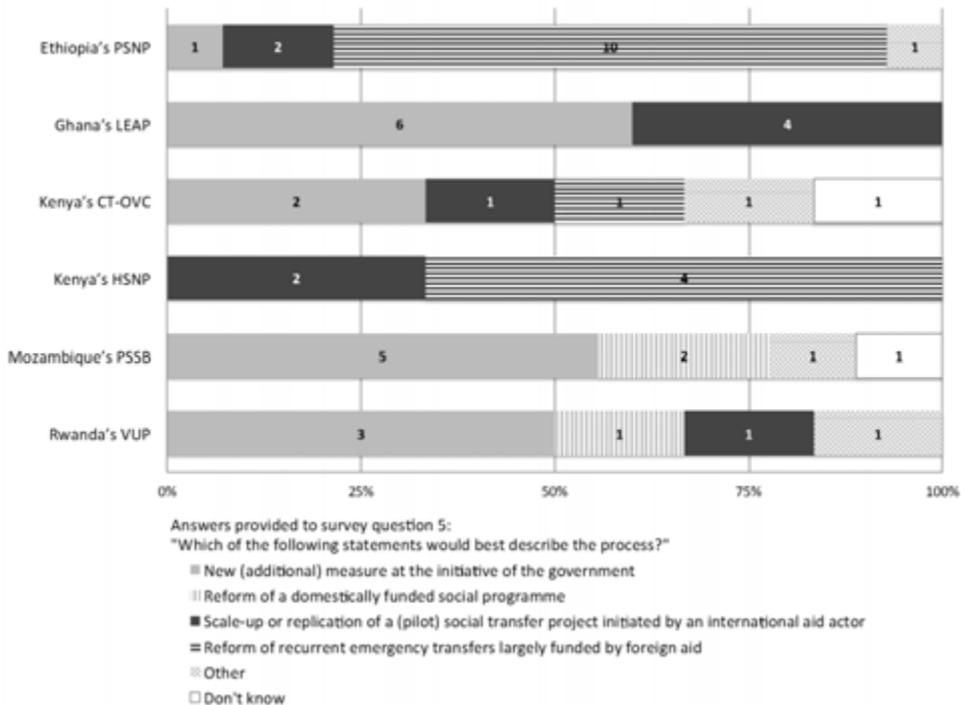
This first empirical chapter examines whether foreign aid actors can successfully enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country context (our first sub-question). It does so in light of the multiple-case study of sizable social transfer schemes introduced in Section 3.2. The chapter starts by considering whether foreign aid actors are perceived to have provided the main impetus for the introduction of the selected schemes (Section 4.1). It proceeds to contemplate the early development process of each of the dozen schemes, underlining the extent to which foreign aid actors appear to have accompanied them (Section 4.2). Then, it seeks to appreciate the overall level of involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of the selected set of sizable schemes, and reflects on some of the main mechanisms through which foreign aid actors are found to exercise their influence (Section 4.3). Last, it attempts to assess the level of social, political and financial sustainability of the schemes, and puts this in perspective with the degree of involvement of foreign aid actors in their origins (Section 4.4). Concluding remarks summarise insights into the triggering, supporting and catalytic roles of foreign aid actors in social transfer policy uptake brought by this comparative analysis, and underline follow-up questions raised by findings.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> This chapter builds on the UNRISD Working Paper No. 2015-3, as well as a paper presented at the conference on 'Social Protection in Africa' organised by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) in collaboration with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Nairobi on 12-13 November 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, which was subsequently accepted for publication in an edited book of selected proceedings (Cherrier forthcoming).

## 4.1 Attempting to Locate and Characterise the Initial Impulse

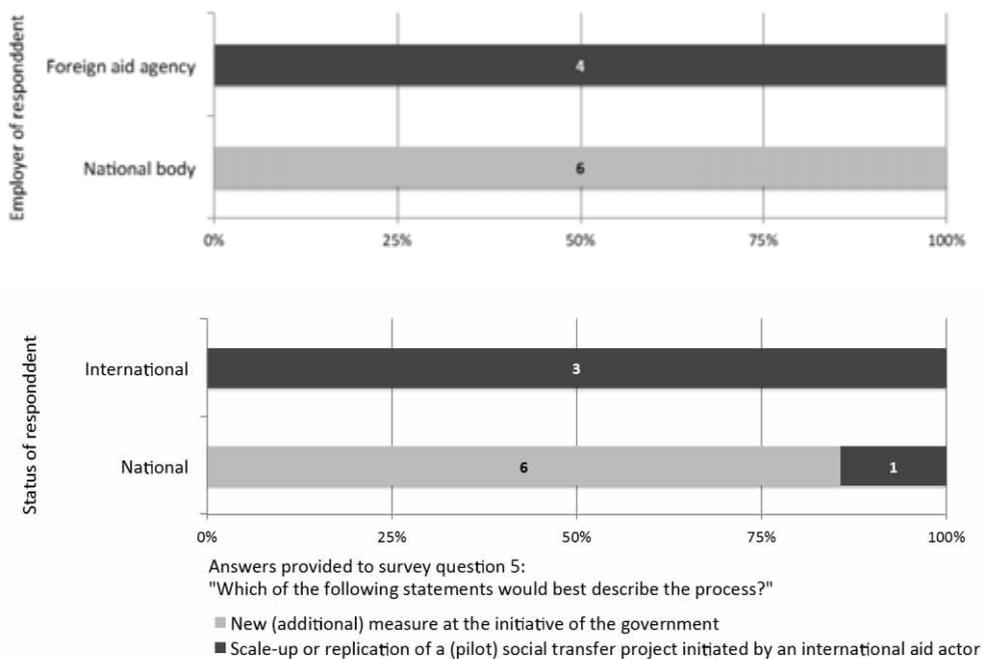
In Section 2.4, we posited that in a low-income African country context foreign aid actors can provide an impetus for the introduction of a permanent and scaled-up social transfer scheme through policy dialogue over fiscal, social protection and/or humanitarian issues. Echoing the trends in aid for social transfers uncovered in Section 2.1, this working hypothesis suggests four possible origin stories for sizable schemes: (a) foreign aid actors had no influence, and the scheme was introduced at the sole initiative of the government (possibly responding to civil society pressure); (b) the scheme has emerged out of concerns over fiscal sustainability, under IFIs' pressure to reform existing social assistance measures; (c) the scheme was introduced with the support of foreign aid actors working towards the expansion of basic social protection; (d) the scheme has emerged from efforts to reform assistance to populations affected by recurrent emergency crises, under humanitarian aid actors' pressure. In a first approach, the working hypothesis was tested in the online survey (Appendix A.1, question 5).



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-1** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Initial Process

For a number of schemes, not enough responses could be collected to draw any conclusions (Table 3-5 in Chapter 3). Hence, the analysis presented here focuses on the six schemes for which at least six responses were collected—namely, Ethiopia’s PSNP, Ghana’s LEAP, Kenya’s CT-OVC, Kenya’s HSNP, Mozambique’s PSSB and Rwanda’s VUP. Figure 4-1 provides an overview of responses provided for these schemes. What is immediately noticeable is that practitioners’ views diverge greatly on which of the four response options best captures the origins of a given scheme. Yet, out of 66 respondents, only seven (11 per cent) saw the need to opt for the ‘other’ option, thereby indicating that none of the proposed storylines adequately described the process, and only two respondents did not know.

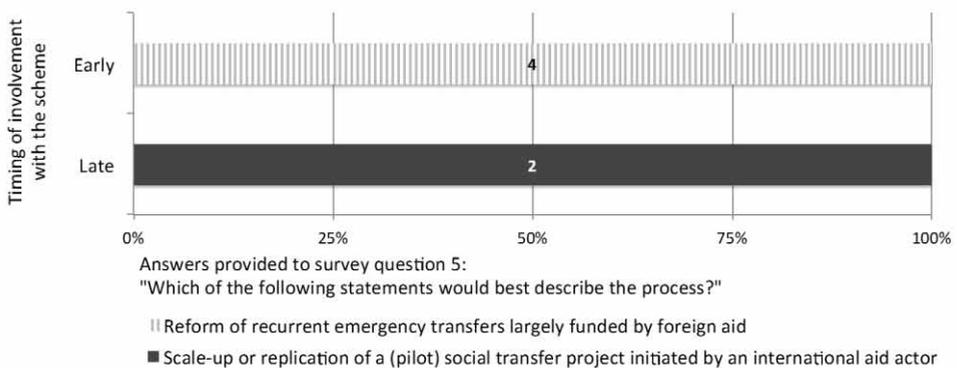


Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-2** Perceived Origins of Ghana’s LEAP

This apparent confusion suggests that the profile of respondents (their position, their period and degree of involvement, their knowledge of the policy making process, etc.) can influence the perception they have of the origins of a given social transfer scheme. Most schemes have several points in time that characterise change, and decisions taken at these points reflect complex interactions between several actors and factors. Practitioners would sit in different decision loops, and

“those in the loops do not see from inside one loop other equally significant loops” (Deacon 2013, p. 6). In that regard, a few cases are worth noting. The case of Ghana’s LEAP is particularly interesting. As shown in Figure 4-2, while respondents working for a foreign aid agency perceive the scheme as the “scale-up or replication of a (pilot) social transfers project initiated by an international aid actor,” respondents working for a national organisation perceive it as a “new (additional) measure at the initiative of the government.” A similar divide appears when comparing responses provided by national Ghanaian vs. international practitioners working in Ghana. The only national practitioner who provided an answer similar to that of international practitioners also indicated having worked extensively for foreign aid agencies as a national consultant. Nonetheless, when comparing responses across the twelve selected schemes, no particular trend emerges suggesting that respondents working for a national body (or national practitioners) would tend to assess the origins of a scheme differently from respondents working for a foreign aid agency (or international practitioners).



Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-3** Perceived Origins of Kenya’s HSNP

Another remarkable pattern appears in the case of Kenya’s HSNP. As shown in Figure 4-3, while the four respondents engaged early in the process perceive it as the “reform of recurrent emergency transfers largely funded by foreign aid,” the two respondents engaged later in the process perceive it as the “scale-up or replication of a (pilot) social transfer project initiated by an international aid actor.” When comparing responses across all twelve schemes, no similar pattern by timing of involvement with the scheme appears.

Interestingly, all six HSNP respondents, national and international practitioners alike, opted for one of the two response options indicating that the scheme has

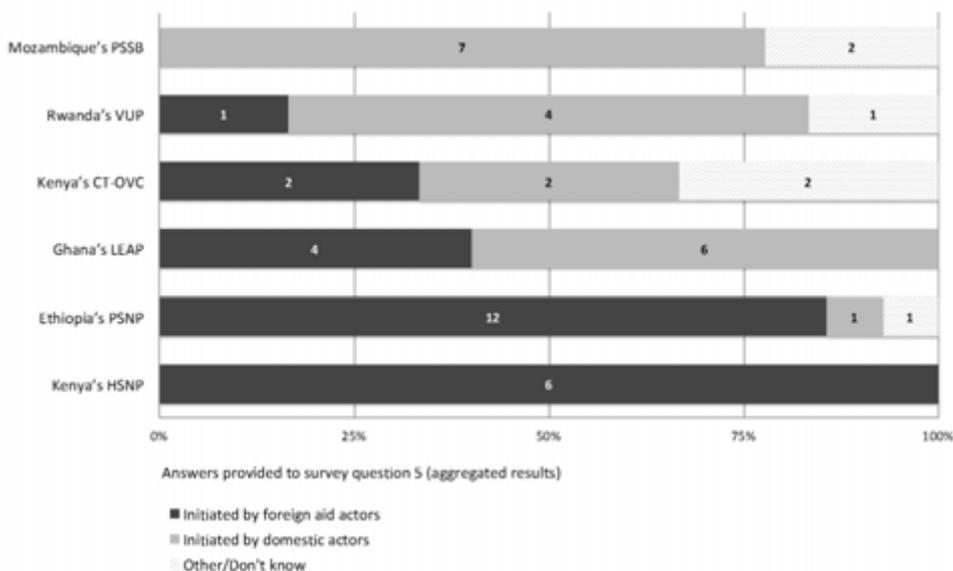
been “initiated” or “largely funded” by foreign aid actors. Table 4-1 indicates how the four response options to survey question 5 can be aggregated according to the locus of impulse they suggest (process primarily initiated by domestic actors or foreign aid actors) and to the type of policy change they represent (introduction of a new measure or reform of an existing measure).

**Table 4-1** Aggregation of Types of Initial Processes Proposed in Online Survey

Locus of impulse	Type of change	New measure	Reform of an existing measure
	Initiated by domestic actors	(a)	New (additional) measure at the initiative of the government
Initiated by foreign aid actors	(c)	Scale-up or replication of a (pilot) social transfer project initiated by an international aid actor	(d) Reform of recurrent emergency transfers largely funded by foreign aid

Note: The proposed types of processes refer to the response options to survey question 5 (Appendix A.1).

Source: Author.

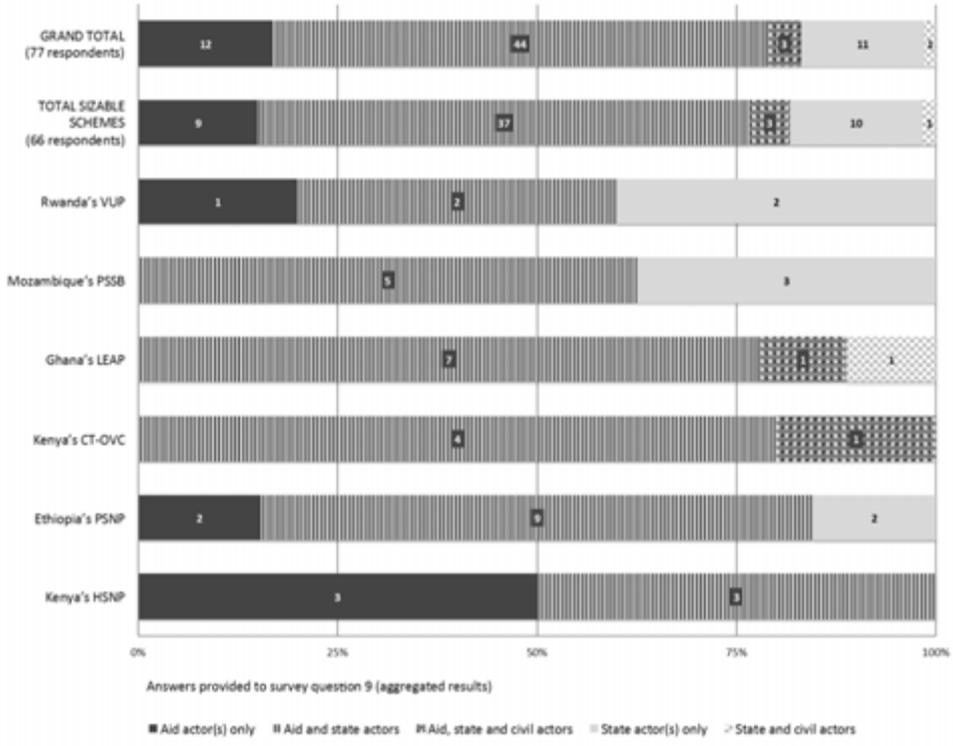


Note: Response options to survey question 5 are aggregated as presented in Table 4-1.

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-4** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Foreign Aid vs. Domestic Initiators

Figure 4-4 presents the result of this first type of aggregation, which represents an attempt to uncover whether foreign aid actors (as opposed to domestic actors and factors) have been the main instigators of at least some of the selected schemes. With the notable exception of Kenya’s HSNP, no clear-cut picture emerges. Rather, what appears can be interpreted as various degrees of perceived level of influence from foreign aid actors, from very high in the case of Ethiopia’s PSNP to minimal or non-existent in the case of Mozambique’s PSSB.



Note: Response options to survey question 9 were aggregated into three categories: “state [and political] actors” (first nine options), “civil [society] actors” (following four options), and “[foreign] aid actors” (last eight options) (Appendix A.1). Respondents could select up to five main initiators, resulting in any combination of these three categories. No respondent indicated ‘civil actors only’ or ‘aid and civil actors.’

Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-5** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Main Initiators

Respondents who opted for the ‘other’ response option to survey question 5 indicated that “[t]he origins are more subtle” (respondent OS71), and that the introduction of a scheme can be “the result of a complex interaction between Government and development partners” (respondent OS33). In the case of

Uganda's SAGE, for instance, survey respondents suggest that "[t]he scheme was introduced as a joint effort of a government ministry and a donor agency and at least two multilateral agencies" (respondent OS77); it is "a pilot sponsored by an international aid actor at the request of and in partnership with the Government" (respondent OS3). In such a context, it may not be possible to establish whether the first impulse (that is the very first idea to consider a social transfer policy instrument) has come from foreign aid actors or domestic players. When explicitly asked to identify "the main initiator(s) of the process that eventually led to the introduction of the scheme" (Appendix A.1, question 9), respondents predominantly pointed to a combination of foreign aid and state actors.<sup>126</sup> As shown in Figure 4-5, across the twelve schemes, 15 per cent of respondents only name foreign aid actors as the main initiators of the scheme, and 67 per cent suggested a combination of foreign aid and domestic actors. Hence, overall, foreign aid actors were cited among the main initiators by over 80 per cent of respondents either as sole initiators or acting in conjunction with state actors.

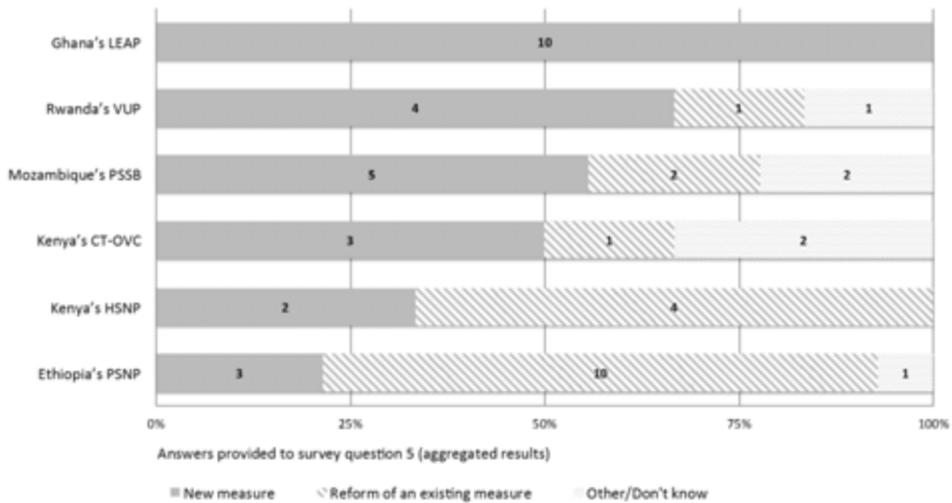
For the six schemes for which at least six responses could be collected, most respondents suggest a combination of "aid and state actors." In the case of Kenya's CT-OVC, all five respondents point to such a combination. This sheds light on the real mix of answers they provide to question 5 (Figure 4-1), in which: one foreign aid practitioner involved since the beginning of the process points to complex origins; two members of national organisations indicate the process has been largely supported by foreign aid (yet, one sees it as the scale-up of a pilot project, the other as the reform of emergency transfers); two international staff of foreign aid agencies suggest it has been nationally instigated (and introduced as a new measure); and one international practitioner engaged late in the process indicates not knowing. Even in the case of Kenya's HSNP, which appears in Figure 4-4 as largely driven by foreign aid actors, half of respondents identified domestic actors among the main initiators. Conversely, in the case of Mozambique's PSSB, over 60 per cent of respondents acknowledged some foreign aid actors, including IFIs, among the main initiators of the scheme, which respondent OS38 suggests, was introduced "as a means to improve resilience of poor households in face of the implementation of the structural adjustment programs."

Turning to the other type of aggregation presented in Table 4-1, Figure 4-6 represents an attempt to determine the primary motivation behind the introduction of the scheme. As suggested in Chapter 2, the perceived necessity for

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<sup>126</sup> The terminology 'state actors' is here taken in a broad sense encompassing ruling bodies and other political actors. The response options aggregated into this category cover members of government, civil servants and technicians, decentralised authorities, as well as members of parliament and non-ruling political parties and leaders.

a social transfer policy may emerge out of a primary concern over costs (to make social assistance more cost-effective or less costly) or over needs (to expand basic social protection to other groups or needs). Of course, these two concerns are not incompatible, but they would tend to mobilise different types of foreign aid actors (such as IFIs in the first case, and social protection advocates in the other), which is of interest to us. In one case, policy makers would consider reforming an existing measure, while in the other, they would envision the introduction of a new scheme. However, with the exception of Ghana’s LEAP, no clear-cut picture emerges from the analysis of the survey.



Note: Response options to survey question 5 are aggregated as presented in Table 4-1.

Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-6** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: New Measure vs. Reform

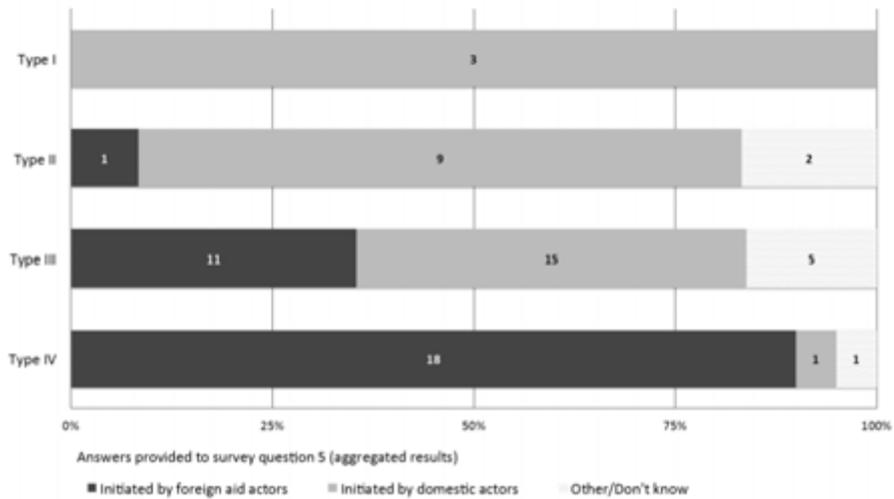
Hence, survey results suggest that the origins of the different schemes do not fall in any clear-cut categories, such as donor-driven vs. nationally instigated process. They invite to approach any categorisation of these initial processes in a more nuanced way. The other methods used in the multiple-case study (documentary analysis and in-depth interviews) brought additional insights into the origins of the schemes. As described in Section 3.2, data collection and analysis were conducted in an iterative process (Figures 3-1 and 3-5). Following the rejection of the hypothesised typology of origin stories (Table 4-1), a new tentative typology was constructed out of the first set of empirical data, tested against the next set of data gathered, and refined accordingly. The process was continued until a coherent picture emerged, which would be validated by subsequent sets of data collected.

Eventually, four broad types of origin stories have emerged in regard to the role played by foreign aid actors. This typology is summarised in Table 4-2. They reflect various degrees of involvement of foreign aid actors in the policy process, from no involvement in Type I to a very high involvement in Type IV. This is illustrated in Figure 4-7 that shows an increasing share of survey respondents suggesting, through their answer to survey question 5, that the scheme has been “initiated” or “largely funded” by foreign aid actors (Table 4-1)—from none in Type I to 90 per cent in Type IV. Likewise, based on responses to survey question 9, Figure 4-8 reveals that foreign aid actors are identified among the main initiators of the scheme across Types II, III and IV. Also, as shown in Figure 4-9, while Types I and III would tend to represent the introduction of a new initiative, Types II and IV would tend to emerge from the restructure of an existing measure. The next section introduces each of these four types of origin stories in details, and provides a narrative overview of their illustrative cases. Tracing the origins of each of the twelve selected schemes is useful to capture the degree and nature of interactions between foreign aid and domestic factors.

**Table 4-2** A Typology of Origin Stories of Social Transfers in Sub-Saharan Africa

Type	Storyline	Main characteristics of the initial phase	Illustrative cases
I	Domestic initiative to expand benefits rooted in national historical, geographical, political and cultural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process initiated by ruling elites, not necessarily within a social protection agenda</li> <li>• Initial design defined within state bodies</li> <li>• Measure funded out of general revenues, at least initially without direct aid support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesotho’s OAP</li> <li>• Malawi’s FISP</li> </ul>
II	Restructuring of a domestically funded social policy measure as a process of retrenchment, economic restructuring or system consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process initiated by ruling elites as part of efforts to sustain the assistance system</li> <li>• Initial design defined within state bodies, possibly with foreign aid support</li> <li>• Measure funded out of general revenues, with possible aid co-funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabo Verde’s MSP</li> <li>• Mozambique’s PSSB</li> <li>• Zimbabwe’s BEAM</li> </ul>
III	Aid-supported initiative to expand antipoverty or social protection provisions informed by global poverty reduction and social protection agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context of PRSP-framed development</li> <li>• Process supported by aid actors and ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>• Initial design defined between government and aid actors</li> <li>• Measure funded with substantial levels of aid support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghana’s LEAP</li> <li>• Kenya’s CT-OVC</li> <li>• Rwanda’s VUP</li> <li>• Uganda’s SAGE</li> <li>• Zambia’s SCT</li> </ul>
IV	Aid-supported initiative to restructure recurrent aid-funded emergency transfers in a context of protracted crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context of recurrent large-scale food crises</li> <li>• Process promoted by aid actors, possibly with ministry in charge of rural development</li> <li>• Initial design largely influenced by aid actors</li> <li>• Measure primarily funded by foreign aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethiopia’s PSNP</li> <li>• Kenya’s HSNP</li> </ul>

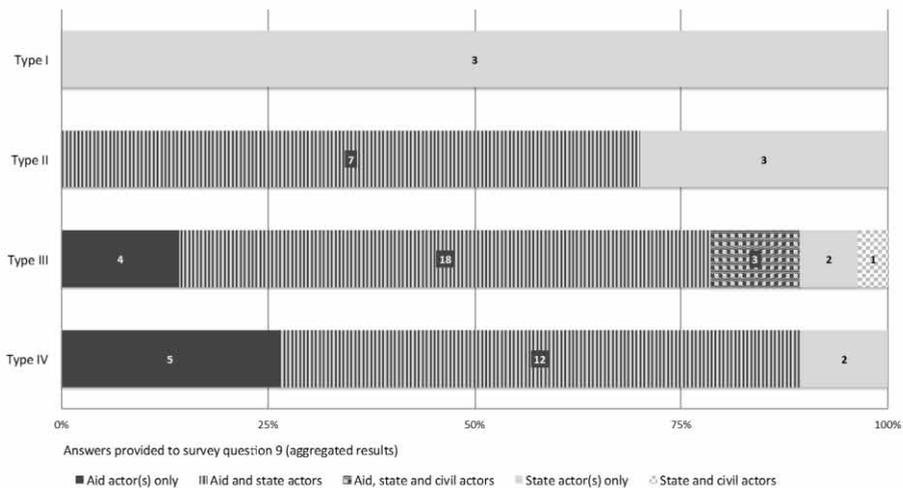
Source: Author.



Note: Response options to survey question 5 are aggregated as presented in Table 4-1.

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

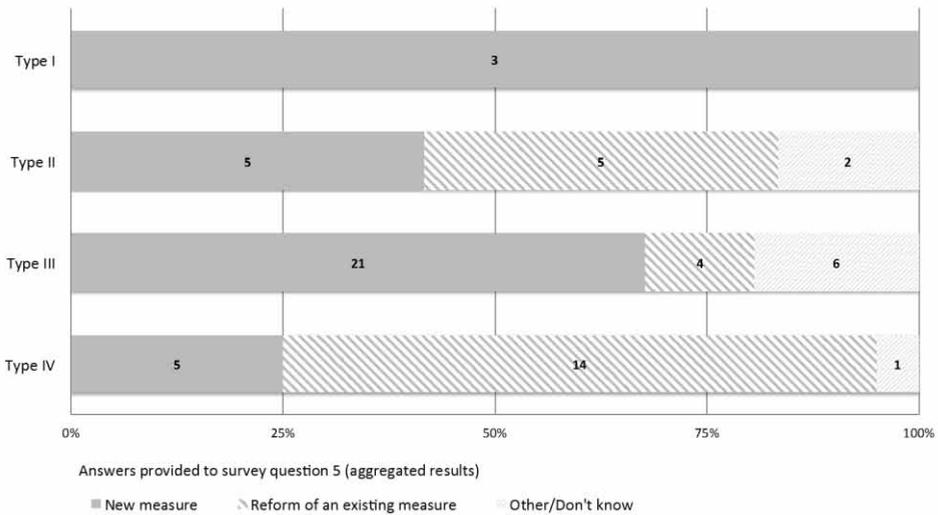
**Figure 4-7** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: Foreign Aid vs. Domestic Initiators



Notes: Response options to survey question 9 are here aggregated into three categories: "state [and political] actors" (first nine options), "civil [society] actors" (following four options), and "[foreign] aid actors" (last eight options) (Appendix A.1). Respondents could select up to five main initiators, resulting in any combination of these three categories. No respondent indicated "civil actors only" or "aid and civil actors."

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-8** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: Main Initiators



Note: Response options to survey question 5 are aggregated as presented in Table 4-1.

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-9** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: New Measure vs. Reform

## 4.2 Tracing the Origins of the Selected Schemes

As explained in Section 3.2, within the multiple-case study, the investigation into the origins and features of the selected schemes informed the development of causal narratives focused on actors (with their capacities and vested interests), institutional framework (in terms of incentives and constraints) and their interaction (processes) to mobilise political will and resources for social transfers. Table 4-3 provides an overview of the findings of this analysis. It summarises key elements of the schemes' origins (column 1) and features—coverage, funding arrangements, technical and institutional design, level of national ownership (columns 2-5). The rest of this section offers a descriptive and chronological account of the genesis of each of the twelve selected schemes. It is focused on establishing whether foreign aid actors have played any triggering and/or supporting role throughout the development of these schemes. It is useful to apprehend how foreign aid actors interact with domestic actors to exercise their influence. This review also illuminates the four broad types of origin stories introduced above (Table 4-2).

**Table 4-3** Origins and Features of Selected Social Transfer Schemes in Sub-Saharan Africa

Country, scheme name, start date	[1] Origins <sup>(a)</sup>	[2] Coverage	[3] Funding arrangements <sup>(b)</sup>	[4] Technical & institutional design features	[5] Level of national ownership
<b>Cabo Verde</b>	<b>Type II</b>	<b>Scaled-up</b>	<b>Domestic resources only</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>Very high</b>
<i>Pensão Social Mínima</i> (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part of efforts to consolidate the social protection system</li> <li>Progressive shift from food aid (project approach) to targeted budget support to general budget support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National coverage</li> <li>21,200 persons, 46% of population over 60, or 4.4% of total population, as of 2013</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (100%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unconditional cash transfers</li> <li>Means tested targeted at the elderly (over 60) and the disabled</li> <li>Managed by the National Centre of Social Pensions and overseen by the Ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>Entitlement design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal basis</li> <li>Fully domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Type IV</b>	<b>Scaled-up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Productive Safety Net Programme (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of large-scale protracted food crises</li> <li>Emerged as a measure to better assist the predictably poor</li> <li>Promoted by Ministry of Agriculture and Prime Minister</li> <li>Substantial technical support from aid actors</li> <li>Launched at full scale a few months before 2005 general elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National level rollout</li> <li>1.6 million households or 7.2 million people or about 20.4% of the economically active population in 2006</li> <li>7.8 million people incl. 242,000 households on direct support in 2009-10</li> <li>5.2 million persons (incl. 22% on direct support) in 8 out of 10 regions, as of 2014-15</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust Fund: World Bank, USAID, CIDA, DFID, Irish Aid, EC, WFP, etc.</li> <li>Government (8% in 2008, exp. 14% over 2015-2020)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on graduation out of poverty</li> <li>Direct food/cash transfers and public works</li> <li>Poverty-based targeting</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry in charge of agriculture</li> <li>Rationing design</li> <li>Countercyclical funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal basis</li> <li>High aid-dependency</li> <li>Delivered by national and international bodies</li> </ul>

Country, start date	[1] Origins <sup>(a)</sup>	[2] Coverage	[3] Funding arrangements <sup>(b)</sup>	[4] Technical & institutional design features	[5] Level of national ownership
<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Type III</b>	<b>Sizable, scaling-up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>High</b>
Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of HIV/AIDS pandemic</li> <li>Emerged as a poverty reduction measure out of PRSP process linked to HIPC initiative</li> <li>Promoted by Ministry of Manpower</li> <li>Substantial technical support from aid actors</li> <li>Launched with a progressive rollout plan a few months before 2008 general elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Piloted in all regions</li> <li>74,000 households or 1.5% of the population, as of 2013</li> <li>Progressive scaling-up: target of 200,000 households by 2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-pilot, 2006: UNICEF</li> <li>Pilot, 2008-2012: Government (HIPC initiative funds)</li> <li>Rollout, indicative breakdown for 2014: Government (63%)</li> <li>DFID (26%, grant, 2012-2016)</li> <li>World Bank (10%, credit, 2010-2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on poverty reduction</li> <li>Conditional cash transfers</li> <li>Mix of categorical and poverty targeting: OVC caregivers, over 65 and disabled</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak legal basis</li> <li>Largely domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Kenya</b>	<b>Type III</b>	<b>Sizable, scaling-up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>High</b>
Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of HIV/AIDS pandemic</li> <li>UNICEF lobbying in the run-up of 2002 parliamentary elections</li> <li>Promoted by newly elected Minister of Home Affairs</li> <li>Pre-pilot with MPs and Ministry in 2004</li> <li>Launched with a progressive rollout plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress towards nationwide coverage</li> <li>152,000 households, as of May 2013</li> <li>Progressive scaling-up: additional 100,000 households anticipated in 2014</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-pilot, 2004: Government (tax)</li> <li>UNICEF and SIDA</li> <li>Rollout, indicative breakdown for 2013: Government (31%, tax)</li> <li>Trust Fund: UNICEF &amp; DFID (30%, grant, until 2016), World Bank (39%, loan &amp; grant, until 2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on child protection and human development</li> <li>Cash transfers</li> <li>Mix of geographical, categorical and poverty targeting: OVC caregivers</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal basis (Social Assistance Bill)</li> <li>Increasing domestic funding</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>

Country, scheme name, start date	[1] Origins (a)	[2] Coverage	[3] Funding arrangements (b)	[4] Technical & institutional design features	[5] Level of national ownership
<b>Kenya</b>	<b>Type IV</b>	<b>Sizable, scaling up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Hunger Safety Net Programme (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of large-scale protracted food crises</li> <li>Emerged as a measure to test an alternative approach to food aid</li> <li>Pilot phase promoted by DFID within larger social protection programme</li> <li>Scale-up phase hosted within National Drought Management Authority</li> <li>Substantial technical support from aid actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four counties of Northern Kenya</li> <li>69,000 households in 161 sub-locations, as of 2012</li> <li>77,000 households or 462,000 regular beneficiaries, as of 2015</li> <li>Over 1m people in total during 2015 crisis</li> <li>Progressive scaling-up: target of 100,000 regular households in 478 sub-locations by 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot phase (2008-2012): DFID (100%)</li> <li>Scale-up phase (2013-2017): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (32% of core caseload, as of 2015)</li> <li>DFID and DFAT</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unconditional cash transfers</li> <li>Poverty-based targeting</li> <li>Regular transfers to the chronically poor and emergency transfers during times of crisis</li> <li>Overseen by the National Drought Management Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal basis</li> <li>High aid-dependency</li> <li>Delivered by national and international bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Lesotho</b>	<b>Type I</b>	<b>Full scale</b>	<b>Domestic resources only</b>	<b>Categorically targeted</b>	<b>Very high</b>
Old Age Pension (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of HIV/AIDS pandemic</li> <li>Cabinet's decision made as part of 'politics as usual' to provide a helping hand to the elderly affected by the HIV pandemic, and probably to ensure equity with beneficiaries of South Africa's Old Age Grant, as well as political credibility of the new regional administration</li> <li>No pressure or support from aid actors</li> <li>Launched at full scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National coverage</li> <li>80,000 beneficiaries or 4% of the population, as of 2011</li> <li>Full scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (100%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unconditional cash transfers</li> <li>Pure categorical targeting: citizens over 70, not entitled to any other public pension or benefit (individual targeting)</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning</li> <li>Implemented through Lesotho Postal Services and other public bodies</li> <li>Benefit level successively adjusted to inflation</li> <li>Entitlement design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal basis (Old Age Pensions Act)</li> <li>Fully domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>

Country, scheme name, start date	[1] Origins (a)	[2] Coverage	[3] Funding arrangements (b)	[4] Technical & institutional design features	[5] Level of national ownership
<b>Malawi</b>	<b>Type I</b>	<b>Scaled up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Categorically targeted</b>	<b>High</b>
Farm Input Subsidy Programme (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of drought and dependence on imported food</li> <li>Building on long history of different forms of input subsidy and distributions</li> <li>Conceived for agricultural development but also political patronage by then weak government</li> <li>Changes/inconsistencies in donor support</li> <li>Launched at scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.5-1.7 million farmers each year, or around half the country's farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2005/06-2006/07: Government (100%)</li> <li>2007/08 onwards: Government</li> <li>Donors (13% on average over the 2007/08-2011/12 period with a peak at 41% in 2011/12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on agricultural development</li> <li>Agricultural input coupons</li> <li>Targeted at resource-poor smallholder farmers</li> <li>Targeting processes involving authorities, civil servants and other local stakeholders</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry in charge of agriculture</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal basis</li> <li>Largely domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Type II</b>	<b>Sizable, scaling-up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Programa de Subsídio Social Básico</i> (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of social unrest</li> <li>Reform of food and fuel subsidies</li> <li>Major changes in management and design over the years</li> <li>Technical and financial support from aid actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>218,000 direct beneficiaries and 454,000 indirect beneficiaries, as of 2010</li> <li>265,000 beneficiaries, as of 2012</li> <li>Target of 310,000 beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of 2014: Government (over 70%)</li> <li>DFID</li> <li>Netherlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unconditional cash transfers</li> <li>Targeted at poor households with no adults able to work</li> <li>Initiated by the Ministry of Finance, later transferred to the Ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal basis (Law on Social Protection)</li> <li>Largely domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>

Country, scheme name, start date	[1] Origins (a)	[2] Coverage	[3] Funding arrangements (b)	[4] Technical & institutional design features	[5] Level of national ownership
<b>Rwanda</b> Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (2008)	<b>Type III</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of chronic poverty and inequality</li> <li>High-level national leadership</li> <li>Led by Ministry of Local Government</li> <li>Technical and financial support from aid actors</li> <li>Launched with a progressive rollout plan</li> </ul>	<b>Sizable, scaling-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18,000 public works beneficiary households in 30 sectors, as of 2008</li> <li>112,000 public works beneficiary households in 203 sectors, and 84,000 households receiving direct support in 330 sectors, as of 2015</li> <li>Progressive scaling-up: target of 416 sectors by 2018</li> </ul>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b> As of 2010/11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (over 65%)</li> <li>Donors (incl. DFID, EU, UNICEF, World Bank, SIDA)</li> </ul>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on extreme poverty reduction</li> <li>Direct food/cash transfers and public works</li> <li>Community-based poverty targeting</li> <li>Implemented by a semi-autonomous agency under the Ministry in charge of local development</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal basis</li> <li>Largely domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Uganda</b> Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (2010)	<b>Type III</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of HIV/AIDS pandemic and chronic poverty</li> <li>Part of Expanding Social Protection programme led by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development</li> <li>Pilot project supported by DFID, Irish Aid and UNICEF</li> <li>Government decision to support a progressive national rollout of the SAGE-SCG announced in 2015</li> </ul>	<b>Sizable, scaling-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 districts out of 111, as of 2015</li> <li>123,000 recipients, 600,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries or 1.4% of the population, as of 2015</li> <li>Progressive scaling-up: target of 216,000 SCG recipients in 55 districts by 2020</li> </ul>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b> Pilot, 2010-2015: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (5%)</li> <li>DFID (85%)</li> <li>Irish Aid (10%)</li> </ul> Rollout, 2016-2020: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (34%)</li> <li>DFID &amp; Irish Aid (66%)</li> </ul>	<b>Categorically targeted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unconditional cash transfers</li> <li>V5FG targeted at labour-constrained households (to be phased out) and SCG at citizens over 65 (to be rolled out)</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<b>Moderate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal basis</li> <li>Largely aid-funded but increasing domestic funding</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>

Country, scheme name, start date	[1] Origins <sup>(a)</sup>	[2] Coverage	[3] Funding arrangements <sup>(b)</sup>	[4] Technical & institutional design features	[5] Level of national ownership
<b>Zambia</b>	<b>Type III</b>	<b>Sizable, scaling-up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Social Cash Transfer Scheme (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of HIV/AIDS pandemic</li> <li>Donor-driven pilots and initial scale-up plan</li> <li>Supported by Ministry of Community Development and included in National Development Plan</li> <li>Included in political manifestos in 2011 general elections</li> <li>Significant increase of government allocation announced in 2013</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress towards nationwide coverage of 10% poorest</li> <li>61,000 households in 19 districts, as of 2013</li> <li>Progressive scaling-up: target of 189,000 households in 31 districts in 2014</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-pilot, 2003: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GTZ</li> </ul> </li> <li>Rollout, as of Dec 2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> <li>DFID</li> <li>UNICEF</li> <li>Irish Aid</li> <li>ILO</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on poverty reduction</li> <li>Cash transfers</li> <li>Mix of geographical, categorical and poverty targeting</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry in charge of social protection</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No legal basis</li> <li>Largely aid-funded but increasing domestic funding</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	<b>Type II</b>	<b>Scaled-up</b>	<b>Domestic &amp; aid resources</b>	<b>Poverty-targeted</b>	<b>Very high</b>
Basic Education Assistance Module (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of macroeconomic crisis and HIV/AIDS pandemic</li> <li>Envisioned under Poverty Alleviation Action Plan by Ministry of Labour with Ministry of Education and World Bank</li> <li>Launched by government on a national scale despite lending suspension</li> <li>Revived in 2009 with donor support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented in all 59 districts, in both urban and rural areas</li> <li>970,000 primary and secondary school children in 2005</li> <li>530,000 primary and secondary school children in 2012, or about 47% of needy children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2001-2008: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government (100%)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2009 onwards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government</li> <li>Donors (45% over 2009-2011) through a multi-donor funding mechanism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused on school retention</li> <li>Targeted school fee waivers</li> <li>School community-based targeting</li> <li>Hosted within the Ministry of Labour and Social Services</li> <li>Rationing design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal basis (Social Welfare Assistance Act)</li> <li>Largely domestically funded, and initially fully domestically funded</li> <li>Delivered by national bodies</li> </ul>

Notes: <sup>(a)</sup> The typology of origin stories adopted here is presented in Table 4-3 and discussed in Section 4.2; <sup>(b)</sup> Government spending may include support from donors providing budget support.

Source: Author.

## **Type I – Domestic Initiatives to Expand Social Benefits**

The origins of Lesotho's OAP and Malawi's FISP fall into what is here qualified as Type I. These cases illustrate a situation where a scheme emerges out of domestic political dynamics in the absence of specific support by development partners, or even against the advice of international financial institutions. In regard to foreign actors' involvement, these two cases differ slightly though. While Lesotho's OAP has remained a fully domestically funded initiative, Malawi's FISP has received later in its development direct donor support, although accompanied by recurrent government/donor disagreements.

### *Lesotho's Old Age Pension*

The case of Lesotho's OAP is an example of a social transfer scheme that has emerged as a domestic initiative rooted in national historical, geographical and cultural factors. It is often cited as a demonstration that social transfers are affordable even in low-income countries. It is the interesting case of a country faced with limited resources, which nevertheless introduced, without donor support, a universal pension to all citizens aged 70 and over. The plan for a universal pension was on the left-wing ruling party's manifesto since 1993—year of the restoration of democracy, probably out of concern for equity between Basotho residing in Lesotho and fellow Basotho living in surrounding areas of South Africa and entitled to the South African Old Age Grant.

When the country decided to introduce the OAP in 2004, its overall fiscal balance had turned from a deficit to an increasing surplus, reflecting the temporary rise in receipts from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and improvement in domestic revenue collection following the launching of the Lesotho Revenue Authority. Still, Lesotho's medium-term outlook was clouded by several downside risks, including a further loss of trade preferences for the export sector and a decline in SACU receipts relative to GDP (IMF 2005). The intention to remain independent of donor assistance was, however, clearly expressed by the Minister of Finance in Parliament (Pelham 2007). It was suggested that the OAP was a backhanded way to increase tax revenue—the Minister of Finance suggested that rather than raising the size of income tax by a large amount, the government could lower the income level at which people start paying taxes and increase it incrementally (Second Reading of the Pensions Bill, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004 cited in Pelham 2007). The decision to adopt a pure categorical targeting approach, whereby taxpayers may possibly benefit from the scheme, may indeed be seen as a step in that direction. The OAP was announced some 18 months after the Lesotho Revenue Authority became operational. The scheme has been overseen directly by

the Department of Pensions situated within the powerful Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, rather than the Department of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. This further suggests that the pensions may have been primarily conceptualised as an economic and political instrument rather than a poverty reduction or social welfare measure.

### *Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme*

The government of Malawi embarked on the FISP in 2005 despite resistance from donors.<sup>127</sup> It funded it from central revenues in two successive years, drawing on the opportunities for independent policy afforded by the introduction of large-scale budget support by its major donors (Chirwa and Dorward 2013). This programme follows and builds on a long history of different forms of agricultural input subsidy in a country where an estimated 85 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood (World Bank 2013b). In their substantive account of this history, Ephraim Chirwa and Andrew Dorward (2013) underline the extent to which delivering patronage to sustain political power has been a core determinant of shaping agricultural policies since independence.<sup>128</sup>

Large-scale input distributions by the government started in 1993 (Chirwa and Dorward 2013) in response to the removal of fertilizer subsidies, currency devaluation, the collapse of the credit system for maize inputs, and drought. In 1998, the government implemented a universal free provision of agricultural inputs. Under this 'Starter Pack' programme, every smallholder farmer was provided with enough maize seeds and fertilizer to plant 0.1 hectares of land. Introduced just before the 1999 presidential elections, the programme was highly politicized, and seen as particularly beneficial for the southern region, the ruling party's power base. The programme, funded by DFID, was continued in 1999/2000 amid controversy. DFID support was subsequently scaled back to a 'Targeted Input Programme' (TIP) out of concerns about the politicization of the Starter Pack programme, its high cost, its inefficiency as regards targeting and benefits to the poor, possible crowding effects on input markets, and apparent emphasis on maize rather than diversification (Chirwa and Dorward 2013, p. 81). This targeted programme was continued until the 2004/05 season; it was phased out following

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<sup>127</sup> Apart from strong support from Jeffrey Sachs and the Millennium Programme (Chirwa and Dorward 2013).

<sup>128</sup> This history also reveals the frequent changes and inconsistencies in donor policies in regard to fertilizers, with, for instance, the World Bank agreeing on the re-introduction of fertilizer subsidies in the 1990s (following their removal in the 1980s) and then later insisting on their removal and opposing their re-introduction under the Starter Pack programme (Harrigan 2003).

the withdrawal of DFID's financial support as the sole donor to the programme (Chinsinga 2007, p. 4).

Poor harvests in 2000/01 and 2001/02 positioned food security and fertilizer subsidies as major political issues in the period leading to the 2004 presidential elections. Both the major parties and candidates campaigned with promises of different forms of fertilizer subsidy. Following the 2004 elections and food shortages in 2005, the government introduced a much larger programme providing approximately half of Malawian smallholder farmers with much larger packs of inputs at highly subsidized prices.<sup>129</sup> Its stated objective was to improve crop production at household and national levels. But it was also seen as a strategic response to the political challenges facing President Bingu wa Mutharika as he established his government without a majority in parliament (Chirwa and Dorward 2013, p. 82). This highly popular measure could help garner widespread support from rural beneficiaries and offer opportunities to divert resources for political patronage. It certainly allowed Mutharika to win a broad-based landslide second term election in 2009 (Chinsinga 2012). The programme attracted immediate controversy, and the sceptical views of development partners (Chinsinga 2007). But it was very popular in Malawi and has since continued (Gondwe 2016). The programme has even been held up as an example for other countries to follow and large-scale input subsidies are now being implemented in a large number of countries (Chirwa and Dorward 2013). Later on donors started supporting the programme,<sup>130</sup> but more as a social protection measure even though it had originally been conceived as an agricultural development initiative, and government/donor disagreements have continued until today.

Persistent divergences over the appropriateness of the FISP as an instrument for pursuing the poverty reduction and agricultural development agendas of donors and the mass patronage and agricultural development agendas of domestic politics lay in different understandings of state responsibilities in agriculture and social protection (Sahley et al. 2005). Donors have supported re-design efforts, particularly around targeting<sup>131</sup> and distribution mechanisms.<sup>132</sup> But if the FISP

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<sup>129</sup> The programme, then introduced under the official name 'Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme' (AISP), is today referred to as the Farm Input Subsidy Programme.

<sup>130</sup> Donor contribution represented on average 13 per cent of the FISP's total budget over the 2007/08-2011/12 period, with a peak at 41 per cent in 2011/12 to help the government overcome the foreign exchange shortage crisis (World Bank 2013b).

<sup>131</sup> According to its 2011 implementation guidelines, FISP is targeted at "resource poor Malawian farmers of all gender categories" with special attention to "vulnerable groups: elderly, HIV positive, female, child, orphan, and physically challenged headed households".

continues to be politically sensitive for being the biggest programme to reach the rural poor, there is now some consensus that it is not an effective pro-poor instrument. Recent studies suggest that the distribution of the subsidy is quite equitably spread across the rural population, if not biased towards the better-off quintiles (World Bank 2013b). Meanwhile, the FISP crowds out funding for agriculture<sup>133</sup> and social protection. It mobilises over 80 per cent of the financial resources available for social transfers.<sup>134</sup> In view of the contribution of the FISP to agricultural growth and national food self-sufficiency,<sup>135</sup> the government has continued to run the programme, while attempting to progressively improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Pilot reforms were introduced during the 2015/16 growing season in view of addressing major recurring challenges.<sup>136</sup> Financial commitment has been confirmed for the 2016/17 growing season, during which further structural and financial improvements to the system are foreseen. (Gondwe 2016)

## **Type II – Initiatives to Restructure National Assistance Programmes**

In contrast to the two cases above, a social transfer scheme may grow out of rather smooth cooperation between a government and its development partners. In what we qualify as Type II-origins, foreign aid actors act in support of domestic efforts to restructure existing assistance programmes for more efficiency and financial sustainability, often with the idea to progressively consolidate a nascent national social protection system. Three of the twelve selected schemes appear to fall in that category. In Mozambique, the PSSB was born in a context of civil war as a measure to mitigate the adverse consequences of structural adjustment. It was expanded to accompany the reform of an unsustainable subsidy system. In Cabo Verde, the PSM arose from the desire to rationalise an embryonic social pension system. In

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<sup>132</sup> For instance, USAID and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) have supported the Ministry of Agriculture in piloting the use of electronic vouchers. The project is implemented with the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and FHI360. It scaled up to 18 districts in 2014/15.

<sup>133</sup> The FISP has absorbed 69 per cent of the Ministry of Agriculture's financial resources since inception and 51 per cent of total public spending in agriculture over the 2007/08-2011/12 period (World Bank 2013b).

<sup>134</sup> FISP is defined as a line item under Social Expenditures in the national budget. In 2012/13, the FISP represented 4.6 per cent of GDP or 11.5 per cent of the total budget expenditures, when all other social protection funding accounted for just 2.6 per cent—half the African average (World Bank 2013b).

<sup>135</sup> As uncovered by Dorward et al. (2013), for instance.

<sup>136</sup> In its 2016/2017 budget statement, the Minister of Finance acknowledged that the FISP had experienced "significant cost overruns every year," and that "[v]arious studies have revealed that only about 50 per cent of the actual beneficiaries of the programme were eligible beneficiaries." (Gondwe 2016)

both cases, donors have played a supportive role through technical and financial assistance— primarily through budget support. In Zimbabwe, the BEAM results from the redesign of a poorly performing targeted school fee waivers.

### *Mozambique's Programa de Subsídio Social Básico*

Mozambique's PSSB is one of the earliest-established cash transfer scheme in a low-income African country. The structural adjustment programme of 1987 sparked its creation in a context of war and widespread chronic poverty. In recognition of the potentially negative impact of the structural adjustment on welfare, the World Bank recommended in 1989 a set of mitigating measures, including an improved coverage of the existing ration system and indirect transfers through subsidies on inferior goods, such as yellow maize; but a targeted cash transfer scheme was being portrayed by consultants as a more efficient alternative to the costly and poorly functioning ration scheme (Low et al. 1999). The scheme began in September 1990 as an emergency programme to alleviate poverty among urban dwellers.<sup>137</sup> At that time, there was a particular need to address the influx into cities of persons dislocated by war and the economic hardships imposed by war. The urban cash transfer scheme was also perceived as a way to start reforming the subsidy system with minimal political and social resistance. Until 1997, it was known as the GAPVU cash transfer programme, from the name of the unit managing it,<sup>138</sup> a small unit for the assistance to vulnerable people created in 1990 and responding directly to the Ministry of Finance. Since inception, the programme has remained primarily funded out of domestic revenue. It has received continuous technical and financial support from a number of development partners, including UNICEF and the World Bank, as well as other contributors to the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme (Massingarella and Nhate 2006).<sup>139</sup>

Major changes in programme management and design have been made over the past two decades, including a broadening of the programme's targeted population. After an initial implementation phase in 1990-1991, the programme was

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<sup>137</sup> At the time the scheme was launched, the political system was still a single-party one (Massingarella and Nhate 2006).

<sup>138</sup> Office for Assistance to the Vulnerable Population (*Gabinete de Apoio à População Vulnerável*, GAPVU).

<sup>139</sup> The SDA programme was launched in July 1987 by the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa, the African Development Bank, and the World Bank in collaboration with other multilateral and bilateral agencies. Its objective was to strengthen the capacity of governments in the Sub-Saharan African region to integrate poverty and social dimensions in the design and implementation of their structural adjustment programmes so as to mitigate the burden on the poor in the process of structural adjustment. The programme came to a close in June 1992.

reorganised in 1992 and expanded through 1996 to soften the impact of the withdrawal of the urban food ration system and food and market subsidies that were in place during the armed conflict. By 1996, it reached about 16 per cent of all urban households, nearly two-thirds of which were deemed to be absolutely poor (Datt et al. 1997). GAPVU was abolished in 1996, after detection of massive corruption, and the programme was transferred to the newly created National Institute for Social Action (*Instituto Nacional de Acção Social, INAS*), subordinate to the Ministry of Women and Social Action. After a restructuring phase in 1996-1998, the programme was expanded to rural areas and renamed the 'Food Subsidy Programme' (*Programa de Subsídio de Alimentos, PSA*). It took on its current name 'Basic Social Subsidy Programme' in 2010 to reflect the nature of the scheme as social cash transfers rather than a subsidy to purchase food.<sup>140</sup> Development partners have since supported the government defining and costing a holistic social protection system. These efforts deterred the scale-up of unsustainable and regressive *Cesta Básica* measures around fuel and food subsidies that were proposed early 2011 (UNICEF 2011).<sup>141</sup> The expansion of the PSSB approved by the Council of Ministers late 2011 responded to the need to replace ill-targeted and fiscally unsustainable subsidies (IMF 2011a). The scheme was subsequently restructured within a comprehensive national social protection system (Selvester et al. 2012). It continues to reflect government's political commitment to alleviate hunger and poverty for capacity-constrained households.

### *Cabo Verde's Pensão Social Mínima*

The government of Cabo Verde has made substantial efforts over recent decades towards the development of a sustainable social protection system. Development partners, including the European Union, have supported these efforts, adopting different approaches over the years depending on the policy and institutional context. In the 1970s, the FAIMO (*Frentes de Alta Intensidade de Mão de Obra*) public work scheme<sup>142</sup> was the main public safety net assisting the needy in Cabo Verde, mainly in rural areas. It was financed by the counterparts of foreign food aid, providing payments in exchange for work (IMF 2001). Following the change of

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<sup>140</sup> This followed a dense review of the programme conducted in 2009 within the context of the elaboration of the National Strategy for Basic Social Security (*Estratégia Nacional de Segurança Social Básica, ENSBB*).

<sup>141</sup> See Box 5-5 in Chapter 5 for an account of these foreign aid actors' efforts from the perspective of UNICEF.

<sup>142</sup> The scheme was known as AIMO before the change of political regime in 1991.

political regime,<sup>143</sup> the government introduced two non-contributory pension schemes in the 1990s: one for retired FAIMO workers (*Pensão de Solidariedade Social*)<sup>144</sup> and one for persons in need over 65 or under 18 (*Protecção Social Mínima*).<sup>145</sup> In 1996, the government committed to a major set of reforms aimed, inter alia, at developing a social protection system. In 1997, the social pension system was still at an embryonic stage and not fully functioning. The EU intervened with targeted budget support to support reforms in the food security sector. With counterpart funds, the EU targeted the social transfer schemes—social pension, school feeding, and income generation programmes aimed at retraining FAIMO workers. The impact has been to regularise monthly transfers from the Treasury to municipalities (which had been erratic), to improve the audit trail from beneficiaries up to the Treasury to ensure that the programme did reach the beneficiaries, and later to contribute to the rationalisation of pension delivery through the progressive use of the post office network and the creation of a beneficiary database (Freeland and Cherrier 2012, box 54).

In 2006, the two schemes were extended and merged into the Minimum Social Pension (*Pensão Social Mínima*, PSM) to be managed by a newly created National Centre of Social Pensions (*Centro Nacional da Pensão Social*, CNPS). This unified scheme guarantees basic income security for the elderly over 60 not covered by any other scheme, disabled persons unable to develop any professional occupation, and children with disabilities living in poor families. From 2008 on, the cooperation between the EU and Cabo Verde shifted to general budget support. The consolidation of a sustainable social protection system has remained one of the priorities of the government. The budget support programme, using both the incentives linked to the variable tranche and policy dialogue, encouraged the government to proceed with a strategy that was already its own. The programme included an indicator measuring the number of beneficiaries, with increasing targets to be attained over the years (Freeland and Cherrier 2012, box 54). The PSM benefits about 21,000 persons, and covers 46 per cent of the elderly population (over 60).<sup>146</sup> Since 1995, its benefit level has been progressively increased from 1,500

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<sup>143</sup> Cabo Verde held its first multi-party elections in January 1991, having previously been a one-party state with the socialist party PAICV (*Partido Africano de Independência de Cabo Verde*) as the sole party. The liberal party MpD (*Movimento para a Democracia*) won the 1991 elections and got re-elected in 1995 with over a two-third majority in parliament.

<sup>144</sup> Decree-Law No. 122/92 of 16 November 1992, awarding an old-age pension to persons over 60 who have worked at least 10 years in the FAIMO scheme.

<sup>145</sup> Decree-Law No. 2/95 of 23 January 1995 introduced measures to assist vulnerable individuals or families with adequate food assistance (provided through the WFP), free medical care and medicines, and a monthly social pension.

<sup>146</sup> Another 43.5 per cent are covered by the contributory mandatory pension system (ILO 2014).

to 5,000 Cabo Verde Escudos, which represents 22 per cent of per capita GDP and is 20 per cent more than the poverty line (Durán-Valverde and Borges 2015).

