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Ideational and institutional drivers of social protection in Tanzania

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Abstract: In the early 2000s, there was low elite commitment to social protection in Tanzania. Yet, in 2012, the government officially launched a countrywide social safety net programme, and a year later it announced the introduction of an old age pension. In this article, I explore the reasons for this recent elite commitment to social protection. The analysis takes an ideational approach, and it is shown how the promotion of social protection has been driven by international and domestic institutions with the resources, expertise, and authority to present policy solutions fitting the elite's general ideas about Tanzania's development challenges and possible responses thereto. Thus, ideas play an important role in policy development. Attention to the ideas of ruling elites also reveals cases where ideas lose prominence as an explanatory factor. The introduction of the pension fits poorly with dominant views on development and poverty reduction in Tanzania and is more likely to have been influenced by political interests.

Keywords: social protection, ideas, institutions, policy entrepreneurs, political settlements, Tanzania

JEL classification: H55, I38, O55, P48

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1 Introduction

In the early 2000s, there was low elite commitment to social protection in mainland Tanzania.¹ Being a low-income country, Tanzania has high levels of deprivation and high demand for income security, but limited resources to address these issues. However, while a general lack of financial resources and capacity within both government and civil society was a compounding factor, a ‘lack of political will [also explains the state’s] failure to provide adequate social protection to the poor’ (Mchomvu et al. 2002: 19; see also Lerisse et al. 2003). In fact, as late as 2009, Tanzania spent only 0.29 per cent of GDP on social safety nets, which was much less than any neighbouring country (World Bank 2015).²

Yet, in 2012, the government approved the implementation of the Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) programme, which is a nationwide conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme that targets the extreme poor population. The programme is estimated to cost US\$300 million per year and is targeted at reaching over 1.2 million households (nearly 5 million people) by the end of the initial phase, closing in 2017 (the full programme runs through to 2019).³ In this article, I ask what explains this recent elite commitment to social protection. The argument put forward is that the push for social protection, specifically CCTs, has been driven by multilateral institutions (principally the World Bank) in collaboration with domestic policymaking and -implementing institutions, in particular the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF). These institutions have been resourceful and strategic in their approach to promoting their favoured policy solution to social protection through workshops and evidence-based reporting. More importantly, in showing the elite how the PSSN provides solutions to some of Tanzania’s main social problems, as they themselves see these problems, the institutions have been able to gain elite commitment to the policy.

This paper is based on the theoretical foundation that the motivations and ideas that shape elite behaviour depend on the type of political settlement in place and that policymaking is a process of negotiation and bargaining between political and bureaucratic elites. Moreover, in situations where policy areas are of low interest to elites, there is room for transnational institutions (such as the World Bank) to promote specific policy solutions. The paper’s contribution to the social protection literature in general lies in its focus on policy promotion and negotiation by institutions outside, or ‘below’, the elite and in its inclusion not only of transnational actors but also of domestic institutions responsible for policy development and implementation. Hence, it is shown how the ideas and strategies of international *and* domestic policy institutions influence elite political commitment to social protection.

¹ Tanzania is a union between the Mainland and the Zanzibar islands. As social protection is not a union matter but falls under the separate jurisdiction of the two regions, the article focuses only on social protection policies as they have developed on Mainland Tanzania during the period from the early 2000s to 2015. A paper on social protection in Zanzibar (the introduction of the universal old age pension) is being prepared by Jeremy Seekings and Prosper Ngowi.

² Burundi 4.21 per cent, Kenya 2.73 per cent, Rwanda 2.14 per cent, Uganda 1.02 per cent (although note that some of these figures are more recent than 2009) (World Bank 2015: appendix D).

³ World Bank websites: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P124045/tanzania-third-social-action-fund-productive-safety-nets-program-tasaf-iii-psnp?lang=en&tab=overview>; and http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/AFR/2016/01/07/090224b0840378dd/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Tanzania000Tan0Report000Sequence006.pdf (accessed 28 July 2016) and as informed by a senior official at REPOA, November 2016.

The structure of the article is as follows: First, a theoretical framework is provided that builds on Tom Lavers and Sam Hickey's (2015) approach to explaining social protection expansion in Africa, which combines political settlement theory and discursive institutionalism. Second, as the first part of the analysis, the article explores how the Tanzanian elite has outlined its main social problems and programmatic responses. Third, the main part of the analysis narrates how the PSSN was developed and promoted by transnational and domestic institutions as the policy solution fitting the elite's programmatic responses to the country's social problems. Fourth, to critically assess the findings and the strength of the theoretical framework, the promotion of the PSSN is compared with the attempt to introduce a social pension over the same period. In the conclusion, I discuss some theoretical and empirical implications of the study.

2 Theoretical framework: Policy solutions by policy entrepreneurs

The article takes as its starting point that within a given political settlement, defined as the balance or distribution of power between contending social groups in a country, there is room for different policy approaches. Furthermore, in policy domains of less concern to the elite's survival and legitimacy—such as social protection in Tanzania in the early 2000s—there is space for other actors to promote their favoured policy solutions (Lavers and Hickey 2015). Hence, in the case of Tanzania, it is reasonable to explore the role of institutions outside, or on the margins of, the political settlement in promoting specific types of social protection policy design. Nevertheless, in order for these institutions to get their favoured policy solutions implemented, they need the commitment of the political and bureaucratic elite, and in this sense it is important to understand the nature of the political settlement in Tanzania.

The political settlement in Tanzania has been defined as a 'dominant party ruling coalition' (Khan 2010). This kind of political regime is characterized by a strong governing party with a relatively coherent elite group that excludes opposing elite factions at the horizontal level. Vertically, the elite coalition is reliant on lower-level factions (party officials at local level) to maintain its legitimacy and ensure regime survival. In recent years, opposition parties in Tanzania have gained strength and rival factions within the ruling party (Chama Cha Mapinduz (CCM)) have become more pronounced, which might indicate a move towards a 'competitive clientelism' political settlement (Khan 2010). However, thus far, the label 'dominant party ruling coalition' seems fitting. There is agreement among political observers that, although internal factions persist, the core of the ruling CCM government controls policy-making in a centralized and top-down manner, which means that the actual and final policy decisions sit with the president, key ministers and high-level public officials (Booth et al. 2014; Gray 2015; Hoffman 2013; Lofchie 2014; Therkildsen and Bourgoignie 2012).