### *Zimbabwe's Basic Education Assistance Module*

The design of the BEAM, a school fee waiver scheme targeted at vulnerable children of school-going age (6-19 years), emerged from discussions with the World Bank in a context of full-fledged macroeconomic crisis and HIV/AIDS pandemic.<sup>147</sup> Interestingly though, the scheme was launched with no external funding support. In 1994, the government of Zimbabwe articulated, under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW), a Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (PAAP) that included more effective safety nets within a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.<sup>148</sup> In 1998, the government embarked on a series of studies and consultations in order to restructure its social protection system.<sup>149</sup> Findings showed a strong correlation between enrolment rates and poverty in Zimbabwe. The World Bank assisted in a major redesign of the poorly performing targeted school fee waivers introduced under the Social Dimensions of Adjustment Fund (SDF), which had been created in the MPSLSW in the early 1990s to cushion the vulnerable groups against the deleterious effects of the reform programme. The redesigned scheme, conceived in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, was to be supported by an IDA credit<sup>150</sup> linked to a proposed three-year social protection project (World Bank 2000). However, by late 2000, the World Bank suspended direct lending to Zimbabwe on account of payment of arrears, and the proposal was dropped. Nevertheless, the MPSLSW decided to launch the scheme using scarce domestic budget resources. The BEAM began implementation in January 2001 as part of the government's enhanced social protection programme. It financed, at its peak, about 900,000 children's school fees at primary and secondary levels across Zimbabwe (Smith et al. 2012).

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<sup>147</sup> The BEAM was conceived as part of the Enhanced Social Protection Project (ESPP) that was launched by the Government of Zimbabwe in the year 2000 in response to worsening social conditions in the country that were causing the poor to suffer deepening multiple shocks (escalating prices of basic commodities, retrenchments and high unemployment rates, high dropouts of school children and high interest and inflation rates). The ESPP was targeted as a short-term social safety net aimed at alleviating irreversible losses to human capital in the areas of education, food security and health.

<sup>148</sup> The three-year outline of implementation modalities of the PAAP formulated by the government in 1994, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), represented a follow up to the Programme of Action to mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment adopted in 1991 (Nkum 1998).

<sup>149</sup> Several studies were carried out by the MPSLSW with technical assistance from the World Bank and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (World Bank 2000).

<sup>150</sup> The International Development Association (IDA) provides concessional loans.

Until the end of 2008, the BEAM remained fully funded out of government resources. Given the ability of the scheme to identify and assist orphans and other vulnerable children, the National AIDS Council decided to provide significant co-financing to the BEAM on an ongoing basis. The then newly created “AIDS levy” payroll tax paying into a National AIDS Trust Fund has been a major source of funding.<sup>151</sup> However, by 2009, with the advent of hyperinflation, BEAM resources became negligible while the need for tuition support increased. Several donors expressed interest in reviving the scheme; their financial support represented 45 per cent of BEAM’s total budget in 2009-2011. Late 2012, DFID responded to an urgent request from the government to cover a US\$15 million shortfall, representing half the estimated BEAM annual budget. Between 2012 and 2014, DFID provided over GB£27 million to support the BEAM (DFID 2014). Still, resources have remained far from meeting the needs of the estimated one million children who live in poor and disadvantaged families.<sup>152</sup> As of January 2015, the future of the scheme is uncertain.<sup>153</sup>

### **Type III – Initiatives to Introduce Social Cash Transfers for Poverty Reduction**

The cases of Kenya’s CT-OVC, Zambia’s SCT, Rwanda’s VUP, Ghana’s LEAP and Uganda’s SAGE exemplify how, in a period when Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)<sup>154</sup> frame the development of less developed countries, a social transfer scheme may emerge out of specific aid-supported initiatives informed by global poverty reduction and social protection agendas. These schemes, with what is here qualified as Type III-origins, emerged in the years 2000s at a time of growing interest among development partners, and progressively African governments, in social protection. Whereas the Type-II schemes reviewed above,

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<sup>151</sup> The idea of a National AIDS Trust Fund was conceived in the late 1990s when it became apparent that the AIDS epidemic had become a serious threat to development. It was established through an Act of Parliament in 2000 that stipulates that three per cent of taxable individual and corporate incomes be directed towards the National AIDS Council, which administers the trust fund. This home-grown resource mobilisation initiative, popularly known as the “AIDS Levy,” meant to raise resources for the national response to HIV/AIDS articulated in 1999. The AIDS Levy initiative was intended to attract international funding partners, especially the World Bank, which had promised US\$100 million. This external funding support, however, did not materialise (SAfAIDS 2008).

<sup>152</sup> In 2012, the BEAM assisted 530,701 pupils, which is 46.5 per cent of the needy children (Munjanganja and Machawira 2014).

<sup>153</sup> In January 2015, the government had allocated only US\$7 million to the BEAM (Mutenga 2015), while DFID intended to continue its support to the education sector in Zimbabwe through other programmes (DFID 2014). Besides, the new constitution adopted in 2013, in its section 27 (1) (a), expressly grants free and compulsory basic education for children.

<sup>154</sup> A country’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper outlines its programme for poverty reduction to allow it to obtain funding from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for support.

began in the 1990s, were largely designed in dialogue with one main donor around practical considerations to make an existing measure more efficient, Type-III schemes grew against a background of a multiplicity of development actors and were largely motivated by a desire to introduce a seemingly successful instrument for poverty reduction, as a momentum around social cash transfers was fuelled by reported success stories from Latin America and pioneering African countries. Each case reviewed below, however, reflects particular aid dynamics to the expansion of social transfers. One important explanatory factor for these differences appear to be the institutional level at which domestic ownership and leadership are initially found—from a small unit within a technical ministry in the case of Zambia’s SCT up to the President of the Republic and a Cabinet Minister in the case of Rwanda’s VUP.

#### *Kenya’s Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children*

The CT-OVC scheme arose as a response to the rapidly increasing number of orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) associated mainly with effects of HIV/AIDS. The very first impulse may have come from UNICEF, but the decision to start the programme was a government initiative led by the Ministry of Home Affairs. As part of the global “call to action” campaign that followed a joint publication by USAID, UNICEF and UNAIDS (2002) on the raising issue of OVC in the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic, UNICEF adopted an interesting lobbying strategy in the run-up of the 2002 parliamentary elections. They asked candidates to sign pledges for OVC, advocating for the creation of a parliamentary OVC committee, and the enactment of policies that promote home-based care of OVC instead of institutions. Half the 2002–2007 members of parliament (MPs) were signatories. The newly appointed Minister of Labour Moody Awori took over leadership by officially seeking support from UNICEF to find solutions to the OVC issue. The option of piloting a cash transfer scheme, proposed by UNICEF, was discussed in the newly formed parliamentary committee for OVC issues as well as among stakeholders involved in the development of the national action plan for OVC. A small pre-pilot was launched late 2004 as the first state-run cash transfer experience in Kenya. It was supported through UNICEF and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and administrated from the Department of Children Services in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Development actors took a light approach, and instead of pushing for ‘golden standards,’ they let MPs and civil servants defined a rough design adapted to the national context in a home-grown trial-and-error approach (Pearson and Alviar 2009). Because it reached only 500 households in three districts and adopted a deliberate low profile with no communication strategy, this first phase did not generate much national debate (Ikiara 2009). But having a pilot on the ground

encouraged policy debate; educational field visits enabled MPs and government officials to judge for themselves of the relevance of the approach. The understanding that people were not misusing the cash led to a Cabinet decision, validated by Parliament, to create a budget line for scaling up the pilot beyond the initial three districts.

The cash transfer option was seen as an effective way to support home-base care for OVC and respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis, reach the poorest, and increase poverty spending—under-spending was then an issue for most poverty-related programmes. The decision was also made easier by a context of steady increase in tax revenue, resulting from an expanding economy and a more aggressive revenue authority.<sup>155</sup> The new phase adopted a two-track scale-up process, whereby the pre-pilot relatively rudimentary model would be rapidly expanded to new districts while capacity would be built to test and evaluate a more sophisticated model in existing pilot districts. In 2008, in a context of economic downturn and post-election violence, political commitment was confirmed, with the objective to gradually reach at least 30 per cent of the extreme poor and most vulnerable OVC by 2012. The first years of the programme saw a rapid increase in domestic funding, which helped the scheme expand at a pace faster than initially planned (Ikiara 2009).<sup>156</sup> Early 2009, the World Bank started its support to the scheme with a concessional loan. A Multi-Donor Trust Fund has since been established with funds committed until 2016.<sup>157</sup> Meanwhile, a Social Assistance Bill passed into law in 2013 confirmed national ownership.

### *Zambia's Social Cash Transfer*

By contrast with the Kenyan case, the development of Zambia's SCT has been a long and bumpy road. Until the recent announcement of a sevenfold increase in national budget allocation to the scheme, a lack of government commitment to social protection generally, and to social cash transfers in particular, had persisted in spite of the fact that pilot projects had been running since 2003. The suggestion of a cash transfer pilot came from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation

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<sup>155</sup> During the 2005/06 fiscal year, tax revenues amounted 19 per cent of GDP (AfDB and OECD 2007). The observed upsurge of revenue over the years 2002-2005 can be attributed to improved tax administration in response to tax reforms that started in 2002/03 (PBO 2010).

<sup>156</sup> By mid 2009, the scheme was already in 47 districts. The government's contribution had increased from US\$0.5 million in 2005 to US\$9 million in 2009, then representing half the programme costs (Ikiara 2009).

<sup>157</sup> As of May 2013, the government ensured 31 per cent of the cost of the CT-OVC scheme, UNICEF and DFID 30 per cent and the World Bank 39 per cent.

(GTZ)<sup>158</sup> in the context of the national rollout of a redesigned Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS)—a long-standing social assistance programme that the Ministry of Finance had asked to review in 1995 and that had been re-launched in 2000 to respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic and the growing numbers of households struggling to care for orphans. Although government officials had requested that the pilot scheme be integrated to the national PWAS implemented by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), GTZ designed the project as a distinct entity to be implemented in a single district (Harland 2014). The Kalomo Social Cash Transfer pilot began in November 2003 as a six-month test phase targeted at a hundred households. It was subsequently expanded to reach about 3,500 households in 2009. It generated great interest among donors, who extended the experiment to other districts in an attempt to increase political support and inform the design of a national scheme. By 2007, variants of the scheme were operated in parts of five districts, jointly reaching some 12,000 households. The extension allowed for more studies and better communication, as well as field visits with government officials. The inclusion of a chapter on social protection—drafted by the MCDSS with support from GTZ and DFID—into the Fifth National Development Plan 2006-2010 (second PRSP), along with the creation of a budget line for social protection, represented the integration of social protection into national goals. But domestic funding levels stayed low. Ownership remained patchy within the MCDSS and the Minister of Finance continued to show strong ideological opposition to the social cash transfer option. In the 2008 budget, funds were substantially increased for a national street children programme but reduced for the PWAS (Hickey et al. 2009).

Donors resisted a plan for a donor-funded scale up, and stepped back to give space for governmental actors to take the agenda forward in their own way at their own pace (Hickey et al. 2009). Development actors adopted a harmonised approach towards a programme standardisation with pool financial support and technical assistance. For some years, Zambia continued to be criticised for a lack of political commitment to social protection, including within the MCDSS (Schüring and Lawson-McDowall 2011). In 2010, a gradual expansion of the SCT scheme along with increasing national budget allocations was included in the Sixth National Development Plan 2011-2015. It was targeted to reach 69,000 households by 2015, with foreign aid still expected to cover around two thirds of the costs. During the run-up to the 2011 general elections, references to the SCT scheme and commitments to social protection appeared in all the major political party manifestos (Harland 2014). The left-wing Patriotic Front gained access to power with a pro-poor agenda. In September 2013, rather unexpectedly, Vice-President

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<sup>158</sup> GTZ was merged in 2011 into the new structure called GIZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*, German Agency for International Cooperation).

Guy Scott<sup>159</sup> announced a significant increase of funding for the SCT scheme in the 2014 national budget—with an allocation seven times higher than what had been planned in the National Development Plan, a decision hailed by opposition MPs (Mukanga 2015).

### *Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme*

Contrasting with the initial lack of political commitment from which Zambia's SCT has suffered, Rwanda's VUP is a notable example of a scheme entirely rooted into the country's national development strategy with a strong commitment by the central government. The scheme was conceived during the Government of Rwanda's high-level 'Akagera IV Retreat' in February 2007 as a response to worrying poverty and inequality trends (Kindness 2011).<sup>160</sup> It was established as an integrated local development programme to accelerate poverty reduction and rural growth to enhance the attainment of the government's Vision 2020 objectives.<sup>161</sup> Aimed to eradicate extreme poverty by 2020, the VUP appeared as a key pillar of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) 2008-2012 (Government of Rwanda 2007). The scheme has three main components underpinned by complementary sensitization and skills development activities: public works on productive community asset development projects; direct support in the form of unconditional cash transfers to the poorest households unable to supply labour; and financial services to facilitate investment in income-generation and entrepreneurial activities.

The Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), which is in charge of social affairs and community development, has led VUP design and implementation in collaboration with other ministries and development partners. Its strong leadership, along with high-level commitment, has led development partners to harmonise and to align themselves to the position of the government (ERD 2010), supporting it with technical assistance and funding. The resulting scheme is

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<sup>159</sup> The spouse of a former UNICEF staff member who had been one of the main proponents of Zambia's SCT.

<sup>160</sup> The household survey (*Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages*, EICV) published in 2006 revealed that: the percentage of people living in extreme poverty only decreased from 43.1 to 36.9 per cent between 2000/01 and 2005/06; when considered together with population growth, the absolute number of poor people grew from 4.8 million in 2000/01 to 5.4 million in 2005/06; the gini-coefficient rose from 0.47 in 2000/01 to 0.50 in 2005/06, which is high by global standards (NISR 2007).

<sup>161</sup> Rwanda Vision 2020 seeks to fundamentally transform the country into a middle-income country by the year 2020. It "aspires for Rwanda to become a modern, strong and united nation, proud of its fundamental values, politically stable and without discrimination amongst its citizens." (Government of Rwanda 2000, p. 6).

innovative in a number of ways. It places a strong emphasis on social cohesion and empowerment, and takes advantage of the country's highly decentralised administrative structure. It built on existing mechanisms that seek to strengthen community solidarity, avoid creating a culture of dependency, and provide extremely poor households with a built-in support system. It is implemented through decentralized administrative structures with strong community participation at the sector level while districts provide oversight, technical support, and supervision. It also integrated the participatory community-based targeting approach of *Ubudehe* rooted in Rwandan culture.

The VUP was introduced as a phased full implementation—rather than a pilot project, and designed to be financially sustainable if scaled up to the national level. It started off in one administrative sector (*Umurenge*) in each of the 30 districts of the country. The public work component was launched in May 2008 in the first 30 sectors followed early 2009 by the direct support component.<sup>162</sup> The flagship programme has since expanded fairly quickly, benefiting from joint funding by the government and development partners—including DFID, EU, UNICEF, the World Bank and SIDA. Yet, the majority of financing comes directly from government sources rather than bilateral donors (Kamurase et al. 2012).<sup>163</sup> In fiscal year 2010/11, the government spent about 0.7 per cent of the national budget on VUP, while all social assistance programmes combined (reaching roughly four per cent of the national population in 2009/10) received 1.1 per cent of that budget. In 2009, it was estimated that in the sectors in which VUP was operating, five per cent of individuals were covered by direct support and 14 per cent by public works (Kamurase et al. 2012). The scheme now reaches close to a million vulnerable people, up from a few thousands in its inception in 2008-09, and is meant to cover all 416 sectors in a very near future.

The VUP is today the cornerstone for an increasingly consolidated social protection sector. Building on lessons from the VUP, the National Social Protection Strategy was developed and approved by Cabinet in January 2011. The VUP and the Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors (*Fonds d'Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide*, FARG) are slowly being harmonized (with their beneficiary lists being merged into the *Ubudehe* household registry classification system) to reduce duplication and cost, thereby enabling further expansion. In addition, the VUP constantly seeks to improve, exploring, for instance, whether it is possible to define a better package for sustainable graduation, which would include linkages to

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<sup>162</sup> The credit scheme was the last to be introduced in February 2010.

<sup>163</sup> In 2006, a substantial portion of Rwanda's debt was forgiven under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

skills-building programmes and employment opportunities (Gahamanyi and Kettlewell 2015).

### *Ghana's Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty*

Ghana was one of the first countries in West Africa to introduce a sizable social cash transfer scheme. The LEAP programme emerged as a poverty reduction measure financed from debt relief funds. Within government, the idea of a poverty-targeted cash transfer scheme emerged from the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE), which had been in a weak position, with limited implementation capacity, relative to strong and well-established ministries such as health and education, and the Ministry of Finance. The Deputy Minister of Manpower demonstrated championship to negotiate with Ministry of Finance and other Cabinet members (Sultan and Schrofer 2008).<sup>164</sup> To move forward this agenda, she had to form alliances outside of government. The fact that social protection became one of the sectors included in the Ghana budget support dialogue in 2004 gave an entry point to the MMYE. Launched in 2005, the second PRSP stipulated the need to promote cash transfers within a comprehensive social protection framework to cover the vulnerable and excluded in society. The MMYE presented LEAP as the flagship programme of the new National Social Protection Strategy. To help convince sceptics within government, the MMYE secured a small UNICEF grant to run a pre-pilot in 2006, as well as support from DFID to organise exchange visits and missions of experts who had worked on similar schemes in Brazil, Zambia and South Africa. Having a detailed design and budget, along with a progressive rollout strategy, convinced the Minister of Finance to allocate funds for LEAP, starting with a trial phase of less than 2,000 beneficiary households.

LEAP was launched early 2008 as a pilot programme aimed to supplement the incomes of “dangerously poor households” through the provision of cash transfers and to link them up with complementary services so that they can, over time, “leap out of poverty.” When it was announced to the public, it had to face criticism that ‘free handouts’ would be ‘wasted’ by poor people. Its cash-based and poverty-targeting features contrasted with the supply-based and categorical historical approach to social protection in Ghana—national health insurance scheme, school feeding, education capitation grants, etc. The MMYE had to launch a strong advocacy and communication campaign to win public support and ensure the programme could go ahead (Sultan and Schrofer 2008). The opposition party, who had alluded to the fact that LEAP was only an avenue to win votes, did maintain the programme after winning the general elections in December 2008.

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<sup>164</sup> The Deputy Minister was appointed in 2005. Her personal engagement and ability to be a “very effective advocate” is also underlined in an ILO (2006, p. 56) report.

The five-year pilot programme was implemented nationwide, initially in 53 districts for every region to be represented. Targeting was based on a mix of categorical and poverty criteria. The main target groups were caregivers of orphans and vulnerable children, older persons over 65 years and people living with severe disabilities. Health, education and child protection conditions were attached to the LEAP grants. It was exclusively financed from Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative funds. The government had been quite cautious in terms of fiscal commitment. By the end of the fifth year of implementation, the scheme would only represent 0.23 per cent of total government expenditure. It would also reach only a small share of the 18 per cent of the population living in extreme poverty. Its rollout and institutionalisation remain an on-going process.

Donors have provided additional funds to scale up the programme with the prospect that by 2017 the scheme would be fully domestically funded. In August 2012, prior to the general elections, President John Dramani Mahama re-launched an expanded programme with a promise that the benefit level would be tripled. A week later, DFID announced its commitment to support LEAP with GB£34 million between 2012 and 2016, which came on top of a World Bank US\$20-million credit already approved for the period 2010-2016. There was agreement among development partners' experts that the country would soon be able to afford LEAP transfers for the poorest 20 per cent of the population. Ghana had limited fiscal space in the short term, but there were prospects for future growth in revenues following the discovery of oil reserves. A limiting factor in the expansion of the scheme remains the delivery capacity of ministries in charge of social protection. From the start, development partners have been providing technical and financial support to strengthen capacity, as mismanagement may result in a loss of political backing. Maintaining political and public support to the LEAP programme as it attempts to scale up is an on-going task.

#### *Uganda's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment*

SAGE was introduced in 2010 as a core component of the Expanding Social Protection programme<sup>165</sup> led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and supported by DFID, Irish Aid and UNICEF. The World Bank and DFID initiated efforts to promote social protection in Uganda in 2002. In 2006, DFID signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government to design and pilot cash transfers. The proposal presented in 2007 was to target the poorest ten per cent of households through a mix of community participation and proxy-means test. The proposed project was approved by the

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<sup>165</sup> For more information on the programme, visit <http://www.socialprotection.go.ug>.

Social Protection Task Force,<sup>166</sup> but blocked by the Minister of Finance apparently because of concerns over its affordability over the long-term, its donor-led character, and the fact that it may be characterised in terms of handouts (Hickey et al. 2009). DFID funded further analysis that provided the basis for the MGLSD to request the Cabinet permission to implement a vulnerability-targeted cash transfer project that would include government counterpart funding from the outset. In the meantime, HelpAge International lobbied MPs and other decision makers with an alternative proposal for a pilot non-contributory pension scheme (Hickey et al. 2009).

Eventually, the Cabinet approved in June 2010 the launch of the SAGE, a pilot cash transfer scheme targeted at labour-constrained individuals and households. For purposes of learning, the sub counties and town councils in the pilot districts were categorized in two: those that piloted the Senior Citizen's Grant targeted at citizens over 65; and those that piloted the Vulnerable Families Support Grant targeted at labour-constrained households on the basis of a composite vulnerability score.<sup>167</sup> DFID and Irish Aid funded an initial five-year phase with a budget of 160 billion Ugandan shillings (UGX). From the financial year 2011/12, the government has made a financial contribution (UGX 2 billion in 2013/14) on top of its in-kind contribution (UGX 6 billion over five years). In 2015, SAGE reached 123,000 direct beneficiaries in 15 districts across the four country regions (Mukasa 2015).

In August 2015, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development announced the government's decision to initiate a national rollout of the Senior Citizen's Grant, and simultaneously to phase out the Vulnerable Families Support Grant with effect from November 2015. During the pilot phase, the Senior Citizen's Grant proved easier to implement, and received greater popular support among beneficiaries and other stakeholders because of its simple and transparent design. Also, the scheme responds to the constitutional obligations of the state with regards to the welfare and maintenance of the elderly, and policy commitments in

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<sup>166</sup> Hosted by the MGLSD, the Social Protection Task Force included representation from donor agencies, civil society and key government departments. It oversaw the work of DFID-funded consultancy teams. Hickey et al. (2009) note that the decision within the task force to focus on cash transfers was made after ministers and officials from the MGLSD, and also the Ministry of Finance, attended the Livingstone conference in March 2006, where a visit was made to the Kalomo project and research on social transfers were discussed.

<sup>167</sup> Numerical scores are allocated to key demographic indicators of vulnerability such as disability, old age, young age and orphan hood and different total scores awarded to individual households based on their composition and the characteristics of their members. A numerical targeting threshold was set for each district, based on data from the Uganda National Household Survey 2009/10, which is designed to ensure that approximately 15 per cent of all households are targeted in each district.

the National Development Plan and Vision 2040,<sup>168</sup> as well as the ruling party's 2011 manifesto.<sup>169</sup> The government has committed UGX 149 billion for the Senior Citizen's Grant roll-out over the next five years, starting with an allocation of UGX 9 billion in 2015/16 and gradually increasing to UGX 53 billion in 2019/20. This financial commitment was made "on the basis of matching [development partners'] support"—conversely, the mobilisation of domestic resources was a benchmark for DFID's continued support beyond the initial five-year period ending in June 2015 (DFID 2016). In addition, DFID and Irish Aid have committed to provide up to UGX 290.6 billion for another five years of support to the overall Expanding Social Protection programme. The Senior Citizen's Grant is expected to be introduced in 40 additional districts across the country (covering all sub-counties) over the coming five years, reaching an estimated total of 226,085 beneficiaries in 2020 (Mukasa 2015).

#### **Type IV – Initiatives to Provide Multi-Year Assistance in Protracted Food Crises**

A fourth type of origins in regard to foreign aid actors' role relates to contexts of protracted crises where donors bear the cost of large-scale humanitarian assistance. Both Ethiopia's PSNP and Kenya's HSNP arose out of concerns over emergency food aid and the desire to evolve towards more predictable multi-year cash-based assistance. These two cases differ, however, in their developmental process. In the case of Ethiopia, the PSNP was established out of long discussions between the government and foreign aid actors. By contrast, Kenya's HSNP started as a stand-alone aid-funded project conceived outside national policy-making processes. For several years, it remained a separate initiative primarily driven by a donor agency and its implementing partners.

##### *Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme*

Ethiopia's PSNP emerged out of a perceived need to eliminate people's dependency on food aid, to protect households' livelihoods and to promote agricultural productivity. Since the mid-1980s, Ethiopia had received large amounts of food aid through annual emergency appeals. As early as the early 1990s, views were expressed to consider alternatives for those populations that were predictably food insecure. But the need for change was only given strong

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<sup>168</sup> The National Development Plan launched in June 2015 is the second in a series of five-year plans tailored to achieving Uganda Vision 2040, whose goal is to transform Uganda into an upper middle income country.

<sup>169</sup> In its 2011-2015 manifesto, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) explicitly states: "The NRM Government will roll out the cash transfer program for older persons." (p. 40)

national political support after the 2002/03 crisis in which 14 million people, the largest number ever, needed emergency assistance. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi launched in June 2003 the New Coalition for Food Security, a technical group with donors and NGOs, tasked to explore long-term solutions to food insecurity. The resulting programme proposal included three components: safety nets, resettlement, and access to inputs and agricultural extension. Donors agreed to support a safety net solution that would ensure a more effective multi-year support to not also save lives but also protect livelihoods. For national decision-makers, the decision to consider the safety net option was motivated by: a strong ideological commitment to reduce the perceived dependency of households on long-term food aid; electoral liability with general elections looming; the embarrassment of the international image of a famine-stricken country; and the prospect of reliable aid resources channelled through government (theIDLgroup 2007).

Concerns over creating dependency led the government to place a strong emphasis on the productive nature of safety nets, leading to focus on graduation and public works, and reluctance to extend the programme beyond a relatively brief timeframe. But some donors were highly critical of the government's productivist focus, which opposed an entitlement approach (Hickey et al. 2009). After several donor threats to withdraw from the dialogue, the government rescinded and agreed to the inclusion of a small (15-20 per cent) direct transfer component to address the needs of households with no able-bodied member. Yet, the influence of development partners did not prevent the government from shaping the PNSP in ways that supported its own priorities and orientation (Niño-Zarazúa et al. 2010). If the government and donors have found common ground in regard to the design of the scheme, their views tend to diverge on what the PSNP is essentially about. At inception, from the perspective of the Food Security Coordination Bureau, the PSNP was not a social protection scheme but rather an initiative to promote productivity (Hickey et al. 2009). While the donor community views the PSNP as a measure supporting its social protection and resilience agendas, to the government, it is a tool supporting its villagisation agenda. The PSNP contributes to support failing agricultural policies and limit urban migration in the interests of political stability (Lavers 2013).

The government rejected some donors' call for a pilot phase and insisted on a national level rollout, a decision likely influenced by the forthcoming general elections. The scheme was launched at full scale in February 2005 as a multi-year, but not permanent, measure overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural

Development.<sup>170</sup> Initially introduced in four regions (Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, and the Southern Nations and Nationalities' Peoples' Region), it was later extended to the more remote regions of Afar (in 2006) and the Somali Region (in 2007). The government recognised the need for an extension of the PSNP beyond the initial period. Donor-commissioned studies conducted as early as 2006 provided evidence that graduation in a five-year time period was extremely ambitious and that a caseload would remain in need of permanent social transfers (Hickey et al. 2009). In 2010, a new five-year phase was agreed along with the introduction of a complementary Household Asset Building Programme (HABP) to help people build their livelihoods and create assets. For a decade now, the PSNP has provided transfers in cash and/or food<sup>171</sup> to between six and eight million chronically food insecure people for six months each year. In July 2015, the PSNP entered its fourth phase, a 'system building' phase that foresees, among other changes, a progressive move towards an entitlement design for people eligible to receive direct support<sup>172</sup>, as well as an increase in the government's financial contribution to the PSNP—expected to reach 14 per cent over 2015-2020. The view is to put strong emphasis on supporting the development of national systems for safety nets in line with the National Social Protection Policy and other relevant national policies (World Bank 2013a).

#### *Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme*

The HSNP is an unconditional cash transfer programme geographically focused on the drought-prone arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya, which are not covered by the CT-OVC scheme. The motivation for the HSNP was similar to that for the PSNP in Ethiopia: the recognition that the problem was chronic and required more predictable and effective assistance. DFID introduced the scheme as part of its larger 10-year social protection programme to test alternatives to food aid in the poorest four Arid Counties of Turkana, Mandera, Wajir and Marsabit in northern Kenya. The overall goal of the HSNP is to reduce poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, and promote asset retention and accumulation for beneficiary households. The HSNP was envisioned in two (initial) phases: Phase 1 (2008-2012, GB£40.5 million) was conceived to develop an evidence base to inform the design of Phase 2 (2013-2017, GB£85.59 million). It uses biometric smart cards to make payments via a private sector payment provider. Beneficiaries use their card to

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<sup>170</sup> Donors insisted for a budget line to be created to improve transparency and accountability. But if the PSNP has its own budget line, this is still a time-limited programme rather than a recurrent expenditure.

<sup>171</sup> In 2013/14, 43 per cent of PSNP beneficiaries received cash only, 30 per cent food only, and 27 per cent mixed transfers.

<sup>172</sup> Along with an increase in transfer level and duration (from 6 to 12 months).

collect their cash at any time from a range of pay points (mainly small shops) across the four counties. Regular transfers are provided every two months.<sup>173</sup> During the pilot phase approximately 69,000 households were targeted. Three different targeting mechanisms were tested,<sup>174</sup> of which community-based targeting was considered the most effective at reaching the poorest households. The current scale-up phase aims to provide 100,000 households with regular cash transfers by 2017. In this second phase, beneficiaries have been selected using a combination of proxy-means test and community-based targeting—as of July 2015, 77,000 households received regular transfers. A wider registration exercise was integrated to allow for timely scale-ups in times of crisis. All households registered with HSNP are provided with bank accounts so that, in an emergency, they can receive temporary payments. This enabled a large scale-up in 2015, a first for Kenya and the continent—95,480 households received an emergency drought payment in April and May 2015 (DFID 2015b).

Started as a donor-led project, the HSNP is today a flagship programme for the Government of Kenya. During its first phase, it was implemented entirely by non-governmental actors, including NGOs and contracted agencies. It was operated under the Ministry of State for the Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands, in which an HSNP Secretariat was located. In 2010, the new constitution proposed major governmental restructuring including the demise of that ministry and the creation of 42 county authorities to which significant powers were devolved. These changes came into effect in March 2013, in the early stages of the second phase. Hence, there was no clear counterpart to effectively engage government bodies at both national and county levels in key technical decisions. By default, HSNP remained a DFID-run programme far longer than planned (Fitzgibbon 2014). Late 2013, in further response to the 2011 drought that led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the government committed itself to ending drought emergencies in Kenya by the year 2022 (Republic of Kenya 2013). As a safety net for the chronically poor living in Northern Kenya with an ability to scale up in emergencies, the HSNP is a key programme for the Ending Drought Emergencies initiative that was included in the Second Medium Term Plan for achieving the country's Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya 2015). The National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) established in 2011, now under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, has taken institutional responsibility for implementation of the HSNP. The scheme is managed through a Programme Implementation and Learning Unit, as part of the wider National Safety Net

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<sup>173</sup> The HSNP originally provided 2,150 Kenyan Shillings to each beneficiary household every two months. This was calculated as 75 per cent of the value of WFP's food aid ration in 2006. Over time the value of the transfer has increased. It was also increased in the 2011 drought.

<sup>174</sup> Community-based targeting, social pensions, and dependency ratio.

Programme that seeks to coordinate and progressively harmonise the five main cash transfer schemes in Kenya. DFID remains the primary financial supporter of the HSNP, but the government has pledged to provide almost half of the funding for the regular transfers by 2017. In 2015, the routine caseload supported by the Government of Kenya reached 32 per cent of the current caseload (DFID 2015b).

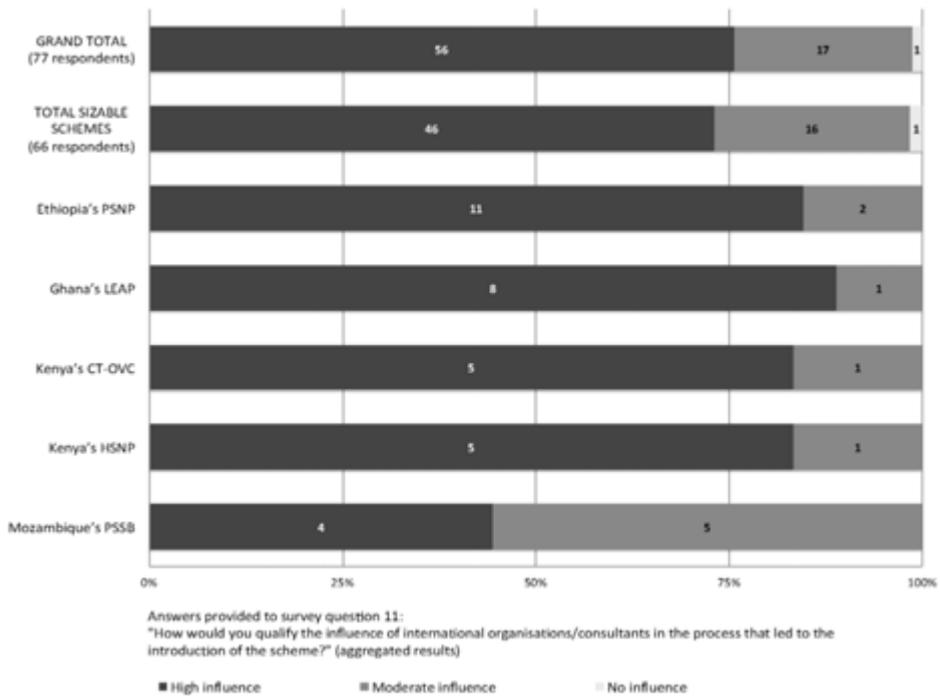
### 4.3 Emerging Patterns of Foreign Aid Actors' Involvement

The overviews above of the origins of the each of the selected sizable schemes establish foreign aid actors as important players in the process leading to their establishment and/or accompanying their expansion. This fact is further illustrated by survey results. Figure 4-10 shows that across all twelve selected schemes 73 per cent of survey respondents perceive international organisations and consultants to have been “extremely” or “very influential” in the process that led to the introduction of the scheme. Only one respondent out of 63, in the case of Lesotho’s OAP, reports seeing them as “not influential at all.” Figure 4-11 highlights that the perceived level of influence of foreign aid actors is particularly high for schemes with Type-III and -IV origins. This echoes the fact underlined in Section 4.1 that foreign aid actors are cited among the main initiators of the schemes with Type-II, -III and -IV origins (Figure 4-8). Besides, foreign aid actors also appear to play a major role in shaping the initial designs (Figure 4-12) specifically for schemes with Type-II, -III and -IV origins (Figure 4-13). As revealed by the different cases presented in Section 4.2, schemes tend to be introduced and designed out of dialogues between state and aid actors.

Influential aid actors revealed in the case studies above include international financial institutions recommending the reform of costly subsidy policies, agencies specialised in social protection advocating for coverage extension, and humanitarian actors calling for more effective ways to provide assistance in protracted crises. This reflects the three streams presented in Section 2.1 that have contributed to push social protection up the development agenda, and supports our first working hypothesis that “foreign aid actors can encourage the emergence of permanent and scaled-up social transfer schemes in a low-capacity country context, through three primary policy entry points: fiscal policy sphere, social protection policy sphere, humanitarian policy sphere” (Section 2.4). A similar echo may be detected in the four broad types of origins of social transfer schemes introduced in Section 4.1 (Table 4-2).<sup>175</sup>

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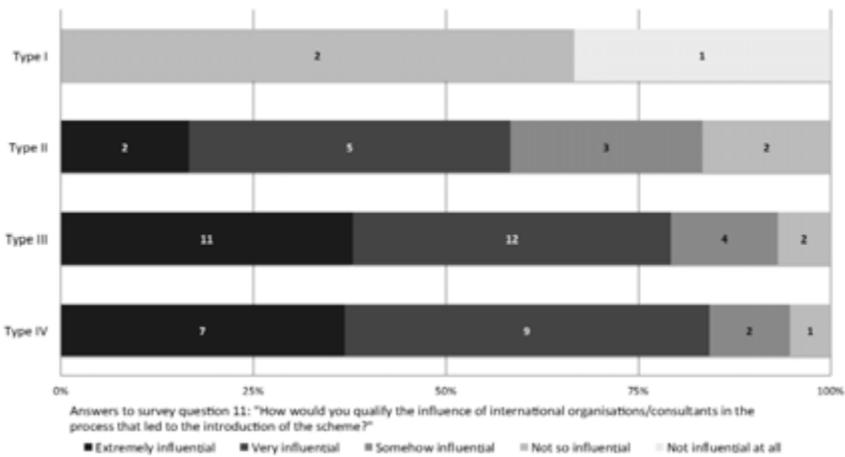
<sup>175</sup> This typology refines the classification brought earlier by Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010), who distinguish two main models of social protection in sub-Saharan Africa—the Southern Africa and Middle Africa models.



Notes: The answers "extremely influential" and "very influential" were aggregated into the category "high influence;" while "somehow influential" and "not so influential" were aggregated into the category "moderate influence;" the answers "not influential at all" appear under the category "no influence."

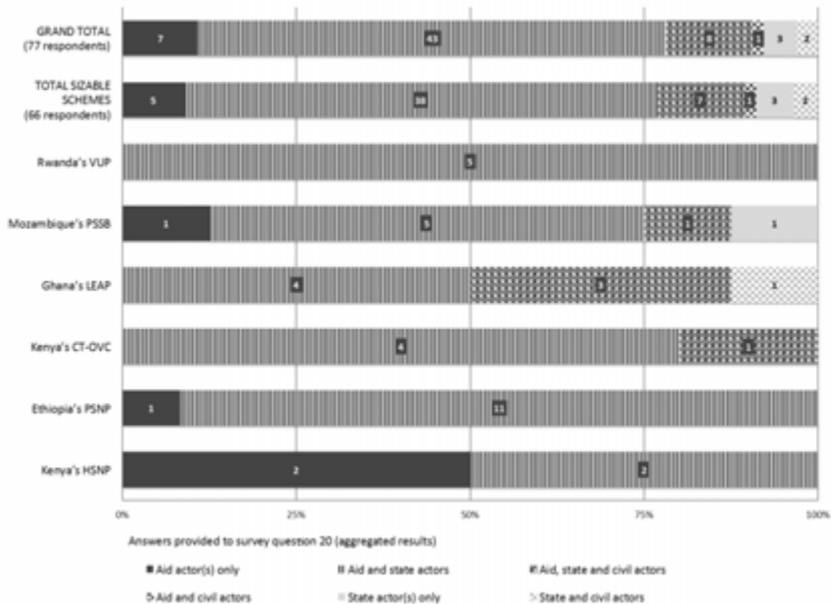
Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-10** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Level of Foreign Aid Influence



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

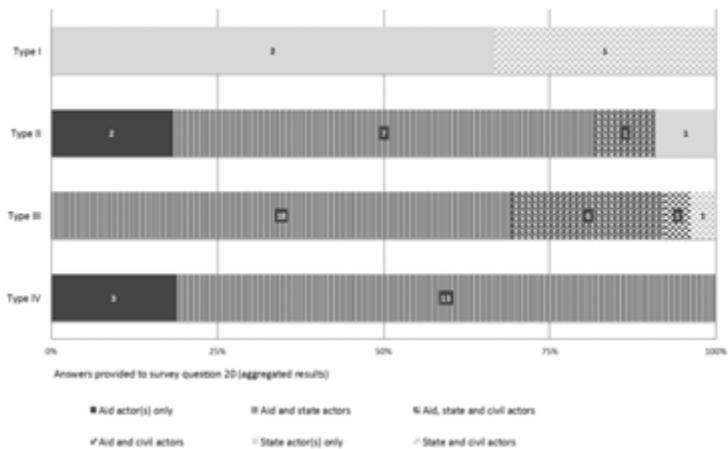
**Figure 4-11** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: Level of Foreign Aid Influence



Notes: Response options to survey question 20 are here aggregated into three categories: “state [and political] actors” (first nine options), “civil [society] actors” (following four options), and “[foreign] aid actors” (last eight options) (Appendix A.1); respondents could select up to five actors, resulting in any combination of these three categories. No respondent indicated ‘civil actors only.’

Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-12** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Key Actors Influencing Design

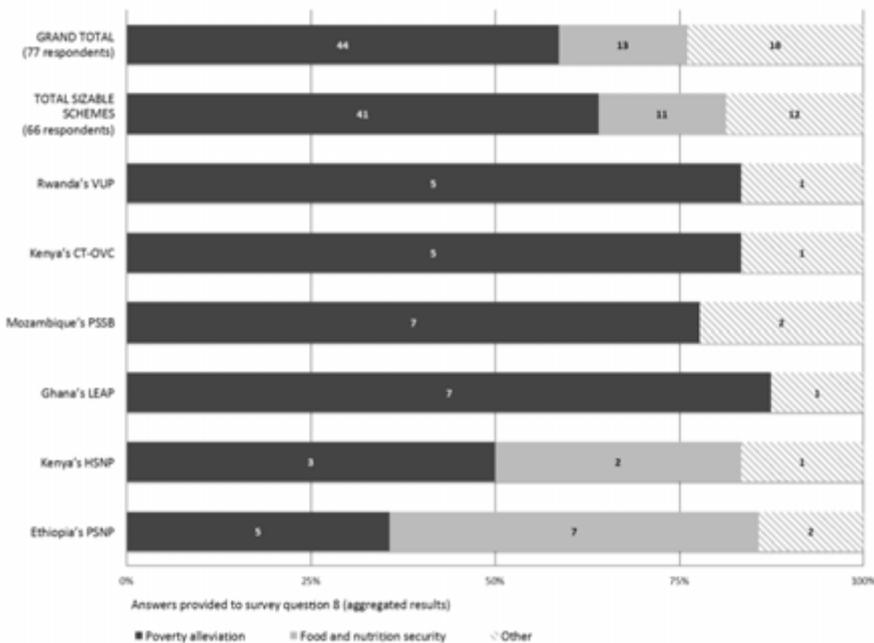


Notes: Response options to survey question 20 were aggregated into 3 categories: “state [and political] actors” (first nine options), “civil [society] actors” (following four options), and “[foreign] aid actors” (last eight options) (Appendix A.1); respondents could select up to 5 actors, resulting in any combination of these 3 categories. No respondent indicated ‘civil actors only.’

Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-13** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: Key Actors Influencing Design

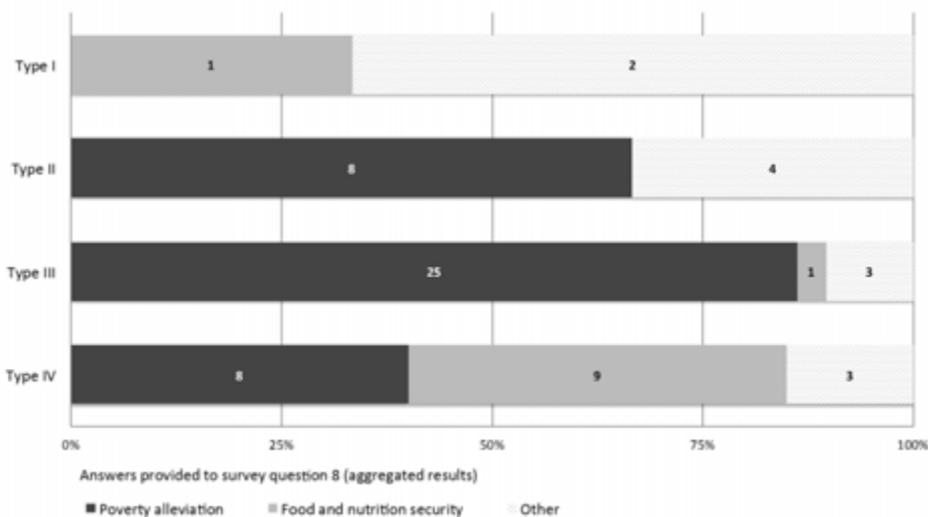
These different types of foreign aid actors tend to intervene in conjunction. In a few cases, such as Cabo Verde’s PSM (with the European Union), Zimbabwe’s BEAM (with the World Bank) and Kenya’s HSNP (with DFID), one main donor stands out as having enabled the genesis of the scheme. However, with the global momentum for social protection since the early 2000s, support tends to come from a multiplicity of foreign aid actors. In the case of Mozambique’s PSSB, recent efforts to further expand the scheme were supported by a group of actors (including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the ILO and UNICEF) that cross the policy spheres suggested above.<sup>176</sup> The influence of foreign aid actors may also be subtler by setting an agenda that is conducive to the expansion of social transfers. As illustrated in Figure 4-14, poverty alleviation is largely cited as the main motivation behind the decision to introduce the scheme. Figure 4-15 shows that this is particularly pronounced for Type-III schemes, which have emerged in a period when Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers frame the development of less developed countries. The food and nutrition security agenda cited by several respondents for Type-IV schemes reflects humanitarian concerns in protracted food crises.



Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-14** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Main Motivation

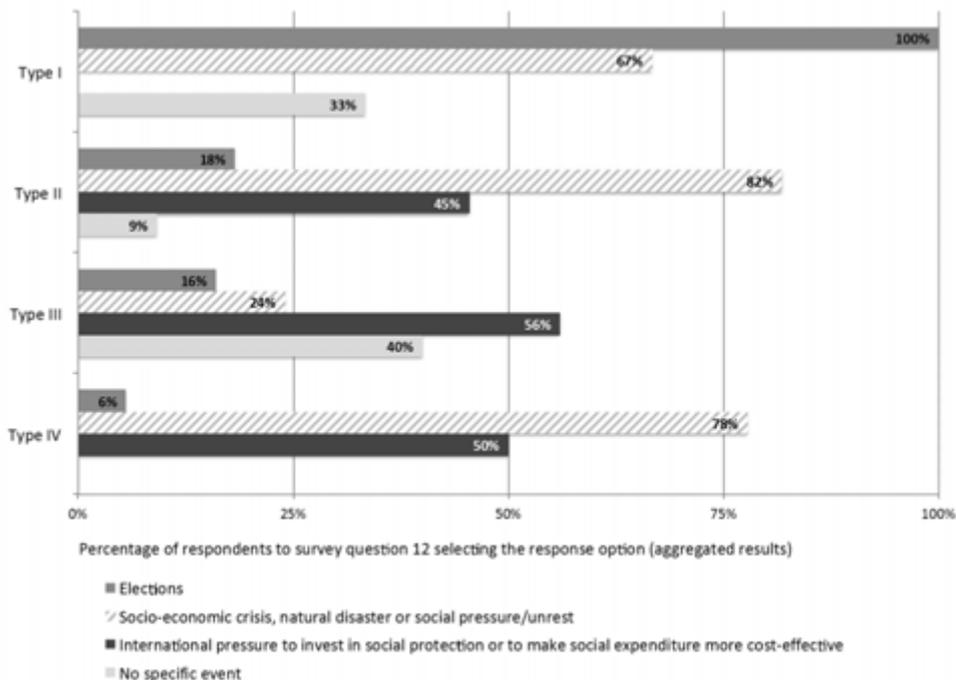
<sup>176</sup> This specific experience is presented and discussed in Section 5.3.



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-15** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: Main Motivation

Overall, efforts of foreign aid actors (at both global and national levels) combine to incite governments to invest further (or adhere to aid-supported efforts) in social protection (as part of the global Social Protection Floor movement, for instance) and/or make social expenditure more cost-effective (in the context of structural adjustment programmes, for example). Figure 4-16 shows that about half of the survey respondents for Type-II, -III and -IV schemes cite such “international pressure” as a “key event that initiated or significantly boosted the decision-making process that led to the introduction of the scheme” (Appendix A.1, question 12). Conversely, apart for Type I, most respondents do not perceive elections to have played any significant role. This, however, does not necessarily imply that global influence has been more important than national factors in shaping social transfer policies. Indeed, a crisis context is pointed by many respondents as having been key in motivating the introduction of the scheme. This echoes Hickey (2006) who posits that “[t]he ‘politics of crisis’ rather than ‘politics as usual’ can provide more fertile ground for pro-poor policies to emerge” (p. vii). The fact that this pattern is less marked for Type-III schemes seems to confirm that these schemes have primarily been introduced (and pushed by foreign aid actors) as part of long-term poverty reduction strategies, largely independently of national ‘crisis events.’ In line with this view, 40 per cent of respondents for Type-III schemes indicate that “no specific event” appears behind the decision to introduce the scheme.



Notes: The analysis is based on three responses collected for Type I, 11 for Type II, 25 for Type III, and 18 for Type IV.

Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-16** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Key Events

It remains that in many cases, the necessity to introduce a social transfer scheme came, at least partially, from an increased awareness on possible (alternative) responses to needs in protracted crisis contexts. Foreign aid actors appear to have significantly contributed to creating or encouraging this awareness, notably through the production and dissemination of assessment reports. In Ethiopia, the technical report “Beyond the Merry-Go-Round to the Relief-Development Continuum” produced by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Raisin 2001) was instrumental in mobilising actors to recognise the nature and scale of the food crises, and the need to go beyond ad hoc humanitarian aid. In Southern Africa, the communication strategy around the report issued jointly by UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS), UNICEF and USAID “Children on the Brink” (UNAIDS et al. 2002) helped create a momentum on the raising issue of OVCs in the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The institutional level at which domestic ownership and leadership are initially found, and where foreign aid actors, at least initially, anchor their efforts to

promote and support social transfers, seems to condition the subsequent expansion process and explain whether it looks more like a bumpy road or a highway. These institutional anchorages range from a small unit within a technical ministry in the case of Zambia's SCT up to the President of the Republic and a Cabinet Minister in the case of Rwanda's VUP.<sup>177</sup> The overall tendency has been to progressively seek higher levels of support, particularly from powerful entities that manage domestic resources. Several respondents stress the importance to "convince Ministries of Finance and Planning above all else" (respondent OS27). Some indicate having "learned that political support [...] and being integrated at least partly into a strong institution (Ministry of Finance) is essential" (respondent OS20); and suggest that the adoption process could have been accelerated by engaging "even more directly with higher levels of leadership within the [government] (in addition to [working] with the social welfare ministry, [working] with [the] Prime [Minister's] office, etc.)" (respondent OS25).<sup>178</sup>

The manner donor funding is engaged reflects different roles, and possibly various degrees of influence, for foreign aid actors. When resources are mobilised to initiate a fully aid-funded pilot project, as in the cases of Zambia's SCT and Kenya's HSNP, this role appears rather proactive and assertive. When resources are mobilised to co-finance the initial phase of what is envisioned as a national programme, as in the cases of Kenya's CT-OVC, Rwanda's VUP and Uganda's SAGE, the role of foreign aid actors already seems more supportive. Also, in some cases, such as Zimbabwe's BEAM and Malawi's FISP, donor funding is found to be mobilised to allow a faster expansion of a scheme that had previously been fully domestically funded—in those cases, government revenues have remained the main funding source. These additional resources are then mobilised with the prospect that the scheme will become fully domestically funded in the medium term. Increasingly, as observed in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia, donors tend to establish pooled funding mechanisms and commit funds on a multi-year basis, as part of strategies to increase predictability and sustainability. The role of donors may also be less visible. In Cabo Verde, the consolidation of the PSM has benefited from financial support from foreign aid actors through budget support. Spending has been on budget, and the scheme has remained entirely funded out of central revenues. In that context, the donor's budget support programme, using incentives linked to the variable tranche and policy dialogue, encouraged the government to proceed with a strategy that was already its own. Interestingly,

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<sup>177</sup> A few survey respondents who referred to experiences with small aid-supported pilot projects that were not taken up and scaled up by governments explicitly identify the absence of institutional anchorage within government as a major explanation for failure (respondents OS9, OS24, OS47).

<sup>178</sup> In Chapter 5, we will examine a specific strategy that has gained traction among foreign aid actors in their attempts to secure support from Ministries of Finance.

donor funding is even found to play a passive role in the expansion of social transfers. In the case of Malawi's FISP, Chirwa and Dorward (2013) indeed suggest that the introduction of the scheme in 2005 "drew on new opportunities for independent policy afforded by the introduction of large-scale budget support by Malawi's major donors" (pp. 82-83).

The case studies also reveal different ways for foreign aid actors to approach and engage with policy-making processes around social transfer issues. The nature of these strategies may have bearing on the sustainability of policy change encouraged by foreign aid actors. In the case of Ghana's LEAP, the idea of a social cash transfer scheme emerged from the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE) that was then a rather weak ministry with limited implementation capacity. Forming alliances outside of government, with development partners, enabled the MMYE Deputy Minister to negotiate with the Ministry of Finance and other Cabinet members. Then, from the start, development partners provided technical and financial support to strengthen capacity, as mismanagement would possibly result in a loss of political backing. In return, positive social spending analyses by international financial institutions encouraged donors to mobilise additional resources. Still, maybe more than funding, delivery capacity remains a key limiting factor in the expansion of the scheme. Aware of this capacity issue, development partners supporting Kenya's CT-OVC expansion engaged with parliamentarians and adopted a rather pragmatic approach with a two-track scale-up process, whereby a pre-pilot relatively rudimentary model would be expanded to new districts while capacity would be built to test and evaluate a more sophisticated model in existing pilot districts (Pearson and Alviar 2009).

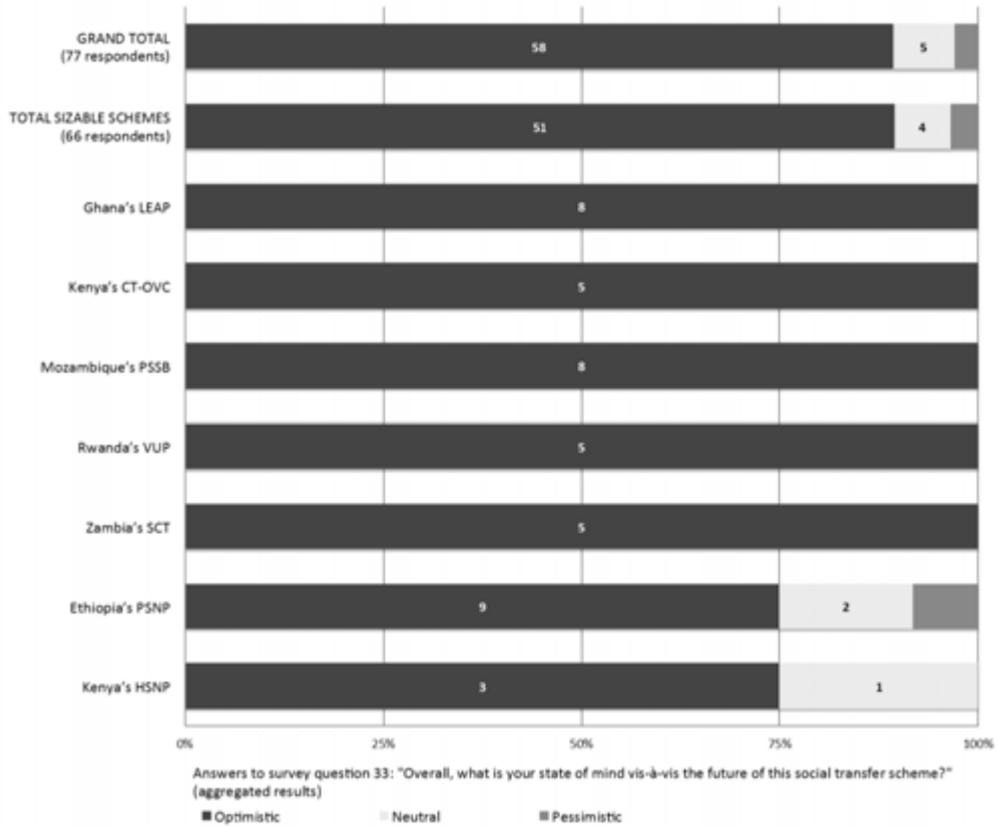
By contrast, considering the development of Zambia's SCT, Charlotte Harland (2014) argues that the way development partners attempted to promote social cash transfers undermined for some years emerging national commitment to social protection. She suggests that a tendency to stand for one preferred solution—presented as technically best but often largely reflecting a donor's ideology—tended to cause situations of deadlock. Stakeholders struggled with the new social protection terminology, concepts and instruments—each development partner having its own jargon and objectives (Hickey et al. 2009). Unlike the cases of Ghana's LEAP and Kenya's CT-OVC, the Zambian Ministry in charge of social protection could not convince the Ministry of Finance to approve substantial investments in social cash transfers, even with sustained support from aid actors. This long stagnation may be explained, at least partially, by a national context broadly unfavourable for inclusive development policies—a focus on economic growth and rent seeking dynamics have limited the space for pro-poor policies in

Zambia (Schüring and Lawson-McDowall 2011). But Harland (2014) advances that the pilot project approach narrowly focused on cash transfers initially adopted by donors may be another explanatory factor. She suggests that the donor-driven pilot project approach aimed at generating scientific evidence and developing a 'turnkey model' had damaging effects. The decision to work the design and implementation process through an international NGO, rather than national bodies, may have been poor preparation for a scaled-up national policy. Furthermore, Harland (2014) deplores the fact that capacity-building efforts by donors had (initially) been limited to Ministry's capacities required to deliver the pilot project.

Hence, if empirical evidence drawn from the dozen case studies shows that foreign aid *can* support the emergence of a permanent (or multi-year) and scaled-up (or sizable) social transfer scheme, a critical question remains: can (heavily) aid-supported initiatives translate into sustainable policy change? After looking at the policy processes at the origin of the selected schemes, and establishing the degree of involvement of foreign aid actors, we thus proceed with an examination of the current status of the selected schemes and consider their prospects for long-term sustainability.

#### **4.4 Social, Political and Financial Sustainability of the Schemes**

Evidence emerging from the comparative analysis questions the second hypothesis that a strong involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a scheme jeopardises its long-term social, political and financial sustainability (Section 2.4). Although in most cases donor dependency remains high, two positive trends are observed. First, the predictability and reliability of aid tend to improve thanks to multi-year commitments and pooled funding mechanisms. Second, the share of domestic contributions is on the rise. There are even plans, in Ghana and Kenya for instance, to achieve full domestic funding in the medium term. Meanwhile, aid funding has allowed a faster expansion of the schemes. Even in contexts of strong foreign aid actors' engagement, as in Ethiopia for instance, some degree of national ownership is observed, which makes the mobilisation of domestic resources to maintain the scheme more likely. In this context, as shown in Figure 4-17, the vast majority of survey respondents report being optimistic vis-à-vis the future of the scheme.



Notes: The answers "very optimistic" and "somehow optimistic" were aggregated into the category 'optimistic'; the answers "very pessimistic" and "somehow pessimistic" were aggregated into the category 'pessimistic.'