According to Lavers and Hickey (2015: 3), 'the success of attempts by transnational actors to promote social protection expansion [...] depends on the compatibility of these ideas with existing political settlements, their underlying interests and [...] the ideas of powerful factions therein'. Given the neglect of social protection in Tanzania in the early 2000s and hence social protection's limited interest to elite factions, the role of ideas becomes particularly prominent in convincing the elite of the need for policy change. Critically, specific policy ideas must fit the elite's general understanding of the complex reality and problems facing the country (Lavers and Hickey 2015; Mehta 2011), as I shall explain.

Ideational approaches to policy analyses typically distinguish between three levels of ideas, from the abstract to the more specific (Hall 1993; Lavers and Hickey 2015; Mehta 2011; Von Glazczynski and Leisering 2016). The abstract level is often termed *policy paradigm* and provides

‘a relatively coherent set of assumptions about the functioning of economic, social and political institutions’ (Béland 2005: 8); it is ‘an idea about how to understand the purpose of government or public policy in light of a certain set of assumptions about the society and the market’ (Mehta 2011: 27). Policy paradigms are quite stable and most likely to change only when overall policy fields fail (Hall 1993; Von Gliszczyński 2015) or if the political settlement is disrupted (Lavers and Hickey 2015). As the political settlement in Tanzania arguably is relatively stable, it is the two lower levels of ideas that are of interest in this paper.

The second level of ideas can be termed *problem definition*. With regard to ideas around social protection, Lavers and Hickey describe problem definition as ideas about the main social problems to be solved and the programmatic responses considered to be effective in addressing these problems. Such problems can, for instance, relate to poverty reduction, economic development, or vulnerability (Lavers and Hickey 2015: 14). The third level of ideas are *policy solutions*, which refer to the ideas of specific policy schemes provided as the means to counter the social problems and accomplish the programmatic responses (Lavers and Hickey 2015; Mehta 2011). There may be several policy solutions relevant to addressing the defined problems. Policy solutions anchored in the higher ideational level of problem definition (and policy paradigm) as defined by the elite will have a greater chance of securing elite commitment (Von Gliszczyński and Leisering 2016).

As often seems to be the case in ideational analyses of social protection (e.g. Deacon and Stubbs 2013; Foli and Béland 2014; Kaasch 2013; Kpessa and Béland 2012; Kwon et al. 2014), Lavers and Hickey also focus on the role of transnational actors in promoting social protection expansion. Yet they point out that ‘successful ideational influence is dependent on the actions of policy entrepreneurs who lead domestic debate, advocate for change and build advocacy coalitions’ (Lavers and Hickey 2015: 15) and they propose that such policy entrepreneurs can include donor agencies, domestic and international civil society organizations, and individuals within the ruling coalition. However, as ‘actors at various levels of government [are] active in policy formulation’ (Sabatier 1988), I suggest that policy entrepreneurs should also include the lower levels of the bureaucracy. These bureaucrats are not necessarily part of the elite political settlement, but they play central roles in developing and implementing policy. The term policy entrepreneurs thus refers to domestic and international actors who are active in promoting policy change, which in this paper specifically relates to social protection policies.

Policy entrepreneurs need resources, expertise, and moral authority to successfully pursue the development of their favoured policy solutions (Orenstein 2008) but they also need to use these attributes strategically if they want to secure elite commitment to their policy solution and thereby ensure its political viability. Borrowing from and building on Moritz von Gliszczyński and Lutz Leisering’s (2016) framework for spreading policy models, I suggest that there are five interrelated strategies that will enable the successful promotion of a favoured policy solution by policy entrepreneurs:

1. *Contextualization*: The policy solution is framed to fit the higher ideational level of problem definition as described by the elite.
2. *Presentation*: Details of the policy (technical aspects, labels, etc.) that are seen to have political and social appeal are included.
3. *National examples*: The policy is shown to have worked in other countries, although local adaptability is also part of securing political acceptability.
4. *Empirical knowledge*: The policy solution is underpinned by references to empirical evidence provided by experts.

5. *Organizational mandate*: The policy solution is presented as being within the institution's mandate and the institution presents itself as the natural authority to successfully implement the policy.

To sum up: In order to analyse how the recent elite commitment to social protection has been generated, I take an ideational approach. As social protection was of little interest to the Tanzanian elite (i.e. the dominant party ruling coalition) in the early 2000s, there was room for international and domestic policy entrepreneurs to promote their favoured policy solutions. Policy entrepreneurs can pursue different strategies, which are manifested in their resources, expertise, and moral authority. As policy solutions are more likely to gain elite commitment if they are anchored in more general ideas, as described by the elite, the following analysis starts by highlighting how the Tanzanian ruling party describes the main social problems and its programmatic responses to them.

The following analysis centres on key government documents that describe Tanzania's developmental challenges (social problems), as these documents represent the views of the ruling party. This analysis is supported by references to the speeches of various presidents and prime ministers. The analyses in Sections 4 and 5 are based on interviews⁴, newspaper articles, and the study of government documents, policy analyses, and evaluations, as well as research papers and academic articles.