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-17** Reported Confidence in the Future of the Selected Schemes

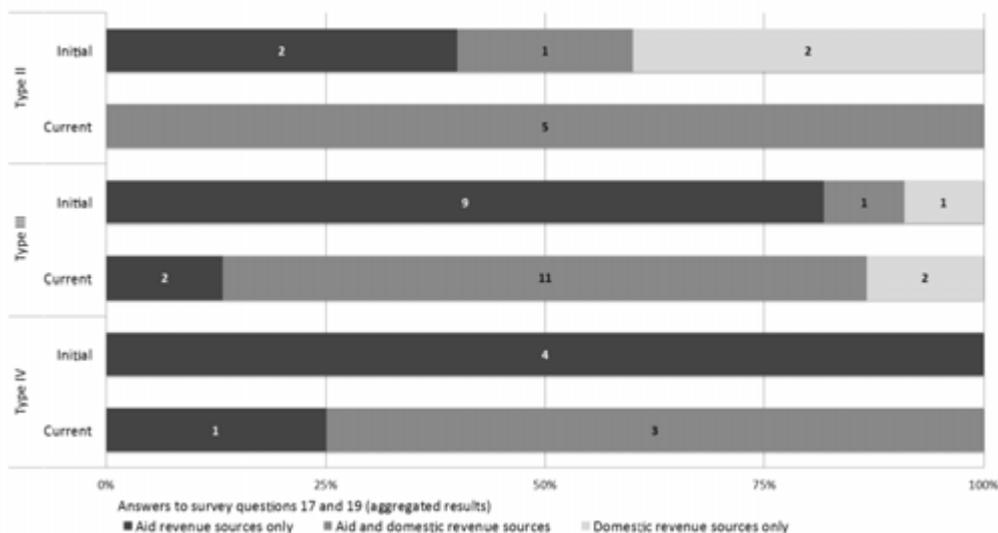
There is overall consensus to see national ownership as "a necessary, though not sufficient condition, for aid sustainability" (Ostrom et al. 2001, p. 16), and all the scaled-up schemes reviewed here can be qualified as being, to differing degrees, nationally owned, even in contexts of strong aid actor engagement. The last column of Table 4-3 summarises findings drawn from the initial assessment of the degree of national ownership for each of the selected scheme based on the basic set of indicators presented in Table 2-3. The analysis was refined using the additional indicators introduced in Section 2.3 (Table 2-4). This approach was not conceived to result in any one aggregated measure of the degree of national ownership of each scheme. Rather, it has been useful to triangulate information and, above all, shed light on the various nuances of the notion of national ownership.

A few noteworthy patterns emerge from the across-case analysis of national ownership. First, the dozen cases reviewed suggest that national leadership and political commitment remain necessary conditions for the emergence of permanent, scaled-up social transfer schemes. The fact that most of these initiatives have received substantial technical and financial support from development partners created the perception that many of them were donor-driven. But, as underlined above, foreign aid and government actors have largely worked in partnerships. What findings further highlight is the fact that political will is fragmented. In many cases, foreign aid actors initially engaged with one part of the government, such as a particular department within the ministry in charge of social affairs, which was also in favour of expanding social transfers. For this initial governmental partner, the level of 'demand' (under the 'provision' dimension of national ownership) can be assessed as high. Meanwhile, it can be seen as low in other parts of government, within the ministry of finance for instance, which may show no interest, or even reluctance, in the support offered. For the scheme to become permanent and scaled-up, there needs to be a progressive appropriation phenomenon, with more and more governmental (and possibly social) actors supporting social transfers.

This gradual appropriation process is observed across different cases. Decisions to introduce a sizable social transfer scheme tend to occur within, or even maybe encourage, broader strategies of state-led social protection and pro-poor policy extension, possibly as part of deliberate moves to put the state in a role of primary welfare provider. Related social assistance bills were passed into law in Lesotho (a scheme with Type-I origins), Cabo Verde, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (schemes with Type-II origins). In Lesotho, the OAP appears today as one of the initial steps in what seems to be a nascent social protection system, which also includes the aid-supported Child Grants Programme. But in Kenya too, cash benefits targeted to the poorest children under the CT-OVC scheme (a scheme with Type-III origins) are becoming a part of the fabric of Kenyan society, notably with the passing of the social assistance bill in 2013. This occurs in a broader context of social protection expansion, which includes several other cash-based schemes—Hunger Safety Net Programme in the arid and semi-arid lands that are not covered by the CT-OVC scheme, Older Persons Cash Transfer, Urban Food Subsidy Cash Transfer, Persons with Severe Disability Cash Transfer. Such efforts towards building systems, and no longer just individual programmes, are observed across the different cases.

Another notable pattern stems from the rising degree of government's appropriation, and concerns budgetary commitments. An upward tendency is observed in the mobilisation of domestic resources for schemes with Type-III or -IV origins for which the involvement of foreign aid actors has been greater. Survey

results nicely illustrate this trend. Among the 25 respondents who reported a change in the funding source(s) of the scheme (Appendix A.1, questions 17-19), the majority (71 per cent) indicate that the scheme was fully aid-funded when it was first introduced and 90 per cent report that the scheme is today co-funded by foreign aid and domestic resources. As shown in Figure 4-18, this shift is particularly striking for schemes with Type-III or -IV origins. For schemes with Type-I or -II origins that have later received donor contributions, such as Mozambique’s PSSB and Malawi’s FISP, government revenue remains the main funding source. In the case of Cabo Verde’s PSM, the consolidation of the scheme did benefit from technical and financial support from aid actors, through budget support, but PSM spending has been on budget and it has remained entirely funded out of central revenues.



Notes: Type I is not displayed here as only one response was collected; Under Type III, four respondents indicated not knowing how the scheme was funded when it was first introduced.

Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-18** Perceived Changes in Funding Sources per Type of Scheme

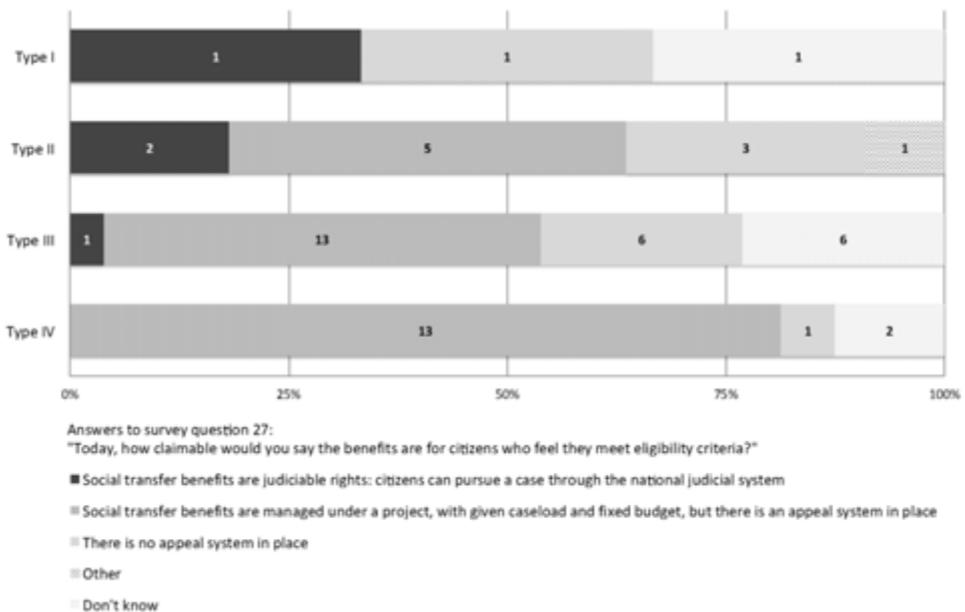
For other schemes reviewed (the origins of which are classified as Types III and IV) the share of domestic funding is on the rise. Most of them have remained highly dependent on donors, who cover at least a third of their budget (Table 4-3, column 3), but it is hard to imagine that donors would suddenly withdraw their support and let them fail. Ethiopia’s PSNP, for instance, is today one of the largest targeted social transfer schemes in Africa, the primary instrument of social protection in the country, and an international flagship programme. Besides, donors increasingly

push for the inclusion of the mobilisation of domestic resources as a benchmark for continued support—as seen above in the case of Uganda’s SAGE. In the case of Ethiopia’s PSNP, the government has committed to ramp up its contribution from 8 per cent of annual costs in the first year to 22 per cent in the fifth year of the new phase of the programme. This means doubling its funding from GB£190m over the last five years to GB£323m over the next five (DFID 2015a). From the perspective of donors, this incremental increase in domestic funding is expected to “allow the Government to become comfortable with the idea of on-budget financing, and will be continued in the future until the programme is largely or entirely domestically financed.” There is recognition that this requires long-term efforts and “continued donor support to the next phase of the programme;” [...] “with per capita [gross national income] a third of the sub-Saharan African average, and limited scope for reallocation from other sectors (Ethiopia already has one of the highest rates of pro-poor spending), it does not yet have the fiscal space to cover the whole PSNP budget” (DFID 2015a).

In Kenya, while encouraging increased external funding, government officials made sure to resist any expansion that could not be domestically maintained in the absence of donor funding (Ikiara 2009). The progressive rollout strategy of the CT-OVC scheme is a reflection of the proactive yet cautious attitude by the Kenyan government to ensure predictable and long-term budgetary commitment and avoid creating chronic fiscal deficits. Over the years, the government has dramatically increased its financial commitment. This has not been directly associated with increased taxation due to the fear of making the scheme unpopular to Kenyan taxpayers (Ikiara 2009). It occurred in a context of sustained economic growth, along with a reallocation of expenditures. Over the period 2005-2010, the annual GDP growth averaged five per cent (World Bank 2013c), and the relative share of government funding for social transfers dropped from over 57 per cent to 19 per cent for relief and recovery social transfers (largely food-based) while it increased from two to 43 per cent for social cash transfers (including CT-OVC) (Republic of Kenya 2012, p. 18). In the case of the HSNP too, domestic funding has now exceeded 30 per cent of the regular caseload and is expected to increase further in the coming years (DFID 2015b).

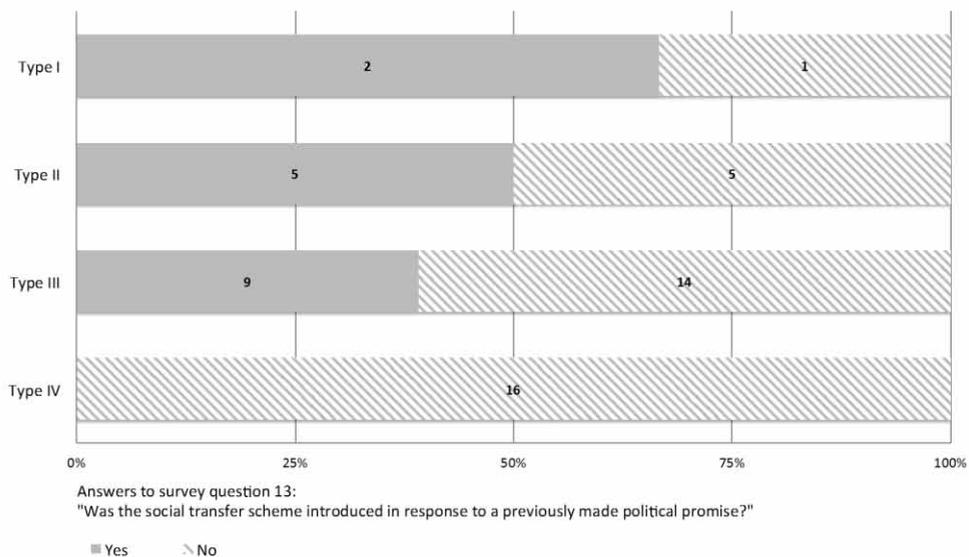
Still, the perceived claimability of social transfers offered by schemes with Type-III and -IV origins appears moderate (Figure 4-19). These benefits do not (yet) appear to be firmly established as part of the social contract between the various governments and their citizens. Reflecting the origins of the schemes, the share of survey respondents who indicate the scheme was introduced in response to a previously made political promise is higher for schemes with Type-I origins than for those with Type-III origins, and is nil for schemes with Type-IV origins (Figure

4-20). This echoes the role perceived to be played by elections in the genesis of the schemes discussed above (Figure 4-16). But there are signs that, as the scheme expands, this might be changing. An interesting pattern is observed among the 33 survey respondents who reported on the issue: while 64 per cent specify that the scheme was *not* (initially) “introduced in response to a previously made political promise” (Appendix A.1, question 13), 82 per cent indicate that social transfer-related issues have been “included in debates/manifestos during the most recent elections” (Appendix A.1, question 30). This suggests that social transfers are now part of national political debates (between governments and their citizens), and are no longer confined to policy debates between governments and foreign aid actors. In this context, most survey respondents perceive the schemes to receive today a fair level of “political and social support,” (Appendix A.1, question 29) even when introduced with substantial support from foreign aid actors (Figure 4-21).



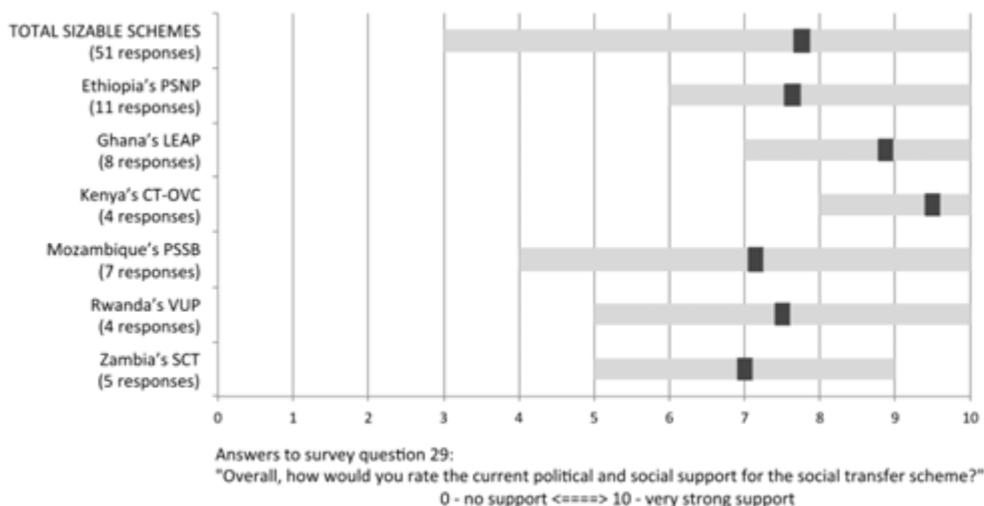
Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-19** Perceived Current Status per Type of Scheme: Claimability of Benefits



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

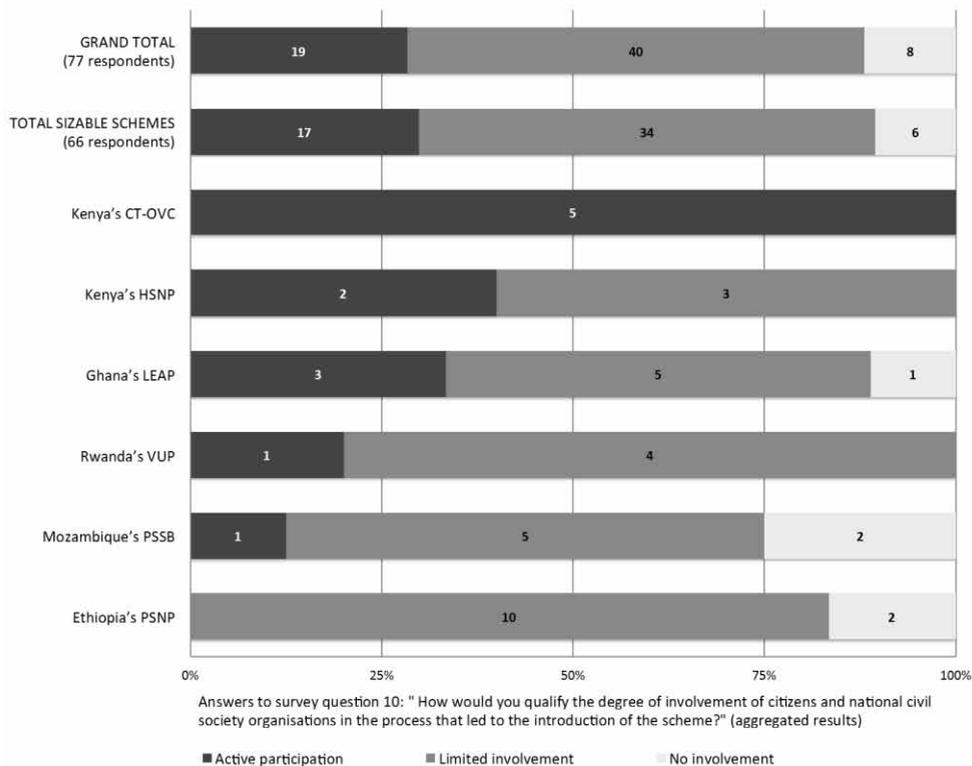
**Figure 4-20** Perceived Origins per Type of Scheme: Political Promise



Note: The dark square indicates the mean value of the responses, and the lighter bar shows the range of responses.

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-21** Perceived Level of Political and Social Support for the Selected Schemes



Notes: The first two response options were aggregated into the category 'active participation,' and the following two response options were aggregated into the category 'limited involvement.'

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 4-22** Perceived Degree of Involvement of Citizens and Civil Society Organisations

In a similar vein, another pattern worth noting concerns citizens' ownership. Overall, citizens are not found to have demanded the introduction of the most aid-supported schemes. With the notable exception of Kenya's CT-OVC, a majority of survey respondents report a limited degree of involvement of citizens and civil society organisations in the process that led to the introduction of the scheme (Figure 4-22). Only three out of 60 respondents (five per cent) cite a civil society actor among what they perceive as the main initiators of the process that eventually led to the introduction of the scheme (Figure 4-8). Interestingly, a slightly higher share of respondents (ten out of 56 respondents, or 18 per cent) include a civil society actor among the actors they see as having been influential in defining the initial design of the scheme (Figure 4-12 and Figure 4-13). Still, interviewed practitioners suggest that for most schemes with Type-III or -IV

origins there has been only limited consultation with citizens (or future beneficiaries) on the initial design of the schemes (Section 6.1). When considering the involvement of civil society actors in any subsequent design change, no change appears: only five out of 24 respondents (21 per cent) cite a civil society actor among actors they perceive as having been influential in bringing the current changes to the scheme design. This, however, might evolve in the future. If the degree of citizen's ownership appears very low in its provision dimension (demand for and conception of the scheme) and still low in its production dimension (implementation of the scheme), there are early signs indicating that in some cases the social appropriation process has started. In several cases, public campaigns have been waged to raise awareness about the need for the social transfer scheme, social transfer-related issues receive some attention in the national media, and the schemes tend to enjoy a fair level of social acceptance (Section 4.2).

The overall picture emerging from this across-case analysis reveals an interesting evolution over the past years and suggests a few nascent dynamics. Government's support for the reviewed aid-supported schemes has been increasing. This progressive appropriation by a growing number of governmental actors, including ministries of finance, has enabled the mobilisation of (higher levels of) domestic resources. Securing this financial support from governments and encouraging an upward trend in their budgetary commitments over the years to come (for instance, by including the mobilisation of domestic resources as a benchmark for continued aid support) appears to be a key focus today for foreign aid actors. Ensuring citizen's support and ownership might be the next area for attention towards long-term sustainability of the schemes.

### *Concluding remarks*

Unwrapping the origins of the dozen selected schemes establishes foreign aid actors as important players in the mobilisation of resources for social transfers. In line with our first working hypothesis, influential aid actors have included international financial institutions recommending the reform of costly subsidy policies, agencies specialised in social protection advocating for coverage extension, and humanitarian actors calling for more cost-effective ways to provide assistance in protracted crises. Findings bring additional insights around the influence of foreign aid actors. Processes behind the emergence of the selected sizable schemes can be categorised according to the degree and context in which foreign aid actors were involved. But contrary to a common perception that some of these schemes have been donor-instigated and -driven, it is often not possible to establish whether the first impulse has come from foreign aid actors or from

domestic players. Rather, foreign aid actors appear to have given weight to existing national proponents, such as a ministry of social affairs that had been weak in the intragovernmental competition for resources. Forming (formal or informal) alliances, foreign aid actors are found to have contributed to convincing other decisive entities within governments, such as ministries of finance. Hence, findings highlight the fragmented nature of political will, government's commitment and national ownership. Within the same government, an entity might be in favour of social transfers, while another might oppose it. Insights brought by this multiple-case study actually challenge the perspective developed in the literature on global social policy and development that tends to identify two competing strands of argumentation regarding social policymaking in developing countries, one emphasizing global influence and the other domestic initiatives. Instead, the national social transfer policies reviewed here appear to emerge out of complex interactions between groups of (international and national) policy actors with their different views on social protection and financial responsibility.<sup>179</sup>

Besides underlying the enabling role of foreign aid actors in the emergence of most of the selected sizable social transfer schemes, the empirical evidence reviewed here suggests a catalytic effect of aid. In most cases, donor funding remains high, but the share of domestic contribution is on the rise, and there are good prospects to see most of these schemes fully domestically funded in the future. Decisions to adopt and scale up a social transfer scheme tend to occur within broader strategies of state-led social protection and pro-poor policy extension. Findings suggest that foreign aid actors have played a significant role in mobilising such additional national efforts for social transfers. Furthermore, they reveal that such a catalytic effect can be observed even when the involvement of foreign aid actors in the origins of a scheme has been strong. The fact that heavily supported initiatives can turn into sustainable policy change challenges our second working hypothesis. The conclusion that aid can have a catalytic effect, rather than a crowding out or substitution effect, on social transfer policies and spending also contrasts with previous studies on social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>180</sup>

Returning to our first sub-question, this chapter has thus established that foreign aid actors *can* successfully enable the emergence of a permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in a low-capacity African country context. Supporting our first working hypothesis, the empirical evidence reviewed here reveals that different types of foreign aid actors have been actively involved in the

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<sup>179</sup> Studying the case of Cambodia, Kwon et al. (2015) reach a similar conclusion.

<sup>180</sup> See, in particular, Devereux et al. (2010), Hickey et al. (2009), Holmqvist (2010), and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010). This conclusion, however, echoes Morrissey's (2009) study that has shown through econometric analyses that aid increases social spending.

genesis of some of the selected schemes. However, contrary to our second hypothesis, this does not necessarily jeopardise their long-term sustainability. The fact that (at least) some aid efforts appear successful, in the medium run, in leading to policy uptake calls for a closer investigation into the reality of aid practices and policy making. In Chapter 2, echoing the concerns of many scholars, we posited that aid for social transfers was unlikely to translate into sustainable policy change, primarily because aid actors tend to adopt a linear, technocratic approach to policy making. The catalytic effect of aid uncovered here challenges this view. This implies that such a linear approach to policy making may actually work, and/or that the approach adopted by foreign aid actors is not so linear, technocratic and economistic. This leads us to our second sub-question that concerns the role of the production of scientific knowledge in the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake. This is what we turn to in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

# What Role for Scientific Analysis? An Inquiry into the Use of Research in Social Transfer Policy Making

Economic instrumentalism, the notion that unless we can prove the economic value of an idea or an intervention it is socially worthless, is now dominant in much of government.

*Richard Horton cited in Parkin et al. (2013)*

This second empirical chapter explores the role the provision of scientific analysis (has played or may) play in the influence of foreign aid actors on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context (our second sub-question). As described in Section 3.3, the question is approached from different angles with a focus on ex-ante cost-benefit analyses as one foreign aid actors' strategy that is explicitly intended at convincing governments to mobilise (additional) domestic resources for social transfers, and that reflects a rather a linear, technocratic and evidence-focused approach to policy making. The chapter starts by offering an overview of the different types of cost analyses and their applications in the social protection field (Section 5.1). It then presents the findings of the methodological review of the main models used for ex-ante cost analyses in social transfer policy, pointing to underlying assumptions and inherent limitations of this type of exercise (Section 5.2).<sup>181</sup> Next, it contemplates, from the eyes of foreign aid practitioners, the use and usefulness of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses, along with other forms of ex-ante and ex-post evaluations, and considers their prospects for further encouraging social transfer policy uptake in low-capacity country contexts (Section 5.3). Last, drawing on the multiple-case study of sizable schemes, the chapter looks at the role played by scientific analysis relative to other forms of evidence and knowledge (Section 5.4). In light of these findings, concluding remarks assess the extent to which the provision of scientific analysis can be seen as a key factor determining foreign aid actors' influence on social transfer policy uptake.

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<sup>181</sup> The first part of this chapter (Sections 5.1 and 5.2) is based on the working paper that was prepared for the UNICEF Office of Research (Cherrier et al. 2013) and discussed with peers in a seminar on "Making the investment case for social protection" organised on 18 March 2013 in Florence, Italy.

## 5.1 Overview of Types of Cost Analyses

In a context characterised by huge needs and limited resources, recent years saw growing attention paid to ensuring best value for money, in particular among development partners. This is the purpose of cost analysis approaches:<sup>182</sup> “to provide a method for choosing among alternatives in order to select those that are able to accomplish a given result most parsimoniously.” (Levin and McEwan 2001, p. 1) There are numerous types of cost analyses, and we will begin by introducing the main ones, giving examples of their application in the social protection field. Next, we will consider how social transfers can be approached as an economic investment. This sets the stage for the investigation of the underlying assumptions and inherent limitations of this type of analysis, which we will present in Section 5.2.

### Main types of cost analyses

In the area of social transfers, ex-ante analyses are conducted with the aim of indicating which types of social transfer intervention are affordable (cost-feasibility analysis), which option delivers a given level of benefit for the lowest cost (cost-efficiency analysis), or which design option yields the highest level of effectiveness for a given cost (cost-effectiveness analysis). As a result of recent interest, terms such as cost-effectiveness, cost-efficiency and return on investment have become buzzwords. These related yet different terms are often mistakenly used interchangeably. To ensure conceptual clarity, Table 5-1 summarises the main types of cost analysis that may be used. We briefly go through each of them below, highlighting their main recent use in the social protection field specifically.

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<sup>182</sup> As previously mentioned, in line with Levin and McEwan (2001), we use the term ‘cost analyses’ as a generic term encompassing any form of analyses involving costs estimates, be it a simple analysis of costs alone or a more complex return-on-investment analysis.

**Table 5-1** Different Types of Cost Analysis for Different Purposes

Main policy question	Type of cost analysis required	Output indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is a single option affordable?</li> </ul>	Cost Feasibility Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ <b>Fiscal Burden</b> Total cost of the programme (over time) expressed as a percentage of GDP, government budget, taxable base, or ODA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which option delivers the highest level of transfer for a given cost (or a given level of transfer for the lowest cost)?</li> </ul>	Cost-Efficiency Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ <b>Efficiency Ratio</b> Total budget required to deliver one unit (e.g. US\$1 worth) of transfer</li> <li>⇒ <b>Cost-Transfer Ratio</b> Ratio of administrative costs to transfer costs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which option yields the highest level of effectiveness for a given cost (or a given level of effectiveness for the lowest cost)?</li> </ul>	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ <b>Cost-Effectiveness Ratio</b> Outcomes in natural units (e.g. 'cases prevented' or 'number of lives saved') for one unit of transfer</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which option yields a given level of benefits for the lowest cost (or the highest level of benefits for a given cost)?</li> <li>Are the benefits of a single option larger than its costs?</li> </ul>	Cost-Benefit Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ <b>Benefit-Cost Ratio</b> Amount of benefits expressed in monetary units per unit of costs</li> <li>⇒ <b>Net Benefits</b> Benefits minus costs</li> <li>⇒ <b>Internal Rate of Return</b> Discount rate that causes the net present value of costs minus benefits to equal zero</li> </ul>

Source: Author, based on Levin and McEwan (2001).

### *Cost-feasibility analyses to assess levels of affordability*

Cost feasibility analysis is the most basic form of cost analysis. It aims at providing estimates of costs alone, and determining on a yes-or-no basis whether something can be afforded. If the cost of any option exceeds the resources that are available, there is no point in doing any further analysis. When considering several options, it allows a pre-selection excluding the ones that appear beyond reach. To apprehend the level of affordability, the total cost of the option (in monetary terms) when the programme is at scale—that is, the initial and the continuing costs—is estimated. This is usually then expressed as a share of the GDP. It may also be helpful to express the total annual cost of a policy option as a share of the government budget, taxable base or the overall ODA received by the country.

Analysing the evolution of the fiscal burden (usually expressed as a percentage of GDP) over time is useful to apprehend financial sustainability.

Recent advocacy efforts in the social protection field have largely focused on fiscal space issues. This resulted in an increased use of cost feasibility analyses over the past few years, as part of efforts, globally and in many developing countries, to demonstrate that the provision of a basic non-contributory social protection package is affordable. Such is the approach adopted, for example, by the ILO (2008) in the aftermath of the global 2008 economic crisis to challenge the view that basic social protection is a luxury that only rich countries can afford, or by HelpAge International (2010) to globally advocate for social pensions for the elderly. It has become a rather common approach and is widely used, notably as an integral part of the dialogue towards nationally-defined social protection floors (Ortiz et al. 2015). However, cost feasibility analyses alone do not allow judging the overall worth of an option because they do not account for output, outcome or impact measures.<sup>183</sup>

#### *Cost-efficiency analyses to improve process*

For a given objective, several social protection policy options can be envisioned. For example, to improve access to food, various forms of social transfers can be considered, such as targeted food rations, food vouchers, cash transfers, or mixed transfers. A comparative cost-efficiency analysis can help define which policy option to opt for, estimating costs to deliver a given output (for instance one kg worth of rice) for alternative options. Such analyses can be useful to fine-tune an existing scheme. For instance, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) commissioned such a study to estimate and compare costs associated to alternative mechanisms (food-, voucher- and/or cash-based) to deliver food assistance to poor Palestine refugees (Cherrier 2009).

#### *Comparative cost-effectiveness analyses to select policy options*

Cost-effectiveness analyses are used to inform the choice between two or more policy options to achieve a given objective—such as, for instance, achieving school enrolment, or improving access to health care. Most ex-ante studies on social transfers have focused on quantifying what could be expected in terms of poverty

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<sup>183</sup> These performance indicators are used to assess to what extent a programme achieves its objectives. Output indicators measure the quantity of transfers provided, or the number of beneficiaries served; outcome indicators measure the effects of the transfer (how they are used); and impacts measure the overall effects on living standards or poverty.

reduction or Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals. This type of simulations has formed the basis for advocacy efforts aimed at convincing national governments to invest in social protection—see for instance, Gassmann and Behrendt (2006), or to reform the current system—see for instance, Gassmann (2011, 2012). Cost-effectiveness studies have been used to present national policy makers with country-specific evidence of the potential of social transfers as a powerful mechanism to reduce income deprivation and inequality, and to promote human development. Such studies usually look at one outcome at a time: poverty headcount, school attendance or else. But social transfers are praised because they can help achieve multiple objectives. The attempt of capturing this multidimensional effect in one measure may be helpful to make the case for social transfers.

*Cost-benefit analyses to assess whether benefits can exceed costs*

Cost-benefit analysis combines all the different benefits of a programme onto one scale (usually a monetary scale) and shows the ratio of the combined benefits to cost. Cost-benefit analysis will, where feasible, provide an answer to the question: Is the programme worth its cost? A comparative cost-benefit analysis would answer the question: Which of the options has the highest benefit/cost ratio? This is only possible when all values involved can be converted into monetary terms, which is challenging in the case of ethical, psychological or social benefits of social protection. Nevertheless, there are some examples, such as the cost-benefit study carried out in Tajikistan to identify the best policy option for child protection and inform a discussion on the financial implications of a policy reform (Gassmann et al. 2009).

Cost-benefit analyses may provide robust estimates about the different benefits of social transfers and clarify the linkages with economic performance. They may help convince policy makers that social transfers are not only social but can also be a worthwhile economic investment. Some development partners have even promoted the idea of a development planning matrix (or big ‘development calculator’) to model the impact of a set of strategies (cash transfers, health insurance, education, livelihoods, etc.) on a set of objectives (poverty reduction, risk management, literacy, health, productivity growth, economic growth, etc.), thus modelling intra- as well as inter-sectorial linkages (Miller and Samson 2012).

*Return-on-investment analyses to make an economic investment case*

Such analyses are intended to go even one step further and consider the aggregated benefits of a package of measures over time (Levin and McEwan

2001). Because social transfers are paid by taxpayers (either in the developing country or in a donor country), the return-on-investment question is particularly sensitive, even more so when countries face the double challenge of having to extend social protection measures and improve social services and basic infrastructure. Finding the right balance between demand- and supply-side investments is a difficult task. Alternative investments need to be discounted against each other as different government sectors are competing with one another. Developing an economic argument for social transfers requires looking both at cost-effectiveness in the short term, to assess whether costs can be justified by the expected impacts for human and economic development, as well as cost-effectiveness—and when appropriate cost-benefit—in the long term. In 2012, in a study commissioned by UNICEF and the government of Cambodia, Andrés Mideros and colleagues (2013, 2016) provide an ex-ante estimate of the rate of return to investment in social transfers.<sup>184</sup>

Having a closer look at the links between government spending, social protection, human development, poverty and inequality, and economic growth can help make a stronger case for public investment in social transfers. It may help move beyond the current state of debate where the productive nature of certain types of social protection investment is questioned. As seen in Chapter 2, arguments in favour of social transfers have broadly evolved from handouts (discretionary) to human rights (obligation) to pro-poor economic growth (essential investment). But if there is a growing tendency to conceive social transfers as economic investment, this is not yet supported by strong empirical evidence. Interest for ex-ante assessment of economic returns is increasing, but estimating rates of return on public investment in social transfers is complex: social transfer interventions have multidimensional impacts; empirical evidence on the long-term impacts of social transfers remains limited; and impacts may be difficult to quantify in monetary terms. To better apprehend this complexity, we look below at a few frameworks conceptualising the links between social transfers and economic growth.

## **Social transfers as an economic investment**

Social transfers have a direct objective in terms of social outcomes and human development, but they are also linked with economic development, and, hence, can be regarded as an economic investment. Several authors have articulated an economic justification for social transfers on the basis of theoretical mechanisms and international evidence linking social transfers and pro-poor economic

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<sup>184</sup> We shall return to that ambitious attempt later in this chapter.

growth.<sup>185</sup> Harold Alderman and Ruslan Yemtsov (2012) actually argue that there is a shift in the economists' view on social protection, which is now increasingly seen as an instrument that can contribute towards economic growth. In line with this statement, it is interesting to see that the World Economic Forum (2012) recently made the case for a new approach to economic growth, emphasising the importance of employment and social protection. Social protection is no longer conceptualised as a cost to the economy but as a source of resilience in tough times, as a support for growth and productivity in good times, and as a general mechanism for socioeconomic inclusion.

Alderman and Yemtsov (2012) identify three main pathways through which social transfers can support economic growth, namely:

- (i) individual level (building and protecting human capital, and other productive assets, empowering poor individuals to invest or to adopt higher return strategies),
- (ii) local economy effects (enhancing community assets and infrastructure, positive spillovers from beneficiaries to non-beneficiaries),
- (iii) overall economy level (acting as stabilizers of aggregate demand, improving social cohesion and making growth-enhancing reforms more politically feasible). (abstract)

Based on evidence from impact evaluation studies, Armando Barrientos (2012) suggests that social transfers can improve the productive capacity of households in poverty and contribute to economic growth at the micro-level. Yet, his study underlines the challenges to identify the size and significance of non-income effects, and get a sense of potential growth effects in low-income countries. His basic framework distinguishes the effects on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries: while social transfers can help lift restrictions on beneficiaries' productive capacity, non-beneficiaries are primarily affected through taxation, which can be expected to impact negatively on work and saving incentives. However, this second issue is not taken further as there are few studies addressing the extent to which the financing of social transfers has adverse incentive effects on non-beneficiaries.

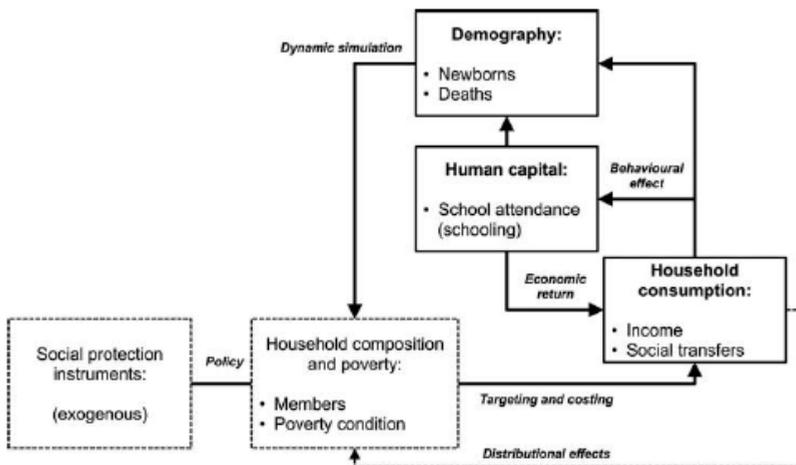
From an analytical perspective of socioeconomic development proposed by Adam Szirmai (2012), links between social transfers, economic performance and socioeconomic outcomes can be identified further from its proximate, intermediate and ultimate sources. Proximate sources of economic growth are those directly related with economic output and include disembodied technological change (that

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<sup>185</sup> See, for instance, Arnold et al. (2011), Barrientos (2012), Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa (2010), Barrientos and Scott (2008), DFID (2006b), ILO (2005), OECD (2009b), and Samson and Cherrier (2009, annexe 5).

is, advances in technological knowledge that are not incorporated in any specific production factor), capital accumulation and labour productivity. Intermediate sources of development include trends in national and international demand, economic, social and technological policies, and changes in the terms of trade. Lastly, ultimate sources of development are related with geographic conditions, demographic trends, social attitudes and capabilities, political and social institutions, as well as class and power relations among others. It is important to note that the relations among these levels are neither linear nor unidirectional (Szirmai 2012).

Building on this literature, it is possible to offer an analytical framework of the links between social transfers, as social protection instruments, and socioeconomic development (Cherrier et al. 2013; Mideros et al. 2013), as presented in Figure 5-1. Economic returns on investment in social transfers can be measured by the effect on economic growth, while the costs include both the resources directly invested in the transfers and those indirectly included in the distortionary effects of taxes and/or social security contributions. Social transfers directly affect household disposable income (distributional effects) and, as such, household consumption. However, social transfers also affect household behaviour through income and non-income effects. Additional and/or secure income encourages households to invest in health, education, livelihoods and productive activities. Moreover, programme design may further encourage certain decisions (for instance, through conditionality and transfer mechanisms).



Source: Mideros et al. (2016).

**Figure 5-1** Social Transfers and Socioeconomic Development: An Analytical Framework

Improving health status and education level increases human capital, and subsequently labour productivity, depending on the coverage and quality of health and education public services. Furthermore, productive investments increase physical capital by fostering and protecting productive assets. In addition, social transfers affect labour supply in different ways. First, they may reduce labour due to a higher level of income for any level of labour. This effect is likely to happen if the transfer amount is higher than the income generated before. However, transfers received by poor individuals may help solve credit constraints and afford transportation costs, and in this way, increases labour opportunities. Finally, social transfers may enhance social cohesion and promote institutional changes.

On the other hand, social transfers are financed by general public revenues, and costs include the effects of taxation and/or alternative sources, such as budget reallocation. Social transfers have the potential to enhance effective demand and generate local multipliers, but also to increase productive capacity and promote institutional changes, thereby contributing to economic performance. Hence, in order to estimate the economic returns on investment in social transfers, it is necessary to develop a multidimensional perspective including complementary effects (that is, the effects of different policies being implemented together) and linking micro- and macro-level effects. Besides, economic effects may not happen overnight and, as such, the analysis would have to take time into account.

For policy makers increasingly concerned with questions of cost, affordability, financing, sustainability, and returns on investment, such a conceptual framework can be attractive. However, the empirical evidence on the links between social transfers and economic growth is inconclusive, and many knowledge gaps remain.<sup>186</sup> Because social transfer schemes are relatively new in developing countries, there is little empirical evidence from low-income countries on their long-term effects, let alone cost-benefit ratio. In this context, various methods have been developed for estimating (and comparing) the costs and benefits of social transfers *ex ante* with a view to informing the decision to introduce, or not, a given social transfer policy. The prevailing context of data scarcity that characterises

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<sup>186</sup> Barrientos (2012) concludes that social transfers have a positive growth effect in developing countries, but that the size of the effect is inconclusive. It does so assuming that the issue of any adverse incentive effects on non-beneficiaries (notably through taxation) is “not a significant issue at present, because most transfer programmes absorb a very small share of resources in middle-income countries, while being largely externally financed in low-income countries.” (p. 18) He notes however that, as programmes become “increasingly financed from domestic resources, distortions associated with higher levels of taxation will need to be studied carefully.” (p. 18) Indeed, a recent meta-analysis of the effect of social transfers on economic growth suggests a negative growth effect in developed countries (Awaworyi and Yew 2014).

most low-income countries makes such exercises particularly challenging. Results depend on the assumptions embedded in the cost-analysis model, notably the assumptions made to address the lack of reliable data. The fact that this type of scientific evidence is expected to play a preponderant role in policy advice—and policy dialogue with budget decision makers in particular,<sup>187</sup> justifies a critical review. The investigation presented below highlights the underlying assumptions and inherent limitations of the current models for estimating and comparing, ex-ante, the costs and benefits of social transfer policies and programmes. It discusses, in particular, the scope for going beyond short-term cost-benefit analyses focused on immediate effects, and estimating rates of return on public investment in social transfers in the medium and long terms.

## 5.2 A Critical Review of Ex-Ante Cost Analysis Models

We identified a total of fourteen models currently used by international organisations and donor agencies for ex-ante cost analysis in social transfer policy in developing countries.<sup>188</sup> Table 5-2 provides an overview of these models, describing required data inputs and outputs in terms of measure of costs, and when relevant, measures of impacts and ratio. As this table reveals, the different approaches that have been used in different parts of the world to estimate and compare, ex ante, the costs and benefits of social transfers range from back-of-the-envelope calculations to advanced expert modelling. The discussion below on the potential usefulness as well as assumptions and limitations of these models is structured around the four main steps for carrying out a (comparative) cost analysis: defining the (range of) policy option(s) to be analysed; quantifying costs; quantifying outcomes and impacts; and comparing impacts and costs. We underline key methodological issues arising in each step, and review how different authors have approached them.

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<sup>187</sup> As underlined in Section 2.2, ex-ante cost-benefit analyses have gained traction lately in the work of foreign aid actors to make the case for non-contributory social protection. See, for instance, the guidance notes recently developed on measuring and maximising value for money in social transfer programmes (White et al. 2013) and in social protection systems (White et al. 2015).

<sup>188</sup> Details on how models were identified and their methodology analysed are provided in Section 3.3.

**Table 5-2** Overview of Main Models Used for Ex-Ante Cost Analyses in Non-Contributory Social Protection Policy

Line	Model	Organisation	Description	Input Data	Measure of Cost	Measure of Outcomes	Ratio
[1]	Pensions Calculator <sup>(a)</sup>	HelpAge (2010)	Easy-to-use online calculator returning the annual cost of a universal pension scheme in a given country, on the basis of variable age of eligibility and benefit level and fixed admin costs (5% of total transfer costs)	Policy parameters (eligible age, benefit level)	Annual cost of an hypothetical universal pension scheme at scale, expressed in currency and percentage of GDP	None	None
[2]	Social Protection Financing Model	DFID, ODI and EPRI (2010)	Simple Excel spreadsheet providing a rough idea on the impact in terms of poverty gap reduction that can be expected from a national cash transfer scheme (or conversely on the benefit size required to reach a given poverty gap reduction)	Policy parameters (target group, benefit level, administrative cost, etc.)	Annual cost of an hypothetical cash transfer scheme at scale, expressed in currency and percentage of GNI	Poverty gap	None
[3]	Basic Social Protection Tool <sup>(b)</sup>	ILO (2007)	User-friendly tool allowing users to make 30-year projections of the fiscal cost of implementing a basic set of social protection programmes, as well as the external funds required to achieve SPF objectives given certain fiscal and macroeconomic data; an additional distribution module estimates the extent of poverty reduction through the selected package	Demographic parameters, macro-economic parameters and policy parameters	Annual cost of an hypothetical social protection package at scale, expressed in local currency, percentage of GDP, percentage of government revenue, and percentage of government expenditure	Poverty gap	None

Line	Model	Organisation	Description	Input Data	Measure of Cost	Measure of Outcomes	Ratio
[4]	Social Protection Floor Costing Tool <sup>(c)</sup>	UNICEF and ILO (2010)	Interactive Excel spreadsheet allowing users to compare different social protection policy options (old-age pensions, child benefits, disability benefits, orphan benefits, education stipends, birth lump-sum benefits, youth labour market programmes, and unemployment programmes) according to their cost and, to a lesser extent, to their impact on income poverty	Both historical and projected national statistics on population, labour market, economy  Policy parameters (target group, benefit level, administrative costs, etc.)	Annual cost of an hypothetical social protection package at scale, expressed in local currency, percentage of GDP, percentage of government revenue, and percentage of government expenditure	Poverty gap	None
[5]	Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP) <sup>(d)</sup>	ILO (2010)	Excel workbook aimed at providing a basis for discussing and simulating alternative financing options and fiscal space — the construction of the model goes hand-in-hand with a national dialogue process involving national authorities and other actors in social protection	Macro-level data for economic and government statistics  Administrative and national household survey data for labour market and social security programmes data	Annual costs of alternative social protection packages at scale, expressed in local currency, percentage of GDP, percentage of government revenue, and percentage of government expenditure	None	None

Line	Model	Organisation	Description	Input Data	Measure of Cost	Measure of Outcomes	Ratio
[6]	Rapid Assessment Protocol Plus (RAP+) <sup>(d)</sup>	ILO (2011)	Excel workbook aimed to provide users with a more refined estimate of the number of beneficiaries targeted and the cost of the benefits proposed, as well as with estimates of the hypothetical impact of alternative benefit packages on poverty	Micro-level, household-level data	Annual costs of alternative social protection packages at scale, expressed in local currency, percentage of GDP, percentage of government revenue, and percentage of government expenditure	Poverty headcount Poverty gap	None
[7]	Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Review (SPER) <sup>(d)</sup> and Social Budget Model	ILO (2000)	Methodology for conducting an analysis of existing contributory and non-contributory social protection schemes, social protection coverage gaps, and extension strategies over a 5-20 year period (contributing to internationally comparable statistics on social protection)	National statistics, national administrative data, household survey data	Past, current and projected costs of existing social protection programmes, expressed in local currency, percentage of GDP, percentage of government revenue, and percentage of government expenditure	Indicators of system performance (e.g. on effectiveness, efficiency, coverage and adequacy)	None

Line	Model	Organisation	Description	Input Data	Measure of Cost	Measure of Outcomes	Ratio
[8]	EPRI micro-simulation model	EPRI (2004)	Static microsimulation model developed to assess the social and economic impacts of a social transfer programme or package	Household survey data	Annual cost of hypothetical cash transfer schemes at scale, expressed in currency and percentage of GNI	Poverty headcount Poverty gap	Poverty gap reduction per monetary unit invested
[9]	Automated Development Economics Poverty Tables software's Social Protection module (ADePT-SP) <sup>(e)</sup>	World Bank (2008)	Statistical software allowing users to: easily generate reports using household survey data (all presented in print-ready, standardised tables and charts); simulate the impact of economic shocks, farm subsidies, cash transfers, and other policy instruments on poverty, inequality and labour; examine how beneficiaries/benefits of social protection programmes are distributed across quintiles, deciles or other population groups; simulate the distributional impact of new/restructured programmes (performing sensitivity analysis with different consumption counterfactuals; generating estimates with correct standard errors; and producing statistics that allow comparisons between survey and administrative data)	Micro-level data from various types of household surveys	None	Poverty Inequality Labour	None

Line	Model	Organisation	Description	Input Data	Measure of Cost	Measure of Outcomes	Ratio
[10]	Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) model, Health tool, version 5.6 <sup>(f)</sup>	World Bank, UNICEF, AfDB (2011)	Mathematical results-based planning and budgeting method to simulate varying configurations of service delivery modes to expand access and measures to encourage usage (mainstream and equity-focus approach) considering high-impact intervention packages	Disaggregated data on population profile, epidemiological profile, intervention coverage	Estimated cost of intervention strategy in US\$	Reductions of deaths and stunting in children under 5 years of age	Number of under-5 deaths and stunting cases averted per US\$1 million invested
[11]	Business Case's Economic Appraisal section	DFID (2011)	Approach to mathematical modelling for estimating costs and benefits over time and assessing value for money for alternative programme design options	Various incl. national indicators, international evidence	Ingredient method, project budget lines	Depending on programme and context (poverty, DALYs, etc.)	Cost-Transfer Ratio Net Present Value Benefit-Cost Ratio
[12]	OPM economic model (used in Côte d'Ivoire)	OPM (2011)	Econometric model to estimate cost, impact, cost-effectiveness, targeting efficiency, and administrative and budgetary feasibility of policy options for developing a system of social transfers	Household survey data	Annual cost of cash transfer alternatives at scale, expressed in currency and percentage of GDP	Monetary poverty School attendance Child labour Use of health services	Cost in local currency of reducing the monetary poverty gap by one percentage point

Line	Model	Organisation	Description	Input Data	Measure of Cost	Measure of Outcomes	Ratio
[13]	PEP-1-t model <sup>(a)</sup>	PEP (2010)	Complex methodology, linking a CGE model to simulate the effects of the global crisis on a country's national economy to a micro-level household model, using national household survey data to simulate both the impacts of the crisis and the impacts of alternative policy measures on child welfare variables	Household survey data	None	Monetary poverty Caloric poverty School participation Child labour Access to health service	None
[14]	Rate of Return	MGSoG (2012)	Model combining i) a static microsimulation model to estimate the direct (distributional) effects of social transfers on poverty and inequality; ii) empirical regression models to estimate the behavioural (income) effects of social transfers as well as the returns of school achievement on household disposable income; iii) a dynamic microsimulation model to estimate the economic rates of return of a basic social transfer package over 20 periods based on the effects on household consumption	Household survey data	Annual costs of alternative policy options and a proposed social protection package at scale, expressed in local currency and percentage of GDP	Monetary poverty Monetary inequality School achievement Nutrition Labour participation Labour supply Household income	Economic Rate of Return

Notes: <sup>(a)</sup> For more information on the Pensions Calculator, visit: <http://www.pension-watch.net/about-social-pensions/about-social-pensions/social-pensions-database/>.

<sup>(b)</sup> For more information on the Basic Social Protection Tool, visit: <http://www.socialsecurityextension.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=447>.

<sup>(c)</sup> For more information on the ILO Costing and Assessment Tools, visit: <http://www.socialprotectionfloor-gateway.org/24.htm>.

<sup>(d)</sup> For more information on the SPER, visit: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/areas/stat/spers.htm>.

<sup>(e)</sup> For more information on ADePT, visit: <http://www.worldbank.org/adept>.

<sup>(f)</sup> For more information on the MBB tool, visit: <http://www.devinfolive.info/mbb/mbbsupport/>.

<sup>(g)</sup> For more information on the PEP-1-t model, visit: <http://www.pep-net.org/programs/mpia/pep-standard-cge-models/pep-1-t-single-country-recursive-dynamic-version/>.

Source: Author's compilation.

## Defining the range of policy options to be analysed

We adopt here the perspective of development partners operating at the national level and assisting national governments in their decision whether to mobilise (further) domestic resources in non-contributory social protection and which instrument(s) to adopt. Most developing countries are yet to engage domestic resources in large-scale social transfer schemes. Their main question is whether to invest in this type of social protection programmes, and which social transfer instrument(s) to use given their specific priorities. In these countries, foreign aid actors are often in a position where they have to advocate for social transfers, and assist in defining which option to opt for. They need to lift national governments' reluctance, in terms of fiscal sustainability and dependency.

Defining the set of alternative policy options to be analysed requires: setting the objective(s); generating options; identifying feasible options; and establishing the counterfactual. Many studies implicitly or explicitly consider the main objective to be the reduction of monetary poverty and inequality. Some studies, particularly those advocating for child-sensitive social protection, would also consider the improvement of children outcomes such as education, health, nutrition and child labour, or progress towards socioeconomic development goals.

In their global study aimed at demonstrating the feasibility of a basic social protection package in low-income countries, the ILO (2008) used the Basic Social Protection Tool (Table 5-2, line 3) to estimate the cost and impact of a standard set of policies in terms of poverty gap reduction: old-age pensions; child benefits; health care; social assistance and employment scheme. The first ILO models were generic with pre-defined scenarios and a pre-defined poverty impact module. Increasingly, studies tend to be country specific, and assess policy against objectives set in the country's national social protection strategy. For instance, the construction of the ILO's new model (Rapid Assessment Protocol, Table 5-2, line 3) goes hand in hand with a dialogue process involving national authorities and other actors dealing with social protection.

Alternative options may be generated based on an articulated theory of change,<sup>189</sup> international empirical evidence, national experiments, etc. It is useful to set clear criteria beforehand for reviewing and pre-selecting alternative options. For instance, DFID Pakistan used the following criteria to assess the feasibility of each

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<sup>189</sup> A theory of change is a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context, or put differently, how and why a given intervention is expected to lead to specific change. For more information, see, for instance, Stein and Valters (2012).

cash transfer option considered to reduce poverty and increase school attendance and retention: ensure that the bottom two quintiles living in poverty are reached (exclusion errors); ensure non-eligible households do not benefit (inclusion errors); fiscal sustainability; political buy-in (provincial level as well as federal); and scalability (DFID 2012c).

Depending on the specific question the analysis aims to answer, the counterfactual would be the absence of social transfers (a do-nothing scenario), the current policy in place, or an alternative policy option, such as food subsidies. Establishing a counterfactual is essential as this is the benchmark against which all costs and benefits of the other policy options are articulated and compared. In particular, estimating the cost of inaction—that is, the costs associated to a do-nothing scenario, is a useful exercise when considering the value of introducing a policy. Box 5-1 provides some examples.

### **Box 5-1** Estimating the Cost of Inaction as a Counterfactual

Social transfers can generate various economic benefits and costs, which should be properly estimated to analyse their return. But the alternative of doing nothing may be costly as well. Holzer et al. (2008) attempted to assess the aggregate annual costs of child poverty to the United States economy. They reviewed research studies that estimate the statistical association between children growing up in poverty and their earnings, propensity to commit crime, quality of health later in life, and estimates of the costs that crime and poor health impose on the economy. Their results suggest that childhood poverty, each year, reduces productivity and economic output by an amount equal to 1.3 per cent of GDP, raises the costs of crime by 1.3 per cent of GDP, and raises health expenditures and reduces the value of health by 1.2 per cent of GDP.

In a similar way, Hirsch (2008) brings together three strands of evidence on the impact and costs of child poverty in Britain: review of research evidence to describe some of the consequences of child poverty that are likely to have repercussions for society; estimates of the effects of the consequences of child poverty on social spending—a cost to taxpayers—based on the observation of different levels of social spending in small areas with different levels of child poverty; and estimates of the costs to the economy of the lower productive capacity and earnings of adults who faced poverty as children. This creates both a cost to the public purse through foregone tax revenues and extra spending on benefits and tax credits, as well as a wider economic cost in terms of reduced economic activity associated with reduced production and private earnings. Hirsch's conclusion is that child poverty costs Britain at least GB£25 billion a year. Likewise, the World Bank (2006) estimated the share of GDP lost to malnutrition to run as high as 2-3 per cent in China and India for instance.

Involving policy makers at an early stage in the study appears essential to ensure all possible alternatives are considered. Ideally, social transfer policy options should be compared with other types of interventions expected to reach the defined objective. However, many studies, due to methodological and data constraints, solely consider cash transfer policy options. Also, studies aimed at

making the case for child-sensitive social protection would often only consider children-targeted options. Yet, in Southern Africa for instance, old-age pensions have proven to have a positive impact on children (due to the existence of a missing generation caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic), be more affordable, and sometimes more politically and socially acceptable.<sup>190</sup>

## Quantifying costs

An ex-ante cost analysis of social transfer policy options needs to estimate the total incremental costs at scale. Estimates would usually be based on the following basic ingredients: number of eligible persons/households; benefit level; administrative costs (including costs of targeting, transfer delivery, monitoring, etc.); costs of any attached activity (for instance, complementary counselling, public works, etc.). The actual drivers of costs for social transfers would typically be: selection of beneficiaries (targeting costs); delivery costs (overheads, service provision, cost of transfer, grievance mechanism, monitoring and information system, evaluation); in case of conditionality, additional costs on the supply side (health, education, nutrition) as well as monitoring conditionality costs (associated to spot checks to confirm that children are in school before approving payments, for instance); transaction costs to the family (opportunity costs, transport costs, other); and actual transfer amount received by the beneficiary.

Different approaches have been used to produce ex-ante estimates of social transfer programme/policy costs, ranging from back-of-the-envelope calculations to simple mathematical modelling to static and dynamic microsimulation. The Pensions Calculator (HelpAge 2010), the Social Protection Financing Model (DFID et al. 2011), the Basic Social Protection Costing Tool (ILO 2007), and the Social Protection Floor Costing Tool (UNICEF and ILO 2010) are examples of very easy-to-use tools aimed at providing policy-makers with rough estimates of costs very rapidly based on national statistics (Table 5-2, lines 1-4). For instance, the Social Protection Floor Costing Tool was used in Argentina, Madagascar and Senegal. It remains obviously very limited and the ILO subsequently developed the Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP), a more time-demanding but flexible and more robust model (Table 5-2, line 5). The construction of the model goes hand-in-hand with a dialogue process involving national stakeholders. The model can be used in early and intermediate stages of the national dialogue process to test different tailor-made benefit designs and policy options, and analyse fiscal space. The ILO Rapid Assessment Protocol Plus (RAP+) uses household-level data to provide users with a more refined estimate of the number of beneficiaries targeted and the cost of the

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<sup>190</sup> As recently experienced in Uganda where the government decided to phase out the Vulnerable Family Grant and simultaneously scale up the Senior Citizen Grant (Section 4.2).

benefits proposed (Table 5-2, line 6). It also allows users to assess the hypothetical impact of alternative benefit packages on poverty headcount and poverty gap. The RAP+ has now been used in a number of countries including El Salvador, Indonesia and Burkina Faso.<sup>191</sup>

The estimation of administrative costs is a critical point. Usual assumptions are to consider five per cent of transfer costs for simple design (such as, old-age pension) and ten per cent for more complex design (such as, poverty-targeted cash transfers). However, there is little ex-post evidence on this percentage. Some well-established programmes have low administrative costs: five per cent for Mexico's PROGRESA in 2000, four years after it was launched (Caldés et al. 2004). Evidence from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States indicates that the administrative costs for targeting alone range between 0.6 and 6.3 per cent of total programme costs (Grosh et al. 2008, p. 94). Hodges et al. (2011) note that programmes of this type in low-income African countries tend to have much higher administrative costs; because they are more recent, they still have large fixed start-up costs and have not yet achieved economies of scale. Another factor is that schemes in Sub-Saharan Africa often provide lower transfer levels than those in middle-income Latin American countries. There are now efforts to collect information on administrative costs more systematically (O'Brien 2014; ODI 2012).

Another important point needs to be made around the distribution of costs. A cost analysis would usually require calculating net costs to each constituency (Dhaliwal et al. 2012; Levin and McEwan 2001). In the case of a social transfer programme, costs could, for instance, be split between government, donor(s), local administration, private sector, beneficiaries, and non-beneficiaries; but most studies would only look at costs incurred by the implementing agency. It is often assumed that there are no transaction costs (such as, opportunity costs and transport costs) for beneficiary households. Yet, these transaction costs determine how much the benefit of cash transfers, for instance, is incremental to the family—that is, how much net additional money it will have to buy goods and invest with. In Pakistan, DFID factored in about four per cent of costs to families (to account for transport and other transaction costs) noting that these should fall moderately as payment systems become more efficient and families are better able to plan ahead (DFID 2012c). The UNRWA study previously cited also factored in transaction costs when assessing the cost-efficiency of alternative food- and cash-based social transfer policy options (Cherrier 2009).

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<sup>191</sup> See Behrendt (2011), Bonnet and Behrendt (2011), and ILO and IMF (2012).

Overall, there tends to be an “optimism bias” when estimating costs, a commonly observed phenomenon whereby “appraisers tend to overstate benefits, and understate timings and costs, both capital and operational” (Treasury Green Book cited in DFID 2009). A way to deal with this bias is to use empirical observations of past optimism bias to make adjustments. Yet, in the case of social transfer policy, the body of evidence on programme costs remains limited.

The issue of social protection costing (and financing) has received a lot of attention over the recent years (McCord and Hagen-Zanker 2011). In particular, key development partners involved in this issue recently agreed to further work on cost modelling and microsimulation towards the preparation of a review that provides insight into the models currently available, outlining technical specifications and intended uses, as well as guidance on appropriate model selection. They also recognised the need to agree on

common definitions for key terms used for the assessment of the cost of social protection provision to facilitate analytical research coherence (e.g. leakage, inclusion and exclusion errors, administrative cost) [...] including agreement regarding inclusion of indirect costs, e.g. cost of adhering to conditions and compliance monitoring. (ODI 2012, p. 5)

In this aspect, Oxford Policy Management recently completed a social budget for South Africa using a static tax-benefit micro-simulation tool to forecast social expenditures, and combining this tool with some rudimentary poverty and inequality measures of the impact of these social expenditures (Powel et al. 2011).

In general, costs are expected to decrease over time, as social transfers are there not only to reduce seasonal poverty, but also to generate mechanisms to alleviate structural poverty through human capital accumulation and economic security. Still, the cost of old-age benefits, for instance, may increase due to population ageing, and new investment in complementary services, such as healthcare and education, may be necessary to respond to an increasing demand generated by social transfer incentives. Models would rarely account for these costs or consider what the effects social transfers may have on reducing overall costs (for example, better household nutrition may lead to a reduced demand for healthcare). Finally, social transfer investment is complementary with other policies such as basic infrastructure, economic inclusion and general productivity, which could be taken into account for a comprehensive costing study.

## Quantifying outcomes and impacts

Ideally, decision-makers would want an analysis to estimate the total incremental impacts of a policy, considering both positive and negative impacts, and looking at both short-term and long-term impacts. Impacts that can be expected from social transfers are numerous, diverse and spread over time. The most relevant ones are: direct consumption effect on beneficiaries; indirect behavioural effects on beneficiaries (such as, increased school attendance and reduced child labour); and indirect effects on the local economy (economic multiplier effects). Usually, studies would focus only on a specific type of impact, or set of impacts, dictated by the specific objective of a given policy, but first and foremost by data availability and level of modelling skills.

### *Using mathematical modelling with national statistics and international evidence*

The Social Protection Floor Costing Tool only accounts for the basic income effect of social cash transfers to provide a rough estimate of a programme's impact on income poverty (UNICEF and ILO 2010). The model is informed by socioeconomic and programme parameters. It provides quick but rough and limited results (Table 5-2, line 4).

When developing a business case for the support of social transfer schemes, DFID aimed at considering other types of impacts using simple mathematical modelling (DFID 2011b; 2011c). This is done on the basis of various assumptions on the size of the beneficiary population, benefit level, international ex-post evidence on impact, etc. (Table 5-2, line 11). In Nigeria, DFID considered the following monetised benefits: consumption distributional dividend; welfare (health and nutrition); productivity gains (households/adults; children aged 2-15 years; children under two)—along with the following non-monetised benefits and risks: financial inclusion; social cohesion and gender; fiduciary risk and clientelism. The estimate of the likely reduction in infant and child mortality is drawn from estimates produced by Bhutta et al. (2008) according to which full coverage of nutrition interventions can reduce mortality by up to 25 per cent between birth and 36 months, and promoting breastfeeding can reduce under-five mortality by up to 8 per cent (DFID 2012a). In Pakistan, DFID used a family model to capture benefits based on: the global evidence base; statistics from the national household survey on the allocation of expenditure of families; the standard use of funds, as articulated in a rapid baseline appraisal of beneficiaries (DFID 2012c). In Gaza, DFID quantified immediate consumption benefits as well as welfare (quality of life) benefits due to improved nutrition using disability-adjusted life years

(DALYs)<sup>192</sup>—secondary monetary benefits in the form of avoided future medical costs were not modelled (Shah 2011).

The Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) tool is a much more complex mathematical model. It was jointly developed by the World Bank and UNICEF to design and test development strategies in international public health research (Table 5-2, line 10). In particular, the MBB model was recently applied to a total of 15 countries, ranging from low- to middle-income countries, to model an equity-focused strategy and compare its predicted outcomes against those of the current mainstream strategies for achieving the health MDGs for children (Carrera et al. 2012). The study arrived at a

surprising and significant conclusion: An equity-based strategy can move us more quickly and cost-effectively towards meeting Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5—reduce child mortality and improve maternal health—than our current path, with the potential of averting millions of maternal and child deaths by the 2015 deadline. (UNICEF 2010, p. 1)

UNICEF has been trying to adapt the MBB approach to other sectors. For example, UNICEF Ghana attempted to adapt the MBB model to the education sector and develop a tool that would look at both supply and demand sides (including financial access to education) and include a costing/budgeting model (Hattori 2011). The underlying idea was to estimate the contribution of social protection to improved education outcomes. UNICEF also envisioned simulating the contribution of social protection to improve health outcomes using MBB Health in urban areas of Lagos, Nigeria. This proved extremely challenging, and overall unsuccessful. The model needs to be fed with data on efficiency and effectiveness of standard interventions, which requires robust empirical evidence. As mentioned earlier, the evidence base around social transfers remains limited, especially concerning their indirect and long-term effects (Arnold et al. 2011). Evidence of the impact of social transfers on economic growth is particularly thin. Table 5-3

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<sup>192</sup> A DALY is a country-specific economic measure that allows to monetise the negative impact of ill health, malnutrition or death on a person. It is the sum of years of potential life lost due to premature mortality and the years of productive life lost due to disability. A DALY of 0 represents a year of perfect health, while a DALY of 1 represents death. Other health states are attributed values between 0 and 1 as assessed by experts on the basis of literature and other evidence of the quality of life in relative health states. For example, the disability weight of 0.18 for a broken wrist can be interpreted as losing 18 per cent of a person's quality of life relative to perfect health, because of the inflicted injury. Total DALYs lost from a condition are the sum of the mortality and morbidity components – the Year(s) of Life Lost due to premature death (YLLs) and the Year(s) of healthy life Lost due to Disability (YLDs).

presents a summary of estimates for economic growth impact of social protection, as compiled by Alderman and Yemtsov (2012).

**Table 5-3** Summary of Estimates for Economic Growth Impact of Social Protection (Micro, Meso and Macro Levels)

Country/Level	Programme/Type	Method	Results	Study
Cross-country/ macro	All SP spending	Regression	Moving from 0 to 2% of GDP spending on SP increases growth by 0.1-0.4 pp	Zaman and Tiwari (forthcoming)
South Africa/ macro	Gundo Lashu and EPWP/PW	SAM	Labour intensive PW on the scale of 0.2% of GDP increases GDP by 0.34%	Mc Cord and Van Sventer (2004)
US/macro	2009 Stimulus package	Modelling	Multiplier for expansion of the food stamp programme is 1.7, larger than for infrastructure spending (1.6)	Zandi (2009)
Representative econ./macro	Fully Funded (FF) Pensions	Simulations	Moving from PAYG to FF pensions increases GDP by 3-5% in 110 years	Corsetti and Schmidt-Hebbel (1995)
Bangladesh/ macro	BRAC/Rural development-Microcredit	SAM	BRAC was boosting GDP by 1.15% in 1998 while its cost was 0.2% of GDP	Alamgir (1996); Mallick (2000)
Brazil/meso	Bolsa Família/CCT	Regressions	10% increase in the programme increases municipal GDP by 0.6%, B/C = 3.5	Landim (2009)
India/meso	NREGA/PW	Simulations/SAM	Public works in a village increase HH incomes with a multiplier of 1.77	Hirway et al. (2009)
Malawi/meso	Dowa Emergency Cash Transfer (DECT)/CT	Simplified SAM	Total multiplier effects of the DECT between 2.02 and 2.79	Davies and Davey (2007)
Lesotho/meso	Child Grants (CGP)/CT	Full village SAM	Total multiplier effects of the CGP between 1.17 and 2.43	Davies (2012)
China/micro	Southwest China Poverty Reduction/CT	ERR	ERR = 8.6-9.8% (lower bound)	Ravallion and Chen (2005)
Bangladesh/ micro	Food for Education (FFE)/SF	ERR	ERR = 15-24%	Ryan and Meng (2004)
Colombia/ micro	Familias en Acción/CCT	B/C	Benefit-cost ratio = 1.59	IFS, Econometrica, SEI (2006)

Country/Level	Programme/Type	Method	Results	Study
Mexico/micro	PROCAPMO/CT	B/C	Benefit-cost ratio = 2.5	Sadoulet, De Janvry, and Davis (2001)
Mexico/micro	Oportunidades/CCT	ERR	ERR = 8% per year (lower bound); 17% (higher bound)	Coady and Parker (2004); Gertler et al (2006)
Ethiopia/micro	Productive Safety Net Programme/PW	B/C	Benefit-cost ratio = 1.8-3.7 (depending on the subproject)	Wiseman et al. (2010)
South Africa/micro	Child Support Grant/ CT	B/C	Benefit-cost ratio = 3.3-4.5	Agüero et al. (2007)
Chile/micro	Progressive Housing Programme/Subsidy	ERR	ERR = 18%, much higher than country's official cut off rate of 12%	Marcano and Ruprah (2008)

Notes: pp: percentage points; PAYG: pay as you go pension; CT: cash transfer; CCT: conditional cash transfer; ERR: economic rate of return; B/C: benefits to cost ratio; HH: household; SAM: social accounting matrices; SF: school feeding; PW: public works.

Source: Alderman and Yemtsov (2012, p. 8), based on IEG (2011) for micro impacts of social safety nets, Hodges et al. (2011), and own compilation for all other programmes.

Efforts are multiplying to extend the evidence base on social transfers. For instance, AusAID has supported evaluations that aim to understand better the economic pathways out of poverty that result from social transfers in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Pacific Island Countries (reported in Miller and Samson 2012). Nevertheless, the use of international evidence to estimate effects of social transfers in a given country appears risky. While human body's reactions are largely universal, a country's reactions to the introduction of social protection measures can obviously not be generalised. There can be considerable differences in results from one scheme to the next depending on implementation capacity, socioeconomic context, and cultural sensitivities. Hagen-Zanker et al. (2011) conducted a systematic review with the intention to identify and synthesise the current evidence on the effectiveness of employment guarantee schemes and cash transfers in terms of poverty outcomes for the poor in low- and middle-income countries. But the authors established that it was not possible to draw any robust conclusion regarding the relative performance of the two instruments. A meta-analysis of evidence on programme impacts was not feasible given the diversity of intervention design, populations and impacts, the range and inconsistency of methodological approaches adopted, and the limited data on statistical significance and incidence.

Hodges (2012) attempted to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of cash transfer options from a nutritional perspective for Mauritania. His analysis is inspired by the study on the rationale for economic investments for nutrition improvement Hoddinott et al. (2012) conducted for the Copenhagen Consensus. In line with that study, Hodges limited the benefit analysis to the reduction of chronic malnutrition among children under three, and to the indirect economic benefits of this reduction in the long term. This approach is justified by the importance of Height-for-Age (chronic malnutrition indicator) in early childhood as a predictable variable of health status, productivity and consumption level of individuals in the long term. The lack of Mauritanian empirical data on the impact of nutrition interventions, either on the nutritional status of children or long-term socioeconomic benefits, made the analysis particularly challenging. The analysis rests heavily on the use of evidence from other countries. To hypothesise on the link between cash transfers and child nutritional status, Hodges referred to data from Mexico, Nicaragua and Colombia. This data is not consistent, showing statistically significant effects from 0.16 to 0.41 Standard Deviation of Height-for-Age Z-score depending on transfer size and child age. Any cost-benefit analysis can only be indicative, but this particular analysis is to be taken with an extra dose of caution. Its findings are very sensitive to the hypotheses taken, which are based on data from contexts very different to the Mauritanian one. The analysis also takes account only of the impacts on Height-for-Age (rather than other nutritional and broader impacts). For instance, the impact on mortality is not captured in monetary terms, nor is the impact on poverty reduction and its indirect effects on education, child labour and healthcare taken into account. As a result, the benefit-cost ratio is most likely underestimated.

#### *Running microsimulation models using household survey data*

Microsimulation is a technique for the study of public policies at the micro level when the objective is to analyse distributional rather than aggregate effects (Merz 1993, 1994). This technique is promising for the analysis of the effects of social transfers at the micro level and their aggregation at the macro level (Barrientos and Scott 2008). Models would usually be run using national household survey data. Using baseline micro-level data collected for an impact evaluation, Seidenfeld and Handa (2011) developed a simple microsimulation model to estimate ex-ante the effects of a cash transfer intervention in Zambia. Social transfers have been studied in different countries using microsimulation models.<sup>193</sup> However, most of these studies use static microsimulation and concentrate on distributional effects (that is,

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<sup>193</sup> See, for instance, Annabi et al. (2005), Atkinson et al. (2002), Bezerra de Siqueira et al. (2000), Cogneau et al. (2003), Cogneau and Robilliard (2000), Creedy et al. (2003), de Souza Ferreira et al. (2010), Gassmann and Behrendt (2006), Llambi et al. (2011), Vandeninden (2012), and Wong et al. (2008).

poverty reduction and inequality decline) or on specific static effects (for instance, on labour participation and schooling) (Bourguignon et al. 2003).

The World Bank developed the ADePT (Automated Development Economics Poverty Tables) software to automate and standardise the production of analytical reports. ADePT uses micro-level data from various types of surveys, such as household budget surveys, demographic and health surveys, and labour force surveys to produce rich sets of tables and graphs for a particular area of economic research. It is a toolkit for calculating indicators of coverage, generosity and incidence of programmes. ADePT, in its version 5.3, contains seven modules for the analysis of poverty, inequality, social protection, labour, gender, health, and education. Although requiring statistical knowledge, the tool remains relatively easy to use. UNICEF Senegal used the Social Protection module (ADePT SP, Table 5-2, line 9) to simulate costs and impacts of a set of targeting options for a national social cash transfer programme (Schnitzer 2011). While that study was carried out by an international consultant, a national research consortium was also able to complete an analysis using the same ADePT SP tool to simulate the impact of the crisis and public policy responses on children (Daffé et al. 2011). The tool proved very useful to UNICEF and its partners to produce robust analysis and show credibility in front of national partners, particularly the ministry of finance, as well as World Bank colleagues.

Many of these models assume perfect targeting, a questionable assumption in most contexts. Recent ex-ante simulations of the targeting efficiency, impacts, cost, cost-effectiveness and affordability of different types of cash transfers in the Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire found that poverty-targeted cash transfers would have positive impacts, although more in terms of monetary poverty reduction than human development (Hodges et al. 2012a; Hodges et al. 2012b). However, Hodges et al. (2013) stress that a major practical challenge for such prediction to be realised would be to target efficiently in an environment of mass poverty.

Dynamic microsimulation models have been used to generate projections about socioeconomic developments (Li and O'Donoghue 2012; O'Donoghue 2001). They provide a useful technique to analyse the effects of social transfers over time. The main difference between static and dynamic microsimulation is that the latter allows individuals to change over time due to endogenous factors. Dynamic microsimulation is largely used in OECD countries to study pension reforms.

In a study commissioned by UNICEF, Cockburn et al. (2010) developed a predictive model that anticipates the impacts of the economic and financial crisis, and compares the cost-effectiveness of food consumption subsidies (in the form of

value-added tax or import tariff exemptions) and cash transfers targeted to households below the national poverty line using a proxy means test (PMT), taking into account the inclusion and exclusion errors predicted by the PMT formula. The study was conducted for three West African countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Ghana). The methodology is quite complex, linking a computable general equilibrium model (CGE) to simulate the effects of the global crisis on the economy of each country to a micro-level household model, using national household survey data, to simulate both the impacts of the crisis and the impacts of alternative policy measures on child welfare variables (Table 5-2, line 13). Impacts were simulated with respect to monetary poverty, caloric poverty (hunger), school participation, child labour and access to health services. A similar model was applied in Côte d'Ivoire (Hodges et al. 2012b) and Burkina Faso (Cockburn et al. 2012).

In most cases, the models employed do not take into account second-round effects, and thus are not appropriate for predicting long-term impacts. As soon as a household receives a cash transfer, it usually spends it. This transmits the transfer's impacts from the beneficiary household to others inside and outside the local economy, including households not eligible for the transfer. Understanding the full range of impacts that social transfers may have on income-generating activities and local markets may help address concerns about dependency traps and medium-term fiscal sustainability and increase political buy-in. The 'From Protection to Production' project<sup>194</sup> has been supporting attempts for modelling economic multiplier effects of cash transfers (Filipski and Taylor 2012a; Taylor 2012). Filipski and Taylor (2012a) modelled local general equilibrium (LGE) effects in addition to the direct impact of the programme on the beneficiary households. Local economy-wide impact evaluation (LEWIE) is designed to capture the full impact of government programs (as well as other exogenous shocks) on local economies. The LEWIE analysis conducted by Thome et al. (2016) on seven such schemes operated in sub-Saharan Africa finds that all of them generate significant spillovers in the local economy. The nominal programme income multipliers range from 1.27 to 2.52, that is, each US dollar transferred to a poor household adds more than a US dollar to total income in the local economy. Small farmers and small businesses tend to gain particular advantage, as this is where poorer households' purchases are focused (Davies and Davey 2008). Such a piece of evidence is very valuable for who wants to make the investment case for social transfers.

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<sup>194</sup> The From Protection to Production (PtoP) project (<http://www.fao.org/economic/PtoP/en/>) is a collaborative effort with FAO, UNICEF, Save the Children UK and the University of North Carolina financially supported by DFID and the World Bank. The project forms part of the larger Transfer Project (<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/transfer>), an innovative research and learning initiative, which supports improved knowledge and practice on social transfers in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## *Using macro models*

Macro-level analysis can be used to test the effect of social transfer expenditure on economic growth and other social outcomes at the cross-country level using regression analysis.<sup>195</sup> However, results are not conclusive, in part due to the lack of sufficiently large and comprehensive data sets. Furthermore, intermediate effects cannot be studied using aggregate data without losing important information about people's circumstances. A second alternative is to use computable general equilibrium models to analyse the economic effect of social transfers.<sup>196</sup> This technique is strong to study consistencies with taxation, public expenditure and economic growth, but it is weak to analyse the impact of specific programmes and social transfers at the individual and household levels (Barrientos and Scott 2008). Moreover, CGE models assume a fixed economic structure over time limiting the interpretation of effects during economic transitions (Cockburn et al. 2012). Still, they allow modelling changes over time and including synergy effects of introducing policies for complementary objectives at the same time.<sup>197</sup> Finally, macro models can be used to generate certain parameters, such as economic growth and productivity, to align microsimulation models.

## **Comparing costs with outcomes and impacts**

The core result of a cost analysis will consist in a ratio, whose nature will depend on the type of cost analysis conducted (Table 5-1). Here, we briefly review some of the main ratios that a cost analysis would produce when comparing costs with outcomes or impacts, offering a few examples from the social protection field. In particular, for reasons given earlier, we will focus our discussion on the ability to estimate rates of return on investment in social transfers.

### *Cost-effectiveness*

All proposals for DFID funding must now be accompanied by a business case, which sets out the need, justification and affordability of the intervention—that is, making a case for the commitment of public funds (DFID 2011c). This fits into DFID's broader Value for Money Framework (DFID 2011b). A guidance was also developed to conduct systematic assessments of the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of design options in DFID-supported social cash transfer programmes, clarifying key concepts and guiding the review of costs and impacts

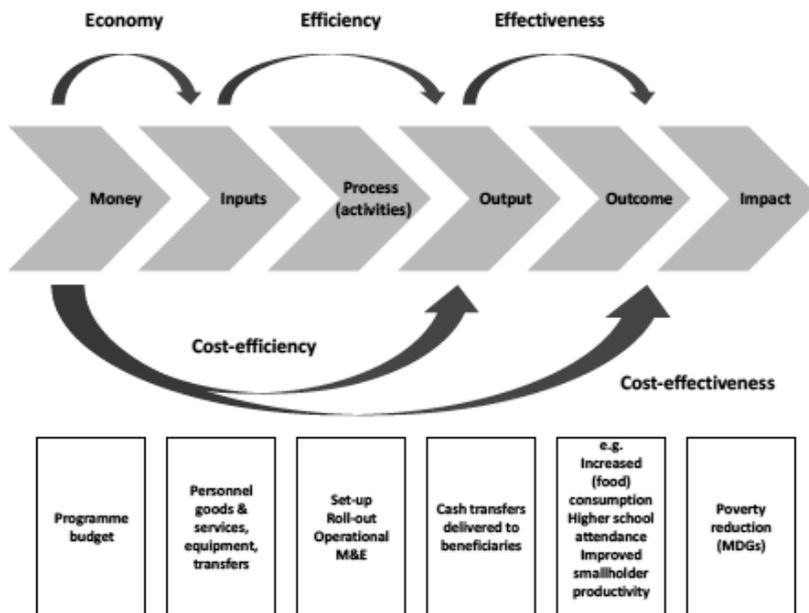
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<sup>195</sup> See, for instance, Atkinson (1999) and Arjona et al. (2003).

<sup>196</sup> See, for instance, Vos et al. (2008).

<sup>197</sup> See, for instance, Behrman (2000).

(Hodges et al. 2011). Figure 5-2 illustrates its conceptual framework. It focuses on cost-economy, cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness, but also touches on cost-benefit analysis where main costs and benefits can be credibly monetised. Business cases have now been developed for DFID-supported social transfer programmes in several countries, including Nigeria (DFID 2012a), Ghana (DFID 2012b) and Pakistan (DFID 2012c). For example, the business case for the Child Development Grant Programme in Nigeria articulates programme theory, presents empirical evidence supporting it, discusses cost feasibility of alternative options, and compares pre-selected options on the basis of their cost-efficiency, captured by the total cost-transfer ratio (TCTR),<sup>198</sup> net present value (NPV),<sup>199</sup> Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR), as well as any non-monetised benefits and risks.



Source: Hodges et al. (2011, p. 5).

**Figure 5-2** Cash Transfers, Value for Money and Results Chain

<sup>198</sup> The TCTR refers to the overall cost per unit of cash transferred, including the cost of the transfer itself. Set-up costs and monitoring and evaluation costs are excluded to reflect likely cost-efficiency in a post-project scale-up.

<sup>199</sup> The NPV is the discounted benefits minus discounted costs. Costs and benefits arising in the future have a lower value than the same nominal amounts arising now. The more distant in time the costs and benefits occur, the less they are valued. Discounting is the process of adjusting future costs and benefits to arrive at their present value.

### *Benefit-cost ratio*

Cost-benefit analysis can handle multiple outcomes and provides measures that can be compared with those estimated for investment in alternative sectors. It is thus particularly useful to estimate economic returns on investment. Yet, interestingly, DFID's Investment Committee decided against introducing a standard hurdle rate of return for DFID interventions. It was judged that the diversity in DFID portfolio makes it difficult to produce comparable measures of what constitutes good value for money for many interventions (DFID 2011b).

Several studies estimated the cost of achieving a certain objective, as for example reducing the poverty gap by one percentage point.<sup>200</sup> However, this is actually just a special form of cost-effectiveness analysis, and it only captures the immediate effects of social transfers. The greatest challenge for cost-benefit analysis is the task of assigning monetary values to all possible effects of an investment.<sup>201</sup> One way that this problem has been handled in the literature is to evaluate benefits in terms of their impact on economic growth.

Assessing economic returns to investing in youth, James Knowles and Jere Behrman (2003) rejected this approach because of

its inability to address all issues related to efficiency (including efficiency issues related to economic growth) and its complete neglect of distributional issues (including across generations in the form of how much current consumption should be reduced in order to increase consumption by future generations). Instead, the review opts for a definition of benefits that is based on direct productivity effects, whenever possible, but that falls back, when necessary, on an alternative indirect method of valuing benefits that is based on the cost of the least-cost alternative investment that secures the same effect. (p. xvi)

Instead, they developed a life-cycle approach using a cost-benefit analysis to calculate the economic returns on investment in youth.

### *Rate of return*

In a pioneering study that considers mid- and long-term effects of social transfers, Mideros et al. (2013, 2016) estimate the economic rate of return on investment in social transfers as the relation between the incremental benefit (difference between

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<sup>200</sup> See, for instance, Schnitzer (2011) for such an analysis using the ADePT model.

<sup>201</sup> See, for instance, Fujiwara and Campbell (2011).

policy and baseline scenario) on total household consumption and the cost of the proposed social transfer package (Table 5-2, line 14). They approximate benefits on total household consumption by the sum of direct distributional effects and behavioural income effects. Using a dynamic microsimulation model, they estimate the effects of cash transfers on household consumption and human capital accumulation, and then aggregate the effects to estimate long-term economic impacts. This study opens a new door for the evaluation of social transfers and their effects on socio-economic development.

The study was designed to help identify affordable and cost-effective policy options within the framework of the newly adopted Cambodian National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable (NSPS).<sup>202</sup> It focuses on four social transfer policy options selected on the basis of their priority under the NSPS, data availability, modelling feasibility and policy relevance: cash transfers, social pensions, scholarships, and public works. The study uses micro data at the individual and household level from the Cambodian Socio-Economic Survey (CSES) 2004 and 2009. The analysis is conducted in three main steps. First, a static microsimulation model is used to estimate the direct (distributional) effects of social transfers on poverty and inequality, measured by changes in household consumption. Second, empirical regression models are used to estimate the behavioural (income) effects of social transfers on education (school attendance), health (nutrition) and labour decisions (labour participation and labour supply), as well as the returns of school achievement (years of schooling) on household disposable income (approximated by household consumption). Third, a dynamic microsimulation model is used to estimate the economic rates of return of a basic social transfer package over twenty periods based on the effects on household consumption. Coefficients drawn from the empirical regression models are used in this microsimulation of long-term benefits. The analysis produces estimates of the potential effects, benefits and costs of the implementation of different policy scenarios, and estimates of the social and economic benefits and economic rates of return over time of a joint policy scenario (basic social transfer package).

Results show that social transfers may generate positive effects on economic performance. They show that twelve periods are needed for the rate of return to become positive. In period 20, the rate of return reaches a value between 12 and 15 per cent depending on the discount rate used. In other words, after twelve periods, the cost of the investment is more than fully recovered, including administrative costs. Overall, the study makes the case for non-contributory social protection in Cambodia. It shows that, on top of their social benefits, social transfers may be seen as an economic investment with a positive return in the medium term. Results

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<sup>202</sup> The study was commissioned by UNICEF Cambodia.

present social transfers as a valuable policy option to foster socio-economic development. As such, the study contributed to efforts to make a case for budgetary allocations to social protection instruments, presenting them as an investment rather than a cost.

This study, however, is not without limitations. The main ones stem from the absence of financing aspects such as taxation, which should be included for a more realistic estimation of rates of return. The dynamic model is also limited to the return from human capital accumulation (approximated by education achievement) on household disposable income. The exclusion of other possible effects—institutional, health improvements (such as, nutrition), spillovers, behavioural (non-income)—is likely to result in underestimated rates of return. Moreover, the model does not include the effects of public works in terms of new infrastructure creation and livelihoods generation. Spillovers and regional multipliers are not studied either; it would require detailed consumption data, and the CSES does not provide economic information at the commune level. Further extensions could include effects on total factor productivity and productive investments if data about firms and productive activities were available by sector and region. Box 5-2 provides a summary of the main assumptions on which the overall microsimulation model is based.

#### **Box 5-2** Main Assumptions of the Rate-of-Return Model Used in Cambodia

The overall microsimulation model adopted by Mideros et al. (2013) to estimate the rates of return on investment in social transfers in Cambodia is based on the following key assumptions:

- *Assumptions based on data limitations:*
  - Household consumption per capita is used as a proxy for disposable income;
  - Transfers are assumed to have a marginal propensity to consume equal to one (that is, households do not substitute foregone transfer income with other income);
  - Disposable income is equally distributed among household members;
  - A 10-per-cent administrative cost is assumed for cash transfers, scholarships and social pensions; public works include 50-per-cent non-wage costs;
  - Transfers are externally funded with no additional effects on the public budget;
  - Transfers are perfectly targeted (that is, inclusion and exclusion errors are assumed to be equal to zero);
  - The supply side in the education sector responds immediately to an increasing demand (higher school attendance);
- *Assumptions based on the analytical and modelling framework:*
  - The model relies on the returns of human capital to income; at the household level the ‘allocation effect’, measured by the maximum level of education, defines the capacity for income generation activities;
  - Structural changes affect the policy and baseline scenarios in the same way (that is, net benefits are not affected).

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this rate-of-return study provides an analytical and methodological framework to move forward in making the business case for social protection. The study did not attempt to analyse a specific effect, neither to study a detailed policy design, which can be done using different methodologies, but to estimate potential economic returns in the medium and long term. As such, the study deals with multiple effects, which are commonly analysed independently, and doing so, it provides information about both costs and benefits. The model estimates effects on human development variables but also on economic returns, which are usually not analysed due to methodological restrictions.

**Box 5-3**      Towards the Uptake of Evidence from the Rate-of-Return Study in Cambodia

The study was executed in close cooperation with the Social Protection Coordination Unit of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development and UNICEF Cambodia. It was part of a country initiative to foster research on social protection and guided by the Cambodian National Social Protection Strategy for the Poor and Vulnerable (NSPS). As stated by the authors, the study “provides evidence to support the design and implementation of the NSPS by estimating potential rates of Return using ex-ante microsimulation techniques.” (Mideros et al. 2012, p. 83) The first step, coordinated by UNICEF, was to meet different partners to collect data and understand the different views and perceptions of various stakeholders regarding social protection in Cambodia. Most of the research was done in-situ allowing for the regular involvement of stakeholders in the discussion of assumptions and policy options. A peer review process at various stages of the analysis ensured critical feedback by academic scholars and experts from international organisations. The report was validated in three different workshops with several development partners and ministries, including a final meeting with line cabinet members in September 2012. Next steps were established by the government to use the report together with the ILO costing studies to define specific actions for the implementation of the NSPS. Three potential donors for the NSPS (namely, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank) commented the report; they indicated considering the study as an important step to make the investment case for social protection in Cambodia. It proposes an affordable (1.6 to 0.85 per cent of GDP in period 1 and 20, respectively) basic package of social protection covering main life-cycle risks. This package includes cash transfers for poor children, scholarships and public works—options already prioritized by the government, and promotes social pensions in order to approach a social protection floor.

Three main limitations should be tackled in future studies. First, it is necessary to include financing aspects and their repercussions on costs and benefits. Second, it is important to account for supply side effects. This could be done by linking a microsimulation model at the firm level or aligning the model with a macro model. Finally, results should be compared with alternative economic investments in order to support informed policy decisions. However, while it is necessary to improve the model, it is important to be careful with methodological complexities. Keeping the model understandable for a general public may increase its prospect

to have a real influence on the policy making process. Box 5-3 outlines how the research process of the rate-of-return study in Cambodia was connected with the national policy process. Interactions between the researchers and the expected end-users of the research were ensured from the outset in view of increasing the likelihood that research findings achieve an impact.

But to what extent do cost analyses, and ex-ante cost-benefit analyses in particular, actually inform policy decisions, and notably motivate decisions to introduce a social transfer policy? The review above has revealed the methodological diversity in this type of analysis, and its potential for making the investment case for non-contributory social protection. Yet, however convincing the results of a cost-benefit study might be, economic analysis is just one component of decision-making. Furthermore, as highlighted above, cost-benefit analyses have their limitations, which may discredit them in the eyes of decision makers. We thus turn to front-line practitioners engaged in social transfer policy dialogue in developing countries to uncover the role they see such analyses play in policy making for basic social protection.

### **5.3 Use and Perceived Usefulness of Cost-Benefit Analyses**

As underlined in Section 2.2, ex-ante cost-benefit analyses have increasingly gained traction in the work of foreign aid actors to make the case for non-contributory social protection.<sup>203</sup> Rate-of-return analyses, in particular, have been perceived by some as the next necessary step in aid-supported efforts to convince governments, and their ministries of finance in particular, that social transfers can be productive and support national economic growth, and therefore represent a worthwhile investment.<sup>204</sup> We here take the case of UNICEF to illustrate and better apprehend the prospects, but also challenges, that such analyses represent for a foreign aid agency globally engaged in the expansion of basic social protection for all. What follows builds on a series of interviews with UNICEF senior social protection specialists, as well as a few other international practitioners involved in cost-benefit analyses on social transfer policies in developing countries.<sup>205</sup> These interviews bring insights into the actual demand these professionals perceive for such studies (perceived needs), their practical experience with using them (perceived value), and the challenges they see in promoting a greater use of ex-ante

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<sup>203</sup> See, for instance, the guidance notes recently developed on measuring and maximising value for money in social transfer programmes (White et al. 2013) and in social protection systems (White et al. 2015).

<sup>204</sup> See, for instance, Cherrier et al. (2013).

<sup>205</sup> Details on the selection and profile of respondents are provided in Section 3.3.

cost-benefit analyses, and return-on-investment studies in particular, in the future (perceived limits).

### **Perceived needs for more ex-ante cost analyses**

Interviews with UNICEF social protection specialists confirm the high demand from country offices for ex-ante cost analyses (respondents CB1, CB3, CB5, CB6, CB7). Most developing countries are yet to engage domestic resources in large-scale social transfer schemes. UNICEF teams have been involved in efforts to raise awareness about the potential benefits of social transfers, and at times, have attempted to clarify the affordability of a few policy options. Cost analyses can help package an advocacy discourse for social protection into the language of people in charge of budget allocation, primarily concerned with fiscal sustainability. In Ukraine, conducting cost analyses was identified as the required next step to bring UNICEF's policy and advocacy efforts to the next level (respondent CB5). So far, UNICEF has been quite successful in promoting an integrated approach to social protection. These efforts contributed to the adoption of a reform plan for the national social protection system.<sup>206</sup> But, even though law and standards were adopted, no budget was allocated, in part due to the significant cost implications attached to the reform plan. In this context, UNICEF teams have planned to engage in cost analyses to provide a basis for further policy dialogue with national decision-makers.

Still, a major gap remains when it comes to relating costs to outcomes, that is, addressing the basic investment case question 'are the costs justified by the value of the impacts?' The fact that impacts are both short-term and long-term, while cutting across various sectors and dimensions, contributes to making this a challenging task requiring high-level expertise. In 2012, UNICEF engaged in an ambitious partnership with the PEP (Partnership for Economic Policy) network to prepare investment cases for social protection in Egypt, Jordan and Morocco. This is part of efforts to ensure that, as governments undergo subsidy reforms, the impacts on children are understood and anticipated, and the planned compensation packages are pro-children. The studies are expected to consider different pro-children social protection policy options and assess, on the one hand, costs alone, and on the other hand, impacts on social returns and cost-effectiveness but only in terms of poverty and inequality reduction (respondent MR8). But contracting senior international expertise is costly, and some people in UNICEF would like to see the organisation "coming up with a methodology which could be taken on board by a local consultant" so that it could be easily replicated in various

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<sup>206</sup> These efforts included a study by Baskott et al. (2011).

countries (respondent CB5). This is certainly behind the decision of the UNICEF Office of Research to commission a discussion paper on the lessons learnt from the ambitious and unique attempt by Mideros et al. (2016) to estimate the rate of return on non-contributory social protection interventions in Cambodia.<sup>207</sup>

Interestingly, a few respondents also refer to internal organisational needs to explain their interest in engaging in cost-benefit analyses. They indicate being in need of evidence to be in a position to better make the case for social protection within their own office. This illustrates the fact that the expansion of basic social protection may not only be constrained by the reluctance in terms of economic returns and fiscal sustainability of governments in developing countries, but also by internal hesitancy within foreign aid agencies for this type of instruments. In the words of a few UNICEF respondents, cost-benefit analyses in social protection is desirable to show “the value of social protection vis-à-vis supply-side interventions”<sup>208</sup> (respondent CB3), to “convince management to agree on things” (respondent CB5), or to “show that UNICEF is pushing for the right thing” (respondent CB1).

### **Perceived actual value of ex-ante cost analyses**

Experiences reported by respondents suggest that ex-ante cost analyses, and notably projections, can indeed, under certain conditions, be very useful to support national policy-making processes for the expansion of social transfers. Essentially, they help convince Ministries of Finance of the value of social transfers in terms of economic returns and to maximise social outcomes. This is illustrated by two reported cases: the case of Senegal, a country with extremely low levels of social protection where UNICEF advocated for the introduction of social cash transfers; and the case of Mozambique, where UNICEF have supported efforts to improve the cost-effectiveness of existing social protection measures.

In Senegal, the use of the ADePT-SP model (Table 5-2, line 9) enabled the UNICEF country office to produce robust evidence and gain credibility to engage a high-level dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank (respondent CB7). Before that, several studies had failed to bring about change, at least not to any visible extent, including: a microsimulation study commissioned by the ILO to bring evidence on the cost-effectiveness of child grants and social pensions in both Senegal and Tanzania; a rather simplistic cost analysis, with no counterfactual, included in a feasibility study commissioned by UNICEF Senegal; and analyses of fiscal space commissioned by the UNICEF regional office. All these studies were

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<sup>207</sup> See Cherrier et al. (2013) for the resulting discussion paper.

<sup>208</sup> Traditionally, UNICEF has worked on health and education policies and programmes.

conducted by international consultants largely outside any established policy dialogue framework. In contrast, the ADePT-SP study was coordinated by a country-based and well-connected UNICEF staff member specifically tasked to facilitate policy dialogue with national counterparts around this issue. Box 5-4 provides an overview of these successive attempts to lift the government's reluctance to invest in social cash transfers.

#### **Box 5-4** Cost Analyses in Efforts to Shape Social Protection Policies in Senegal

In Senegal, discussions around the use of social transfers as a poverty reduction instrument can be tracked back to the development of the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, when a civil society organisation suggested to provide transfers to people living with disabilities, as a way to prevent begging and support their children's education. A few years later, a member of the Ministry of Economy and Finance's Poverty Reduction Unit, freshly back from a World Bank conference on social transfers, developed a concept note for a conditional cash transfer programme (Dia 2006). The same year, an ILO-commissioned microsimulation study brought evidence on the cost-effectiveness of child grants and social pensions in Senegal (Gassmann and Behrendt 2006). But because none of these initiatives were followed up with sustained dialogue with the Government of Senegal, nothing materialised.

The issue came back in the national policy debate following the 2008 food, fuel and financial crisis. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) produced two interesting reviews: one revealing that the national food and energy subsidies were very expensive yet inefficient in reaching the poorest; and another showing that the amount of fiscal space had increased considerably since 2000 (IMF 2008b). This pushed the IMF to recommend the introduction of a well-targeted conditional cash transfer system as a cost-effective option (and much more cost-effective option than the then prevailing food subsidy system) to address both cyclical and structural threats to the well-being of poor households, and reduce poverty over time (IMF 2008a).

Subsequently, UNICEF Senegal commissioned a feasibility study which suggested that the fiscal burden of a national cash transfer programme would reduce from 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2010 to 0.69 per cent in 2050 (Samson and Cherrier 2009). That same year, the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office published studies on fiscal space issues, conducted by ODI (Handley 2009) and OPM (Schoch et al. 2009). While also bringing country-specific evidence, it is felt that these later studies, carried out outside a national consultation framework, have not been very influential in Senegal. In contrast, the appointment of a social and economic policy specialist in the UNICEF Senegal office early 2009 appears to have been very instrumental for moving the social protection agenda.

These efforts coincided with renewed interest for non-contributory social protection at the global level, with the announcement of the Social Protection Floor initiative as well as many donor-supported social transfer programmes in response to the food, fuel and financial crisis. In Senegal, the World Bank supported a nutrition-focused emergency cash transfer programme (*Projet Nutrition et Transferts Sociaux*, NETS) implemented through a national agency, while the World Food Programme piloted food vouchers in urban areas. Dialogue for the introduction of a long-term national social cash transfer scheme continued between national policy makers and development partners. In the period preceding the 2012 national elections, the government showed interest in accelerating efforts to introduce cash transfers, but development partners decided to wait until after the elections. Targeting has been a major point of discussion, UNICEF

advocating for (universal) child grants and the World Bank for poverty-targeted cash transfers.

In an attempt to bring new evidence into the debate, UNICEF Senegal commissioned an analysis of the cost feasibility and impact of several categorically-targeted options, using the ADePT-SP tool (Schnitzer 2011). This was complemented by a study of the implementation arrangements of the proposed targeting approach (Fall 2011). The use of the ADePT-SP model generated robust evidence, which enabled UNICEF to engage a high-level dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and other donors (notably the World Bank) on targeting options. This strategy proved successful as it was eventually agreed to incorporate categorical indicators (household size, number of children under 15, presence of children under five) in the envisioned Proxy-Means Test (PMT) formula. Later, the World Bank carried out a similar exercise, using 2012 household survey data and simulating different PMT-targeted options.

Following the creation under the Presidency of a Directorate General for Social Protection, the government introduced in October 2013 a conditional cash transfer scheme entitled 'National Family Security Grants Programme' (*Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale*, PNBSF). Its rollout is progressive, starting with 50,000 households in the first year. The government dotation, included in the operating budget, reached FCFA 21.2 billion in 2015—a significant increase from the FCFA 11.8 billion executed in 2014 (Dionízio 2015). Since 2014, the PNBSF is co-financed by the World Bank (15 per cent of the programme budget) who supports the establishment of a unified registry. As of June 2015, the programme reached 100,000 households who receive quarterly payments (FCFA 25,000) conditional to investment in human capital (education, health and nutrition). It is expected to reach 300,000 households by 2017.

Source: Author, based on Samson and Cherrier (2009), UNICEF (2011), Berton (2015) and respondent CB7.

The situation in Mozambique was different: a national social cash transfer scheme had been in place since 1990, and there was no need to convince national decision-makers of the benefits of investing in non-contributory social protection. The issue was rather more on improving the cost-effectiveness of existing or envisioned measures (respondent OR10). In that context, the development of a costing tool by UNICEF contributed to enhance the capacity of the ministry in charge of social affairs to engage with the Council of Ministers, and particularly with the Ministry of Finance, and make the financial case for an extension of the scope for implementation of the national social protection strategy. It also gave UNICEF legitimacy to engage in further work on costed models for targeted social cash transfers jointly conducted with the ILO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Ministry of Finance. This work took place in a context where the government had “acknowledged that the fuel subsidy was ill-targeted and fiscally unsustainable [...] and that there was scope to replace the emergency subsidies introduced in the wake of the September 2010 unrest.” (IMF 2011a, p. 18) This experience, as reported by UNICEF, is captured in Box 5-5. It

unfolded as a multifaceted process with different stages (respondent CB3). In its staff report for the 2011 Article IV Consultation,<sup>209</sup> the IMF (2011a) describes:

The policy dialogue is being informed by a joint pilot exercise involving the UN (including the ILO), the [World] Bank, the [IMF], and bilateral partners. The exercise includes (i) a [World] Bank-led review of existing social security programs and expenditure; (ii) a costing exercise led by the ILO, focusing on public works programs, conditional cash transfers, and a universal pension system; (iii) [an IMF]-led assessment of available fiscal space consistent with the macroeconomic framework; and (iv) a simulation of the impact of policy options on the poverty gap, led by UNICEF. (p. 19)

The process proved extremely useful; it helped take better-informed decisions and directly responded to a demand of the government (respondent CB3). This joint effort is perceived by some as the “most successful advocacy strategy” that translated into three consecutive years of increasing domestic contribution for the PSSB—from US\$67 million in 2012 to US\$94 million in 2014 (respondent OR10). As in the case of Senegal, the production of strong evidence gave visibility and credibility to UNICEF, and made it possible to start a dialogue with the Ministry of Finance and the IMF (respondent CB3). It allowed UNICEF to have a (stronger) voice at the table and advocate for children’s rights in the high-level policy sphere—in 2011, the PSSB was notably expanded to child-headed households and orphans and vulnerable children.

#### **Box 5-5** Cost Analyses in Efforts to Shape Social Protection Policies in Mozambique

Following violent riots brought on by rising costs of living, the Government of Mozambique introduced in 2008 expensive (1.3 per cent of GDP in 2010) yet inefficient fuel and wheat subsidies. In contrast, only 0.5 per cent of GDP was allocated to other forms of social protection, which include the national cash transfer programme *Programa Subsídio de Alimentos* (PSA) [renamed *Programa de Subsídio Social Básico* (PSSB) in 2010], covering only 8.3 per cent of poor households. In response, UNICEF has been working towards the development of strategic social protection policies. Approval of the Regulation for Basic Social Security in December 2009 and the National Strategy for Basic Social Security (ENBSS) in April 2010 are essential milestones. However, negative attitudes regarding social cash transfers persisted among higher levels of Government, particularly within the Ministry of Finance. Social protection seemed to survive only within the limited sphere of Ministry of Women and Social Action

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<sup>209</sup> When a country joins the IMF, it agrees to subject its economic and financial policies to the scrutiny of the international community. This country surveillance is an ongoing process that culminates in regular (usually annual) comprehensive consultations with individual member countries led by an IMF team of economists. These consultations are known as ‘Article IV consultations’ because they are required by Article IV of the IMF’s Articles of Agreement.

(MMAS). In this context, UNICEF embarked with other UN agencies and donors on reviewing and supporting the implementation of the ENBSS. This included a joint technical support to the MMAS to undertake economic modelling on the costs of various social policy options.

*Initial costing exercise.* UNICEF commissioned Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to produce a paper grounded in evidence-based research to re-ignite advocacy efforts with the government for expansion of social protection. OPM undertook a pre-feasibility study and costing analyses of three social protection reform options, using MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) data: a) scale-up of the PSA cash transfer amount to account for inflation; b) expansion of potential PSA beneficiaries such as child-headed households; and c) a conditional cash transfer (CCT) or public works programme (Pellerano 2010). The paper provided useful information to the government through concrete costing of different social protection policy options that link any suggested programmatic response to required resources. The pre-feasibility and costing analysis report, coupled with a policy brief on CCT, gave UNICEF an opportunity to brief the new IMF Country Director on the corresponding social protection options in Mozambique.

*Social protection expenditure review.* As part of joint efforts under the Social Protection Floor (SPF) initiative, UNICEF, together with the ILO and the World Bank, undertook the review of the Basic Social Security programmes and the Social Protection Expenditure Review. The exercise contributed to improving decision-making around social protection by informing of (a) specific risks and vulnerabilities of the population by age group and gender, (b) gaps and overlaps within the social safety nets relative to such risks and vulnerabilities, (c) benefit incidence of selected programmes, and (d) inputs for the prioritization of Government action regarding basic social security.

*Expanded set of costing tools.* Further, with the ILO and the IMF, UNICEF developed an expanded set of costing tools to support ministries in determining the cost of implementing the basic elements of social protection under the SPF. In undertaking this exercise, UNICEF and its partners combined three sources of evidence: a) household-level data on demographic composition and wealth from the 2009 household survey; b) population projections by age and sex constructed by the National Institute of Statistics on the basis of the 2008 census; c) projections of the macroeconomic scenario and fiscal aggregates, produced by the IMF. By combining these three sources, the costing model simulated the cost of a series of alternative policy options for 2012-2015. The model provides flexibility to compare alternative scenarios for eligibility, targeting, value, periodicity of the transfer and so on. The costing tool has two versions: a flexible version in data analysis software for internal background use, and a simpler user-friendly Excel version to facilitate future planning and analysis.

The costing tool has supported the government, and particularly the MMAS, in the design and costing of a holistic social protection system in line with the ENBSS. It deterred the potential scale-up of unsustainable and regressive measures around fuel and food subsidies (*Cesta Básica*) that were proposed early 2011. The costing tool was highly valued by the government as it provided the Ministry of Planning and Development with evidence to substantiate arguments, including easy comparisons with the costs of other potential social protection interventions. By July 2011, the government announced the *Cesta Básica* would not be implemented, bringing social protection into the political mainstream and opening up a political space for constructive debate and policy engagement. The costing tool also strengthened MMAS's position to petition for an expansion of the PSA, a proposal the Council of Ministers approved in September 2011. This resulted in the scaling-up of the monthly transfer amount as well as inclusion of additional vulnerable groups in the cash transfer scheme, including child-headed households and orphans and vulnerable children.

Source: UNICEF (2011).

Insights drawn from these experiences already highlight a number of possible necessary conditions for ex-ante cost analyses to be useful in supporting foreign aid actors' efforts towards the expansion of efficient, effective and sustainable basic social protection systems. First, it suggests that the analysis needs to be part of a comprehensive policy dialogue process, and followed up with sustained in-country support. Second, timing looks important. In both Mozambique and Senegal, the strong partnerships built over time in the process with key ministries and development partners proved invaluable as opportunities for high-level advocacy emerged as a result of the 2007-2008 economic crisis. Third, defining the alternative policy options considered in close consultation with national stakeholders appears to be a valuable practice. The early involvement of decision-makers in the research process is likely to increase research uptake. Fourth, the necessity of using a robust and transparent methodology is underlined. An oversimplistic model, or a very partial approach (for example, using inappropriate assumptions to favour a preferred result), may not be credible enough to provide a solid basis for discussion. Actually, studies would need to be not only valid but such that their intended audiences believe that they are valid.<sup>210</sup> These points reflect common guidance on research uptake as developed by a few foreign aid actors.<sup>211</sup>

### **Perceived limits and pitfalls of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses**

Echoing points raised in Section 5.2, interviewed practitioners stress some serious limitations to running ex-ante cost-benefit analyses, not least in low-income countries. They express concerns over the availability of quality data and technical skills to conduct such studies, and the ability to use them well at country level (respondents CB1, CB3, CB5). Such studies are costly and not always easy to digest by non-experts. Modelling economic returns of social protection is highly data demanding, while at the same time it needs a balance between robustness and simplicity to influence policy decisions. Contexts where this might be most needed—to encourage the introduction of basic social protection for all, would often be contexts where reliable and accurate data is scarce and complementary evidence limited (respondent CB1). In such contexts, the analysis has to rest on far-reaching assumptions concerning some estimated impacts. But estimating impacts based on non-experimental microeconometrics may raise questions on direction of causality even if best possible use is made of econometric techniques such as instrumental variables (respondent MR4).

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<sup>210</sup> Scriven (1991) stresses that this may require extra care about avoiding (apparent) conflict of interest.

<sup>211</sup> See, for instance, DFID (2013b).

Furthermore, senior practitioners interviewed identify clear risks associated to an over-reliance on cost-benefit analyses. As respondent CB1 puts it, seeking to come up with “one number is a slippery slope.” Investing in schools for disabled children might not score well compared to rural infrastructure programmes, for instance. Narrowing the equity gap—a major focus for UNICEF,<sup>212</sup> might not stand out as the most cost-effective investment, if cost-effectiveness is considered vis-à-vis the whole population, not just marginalised children (respondent CB5). In addition, a cost-benefit analysis intends to bring together costs with a broad range of impacts, but is still forced to leave aside important aspects where estimation and/or monetary quantification is out of reach (such as, impacts in terms of social cohesion, child protection, etc.). As a result, studies would often be focused on social assistance (cash transfers), not taking into account social welfare services (social workers). In that sense, it falls short of UNICEF’s integrated approach for social protection (respondent CB5).<sup>213</sup>

For these reasons, none of the respondents sees the development of one single approach to ex-ante return-on-investment analyses—for instance, building on the pioneering study by Mideros et al. (2016) in Cambodia, as the way forward for UNICEF’s social protection work. Different political and socio-economic contexts may call for different evidence production strategies (respondents CB1, CB3, CB5). In some circumstances, a less sophisticated cost feasibility or cost-effectiveness analysis may be what best responds to the needs of policy makers. The more ambitious and research-intensive cost-benefit analysis approach could still be further explored in a context where there is particular demand for that kind of evidence and where the situation in terms of data availability and complementary evidence is favourable.

Respondents suggest other types of evidence as potentially more useful than a single rate of return in efforts to encourage the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries. First, it was advised that what should be calculated is the opportunity “cost of not investing in social protection” (respondent CB3)—that is, the cost of inaction (Box 5-1). Secondly, once a development objective has been set (such as, for instance, quality education for all), it appears more useful, interviewed practitioners argue, to run cost-efficiency and effectiveness analyses to help compare policy options and inform the choice of measure to achieve that given objective.<sup>214</sup> Third, several practitioners point to the crucial need for more

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<sup>212</sup> As outlined in UNICEF (2010).

<sup>213</sup> UNICEF’s social protection strategic framework stresses the need to support the development of integrated social protection systems for enhancing equity for children (UNICEF 2012).

<sup>214</sup> For example, comparing cash transfer and agricultural input subsidy policy options, as was done in Malawi and Ghana (Filipski and Taylor 2012b).

implementation research,<sup>215</sup> that is, not solely focusing on whether a social protection measure brings (or could bring) benefits, but rather, how it works (or could work) considering the specific capacity constraints of a country (respondents CB3, CB4, CB5). Impact and process evaluations provide useful feedback to progressively improve policy design (respondent MR4). Last, a few respondents point to the Latin American experience where the evidence of positive impacts of social transfers on food consumption, school enrolment, healthcare, stunting, child labour, and illness rates, which has been widely circulated, has been crucial to building political support and ultimately led to the schemes' expansion.<sup>216</sup> In this perspective, generating robust context-specific ex-post empirical evidence may be crucial to build political support and secure government and donor commitment to sustain and expand social protection schemes.

Ultimately, all respondents agree to recognize that economic analysis is just one component of decision-making: "Presenting an investment case may help, but it is very hard to move politics just on evidence." (respondent CB1) A positive return expected in twenty years from now is too far for politicians (respondents CB1, CB5). Scientific knowledge is only one of three things that inform policy decision, along with interests (such as, pecuniary or electoral interests) and ideology (that is, the way politicians see the world) (respondent CB1). A senior researcher corroborates, "[p]olicy is not made by cost-benefit numbers; it is made because you think it's a good idea. [...] Most programmes scaled up are not evidence-based. It is a political decision, even [Mexico's] *Oportunidades*." (respondent MR4) Such observations echo research underlining the relative importance of scientific knowledge vis-à-vis other factors in informing policy decisions.<sup>217</sup>

Respondents point to other examples indicating that having a return-on-investment analysis is not a necessary condition for a government to start investing massively in the expansion of basic social protection for all. In Brazil, the momentum of the 2003 elections and President Lula da Silva's strong political will to eradicate hunger throughout the country was at the origin of the progressive consolidation of the integrated *Fome Zero* strategy, within which the influential *Bolsa Família* scheme was developed (respondent MR14). In South Africa, the Department of Social Development only recently started to develop different types of micro-simulation tools aimed at estimating the cost of the national social transfer schemes. Many of these models are static rather than dynamic micro-simulation tools. This situation prevails in much of the Southern Africa Development

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<sup>215</sup> This echoes Deaton (2010) who argues that learning about development requires investigating mechanisms.

<sup>216</sup> As also underlined by Miller and Samson (2012), for instance.

<sup>217</sup> See, for instance, Jones et al. (2012).

Community. In 2013, Oxford Policy Management, supported by the Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy at the University of Oxford, was just about to finish a Social Budget for South Africa. They use a static tax-benefit micro-simulation tool to forecast social expenditures, combined with some rudimentary poverty and inequality measures of the impact of these social expenditures (respondent MR15). The lack of cost-benefit-analysis tool in the past did not stop the country from gradually expanding a now well-established social protection system. These examples suggest that political will in the first place, financial feasibility, and subsequent positive ex-post evidence of impact<sup>218</sup> might have been the key ingredient for policy makers to invest in social protection.

Overall, UNICEF social protection specialists interviewed concur that it would not make sense to conduct cost analyses outside a sustained framework of cooperation. They agree that “it is just one part of the policy dialogue process” (respondent CB3), and that advocacy efforts are most successful when they are “specific and within a country process” (respondent CB5). They further reckon that, particularly in low-income countries, other types of scientific analyses may be more useful, and feasible, to produce than cost-benefit ratios. Some also suggest that other factors, such as ideology and political interests, play a much bigger role than scientific analyses behind governments’ decisions to adopt a social transfer policy. In the next section, we delve into some of these aspects in light of the findings drawn from the multiple-case study of the origins of sizable social transfer schemes, and consider the role of scientific analyses, either ex-ante or ex-post, as to explain foreign aid actors’ influence in policy uptake.

## 5.4 Reported Role of Scientific Analyses in Policy Making

It is common belief among foreign aid actors that robust information on needs (poverty and vulnerability knowledge) and strong (ex-ante or ex-post) evaluations of effectiveness, value for money and affordability are key to convince decision-makers to invest in social transfers. As a result, as noted in Section 2.2, foreign aid actors have invested a lot in the production of analytical reports, either based on ex-ante analyses or ex-post empirical evidence, to encourage the uptake of social transfer policies. In particular, there has been a vast expansion of ex-post impact evaluations of social (cash) transfer pilot projects and nascent schemes in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years.<sup>219</sup> The cases presented in Section 4.2 suggest that

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<sup>218</sup> As documented by Samson et al. (2004), for instance.

<sup>219</sup> See, for instance, on the impact of cash-based transfer schemes, Arnold et al. (2011), Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa (2010), Bastagli et al. (2016), EPRI (2010) and publications from the ‘From Protection to Production’ (PtoP) project (<http://www.fao.org/economic/PtoP/en/>).

this strategy has indeed helped making the case for social transfers. As underscored in Section 4.3, in many cases, the necessity to introduce a social transfer scheme came, at least partially, from an increased awareness on needs, and foreign aid actors appear to have significantly contributed to creating or encouraging this awareness, notably through the production and dissemination of assessment reports. In the case of Ghana's LEAP, Sultan and Schrofer (2008) report that having a detailed design and budget, along with a progressive rollout strategy—developed under DFID-supported technical assistance—did help convince the Minister of Finance to allocate funds for an initial pilot.