3 Problem definition and responses by the ruling party

The Development Vision 2025 (of 2000) and the Tanzania Five Year Development Plan (FYDP) 2011/12–2015/16 (of 2011) are the primary documents that lay out the government's approach to development. Both have been driven by the government, not by donors (Ulriksen 2016). In the following, I explore how the Development Vision 2025 narrates the challenges facing Tanzania (problem definition), and how the FYDP, in response, reflects a productivist strategy in 'realising the Country's aspirations as stipulated in the Development Vision'.⁵

Work on the Development Vision 2025 started under President Mkapa in 1995 and it was unveiled in 2000. The Vision was developed through discussions with domestic stakeholders, including 'Honourable Members of Parliament, all political parties, leaders of various religious denominations, women and youth organisations, chambers of commerce and industry, farmers, professional associations, renowned personalities in our nation's history and ordinary Tanzanians'.⁶ Hence, the Vision is a truly Tanzanian document, although in a political settlement described as a dominant party ruling coalition it reflects more the views of the ruling party than those of the Tanzanian population in general.

The Vision highlights economic and capacity issues as impediments to development, which are only indirectly related to the main social problems and hence less relevant for our purposes here.

⁴ Interviews and conversations have been held with officials in the following organizations: TASAF, President's Office, Social Securities Regulatory Agency (SSRA), REPOA, World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP, World Food Programme, HelpAge, Department for International Development (DFID), Embassy of Sweden.

⁵ Prime Minister M.P. Pinda, in his opening speech at the 3rd Annual National Policy Dialogue at Ubungu Plaza, Dar es Salaam, 26 January 2012.

⁶ President B.W. Mkapa in Foreword to the 2025 Vision (URT 2000).

However, importantly, the first impediment to development is said to be ‘Donor-Dependence Syndrome and a Dependent and Defeatist Development Mindset’. This idea is elaborated as follows: ‘The mindset of the people of Tanzania and their leaders has succumbed to donor dependency and has resulted in an erosion of initiative and lack of ownership of the development agenda. [...] The mindset [...] has neither been supportive of hard work, ingenuity and creativity, nor has it provided a conducive environment for these attributes to emerge’ (URT 2000: 8). The Vision suggests the following responses to this state of affairs:

The effective transformation of the mindset and culture to promote attitudes of *self-development*, *community development*, confidence and commitment to face development challenges and exploit every opportunity for the improvement of the quality of livelihood is of prime importance. The effective ownership of the development agenda coupled with the *spirit of self-reliance*, at all societal levels, are major driving forces for the realization of the Vision. Tanzanians *should learn to appreciate and honour hard work*, creativity, professionalism and entrepreneurship (URT 2000: 17; italics added by author).

Responses to development challenges thus lie in ideas around the need for change among Tanzanians and in society as a whole: the need to strive for self-development within communities and to cherish self-reliance, responsibility, and hard work. In the analysis of the development of the CCT programmes (Section 4), these issues feature prominently in the framing of the policy. The political elite’s concern with the Tanzanian ‘mindset’ remains pronounced. The new president, Dr J. Magufuli, has emphasized the main drawbacks in Tanzania as corruption, poor management, waste of public resources, and ‘a culture that encouraged laziness and did not reward hard work’.⁷

The Vision’s overall aim is to transform Tanzania from a ‘least developed’ country to a ‘middle-income’ country by 2025 (URT 2000). The government views the FYDP as the formal implementation tool (programmatic response) in its effort to meet this aim. In line with the Vision, the FYDP also highlights the need for people to ‘move out of the now entrenched dependency mindset’. It emphasizes that ‘every Tanzanian has the duty and responsibility to play an active part in the development of the motherland’ and ‘to build a culture and attitude of “we can do”’. The response is to ‘enhance entrepreneurship and [...] targeted support for disadvantaged and most vulnerable groups in society’ (URT 2011: 102).

The objective of the FYDP ‘is to unleash Tanzania’s latent growth potentials [...] by] the targeting of strategic priority interventions to move Tanzania to a higher growth trajectory coupled with a shift from an Agriculture-Based to an Industry-Based economy’.⁸ Specific strategies include addressing infrastructural bottlenecks, increasing the pool of skilled labour, improving the business environment, and enhancing productivity in agriculture.⁹ Clearly, the focus is on increasing productivity and enabling pro-poor growth. Any strategies aimed at the poor relate to ‘attracting investments, particularly in areas where the poor are more involved’ (URT 2011: 10). Thus, any growth strategy including the poor ‘must involve substantial growth

⁷ Speech by President Dr J. Magufuli at the inauguration of the 11th Parliament as cited in *The Citizen*, ‘Magufuli: My Priorities’, 21 November 2015.

⁸ Prime Minister M.P. Pinda, in his opening speech at the 3rd Annual National Policy Dialogue at Ubungu Plaza, Dar es Salaam, 26 January 2012.

⁹ Keynote speech by President Dr J.M. Kikwete at the USAID Forum on ‘Frontiers in Development: Ending Extreme Poverty’, 19 September 2014, Washington, DC.

of agricultural productivity and allow most of the rural population to benefit from such growth through selling the increased produce in domestic and export markets'. Only the most vulnerable may receive some targeted support (URT 2011: 17).

The Tanzanian leaders' programmatic response to development challenges prioritizes growth and productivity. Key terms are community development, self-reliance, responsibility, and hard work. Programmatic responses to problems of development and poverty are therefore framed within an economic rationale for social protection as instruments to strengthen the agency of the poor and allow them to participate in markets. In this ideational orientation, one can draw links to both Nyerere's socialist policy of the 1960s and 1970s, Ujaama, and the subsequent decades of economic liberalization. In the Arusha Declaration of 1967, the then President Julius Nyerere emphasized self-reliance and hard work, dedicating a whole section to a 'policy of self-reliance' and emphasizing specifically how 'hard work is the root of development' (Nyerere 1967). These aspects of social idealism continue to feature in Tanzanian politics, but nowadays they co-exist with liberal economic views that underscore the importance of the poor participating in economic markets in order to escape poverty (Lofchie 2014).