However, other findings suggest that the uptake of the evidence base may be closely linked to ideology. Hickey (2011) draws attention to the fact that different theoretical and ideological approaches to social protection thinking have very different implications for the forms of social protection that would be promoted. The liberal tendency would broadly favour approaches that are targeted and conditional, whereas the social approach would tend to support more universal and unconditional approaches. Such ideological divide was at the core of the initial heated debates around Ethiopia's PSNP, when the World Bank would support a poverty-based and productive approach, whereas the European Union would advocate for a more protective approach. Despite an apparently neutral focus on technical evidence, development partners are likely to show ideological positions. In the case of Ethiopia's PSNP, Hickey et al. (2009) indicate that DFID was viewed by some donors as adopting an ideological rather than evidence-based position when advocating for a cash-based option, which was not necessarily based on adequate field research. In the case of Zambia's SCT, Harland (2014) advances that the initial lack of political commitment can be attributed to a fundamental ideological misalignment between SCT proponents and the Minister of Finance, and underlines that the drastic change recently observed occurred under a new government, after the left-wing Patriotic Front gained access to power with a pro-poor agenda.

Findings also suggest that personal knowledge (informal, implicit, derived primarily through personal experience) may be at least as important as scientific evidence in informing policy decisions around social transfers. The reported impact, in the cases of Ghana's LEAP and Kenya's CT-OVC, for instance, of educational field visits of pre-pilots and exchange visits to other parts of the world where cash transfer schemes were already well established highlights the importance of personal experience to inform policy decisions. Interestingly, the political push for the expansion of Kenya's CT-OVC pilot occurred before any robust scientific evidence of its effectiveness had been produced, and even before all major design and implementation questions had been answered. A small pre-

pilot was launched late 2004 with government and donor funding. Having a pilot on the ground encouraged policy debate; educational field visits enabled MPs and government officials to judge for themselves of the relevance of the approach. Pearson and Alviar (2009) stress how this first-hand understanding that people were not misusing the cash led to a Cabinet decision, validated by Parliament, to create a budget line for scaling up the pilot beyond the initial three districts.

To gain further insight into the role of scientific analysis in policy uptake, we asked survey respondents to rate the importance of various elements “in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme” (Appendix A.1, question 14).<sup>220</sup> We then analysed the absolute and relative degrees of importance attributed to various types of scientific evaluations (of needs, effectiveness, affordability, etc.), as well as the degree of importance attributed to scientific analysis relative to other factors. So we will consider below, under the generic term of ‘scientific evidence,’ all types of research (including, *inter alia*, needs assessments, *ex-ante* cost analyses and *ex-post* impact evaluations) with the intention to put in perspective codified knowledge (formal, explicit, derived from research), and personal knowledge (informal, implicit, derived primarily through direct observation). Of course, due to research limitations highlighted in Chapter 3, the results of this analysis cannot be treated as representative of the population of (foreign aid) practitioners involved in the development of social transfer schemes. Their value is indicative, but also revelatory of some interesting views among front-line practitioners.<sup>221</sup>

With regard to evidence of needs, Figure 5-3 shows that the vast majority of respondents assess the fact to have had a quantified measure of the extent of needs as important. Across the selected sizable schemes, only two out of 59 respondents (3 per cent)—referring to the case of Lesotho’s OAP, rate “clear measure/credible indicators showing the extent of needs (poverty, food insecurity, etc.)” (‘measured evidence’) as “really not important;” and only six respondents (10 per cent) rate it as “somehow not important.” The share of respondents that rate “the fact that decision-makers have personally witnessed the extent of needs” (‘witnessed evidence’) as important (either “very important” or “somehow important”) is also high (80 per cent). However, the share of respondents rating the element as “very important” is much larger for ‘measured evidence’ than for ‘witnessed evidence’ of needs (61 per cent against 27 per cent). Comparing the rating attributed to these elements by each of the 68 respondents to question 14 reveals that 44 per cent of them attribute a similar or higher degree of importance to witnessed evidence—

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<sup>220</sup> A total of 68 out of 77 respondents answered this question.

<sup>221</sup> As mentioned in Section 3.2, over 70 per cent of survey respondents indicated working for an international organisation, and nearly 60 per cent of them reported being international practitioners (Table 3-6).

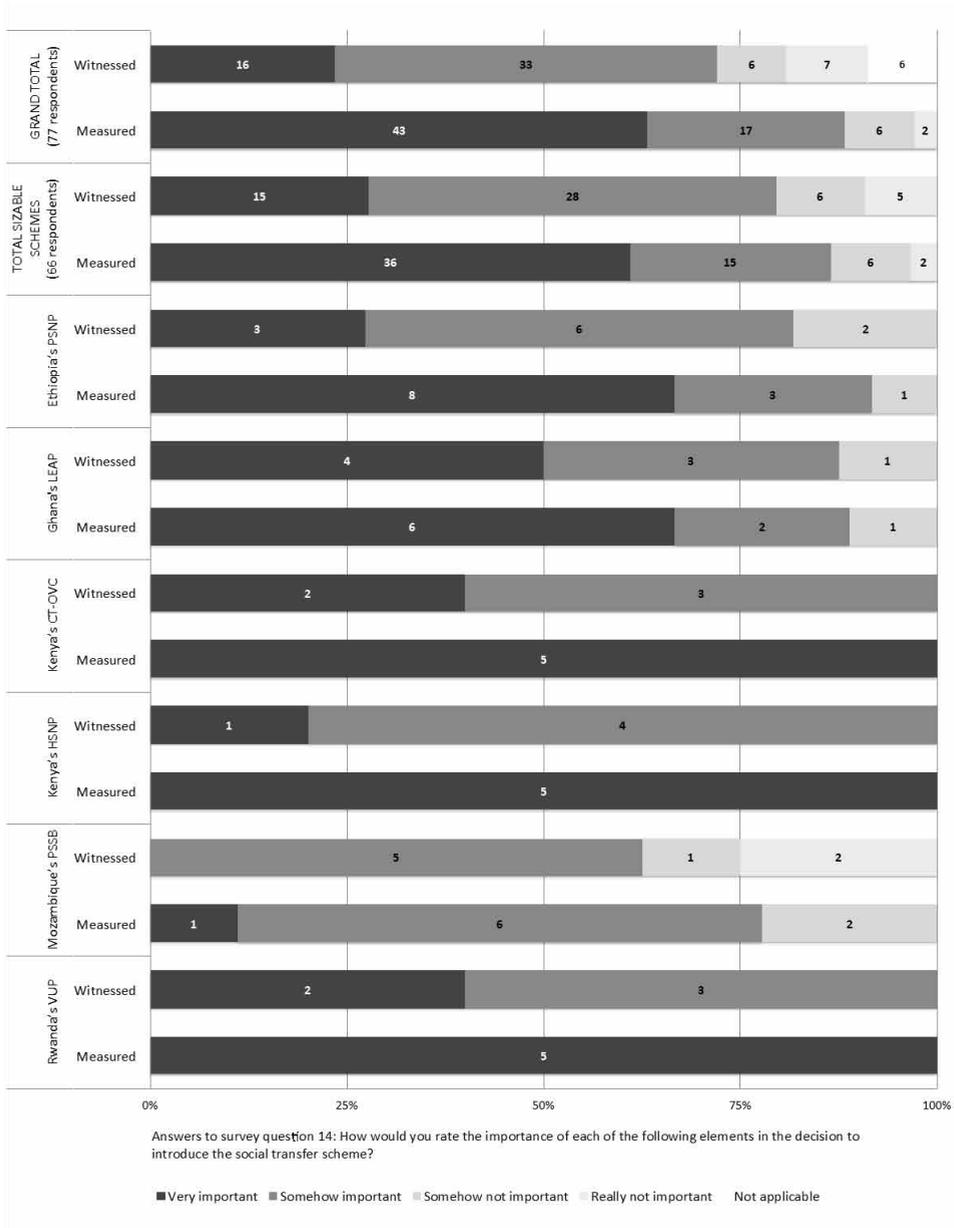
nine per cent even attribute a higher degree of importance to witnessed evidence than to measured evidence of needs.

With respect to evidence of effectiveness, Figure 5-4 reveals that, across the selected sizable schemes, around 25 per cent of respondents rate “scientific evidence of effectiveness” (either national or international) as very important. This share is smaller than that for measured evidence of needs (61 per cent). Overall, no major difference is observed between direct observation (“the fact that decision-makers have personally witnessed the impact of social transfers on people’s lives”), national scientific evidence of effectiveness (that is, evidence drawn from country-specific studies), and international scientific evidence of effectiveness (that is, evidence “drawn from theory/practice in other countries”). It is interesting, however, to see that the share of respondents who rate evidence of effectiveness as important is higher in the case of Kenya’s CT-OVC than in the case of Mozambique’s PSSB. In particular, direct observation is rated as very important by all five respondents for Kenya’s CT-OVC. This is in line with the respective origins of these schemes, as presented in Section 4.2.

In most cases, the scheme represented the first social transfer programme implemented in the country. Its introduction and early development occurred in a context where country-specific empirical evidence of the effectiveness of social transfers was absent or rather limited (to results drawn from a small pre-pilot, for instance), and globally, the evidence base on the use of social transfers in low-income countries was still tiny. In such a context, as suggested above by a few practitioners interviewed, before evidence of impact, leaders’ ideology and/or interests may actually be key factors supporting the expansion of social transfers. As shown in Figure 5-5, survey respondents tend to support that view. Across the selected sizable schemes, over 75 per cent of respondents rate “decision-makers’ own agenda/ideology” as important—30 per cent rate it as very important, in the decision to introduce the scheme. In comparison, only 9 per cent of respondents attribute the same high degree of importance to “scientific evidence of cost-effectiveness.”

Cost-effectiveness studies are indeed rather new, but, as underlined earlier in this chapter, other simpler types of cost analyses have been used as part of advocacy efforts. Figure 5-6 shows that, across the selected schemes, 62 per cent of survey respondents perceive “evidence of affordability over the long run” to have been important in the decision to introduce the scheme; 21 per cent see it as very important. Besides financial capacity, the capacity to implement a proposed scheme at scale (or lack thereof) might impact the decision to introduce it. Considering the importance of “evidence of the national administrative capacity to

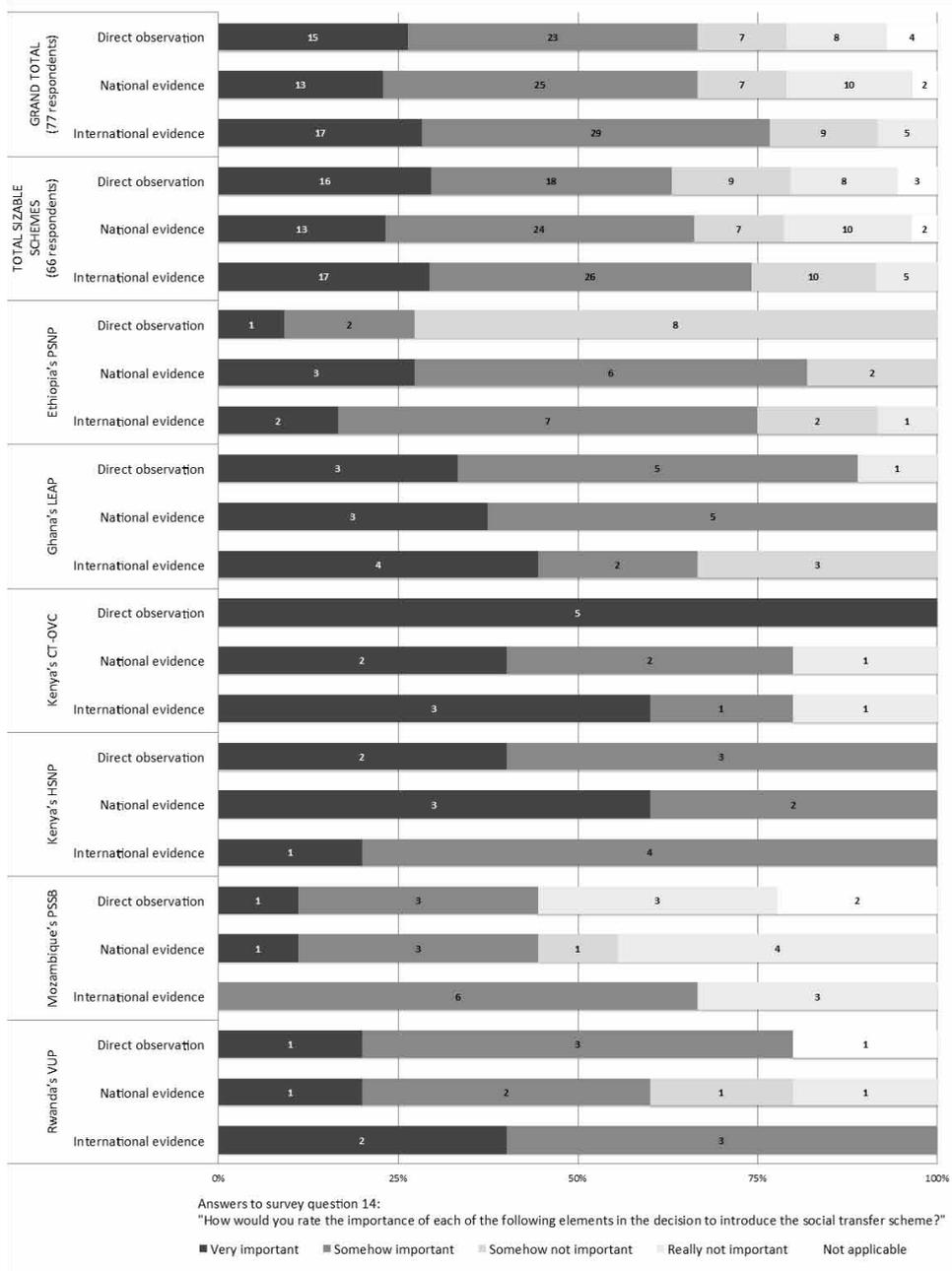
implement the scheme” in the origins of the scheme, 52 per cent of respondents think it has been important; 17 per cent perceive it as very important.



Note: The analysis covers two elements included in question 14: “The fact that decision-makers have personally witnessed the extent of needs” (‘witnessed’); and “Clear measure/credible indicators showing the extend of needs (poverty, food insecurity, etc.)” (‘measured’).

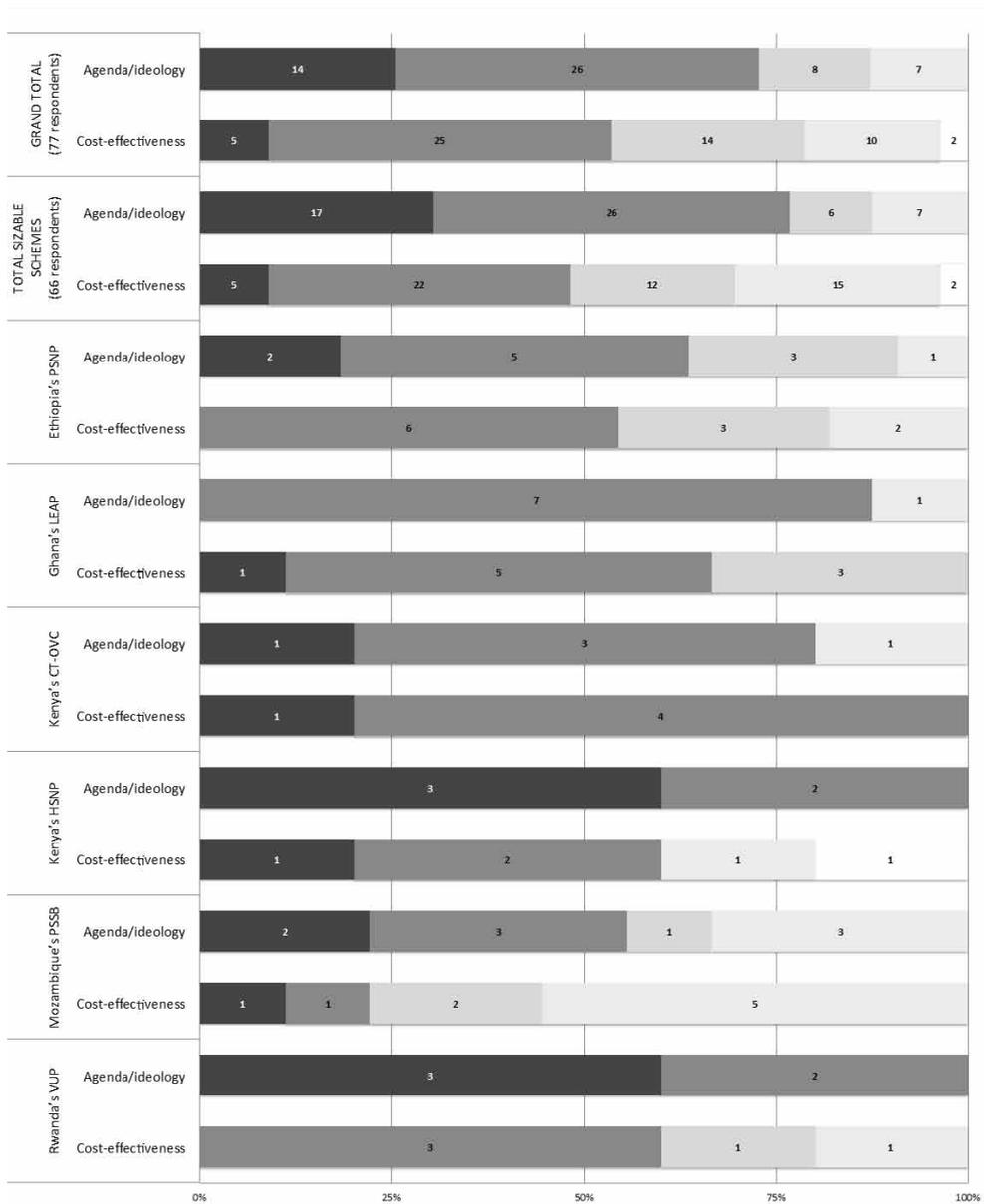
Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-3** Perceived Importance of Two Forms of Evidence of Needs



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-4** Perceived Importance of Various Forms of Evidence of Effectiveness



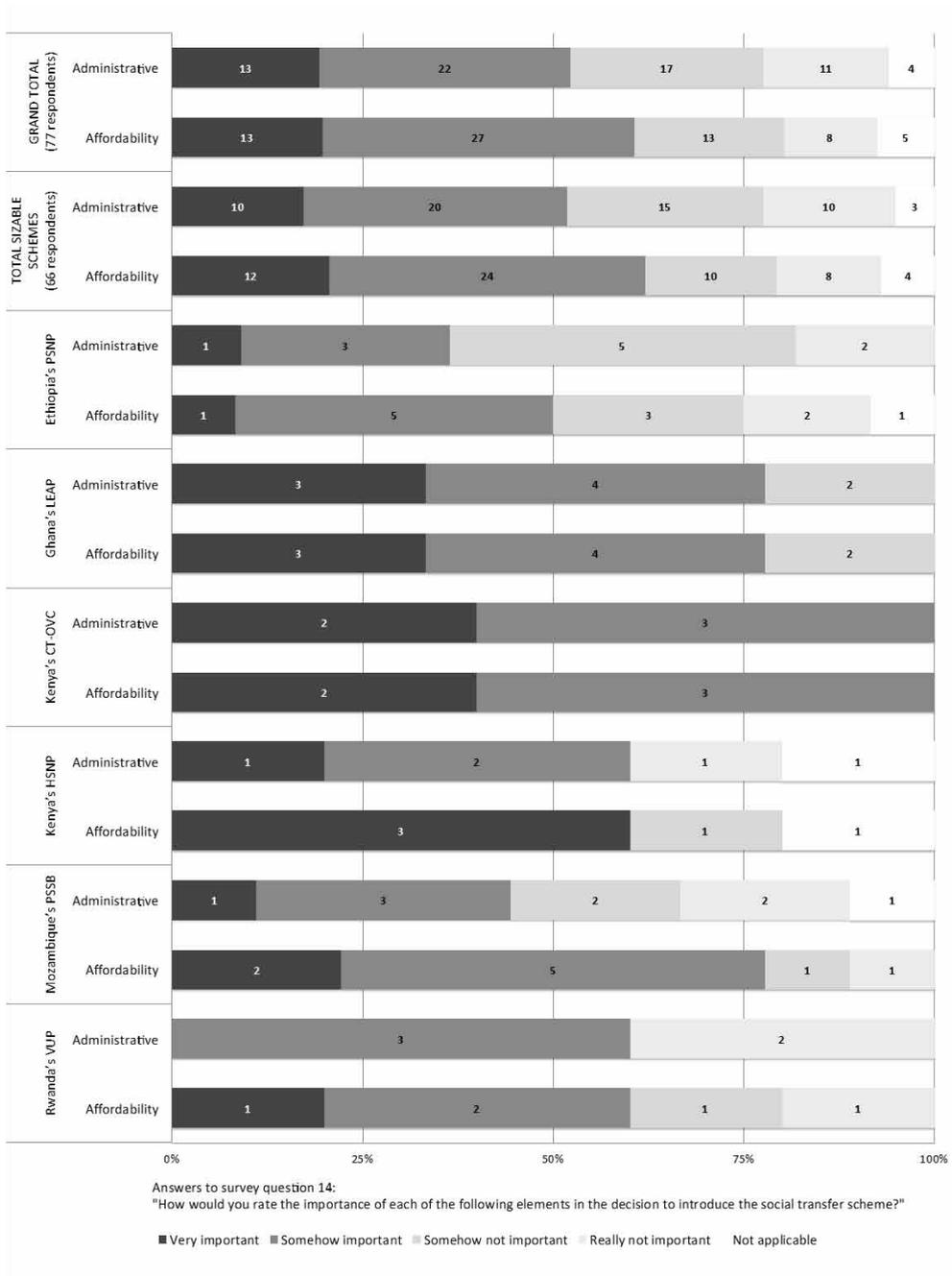
Answers to survey question 14:  
 "How would you rate the importance of each of the following elements in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme?"

■ Very important ■ Somehow important ■ Somehow not important ■ Really not important ■ Not applicable

Note: The analysis covers the following elements included in question 14: "Decision-makers' own agenda/ideology," and "Scientific evidence of cost-effectiveness."

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-5** Perceived Importance of Two Types of Motivation



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

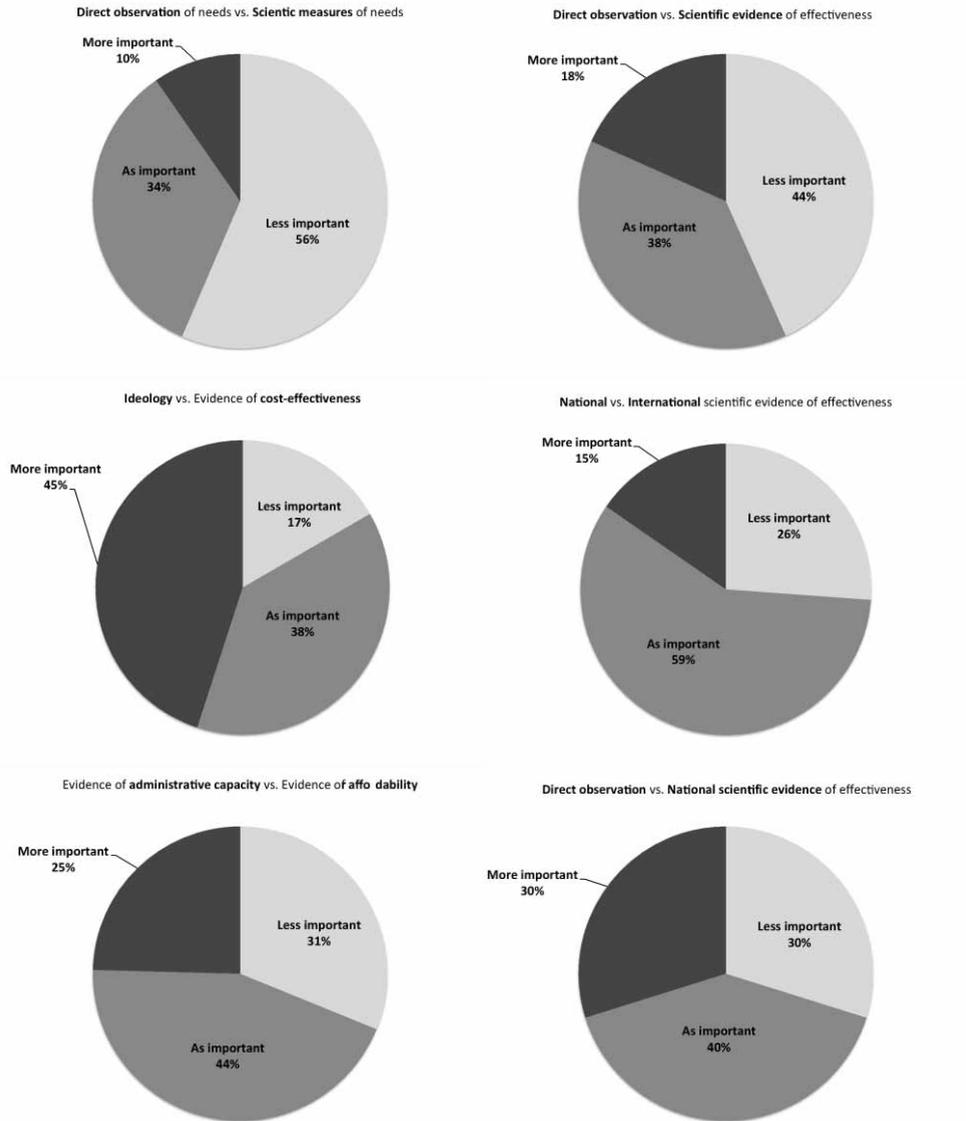
**Figure 5-6** Perceived Importance of Two Forms of Evidence of Capacity

Figure 5-7 provides an overview of results drawn from a series of comparisons of answers provided by individual respondents. It reveals that 44 per cent of survey respondents attribute a similar or higher degree of importance to direct observation than to scientific evidence of needs (upper left graph). This share reaches 56 per cent when it comes to evidence of effectiveness (upper right graph). Only a small share of respondents (17 per cent) view cost-effectiveness evidence as more important than ideology in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme (middle left graph). A majority of respondents (69 per cent) attribute a similar or higher degree of importance to evidence of national administrative capacity than to evidence of affordability; 25 per cent actually perceive evidence of capacity as more important in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme (lower left graph).

Overall, findings show that survey respondents, who are front-line practitioners involved in the early development of a sizable social transfer scheme, tend to see scientific evidence as having played a significant role in the decisions to adopt the schemes. The multiple-case study uncovered that most of this evidence is actually produced with foreign aid support. This tends to confirm the high influence of foreign aid actors in policy uptake highlighted in Chapter 4, and may suggest that the production of scientific evidence is an effective and important mechanism through which this influence is exercised. As shown in Figure 5-8, survey results also suggest the value of another type of foreign aid initiatives towards social transfers policy update that consists in supporting the organisation of training courses for technicians, national workshops with decision-makers, international conferences on the subject or study tours.

Findings, however, should be interpreted with caution given the fact that many respondents, working for foreign aid agencies, can be expected to support these activities themselves. Further research would be needed to confirm these apparent patterns from the viewpoint of national decision-makers. Also, survey questions referred to “the overall process that led to the introduction of the social transfer scheme” (Appendix A.1, questions 14-15). They may not adequately reflect later dynamics around the mobilisation of domestic resources, which represents somehow a higher degree of policy uptake than the sole acceptance of the scale-up of an aid-funded scheme. In particular, only nine out of 63 respondents (14 per cent) identified “source of funding” as a feature that generated “heated debates” during “the initial design process” (Appendix A.1, question 21). As revealed in Chapter 4, for schemes (co-)initiated by foreign aid actors, debates around funding arrangements, and the mobilisation of domestic resources specifically, would tend to appear later on in the development process of a scheme (Figure 4-18). In that

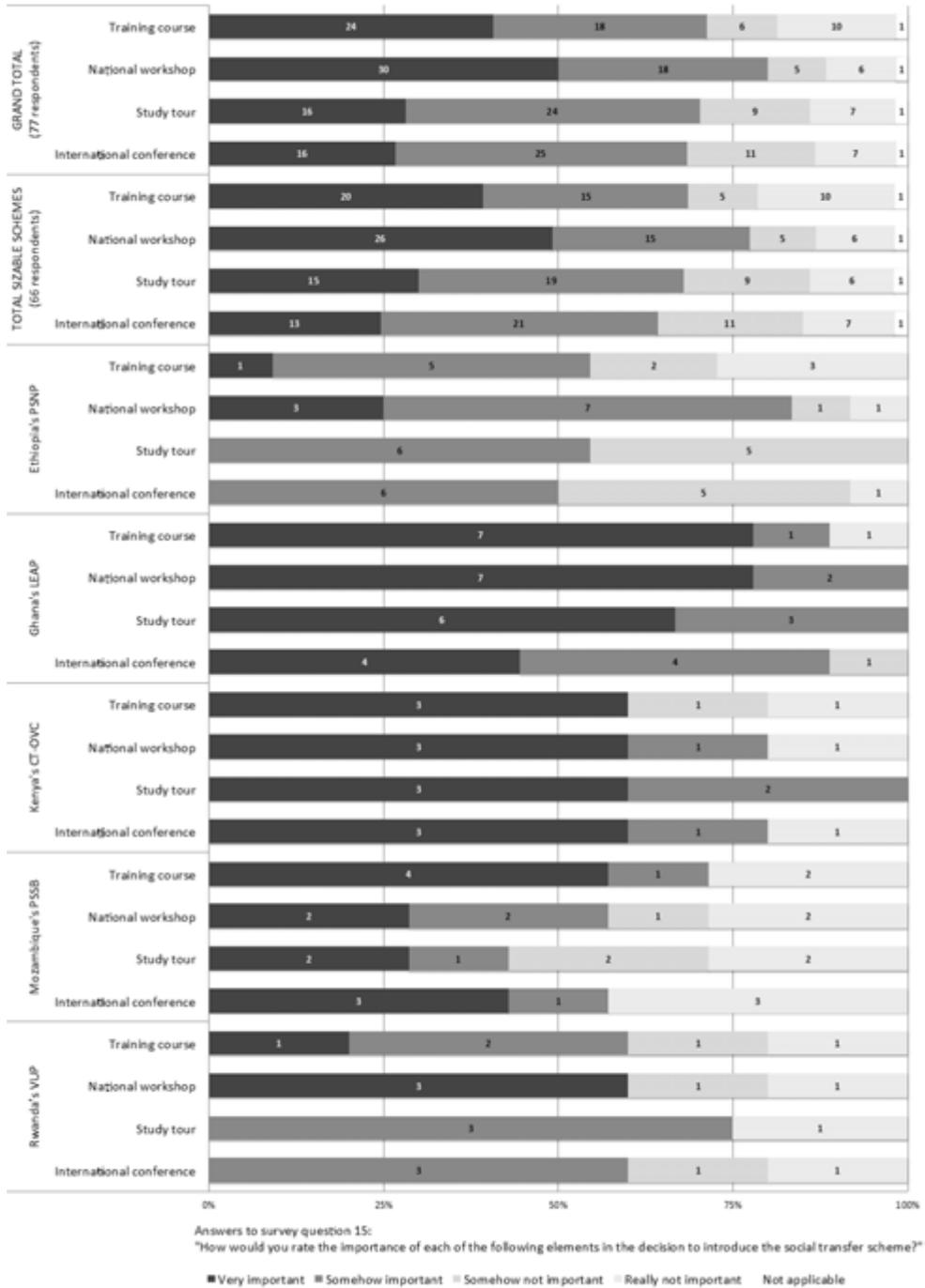
sense, survey results may indicate, but not perfectly capture or disentangle what actually convinced high-level decision-makers (such as ministries of finance) to adopt the social transfer policy.



Note: The analysis is based on the comparison of the rating attributed to different elements by each of the 68 respondents to survey question 14.

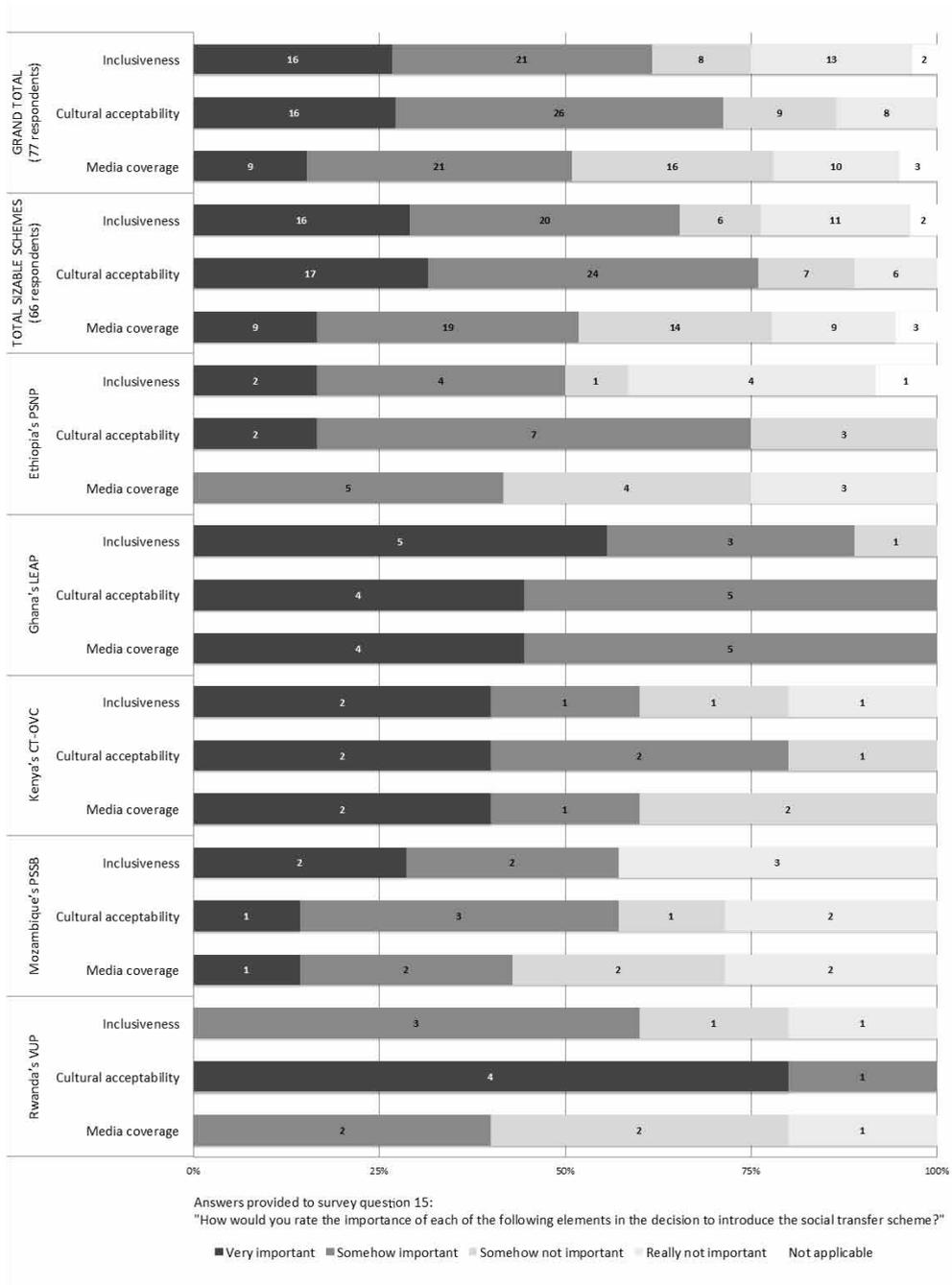
Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-7** Relative Importance Attributed to Various Types of Evidence



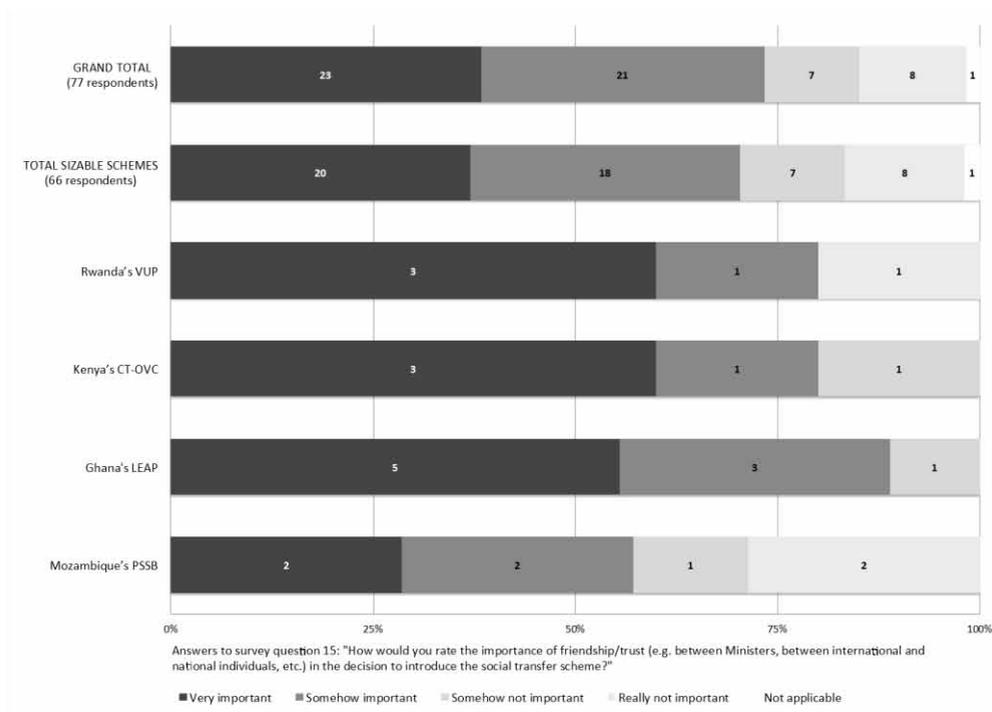
Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-8** Perceived Importance of Various Forms of Exposure to Knowledge



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-9** Perceived Importance of Various Forms of Connection with Society



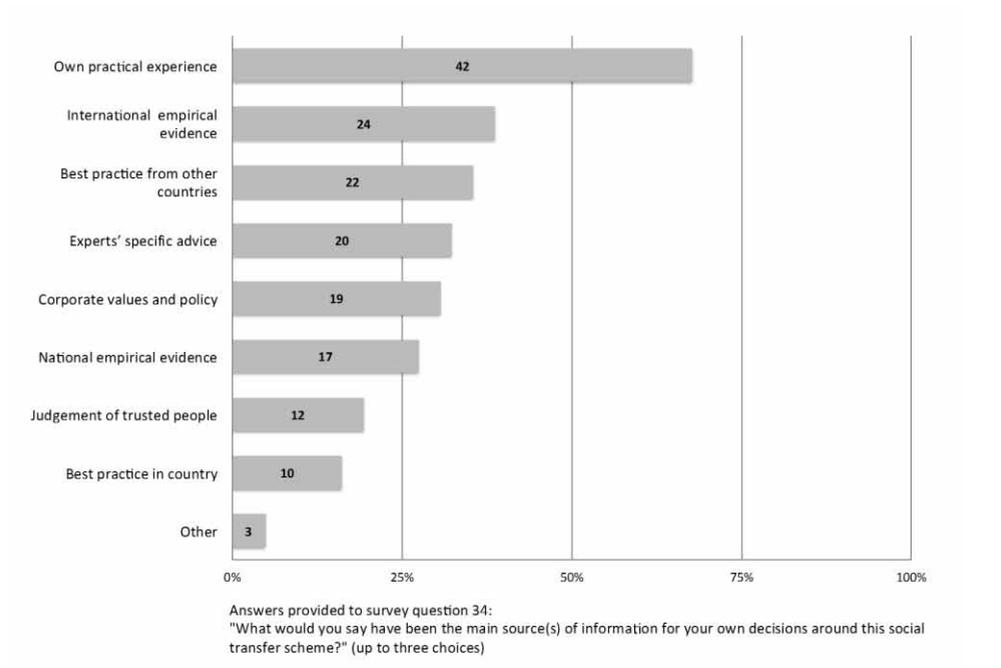
Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-10** Perceived Importance of Friendship and Trust

The fact remains that foreign aid practitioners directly involved in policy-making processes that have proved successful in terms of social transfer policy uptake tend to perceive the production of scientific evidence as playing a significant role. Yet, as underlined above, this is nuanced by the perceived importance of ideology, and in some instances, as in the case of Kenya's CT-OVC, by the reported role played by direct observation (of the extent of needs and/or impact of social transfers on people's lives). A majority of survey respondents also report the "cultural acceptability of the proposed design" to have been an important element (Appendix A.1, question 15). As shown in Figure 5-9, across the selected sizable schemes, 76 per cent of the 54 respondents perceive it as important; it is even "very important" for 31 per cent of them.<sup>222</sup> These shares are smaller but still noteworthy (respectively 52 per cent and 17 per cent) for "media coverage," which can be seen

<sup>222</sup> Conversely, six respondents (11 per cent) view it as really not important. They refer to the cases of Malawi's FISP and Mozambique's PSSB (in which foreign aid actors' influence has been limited), but also to the cases of Zambia's SCT and Kenya's HSNP, which were first introduced as aid-funded pilot projects.

as another form of ‘connection with society.’ In fact, 6 per cent of respondents indicate that this element is “not applicable” in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme. This is in line with the point made in Section 4.4 that, for most cases, the topic has only recently reached the media as part of an early citizen’s appropriation process. Another interesting result that puts the production of scientific evidence in perspective concerns the role of “friendship/trust (e.g. between Ministers, between international and national individuals, etc.)” (Appendix A.1, question 15). As revealed in Figure 5-10, across the selected schemes, 70 per cent of respondents perceive it to have been an important element in the overall process that led to the introduction of the social transfer scheme.



Source: Author’s compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 5-11** Reported Main Sources of Information for Own Decisions

In echo to this last point, we sought to examine how practitioners make their own decision, and if trust, for instance, plays any role. We thus asked survey respondents to indicate “the main sources of information [they use] for [their] own decisions around [the] social transfer scheme” (Appendix A.1, question 34). A total of 62 (out of 77) respondents answered this question. Results are summarised in Figure 5-11. Respondents could select up to three choices among nine response options—including ‘other’ that gave the possibility to specify another source. Five respondents selected only one response: four of them reported that they used their

“own practical experience;” one indicated that he used his “organisation’s corporate values and policy.” Overall, 43 respondents (70 per cent) selected at least one of the three response options related to scientific evidence (referring to national/international “scientific empirical evidence” or “experts’ simulations and recommendations specific to the scheme”); 27 per cent selected two of them. One of the 19 respondents who indicated not having used scientific evidence explains, “this was the first cash transfer program in a poor African country. There was no experience to draw on. For me as the [international] consultant who designed the program it was learning by doing.” (respondent OS20, referring to his involvement with Mozambique’s PSSB in the early 1990s) This echoes insights of in-depth interviews (Appendix A.4, questions 13-14) with practitioners who often indicated that, at first, they were largely new to the topic and were relying on the policy position and guidance of their organisation before progressively building on their own experience and interactions with others. Actually, the most cited source of information, by 68 per cent of respondents, is “own practical experience.” Interestingly, “judgement of people you trust” is cited by 19 per cent of respondents.

The survey has represented a first approach to apprehending the role of scientific evidence in social transfer policy uptake. The survey results presented here raise a number of follow-up questions. If foreign aid practitioner’s “own decisions around [a] social transfer scheme” are primarily based on their “own practical experience,” could it imply that policy advice by foreign aid actors is not necessarily based on best available research evidence? In contexts where country-specific scientific evidence around social transfers is scarce, what do policy makers tend to base their decisions on? To what extent could this encourage a greater role for ideology? And if the “judgement of trusted people” plays a role, to what extent may personal charisma (and values) play out? Research on evidence uptake suggests that scientific robustness is rarely the primary criteria for uptake; many other factors intervene, including trust in authors, ideology, personal agenda, and practical experience, among others.<sup>223</sup> The people-centred investigation conducted as part of this research has been designed, *inter alia*, to delve into these questions. In particular, it has aimed to uncover what foreign aid practitioners, based on their past experience, perceive as key factors, other than the production of scientific evidence, determining foreign aid actors’ influence on social transfer policy uptake. The next chapter will present the results of this inquiry.

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<sup>223</sup> See, for instance, AidData (2015), Beynon et al. (2012), and Darcy et al. (2013).

## *Concluding remarks*

The production of scientific evidence represents one major strategy for foreign aid actors to encourage social transfer policy uptake, and in particular budget decision-making. Over the past two decades, such work has focused on generating, on the one hand, theoretical and empirical evidence on the positive effects of social transfers on social outcomes (based on microsimulations of redistributive effects or gleaned from pilot projects, for instance), and on the other hand, ex-ante and ex-post evidence on the affordability of basic social transfer packages. In recent years, there has been a growing interest within foreign aid actors in using ex-ante cost-benefit analyses for making the case for budgetary allocations to non-contributory social protection, presenting social transfers as an investment rather than a cost. This responds to a general understanding that the arguments in favour of social transfers are not yet convincing enough for many national policy makers of developing countries.

The methodological analysis presented here underscores that ex-ante cost-benefit analysis is not really an exact science. Different methodologies can be used, the choice depending on the specific objective of the study. There is no one methodology to answer any questions, and any model is just a simplification of real life. A cost-benefit analysis intends to bring together costs with a broad range of impacts, but it is forced to leave aside important aspects (for instance, social cohesion or child protection) where estimation and/or monetary quantification are out of reach. Modelling social transfers in a comprehensive way is highly data demanding, while availability and quality of relevant data is problematic in many low-income countries. The analysis has to rest on far-reaching assumptions concerning some estimated impacts, particularly so in a context where data is a constraint and complementary evidence is limited. Estimating effects based on non-experimental microeconometrics may raise questions on direction of causality, even if best possible use is made of econometric techniques such as instrumental variables.

Foreign aid practitioners questioned on the subject appear fully aware of these limitations, even more so for use in a low-capacity country context, and actually identify risks associated to an over-reliance on cost-benefit analyses. There is a risk, in particular, of appreciating the worthwhileness of a social transfer policy according to its economic effects with no or not enough consideration to its additional effects on social cohesion, for instance. Cost-benefit analyses might also push users to consider social cash transfer policy options on their own, without considering any synergies with social services for instance. As such, a risk exists of promoting a fragmented approach to social protection when foreign aid actors

themselves have argued for the need to move towards integrated social protection system approaches. Furthermore, there are risks of distracting resources and attention away from the production of what is perceived as more valuable evidence—for instance, around implementation processes, or impact on income distribution, which rate-of-return analyses fail to capture. In the end, interviewed practitioners do not see any major role for rate-of-return studies, as a sophisticated type of cost-benefit analyses, as part of foreign aid efforts to encourage the adoption of a social transfer policy in a context that would be largely unfavourable to it.

Nonetheless, interviewed practitioners largely perceive the production (and dissemination) of scientific evidence as having played a significant role in the introduction of sizable social transfer schemes. Yet, this appears dependent on a few conditions, in particular, the need for evidence to be brought up as part of a sustained policy dialogue process, and to respond to specific needs of national decision makers. In the specific case of ex-ante cost-benefit studies, this suggests a need to strike a balance between robustness and simplicity to influence policy decisions—complex analyses may generate more robust results, but may be more costly to perform and less easy to digest by non-experts. As such, ex-ante rate-of-return analyses may not be the most appropriate ‘promotion tool’ to draw attention on the prospects of social transfers in general, but they may prove useful as a ‘design instrument’ aimed to inform a pre-existing policy formulation process.

Findings presented here show that foreign aid practitioners with direct experience in policy making processes that eventually led to social transfer policy uptake are very well aware of the necessity to actively engage in policy and political processes. They identify a number of key elements, other than research evidence, as playing a role in the decision to introduce (or scale-up) a social transfer scheme—some possibly even playing a more important role than research evidence. These notably include ideology, direct observation, practical knowledge, cultural acceptability but also friendship and trust. This suggests a possible double discourse, whereby foreign aid agencies may present an official technical (and apolitical) approach while their staff may adopt more complex politically sensitive strategies in their daily work. Thus, challenging our third working hypothesis, the approach to policy-making foreign aid actors adopt, on the ground, may not be so linear, technocratic and evidence-focused. How front-line foreign aid practitioners interact with national policy-making processes and the dynamics of power that drive them is the question we turn to in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6

# What Facilitates or Hinders Policy Uptake? An Exploration of the Views of Foreign Aid Practitioners

[S]uccessful efforts at building socially-inclusive developmental agenda have always depended on visionary agenda setting [...] While it is true that successful cases depend on the use of 'evidence' (scholarly studies, impact assessment, etc.), this is often in the service of the visionary agenda, not the reverse.

*Jimí O. Adésínà (2010, p. 16)*

This last empirical chapter investigates key factors, other than the production of scientific evidence, that appear to determine foreign aid actors' influence on social transfer policy uptake in a low-capacity African country context (our third sub-question). As summarised in Section 3.1, multiple methods have been used to address this question. Some initial findings have already been presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. This chapter focuses on the original insights brought by the people-centred investigation carried out to explore this question through the eyes of front-line foreign aid practitioners. It first presents findings around the ways foreign aid practitioners engage, in their everyday professional lives, with national policy-making processes (Section 6.1). Then, it shows how what practitioners perceive, from their own practical experience, as key enabling factors and bottlenecks for social transfer policy uptake largely revolve around human factors (Section 6.2). Elaborating on this empirical data, the chapter proceeds to articulate how trust emerges as a binding concept of what may define foreign aid influence in social transfer policies in low-income countries (Section 6.3). Interview respondents' narratives are used to illustrate these diverse aspects.<sup>224</sup> In light of the overall results of this research, the final section offers new perspectives on social transfer policy uptake processes (Section 6.4). Concluding remarks summarise fresh insights into foreign aid actors' approach to social transfer policy making brought by this people-centred analysis, and outline questions that these findings raise in terms of foreign aid policy and practice.

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<sup>224</sup> Because of length restrictions the most salient stories and quotes are given focus.

## 6.1 Foreign Aid Practitioners' Engagement in Policy Making

In Chapter 2, we underlined that foreign aid actors had been criticised for adopting a linear, technocratic approach to policy making, which jeopardises their ability to influence policies towards the expansion of social protection (Section 2.4).<sup>225</sup> Findings of the comparative case study presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 tend to nuance this view—suggesting that, even when aid agencies present a project as purely technical and apolitical, their staff may adopt in their daily work politically-smart advocacy strategies. Here, we delve into the ways foreign aid practitioners perceive their role and interact with national stakeholders, their own organisation, and other development partners, and how all this come into play to facilitate or hinder the adoption of social transfer policies.

### Interactions with national stakeholders

Already, the case studies presented in Chapter 4 reveal different ways for foreign aid actors to approach and engage with policy-making processes around social transfer issues. At an individual level, this translates into different ways practitioners perceive their role and approach their work. This ranges from 'pure' technical support, advocacy, to direct lobbying as well as grassroots lobbying. At one end of the spectrum, a senior World Bank staff member working on social protection from headquarters reflects: "In general, [...] I don't have much contact with the parliamentarians as much as the bureaucrats, the technicians." (respondent OR2) He later develops,

I don't spend enough time in a country to do—to even understand the politics well enough. My own strategy is that I would do more damage than help by trying to work through the political process when I don't know who the allies are, I don't know who I'm attending. So I try, I do try to be aware of it, but it's a bit dubious to think that a bunch of visitors can play politics without being burned. This is my view.

Quite in contrast, several country-based specialists report elaborated strategies to influence agendas and outcomes. As already underlined, engaging with parliamentary candidates was a core element of UNICEF's strategy to encourage the launch of the CT-OVC scheme in Kenya (respondent OR1). In Lesotho, rather aggressive direct lobbying tactics, including, for instance, breakfast meetings with the Minister, were used to push for a Child Grants Programme (respondent OR15).

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<sup>225</sup> See Hickey (2006, 2009) and Hickey et al. (2009).

In Ghana, aid actors support a strategy to create “a new narrative about the LEAP” in a context where the media has relayed stories about transfers being mistargeted or money being lost (respondent OR7). Working “from behind the scene,” they help prepare news articles based on post-distribution monitoring reports to be published through the Ministry for it to show that “even if not perfect, LEAP is working.” (respondent OR7) Likewise, respondent OR10 reports being involved in a whole series of activities in Mozambique, including: advocacy with the Ministry of Women and Social Action, the Ministry of Finance and the Parliament for more domestic resources to be allocated to social protection; advocacy to influence the design of a law, a strategy and programmes for child-sensitive social protection; support for INAS to improve implementation modalities, set up a management information system and move to electronic funds transfers; support for the government to better communicate with the population about the scheme (through the radio and community leaders); and training of journalists and parliamentarians on what social protection is and what it can contribute to. Efforts by international aid agencies to lobby the Parliament also include supporting the civil society and its platform for social protection for it to lobby parliamentarians (respondent OR4).

Besides bringing financial resources to pilot a scheme (as in the case of Kenya’ CT-OVC) or accelerate its expansion (as for Mozambique’s PSSB or Ghana’s LEAP), foreign aid actors also play a key role in supporting the management and effective delivery of social transfer schemes. In Mozambique, respondent OR10 views its organisation to be “the key technical advisor to the government to improve the operational efficiency of the programme.” In Kenya, respondent OR8’s personal objective was to make all “payments on time, as per the implementation manual.” As a full-time technical assistant, she could push the national team every day. She believes that aid actors have helped ensure everything was done on time (if only through weekly technical group meetings) and she is not sure the government would have been able to put the programme together without this pressure and support. Similarly, respondent OR6 reports that her main satisfaction has been around the timely disbursements of HSNP’s benefits despite all the challenges. In Ethiopia, foreign actors put pressure to fix things in Amhara where the programme had been mistargeted during PSNP’s hectic first year (respondent OR3).<sup>226</sup> HSNP donors also pushed for a more elaborated monitoring and evaluation component, bringing in international research institutes,<sup>227</sup> which proved useful to reveal where people were receiving payment late (respondent OR2). Before that, a donor agency staff member recalls, “we were *hearing* it rather than having strong monitoring

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<sup>226</sup> By June 2005, an agreement was put in place to resolve the issue and a large-scale retargeting exercise took place in September-October 2005.

<sup>227</sup> The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

information that told us.” (respondent OR 3) Several practitioners interviewed indicate that, as they see it, one of their key roles is to bring innovation, to improve service quality and lower costs, and to increase transparency—for instance, by helping to introduce payments via mobile phones, or establish a management information system that can free staff to deal with other important tasks such as counselling, etc. (respondents OR10, OR15). Also, aid actors would urge and support the development of good-quality monitoring and evaluation systems for the ability to demonstrate the impact of a scheme is perceived as a key element to ensure its sustainability (respondents OR2, OR4, OR6, OR7, OR10).

But all this ‘enthusiasm’ to make things work (better) is more often than not hampered by a major bottleneck: the capacity of national partners, who may be overwhelmed by the amount of information that has to be absorbed and the range of skills that to be developed in a short period of time, and who may be unprepared for the implementation of a possibly complex social transfer scheme. Most respondents spontaneously cited a lack of national capacity as the major source of frustration in their work, and a key constraint on the expansion of social protection in low-income countries. Respondent OR10 deplores a “limited government capacity” in Malawi and Mozambique to effectively roll out the social transfer schemes, and laments “they are slow.” In Ghana, respondent OR7 identifies “human resources,” for social protection in general, as the main constraining factor due to severe staff shortages and lack of proper structures. This notably has translated into sporadic and lumpy payments of LEAP benefits—between August 2013 and June 2014, payments finally occurred every two months but this remains the “most challenging thing” (respondent OR7). In Lesotho, respondent OR15 also regrets the slowness and low capacity of governmental bodies—an issue made worst by the transfer of social protection issues to a new ministry. For respondent OR8, the main issue during the implementation of Kenya’s CT-OVC was the capacity of national bodies to collect data and verify compliance with the conditions. Respondent OR4’s comment on Mozambique summarises the situation that often prevails:

So it’s both, we get the enthusiasts about the programme who want to do more and more and more, and we forget that we are five, we are different agencies and we are talking to one interlocutor on the other side.

### **Foreign aid agencies’ internal institutional incentives**

Rwanda stands out as a case where aid practitioners interviewed praise the quality of their national counterparts. Respondent OR11, for instance, reports having enjoyed working “with a high degree of collaboration” with “very capable”

people. For respondent OR13, “the main source of satisfaction was the opportunity to work with a government that was very smart, very focused, doing things that we thought were sensible, that was willing to listen to advice from specialists that we brought in.” The frustration about his experience “came much more from things going on in [his own organisation,] the World Bank, than from things going on in Rwanda.” Many units within the World Bank needed to be convinced.<sup>228</sup> It required “a great deal of dialoguing,” respondent OR13 recalls,

We had to work very hard for a year and a half to get approval from within the [World] Bank to move from a project lending mode, where you sort of agree that we’re going to build this building and then you build it, to a mode where we were working with the country to design a fundamental reform of how social protection systems and associated systems would work.<sup>229</sup> There was very intense opposition inside the [World] Bank, bureaucratic opposition from people who thought this was misguided, who, I think, underestimated what Rwanda was capable of doing, who were sceptical of things on both the health and social protection sides of what we were trying to do. We had push back from the agriculture people who thought that anything to do with [rural development] was their business and [...] that was their territory.

Similarly, when respondent OR6 recommended a shift to predictable cash-based transfers to assist food insecure populations in the arid lands of northern Kenya, she encountered the opposition of many people in her country office and headquarters who were “highly resistant to it. [...] They had a vested interest in perpetuating food aid in the North of Kenya because they got a good administrative fee for doing that.”

But even when a donor agency is willing to support predictable social transfers as a form of social protection, internal procedures may hamper the capacity of field teams to conceive a scheme through a genuine participatory process. Respondent OR14 explains, for example, how this played out in the case of a DFID-funded social transfer programme introduced with the intention that national counterparts would progressively take it over and fund it. The primary documents that outline

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<sup>228</sup> The World Bank is composed of a set of units focused on country groups and another set of units focused on different facets of development (agriculture, social protection, health, etc.).

<sup>229</sup> That is, moving from a Poverty Reduction Support Credit to a Community Living Standard Grant, which the Government of Rwanda had made a condition to accept World Bank’s funding (respondent OR13).

its objectives and modalities are the business case<sup>230</sup> put together by DFID in August 2012, and the technical proposal prepared by the bidding NGO in November 2012—largely from its headquarters in the UK. The business case already set two important parameters—unconditional transfers and categorical targeting. The extensive consultations with State officials and targeted communities that finally took place late 2013 revealed that most local stakeholders were not at ease with this approach, but by that time, the implementing NGOs felt they had little room to manoeuvre. This is possibly a poor start for an initiative concerned with generating national ownership and ensuring sustainability. This echoes respondent OR6’s reflection on the degree of consultation with beneficiaries in the initial phase of the DFID-funded HSNP in Kenya:

there was a lot of consultation. Oh, not in term of design though... You mean in terms of beneficiaries influencing the design... I would say not really. It’s quite a top-down programme in many ways. They were consulted a lot and I think the guys doing the targeting were pretty good at consulting... but that was just informing people of what was going to happen, which was really different from inclusive design.

The first phase of HSNP also illustrates a case where the design of the scheme was modified to suit the need to evaluate certain impacts. Respondent OR6 indicates, “the design was quite different where the monitoring and evaluation was operating.”<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, a late start caused by internal management issues meant that the monitoring and evaluation was about a year late. But DFID needed to move ahead with designing the following five-year round and re-issuing contracts with implementing partners. So, respondent OR6 deplores, “they kind of moved ahead on the design slightly before the results came out, which is disappointing.” Respondent OR2 reports a similar situation with Kenya’s CT-OVC scheme: “These studies [evaluating the pilot phase] came after the [World Bank] loan was already put in [for the scale-up phase], at least the conclusions.” He concludes, “[t]hat’s a problem [with] all impact evaluation. If you want to do it well, you need to take time. If you need to take time, you don’t necessarily meet the funding timetable. That’s different timetables.”

Corporate agendas and internal funding opportunities may also, rather unexpectedly, affect the design of a social transfer scheme. Dynamics internal to

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<sup>230</sup> A business case is the core internal proposal document DFID uses to assess and approve programmes before any funding can be released (DFID 2011c). These business cases appear to be the only written documents where the scope, scale, objectives and outputs of the programme are formally articulated.

<sup>231</sup> About one third of the programme was evaluated (respondent OR6).

the World Bank significantly delayed funding for Kenya's CT-OVC. As respondent OR2 explains, it was the point of negotiating the next cycle of IDA loans,<sup>232</sup> and the World Bank "decided they needed to move a lot of money before the next IDA round" — "in order to be able to request more for the next round, they wanted to make sure they can show that they have used all the previous rounds." The rushed attempt to include the CT-OVC loan within a larger one failed and caused a significant delay.<sup>233</sup> Conversely, in Rwanda, what had been envisioned as a US\$30-million project over three years became a very large operation following the decision to reallocate funding for infrastructure to the VUP—a decision motivated by unexpected developments (respondent OR13). Respondent OR6 relates a similar story in Kenya: "DFID had an underspent in their budget" and that's why they "suddenly" had massive funding for the HSNP that could contribute to achieving the global targets set in DFID's White Paper.<sup>234</sup> She further notes, "there's a huge difference between the initial discussions we were having in 2005 and what eventually happened. Eventually, they had £100 million for this enormous programme with all these different components working together."

Most respondents mention the fact that aid organisations tend to show corporate ideological positions. Respondent OR8 makes the remark in passing that "in general, DFID doesn't like condition. We have these two schools of thought: one with condition, one without condition." Respondent OR2 relates that the World Bank suggested incorporating the option of providing cash to female students in the drought response in Ethiopia as an attempt to "familiarise [national counterparts] with the idea of a conditional cash transfer." Respondent OR7 underlines the importance of corporate priority. While all make extensive reference to the scientific evidence base, DFID clearly promotes cash transfers while the World Bank "saw more public works as a strategy for Africa." A snowball effect then sets in. Respondent OR2 explains, for example, how the World Bank director "was trying to get something in Ghana that was close to what he knew" (namely, public works). The use of proxy means tests for targeting is also seen as something largely pushed for by the World Bank, sometimes against orientations taken earlier by the national government and other donors (respondent OR4). In the end, with social protection ranking high on the development agenda, "too many

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<sup>232</sup> The International Development Association (IDA) provides concessional loans. Every couple of years, the World Bank and various donors meet to discuss what the quotas will be for each country.

<sup>233</sup> Early planning to make a financial contribution to the CT-OVC scheme started in 2006, but only reached maturation with the approval of an IDA loan in early 2009 (respondent OR2).

<sup>234</sup> The 2006 White Paper set the following objectives for DFID: "Significantly increase spending on social protection in at least ten countries in Africa and Asia by 2009, supporting national programmes and working with the UN and NGOs in fragile states;" and "Working with European partners and national governments in Africa, double to 16 million the number of people moved from emergency relief to long term social protection programmes by 2009." (DFID 2006a, p. 85)

development partners are pushing” (respondent OR4) and many countries see “donors coming with a lot of different demands” (respondent OR10). In that context, respondent OR4 regrets a tendency for aid actors to be “stubborn on specific instruments” and comments: “Sometimes you feel like pulling your hair. [...] [Because] that’s the problem: sometimes, we have all our small agendas and we try to... to be a little bit forceful to the ministry.”

## Domestic leadership and aid coordination

Poor donor coordination emerges as another major source of frustration among respondents. This issue tends to make the problem of low national capacity even worse. In Mozambique, for instance, respondent OR4 highlights the importance of “having donor alignment” in a real “effort not to overwhelm the ministry with our demands and agendas.” She explains,

To some extent the government has limited capacity. So if DFID comes with one idea, and then the [Netherlands] Embassy comes with another idea, and then the World Bank comes with another idea, in the end we are limiting the ability of the government to provide us with a good response and to be able to implement the social protection programme. [...] And this happened last year, where there were really conflicting, hmm... not that much conflicting... that everyone was pressing for issues to take place instead of saying ‘these are the key issues, how do we prioritise them and where do we focus.’ So they were all very important things, very important ideas, but [we] have to be sure that the other counterpart is able to absorb everything that we are bringing on.

Ideological divide impacts the capacity of aid actors to coordinate and speak with one voice with the government. Respondent OR11 reports many clashes in the early days of Ethiopia’s PSNP between its main donors.<sup>235</sup> The EU was fundamentally against a focus on graduation and productivity. They wanted to name the programme ‘*protective safety net*’ and include a strong CCT component as a way to invest in children’s future. The government rejected it, which the World Bank accepted, but the EU wanted to negotiate harder (respondents OR3, OR11).<sup>236</sup> This led to quite a breakdown in trust among development partners. When, in May

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<sup>235</sup> Donors established their own forum to facilitate donor harmonisation and allow them to present a common front to the government during Joint Coordinating Committee meetings with the body that runs the PSNP. Respondent OR2 notes, however, that “because USAID has to do things in-kind and through NGOs, they had a parallel organisation.”

<sup>236</sup> Respondent OR2 relates an earlier attempt by the World Bank to introduce CCTs in Ethiopia that had found “zero support” among national counterparts.

2004, they had to decide whether to jump out or jump in with the government, they eventually all jumped in but with quite a lot of distrust (respondent OR3). Respondent OR11 regrets the “stubbornness” and “psycho-rigidity” of the government, but also the cold feet of some donors who, she believes, knew focusing on graduation was not appropriate, and nevertheless let the government “put through *its* design.” She thinks that “If [donors] had been together, if [they] had negotiated, we could have had a smarter design.”

Government leadership was strong in Ethiopia. Various people in aid and government agencies contributed to write the report of the New Coalition for Food Security,<sup>237</sup> which set a broad outline for the PSNP, but “nothing in this document was something the government wouldn’t want.” (respondent OR3) Likewise, respondent OR2 recalls how they failed to incorporate nutrition issues in the World Bank’s draft project implementation manual:<sup>238</sup>

We were working every day full time with [the head of the Food Security Programme Coordination and Disaster Prevention Office] and we gave him a draft in the afternoon and the next morning he would come back and show where we had tried to sneak nutrition in and ask us to take it out.

The latest redesign of the PSNP puts a stronger focus on nutrition, but back then, the unit overseeing the design process considered themselves a *food security* bureau and “they just didn’t want new responsibility, they didn’t want basically to have the burden of proving being successful in nutrition when they thought it wasn’t their job.” (respondent OR2) The focus on labour-intensive public works was also motivated by a strong fear among Ethiopian officials of creating dependency. Respondent OR11 notes that providing cash transfers should have “sold like hot cakes,” as a tremendous electoral tool, but it met strong resistance from the government who did not want to acknowledge that the problem was chronic, and did not want to talk of social assistance. She suggests that it is only after the 2005 electoral debacle, that the direct support component was then brutally exploited by the government.<sup>239</sup>

Depending on national context, development partners have shown different ways to factor in electoral interests in their efforts to get domestic leaders to support

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<sup>237</sup> The 2002/03 food crisis in which up to 14 million people, the largest number ever, needed emergency support prompted action from the Prime Minister. In June 2003, he convened a meeting with donors and NGOs to explore long-term solutions to food insecurity. The result of this meeting was the New Coalition for Food Security.

<sup>238</sup> A document required within the World Bank to get to its Board for loan approval.

<sup>239</sup> Cash transfers became transfers to those who vote for the party, respondent OR11 suggests.

social transfers. In Senegal, development partners collectively decided to wait until after the elections to support the government in its desire to introduce cash transfers—for fears of massive leakages (Box 5-4). In Kenya, encouraging citizens to put pressure on their representatives during the parliamentary election campaign to back up the idea of cash transfers for OVCs translated in strong leadership by the government for the CT-OVC scheme (respondents OR1, OR8). In Mozambique, the civil society (through national NGOs) has lobbied MPs on social protection issues, but candidates do not appear to have used the PSSB during election campaigns (respondent OR4). In contrast, respondent OR7 identifies the 2008 elections as one of the main triggers behind the emergence of the LEAP in Ghana.<sup>240</sup> As he states, “Social protection is good PR [public relations]. It doesn’t matter left or right.”<sup>241</sup> Under the pressure of the electoral timeframe, the scheme was designed between August and November 2007 and started in March 2008, which is extremely fast and rushed for Ghana. This rush had implications in terms of design and implementation quality. This echoes respondent OR3’s observation:

In Kenya, we’ve got a bit of a ‘be-careful-what-you-wish-for-type situation’ where social cash transfers have been jumped on by politicians as being something that can really help to get them elected. And this has particularly been in the last twelve months and the MPs are all over it. [...] the fact that they keep on doubling the programme budget [should in theory] be really exciting, but in practice it’s far too much, far too quickly. There isn’t the capacity and it’s an absolute nightmare! *[Laugh]*

Again, Rwanda appears to be something of a special case. Despite the presence of an “awful lot” of international organisations (including the World Bank, a strong team from DFID, a significant UNDP programme, WFP, the EU, and the Dutch Embassy—and “USAID [who] functioned on its own”),<sup>242</sup> Rwanda is remembered as “being a place where work was generally done effectively and efficiently. Most of the time, organisations got on fairly well with one another.” Respondent OR13 further explains,

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<sup>240</sup> Along with the role of development partners (particularly UNICEF and DFID) that had pushed the social protection and cash transfer agenda in several countries in Africa, including through South-South cooperation in 2006-07 with Brazil around the design of the LEAP with DFID support, two national champions exposed since early 2007 to different training; and the national household survey in 2006, which reported very high poverty and extreme poverty rates.

<sup>241</sup> This comment echoes the findings of a study by Sugiyama (2011).

<sup>242</sup> Respondent OR12 thinks these organisations were “influenced by the Livingstone meeting” that took place in March 2006, an intergovernmental conference on basic social protection in Africa co-hosted by the Government of Zambia and the African Union.

It really was very very different. [...] because the government was in charge of what was happening. [...] Usually in countries where I worked, where you had quarrels between organisations, it's because you had different viewpoints from different donors about what the government should be doing, and each donor was trying to get the government to follow its recommendation, and there could be tension between the organisations and struggles between the ministers or what ever. It really helps development if the government is in charge, is capable of being in charge and is in charge. And in Rwanda that's what happened. At least, that was my experience.

Respondent OR12 reports a similar experience, describing a general sense of goodwill and smooth collaboration with people who wanted to get it work. Trying to figure out why that was, when there would so often be competition between donors, she suggests,

I always wondered how we managed to go about it because it seems to cause so many problems in other countries. So I think it was all those personalities. [...] individuals were all more committed to actually getting something that helped people out on the ground and corresponded to the government rather than pushing their own institutional agenda. Now, why all these individuals were allowed to get away with not having to push their institutional agenda where in other countries they don't have that space, I'm not quite sure. You know, what, why, but I do think the bigger thing was that strong government leadership. [...] I think it is about government being joined up and it's not just because they had a strong vision, it's also that they were very joined up. So what you couldn't get is, you know, an amazing looking proposal from some donor in just a couple of regions, or just working with one of the ministries that would have broken rank with the vision of VUP. So that was quite important. But yeah, I think we deliberately tried to do that.

Government leadership is reported to have been very strong in both Rwanda and Ethiopia. The degree of alignment between government and donor positions might explain why, in one case, aid coordination was smooth, and the other, it proved difficult—at least in the early days of the PSNP. But this last observation points to the fact that the personality traits and attitudes of people engaged in policy debate might be another explanatory factor. In the following section, we delve into other aspects, more human ones, aid practitioners perceive as important in explaining success or failure of foreign aid attempts to support the expansion of social transfers in low-income countries.

## 6.2 Policy Uptake and Human Behaviour

As described in Chapter 3, research tools were designed to capture the lived experience and personal feelings of aid practitioners in relation to their own field experience with social transfers in Africa.<sup>243</sup> During interviews, practitioners described the essence of their daily work and their interactions with other actors. They highlighted the main factors they identify as having either accelerated or hampered the policy uptake process. Many references were made to corporate and personal charisma, as well as other personal traits and attitudes, such as openness (or stubbornness) of individuals, or readiness to collaborate. Many respondents also praised the role played by specific individuals and teams to get a scheme off the ground.

### Personalities and attitudes

Echoing the last reflection above by respondent OR12, several respondents (spontaneously) emphasised that “the personalities thing matters” (respondent OR3). In Ghana, for instance, respondent OR7 highlights: “Something that is very important and often underestimated is about the role of some people working in DFID and the World Bank. [...] I think that the personality of external champions is also important at some point.” He describes those key people in donor agencies as having a “very strong personality” and being “very convincing, [...] well connected, and very articulated.” They played a major role in convincing decision-makers in country, as well as within their own agencies, for instance, increasing drastically the budget allocated to LEAP.<sup>244</sup> In Ethiopia, respondent OR3 comments,

I think the personalities helped in some ways where we got to in Ethiopia; they were also a huge hindrance at times. The level of unpleasantness that there was particularly between development partners, at times, was pretty bad and pretty unconstructive and [...] almost certainly meant that we didn't necessarily get the best outcomes in our negotiations with government as we could have done.

This last remark resonates with the respondent OR11's conviction reported earlier that a greater ability of donors to harmonise their approach and negotiate with the

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<sup>243</sup> See, for instance, questions focused on personal experience in the online survey (Appendix A.1, questions 32-36) and questions focused on personal feelings in relation to the respondents' individual experience in the key informant interview guide (Appendix A.4, questions 13-18).

<sup>244</sup> From a few millions to GB£35 million in the case of DFID (respondent OR7).

government would have resulted in a design much better adapted to the needs of people in Ethiopia. Respondent OR3 proceeds,

I keep talking about this issue of personalities. It's frightening how important they are. And people's ability to constructively disagree. And when people are able to constructively disagree, I think it produces a very... you know, a really useful environment. And when people either hide their disagreement, which happens a lot, mutter kind of behind close doors, or are very disruptive in meetings on how they disagree, then it's horrendous. So, yeah, it's sort of—it's interesting seeing that.

The capacity to argue constructively seems to be a characteristic of the pleasant experience reported by practitioners who worked in Rwanda. For respondent OR13,

The main source of satisfaction was that we had the opportunity to work with a government that was very smart, very focused, doing things that we thought were sensible, that was willing to listen to advice from specialists that we brought in. It didn't necessarily accept the advice always, and that was fine. It thought about how and frequently modified the details of how it was doing things to take advantage of that. [...] It was quite a different experience from anything else I had experienced [...]. Things were done cooperatively. Things were done in ways that were wise. There was careful debate. The Rwandans were in charge, which is how it should have been. So, the satisfaction was firstly being part of something that was clearly very worthwhile. Secondly, being able to make suggestions for how things could be organised, or organised differently, or strengthened, and had those considered seriously and more often than not accepted. When they weren't accepted, we understood why.

In marked contrast, respondent OR6 describes "a huge amount of animosity and conflict" between the different aid organisations engaged in the initial phase of Kenya's HSNP over agreeing on the nuts and bolts. Her experience underlines the issue of charisma, as well as, to some extent, the matter of cultural differences:

Well, there was a coordinator, [...] who was the coordinator of the HSNP, but he was very new to this and he didn't really had a clue about social protection and cash transfer programme so he was really, you know, out of his depth. And he's also Kenyan and most of us were Westerners and so *[smile]*... and Kenya just operates in a very different way, in a much more sort of subtle and gentle and... and the discussions were really quite direct

and aggressive and... so there's a whole dynamic there, which was very challenging. And he didn't really manage to stir the ship at all very well.

Of course, organisational reputation also plays a very big role. In Ethiopia, for instance, the World Bank quickly took the lead in discussions over the PSNP, even though the initial idea had come from a USAID advisor quickly supported by the EU. But "they are listened to more by the government" (respondent OR11). They had more weight, not in terms of funding to the PSNP though, but as a very large donor in general, with historically strong institutional links with the government.<sup>245</sup> Reflecting more broadly about what makes a person influential in a country, respondent OR3 stresses the importance of both organisational reputation and personal charisma, that is, what the organisation represents, as well as the way the person behaves and is able to convey messages:

I think both play a really big part. But I really do think both play a very big part. If you are good in how you represent yourself in your views, you can absolutely punch above your weight. [...] I really noticed when I moved from [an NGO] to [a donor agency], the difference between, you know, the difference in having a \$200 million seat at the table. [...] I quite quickly realised [I needed] to be careful about what I said because people were actually listening to me. So I mean, I think they do both play a really key role. [...] And I think, you know, the ability to draw on evidence, to articulate yourself, but also to be very respectful to your colleagues, are all very key in that. And it's surprising how many people can't do that combination, particularly the last.

## **Personal agency and team spirit**

Organisational and personal commitment appeared as important conducive factors to the expansion of social transfers in the narrative overviews of the cases examined in Chapter 4. Sustained efforts by national proponents,<sup>246</sup> as well as

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<sup>245</sup> A decade later, "the World Bank is kind of the managing entity for [Ethiopia's PSNP] because they also contribute quite a considerable amount of funds to the programme." (respondent OR5) Unlike other donors, they provide a long-term loan, not a grant. This requires going through an internal appraisal process.

<sup>246</sup> In Lesotho, for instance, Prime Minister Mosisili's headship was decisive for the adoption of the OAP, and in Kenya, the commitment and leadership of Minister of Home Affairs and Vice-President Awori proved crucial in the early years of the CT-OVC scheme.

sustained organisational support,<sup>247</sup> can be found in most of the twelve case studies (Section 4.2). We have also seen above that, on the side of foreign aid actors, these may be largely motivated by corporate agendas<sup>248</sup> in a rather top-down way (Section 6.1). Interviews with field practitioners, however, bring a bottom-up perspective and highlight the power of personal agency—rather than institutional incentives alone. Considering what made the emergence of the PSNP possible, respondent OR3 underlines that the same organisations had been in Ethiopia for years if not decades and had reflected on the limits of their approach, but adds that “a big part was [also] played by this big personality matter.” Within the different organisations involved, she explains, there were sometimes a group of people having cold feet, and a group of people willing to make things move. Respondents concur to say that Joanne Raisin was an obvious member of the latter group. Her report “Beyond the merry-go-round” (Raisin 2001), written as a USAID technical advisor on food security, contributed to push the discussion further on the multi-annual safety nets (respondents OR3). It was not the first time the idea was presented,<sup>249</sup> but it has been a seminal document in the process (respondent OR3).

To a large extent, respondent OR11 argues, the “intellectual maternity” of the PSNP may be attributed to Raisin. There were not all the current talks around social protection back then. The thinking started from a pragmatic reflection on how to “get it right this time” (respondent OR3). It did not come from the top-down, that is, from a willingness to introduce a specific policy (for instance, inspired from the experiences on Latin America). It really came from a desire to fix a problem that was “so obvious,” including the fact that aid came “too little too late” and that microfinance services had no sense for the poorest parts of the population (respondent OR11). Joanne Raisin had done her PhD in Tigray, had been there for several years, and knew the language and the culture. She had already managed to run a pilot in two districts (*woredas*) when she decided to partner with the EU to take the initiative to the next level (respondent OR11).<sup>250, 251</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> The expansion of Kenya’s CT-OVC scheme, for instance, has been a continuous national effort, sustained by the Department of Children’s Services, which has led the rollout of the programme from the very beginning. In most cases, a set of foreign aid agencies have also sustained their efforts to promote the use of social transfers—including DFID, the World Bank, UNICEF and GTZ.

<sup>248</sup> Such as the quantified targets DFID has set in its 2006 White Paper.

<sup>249</sup> SOS Sahel, for instance, had been one of the first organisations to use cash transfers on quite a big scale, also accompanied with a lot of lesson learning, as early as 1992-1993 (respondent OR3).

<sup>250</sup> In particular, the EU had two innovative things to offer: experience in local purchases, and a food security programme operating in four regions, including Tigray, with one technical assistant in each region and one in the Federal Ministry of rural development (something quite extraordinary back then) (respondent OR11).

In Rwanda, respondent OR13 explains how things evolved following the change of national counterpart. At first, they worked with the Minister of State for Community Development who was responsible for a small social assistance component, and “she wasn’t always an easy person to work with.” Then, everything became different when Protais Musoni, the then MINALOC Minister, became the person foreign aid actors began to deal with regularly:<sup>252</sup>

The logic of the policy, the sort of framework, was clear. And his vision of what he wanted to do was clear, and he knew how to get it done. He was very involved in this when our team came in. We would usually go to one or another part of the country usually with him. We would meet people there [and] talk with them about what was going on.

Musoni embraced with great determination the presidential agenda “to address poverty and inequality, and to do something fast that has impact.” (respondent OR12) Musoni did not just put his institutional weight and political power behind the initiative; he “was doing a lot of the thinking and the writing himself.” (respondent OR12) Respondent OR13 describes him as “a major architect of [the VUP], if not the major architect” of the VUP:

Protais Musoni was, apart from being a very engaging human being, was an engineer and thought like an engineer. [...] Very systematically he would take a problem and pull it apart, and look at all the different pieces and figure out what could be done with each piece, and put together a programme that would start to address this.

Of course, Musoni was not working alone. He had a “very small team” (respondent OR12), and worked very closely with a number of other “very experienced people” (respondent OR13) within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.<sup>253</sup> They had “access to experts from all around the world,” both through the aid community and their international connections, and they “all worked together” to optimise the concept (respondent OR13). As stated earlier,

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<sup>251</sup> Respondent OR6 relates a very similar story behind the emergence of the HSNP in Kenya. The idea “was just pretty obvious” from the food security situation in Turkana. A couple of individuals then mobilised to find partners among donors (including DFID who was willing to expand the use of cash transfers globally).

<sup>252</sup> Respondent OR13 describes that this happened not long after a senior colleague of his bumped into Protais Musoni in a parking lot and chatted with him about the World Bank’s health and social protection project.

<sup>253</sup> It is described as a “very strong [ministry], which was not just a finance ministry,” but a sort of “visioning unit.” (respondent OR13)

Rwanda “managed the challenge of coordinating all the help that they had pretty well,” and respondent OR13 concedes, “It was fun working with that group.”

The value (and joy) of team work is something respondent OR8 wants to underline, when as a conclusion, she emphasises, “I would say that the success of [Kenya’s CT-OVC], it was really done by the *team*.” She refers here to a special unit within the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs that had been established to implement the scheme.<sup>254</sup>

We were a team, and this is one of the successes, after all, of the programme. Because we could have some differences about what to do, but at the end of the day, we made the decisions all together, and once it was decided we went through the process.

This was different from what respondent OR8 had experienced in other countries.<sup>255</sup> In Tanzania, for instance, she “couldn’t feel the same. [...] They were a team, but each one in their corner.” In Kenya, “They were really working together. [...] It’s making such a difference.” Trying to figure out what made this team spirit possible, she proposes,

One, it has to [do] with the—you will laugh... about the office, okay? Because they were working together, and they were working [close] to each other. They have a very strong boss, [...] very tough, and they had a very good leadership. And also because they have the skills.

Respondent OR8 also indicates that team members were proud to be there. They took pride in the positive feedback from beneficiaries, impact evaluations, and media coverage:

And the people who were working in the ministry were very involved. They believed what they were doing and that it was needed, and that it was good for the community. And they were ready to learn. They were open to work with us and... and they *trusted* the programme! This is the way, I think. If you don’t trust the programme, you do not put it in place. And they really worked very hard for that.

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<sup>254</sup> Member of an international consulting firm, respondent OR8 had been assigned, as a full-time resident, to work with this unit to help deliver the scheme.

<sup>255</sup> In similar assignments, working with national teams charged with delivering cash transfer schemes.

## 6.3 The Binding Concept of Trust

An analytical story of what may determine the role of foreign aid actors in social transfer policy uptake emerges, with *Trust* as a binding concept. The rather good prospects in terms of financial, social and political sustainability that emerge from the multiple case study presented in the previous chapter (Section 4.4) contrast with the findings of studies conducted a few years ago<sup>256</sup> that raised serious questions over the likelihood for aid-supported initiatives, such as Zambia's SCT, to translate into sustainable policy change. This introduces *Time* as an important factor in the policy uptake process. It may be the time needed to build trust among technicians and decision-makers and time for new ideas to diffuse—that is, for instance, the time required for social transfer proponents to build trust with decision-makers, to generate convincing country-specific evidence, or for decision-makers to familiarise themselves with new concepts and ways of doing things. The acceleration recently observed in the expansion of social cash transfers in Africa<sup>257</sup> may reflect a 'bandwagon effect'<sup>258</sup> with the adoption of social transfer policies indicating that a "tipping point" (Sinek 2009) has been reached in the spread of policy ideas. Insights brought by the people-centred analysis presented in this chapter confirm the importance of *Trust* and, related to this, *Time*. It also underlines the consequences of personal *Traits* and attitude that can either tighten or loosen trustful *Ties* between individuals, which facilitate the uptake of evidence and allow the emergence of well-functioning teams mobilised around a mission they trust.

### Time to build *Trust*

Several respondents explicitly (and spontaneously) referred to trust when describing their personal field experience as aid practitioners engaged in social transfer policy. Asked about what he sees as vital to encourage social transfer policy uptake, respondent OR2 puts it simply: "Well, I think that trust is very important, and that takes time." He further stresses the importance for development partners working on social transfer policies to "find enough time to work out a long-term dialogue." In the case of Ethiopia's PSNP,

it was at least a year of discussions between the government and the various donors, maybe more, working out details, which, at one end, was very

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<sup>256</sup> See Devereux et al. (2010), Hickey et al. (2009), Holmqvist (2010), and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

<sup>257</sup> See, for instance, Garcia and Moore (2012), ILO (2014), Monchuk (2014), and World Bank (2015).

<sup>258</sup> The term 'bandwagon effect' refers to an accelerating diffusion through a group of a pattern of behaviour, the probability of any individual adopting it increasing with the proportion who have already done so (Colman 2009).

frustrating if one was trying to do a timeline as the [World] Bank likes to do, on the other end, it probably led to a much stronger project.

In the case of Zimbabwe's BEAM, already in 1999, there were "fairly strong ties" between the World Bank and the Ministry in charge of Labour and Social Welfare who were working together in the context of a Community Action Project (social funds for small public works activities in communities),

and, just as [...] with Ethiopia, the time of working together, which was not on a compressed schedule, allowed for the establishment of trust. And there was a period of nearly two years of discussion where the various components of the safety net project, which BEAM was probably the cornerstone, but not the only component.

This allowed conceiving a scheme that was "tailored to local circumstances" and nationally owned, which led the government to launch the BEAM despite the suspension of loans by the World Bank (respondent OR2). In Rwanda, respondent OR12 explains that development partners deliberately allowed the policy dialogue "to be a process over time and a process of learning over time rather than being discussions or conditionality around exactly how the programme was designed." This is again echoed in the three main lessons respondent OR1 indicates drawing from the Kenya's CT-OVC experience, which are: being patient, being ready to lower standards, and focusing on home-grown solutions.

Staff stability is a related aspect many respondents underline as a valuable factor for quality dialogue. In Zimbabwe, the continuity in the core technical team membership, both on the government and donor sides, allowed mutual trust to develop (respondent OR2). On the government side, for instance, the person responsible for the BEAM (its design and then its day-to-day management) has been there for well over a decade. In Kenya too, it has been the same national team running the CT-OVC scheme for a decade (respondent OR8). In Ghana, respondent OR7 identifies the presence over time of a couple of "national champions" as a key trigger behind the successful development of the LEAP. Since early 2007, these two charismatic figures have been exposed to different training events.

Simply the time spent together is important to build ties and trust. This can be in training workshops, for instance. Respondent OR2 emphasises that many countries have sent a team to one of the well-established training courses on social

transfers,<sup>259</sup> and “that works very well because then they have a common language. But besides that, when you sent five or six people from your own unit, they spend two weeks together and they tend to become a stronger team.” Having “people share some concepts together” is important. It is “different but complements the direct dialogue about specific projects [...] both between different donors and between donors and the government.” This can also happen in short seminars—such as, for instance, the ones the World Bank organised throughout Africa following the publication of its book on social safety nets (Grosh et al. 2008) “just merely to get some of the ideas of what social protection can do discussed,” even if there is no grant or loan behind it.

### ***Trust to spread ideas***

Generating robust scientific evidence will only bring change if uptaken by decision makers. As respondent OR3 points out, “there’s no point in doing interesting things if you’re not talking about it.” Aid actors need to be “contributing to a conversation.” Research on evidence uptake shows that scientific robustness is actually rarely the primary criteria for uptake. Many other factors intervene, including, for instance, the level of trust in the authors (based on academic reputation, personal connection, etc.), or the degree of alignment of the findings with one’s ideology, personal or corporate agenda, or practical experience (AidData 2015; Beynon et al. 2012; Darcy et al. 2013). In Ethiopia, respondent OR3 explains,

in the beginning phases of the programme, everyone was pretty much influenced by their own doctrine. [...] having shared systems in developing evidence have been really really important [...]. So people don’t just complain about the methodology of studies that they don’t like. So you don’t have a situation where people complain about the methodology of studies they don’t like. So, [...] if you do a joint piece of work, of research, of assessment, or whatever, and you... you know, as development partners and government, you agree how that work is going to be done and why it’s going to be done in a particular way before the results come out, then you’re in a better position to hold everybody to... listen in to those results. [Be]cause, I mean, everybody does it. It’s quite amusing watching how people... the moment a study says something they don’t like, they start saying ‘well, it wasn’t, you know, properly [done]’. So, [...] it’s a nightmare for the poor consultants who have to do the work because they have 25

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<sup>259</sup> Several respondents reported having attended one of the two-week “Social Safety Net Core Course” run by the World Bank or the two-week course on “Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes” delivered by the Economic Policy Research Institute.

masters, but I think it results in better evidence-based decision-making, [be]cause people have bought in to the study processes before they get the results, and that means that they accept the evidence even when the evidence isn't saying exactly what they were hoping it was [going to] say.

As discussed above (Section 6.2), personality matters. Talking about the main interlocutor in government, respondent OR2 notes, "I remember he was very charismatic and there was good report between donors and him [...] I think that the fact that there was a lot of trust between him and the donors surely made things easier." Conversely, respondent OR3 observes that the dynamic around the World Bank, for instance, is quite interesting. Some actors would joint discussions with them "with an apparent distrust." Sometimes, this would be caused by a duplicitous attitude of staff members, but sometimes, it would simply come from the image the World Bank portrays—even if their staffs shows a positive and flexible attitude. So, one strategy often cited by respondents to give credibility to their action is to contract with renowned high-level experts.<sup>260</sup> Likewise, the production of robust cost-benefit analyses is reported to help increase the credibility (that is, the trust in one's ability to fulfil a given function, and by extension, the trust in one's messages) of aid actors. In Senegal and Mozambique, for instance, it helped UNICEF engage in a fruitful dialogue with the Ministry of Finance (Section 5.3). Producing country-specific empirical evidence is also useful to build trust around a novel approach. In Ethiopia, for instance, a small Save the Children's cash-for-work project provided a "certain degree of comfort" that injecting cash in rural areas would not increase food prices, which proved useful to build trust around the use of cash transfers (respondent OR2).

### ***Trust to take action***

At the end of the day, individuals are the ones who bring change. Expanding basic social protection in low-income countries is as much a technical question as an awareness and personal issue. It requires people to be aware of the issue, and to know and trust each other enough to be able to work together towards a practical solution. As reported by respondent OR8 above, the ministerial staff managing Kenya's CT-OVC was all supportive and trusted the soundness of the approach—seeing what the scheme could deliver, "people [in the team] where proud to be Kenyan." Many respondents indicated being very pleased to be associated with an

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<sup>260</sup> A direct consequence is that a relatively small group of people are behind the main social transfer schemes in Africa. For instance, experts cited by respondents in several of the twelve selected sizable cases include Kalanidhi Subbarao (Ethiopia's PSNP, Ghana's LEAP, Rwanda's VUP), Michael Samson (Kenya's HSNP, Ghana's LEAP), and Joanne Raisin (Ethiopia's PSNP, Kenya's HSNP).

assignment that is having a substantial impact towards “improving the life of poor people” (respondent OR5). Trust in their mission is certainly what drives them.

Trusting one’s own capacity to change things is another important aspect that transpires. Experiences reported above illustrate the power of personal agency and team action. It is interesting to see, for instance, that what became a very successful lobbying strategy, which eventually led to the development of Kenya’s CT-OVC, emerged when a small group of UNICEF staff members was asked, at a regional meeting, to brainstorm for 15 minutes and come up with innovative ideas (respondent OR1). Exercising personal responsibility may be deliberately trying to ensure smooth coordination and constructive dialogue—as respondent OR12 experienced in Rwanda, for instance. It may also be having the courage to leave an organisation and take a promising idea to a more receptive body. For example, respondent OR6 recounts: “So I was trying to suggest something that my boss was just not interested in at all, at that time. So it became really difficult, so I just left.” She took the initiative to approach other agencies, which showed interest in supporting the development of what became Kenya’s HSNP. In the end, taking action to make change happen in a challenging environment probably has to do with trusting the change project, trusting one’s own capacity to bring change, trusting others enough to allow for a constructive dialogue to occur, and trusting a process that requires patience and perseverance.

## **6.4 Fresh Perspectives on Policy Uptake Processes**

Findings presented above illustrate the interactions of knowledge and power in policy making (Court et al. 2005; Jones et al. 2012). They exemplify that ‘powering’ (or ‘politics as a struggle for power’) and ‘puzzling’ (or ‘politics as learning’) are often intertwined in the formation of public policies (Hall 1993; Hecló 1974). Critical actors in the social transfer policy-making process are not simply seeking to advance their own interests; they are also seeking solutions to a country’s problems. The adoption of social transfer policies appears to take time. Indeed, “policies with a higher potential for domestic conflict of interests,” such as redistributive policies, “diffuse more slowly” (Bender et al. 2014, p. 17, based on Lütz 2007 and Holzinger et al 2007). Also, in many cases, the first adoption of a national (pro-poor) social transfer policy may be viewed as what Peter Hall (1993) qualifies as ‘third order change,’ that is, a wholesale change that presents “simultaneous changes in all three components of policy: the instrument settings,

the instruments themselves, and the hierarchy of goals behind policy.” (p. 279)<sup>261</sup> Such a policy change, Hall (1993) argues, is likely to be associated with a “paradigm shift” (p. 279) and “be more sociological than scientific.” (p. 280)

The reported importance of ideology thus comes as no surprise. As underlined earlier, social transfers are about redistributing public resources; defining a social transfer policy is thus “self-evidently about a vision of society” (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2007, p. 2) as it implies clarifying which inequalities a society aims to reduce (or which privileges elite groups aim to maintain) through them. Different ideological approaches to social contract thinking have very different implications for the forms of social protection that would be promoted; the liberal tendency would broadly favour approaches that are targeted and conditional, whereas the social approach would tend to prefer more universal and unconditional approaches (Hickey 2011). Interestingly, findings suggest a similar ideological divide among aid agencies.<sup>262</sup> This supports the view of another type of double discourse from foreign aid actors who, despite an apparently neutral focus on technical evidence, would tend to show organisational ideological positions.<sup>263</sup> This ideological divide transpires behind the apparent contention observed in many cases (Chapter 4) that “lies not between global influence and national ownership but rather between [...] blocks of policy actors with their different views of social protection and financial responsibility.” (Kwon et al. 2015, p. 142)

In line with this, findings touch on the human dimension of knowledge uptake and policy formation. “In a way, policy is all about ideas. It could even be described as a way of putting ideas into motion by translating them into concrete actions.” (Rodríguez Prieto and Bloching 2015, p. 67) Scientific evidence may bring change and lead to social transfer policy uptake *if* uptaken by decision-makers. A wealth

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<sup>261</sup> Building on Thomas Kuhn’s (1962) analysis of paradigm shift processes, Hall (1993) distinguishes three types of policy changes according to the magnitude of changes involved. First and second order change “can be seen as cases of ‘normal policy making,’ namely of a process that adjusts policy without challenging the overall terms of a given policy paradigm” (p. 279). The processes of first and second order change in policy correspond to policy legacies theory – that is, the argument that “policy legacies” or “meaningful reactions to previous policies” (Weir and Skocpol 1985, p. 119) determine the course of subsequent policy. In first and second order change, Hall (1993) argues, “[e]xperts in the public employ [are] primarily responsible for policy innovation, and the learning process as a whole [takes] place primarily inside the state itself.” (p. 288)

<sup>262</sup> Likewise, Rodríguez Prieto and Bloching (2015) note a “traditional attitude of donors who, for the sake of neutrality, usually present themselves as providers of ‘technical’ knowledge. [...] Yet in reality, the reasons underpinning the final choice by the provider as well as the recipient of the assistance are seldom purely technical.” (p. 44)

<sup>263</sup> At the end of Chapter 5, we already underlined that a first type of double discourse may be found, whereby aid agencies would tend to present a project as purely technical (and apolitical), but their staff would actually adopt in their daily work ‘politically-smart’ advocacy strategies.

of research on evidence uptake shows that scientific robustness is rarely the primary criteria for uptake. As suggested in this research, many other factors intervene, including trust (in authors or users), ideology, personal agenda, and practical experience (AidData 2015; Beynon et al. 2012; Darcy et al. 2013). The fact that practical knowledge is found as important in informing foreign aid actors' policy decisions and advice around social transfers illustrate the dynamic relationship between two main sources of knowledge: propositional or codified knowledge (formal, explicit, derived from research, and concerned with generalisability), and non-propositional or personal knowledge (informal, implicit, derived primarily through personal experience) (Eraut 1985, 2000). Furthermore, findings illustrate the role of trusted relationships in the diffusion of ideas, together with the roles of an organisation's reputation and personality traits (Cuddy et al. 2013).

### **Box 6-1**      Conceptualisation of Ideational Leadership

Communicative/behavioural aspects:

1. Exposing the drawbacks of the policy status quo
2. Making consistent efforts to legitimize (the principles of) new policy
3. Engaging with reform opponents by framing their resistance as 'problematic'
4. Making efforts at political consensus-building to muster support for a particular reform initiative

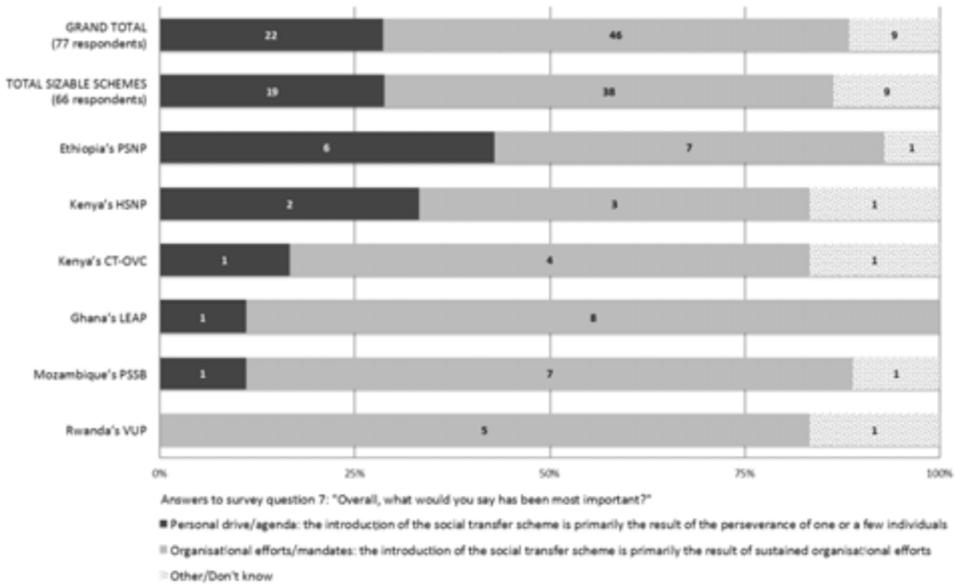
Orientation/motivation aspect:

5. Being policy- rather than power-oriented

Source: Stiller (2009, p. 177).

As uncovered in this research, the first adoption of pro-poor social transfer scheme, as a major policy change, "usually requires the acquiescence of numerous actors" (Pierson 1996, p. 174, cited in Stiller 2010). The concept of ideational leadership put forward by Sabina Stiller (2009, 2010) to explain welfare state reforms in Germany appears useful to illuminate social transfer policy uptake in low-income African countries, and the particular influence of foreign aid actors. This concept "implies 'leadership with the help of ideas.' It is exercised by those key policy-makers who use strategies that are idea-based ('ideational'), and purposively aim for the achievement of change, even in view of reform resistance ('leadership')." (Stiller 2010, p. 17) It focuses on "innovation-mindedness, persuasion, and the breaking-down of vested resistance to change without relying merely on one's position of authority." (p. 43) In other words, ideational leadership may be seen as a comprehensive concept compassing "intellectual leadership (ability to articulate the ideas), entrepreneur leadership (ability to sell the ideas) and implementation leadership (ability to translate the ideas into reality)" (Geldenhuis 2009). Box 6-1

lists the most salient aspects of ideational leadership as defined by Stiller (2009, 2010).



Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

**Figure 6-1** Perceived Origins of Selected Schemes: Personal vs. Organisational Drive

In many aspects, foreign aid actors successful in supporting the emergence of permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer scheme in an environment initially resistant to the idea, may be seen as ideational leaders. This concept echoes that of 'opinion leader' brought forward by Everett Rogers (2003) to describe the diffusion of innovations. Drawing parallels with Rogers' theory, we may posit that impersonal methods like reporting may spread information about innovative social transfer policies, but it is 'opinion leader tactics,' such as conversations with people one personally knows and trusts, that spread adoption by producing behavioural changes.<sup>264</sup> Pushing the analogy further, we may attempt to break down the 'population' of low-income countries into five segments, based on their propensity to adopt a specific innovative policy (such as, social cash transfers): innovators, early adopters, early majorities, late majorities and laggards. Rogers (2003) argues, innovation spreads when it evolves to meet the

<sup>264</sup> Research in neuroscience shows indeed that depending on their formulation, policy advocates' messages activate different part of decision-makers' brains—the one driving behaviour, or the one responsible for language, which has implications in terms of change adoption (Sinek 2009).

needs of successive segments. Typically, the 'early majority' would tend to need solid proof of benefits, be cost sensitive and risk averse. By providing (seed) funding to run pilot projects, foreign aid actors may be seen as helping countries manage the risk and uncertainty associated with innovation. The 'late majority,' the theory goes, would tend to follow established standards. By establishing global norms, notably through the Social Protection Floor, foreign aid actors may be seen to have set favourable conditions to encourage another wave of countries to adopt social transfer policies. Reaching the group of 'laggards' may require yet another strategy on the part of foreign aid actors.<sup>265</sup> Thus, as illustrated in Figure 6-1, the spread of social transfer policies in low-income African countries may be seen as the result of the combined effects of personal leadership and organisational sustained efforts.

However, in some cases, organisational incentives, and/or incentives within the international aid system more broadly, may hamper social transfer policy uptake processes and jeopardise the sustainability of aid initiatives (Ostrom et al. 2001). Empirical evidence presented above (Section 6.1) illustrates how organisational vested interests or resistance to new ideas may reduce field practitioners' ability to innovate.<sup>266</sup> A lack of donor alignment, notably due to divergent organisational ideological positions, may also hinder policy uptake. Meanwhile, however, King and McGrath (2003) suggest that better coordination between foreign aid agencies would lead governments being faced with a more concerted position which may reduce national ownership.<sup>267</sup> The results agenda that has become ubiquitous among foreign aid actors in recent years (Taylor 2014) may also have a perverse effect on national capacity and ownership. Harvey Smith (2005) notes, "[t]he risk is that, when donor-driven pressure for rapid planning and prioritising means key decision-making deadlines arise before capacity has been built, the [foreign aid-funded] technical advisers may then be pressured into making the decisions, so ownership is weakened." (p. 452) Hence, Smith advises, "local capacity, however acquired or delivered, will have more impact than local ownership, and should be given top priority for donor funding." (p. 254)<sup>268</sup> Another notable pattern is the

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<sup>265</sup> Looking at the case of the Sahel, a region that has lagging behind in terms of social protection and social transfers, we suggest that foreign aid actors may need to further innovate in the way they approach the expansion of basic social protection (Section 7.3).

<sup>266</sup> Whereas, Rogers (2003) argues, continuous improvement is the key to spreading an innovation.

<sup>267</sup> Conversely, Chirwa and Dorward (2013) note that the introduction of Malawi's FISP in 2005 "drew on new opportunities for independent policy afforded by the introduction of large-scale budget support by Malawi's major donors and (to a lesser extent) by ideological divisions within the donor community regarding the relative economic and welfare benefits of such a programme" (pp. 82-83).

<sup>268</sup> Smith (2005) reports the words of a Rwandan colleague: "There is no point in saying that the government should be in the driving seat if it does not know how to drive. Teach it how to drive first." (p. 453)

tendency encouraged by the prevailing evidence-based policy discourse<sup>269</sup> for foreign aid actors to focus their attention and resources on the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge to the detriment of other important types of knowledge for policy-making, notably practical knowledge and citizen (or participatory) knowledge (Jones et al. 2012).<sup>270</sup> De Coninck et al. (2013) note, “far too often the *consequences* and the *symptoms* of social inequities are typically scrutinized, rather than the notion of social justice itself and therefore an exploration of the kind of society that is found to be desirable.” (p. 3)

These different incentives may, at least partially, explain a seemingly limited engagement of citizens in the early phases of many aid-supported schemes. Scheme design has occurred primarily between state and foreign aid actors (Figure 4-13 in Section 4.3). Yet, globally, citizen’s preference are found to influence the level of social protection expenditure (Gassmann et al. 2016), and in industrialised countries, social protection regimes coincide with different ‘cultures of social protection’—that is, coherent differences in people’s value orientations, or informal social protection cultures; each regime reflects a specific vision of society, notably a particular approach to the notion of social justice and a given understanding of the role of the state (Vrooman 2012). Donor funding may have engendered a bifurcation of accountability, whereby recipient countries are more accountable to donors than they are to their citizens (Ulriksen 2013). Rather, a broad and diversified tax base is seen as an important mechanism for creating a reciprocal relationship between taxpayers and their government, and thus increasing social spending.<sup>271</sup> But the context of high economic informality that prevails in most low-income countries generates a taxation trap—a vicious circle where a low taxation level weakens state credibility and capacity in providing public goods, further weakening the justifications for the citizens to pay taxes and contributing to maintaining high poverty levels (Sindzingre 2009). This underlines the importance of examining tax policies in conjunction and while designing social transfer schemes (Bastagli 2015). Citizen (re-)appropriation may be the next challenge ahead for many sizable schemes.

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<sup>269</sup> See, for instance, Jones et al. (2012), Powell (2006), Rodríguez Prieto and Bloching (2015), and Taylor (2014).

<sup>270</sup> “Research-based knowledge is produced by scientists, academics and professional groups. [...] Practice-informed knowledge is knowledge from experience of implementing policy and practice, or gained more generally through hands-on action. [...] Citizen (or participatory) knowledge is held by citizens, both individually and collectively, drawing on their daily lives; it is knowledge of a place, a culture, a people, and their challenges, gained through direct experience.” (Jones et al. 2013, pp. 6-8)

<sup>271</sup> See Hujo and McClanahan (2009), Ulriksen (2013), and UNRISD (2010).

## *Concluding remarks*

The people-centred perspective adopted in this chapter reveals original understandings around the role and influence of foreign aid actors in social transfer policy uptake. The study observes national policy-making processes around social transfer issues through the eyes of front-line foreign aid practitioners, and helps uncover important, yet often underestimated, factors behind policy uptake. Already, Chapter 4 has outlined a few strategies adopted by foreign aid actors, beyond the production of scientific evidence, that have proven useful in encouraging social transfer policy uptake. Chapter 5 has underlined that generating scientific evidence, however robust, is only useful to the expansion of social protection if it contributes to a country-based policy conversation. This chapter further highlights the value of trust-based partnerships built over time to allow a fruitful dialogue to take place, and facilitate the uptake (and appropriate adaptation) of any good practices, evidence and novel ideas by national policy makers.

Interestingly, findings also point to factors internal to foreign aid agencies that might either support or hamper the expansion of social transfers in low-income countries. Before lack of political will, or even limited fiscal space, interviewed practitioners predominantly identify weaknesses in the capacity of national bodies to contribute to policy dialogue and implement a social transfer scheme at scale as a major bottleneck. Foreign aid actors may play a positive role in encouraging the effective delivery of social transfers, but the resistance to an expansion of social transfers may, at times, come from within foreign aid agencies themselves. Moreover, their internal procedures and dynamics may also be in contradiction with the stated intention to ensure national ownership—among beneficiaries, and citizens more broadly, as well as local and national authorities. In particular, findings suggest that some of the main foreign aid organisations working on social transfer issues tend to show corporate ideological positions. Ideological divide may impact their capacity to align their approaches and speak with one voice with the government. Poor donor coordination comes up as another major source of frustration cited by respondents, an issue that, ironically, only tends to make the problem of low domestic capacity even worse.

Furthermore, the study sheds light on the human dimension of policy uptake. Interviews with field practitioners bring a bottom-up perspective that highlights the power of agency. The narratives foreign aid practitioners develop to describe policy formation are human stories more than accounts of institutional processes. The ability of an individual to convey messages and foster trust-based relationships, its capacity to argue constructively and engage in teamwork, appears

as a significant conducive factor—while difficult personalities, on the contrary, can engender an atmosphere of mutual distrust, which hampers policy dialogue. These insights raise follow-up questions in terms of foreign aid policy and practice in view of the recent evolutions in the sector. Is enough time allowed for dialogue? Does it take place at the appropriate level? Are front-line practitioners equipped with the right skills? Is adequate attention given to fostering national ownership? These questions, *inter alia*, are discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 7

# Policy Discussion: Foreign Aid for Expanding Basic Social Protection in Low-Income Countries

Ideas and values underlie all our thought and action. The world we know today is a natural consequence of ideas and values formulated in the past, adopted over time and still prevalent in spite of increasing challenges to their validity, fairness and relevance.

*Ivo Šlaus and Garry Jacobs (2013, p. 4)*

This chapter offers a reflection upon the empirical research findings presented in previous chapters in the perspective of informing current and future efforts by foreign aid actors to help expand basic social protection in low-income countries. It begins by considering the potential downside to the catalytic effect of aid uncovered in Chapter 4. In particular, it touches on concerns raised within the larger quest for inclusive development (Section 7.1). Then, in view of insights brought by Chapter 6 on the human dimension of policy formation, it offers a reflection on the appropriateness of mainstream aid practices for the purpose of fostering national ownership around social transfers (Section 7.2). Next, turning to the case of the Sahelian countries of West Africa, it contemplates additional challenges specific to fragile environments that have been lagging behind in terms of social protection (Section 7.3). This brings additional insights and leads to the identification of a few avenues for further reflection on the role of foreign aid actors in the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries (Section 7.4). The chapter concludes with future prospects.

### 7.1 Concerns as regards the Quest for Inclusive Development

The empirical evidence reviewed in Chapter 4 suggests a catalytic effect of aid, rather than a crowding out or substitution effect, on mobilising national effort for social transfers. Additional findings presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 further explain how this happened. But beyond providing insights into hypotheses on the role of foreign aid actors in the decision of low-income countries to adopt and

finance a social transfer scheme, findings raise a number of follow-up questions. In particular, they invite to reflect on three aspects: the role, or lack thereof, of citizens in the shaping of social transfer policies; the realisation of the rights-based perspective to social protection; and the contribution of social transfer policies to the transformative agenda of social protection.<sup>272</sup>

### **Lack of citizens' involvement**

In all the cases reviewed, policy decisions around social transfers have been primarily taken in closed policy spaces, in the executive branch, often in dialogue with donors (or creditors). Like with other progressive policies, it is not completely surprising to see that the initiative tends to come from the supply side of the social contract. Hickey (2011) uncovers that political society (politicians, parliamentarians and political parties) rather than civil society tends to be the key driver for pro-poor policies in developing countries. In the case of basic social protection in low-income countries, aid actors promoting social transfers could be seen as playing the role of needy citizens' representatives, giving a voice to the powerless in policy spaces. However, their legitimacy and capacity to do so is open to debate. An enthusiasm for cash transfer instruments, for instance, along with a focus on international 'best practices' may have led foreign aid actors to neglect longstanding national social policies, and ignore historical and cultural choices of society vis-à-vis social protection.

If in most cases, citizens do not appear to have actively claimed for the introduction of a social transfer scheme, the catalytic effect of elections—observed at some point in all the reviewed cases—implies that citizens have nevertheless played some role as voters. In Kenya, discussions that led to the introduction of the CT-OVC scheme started in the run-up of the 2002 parliamentary elections, encouraged by a UNICEF-supported lobbying strategy (Pearson and Alviar 2009). In Ghana and Ethiopia, the scheme was launched a few months before general elections. Ghanaian President Mahama re-launched an expanded LEAP programme prior to the 2002 general elections with a promise that the benefit level would be tripled. In Lesotho, the OAP benefit value was increased every election year.

The recent acceleration in the development of Zambia' SCT suggests that having proposals for social transfers on political manifestos (frames for state-citizens relationships) may be more decisive than having them included in PRSPs (frames

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<sup>272</sup> An earlier version of this section appears in the UNRISD Working Paper No. 2015-3.

for state-donor relationships).<sup>273</sup> Social transfers were mentioned in a chapter on social protection of Zambia's Fifth National Development Plan 2006-2010 (second PRSP).<sup>274</sup> This, along with the creation of a budget line for social protection, represented the integration of social protection into national goals. But domestic funding levels stayed low. Then, a few years later, during the run-up to the 2011 general elections, commitment to the SCT scheme appeared in all the major political party manifestos (Harland 2014). Finally, this led the new government to drastically increase funding for the SCT scheme in 2014—much more than what had been planned in the National Development Plan.<sup>275</sup>

Social support appears crucial to the sustainability of a tax-based scheme. Increasingly, civil society representatives are invited to take part in policy consultation processes. But, Andrea Cornwall (2002) stresses, “[e]nhancing citizenship participation requires more than inviting or inducing people to participate. [...] [It] requires giving people access to information on which to base deliberation or to mobilise to assert their rights and demand accountability.” (p. 28) The prevailing technocratic, linear and economistic approach to policy making among development partners (Hickey 2009) has tended to give (international) technical experts the primary voice in the design of a scheme. In many cases, citizens (taxpayers or people in need of assistance) have played little to no role in the decision to opt for a social transfer policy, or in initial design choices. This may evolve in the future as the schemes become increasingly domestically funded and discussed in mass media and during election campaigns. In the meantime, donor-supported initiatives will possibly have engendered path dependency.

### **Limits from a rights-based perspective**

Financing and spending decisions associated with the introduction of a social transfer scheme may modify the extent and nature of state-society relations. Predictable transfers constitute a social contract that binds a state to its citizens; and introducing a new scheme can be seen as a means of extending this pact to vulnerable citizens (Hickey 2011). In countries with an existing social contract between the state and (sub-groups of) citizens, the challenge lies in sustaining the contract while including new beneficiaries and keeping costs down (Monchuk

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<sup>273</sup> The drastic change recently observed was also made possible by the coming to power, as Vice-President, of the spouse of a former UNICEF staff member who has been one of the main proponents of Zambia's SCT.

<sup>274</sup> The chapter was drafted by the Zambian Ministry of Community Development and Social Services with support from the GTZ and DFID.

<sup>275</sup> Zambia's dependency on foreign aid has reduced over the last decade due to economic growth and debt relief. The decision to increase funding for SCT occurred in a favourable economic context, yet marked by a large fiscal deficit (IMF 2014b; Whitworth 2012).

2014). In Lesotho, the introduction of the scheme at scale and the adoption of the Old Pensions Act within a few months after first payments were made elevated OAP benefits to the status of a right. The case of Lesotho's OAP shows the value of categorical targeting from a rights-based perspective. Eligibility criteria are clear and transparent. Pensions have fostered a sense of citizenship among beneficiaries by allowing them to contribute to their community; they are seen as an entitlement in the eyes of beneficiaries and other citizens (Pelham 2007).

Contrasting with the case of Lesotho's OAP, Ghana's LEAP design (largely developed during discussions between governments and donors around poverty reduction strategies) includes tight poverty-based targeting, conditionality, and a progressive rollout strategy. A rationing mechanism is used where beneficiaries are accepted until a given caseload that exhausts a fixed budget is reached—as opposed to an entitlement design, as is that of Lesotho's OAP, where any citizen meeting eligibility criteria can claim his/her benefits. The LEAP case illustrates options frequently promoted to make a scheme more affordable and politically acceptable, as well as to account for limited implementation capacities—options that include gradual expansion strategy, narrow eligibility criteria, limited enrolment campaigns, restrictive conditions, and absence of indexation for inflation. Such a cautious approach demonstrates policy makers' awareness that benefits provided within a social transfer scheme are not simple ad hoc handouts, that can be terminated any time, but that they are due to become *de facto* (if not *de jure*) entitlements in the eyes of beneficiaries. Still, while understandable in the context of low-income countries, such an approach does not (yet) support an entitlement design.

Of particular concern to governments is how to guarantee adequate resources in times of covariate shocks, such as macroeconomic crises or natural disasters. If social transfers are to efficiently protect those in need, larger budgets are required in times of crisis—when government revenues also tend to decrease—to increase caseload and/or benefits. Social protection spending in low-income countries has tended to expand in recent years (ILO 2014), but as Grosh et al. (2008) note, prospects for achieving sufficient countercyclical financing for social transfers (to adequately protect shock-affected populations) seem slim until social transfers are fully funded in stable times and volatility is lower than has recently been the case. While foreign aid can boost funding in times of crisis (as in the case of Zimbabwe's BEAM, for instance), a government could not rely on donors to meet the level of countercyclical financing required to ensure an entitlement design to a poverty-targeted scheme.

The rights-based perspective is at the core of the Social Protection Floor initiative, which advocates for the development of a “set of basic social rights, services and facilities that the global citizen should enjoy” (ILO and WHO 2009, p. 4). Signatories of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are committed to ensure the realisation of human rights to their “maximum available resources” (UNGA 1966, Art. 2). Measures need to be put in place to gradually improve the rights-based design of social transfer schemes, and eventually move towards social guarantees—for instance, following the concrete guidelines developed by Magdalena Sepúlveda and Carly Nyst (2012). In that respect, the recent initiative led by the ILO and the World Bank towards universal social protection represents a positive move. The joint statement they issued in June 2015 articulated their shared vision to advance the “integrated set of policies designed to ensure income security and support to all people across the life cycle—paying particular attention to the poor and the vulnerable” (ILO and World Bank 2015, p. 1). It was the first time the World Bank endorsed universal social protection as a primary development priority. With its neoliberal approach, strong emphasis on social risk management, and traditional preference for residual safety nets, this represents a major policy shift for the World Bank. This orientation was further confirmed in September 2016 with the launch of the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection, which marks a commitment by the ILO and the World Bank to “use their individual and collective resources and influence” to support “countries to design and implement universal and sustainable social protection systems” as part of efforts to implement the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (ILO and World Bank 2016, p. 5).