Another ideational approach to social protection is related to human rights, where the rationale for social protection is related to the right to social security and adequate standards of living (Von Gliszczynski 2015). Other than references to rights to land, human rights do not feature in the documents and may thus be perceived by the elite as an unimportant ideational basis for development. This is not necessarily surprising in a Sub-Sahara African context, where political elites often stress production over protection and take a priority view of poverty reduction, whereby social protection interventions are limited to the worst off (Barrientos 2013; Hickey and Bracking 2005). In the next sections, I explore how policy entrepreneurs use different strategies to present policy solutions fitting the government's ideational approach to development challenges.

4 Social protection policy solution: The promotion of PSSN

In 2012, the Tanzanian government launched the nationwide Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) programme, which is a conditional cash transfer (including elements of public works and livelihood enhancement) targeting the extreme poor (calculated as about 10 per cent of the population of 50 million). According to TASAF (2015: 1), 'households benefit from a combination of basic and conditional cash transfers, cash transfers through participation in labor-intensive Public Works, and advice and support concerning savings and investments'. The ambition set in 2012 was to reach at least 1 million food-insecure households (TASAF 2015). As described below, the PSSN was not an entirely new idea but instead had its roots in small community development projects implemented by TASAF in the early 2000s.

The analysis in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 chronologically narrates how the PSSN developed from these early community-based projects aimed at improving livelihoods and lifting people out of poverty. The narrative shows—and the discussion in Section 4.3 elaborates on—how the process of developing and promoting the PSSN has been driven by international and domestic policy entrepreneurs with the resources, expertise, and authority to present a policy solution, backed by national examples and empirical evidence, that matches the way the elite perceive the main social problems. Community development, self-reliance, responsibility, and hard work were key terms in the early projects and continued to feature as the advocated policy solution was transformed into the PSSN. This strong productivist notion fits well with the ruling party's problem definition and response, as outlined in the Development Vision 2025 and the FYDP.

4.1 From community development to CCT pilot

In 2000, the government established a programme to ‘facilitate improvements in socio-economic infrastructure in rural and peri-urban communities under TASAF’ (Lerisse et al. 2003: 35). The programme is the responsibility of the President’s Office and was originally ‘part of the Government of Tanzania’s strategy for reducing poverty and improving livelihoods by stimulating economic activity at the community level’ (Evans et al. 2014: 10). In its wording, the programme falls in line with the government’s Development Vision 2025, in which dissatisfaction with previous attempts at rural development and poverty reduction is expressed, and in which the idea of self-development is promoted to effectuate transformation (URT 2000). At this stage, TASAF was more akin to a community development programme than simply a cash transfer programme. The main purpose was to oversee smaller projects, which were decided on, implemented, and managed by the communities; such projects included the construction and improvement of community social services (basic health-care facilities and schools) and infrastructural assets. Poor and vulnerable households were identified by community leaders and TASAF officials, and targeted households could become part of a public works programme (receiving income for work on community assets) or other, smaller income-generating projects; thus active community involvement was an essential element of the programme (Evans et al. 2014; Lerisse et al. 2003).

TASAF I ran from 2000 to 2005 and was followed by TASAF II, which continued in much the same way with the aim of ‘empowering communities to access opportunities so that they can request, implement and monitor subprojects that contribute to improved livelihoods’ (TASAF 2008: v). TASAF II covered 121 local communities in mainland Tanzania, supporting the improvement of basic social services and access to them, and assisting food-insecure households and vulnerable individuals through public works sub-projects and income-generating activities. According to the UN, TASAF I and II ‘achieved impressive results in facilitating community access to social services through infrastructure projects such as schools, health facilities and water points[,] reaching 7.3 million people in TASAF I and 16.1 million in TASAF II’ (UN n.d.).

During TASAF II, the idea of a CCT programme took form. The World Bank has been the primary funder of TASAF since its inception and, from around 2005, the Bank organized international workshops and exchange programmes so that TASAF staff and other key stakeholders could learn about social protection interventions and programmes elsewhere.¹⁰ TASAF officials learned from other regional programmes such as those in Ethiopia and Kenya, but they also travelled as far as Jamaica to study different programme designs.¹¹ With the assistance of the World Bank, TASAF started to design a cash transfer system around 2006–2007. The basic elements of the suggested pilot programme were similar to those of many other World Bank-supported cash transfers in the Global South (Hall 2007; Von Gliszczynski 2015). Thus, an initial pilot project should run in a few districts (with previously identified control group communities), and the project should—as was already the case with TASAF programmes—target the poorest and most vulnerable groups, who should receive a small regular cash transfer on certain conditions. The pilot also fitted the ruling party’s problem definition and response, as discussed in Section 3, with targeted support to only the most vulnerable and an emphasis on community development and responsibility. According to TASAF officials, the

¹⁰ Interview with a senior official at the World Bank, 7 May 2014.

¹¹ Conversation with a TASAF official, 19 October 2016.

inclusion of these conditions in the policy was politically important in a context where it was feared that cash transfer programmes could otherwise be perceived as handouts.¹²

In keeping with the spirit in TASAF I of co-responsibility and active engagement at all stages of the programme, the targeting of beneficiaries and the monitoring of the programme were to be done at the community level with the strong involvement of the people in the community. Thus, CB (for community-based) was added to the abbreviated name of the proposed project, which became CB-CCT. In the proposed design, it was suggested that the CB-CCT pilot programme would work most cost-effectively if it built on the structures that TASAF had already established in the communities that had benefited from previous programmes.¹³

With the World Bank in the lead, the policy entrepreneurs had sufficient resources and expertise to fund the pilot project, to provide opportunities for learning about other, similar programmes, to set up a project with opportunities for building empirical knowledge, and to present a policy solution with features that had political appeal. The policy solution was also made attractive through the local adaption that cemented the central role of community development; and the domestic partnering policy entrepreneur, TASAF, was able to present itself as the natural authority to successfully implement the policy. The centrality of TASAF was strengthened by its partnership with the resourceful World Bank, but probably also by TASAF's institutional placement within the President's Office, rather than within a line ministry. The government agreed to the project and it was started in 2009, the first cash transfer payments being made in January 2010 (Evans et al. 2014).

4.2 From conditional cash transfers to productive social safety nets

The pilot CCT projects in Tanzania built on the community development projects implemented by TASAF, with the bulk of funding from the World Bank. The projects had a specific focus on poverty reduction and included a strong emphasis on assisting beneficiaries to help themselves and escape the poverty trap. The ideas of productivity and co-responsibility remained strong elements in the policy design as the CB-CCT moved to become a nationwide programme (the PSSN).

As the CB-CCT was a pilot project, monitoring and evaluation were, of course, essential components. Documentation includes reports developed by or in consultation with TASAF for its own internal use and for sharing with its government counterparts and international development partners.¹⁴ However, there are also publicly available reports and documentation that have been shared more widely. In the following, it is described how the World Bank and TASAF organized events and disseminated reports in order to gain support for the upscaling of the CCT programme.

As early as June 2010, the World Bank and TASAF organized an international conference within which participants across the Global South could engage in a Public Works Learning Forum. TASAF was to showcase its public works programmes, as implemented in TASAF I and II, and the forum would enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise among World Bank officials and

¹² Conversations with TASAF officials, 15–17 December 2014.

¹³ Interview with a senior official at TASAF, 9 May 2014.

¹⁴ Interview with a senior official at TASAF, 9 May 2014.

their country-level counterparts and ‘catalyze improved understanding and know-how on the role of public work programs as part [of] national safety net and social protection agendas’.¹⁵

In 2011, the World Bank published a report on Tanzania with the sub-title Options for a National Productive Safety Net Program. The report ‘explores the role safety nets and transfers can play in reducing poverty more rapidly in Tanzania’ (World Bank 2011: i). It was not an evaluation of the ongoing CB-CCT programme, but instead engaged with the issue of a social safety net system being not just a mechanism to reduce poverty and improve human capabilities (as in the CB-CCT), but also a means to increase the productivity of beneficiaries so that they could help themselves escape poverty. In advocating conditional cash transfers with a ‘productivist’ element, the report—in wording not unlike that of the FYDP—suggested that

the primary focus of reducing poverty clearly needs to remain on re-engineering growth to reach poor Tanzanians. This means raising the productivity of subsistence agriculture, improving markets and access, investing in education and infrastructure, and encouraging smallholder cash cropping and small business. But judicious transfers to the poor can complement these efforts and hasten reduction of extreme poverty. A central role of safety net transfers is to equip the poor to participate more fully in this growth process, and to bridge ‘gaps’ that are preventing them from realizing potential income gains. ‘Smart’ safety nets can increase their productivity (by building human and physical capital); allow the poor to take on higher-risk, higher-return activities (for example using fertilizer); and increase the returns to their labour (examples include small cash transfers that allow women to undertake petty trading; or subsistence farmers to buy food, and thus shift some of their land to cash crops) (World Bank 2011: 54).

In conversation, TASAF officials have emphasized that the idea of ‘productivity’ was important in building political support for an upscaling of the CCT programme,¹⁶ which linked well with the political leaders’ focus on ‘unleashing Tanzania’s growth potential’, as discussed in Section 3. The reference to productivity raises the question whether there has been policy diffusion from other countries in the region, such as the social protection programmes in Ethiopia and Rwanda, which also refer to productivity (Lavers 2016, forthcoming). TASAF officials maintain that the PSSN largely builds on experiences stemming from TASAF I and II, but they also acknowledge drawing inspiration from the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia (but not that of Rwanda), although the Ethiopian version has a stronger public works component than the Tanzanian programme.¹⁷

Gathering evidence from the pilot was another important aspect in ‘selling’ the programme. Although not published until 2014, a World Bank-led evaluation report provided important information about the impact of the CCT pilot, with a mid-term review in 2011, draft versions of the report, and presentations of key findings being available earlier (Evans et al. 2014). The report is extensive and thorough in its assessment of the impacts on beneficiary communities, as summarized by Evans et al. (2014: 8):

¹⁵ Media Briefing Note circulated by TASAF and the World Bank’s Social Protection & Labour Department for the Public Works Learning Forum, which took place on 14–18 June 2010.

¹⁶ Conversations with TASAF officials, 15–17 December 2014.

¹⁷ Conversation with a TASAF official, 19 October 2016.

On the whole, the community-based CCT program led to improved outcomes in both health and education. Households used the resources to invest in livestock, in children's shoes, in insurance, and—for the poorest households—in increased savings. This suggests that the households focused on reducing risk and on improving their livelihoods rather than principally on increasing consumption. There is also evidence that the project had positive effects on community cohesion.

Based on the experiences of TASAF I and II (including the CB-CCT pilot), its evaluations and reports, as described above, and lessons learned from other national examples, the government decided in 2012 to design and implement a countrywide Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) programme (UN n.d.). It was argued that this was 'fundamentally a conditional cash transfer program, complemented by a seasonal intensive public works labor program' (World Bank 2013: 42), which was in line with the CCT pilot and the public works aspects of TASAF I and II. Thus, the government committed itself to the PSSN as part of its overall strategy to overcome the persistence of extreme poverty in the country. This move was widely championed by the Department of Poverty Eradication within the Ministry of Finance.¹⁸ Incidentally, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Finance was previously the director of TASAF.¹⁹

Even though there was a *decision* to implement the PSSN, the actual *implementation* and upscaling of the programme countrywide required additional funding. The World Bank had been the primary funder of TASAF I and II, including the CB-CCT (with some limited government contributions as well) but it was now looking to find co-funders and to persuade the government to turn its initial support into budgetary commitment and ownership of the programme. From 2013 to 2015, the World Bank and TASAF worked hard to get funding commitment from the government and other donors, and they largely succeeded, as discussed below.