### **Risks of crowding out investment in other relevant social policies**

The prevailing emphasis on social cash transfers may generate a ‘rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul’ effect, with significant increase in domestic budgets for social cash transfers funded through a reduction in other pro-poor expenditures. In Zambia, Hickey et al. (2009) stress that over-focusing on social cash transfers distracted resources and attention from other viable social protection measures, such as the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme, without achieving (at least then) the goal of a national scale-up. In Ethiopia, the PSNP does contribute to counter failing agricultural policies, but Tom Lavers (2013) warns that a narrow focus on social transfers has distracted attention and resources away from deeper causes of poverty and marginalisation, such as the sensitive land issue. He questions whether the social transfer approach promoted in Ethiopia is genuinely tackling the power imbalances in society that encourage, create and sustain vulnerabilities, or whether it simply represents a mean of increasing consumption and basic welfare outcomes among the poorest, without significantly addressing the dynamics of marginalisation. Harland (2014)

makes a similar point in the case of Zambia's SCT. This underlines the importance for foreign aid actors of engaging better with the national politics around social protection and pro-poor spending issues, as well as understanding better (and addressing better) the power imbalances in society that create and sustain poverty and vulnerability.

Some authors, such as Jimí Adésínà (2010) and Bob Deacon (2010), have raised more fundamental questions around what they perceive as an hegemonic ideology behind aid actors' efforts to expand social protection systems in developing countries. They argue that, generally speaking, development partners' approaches to social transfers have built on the following paradigm: a strong focus on poverty reduction and on providing support to the poorest; a focus on risk and vulnerability; cash transfer as the policy instrument of choice; a preference for means-testing; and a disconnection between the social and the broader economic aspects of development policy making (Adésínà 2010; Barrientos 2010). Adésínà (2010) even denounces what he calls an "aggressive policy-merchandising" by development partners in the African context, and calls for a return to a "wider vision of society that embeds social policy with a wider development strategy" (p. 4). This critique points to the importance of conceptualizing social and economic policies in tandem, and to move away from approaches that target the poor exclusively towards more universal and integrative approaches.

## **7.2 Reflections on Aid Practices for National Ownership**

Seeking to prevent any perverse effects of aid for social protection and intensify its progressive effect requires taking a critical look at the mainstream practices and apparent trends of the sector. During interviews, several aid practitioners highlighted some of the damaging trends they observe in the international aid business. The emerging picture leads to a critique of the prevailing approach to policy making and management. In particular, it invites foreign aid agencies to refocus their efforts on the uptake of evidence—and not just their generation, to make sure they recruit, or equip, staff with the right skills and motivations, and to work much more broadly on ensuring national commitment to the expansion of social protection.

### **From evidence generation to knowledge uptake**

A notable feature of the prevailing approach to policy making is its evidence-driven nature, or aspiration. This is, of course, commendable in low-income countries; "if you are poor, actually you need more evidence before you invest, rather than if you are rich." (Director of the Tanzanian Council for Science and

Technology quoted in Oxman et al. 2010, p. 427) But, as Ben Taylor (2014) puts it, “evidence of [evidence-based policy] is far stronger than the evidence for it.” (p. 272) The evidence-based agenda reflects a linear approach to policy making, which “assumes that policymakers approach the issues rationally, going through each logical stage of the process, and carefully considering all relevant information. [...] There is much evidence to suggest that this model is far from reality.” (Sutton 1999, p. 9) Furthermore, donors seem to work with a double standard and have a double discourse. In Europe, social transfers did not start out of research. They got introduced, at scale, as a result of a contestation, and because decision-makers thought it was a good idea, compatible with the country culture. In sub-Saharan Africa, this visionary dimension tends to be eluded by the technocratic discourse of development partners articulated around ‘evidence base’ and ‘best practices.’ Yet, as underlined earlier, despite an apparently neutral evidence-base discourse, foreign aid actors themselves tend to show ideological positions and preferred models in line with their organisational culture.<sup>276</sup>

Through this double discourse, the politics of knowledge plays out. Some reported success stories tend to overstate the role of social transfers—such as, for instance, the role of *Bolsa Família* in poverty reduction in Brazil.<sup>277</sup> Idealised narratives then get relayed in various forms of briefing and learning materials drawing self-serving conclusions. The conflation of analysis and advocacy (Deacon and Stubbs 2013) incites development partners to commission research, or merely consultancy studies, with the aim to back up a preferred policy option with scientific evidence. But even if such a piece of research were found to have an impact, it would not necessarily mean that the resulting policy is evidence-informed. It may just mean that those disseminating the research have lobbied more effectively than others. Encouraging a genuine evidence-informed approach to policy making calls for a more systematic evaluation of the evidence base. It also requires looking at whether policy makers have the capacity and incentives to routinely consider a range of research evidence when they are making policy decisions.

While much attention has been paid to strengthening the supply of research information, there is also a need to ensure that policy makers and other users are able to demand and use research. The demand for research evidence is influenced both by policy makers’ incentives or motivations to use research and by their capacity to access, understand and use it (Newman et al. 2012). A research uptake strategy thus implies stakeholder engagement and capacity building (to support

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<sup>276</sup> This echoes, for instance, a study by Gliszczynski (2013) that identifies four social transfer policy models development actors have advocated globally.

<sup>277</sup> *Bolsa Família* is only one programme of a whole integrated strategy combining social and economic policies (Menezes et al. 2012).

both supply of and demand for research evidence)—along with communication, and monitoring and evaluation of uptake (DFID 2013b). Obviously, adopting a demand-driven approach to building and analysing the evidence base is more likely to support evidence-informed policy (Carden 2009; Miller and Samson 2012). But, in practice, the intended end-users (decision-makers, activists or citizens’ groups) tend to be left out of the research process, starting with the research agenda setting phase. Figure 7-1 illustrates the resulting situation whereby a large share of the evidence supplied does not respond to the practical needs of decision-makers, and there remain a huge unmet demand for evidence.



Source: Miller and Samson (2012, p. 16)

**Figure 7-1** A Demand-Driven Perspective on Evidence

In particular, there has been a severe lack of implementation research. Because the research agenda is largely set by development partners who need to demonstrate that what they do, or advocate for, have impact, the focus has been on evaluating impact more than processes. This focus on ‘what works’ has encouraged a silver bullet approach to public policy, and has distracted attention from critical implementation issues. Many pilot projects or experiments have been run under ‘ideal’ implementation circumstances, on a small scale and with the support of international organisations which capacity level tends to be higher than that of domestic institutions. The results of such experiments can only be of limited value to predict the impact of a scaled up national scheme operated under different implementation arrangements. Besides, as Angus Deaton (2010) stresses, learning about development requires investigating *mechanisms*. Research efforts should be more concerned with discovering *how* projects work rather than *whether* they work. In that regard, the hierarchy of evidence induced by the evidence-based policy discourse—with results drawn from randomised controlled-trials featuring at the top appears inadequate (Taylor 2014). Uncovering *why* social transfer schemes

work, or not, invite to adopt more participatory and qualitative research methods. It also calls for the inclusion of African researchers and indigenous knowledge in the design and implementation of research to allow “the examination of African reality from the perspective of the African and not with the African on the periphery.” (Owusu-Ansah and Mji 2013, p. 2)

But the fact that agendas for research in sub-Saharan Africa tend to be set by donors has not supported the emergence of an African voice around social protection issues. The production of research evidence on social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa, and social protection more generally, remains largely dominated by Western researchers. This is highly regrettable for having the domestic capacity to research and evaluate social transfer schemes appears critical for their full institutionalisation. But researchers in Africa continue to face many challenges, both in conducting research and ensuring the use of results (Owusu et al. 2014). While the number of universities has been increasing in the region, domestic funding for research remains limited, and with only a few exceptions, Northern actors have shown little interest for supporting the development of genuinely independent social science research centres in Africa (Olivier de Sardan 2012). Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan (2012) even identifies the “*excessive hegemony, in Africa, of social science consulting*” (p. 50) as a “major obstacle when it comes to developing social science research skills.” (p. 44) African researchers who engage regularly in (better paid) consultancy work tend to develop bad habits (such as, focusing on finding solutions rather than formulating a problem) and get distracted from doing real research.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, Frances Owusu-Ansah and Gubela Mji (2013) deplore, “[i]n the predominantly Western-oriented academic circles and investigations, the African voice is either side-lined or suppressed because indigenous knowledge and methods are often ignored or not taken seriously.” (p. 1) Valuing alternate ways of knowing and investigating consistent with the African worldview<sup>279</sup> would, however, encourage “cultural and social immersion as opposed to scientific distance in research” (p. 2) and ensure “the work is both empowering and meaningful for context-specific lasting impact.” (p. 1) In particular, adopting the Afrocentric methodology advanced by Molefi Kete Asante (1987, 2003) would support an emancipatory and participatory research, which values and includes indigenous knowledge and peoples, and can encourage effective civic engagement in policy making.

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<sup>278</sup> In turn, not having good research to make use of can bring down the quality of consulting itself.

<sup>279</sup> The spirit of the African worldview, as understood here, is captured in the Ubuntu philosophy, which can be defined as “the African ethic of community, co-humanness, unity, and harmony.” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2016, p. 31) Central to this worldview that is basically relational is the strong orientation to collective values and harmony rooted in a collective sense of responsibility (Mkabela 2005).

## Potential damaging effects of institutional pressure and staff incentives

Along with the evidence-based policy discourse, the results agenda has become ubiquitous among development partners in recent years. The adoption of results-based management in development cooperation was in large part a response to increasing pressure from the public in donor countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of aid. The change was introduced, as part of new public management, with the laudable objectives of transparency, accountability and improved development outcomes relative to investment. However, in practice, there has been a “tendency to translate the results management idea into formal or mechanistic models in contrast with analytic, adaptable and learning-oriented thinking.” (Vähämäki et al. 2011, p. 15) This has had the “impact of shifting power gradually up the chain away from those ‘doing development work’ in developing countries.” (Taylor 2013, p. 11) Practitioners interviewed in the course of this research concur to deplore an increasing institutional pressure to deliver quick results to the expense of national ownership and quality dialogue. In that context, respondent OR4 suggests, “the role of the local offices is to be able to [provide] intermediation [...] between the demands of headquarters and what is happening in the field.”

In particular, field staff would need to resist pressure to apply blueprints on the basis of ‘best practices’ drawn from other contexts, allow enough time for dialogue, and respect the timing of the government. Respondent OR3 emphasises, “a little less focus on the perfect and more focus on the implementable at scale could be really key.” This inevitably requires time and dialogue. Respondent OR2 underlines, if “your starting point would have to be what is sort of the accepted wisdom”—that is, the global experience and learning that has come about from Latin America and pioneering African countries, “the better programmes have a bit of dialogue so that they would be tailored to local circumstances.” But respondent OR2 regrets that this might not be the direction taken by the World Bank, for instance, which, he believes, “trades off a lot of quality by trying to compress timetables to put loans together [...] with less advanced preparation budget.” In echo, respondent OR4 stresses the necessity to “respect the timing of the government,”

this is one of the key issues because the government has a different way of dealing with issues and they take time, and we have to respect that. And we forget. [...] sometimes you have ideas on how we can implement this and that, and you think that, as it is very bold, it should be implemented immediately, forgetting that there are also other processes that demand

[government staff's] attention, and we are talking about six-seven people [whom we are asking] to do very different things.

Resisting the institutional pressure, and personal eagerness, to deliver quick results at the expense of teamwork and national ownership, requires determination and character. Too much institutional pressure can lead to discouragement. Respondent OR13 explains, "what was good about it was working in Rwanda with people who make things happen. What was frustrating was that we had to work very hard to have the opportunity to do that, just working within our own system."

The results agenda, with its panoply of logical frameworks, theories of change and value-for-money analyses, can discourage innovation. The new prominence of value for money, for instance, has encouraged a tendency towards simplicity in NGO interventions (Antinoja et al. 2011). Of course, funding may be a contributing factor. As respondent OR3 describes, "money has got tighter; and if money is tighter, then your opportunity to persuade somebody to give you money for a mad idea is more limited." However, in the end, respondent OR3 suggests, the capacity to innovate depends on individuals; innovation may

just [be] about who happens to be in what key positions at the moment. [...] I think dynamism does breed dynamism. So if you've got a couple of interesting people in a couple of organisations, then [...] that can start a series of conversations going. And you know, when the staff turns over, [...] at some point you can hit a critical point where there's just not enough people [*laugh*] who were being interesting or something.

But if innovation and successful development depends on having the right people with the right skills at the right time, respondent OR11 deploras a situation where "ultimately, there are few outstanding people" in the aid business today. As she sees it, the vast majority of people operate on the same model: they want to pursue a career, and so, they comply with the requirements of the institution. Doing better work, respondent OR11 suggests, would require people at technical level to have "the courage of their opinions, a common agenda, and a greater ability to have joint bargaining." She adds,

Ultimately, it is a bit more integrity. There is a lot of ethics and integrity in there, and I think that, often, in examples where quite remarkable things have been accomplished, we always find a small group of people who have a high level of technical expertise and a high degree of ethics, of integrity.

But an opposite trend is observed. Increasingly, especially in large donor agencies, staffs are primarily recruited on the basis of administrative management skills, and less on the basis of technical skills or genuine commitment to do real development work. Over the past decades, there has been a proliferation of policy work, at the expense of what is at the other end of the line, that is, work around the operationalization of programmes. A balance is to be found between the situation that prevailed in the past, where technicians were probably too focused on their own projects and lacked a political vision of the situation, and the current situation, where governance and public policy experts operate with too little technical substance—working on poverty reduction in Ethiopia, for instance, requires having some competencies in land issues and food security. Respondent OR11 concludes,

This is very worrying, because now what we have is the bureaucrats on one side, the academics on the other. There is also a lack of understanding of the organisational, logistical, well, operational problems, and for me it is a gap each time more obvious.

The pressure to respond to increasing administrative requirements can lead to the ‘freezing of thought,’ when people have no time to learn about other valuable experiences, or even just to lift their head up from the grindstone, pause and reflect on the overall picture. Interestingly, a recent study suggests that working in a foreign language, which is the case of many people in the sector, tends to make people’s moral judgments and decisions more utilitarian (Costa et al. 2014).<sup>280</sup> These two factors combine may have harmful effects.

### **From political commitment to system-wide commitment**

While simple techniques may be used to raise policy attention on an issue, policy attention does not always lead to action; and success in agenda setting and advocacy to senior policy makers does not guarantee success in other aspects of the policy process, such as capacity-building and implementation of effective actions at scale. David Pelletier and colleagues (2012) analyse that responses that only seek to address intellectual, knowledge or evidence issues are unlikely to succeed in building deeper political commitment (policy formulation) and broader system-wide commitment (for effective policy implementation). Rather, they advance that one approach for overcoming difficulties and disagreements in the policy-formulation process is to strengthen the ‘strategic capacity’ within the policy

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<sup>280</sup> A foreign language is likely to increase emotional distance, and reduces emotional reactivity, promoting cost-benefit considerations, leading to an increase in utilitarian judgments (Costa et al. 2014).

community, referring to the individual and institutional capacity to broker agreements, resolve conflicts, build relationships, respond to recurring challenges and opportunities, and undertake strategic communications. However, as this research has done, they note that such capacities have not yet received systematic attention. In addition, they stress that one of the reasons for the difficulties experienced at the later stage of the policy process (implementation) may be the lack of involvement in agenda-setting of the many mid-level actors that later would become involved in policy formulation and implementation.

Despite their importance to explain progress (or lack thereof) on development indicators, too little attention has been paid to implementation issues. However, disturbingly, Lant Pritchett and colleagues (2010) describe how the development system itself can push countries to consistently fail to acquire implementation capability. They identify two major mechanisms at play behind persistent implementation failure. First, they note that countries are encouraged to adopt the camouflage of organisational forms that are successful elsewhere (imported blueprints) to hide their actual dysfunction.<sup>281</sup> Second, they observe that unrealistic expectations in regard to the level and rate of improvement of capability leads to premature load bearing, which causes capability to weaken (if not collapse). Many countries are caught up in such “state capability traps.” In those contexts, a phenomenon of ‘state avoidance’ is often observed, whereby donors prefer working with international implementation partners (such as, United Nations agencies) for them to (hopefully) build the capacity of national counterparts<sup>282</sup>—even though, the competencies of such organisations to engage in social transfer work would, in many instances, be questionable. It can be argued that the current system and its results agenda encourages such an approach by inciting to ‘do the wrong thing right’—not working on building the capacity of national bodies but having international implementation agencies produce administrative reports on time, rather than risking to ‘do the right thing wrong’—working with national bodies and failing to disburse funds.

A related matter rarely tackled is that of the coherence in human resource policy between national organisations and aid-supported entities. Often, teams in charge of implementing social transfer schemes in low-income countries would be composed of civil servants (reallocated from other services) and consultants (hired by the World Bank, for instance). Such is the case in Ghana, where respondent OR7 comments, “[o]nce you build the structure and it works, anyway the government won’t make it collapse,” suggesting that the type of contract does not matter. But the difference in salary and conditions might. It may encourage civil servants to

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<sup>281</sup> This is referred to as ‘isomorphic mimicry’ (DiMaggio and Powell 1983 cited in Pritchett et al. 2010).

<sup>282</sup> For instance, respondent OR11 deplures, “[t]here is like a monopoly of UN agencies.”

resign and join the international development sector. Surely, this would not be such a problem if, then, other skilled persons could take over and demonstrate at least the same level of capacity within state organisations. But experience shows that this can be really problematic because not enough is invested in professional education to train the next (or even the current) generation of technicians and policy makers on subjects, such as non-contributory social protection, that are still relatively new. In that regard development partners' efforts remain patchy. In that area too, a conflation with advocacy can be observed. Short professional courses may be offered, but only on specific aspects promoted by foreign aid actors (such as, social cash transfers), or efforts may be limited on building the national capacity to deliver a given scheme. Only rarely would development partners support training programmes that promote a comprehensive approach to public policies.<sup>283</sup>

If considering social and economic policies in tandem appears crucially important (Section 7.1), this is rarely the case within aid organisations where a fragmented approach to policy making prevails. In interviews, many aid practitioners admitted not knowing exactly how the scheme they are working on, as technicians, is financed.<sup>284</sup> Or when they know what the main funding source is, they might not know why, for instance, a given social transfer scheme is financed through a loan and another through a grant. These aspects tend to be discussed by a different group of people. While data on technical features, efficiency and impact of major social transfer schemes is today relatively easy to find, information on funding arrangements is much more difficult to access. Yet, as underlined earlier, taking this into account is important when considering the financial sustainability of a scheme (Ulriksen 2013). Only recently did research institutes begin looking more closely into this, adopting an integrated approach to the study of taxation and social protection systems in developing countries.<sup>285</sup>

Previous critiques of aid actors' attempts to promote social transfers have encouraged a shift from a (pilot) project approach to a more systemic approach. This trend is now reflected in the strategic papers of several key actors (Section 2.1) and observed in several cases covered in this research (Section 4.2). However, how

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<sup>283</sup> In that respect, the two-week course on 'Social Policy for Development Planners' offered by the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) stands out as an exception.

<sup>284</sup> See questions focused on funding sources in the online survey (Appendix A.1, questions 16-19) and in the key informant discussion guide (Appendix A.4, question 6).

<sup>285</sup> See, for instance, the project of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on the "Politics of domestic resource mobilization for social development"—for more information, visit <http://www.unrisd.org/pdrm>, and the research project of the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) on "The economics and politics of taxation and social protection"—for more information, visit <http://www1.wider.unu.edu/tax4protection/home>.

to operationalize such a systemic approach to social protection in practice is not yet clear for development partners, who remain attached to their organisational agenda and, for some, ideological preferences. Moreover, Taylor (2014) provides a useful analysis of the current situation, showing that the evidence-based policy discourse and the results agenda, that continue to prevail among government and development policy makers, are incompatible with a systemic approach to development policy and programming. This research has touched on a few of these incompatibilities that notably concern pre-defined targets and variables, the utilisation of evidence (and the quest for universal silver bullets), the hierarchy of evidence, and value for money.

### **7.3 Additional Challenges Specific to Fragile Contexts: The Case of Sahelian West Africa**

To further illustrate and reflect on aid practices, we now turn to the case of a few Sahelian countries of West Africa where the challenges of expanding basic social protection have been exacerbated by protracted crises. This part of the developing world remains largely under-researched when it comes to social protection and social transfers. The region is lagging behind in terms of social protection extension. Until recently, donor investment in basic social protection had been limited, and there was not much to study. Additionally, non-contributory social protection, and social transfers in particular, has been a concept largely debated in and shaped by the Anglophone literature. It has not been a traditional area of study for Francophone researchers in the region,<sup>286</sup> and language has been a barrier for many international researchers to study the region. Recently, initiatives around social transfers have intensified in the Sahel and it is an interesting time to take a snapshot of the situation, seek to grasp in what direction current dynamics might lead, and draw insights into ways to improve aid practices towards the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries.

#### **A region in permanent crisis**

The Sahel is defined as the semi-arid belt of land located between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> parallels north. As Figure 7-2 shows, it stretches across the African continent. Since the early 1970s, the Sahel region has been subject to severe natural disasters, including repeated droughts that have caused widespread hunger and malnutrition. Over time, these crises have become more frequent and their impacts more extreme. Since 2008, their effects have compounded with those of deep

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<sup>286</sup> Traditionally, research has mainly focused on social health protection systems, and in particular, mutual health organisations and health fee exemption systems (Holmes and Lwanga-Ntale 2012).

economic shocks, including a steep increase in food and fuel prices, and the global financial crisis. In 2011-12, the political crises in Côte d’Ivoire and Libya forced hundreds of thousands of migrants to return to their homes, with these home communities then losing key sources of income while having to deal with increased pressure on the limited food supplies and services locally available. From early 2012, the conflict in Mali added massive internal displacements, led to an influx of refugees in its neighbouring countries, and exacerbated fears of political, social and economic instability in the region. This in turns has limited regional exchanges, frightened off investors, and diverted political attention and resources towards fighting insecurity, rather than tackling on the root causes of poverty and vulnerability (Fallavier 2014).



Source: Harvest Choice (2013).

**Figure 7-2** Dryland Regions of Sub-Saharan Africa

In West Africa, the Sahel is not only an ecoclimatic and biogeographic zone; it is also a geopolitical entity. In 1973, several countries that were becoming interdependent formed the permanent interstates committee for drought control in the Sahel (*Comité permanent inter-États de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel*, CILSS). Many are also Member States of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) and/or the West African Economic and Monetary Union (*Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine*, UEMOA). These three regional entities are at the centre of the regional food crisis prevention network (*Réseau de prévention des crises alimentaires*, RPCA) created in 1984, which is a unique platform in Africa that brings together Sahelian and West African governments, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, humanitarian actors, agricultural professional organisations, civil society and the private sector, as well as regional and international information systems.<sup>287</sup>

Social transfers are still a relatively new topic within these organisations, but one that has received increasing attention in the past years—UEMOA’s social protection work has largely focused on health coverage issues; ECOWAS has only recently engaged in social transfers, mainly through aid-funded initiatives; and the set of instruments for food crisis management listed by the RPCA (2013) includes tools commonly used as social transfers. At the regional level, the impetus for social transfers has primarily come from the food security sector. Late 2012, under the impulse of the European Commission, RPCA members formed the Global Alliance for Resilience (*Alliance globale pour la résilience*, AGIR) in the Sahel and West Africa with the objective to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030.<sup>288</sup> The AGIR roadmap adopted in 2013 reflects an integrated approach articulated around four pillars, the first of which specifically aims to “improve social protection for the most vulnerable households and communities in order to secure their livelihoods” (ECOWAS et al. 2013). Breaking with the past, the intention with the AGIR process was to bring together the expertise of the humanitarian and development spheres, and to mobilise in a unified approach the available resources for social protection and livelihoods, nutrition, maternal and child health, agricultural development, and natural resources management in order to support the most vulnerable populations specifically. In practice, however, the vital equal approach to all four AGIR pillars has been hampered by conservative approaches to food production (pillar 3) rather than nutrition security, which includes social protection (pillar 1) and health (pillar 2). One challenge ahead is to ensure all pillars, including social

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<sup>287</sup> For more information on the RPCA, visit <http://www.oecd.org/site/rpca/>.

<sup>288</sup> See Eijkenaar (2015) for an account of AGIR’s genesis and early development, and for more information on AGIR, visit <http://www.oecd.org/site/rpca/agir/>.

protection and social transfers in particular, receive equal and well-coordinated support from a modern food and nutrition security point of view (Eijkenaar 2015).

This requires a change of mindset for decision-makers to recognise that the face of poverty in the Sahel has changed over the last decades (Cherrier 2012a). Despite being one of the world's top agricultural performers, the region nonetheless suffers from unacceptable levels of chronic food and nutritional insecurity (OECD/SWAC 2013). In rural areas, the poorest households are now excluded from the productive circles, and inequalities are on the rise. Year after year, mainly due to a lack of financial means, nearly half the rural population is affected by structural food and nutrition insecurity and excluded from healthcare. Repeated drought episodes, conflicts and population displacement, as well as economic and financial shocks and epidemics generate acute-on-chronic crisis peaks. Tackling the root causes of this chronic crisis necessitates new approaches and instruments. AGIR has provided a useful conceptual framework; however, operationalizing this integrated approach remains a major challenge, including that of expanding basic social protection in remote areas.

### **Nascent initiatives towards national social transfer systems**

The Sahel region of West Africa is one of the last regions of sub-Saharan Africa to engage in the consolidation of social protection systems to support most vulnerable households. For long, social protection has been limited to a few areas of social insurance (some health, accident and pension benefits) that merely covered civil servants and a limited number of workers in the formal economy, to which were added a few measures for the chronically vulnerable (such as, the disabled, orphans and the destitute) that were often of limited reach, inefficient, fragmented, and uncoordinated.<sup>289</sup> Following the series of crises that hit the region since 2008, foreign aid actors (particularly, the World Bank, UNICEF, the ILO, as well as ECHO and the WFP) started intensifying their efforts towards the expansion of basic social protection, particularly in the form of scaled-up multi-year social transfer schemes.<sup>290</sup> A few years later, most countries of the region have adopted a national social protection strategy. Several of them have committed to progressively deploy nationwide permanent social transfer schemes—such as, for instance, *Jigisèmèjiri* in Mali, the *Bourses de sécurité familiale* in Senegal, or the *Projet*

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<sup>289</sup> For instance, in Mali, the budget allocated to social transfers in 2009 corresponded to only 0.5 per cent of GDP, when about 27 per cent of population was food insecure (Cherrier et al. 2011b). In Burkina Faso, spending on social transfers, excluding fuel subsidies, constituted only 0.9 per cent of GDP in 2009, while 20 per cent of the population was food insecure. Universal fuel subsidies were very expensive (0.7 per cent of GDP in 2007) and had little impact on the poorest. Most of the financing for social transfers has come from external and ad hoc resources (Cherrier et al. 2011a).

<sup>290</sup> See, for instance, Cherrier (2012a), Fallavier (2014), and Holmes and Brauhnoltz-Speight (2009).

*filets sociaux* within the 3N (*les Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens*) initiative in Niger. These schemes are still in their infancy, their scope is limited, and the capacity of implementing bodies is weak, but the political will to establish them at scale, over time, seems assured.

In the absence of scaled-up and effective national social assistance mechanisms, it is for humanitarian actors to meet the needs of people most severely affected by food and nutrition insecurity. The prevalence of acute malnutrition in the region is constantly over emergency thresholds;<sup>291</sup> chronic malnutrition is also widespread and severe—affecting an estimated 40 per cent of children under five, half of them in a severe form. Thus, each year, ECHO, for instance, provides food assistance to over 1.5 million people through UN and NGO partners. This large humanitarian donor has been encouraging the use of cash transfers in the Sahel as a more cost-effective instrument. In recent years, it has also worked on the harmonisation of cash-based approaches used by its partners to provide food assistance and build resilience (such as, in Niger and northern Mali).<sup>292</sup> This was motivated by the recognition that the crisis is chronic and calls for multi-annual assistance. It is also a modest attempt to come up with a model of ‘seasonal safety net’ that could be handed over to the national authorities. Indeed, taking care, year after year, of what are de facto chronic caseloads is putting high pressure on the humanitarian system. Rationalising mechanisms to provide regular and predictable transfers to chronically and seasonally food insecure people is expected to result in greater effectiveness and cost-efficiency—and thus a better use of foreign aid funds.<sup>293</sup>

Today, with nascent initiatives towards national social transfer systems, there is a window of opportunity for recurrent humanitarian assistance to be progressively handed over to Sahel governments with support from development partners. This could help address some of the ‘anomalies’ currently observed, namely: a shift in responsibility from state to humanitarian actors for the assistance of populations in chronic vulnerability; a high dependence among vulnerable populations and governments on humanitarian aid, which shows clear limitations in terms of predictability (very short rounds of funding) and accountability (towards state authorities and citizens); and the existence of parallel safety net initiatives—those run by humanitarian actors on one hand, and those run by state actors on the other

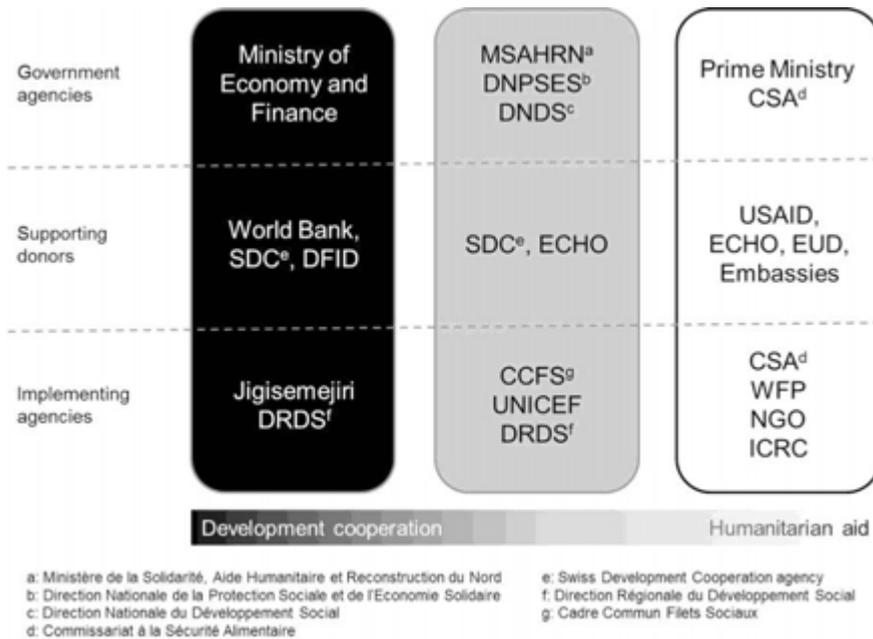
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<sup>291</sup> According to the World Health Organisation, when the prevalence of acute malnutrition in children 6-to-59-months-old is greater than 10 per cent the nutrition situation of children is considered serious; when it is greater than 15 per cent the nutrition situation of children is considered critical.

<sup>292</sup> See, for instance, Boulardot (2014), Goldmann (2015) and Gruffat (2015) on the experience of the *Cadre commun sur les filets sociaux saisonniers* in northern Mali.

<sup>293</sup> Ethiopia’s PSNP, today the largest social transfer scheme in sub-Saharan Africa, is estimated to be about one third the cost of previous humanitarian interventions.

(Cherrier 2014a). For instance, since 2012, three parallel social transfer mechanisms targeting households vulnerable to food insecurity have developed in Mali. As summarised in Figure 7-3, they are anchored in different ministries and implemented by different agencies although at times supported by the same donors (Bernard and La Rosa 2015).



Source: Bernard and La Rosa (2015).

**Figure 7-3** Three Parallel Social Transfer Mechanisms in Development in Mali

The proliferation of policy and institutional frameworks is certainly not new in the region. In Mali specifically, a review of social transfer schemes conducted in 2010 had already flagged that the various strategic documents around social protection and social development were inconsistent in terms of priority groups and instruments, and seemed disjointed (Cherrier et al. 2011b). Earlier, a general study on aid in Mali had concluded that, as donors’ influence over policy increased, the government’s capacity and will to take the lead in managing aid has decreased (Bergamaschi 2008). This leaves some latitude for aid actors to somehow proceed with their own agenda, with the consequence that some national measures tend to be framed by the mandate of the development partner supporting them. Thus, a pattern already highlighted above is observed in the Sahel. Although the different aid actors engaged in the provision of social transfers acknowledge that there cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” approach (EC 2012, p. 6; UNICEF 2012, p. 23; WFP

2013, p. 7; World Bank 2012, p. xii), each tends to promote a specific approach to social assistance: public works and poverty-targeted cash transfers for the World Bank; child-focused cash transfers for UNICEF; food insecurity-targeted cash transfers for ECHO; and food transfers and vouchers for the WFP.

But even for ECHO and the World Bank who both demonstrate a residual approach to social transfers, their approaches may not reconcile. The debate has crystallised around the thorny question of targeting. The World Bank has promoted the use of proxy means tests (PMT)— on its own or coupled with community-based targeting, while, in the Sahel, ECHO has been encouraging the use of the household economy approach (HEA).<sup>294</sup> Both approaches aim to identify the poorest, but they conceptualise poverty differently (Boulinaud 2014). In Niger, preliminary comparative studies found little overlap between households identified through the HEA and those identified through the World Bank’s PMT. This question is vital, and more empirical studies are envisioned in several Sahelian countries. Indeed, as part of efforts to consolidate national social transfer systems, several countries have engaged, with World Bank’s support in particular, in the establishment of a unified registry that would record all beneficiary and/or vulnerable households and individuals.

### **Outstanding critical issues in the expansion of basic social protection**

In the Sahel, humanitarian action is increasingly substituting for failures of governments and their development partners to respond to a crisis that has become chronic. This is soaking up an important share of scarce humanitarian resources, and the humanitarian system is today ill equipped to provide the type of multi-year and predictable response that such a situation requires. A paradigm shift is needed so that regular seasonal crises are no longer perceived as incidents that interrupt the implementation of development work, but as a structural element of the Sahelian context to be accounted for in public policies and programmes. Accompanying, in the long term, a progressive transfer of caseload from humanitarian actors to state actors (and their development partners) is a major challenge ahead. This has led to the recent introduction of the concept of “adaptive social protection” in the Sahel, a new integrated approach that can help address the challenges of adaptation and climate risk management (Vincent and Cull 2012) “by establishing national level systems that will build the resilience of

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<sup>294</sup> It is worth noting that the HEA was initially conceived as a livelihood analysis tool and was not envisioned as a targeting instrument. For more information on the HEA, visit <http://www.hea-sahel.org/>.

vulnerable populations and can be scaled in a time of crisis” (DFID 2013a, p. 4).<sup>295</sup> Having such systems in place may allow (less expensive) interventions earlier in a crisis, as well as more predictable and reliable social protection benefits.

However, building effective adaptive social protection systems in the Sahel will take years if not decades. Many Sahelian states feature in the list of the least developed countries; national institutions tend to be weak, and the absorption capacity is limited. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands food insecure people will continue to require assistance. On one hand, pushing national schemes to be more responsiveness presents the risk of overloading yet immature systems—asking them to run before they can walk. On the other hand, having well-developed humanitarian systems presents the risk of undermining state institutions in charge of social assistance. Realistically, state-led social transfer schemes and humanitarian assistance will continue to co-exist for years/decades to come. A promising avenue may thus be to deliberately envision the consolidation of a hybrid system, which would be state-led but include flexible elements funded and delivered by international (humanitarian) actors. This, of course, poses numerous critical questions—for instance, around potential tensions between approaches to long-term social protection and humanitarian principles in setting benefit levels, or around the ability of humanitarian actors to contribute to building the capacity of (local) state actors.

Poverty-targeted cash transfers have become a popular instrument among humanitarian and social protection actors. They have been central to the debate around the expansion of basic social protection in the Sahel. A residual safety net approach responds to the ambition, under budget constraints, to reach those most in need. It also responds to the institutional agenda of reducing poverty and food insecurity as measured at the household level. The suitability of the approach, though, is based on a number of tacit assumptions that may not fully hold in the socio-cultural context of the Sahel. Even before cash transfers, the pertinence of tight household targeting within rural Sahelian communities was questioned. It is not uncommon to observe a phenomenon of redistribution, often on equal terms, following targeted food distribution. The poor are not a small minority marginalised and neglected; they represent, on the contrary, a large share of the population—often 50-60 per cent of the national population, and 70-90 per cent of the communities most affected by food insecurity. Unlike other regions of the

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<sup>295</sup> A multi-donor trust fund has been set up to support adaptive social protection in the Sahel. The World Bank is to manage the trust fund for a period of about four years—until December 2017. DFID has committed to provide GB£43 million, but more donors may come on board during implementation (DFID 2013a).

world, the wealth distribution curve is quite flat for the first three or four quintiles.<sup>296</sup>

The very concept of household, as promoted by household surveys, may be at odds with the socio-economic and cultural background of some Sahelian communities. A household may be defined as ‘the group of people who live together and share food from a common pot’ (a polygamist household, for instance), but it may differ from the entity within which resources are shared for other expenses, such as health-related costs (a wife and her children, for instance). In Mauritania, a study reveals how the challenge of understanding household economy is further complicated by seasonal mobility (Cartiaux 2013). The focus on reducing extreme (monetary) poverty at the household level may, itself, be at odds with the relational nature of the Sahelian culture, which places great value on social cohesion. In Niger, an anthropological study reports evidence of adverse effects of targeted cash transfers on communities that are attributed to a lack of accountability within traditional structures and could result in conflict (Olivier de Sardan 2013; Olivier de Sardan et al. 2014). A study in Mauritania also reveals the level of mistrust between national stakeholders and foreign aid actors (Broudic and Selmane 2015).

Besides household poverty and food insecurity, a major challenge for the region is that of addressing widespread child malnutrition. Despite a convincing theory of change (Freeland and Cherrier 2012, 2015), the huge potential for social transfers to contribute to reducing childhood undernutrition has yet to be unleashed (Leroy et al. 2009). This requires going one step further by focusing explicitly on the final individual level, and taking into account more clearly all the underlying causes of undernutrition—that is, access to food, but also health care, water and sanitation, and care practices, and their respective basic causes. It necessitates conceiving social transfers within integrated strategies aimed at tackling child malnutrition. Various types of social transfers may be considered (Cherrier 2012b), most of which have been implemented in the Sahel—including health fee exemptions for young children and pregnant and lactating women and/or the indigents (Ridde and Olivier de Sardan 2013). Remarkably, the theme of the annual RPCA meeting to be held in December 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria will be ‘nutrition and social protection’ (RPCA 2015).

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<sup>296</sup> Similarly, under-five mortality rates, for instance, would often be almost identical for the three-four wealth quintiles, and only drop for the wealthier quintile.

## 7.4 Reinventing Aid for Social Protection

The case of the Sahel illustrates the growing complexity of expanding basic social protection in low-income countries. It involves a multiplicity of actors, working at different levels (global, regional, national and sub-national) and in different interlinked domains. In such a context, what should and could be the role of foreign aid actors in the future? Today, the development aid architecture, dominated by Northern-funded and -controlled development institutions, appears ill designed and equipped to navigate such a degree of complexity. The fragmented and technocratic nature of the dominant approach to policy making has perverse effects on the scale and sustainability of development outcomes. An alternative must be sought, one that would continue to emphasise results delivery and accountability, but in a way that would allow for flexibility, encourage innovation and, ultimately, kick off and support national social contracts towards inclusive and sustainable social protection.

### Going back to the *essence* of social protection

This research has shown that foreign aid actors can have a positive role in the emergence of scaled-up, permanent and nationally owned social transfer schemes (Section 4.4). Yet, this might be at the expense of more inclusive and transformative development (Section 7.1). What is seen as a success by a development actor (in terms of encouraging the emergence of social cash transfers, for instance) may be perceived as a failure from the viewpoint of ordinary community members (in terms of social cohesion, for instance) (Section 7.3). What has happened is that many foreign aid actors have become too prescriptive in terms of types of instrument to adopt for expanding basic social protection. Since the topic has gained momentum in development work, the dynamic around social protection policy making in low-income countries has been mainly one of policy transfer and adaptation (in a top-down dynamic, as observed in schemes with Type-III origins), rather than one of pragmatic policy formulation building on a country's history of social policy (in a more bottom-up dynamic, as witnessed in schemes with Type-II origins) (Section 4.2). Abuse of terms, and conflation of (basic) social protection and social (cash) transfers (that is, the objective or function, and a specific type of instrument) has become extremely frequent. Likewise, the term 'universal social protection' would often be used to mean 'universal (or categorical) social transfers,' that is, benefits to all citizens (or category of citizens) without a test of means. Conversely, abuses of the term 'safety net' has led some aid actors to present the resource transfers they provide as an accomplished form of social protection, even in the absence of predictability or guarantee (Freeland 2012).

It would be sensible for foreign aid actors to return to the primary function of social protection, as encouraged by the ILO Recommendation 202, and consider the many different (funding and delivery) alternatives to ensure that all people at all times have physical and economic access to essential goods and services in a given low-income country context. This would also mean going back to the essence of evidence-based policy making—that is, reviewing the evidence base systematically to compare a range of alternatives, rather than solely compiling supporting evidence to back up a given preferred option. It would imply considering different types of instrument, and not restricting policy debates to one specific instrument (such as cash transfers) or even one set of instruments (such as social safety nets or non-contributory social transfers). Likewise, it would invite to consider a range of potential providers, beyond state actors and their traditional social protection partners. As suggested in Section 7.3, in context where indicators regularly exceed the humanitarian intervention thresholds, it makes sense to envision hybrid systems, which encompass state, humanitarian, private and community actors, and embrace different levels or stages of formality (Box 7-1). This makes the case, inter alia, for better linking informal and formal social protection systems (Devereux and Getu 2013).

#### **Box 7-1** Levels of Formality of Social Protection

We draw the following distinction between formal, semi-formal and informal social protection:

- *Formal social protection* refers to mechanisms overseen (legislated) by the state, whether or not directly delivered by state agencies. Formal social protection schemes have institutional arrangements, rules and regulations and accountability mechanisms.
- At the other end of the spectrum, *informal social protection* refers to mechanisms delivered by extended families and communities, also referred to as traditional solidarity networks, which continue to provide the first source of support in case of shocks in many communities.
- The intermediate category of *semi-formal social protection* refers to mechanisms that are not publicly provided but have demonstrated that they can operate as institutions with accountability mechanisms. That category includes:
  - Local/indigenous mutual support systems/institutions that operate with accountability mechanisms, such as burial societies that are financed by member contributions;
  - Humanitarian assistance that is financed by foreign aid for relief and recovery, such as emergency cash transfers, food aid or livelihood-based transfers for recovery.

Source: Author, building on Devereux and Getu (2013).

Institutional issues, however, may prevent such an approach. Implementing partners (UN and NGOs) would often be constrained by their organisational mandate—for instance, the WFP would only consider food-related instruments; and because they compete for resources, they would often seek to demonstrate that

their traditional approach contributes to social protection—thus, starting with the instrument and not the objective. Even in donor agencies, many instruments that could be considered to expand basic social protection would not be part of the portfolio of social protection specialists—for instance, health fee waivers would tend to be dealt with by health specialists/departments, while food reserves would tend to be discussed by agriculture specialists.

### **Accompanying co-learning processes**

The imperative to link humanitarian and development interventions is gaining momentum because of the significant increase in the number and severity of disasters over the past few years, with significant losses and reversals in development gains.<sup>297</sup> In fragile environments, the resilience agenda invites to adopt a pragmatic, rather than dogmatic, approach (Levine and Mosel 2014). In that respect, learning from and building on informal and semi-formal social protection mechanisms—that is, local practices and cultural norms around reciprocity and mutual support (Devereux and Getu 2013), and humanitarian assistance (Bailey et al. 2011), could help strengthen formal social protection mechanisms. Insights from the global experience in formal social protection can help begin a policy discussion, but experiences in low-income countries and fragile and conflict-affected states are limited, and learning from middle-income countries has limited transferability. In addition, any lessons learned from past experiences in a given fragile context will be of limited use in regard to future challenges—the situation will continue to evolve and new vulnerabilities will emerge. This calls for innovative solutions to be created. Looking backward will only have limited value to do so, and could even encourage people to think inside the box—when, in the words of Peter Senge (2006), “[t]oday’s problems come from yesterday’s solutions.” (p. 57) It is thus important to allow policy dialogue “to be a process over time, and a process of learning over time,” and be less prescriptive about how a scheme should be designed (respondent OR12).

For foreign aid actors and their experts, this means refraining from turning any case of policy innovation into a guidance note. It implies describing innovations without intending to prescribe what policy makers should adopt to get certain outcomes, that is, it entails encouraging learning by analogy from particular cases and stories (Bevir 2013). In other words, “[e]vidence needs to be redefined as a means of assessing approaches to development so that lessons can be learned and adapted to different contexts rather than a means of assessing which tool should be applied universally.” (Taylor 2014, p. 283) Furthermore, enabling citizens to

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<sup>297</sup> It was high on the agenda of the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2016—see Core responsibility four in WHS (2016).

become active participants in policy making requires taking into account different forms of evidence, such as narratives (Epstein et al. 2014) and oral traditions (Owusu-Ansah and Mji 2013). It also necessitates a genuine change in attitude on the part of foreign aid actors operating in the social protection field, where economic thinking has tended to dominate debates, for them to acknowledge that there is much to learn from other disciplines (such as anthropology and agricultural sciences), as well as ordinary citizens.

Adopting such a process-focused approach to evidence-informed policy remains a challenge for the development aid system as it operates today. Accompanying an inclusive policy dialogue necessitates organisations to allow sufficient time for this and enough latitude for their country teams to work collaboratively—in a bottom-up rather than top-down dynamic. But, maybe more importantly, it also demands being comfortable with uncertainty. Experts have to hold back from providing the answers, and instead become facilitators. One has to accept that the outcome of such a process is an unspecified one. However, as noted above, there are clear incompatibilities between how evidence-based policy and results agenda are currently realised in development and the parallel trend towards a systemic approach (Taylor 2014). Adopting iterative, collaborative and adaptive processes of evaluation “remain rare and rely on courageous individuals within donors to advocate for their employment in the face of normative voices within their organization.” (Taylor 2014, pp. 282-283)

### ***Embracing complexity***

Today, the mantra in aid for social protection is to encourage a systems approach to social protection.<sup>298</sup> This entails a departure from support to individual schemes towards efforts to support initiatives that aim to merge, bridge, or coordinate schemes. In many countries, this has meant, for instance, supporting the establishment of single registries to connect different social transfer schemes,<sup>299</sup> and possibly later link them up to contributory schemes too. But adopting a systems approach also implies strengthening the links with other economic and social policies. How to proceed to do this in practice, though, remains unclear to many field practitioners. The level of complexity just seems too high. The standard reaction would then be to seek to understand the whole system through an analysis of its discrete parts. Such a reductionist approach lies on a number of assumptions, notably that: the system is ordered and its parts can reveal the whole;

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<sup>298</sup> This aspiration is made explicit in the strategic documents of some major aid actors in social protection (EC 2012; UNICEF 2012; World Bank 2012); the trend is also observed in a few cases presented in Chapter 4.

<sup>299</sup> Such is the case, for instance, in most Sahelian countries of West Africa (Section 7.3).

relationships are linear, and change is predictable through simple cause-to-effect reactions; human behaviour is rational and can be anticipated. The reality is quite different. Complex systems are more than, and different to, their parts, and are to be approached like dynamic ecosystems.<sup>300</sup> Table 7-1 contrasts the new perspectives brought by complexity science with the conventional thinking prevailing in the aid system.

**Table 7-1** Conventional and Alternative Approaches

	<b>Conventional aid thinking</b>	<b>New perspectives</b>
<b>Systems and problems</b>	Systems and problems are closed, static, linear systems; reductionist—parts would reveal the whole	Systems are open, dynamic, non-linear systems far from equilibrium. Macro patterns emerge from micro behaviours and interactions
<b>Human agency</b>	Individuals use rational deduction; behaviour and action can be specified from top down; perfect knowledge of future outcomes is possible	Heterogeneous agents that mix deductive/inductive decisions, are subject to errors and biases, and which learn, adapt, self-organize and co-evolve over time
<b>Social structures</b>	Formal relations between actors are most important; relationships are ahistorical and can be designed; actors can be treated as independent and atomized	Interpersonal relationships and interactions matter in form of culture, ties, values, beliefs, peers. Informal matters, relationships are path dependent and historical
<b>The nature of change</b>	Change is direct result of actions; proportional, additive and predictable; can hold things constant; simple cause and effect	Change is non-linear, unpredictable, with phase transitions

Source: Ramalingam (2013, p. 142), adapted from Beinhocker (2006).

The mainstream approach to policy making may be appropriate to tackle simple issues, and may help address complicated ones, but it appears inadequate to address complex issues.<sup>301</sup> Tools like theory of change, logical frameworks and best practices reflect a linear model biased towards “puzzle solving” that ignores the messy nature of systems (Ackoff 1974 cited in Ramalingam and Jones 2008, p. 11). On the ground, aid practitioners know only too well that policy-making is a “living process” (respondent OR4), and that “doing this work is very messy. There aren’t right answers and one frequently doesn’t even manage to get to the best

<sup>300</sup> See, for instance, Meadows (2008), Ramalingam (2013), and Senge (2006).

<sup>301</sup> Simply put, a simple puzzle would be baking a cake (the recipe is essential), a complicated problem would be sending a rocket to the moon (coordinated expertise is required), and a complex mess would be raising a child (the contours of the ‘task’ are not clearly defined, and every child is unique) (Ramalingam 2008).

compromise.” (respondent OR3) Embracing complexity is about being humble and resisting the temptation to pretend one has control over the course of things. In the words of Donella Meadows (2008), “[w]e can’t control systems or figure them out. But we can dance with them!” (p. 170) It necessitates being willing to engage in a real dialogue with others and prepared to be challenged. This demands cultivating an “open mind, open heart, open will” (Scharmer 2009). Considering how change happens in complex systems, William O’Brien advances, “[t]he success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.” (cited in Scharmer 2009, p. 27) It is not only *what* leaders do and *how* they do it but the inner place from which they operate—the source and quality of their attention.

There can be no blueprint on how to navigate complexity, but various proven tools exist that can help practitioners ‘dance’ with complex systems. Different hard and soft technologies, from digital real-time data to participatory methods, can support adaptive programmes and policies. A systemic approach implies a fundamental mind shift. Instead of having a group of researchers or experts attempting to understand the system, figure out what needs to be changed, and formulate recommendations for other people to make those desired changes, in a systemic approach, tools are designed to help the system see itself, and correct itself in an organic manner—just like a person would adjust her collar in front of a mirror. Instigating change is therefore about leading actors of a system into co-learning journeys for profound innovation and transformation. The ‘U-process’ exemplifies how complexity concepts can be put in practice, and how such journeys can look like. This social technology is based on five movements: 1. *Co-initiating*: uncover common intent (listen to others and to what life calls you to do); 2. *Co-sensing*: observe, observe, observe (connect with diverse people and places to sense the system from the whole); 3. *Co-inspiring*: connect to the source of inspiration and will (retreat and reflect, allow the inner knowing to emerge); 4. *Co-creating*: prototype the new (in living examples to explore the future by doing); 5. *Co-evolving*: institutionalise the new in practices (by linking micro, meso and macro change) (Scharmer 2009; Scharmer and Käufer 2013).<sup>302</sup> This process offers a simple framework for navigating complexity, a framework within which many different tools can be integrated. It invites to tap into alternative ways of knowing, including intuition and collective intelligence. It is essentially about learning how to sense and actualize emerging future possibilities rather than reacting to (and thereby perpetuating) patterns of the past (Scharmer and Käufer 2013).

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<sup>302</sup> The U-Process has been applied in sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, to reform the maternal health system in Namibia (Synergos 2015) and transform agriculture in Ethiopia (Presencing Institute 2015).

Of course, more work is still needed in this area. The systemic approach represents a major challenge to the current aid architecture and mainstream practices. Rather than seeking “solutions *for* problems,” it implies looking for “approaches *to* problems” (Ramalingam 2008), and Ben Ramalingam (cited in Green 2013) to note: “[w]e in the aid should move from being people who know the answers to people who know what questions to ask.” Systems thinking also requires opening up to the larger evidence ecosystem—that is, not restricting learning to scientific evidence produced by experts. It invites to observe and listen to the system to “identify the spaces where change is already happening and try to encourage and nurture them.” (Ramalingam 2013, p. 257) For foreign aid practitioners committed to support change, this means adopting a humble posture and being dedicated to playing a catalytic role in the evolution of ideas and practices rather than pushing pre-defined models. It is about experimentation and constant, ongoing learning and adaptation. That is, it is about prototyping and not about running pilot projects. Typically, pilot projects are introduced to prove that an approach works; they are implemented in a visible, controlled and ordered fashion. Conversely, the mantra of prototyping is to “[f]ail early to learn quickly” (Dave Kelly cited in Scharmer 2009, p. 114). It allows testing a concept before it has been fully worked out. As such, a prototype is a small, rapid and iterative initiative, which is fully owned by the various stakeholders of a system, including ordinary citizens (who then have a space to contribute their own knowledge), rather than led by external researchers. Table 7-2 further details the seemingly subtle yet fundamental differences between a pilot and a prototype. Hence, the application of a systemic approach, as exemplified in the U-process with its co-creating movement, allows hitting three targets with one shot. It provides an inclusive *analysis* of a system; it builds the *capacity* of system actors by empowering them to find their own solutions; and it results in immediate *action*.

**Table 7-2** Pilot vs. Prototype

	<b>Pilot</b>	<b>Prototype</b>
<b>Intention</b>	Test a pre-defined approach works (proposed solution)	Nurture an initial rough idea (incomplete approach)
<b>Mantra</b>	Succeed to prove the approach works	Fail early to learn quickly
<b>Feedback loop</b>	Phased, sequenced	Rapid, iterative
<b>Implementation</b>	Phased, careful rollout of a pre-defined plan	Series of small experiments successively defined along the way
<b>Actors</b>	Led by actors external to the system	Owned by system’s stakeholders
<b>Results</b>	Only outcomes are important	Learning and outcomes matter

Source: Author, building on Scharmer (2005).

Currently, however, pressures such as linear planning, donor requirements and hierarchical relationships get in the way of systems thinking, and impede the ability of aid actors to have transformational impact (Bowman et al. 2015). Given the resistance to change in the power dynamics of aid, and arguably among national policy makers, real-world applications of systems thinking may continue to be marginal and outside the mainstream of aid policy and practice (Ramalingam 2008). Still, interest in systems thinking is growing in the aid sector, and the field initiatives that are multiplying contribute to building the global knowledge base on complex adaptive systems. Experience sharing and learning in this area happens primarily through telling stories and working by analogy. These pioneering experiences could “lead to the development of a more pragmatic and less positivist best-practice standard for results measurement in systemic change programmes” (Taylor 2014, p. 282). They might also contribute to develop the individual, institutional and political *courage* to face up to the implications of complexity.

### *Concluding remarks*

In this chapter, we have examined the role of foreign aid actors in the emergence of social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa from three perspectives: reflecting on the experiences of the *past*, mainly from East and Southern Africa; considering the *present* situation in the Sahel of West Africa; and contemplating how aid for social protection could look like in the *future*. What conclusions can be drawn from all this? Seven points stand out:

- *Catalytic or catastrophic?* Aid for social transfers can have a positive effect towards the institutionalisation of social transfers—as uncovered in this research. Several scholars, however, have raised concerns that this may occur at the expense of more profound transformational change, and may possibly come with negative effects—for instance, on social cohesion. This needs more research and policy attention.
- *Accelerator or break on innovation?* The dominant evidence-based policy discourse has encouraged a focus on measurable outcomes and ‘proven’ policy models. The recent enthusiasm for ex-ante cost-benefit analyses to accelerate policy uptake presents the risk of encouraging a tendency towards simplicity and standardisation. This can be mitigated by making sure such analyses are conducted within a national policy dialogue process that pays due attention to country specificities and practices (including informal social protection mechanisms) and leaves space to bottom-up innovation.

- *Advising or advocating?* The fine line is often crossed. Corporate ideology and the results agenda have tended to encourage the promotion of pre-defined policy models in a rather top-down dynamic. In some cases, the conflation of analysis and advocacy has translated into selective reviews of evidence and overstatement of experiences, for self-serving conclusions. Now that social protection has established itself as an important policy agenda globally and in an increasing number of developing countries—notably through the Social Protection Floor global movement, we may expect the use of such practices, where analysis and advocacy are conflated, to decrease.
- *Ingredients and cooks.* The dominant approach to policy making tends to overemphasise the importance of ‘ingredients’—turning success cases into recipe-like guidance notes, and cast a shadow over the role of ‘cooks,’ and their ability to stir and allow different elements to blend together. Complexity science invites to pay attention on what allows a chef to master the art of steering, instead of seeking for the best recipe in the laboratory.
- *Simplicity and complexity.* Promoting a systems approach to social protection invites to adopt a humble posture and support co-learning processes for evidence-informed policy dialogue. Social technologies for change inspired by the science of complexity offer the prospect of including mid-level actors (crucial for implementation) and citizens (crucial for sustainability) in policy making. Exploring how these could be applied to advance the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries requires participatory action-research.<sup>303</sup>
- *Means and ambitions.* In view of stated commitments to national ownership, systems approach and inclusive development, foreign aid actors are invited to reconsider their organisational setup and incentive systems—for instance, revisiting their recruitment strategy to bring in more innovators as opposed to careerist administrators of aid, and overall management system to encourage innovation towards adaptive systems. Vested interests and the power of habits are likely to make this a challenging task.

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<sup>303</sup> Participatory action research is “a powerful strategy to advance both science and practice. [It] involves practitioners in the research process from the initial design of the project through data gathering and analysis to final conclusions and actions arising out of the research.” (Whyte 1991, p. 7)

- *So, Bono or Moyo?*<sup>304</sup> This research shows that foreign aid can play a catalytic function towards an expansion of social protection to the poorest and most vulnerable. It also suggests that domestic capacity and citizens' participation remain important matters to attend to towards inclusive and sustainable social protection. This might require foreign aid actors to adopt alternative or complementary approaches. We suggest here that one avenue worth exploring is applying systems thinking and practice to the issue, as well as encouraging the learning and use of facilitation techniques to animate participatory processes towards innovation and transformative social policy. Such efforts would likely contribute to enhance national leadership and ownership (on both governments' and citizens' sides).

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<sup>304</sup> While the economist Dambisa Moyo (2009) has argued that depending on aid has not worked, the musician and activist Bono has harangued Northern governments to increase public spending on aid as the way to end world poverty—late 2015, he acknowledged that the private sector has a bigger role to play.

## Chapter 8

# Conclusions: Roles and Effects of Foreign Aid on Social Transfer Policy in Low-Income Countries

Grass does not grow faster if you pull it.

*African proverb*

This chapter concludes the dissertation. It underlines the policy relevance of the research and its contribution to knowledge (Section 8.1). It provides a summary of findings (Section 8.2) and presents emerging implications for aid policy and practices (Section 8.3). Finally, it suggests areas and opportunities for further research and analysis (Section 8.4). Final remarks give directions for the author's own future research.