In December 2013, the World Bank launched the report 'Tanzanian Economic Update 2013' at an event attended by government officials and donor partners. The report specifically promoted the idea of 'lessening extreme poverty by transferring cash directly to the most vulnerable groups' and advocated that '[t]he scaling up of this program [CCT to PSSN] to achieve national coverage could result in significant reductions in extreme poverty without excessively high expenditure' (World Bank 2013: iii, x–xi). World Bank officials challenged the Tanzanian government 'to seriously invest in social protection if it really aims to combat poverty',²⁰ and sought to provide convincing arguments as to why the government should 'give money to Tanzania's poor'.²¹

Another important event that can be seen as a clear attempt by the Ministry of Finance to obtain domestic political support for the PSSN was the international conference in Arusha on 15–17 December 2014. The conference was entitled 'Social Protection: Building Effective and Sustainable Systems for Equitable Growth' and was facilitated by the Ministry of Finance. A range of ministries broadly related to social protection were represented by their deputy ministers, including the Ministries of Education and Vocational Training; Community Development; Health and Social Welfare; State; Home Affairs; and Labour and Employment (only the Permanent Secretary), as well as the Prime Minister's Office of Regional

¹⁸ Interview with a senior official at the World Bank, 7 May 2014.

¹⁹ Conversations with officials at UNDP and DFID, December 2014.

²⁰ *The Citizen*, 'WB advocates cash handouts poor' [sic], 15 December 2013; accessed 23 March 2015.

²¹ *The Citizen*, 'Should government give money to Tanzania's poor', by Jacques Morriset, the World Bank's Lead Economist for Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda, 17 December 2013; accessed 23 March 2015.

Administration and Local Government.²² In order to ensure their active participation, the deputy ministers were given the task of chairing the sessions. The programme included a variety of presentations on experiences of social protection programmes internationally, regionally, and within Tanzania. Although there were presentations on categorical pension schemes such as those implemented in Lesotho and by KwaWazee in the Kagera region (see Section 5), the majority of presentations focused on targeted and conditional cash transfers, including the experiences of combining these with public works. Listening to all the presentations, it was hard to miss their principal message: that cash transfers to the extreme poor have a range of positive impacts that goes well beyond the cost of such programmes, not least in strengthening the agency of the poor and enabling their participation in markets and communities.

There were some who felt that the World Bank and TASAF were glossing over possible difficulties in the pilot programme and the potential challenges of upscaling it. As one civil society activist said, ‘it is all praise and I don’t believe that it [the pilot programme] didn’t encounter any problems’.²³ Some donors were also not particularly keen on certain aspects of the PSSN, particularly the use of conditionalities.²⁴ Nevertheless, the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK government, USAID, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA) joined as primary donors alongside the World Bank. UN bodies (operating under the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP)) have also supported the PSSN programme on the fringes with technical assistance and training to strengthen the capacity of TASAF and other implementing institutions.²⁵ Two of the main rationales put forward by the donors for the PSSN were that this was a programme that was already in existence and that the government had made it clear that it wanted the PSSN as the main poverty-reducing social protection strategy.²⁶ The programme furthermore fitted with the overall donor strategies of reducing poverty, improving education (especially for girls), and contributing to employment and income security among the poorest.²⁷

By May 2014, TASAF was already confident of the government’s commitment to the PSSN, whereas the final commitment from some donors took a little longer to achieve. With the cost of the PSSN estimated at US\$300 million per year, the agreement achieved during 2015 was for the government to fund US\$100 million per year through domestic revenue finances, US\$100 million through credit from the World Bank, and the last US\$100 million from development partners.²⁸

As should be clear by now, the road to the PSSN was driven by the World Bank together with TASAF. Through the implementation of TASAF I and II, and the CB-CCT pilot, the two institutions built a foundation on which it seemed only natural that TASAF should implement the countrywide programme. The nature of the policy solution, with elements such as co-responsibility (conditionalities) and productive economic activities (public works), fitted well with the ruling party’s ideational approach to the country’s development challenges. TASAF officials emphasize that beneficiaries should ‘graduate’ out of the programme within three years;

²² The conference was attended by the author.

²³ *The Citizen*, ‘WB advocates cash handouts poor’ [sic], 15 December 2013; accessed 23 March 2015.

²⁴ Interview with an official from DFID, 21 April 2015.

²⁵ Interview with an official at ILO and UNDP Coordinator, 9 May 2014.

²⁶ Interview with an official from DFID, 21 April 2015.

²⁷ Email correspondence with an official at the Swedish Embassy, 10–13 April 2014.

²⁸ Interviews and conversations with officials at TASAF and REPOA, May 2014 and October 2016.

they regard social pensions as problematic and inefficient, as you cannot ‘graduate’ from them and because a universal pension will also have non-poor beneficiaries; and they see conditionalities as essential in ensuring that beneficiaries prioritize health and education and in building political support.²⁹ With the emphasis on productive self-reliance and co-responsibility rather than protective entitlements and rights, they have been able to ensure that the PSSN fits with the responses to development challenges as laid out in the FYDP. TASAF officials are, not surprisingly, passionate about the PSSN, which has made them central to the government’s poverty-reducing efforts. From running quite small-scale community projects, TASAF has—together with the World Bank—pursued the idea that a productive social safety net is the best form of social protection, and TASAF has become the main entity to take this key social protection policy countrywide.

4.3 How the policy entrepreneurs achieved elite commitment for the PSSN

Returning to the theoretical framework, as discussed in Section 2, the analysis of the development of the PSSN in Tanzania shows how policy entrepreneurs can build elite commitment to social protection. Initially, the World Bank (a transnational actor) drove the process, strongly helped by its availability of resources and expertise as well as its reputation as an authority that drives productive and pro-poor economic development. However, the World Bank was not the only policy entrepreneur. The analysis makes evident how domestic policy institutions (here TASAF) are important partners in designing, implementing, and, in time, advocating for a policy solution. This alliance of policy entrepreneurs also gained the backing of an important faction within the ruling party, namely the Ministry of Finance, helped in part by the personnel connections between the Ministry and TASAF.

In terms of strategies, the analysis underlines the following: The PSSN was a policy solution that fitted well with the problem definition and programmatic responses as defined by the ruling party, which emphasized a productivist approach to development and featured responses such as community development, responsibility, and self-reliance (*contextualization*). The PSSN included details that were seen as critical to ensure political support. Thus, in its *presentation*, the policy solution featured targeting of the most vulnerable, conditionality (i.e. co-responsibility), and public works (production and hard work).

In promoting their policy solution, the policy entrepreneurs used examples to show ruling party officials (and other donors) how the policy had worked in other countries, such as in Ethiopia, evidencing that the PSSN was not a handout, but instead enabled poor recipients and their families to become self-reliant and responsible agents that could take part in the economy (*national examples*). The legitimacy of the policy was enhanced by its inclusion of communities in the identification of beneficiaries and monitoring of the programme. The policy solution was further legitimized by empirical evidence presented by experts in a range of workshops and publications (*empirical knowledge*). Finally, as the policy had developed out of TASAF-implemented community projects, TASAF was able to present itself as the national authority to successfully implement the policy solution (*organizational mandate*).

²⁹ Conversations with TASAF officials, 15–17 December 2014.

5 Contrasting PSSN to the promotion of social pensions

Thus far, we have established that, in the case of social protection in Tanzania, international and domestic policy entrepreneurs have played a critical role in getting the ruling party to endorse social protection in the form of the PSSN. In order to investigate the theoretical framework still further, I discuss in this section the concurrent attempt by other policy entrepreneurs to promote an old age pension.

Initially, during the 2000s, the idea of a non-contributory old age pension was promoted by international NGOs, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and some international donors through internationally funded pilot projects, workshops, and the reporting of examples from elsewhere and empirical evidence.

According to one study in the early 2000s, ‘the elderly are the least supported’, with only the international NGO HelpAge International paying attention to ‘the impoverishing forces facing the elderly’ (Lerisse et al. 2003: 69). With the assistance of HelpAge International and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), the KwaWazee pension fund was started in the Nshamba villages in the Muleba District, in northwest Tanzania, at the end of 2003. The project started on a small scale with the intention of generating knowledge about the lived realities of elderly people and identifying ways of responding to their needs. However, as more funds became available, KwaWazee developed into a cash transfer programme with the aim of providing poor and vulnerable people over the age of 60, including those caring for children without parents, with regular cash payments in the form of pensions and child benefits. The programme expanded to other villages in the Muleba district and, by 2007, nearly 600 pensioners were receiving a monthly cash transfer of TZS6,000 (US\$5) plus a child benefit of TZS3,000 for each (grand)child cared for (Hofmann et al. 2008; Kessy 2014).

Although the KwaWazee project has remained limited in reach, the project has played an important role in documenting and evaluating the impact of a regular cash transfer on the well-being of older people and their families. An evaluation of the project was published in 2008 with a strong justification of its value: ‘There is very little documentation in Tanzania on social pensions or social assistance for older people. Thus, the KwaWazee scheme can be regarded as a step towards the introduction of more such provision in Tanzania’ (Hofmann et al. 2008: xiv). In line with studies of social cash transfers elsewhere (e.g. UNDP and ILO 2011), the evaluation report documents a range of positive impacts on older people. To highlight a few aspects, regular pension payments improved the household economy so that pensioners were better prepared for crises such as drought and illness, and they made pensioners more self-reliant, the majority of the cash being spent on basic needs (salt, soap, and shoes). There were also notable improvements in the overall health and psychosocial well-being of pensioners, just as children in homes receiving cash transfers experienced better material and social well-being. This evaluation led the authors of the report to recommend the consideration of a universal pension scheme (Hofmann et al. 2008).

The civil society organizations involved in the KwaWazee project have continued to proclaim the importance of an old age pension. Other stakeholders have added their voices, too. In 2006, the DFID funded an ILO-led feasibility study (Gassmann and Behrendt 2006). The study provided micro-simulations for Tanzania and Senegal to test different social policy options and their potential impact on poverty at household level. For Tanzania, it was argued in the report that a combination of universal old age pension and child benefit ‘would achieve a reduction in poverty rates of 35 per cent, with even more substantial effects for individuals living in households with children and elderly (a drop of 46 per cent), which face the highest poverty risk’

(Gassmann and Behrendt 2006: vi). This study built on an earlier ILO study (Pal et al. 2005) that had assessed the affordability of social protection from a macroeconomic perspective and concluded that a basic social benefits package would be affordable in most African countries if governments were willing to provide sufficient budgetary commitment and international donors some intermediate support.

The ILO was also involved when, in 2008, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development undertook a Social Protection Expenditure Performance Review. In this, it was highlighted that the feasibility of a universal non-contributory old age pension should be investigated, as there was a high rate of poverty among households containing older people (ILO 2008). Based on that recommendation, the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with HelpAge International, and with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, embarked on a study to assess the feasibility of introducing a universal old age pension (Ministry of Labour 2010). The study, which included inputs from a range of government, parastatal, non-governmental, and private institutions, offered an analysis of costs, fiscal sustainability, and financing options in relation to an old age pension. A number of scenarios were proposed, with different payment and age eligibility levels, which estimated that a universal old age pension would cost the government between 0.26 and 1.28 per cent of GDP (Ministry of Labour 2010). The report argued that

achieving old age income security is key to realising Tanzania's national development potential. Implementation of a universal social pension is both technically possible and fiscally sustainable and would contribute to achieving a wide range of national development objectives. The social pension represents a cost-effective investment in broad-based social and economic development and would be a major step towards achieving the rights set out in the Tanzanian Constitution (Ministry of Labour 2010: 8).