### 8.1 Contribution and Relevance

There is increased international consensus, particularly within the framework of the Social Protection Floor initiative, around the need to ensure a minimum level of social protection to all global citizens. In this respect, foreign aid actors have been intensifying their efforts to support the expansion of basic social protection in the poorest developing countries, largely in the form of non-contributory social transfers (Section 2.1). To date, the growing literature on the use of social transfers in low-income countries has tended to focus on conceptual debates, policy design issues, and impact evaluations. Much less has been researched around the institutionalisation of (aid-supported) social transfer schemes, even though this aspect is crucial for sustainability (Section 1.5). This issue is undeniably relevant in the sub-Saharan African region, which faces persistent high rates of hunger, poverty and inequality, despite significant economic growth (Section 1.1). This research thus adds to the body of knowledge by offering an analysis, in the sub-Saharan African context, of foreign aid actors' role in the institutionalisation of social transfers in low-income countries. At a more general level, findings shed light on broader academic debates, notably around global influence in national policy-making, the nature of policy change, and the role of research evidence vis-à-vis other important factors in policy formulation (Section 6.4).

The empirical investigation has concerned a variety of situations in the emergence of social transfers. The research has covered many different cases in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. It has studied the early development of a dozen sizable social transfer schemes, most of which are found in Southern and Eastern Africa (Chapter 4), and examined nascent dynamics around social transfers in six Sahelian countries of West Africa (Section 7.3). This broad range of experiences, from embryonic initiatives to more mature schemes, has enabled considering the roles and effects of foreign aid at different stages in the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries.

At a time when several major foreign aid actors engaged in social protection have explicitly stated that they have the ambition to support the development of *nationally owned* social protection policies and programmes,<sup>305</sup> this research provides various pertinent elements to inform foreign aid strategies and approaches in this area. In particular, it proposes an initial framework for apprehending the degree of national ownership of a social transfer scheme (Section 2.3). It presents an analysis of the influence of foreign aid on the social, political and financial sustainability of twelve well-known social transfer schemes introduced in low-income African countries (Section 4.4), and provides a concise overview of on-going foreign aid efforts in this area in the under-researched Sahelian region of West Africa (Section 7.3). Additionally, it offers a reflection on what findings may imply for foreign aid practices if the ultimate goal is to foster national ownership (Section 7.2).

Beyond its direct relevance for informing foreign aid efforts aimed at expanding basic social protection in low-income countries, the research contributes to the debates around evidence-based policy making. It has specially examined the use of ex-ante cost-benefit analyses as a strategy increasingly valued by foreign aid actors to make the investment case for non-contributory social protection. A methodological review underlines the major strengths and limitations of different models commonly used to conduct such analyses (Section 5.2). This is complemented by an examination of the use and usefulness of this type of exercise from the eyes of senior foreign aid practitioners directly engaged in efforts to expand social protection in developing countries (Section 5.3).<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> See, in particular, EC (2012, p. 7), UNICEF (2012, p. 23), and World Bank (2012, p. 68).

<sup>306</sup> To our knowledge, there had not been any previous study looking specifically at the influence of ex-ante cost-benefit analysis findings in the shaping of national social protection policy in developing countries, nor had there been any thorough assessment of the needs and demand for such studies.

Furthermore, the research contributes frameworks and tools for policy formation analysis adapted to the specific case of social transfers. A series of analyses was conducted, in turn descriptive, analytical and exploratory, to uncover the extent to which, and mechanisms through which, foreign aid actors exercise an influence on social transfer policy uptake in low-income countries. An analytical framework was developed and tested for tracing the origins of social transfer schemes and their influence on resulting policy features (Section 3.2). This resulted in narratives about the role of foreign aid actors in the emergence of social transfer schemes in low-income African countries, which further led to proposed a tentative typology of origin stories (Section 4.1). In addition, tools are suggested for conducting a people-centred investigation on policy making (Section 3.2), and applied to study policy formation from the perspective of field practitioners (Chapter 6).

## 8.2 Main Research Findings

In light of the main conclusions from the previous chapters, we can now contemplate again the overall research question this dissertation has sought to answer:

To what extent, and through which mechanisms, do foreign aid actors influence the emergence of permanent, scaled-up and nationally owned social transfer schemes in a low-capacity African country context?

First and foremost, empirical evidence from the dozen case studies presented in Chapter 4 shows that foreign aid *can* support the emergence of permanent and scaled-up social transfer schemes. More importantly, it shows that aid can have a **catalytic effect** on the mobilisation of domestic resources for social transfers in a low-income country context. This conclusion echoes an econometric study by Oliver Morrissey (2009) that indicates that aid increases social spending. Even in contexts of strong engagement by foreign aid actors, it is possible to find signs of a progressive domestication of aid-supported initiatives towards integrated social transfer systems. This finding nuances Freeland's (2013) rather radical proposition that social protection for the most vulnerable does not work where there are strong donors.

Contrary to a common perception that most recent social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa have been donor-instigated and -driven, this research uncovers how foreign aid actors have formed alliances with, and given weight to, existing national proponents, such as a department under the ministry of social affairs, towards convincing other decisive entities within governments, such as ministries of finance. Findings highlight the fragmented nature of political will, government's

commitment and national ownership, and show the limits of the perspective of both global influence and domestic initiatives found in the global social policy discourse. Rather, national social transfer policies reviewed here appear to emerge out of **complex interactions** between groups of (international and national) policy actors with their different views on social protection and financial responsibility. Studying the case of Cambodia, Huck-ju Kwon and colleagues (2015) reach a similar conclusion.

Specifically, influential aid actors revealed by the empirical study include international financial institutions recommending the reform of costly social policies, agencies specialised in social protection advocating for coverage extension, and humanitarian actors calling for more effective ways to provide assistance in protracted crises. This reflects the three streams presented in Section 2.1 that are found to have contributed to push social protection up the development agenda. A similar echo may be detected in the **four broad types of origins** of social transfer schemes uncovered by this research (Section 4.1). This typology refines the classification brought earlier by Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010), who distinguished two main models of social protection in sub-Saharan Africa—the Southern Africa and Middle Africa models.

Insights brought by this research contrast slightly with the findings of previous studies<sup>307</sup> that had led Hickey (2011), for instance, to conclude that foreign aid actors were unlikely to be able to “promote progressive social contracts around social protection without significant reforms to the way in which aid currently works” (p. 2). A first factor that may explain this is the **double discourse** highlighted by Rosalind Eyben (2010), whereby aid agencies may present a project as purely technical (and apolitical), but their staff may actually adopt in their daily work ‘politically-smart’ advocacy strategies. This research sheds light on how front-line foreign aid practitioners interact with common conducive factors identified in the emergence of sizable schemes, namely: a crisis context; the sustained commitment of national organisations and individuals; electoral events; and the building of evidence and personal knowledge.

In addition, the fact that this research reports a rather good prospects in terms of financial, social and political sustainability of a number of aid-supported social transfer schemes, while studies conducted a few years ago did not,<sup>307</sup> introduces **time** as an important element of the policy uptake process. It may be the time needed to build trust among technicians and decision-makers, and time for new ideas to diffuse—that is, for instance, the time required for social transfer proponents to build trust with decision-makers, to generate convincing country-

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<sup>307</sup> See Devereux et al. (2010), Hickey et al. (2009), Holmqvist (2010), and Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2010).

specific evidence, or for decision-makers to familiarise themselves with new concepts and ways of doing things. The acceleration recently observed in the expansion of social transfers in sub-Saharan Africa reflects a ‘bandwagon effect’ indicating that a tipping point has been reached in the spread of social transfer policy ideas.

Importantly, the research is also revelatory of other critical, yet often underestimated, factors favourable to the expansion of social protection in low-income countries. In particular, it sheds light on the importance of individual agency. Fresh empirical evidence underlines the consequences of **personality traits** and attitude that can either tighten or loosen trustful ties between individuals, and thereby, either facilitate or hamper policy dialogue and uptake of evidence. Findings highlight the role of individual change-makers and their personal values, along with the power of teams, however small, mobilised around a mission they trust. This resonates with the quote most associated with Margaret Mead,<sup>308</sup> “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.”

Today, maybe more that political will among national decision-makers, or even fiscal space, a major bottleneck in the expansion of social transfers in low-income African countries appears to be **implementation capacity**. Findings suggest that, in some cases, incentives internal to the international aid system (such as, corporate agendas, competition for funding and pressure to show results) may actually contribute to make this problem worst—for instance, by having conflicting demands or by demanding too much too soon on still weak national bodies (Section 6.1).<sup>309</sup>

### 8.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

By shedding light on the human dimension of policy formation, this research serves as a reminder that behind policy making is individual decision making; and “[b]efore people decide what they think of your message, they decide what they think of you.” (Cuddy et al. 2013, p. 59). Sociology and psychology research would tend to suggest that the way to influence policies is by first focusing on displaying warmth and understanding, which allows trust to develop, and then blending in demonstrations of competence and strength. For instance, Amy Cuddy and colleagues (2013) have shown that cultivating warmth and trust not only facilitates the exchange and acceptance of ideas, it also boosts innovation. From a policy

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<sup>308</sup> The origin of this famous and now trademarked quote remain a mystery (ISS 2009; Keyes 2006).

<sup>309</sup> This echoes the phenomenon of ‘premature load bearing’ described by Pritchett et al. (2010).

entrepreneur's viewpoint, this draws attention on the importance of building **relationships** based on mutual trust.

The literature on change leadership further stresses that connecting with decision-makers also requires getting the narrative right. In that regard, it is suggested that "starting with Why," rather than What, (Sinek 2009) offers much better prospects to "connect, then lead" (Cuddy et al. 2013). This further challenges the dominant technocratic discourse that tends to start with policy models (social transfers, for instance) and explains how they can expand social protection and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development. Instead, a focus on relationships invites to go back to, and begin with, the essence of social protection, and what it means in a given local context. In doing so, a shift in discourse from social protection to "**social commons**" may help foster a sense of civic ownership of the policy debate (Mestrum 2015). Connecting to the core values and principles of decision-makers, practitioners and ordinary citizens appears vital to instil a sense of ownership and get people intrinsically motivated to help bring about positive change.<sup>310</sup>

Valuing the importance of relationships within complex systems further invites to envision policy making as continuous **co-learning processes** and not as problems to be solved (by experts). This research brings further evidence for shifting away from the mainstream linear and technocratic approach to policy making, which appears based on ideology more than evidence (Hickey 2009; Taylor 2014). This may represent a fundamental mind shift. It implies opening up to alternative forms of evidence,<sup>311</sup> and "calls for an evaluation of approaches rather than a search for a silver bullet." (Taylor 2014, p. 271) It requires above all humility to recognise that no one possesses the 'whole' truth.<sup>312</sup> It also necessitates a quality of "presence" (Senge et al. 2005) that current ways of working may hamper. Encouraging inclusive co-learning processes, however, can further support democratic engagement and ensure system-wide commitment.

A shift towards a process-focused approach to evidence-informed policy would tend to put foreign aid actors in a (pure) **facilitative role**, rather than that of a (possibly biased) advisor or advocate. The legitimacy of foreign aid actors to represent (voiceless) citizens and lobby for certain types of policies on their behalf is open to debate—not least because they are not elected bodies. But one could envision that foreign aid actors take (better) advantage of their resources and

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<sup>310</sup> See, for instance, Cuddy et al. (2013), Green and Howe (2011), and Sinek (2009).

<sup>311</sup> See, for instance, Epstein et al. (2014), Owusu-Ansah and Mji (2013), and Scharmer (2009).

<sup>312</sup> In contexts of capacity constraints, the complexity of 'proven' policy models might be a major bottleneck in the expansion of basic social protection. This calls for more focus on the implementable at scale.

position to act as a catalyst to the processes through which national actors have to find their own solutions. In that regard, adopting a systems approach would imply, in particular, seeking to clarify the vision of society in regard to social commons and solidarity, considering social and economic policies in tandem to achieve it, and reconnecting people impacted by policy decisions with people making those decisions. By engaging with mid-level actors and citizens, and not solely with senior policy makers, such processes are more likely to ensure emerging policy options are implementable at scale, and respectful of informal social protection/traditional solidarity mechanisms. Doing so, foreign aid actors would help kick off and support national social contracts towards inclusive and sustainable social protection.

For meeting their commitment to encouraging national ownership and a systems approach to social protection, foreign aid actors may need to deploy an **expanded set of skills**. Economists have been dominating the social protection debate (Voipio 2011), but the reductionist aspect of economics is at odds with the concept of holism. It is suggested that more room be given to other disciplines, including professional facilitators, sociologists, anthropologists, as well as philosophers—since, again, social protection policy design cannot be reduced to a technical matter; it is a societal matter. Foreign aid actors may also need to revisit their human resource policies to value personal integrity and soft skills, such as the ability to build trust and work collaboratively.<sup>313</sup> They may as well need, in particular, to carefully examine whether the way they operate (with consultants, for instance) does support the building of capacity in Africa and the integration of indigenous knowledge and culture, or on the contrary, hamper them. In that respect, the development of South-South lesson learning appears as a positive trend, which can support a shift from “Northern-driven global social reformism to South-South social policy transfers” (Deacon and Stubbs 2013).

## 8.4 Suggestions for Future Research

An in-depth country case study appears as a natural follow-up to this research as it would help overcome the research limitations outlined in Section 3.4, notably the difficulty to access national stakeholders. Field research could better accommodate a **360-degree review** of the national policy-making process, notably based on interviews with different types of national and international stakeholders. It would also facilitate the collection of data on funding arrangements over time. In

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<sup>313</sup> Interestingly, in reaction to changes in the world and the growing importance of trust, leadership theorists nowadays stress authenticity, emotional intelligence and relationships (Green and Howe 2011).

addition, such a study could examine more extensively why and how the government of a low-income country mobilise public resources for social transfers, paying more attention than this research could pay to triggering factors that have no direct connection with aid for social transfers.<sup>314</sup> Research findings underline the value of adopting an ideational approach (Béland 2009, 2014)<sup>315</sup> and, in a cross-disciplinary research model, of working at the cross-road between a political economy and an ideational approach (Béland and Cox 2011)—as experimented, for instance, by Lavers and Hickey (2015) to study social protection expansion in Africa. This research also suggests incorporating a leadership perspective, possibly building on Stiller's (2009) work to further consider the role of ideational leadership in explaining policy change.

Field research may also enable investigating our broader topic of interest—namely, the role of foreign aid in the expansion of basic social protection in low-income African countries, beyond the research boundaries set in Section 1.3. In particular, a 360-degree approach could fit very well to investigate the **overall institutional impact** of aid for social transfers. Deborah Bräutigam and Kwesi Botchwey (1999) suggest that interviews and archival work may be used to paint a picture of changes in organisational capacity and institutional relationships over time. Through standardised questions, respondents could be invited to reflect on the impact aid for social transfers, not simply aid itself, has had on institutional practices and organisational capacity. In that respect, Appendix A.7 offers a preliminary outline for case study questions aimed at evaluating the capacity and institutional framework of public bodies in regards to social transfers. This builds on the outline proposed by Bräutigam and Botchwey (1999) to analyse the institutional impact of aid dependence in Africa. A first step would consist in mapping out the organisations engaged in the formulation and provision of public assistance.

While this research explicitly looked at the sole case of social transfers—and among them, mainly but not exclusively, social cash transfers, which are only one possible form of basic social protection, directions pointed by the research findings (Section 7.4) imply adopting a broad perspective to social protection, encompassing any instruments and providers able to deliver the function of (predictable and reliable) social protection. It also points to the value of considering the case of a fragile and conflict-affected state where, this research suggests, it makes sense to envision hybrid systems (including humanitarian actors, for instance) to support an effective expansion of basic social protection in

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<sup>314</sup> See, for instance, the elements of national context and politics studied by Sugiyama (2011).

<sup>315</sup> See, for instance, how Béland and Ridde (2014) used this approach to study the case of free health care policies in Africa.

the medium term. Furthermore, this research argues that the **application of systems thinking** and practice to the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries is an avenue worth exploring. Studying how systemic change may (be instilled and) occur in dynamic ecosystems (such as fragile states) calls for an operational research (aimed at simultaneously capturing lessons learned from past and present experiences, and elaborating solutions to face future challenges) co-led with various stakeholders of the system, including ordinary citizens.<sup>316</sup> This would require adopting suitable techniques to “catch social reality creation in flight” (Scharmer 2009, p. 355), and to engage stakeholders in a way that encourages the identification of practical strategies for more effective social protection—and not solely the identification of problems. These could imply, for example: using an appreciative inquiry approach (Pagès 2014) when conducting one-to-one interviews to invite people to focus on what works and what they would like to develop; introducing co-development techniques, such as ‘CoDev’ (Payette and Champagne 2005); making use of specific social technology, such as the ‘U-process’ (Scharmer 2009; Scharmer and Käufer 2013) to co-create innovative solutions and handle complexity (Section 7.4); or considering the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach put forward by Matt Andrews and colleagues (2015; 2012). Overall, such a study could bring insights on how to measure change and reconcile the incompatibilities between how evidence-based policy and the results agenda are currently realised in development with the parallel trend towards a systemic approach (Taylor 2014).

Another interesting next step would be to pursue theoretical research on the **role of trust** in the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries. Insights brought by this research already point to the importance of trust in explaining the influence of foreign aid actors in social transfer policy uptake (Section 6.3). They suggest a simple formula—what may be described as the four-T’s of policy influence: *Time* required for the diffusion of new ideas; personality *Traits* to inspire confidence; *Ties* between individuals to facilitate the exchange and acceptance of ideas; and *Trust* as a fourth encompassing dimension—trust in oneself to take action, trust in a mission, trust in others, trust in evidence, trust in lengthy processes, etc. Now, it would be valuable to put these findings in resonance with research in other fields such as leadership, neuroscience,<sup>317</sup> psychology and anthropology, to help understand the biology, chemistry and

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<sup>316</sup> Innovation loves constraints, and the “edge of chaos” might be the optimal position for learning—‘edge-of-chaos systems’ are seen as most robust and resilient for being the optimal combination of control and flexibility (Ramalingam 2013).

<sup>317</sup> As mentioned earlier, research in this field shows, for instance, that depending on their formulation, policy advocates’ messages activate different part of decision-makers’ brains—the one driving behaviour, or the one responsible for language, which has implications in terms of change adoption (Sinek 2009).

physics of trust, and its role in decision making. Furthermore, the concept of Trust also lies behind effective social protection schemes. Trust in the system to deliver benefits in case of shock encourages people to engage in risk-taking activities for higher returns. An effective scheme also allows trust in the state to develop. It might also, help strengthen interpersonal trust for social cohesion. Ultimately, investigating the role of trust implies focusing on the quality of relations individuals establish with one another, that is, studying *relationships* rather than individuals themselves. It has indeed been suggested that “the relation [is] the smallest unit of being and of analysis” (Haraway 2008, p. 165). Interestingly, viewing the world as relations, rather than distinct elements, is at the core of the indigenous African worldview, as captured in the Ubuntu philosophy. Thus, researching trust appears totally relevant to the study of social protection in Africa.

### *Final remarks*

Insights brought by this research echo the old African proverb “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” This research work has started with an examination of cost-benefit analyses, an economic analysis of social protection policy. At the end of the journey, insights gained from this research support a focus on holism, the adoption of cross-disciplinary research models, and the value of people-centred analysis. Exploring new ways of doing things, more in line with the African indigenous culture (as expressed, for instance, in the humanistic African philosophy of Ubuntu), and encouraging both the current and the next generation of policy actors and researchers to innovate appears essential. This may help address the crisis of vision around social protection in Africa.

# Research Methods Appendices

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# Appendix A.1

## Survey Questionnaire

 <b>Maastricht University</b>
<b>Origins of Social Transfer Schemes</b>
<b>Informed Consent Statement</b>
<p>Thank you for participating in this study on the origins of social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa. The study is being conducted by the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance / UNU-MERIT (<a href="http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu/">http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu/</a>). It aims at identifying factors, actors and processes that led to the introduction of sizable social transfer schemes in low-income African countries.</p> <p>The present survey is designed to capture your personal experience and reflections on how the process took place, and collect your views on the current status of the scheme. You should respond in a personal capacity. Any information provided by you will be used only for the purpose of this study and will be kept strictly confidential. Your privacy will be ensured in that all data resulting from this study will be analysed, written, and published in summary form.</p> <p>Completing this survey is obviously voluntary and you may leave any question blank or suspend the survey at any time. By completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in this study.</p> <p>We advise you to make sure cookies are enabled on your web browser. This will allow you to leave the survey and resume it later (using the same computer and same browser), for instance if you experience Internet disconnection or get interrupted. Here's how to do it: <a href="http://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/How-do-I-enable-cookies-on-my-computer">http://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/How-do-I-enable-cookies-on-my-computer</a>.</p> <p>If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:</p> <p>Dr Franziska Gassmann, Senior Researcher Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht University P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands Phone: +31 43 388 46 50 Email: <a href="mailto:franziska.gassmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl">franziska.gassmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl</a></p> <p><b>* 1. Please confirm that you have read this statement and agree to participate in the study.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have read the Informed Consent Statement and agree to participate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I do not agree to participate.</p>
<b>Relevant Personal Experience</b>
<p>This survey on the origins of social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa is designed to investigate policy making processes that led to the introduction of a social transfer scheme, and explore the role played by different actors. It aims to capture your personal experience and reflections on how the process took place and get your views on the current state of the social transfer scheme.</p> <p>If you have been personally involved in the introduction of several sizable social transfer schemes, we ask you to choose the one you are most knowledgeable about.</p>

>>> The rest of the survey will explore your experience vis-à-vis this scheme specifically. <<<  
If you have personal experience in more than one scheme and would like to complete several questionnaires, please contact [cecile.cherrier@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:cecile.cherrier@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

**\* 2. Please select the scheme in the introduction of which you have been personally involved:**

- Cabo Verde's Minimum Social Pension
- Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme
- Ghana's Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty
- Kenya's Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme
- Lesotho's Old Age Pension
- Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme
- Mozambique's Programa de Subsídio Social Básico
- Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme
- Uganda's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment
- Zambia's Social Cash Transfer Scheme
- Zimbabwe's Basic Education Assistance Module
- None, I haven't been personally involved in the introduction of any sizable social transfer scheme
- Other (please specify country and full name)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Professional Capacity

**3. In what capacity have you been involved?**

- National official
- National technician/practitioner
- National consultant
- National civil society organisation member
- Donor agency staff member
- International organisation staff member
- International consultant
- Academic researcher
- Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Over what time period have you been involved?**

From (month and) year \_\_\_\_\_  
To (month and) year \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Process

Thinking back to the initial process that led to the introduction of the social transfer scheme:

**5. Which of the following statements would best describe the process?**

- The social transfer scheme was introduced as a new (additional) measure at the initiative of the government.
- The social transfer scheme resulted from the reform of a domestically funded social programme.
- The social transfer scheme is the result of the scale-up or replication of a (pilot) social

- transfer project initiated by an international aid actor.
- The social transfer scheme is the result of efforts to reform recurrent emergency transfers largely funded by foreign aid.
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**6. Overall, how would you describe the policy-making process?**

- Decisions were mainly made in a way that can be qualified as open, transparent and genuinely participatory.
  - Decisions were mainly made behind closed doors by politicians and/or technicians.
  - There has been a mix of decisions directly made by politicians and/or technicians and decisions emerging from a participatory process.
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**7. Overall, what would you say has been most important?**

- Personal drive/agenda: the introduction of the social transfer scheme is primarily the result of the perseverance of one or a few individuals.
  - Organisational efforts/mandates: the introduction of the social transfer scheme is primarily the result of sustained organisational efforts.
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**8. What would you say has been the main explicit or implicit drive behind the decision to introduce the scheme?**

- Poverty alleviation / reduction
  - Agricultural production
  - Economic growth
  - Food and nutrition security
  - Education
  - Health
  - Social stability / cohesion
  - Political motives
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**Actors**

Thinking back to the initial process that led to the introduction of the social transfer scheme:

**9. Who has been the main initiator of the process that eventually led to the introduction of the scheme? If appropriate, please select up to five actors.**

- President/Prime Minister/Head of Government
- Minister in charge of finance
- Minister in charge of development/planning
- Minister in charge of social affairs
- Minister in charge of rural development/agriculture
- Civil servants/Technicians

- Decentralised authorities
- Member(s) of Parliament
- Non-ruling political party/leader
- National civil society organisation representing a specific group (e.g. the disabled, the elderly, etc.)
- National civil society organisation campaigning for specific outcomes (e.g. access to education, access to health care, food security/nutrition, etc.)
- National civil society organisation mobilised specifically around social transfer/protection issues
- Other type of national civil society organisation
- IMF (International Monetary Fund)
- World Bank
- ILO (International Labour Organization)
- UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)
- WFP (World Food Programme)
- DFID (United Kingdom's Department for International Development)
- Other bilateral donor(s)
- International NGO(s)
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

**10. How would you qualify the degree of involvement of citizens and national civil society organisations in the process that led to the introduction of the scheme?**

- Civil society representatives have demanded the development of the social transfer scheme and remained actively involved throughout the process.
- Civil society representatives were actively involved throughout the process.
- Civil society representatives were only invited to take part in some milestone events and participated actively.
- Civil society representatives were only invited to take part in some milestone events, but their participation has been limited.
- No civil society representative was consulted.
- Don't know

**11. How would you qualify the influence of international organisations/consultants in the process that led to the introduction of the scheme?**

- Extremely influential
- Very influential
- Somehow influential
- Not so influential
- Not influential at all
- Don't know

**Events / Triggers**

Thinking back to the overall process that led to the introduction of the social transfer scheme:

**12. Has there been a key event that initiated or significantly boosted the decision-making process that led to the introduction of the scheme? Please select as many as appropriate.**

- Elections
- Socio-economic crisis/natural disaster

- New national resources (e.g. mineral rents)
- Social pressure/unrest
- International pressure to invest in social protection
- International pressure to make social expenditure more cost-effective
- No specific event, the decision to introduce social transfers occurred as part of regular policy-making processes
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

**13. Was the social transfer scheme introduced in response to a previously made political promise?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Knowledge Base

Thinking back to the overall process that led to the introduction of the social transfer scheme:

**14. How would you rate the importance of each of the following elements in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme?**

	Very important	Somehow important	Somehow not important	Really not important	Not applicable	Don't know
Clear measure/credible indicators showing the extent of needs (poverty, food insecurity, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The fact that decision-makers have personally witnessed the extent of needs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
International scientific evidence of effectiveness (i.e. drawn from theory/practice in other countries)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
National scientific evidence of effectiveness (i.e. drawn from a feasibility study or pilot phase)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The fact that decision-makers have personally witnessed the impact of social transfers on people's lives	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Evidence of the national administrative capacity to implement the scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Scientific evidence of cost-effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Evidence of affordability over the long run	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Decision-makers' own agenda/ideology	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**15. How would you rate the importance of each of the following elements in the decision to introduce the social transfer scheme?**

	Very important	Somehow important	Somehow not important	Really not important	Not applicable	Don't know
Training course for technicians	<input type="checkbox"/>					
National workshop with decision-makers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Participation in an international conference on the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Media coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Participation in a study tour	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Friendship/trust (e.g. between Ministers, between international and national individuals, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Cultural acceptability of the proposed design	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Inclusiveness of the proposed design (not limited to the very poorest)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Funding Source**

**16. Was the funding source identified before or after the decision to consider the scheme?**

- Before
- Concurrently
- After
- Don't know

**17. When the social transfer scheme was first introduced, which revenue source was mobilised?**

- Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
- Other debt relief initiative
- Foreign aid through General Budget Support
- Foreign aid through Sectoral Budget Support
- Foreign aid through Non-Emergency Project Grant
- Foreign aid through Emergency Project Grant
- Other type of foreign aid
- Rents from natural resources
- Other rents (e.g. from Customs Union)
- Existing taxes
- New tax introduced
- Termination/reduction of an item of expenditure on the national budget
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

---

**18. Has the funding source changed over time?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Change in Funding Source**

**19. Today, what is the funding source for the social transfer scheme? Please select as many as appropriate.**

- Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
  - Other debt relief initiative
  - Foreign aid through General Budget Support
  - Foreign aid through Sectoral Budget Support
  - Foreign aid through Non-Emergency Project Grant
  - Foreign aid through Emergency Project Grant
  - Other type of foreign aid
  - Rents from natural resources
  - Other rents (e.g. from Customs Union)
  - Existing taxes
  - New tax introduced
  - Termination/reduction of an item of expenditure on the national budget
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

Design

**20. When the social transfer scheme was first introduced, who has been particularly influential in defining its design? If appropriate, please select up to five actors.**

- President/Prime Minister/Head of Government
  - Minister in charge of finance
  - Minister in charge of development/planning
  - Minister in charge of social affairs
  - Minister in charge of rural development/agriculture
  - Civil servants/Technicians
  - Decentralised authorities
  - Member(s) of Parliament
  - Non-ruling political party/leader
  - National civil society organisation representing a specific group (e.g. the disabled, the elderly, etc.)
  - National civil society organisation campaigning for specific outcomes (e.g. access to education, access to health care, food security/nutrition, etc.)
  - National civil society organisation mobilised specifically around social transfer/protection issues
  - Other type of national civil society organisation
  - IMF (International Monetary Fund)
  - World Bank
  - ILO (International Labour Organization)
  - UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)
  - WFP (World Food Programme)
  - DFID (United Kingdom's Department for International Development)
  - Other bilateral donor(s)
  - International NGO(s)
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
-

**21. Thinking back to the initial design process, which specific design features generated the most heated debates?**

- Targeting
  - Conditionality
  - Benefit level and duration
  - Institutional location
  - Source of funding
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**22. Thinking back to the initial design, what ideology would you say it best reflects?**

- Liberal: poverty targeting, conditional transfers, etc.
  - Social: categorical targeting, no conditionality attached, etc.
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**23. Thinking back to the initial design, what approach would you say it best reflects?**

- Entitlement: any citizen meeting eligibility criteria is due to receive benefits from the scheme.
  - Rationing: beneficiaries are accepted until a given caseload that exhausts a fixed budget is reached.
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**24. How does the initial design (when it was first introduced/scaled up) compare with the current design and implementation arrangements of the social transfer scheme?**

- Some major changes
- Only minor changes
- No change
- Don't know

Change in Design

**25. Who would you say has been particularly influential in these changes? If appropriate, please select up to five actors.**

- President/Prime Minister/Head of Government
- Minister in charge of finance
- Minister in charge of development/planning
- Minister in charge of social affairs
- Minister in charge of rural development/agriculture
- Civil servants/Technicians
- Decentralised authorities
- Member(s) of Parliament
- Non-ruling political party/leader
- National civil society organisation representing a specific group (e.g. the disabled, the elderly, etc.)
- National civil society organisation campaigning for specific outcomes (e.g. access to education, access to health care, food security/nutrition, etc.)

- National civil society organisation mobilised specifically around social transfer/protection issues
  - Other type of national civil society organisation
  - IMF (International Monetary Fund)
  - World Bank
  - ILO (International Labour Organization)
  - UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)
  - WFP (World Food Programme)
  - DFID (United Kingdom's Department for International Development)
  - Other bilateral donor(s)
  - International NGO(s)
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**26. What would you say mainly motivated these changes?**

- Evaluation findings
  - Political pressure
  - Social pressure
  - Change in needs/context
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

Current Status of the Social Transfer Scheme

**27. Today, how claimable would you say the benefits are for citizens who feel they meet eligibility criteria?**

- Social transfer benefits are judiciable rights: citizens can pursue a case through the national judicial system.
  - Social transfer benefits are managed under a project/programme approach, with given caseload and fixed budget, but there is an appeal system in place.
  - There is no appeal system in place.
  - Don't know
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**28. Have public campaigns ever been waged to raise awareness about the need for the social transfer scheme (its continuation, expansion or improvement)?**

- At least twice
- At least once
- Never
- Don't know

**29. Overall, how would you rate the current political and social support for the social transfer scheme?**

No support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very strong support	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>											

**30. Have social transfer-related issues been included in debates/manifestos during the most**

**recent elections?**

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

**31. How much attention would you say social transfer-related issues have received in the national media?**

- Substantial attention/criticism
- Some talk and some general writing on the topic
- None or very little
- Don't know

Personal Experience

**32. Personally, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with the initial design of the transfer, when it was first introduced?**

- |                          |                          |                                    |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very satisfied           | Somehow satisfied        | Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | Somehow dissatisfied     | Very dissatisfied        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**33. Overall, what is your state of mind vis-à-vis the future of this social transfer scheme?**

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very optimistic          | Somehow optimistic       | Neutral                  | Somehow pessimistic      | Very pessimistic         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

**34. What would you say have been the main sources of information for your own decisions around this social transfer scheme? Please select up to three choices.**

- Your own practical experience
  - Your organisation's corporate values and policy
  - Judgement of people you trust
  - Best practice reported by national practitioners
  - Best practice reported by practitioners from other countries
  - National scientific empirical evidence
  - International scientific empirical evidence
  - Experts' simulations and recommendations specific to the scheme
  - Other (please specify)
- 

Additional Feedback

**35. In hindsight, is there anything that could have been done differently to improve/speed up the process or improve its outcome?**

---

**36. Personally, what lessons have you learned about the introduction of social transfers?**

---

Respondent Profile

**37. In what sector do you currently work?**

- National government
  - Sub-national government/authorities
  - Aid agency
  - Civil society
  - Academia
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**38. What type of position do you currently hold?**

- Technical
  - Management
  - Communication / Advocacy
  - Research
  - Elected politician
  - Other (please specify)
- 

**39. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

**40. Which category below includes your age?**

- 20 or younger
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

**41. What is your nationality?**

---

**42. Where did you get your main education?**

- Inside Africa
- Outside Africa
- Both inside and outside Africa

Any Final Thought?

**43. Would you like to make any additional comments related to this survey and study?**

---

**44. Would you be ready to take part in a phone interview to further exchange on your personal experience and reflections on how the process took place? If so, please provide your email address below.**

---

Source: Author.

## Appendix A.2

### Profile of Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Total	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	23	36.5%
Male	40	63.5%
Not specified	14	-
<b>Age</b>		
30-39 years	18	28.1%
40-49 years	25	39.1%
50-59 years	16	25.0%
60 and older	5	7.8%
Not specified	13	-
<b>Nationality</b>		
African country	24	38.1%
European country	32	50.8%
<i>including United Kingdom</i>	19	30.2%
Latin American country	2	3.2%
Other nationality	5	7.9%
Not specified	14	-
<b>Education</b>		
Inside Africa	6	9.7%
Outside Africa	42	67.7%
Both inside and outside Africa	14	22.6%
Not specified	15	-
<b>Position</b>		
National staff	25	36.2%
International staff	44	63.8%
Not specified	8	-
<b>Total number of complete responses</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Author's compilation, based on survey results.

# Appendix A.3

## Informed Consent Statement



### INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

<b>Department:</b>	Maastricht Graduate School of Governance
<b>Name of Researcher:</b>	Cécile Cherrier
<b>Research Title:</b>	The origins of social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa
<b>Date:</b>	28 January 2014

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

You are invited to participate in the research study entitled 'The origins of social transfer schemes in sub-Saharan Africa' conducted by Cécile Cherrier with Franziska Gassmann and Michael Cichon of the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance/UNU-MERIT. Study findings will be published in the UNU-MERIT working paper series (<http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu/publications/wp.php>).

**Purpose**—This study aims at identifying factors, actors and processes that led to the introduction of sizable social transfers in low-income sub-Saharan African countries. It adopts a comparative case study approach and focuses on a dozen of schemes currently operating in the region. As part of this study, we intend to consult a broad range of individuals through online surveys and interviews. The research method is specifically designed to capture personal experience and reflections on how each process took place, and collect views on the current status of the selected schemes.

**Procedure**—In this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview. You should respond in a personal capacity. If possible, we would like to conduct the interview on Skype—an Internet-based software ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)) offering a free download that enables individuals to videoconference (with webcams) from computer to computer. Alternatively, the interview will be conducted by phone. The interview may also be conducted face-to-face if the researcher and yourself happen to be in the same location. With Skype interviews, you will have the option to turn off the video conferencing and continue audio only if you wish. The interview is expected to take about one hour. Nobody but the interviewer will be present in the room when the interview will be conducted. The interview will be recorded unless you object to it—we will explicitly ask your permission to do so.

**Risks**—There are no known risks to participating in this research.

**Potential benefits**—There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this research. Your contribution will inform a broader reflection on what development partners should or should not do to support the expansion of basic social protection in low-income countries.

**Protection of confidentiality**—Your name or other identifiers will not be attached to your answers so that your confidentiality can be maintained. Your privacy will be ensured in that all data resulting from this study will be analysed, written, and published in summary form. We will not be reporting back anything in a form that could lead to your replies being identifiable.

**Voluntary participation**—Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any question if you wish. And of course you are free to stop the interview at any time for any reason. You will not be penalised in any way should you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from this study.

**Contact information**—If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Dr Franziska Gassmann, Senior Researcher/Associate Professor Poverty and Social Protection  
Maastricht Graduate School of Governance/UNU-MERIT, Maastricht University  
P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands  
Phone: +31 43 388 46 50  
Email: [franziska.gassmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:franziska.gassmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

**Consent**—By completing the interview, you are agreeing to participate in this study. You may keep a copy of this document for future reference.

Sincerely,

Dr Franziska Gassmann  
Senior Researcher/Associate Professor Poverty and Social Protection  
Maastricht Graduate School of Governance/UNU-MERIT  
P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands  
Website: <http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu/>  
Phone: +31 43 388 46 50

## Appendix A.4

# Discussion Guide on the Origins of Sizable Schemes

<b>Origins of Social Transfer Schemes</b>
<b>Discussion Guide for Key Informant Interviews</b>
<b>Introduction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>Convenient time and environment</i>—<b>Check that the interview is still convenient:</b> respondent available for an hour, quiet environment, good connection—If not, reschedule the interview.</li><li>▪ <i>Presentation</i>—This research study examines the origins of a dozen of sizable social transfer schemes currently operating in sub-Saharan Africa. The objective is to better understand the drivers and motivations behind the uptake of social transfer policy in low-income countries, and what informs specific policy choices.</li><li>▪ <i>Personal views</i>—In this interview, we would like to hear about your personal experience and reflections on how the process took place (key milestones, main actors and their motives, etc.) and get your views on the current state of the social transfer scheme. You should respond to the interview in a personal capacity.</li><li>▪ <i>Voluntary participation</i>—You can refuse to answer any question if you wish. And of course you are free to stop the interview at any time for any reason.</li><li>▪ <i>Confidentiality</i>—Any information provided by you will be used only for the purposes of this study and will be kept strictly confidential.</li><li>▪ <i>Video/audio recording</i>—<b>Ask permission for the interview to be recorded; Record date and time and participant ID #.</b></li></ul>
<b>Warm-Up</b>
<p><b>1. In what capacity have you been involved in the genesis of the scheme?</b> [Prompts: a. Over which period of time have you been involved? b. Where you based in the country? c. What brought you to this position?]</p>
<b>Overall Process</b>
<p><b>2. Could you describe how the process unfolded; what was the situation when you started to get involved, and what happened until you left/today?</b> [Prompts as needed: a. Context: When did the social transfer topic first appear in national policy debate? b. Trigger: What has triggered discussions towards the introduction of the scheme?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any key event (crisis, elections, etc.)?</li><li>• Any key actor (individual or organisation, making funding available, advocating, etc.)?</li><li>• Any key information/report?</li></ul></p>

- c. *Milestones/phases: What have been the main milestones/phases?*
- d. *Actors: Which actors got involved in the process (proactively or as invitee)?*
  - *Who were the main proponents of the introduction of the scheme?*
  - *What would you say were their main motives (objective, ideology, values)?*
  - *Who were the other supporters of the scheme?*
  - *When did each of them begin to be active on the topic? And how?*
  - *Who opposed the process/decision? And what were their motives/arguments?*
- e. *Policy space: How would you describe the bargaining/negotiation/consultation processes?*
  - *What about regional actors, have they played any role?*
  - *What about citizens or (sub-)national civil society organisations/representatives, what have been their involvement throughout the policy-making process?*
  - *What about international organisations and consultants, how influential have they been?*
- f. *Catalyst: What significantly accelerated decision-making? How did this process come to a conclusion?*
  - *Any key event (crisis, elections, etc.)?*
  - *Any key actor (individual or organisation, making funding available, advocating, etc.)?*
  - *Any key information/report?]*

**3. So what (or who) would you say made it possible to transform an idea into an operational reality?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

- a. *What had been the previous attempts (or the most recent attempt prior to this) to introduce a social transfer scheme?*
- b. *What was the outcome? If not successful, why not?*
- c. *What was different this time?]*

**4. Were there diverging motivations among proponents?**

**5. What have been the main barriers; what has delayed the process (or negatively affected the outcome)?**

**Policy Outcome**

**6. How has the scheme been funded over the years, do you know?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

- a. *What share of domestic funding?*
- b. *What revenue sources (type of aid funding mechanism, type of domestic revenue, etc.)?*
- c. *Was the funding source identified before or after the discussions started?*
- d. *Which revenue sources were first mobilised, and how?*
- e. *Has funding source changed over time? If so, how?*
- f. *How has the share and nature (off-/on-budget) of domestic funding evolved since the beginning, and how is it expected to evolve (duration of current commitment)?]*

**7. What (or who) has been particularly instrumental in defining the specific design of the scheme?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

- a. *Who has been particularly influential in defining the specific design of the scheme (national vs. international stakeholders, politicians vs. technicians, elites vs. citizens, etc.)?*
- b. *What has been instrumental in defining the specific design of the scheme (poverty*

*statistics, global experience, national scientific evidence, anecdotal evidence, personal experience, affordability over the long run, etc.)?*

*c. Has the design changed over time?*

*d. If so, what motivated these changes (evaluation findings, political/social pressure, change in needs/context, etc.)? And who pushed for these changes?]*

**8. Which specific features generated the most heated debates?**

*[Prompts:*

*a. Why?*

*b. How was the final decision taken (by whom, on what basis)?]*

**9. How was it determined who would be in charge of the delivery of the scheme?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

*a. Was it clear from the start who would be in charge?*

*b. Were there serious concerns about the capacity to deliver the scheme?*

*c. If so, how close was it to jeopardise the adoption of the scheme?]*

**10. Tell me about the domestic capacity to deliver the scheme at scale?**

*[Prompt as needed: Dependence on external support? Know-how? Capacity-building efforts?]*

**11. Tell me about the level of (domestic) political and social support to the scheme?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

*a. Has it been included in election debates?*

*b. Has it received attention in the media?*

*c. Have public campaigns ever been waged to raise awareness about the need for the scheme (its continuation, expansion or improvement)?*

*d. What importance is it given in national/presidential development plans?]*

**12. How do you see the future of the programme?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

*a. Do you have any fears/concerns?*

*b. Do you have any hopes/expectations?*

*c. What do you see as the main challenge ahead?*

*d. How confident are you that the scheme will be scaled up/extended to other groups?]*

**Personal Experience**

**13. Tell me about your first interaction with social transfer issues?**

*[Prompts:*

*a. When and where were you first introduced to the issue?*

*b. Have you received specific orientation/training on social transfer/protection/policy?]*

**14. What would you say has been instrumental in shaping your position on this specific scheme?**

*[Prompt as needed:*

*• Personal practical experience?*

*• Your organisation mandate and objective?*

*• Training events or policy workshops?*

*• Scientific literature: statistics on poverty/needs; evidence of effectiveness; evidence of affordability; etc.?*

*• Exchanges with others: other practitioners' experience; views of people you trust; etc.?*

*• Your own beliefs (i.e. ideas about what the world is like) and values (i.e. ideas about what*

*the world should be like)?]*

**15. Throughout this genesis process, what was your own objective?**

*[Prompt for: What was your motivation (official duty; personal commitment; career advancement; etc.)?]*

**16. Which approaches did you adopt to achieve this objective?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

- a. How did you influence decision-makers?*
- b. What proved successful (and unsuccessful)?*
- c. Have you had any interaction with politicians (directly or indirectly)?*
- d. What about understanding and incorporating citizens' views?*
- e. What about alignment/integration/coherence with national socio-economic policies?*
- f. What about understanding and incorporating the national historical and cultural approach to social policy?]*

**17. How did you feel about the whole experience?**

*[Prompts as needed:*

- a. How has your state of mind evolve throughout the process?*
- b. What have been the main sources of frustration?*
- c. What have been the main sources of satisfaction?*

**18. Is there anything that you (or someone else) could have done differently to improve or accelerate the process?**

*[Prompt as needed:*

- a. To make the process more participatory, more transparent, faster, etc.?*
- b. Is there anything that you (or someone else) could have done differently to improve the outcome (making it technically sound, culturally sensitive, adapted to the context, etc.)?]*

Cool Down

**19. Thank you for sharing your insights today. Is there anything else you would like to share?**

**20. Do you know any good documents around the genesis of the scheme we should consult?**

**21. Do you know anyone else who would be a good person to talk to?**

**22. Do you have any questions about this interview, or what we talked about?**

**23. What is your exact job title?**

**24. How many years of experience do you have in this job?**

**25. How many years of experience do you have at a similar position?**

Field Notes

*To be completed right after the interview*

- *In one line, what answer does this interview bring to each of the main research questions?*
- *Did the interview bring any surprises?*
- *Are there any questions to be added in the next interviews?*
- *Any observations about the way the interview took place?*

Source: Author.

## Appendix A.5

### List of Interviews on the Origins of Sizable Schemes

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Respondent's Profile</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Type, Date</b>
OR1	International practitioner	In-country	M	Face-to-face, 07.12.2013
OR2	International practitioner	Outside	M	Skype, 20.05.2014
OR3	International practitioner	In-country	F	Skype, 23.05.2014
OR4	National staff of an aid agency	In-country	F	Skype, 26.05.2014
OR5	National staff of an aid agency	In-country	M	Skype, 28.05.2014
OR6	International practitioner	In-country	F	Skype, 02.06.2014
OR7	International practitioner	In-country	M	Skype, 04.06.2014
OR8	International practitioner	In-country	F	Skype, 05.06.2014
OR9	International academic researcher	Outside	M	Skype, 09.06.2014
OR10	International practitioner	In-country	F	Skype, 12.06.2014
OR11	International practitioner	In-country	F	Phone, 12.06.2014
OR12	International practitioner	In-country	F	Skype, 20.06.2014
OR13	International practitioner	Outside	M	Skype, 03.07.2014
OR14	National staff of an aid agency	In-country	F	Skype, 10.08.2014
OR15	International practitioner	In-country	M	Skype, 17.09.2014
OR16	International practitioner	In-country	M	Skype, 18.09.2014
OR17	International practitioner	In-country	M	Skype, 19.09.2014

Note: Profile and base at the time of involvement with the scheme.

Source: Author's compilation.

## Appendix A.6

### List of Interviews on Cost-Benefit Analyses

Ref.	Respondent's Affiliation	Gender	Type, Date
<b>Interviews on the Methodology of Cost-Benefit Analyses</b>			
MR1	Oxford Policy Management	M	E-mail, 05.12.2012 E-mail, 09.12.2012
MR2	Oxford Policy Management	F	E-mail, 10.12.2012
MR3	Oxford Policy Management	M	E-mail, 12.12.2012
MR4	Food and Agriculture Organization	M	E-mail, 17.12.2012 Face-to-Face, 30.10.2013
MR5	Overseas Development Institute	F	E-mail, 18.12.2012
MR6	DFID	M	E-mail, 18.12.2012
MR7	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth	M	E-mail, 18.12.2012
MR8	Oxford Policy Management	M	E-mail, 17.12.2012 Skype, 20.12.2012
MR9	International Labour Office	M	E-mail, 21.12.2012
MR10	Institute of Development Studies	F	E-mail, 21.12.2012
MR11	Université Laval	M	E-mail, 20.12.2012 Skype, 28.12.2012
MR12	European Commission	M	E-mail, 02.01.2013
MR13	International Labour Office	M	E-mail, 04.01.2013
MR14	Save the Children	F	E-mail, 04.01.2013
MR15	UNICEF	M	E-mail, 31.01.2013
<b>Interviews on the Use of Cost-Benefit Analyses</b>			
CB1	UNICEF	M	Skype, 13.12.2012
CB2	UNICEF	F	Skype, 13.12.2012
CB3	UNICEF	F	Skype, 13.12.2012

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Respondent's Affiliation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Type, Date</b>
CB4	UNICEF	F	Skype, 13.12.2012
CB5	UNICEF	F	Skype, 13.12.2012
CB6	UNICEF	F	Skype, 17.12.2012
CB7	UNICEF	M	Skype, 21.12.2012

Source: Author's compilation.

## Appendix A.7

# Researching the Institutional Impact of Foreign Aid

<b>Institutional Impact of Foreign Aid for Social Transfers</b>
<b>Preliminary Research Questions</b>
<b>Capacity to Take Decisions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Does the leadership have a clear vision for the goals and objectives of policy and programmes?</li><li>▪ What measurable progress has the organisation made towards those goals?</li><li>▪ For major projects and programmes undertaken by the organisation, where was the locus of initiative?</li><li>▪ How deep was the level of intellectual conviction among key policy makers?</li><li>▪ Were there expressions of political will by top leadership?</li><li>▪ What were the efforts made by the top leadership toward consensus building among various units?</li></ul>
<b>Financial Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Has the organisation's annual budget undergone many significant changes over the years?</li><li>▪ What proportion of the organisation's financial resources directly comes from aid?</li><li>▪ What specific types of expenditures are aid-funded (staffing, activities, assets or running costs)?</li><li>▪ Have the sources of funding of the organisation changed over the years?</li><li>▪ How much of the organisation budget is devoted to servicing aid projects?</li><li>▪ Are there any discrepancies between budget allocations and spending?</li><li>▪ What is the gap between domestic investment needs, and amount filled by domestic resources?</li><li>▪ How have these gaps changed over the past decade?</li></ul>
<b>Technical and Administrative Capacity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How has the number and profile of staff members evolve over the past years?</li><li>▪ What has been the level of staff turnover, and main reasons for staff departure over the past few years?</li><li>▪ What percentage of the organisation's line positions is unfilled?</li><li>▪ What percentage do expatriates file?</li><li>▪ Does the organisation have clear plans as to how it will eventually fill these positions with nationals?</li></ul>

- How competitive are local government salaries compared with the private sector and aid agencies? What is donor practice in ‘topping up’ local salaries?
- Have donor salary scales created upward pressure on public and private sector wages?
- Is this pressure sustainable?
- How has the technical knowledge of staff members evolve over the past years?
- What training opportunities are accessible to staff members?
- What percentage of the time is spent in meetings with development partners?

#### Organisation Behaviour

- What is the quality of information exchange and cooperation between different units?
- Are there any corruption practices in the organisation?
- What is the level of interest and commitment of staff members?
- Are staff members ‘service-oriented’?

#### Relationships

- Does the organisation have a single unit that coordinates with aid partners?
- What is the level of consistency between the organisation’s actions and initiatives by other ministries?
- Is the organisation’s voice being heard in inter-ministerial debate?
- What relationship does the organisation have with social services providers?
- What relationship does the organisation have with social services users?
- What relationship does the organisation have with aid partners?

#### Accountability Mechanisms

- Does the organisation have a single unit that has responsibility for signing loan and grant documents and coordinating donor aid?
- If so, do donors respect these requirements?
- What is the organisation’s level of overview of and control over social protection initiatives in the country?
- Does the organisation have a mechanism for reporting actions to users and treating complaints and grievances?

Source: Author, building on Bräutigam and Botchwey (1999).

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## Valorisation Addendum

In accordance with the Regulation Governing the Attainment of Doctoral Degrees at Maastricht University, this addendum articulates opportunities for knowledge valorisation offered by this dissertation. It discusses the policy relevance and innovativeness of research findings, and specifies important groups of actors, in addition to the academic community, to whom research results are of interest. It subsequently presents activities carried out or planned to disseminate results to these intended audiences, and help translate research into practice.

The increased international consensus, particularly within the framework of the Social Protection Floor initiative, around the need to ensure a minimum level of social protection to all global citizens has translated into an intensification of foreign aid efforts to support the expansion of basic social protection in the poorest developing countries, largely in the form of non-contributory social transfers. In this context, this research helps fill an important knowledge gap around the institutionalisation of aid-supported social transfer schemes—a crucial aspect for sustainability. This issue is undeniably relevant in the sub-Saharan African region, which faces persistent high rates of hunger, poverty and inequality, despite significant economic growth.

The fact that foreign aid can, under certain conditions, have a catalytic effect on social transfer policy and spending in low-income African countries, as this research uncovers, is of interest to decision makers in donor agencies. Findings invite them to commit funds over the medium term (and allow time for sustainable results to be obtained) and ensure aid-supported activities genuinely contribute to an inclusive country-based policy conversation. Results also draw attention on the importance of acknowledging and helping address critical delivery capacity issues.

In looking at social transfer policy making from the eyes of front-line practitioners, the research brings attention on too-often neglected aspects of policy formation. In particular, by shedding light on the human dimension of policy formation, it serves as a reminder that behind policy making is individual decision making. From a policy entrepreneur's viewpoint, the research highlights the value of trust-based partnerships built over time to allow a fruitful dialogue to take place, and facilitate the uptake (and appropriate adaptation) of any good practices, evidence and novel ideas by national policy makers. Connecting to the core values and principles of decision makers, practitioners and ordinary citizens appears vital to instil a sense of ownership and get people intrinsically motivated to help bring about positive change.

Valuing the importance of relationships within complex systems invites foreign aid actors to envision policy making as continuous co-learning journeys—and not as problems to be solved by experts. As such, this research brings further evidence for shifting away from the mainstream linear and technocratic approach to policy making. Encouraging inclusive co-learning processes can support democratic engagement, ensure system-wide commitment, and ultimately foster national ownership. Yet, this may represent a fundamental mind shift, and be at odds with prevailing procedures and dynamics within foreign aid institutions. In particular, accompanying an inclusive policy dialogue necessitates organisations to allow sufficient time and longer project timelines for this, as well as enough latitude for their country teams to work collaboratively—in a bottom-up rather than top-down dynamic. It implies opening up to alternative forms of knowledge (including citizen knowledge and collection intelligence), and maybe more importantly, it also demands being comfortable with uncertainty.

A shift towards a process-focused approach to evidence-informed policy would tend to put foreign aid actors in a (pure) facilitative role, rather than that of a (possibly biased) advisor or advocate. Research findings invite foreign aid actors to take (better) advantage of their resources and position to act as a catalyst to the processes through which national actors have to find their own solutions. In that regard, adopting a systems approach would imply, in particular, seeking to clarify the vision of society in regard to social commons and solidarity, considering social and economic policies in tandem to achieve it, and reconnecting people impacted by policy decisions with people making those decisions. By engaging with mid-level actors and citizens, and not solely with senior policy makers, such processes are more likely to ensure emerging policy options are implementable at scale, and respectful of informal social protection/traditional solidarity mechanisms. Doing so, foreign aid actors would help kick off and support national social contracts and consensus towards inclusive and sustainable social protection.

For meeting their commitment to encouraging national ownership and a systems approach to social protection, foreign aid actors may need to deploy an expanded set of skills. This research suggests that more room be given to disciplines other than economics, including professional facilitators, political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists. Foreign aid actors may also need to revisit their human resource policies to value personal integrity and soft skills, such as the ability to build trust and work collaboratively. They may as well need, in particular, to carefully examine whether the way they operate (with consultants, for instance) does support the building of capacity in Africa and the integration of indigenous knowledge and culture, or on the contrary, hamper them.

Research findings also encourage individual foreign aid practitioners to reflect on their own day-to-day practice. The bottom-up perspective brought by this research highlights the power of agency, and the power of teams, however small, mobilised around a mission they trust. The narratives foreign aid practitioners develop to describe policy formation are human stories more than accounts of institutional processes. The ability of an individual to convey messages and foster trust-based relationships, his/her capacity to argue constructively and engage in teamwork, appears as a significant conducive factor—while difficult personalities, on the contrary, can engender an atmosphere of mutual distrust, which hampers policy dialogue.

Throughout the research process, efforts were made to connect with intended research end users. The initial phases (research design and documentary analysis) of the multiple-case study of sizable social transfer schemes were conducted as a visiting research fellow at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in Geneva, Switzerland. This foundational work specifically gained from and contributed to the UNRISD research project on ‘The Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization for Social Development.’<sup>318</sup> Preliminary results drawn from the review of an initial set of six cases<sup>319</sup> (Cherrier 2014a) were presented and discussed with researchers and practitioners at the 14<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) held in Bonn, Germany on 23-26 June 2014.<sup>320</sup> A revised paper was subsequently published as a working paper in February 2015 and disseminated through the UNRISD network (Cherrier 2015b).<sup>321</sup> In May 2015, in an effort to reach more readers, a summary version of this paper was published and disseminated as a one pager by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC) (Cherrier 2015a).<sup>322</sup> Findings drawn from the documentary analysis of the complete set of twelve cases (Cherrier 2014b) were presented and discussed at the conference on ‘Social Protection in Africa’ organised by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) in collaboration with the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), University of Nairobi on 12-13 November 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. Following a submission to three anonymous peer

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<sup>318</sup> For more information, visit <http://www.unrisd.org/pdrm>.

<sup>319</sup> Ethiopia’s PSNP, Ghana’s LEAP, Kenya’s CT-OVC, Lesotho’s OAP, Mozambique PSSB, and Zambia’s SCT.

<sup>320</sup> This EADI conference paper is available at <http://eadi.org/gc2014/>.

<sup>321</sup> This UNRISD Working Paper No. 2015-3 is available at <http://www.unrisd.org/pdrm/cherrier>.

<sup>322</sup> This IPC/UNRISD One pager No. 289 is available in both English and French at <http://www.ipc-undp.org/publication/27638>.

reviewers, the conference paper was accepted for publication as a chapter of an edited book of selected proceedings (Cherrier forthcoming).

Preliminary results of the methodological review of ex-ante cost analyses were also included in a working paper prepared for the UNICEF Office of Research and published in May 2013 (Cherrier et al. 2013).<sup>323</sup> This paper was discussed with peers (27 researchers and practitioners working on cost analyses in social protection) in a seminar on 'Making the investment case for social protection' organised on 18 March 2013 in Florence, Italy. It had been explicitly commissioned by the UNICEF Office of Research to inform its future work in that area. The seminar offered the opportunity to exchange on prospects brought about by pioneering ex-ante return-on-investment analyses along with risks associated with an over-reliance on cost-benefit analyses.

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<sup>323</sup> This Innocenti Working Paper 2013-06 is available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/694/>.

## About the Author

Cécile Cherrier was born in France in 1975. She obtained a Master of Science in Agronomy in 1998 from Montpellier SupAgro. After her studies, Cécile engaged in humanitarian and development work. Working with international non-governmental organisations, she coordinated interventions in conflict and post-conflict areas. Cécile later specialised in social protection policies and programmes with a specific focus on low-income countries and fragile situations.

Parallel to her commitment to the dual career training programme to obtain a PhD in Governance and Policy Analysis (GPAC<sup>2</sup>) at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Cécile worked as an independent consultant. She has provided training, technical assistance, research and evaluation services to international organisations including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and donor institutions. Cécile has been the co-team leader of the European Commission's Advisory Service in Social Transfers since 2012, working at the interface between social protection and food and nutrition security, and encouraging closer synergies between humanitarian assistance and national social policies.

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