Around the same time, the independent research institution REPOA published a report on the material well-being and living arrangements of Tanzanians who were 60 years of age and older, which assessed the affordability of a universal pension. In line with the report from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development, this report also argued that an old age pension would substantially decrease poverty—that it could 'lift over 3 million Tanzanians out of poverty' and that it would be affordable (Mboghoina and Osberg 2010). In the years that followed, HelpAge International and its partners in the KwaWazee project continued to lobby for an old age pension and to provide evidence of its value, for instance with an evaluation report published in 2014 (Heslop and Hofmann 2014).³⁰ Furthermore, the Social Security Regulatory Authority (SSRA) under the Ministry of Labour was tasked with running additional feasibility studies and designing the programme.³¹

It is evident from the above that the promotion of the old age pension has focused on showing the various positive impacts of the pension and estimating its (limited) costs. The policy solution is framed in terms of helping to achieve poverty reduction and realizing Tanzania's development potential, but it does not otherwise speak to the ruling party's problem definition and programmatic responses in the way that the PSSN does. From one ideational perspective, the promotion of social pensions can be advocated on the basis of human rights (Von Gliszczynski 2015), and the reports do make references to the proposed old age pension as an instrument to

³⁰ Interview with a senior official at HelpAge International Tanzania, 13 October 2015.

³¹ Interview with a senior official at the SSRA, 17 April 2015.

meet basic human rights, as the above quote from the Ministry of Labour report highlights. However, most of the reports only refer to human rights in passing; a recent report presents no rights argument to support the case of an old age pension (Heslop and Hofmann 2014).

Given that the ruling party has not put any emphasis on human rights in its primary development documents, it is perhaps not surprising that policy entrepreneurs have tried to focus on other ideational frames to promote their policy solution. Instead, the potential of the old age pension to reduce poverty, its wide reach, and limited costs have been expressed as positive attributes of the policy. However, the proposed pension has also met criticism that follows the programmatic development approach of the government. Thus, the pension is argued to be ineffective in addressing poverty, as it will also reach the non-poor elderly. Also, unlike the PSSN, which already reaches the elderly in vulnerable households, there are no 'productivist' elements in the policy design that relate to support for asset investment and graduation out of poverty.³²

Despite such misgivings, the Minister of Finance, at the aforementioned international conference in December 2014, stated that there is a 'political will for social protection, particularly on implementing a universal pension for elders'³³ and that the government is at the initial stages of introducing a pension system for the elderly. While there had been considerable lobbying for an old age pension, particularly by HelpAge International, the announcement still came as a surprise to many and, theoretically, this policy solution does not appear as well anchored to the ruling elite's problem definition and programmatic responses. It is possible that the government has taken an interest in the old age pension because it may be a popular policy among the electorate. In this case, political interests override possible ideational fits between policy solutions and problem definition. Certainly, it is telling that the pension was announced by the Ministry of Finance, and not its erstwhile promoter, the Ministry of Labour, and that the proposal came within a year of a parliamentary and presidential election, in October 2015. The political value of announcing the introduction of an old age pension before the election is obvious: the ruling CCM was under pressure from opposition parties (Gray 2015) and a pension, with its wide reach, could be expected to give an electoral 'boost' to the incumbent government. While the policy announcement supported political interests, it is less certain—in the current post-election context—whether the promise will be converted into actual budgetary commitment by the government. At the time of writing, an old age pension scheme has not yet been put in place.

The comparison between the promotion of the old age pension and that of the PSSN reveals clear similarities in the types of policy entrepreneur involved and the strategies used. In both cases, international policy entrepreneurs were the initial and primary promoters of the policy solution. That the World Bank sponsored CCTs and that the ILO and HelpAge International advocated for old age pensions is in line with general global trends (Von Gliszczynski 2015). Policy entrepreneurs also similarly used national examples, pilots, and empirical evidence as strategies to promote their policies. However, the theoretical framework also highlights the different success rate in the two cases. The ILO and HelpAge International did not have the same resources and ability to fund projects in Tanzania as the World Bank. In addition, the World Bank had strong domestic partners in the TASAF and the Ministry of Finance, whereas HelpAge International partnered with a smaller NGO (KwaWazee project) and the less centrally placed Ministry of Labour. Importantly, in contextualization and presentation the World Bank

³² Interviews and conversations with TASAF and World Bank officials, May and December 2014.

³³ Speech by Hon. Saada Mkuya Salum, Minister of Finance, 17 December 2014, International Conference in Arusha, as recorded by author.

and TASAF provided a policy solution fitting the elite's problem definition and programmatic responses, which was not entirely the case with the pension policy. That an old age pension has now been announced suggests the possible theoretical limits of an ideational approach where political interests are at stake. I discuss this further in the next section, where I conclude by highlighting some theoretical and empirical implications of the study.

6 Conclusion

In this article, I took as a starting point that within a given political settlement and in a policy area of little interest to the elite, there is room for policy entrepreneurs to promote their favoured policy solutions. Thus, in this context, ideas take a prominent role in explaining policy development. Yet it appears that the space for policy entrepreneurs outside or on the margins of the elite to shape policy may be closing as social protection has now attracted the attention of the ruling party. Consequently, the role of political interests is also an important factor to include in analyses of social protection introduction and expansion. Certainly, future studies of social protection in Tanzania may want to focus on the role that the PSSN and the old age pension play in electioneering and in politics at the local level, where the programmes are implemented. As the ruling party still relies on the support of local-level factions and as political competition is increasing, it will be no simple matter for TASAF to implement the PSSN programme objectively and without interference from local political interests.

The theoretical framework, based on ideational approaches, proved valuable in explaining how specific types of social protection policies have developed in Tanzania. Of broader relevance, the study shows how not only transnational actors but also domestic institutions at the lower levels of government shape specific policy solutions. Policy entrepreneurs can use different strategies to promote their policy, but it seems particularly important that the policy fits the elite's understanding of the country's challenges and possible responses thereto.

The Productive Social Safety Net programme fits the ruling party's productivist approach to development insofar as it presents an economic rationale for social protection, whereby poverty reduction is achieved by enhancing the agency of the poor to participate in the market. Human rights do not feature as an ideational frame for promoting social policy. As we continue to study the expansion of social protection across the African continent, we might do well to pay more attention to the extent to which specific social protection policies are in line with the development ideas of the elite.

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