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**Social protection policy reform in
Zambia during the Sata presidency,
2011-2014**

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Social protection policy reform in Zambia during the Sata presidency, 2011-2014

Abstract

The election of Michael Sata and his Patriotic Front (PF) party in 2011 led to the expansion of social cash transfers (SCTs) in Zambia, with the state taking over primary financial responsibility from foreign aid donors. Public discontent towards the liberal (or neoliberal) economic policies of the former ruling party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), resulted in the resonance of populist strategies in urban centres and increased support towards interventionist policies. Sata and the PF capitalised on these demands by successfully using a populist electoral strategy that included “branding” themselves as pro-poor. In government, the PF shifted the emphasis of public policy from agriculture subsidies (which had been preferred by the MMD) to cash transfers and related social protection programmes. The government completed and published the country’s first National Social Protection Policy. This shift in policy was driven by the diffusion of ideas from donors through an influential “social democratic” faction within the PF. These ideas meshed with the PF’s strategic interests, because of popular support for statist policies among both the PF’s existing supporters (in urban areas and the north of the country) as well as prospective supporters in other rural areas who might be attracted away from other parties. Yet, a decision towards the end of Sata’s presidency to significantly increase spending on farm input subsidies presented a shift from the earlier programmatic reforms to a continuation of the forms of patronage that persisted under previous governments.

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, there has been a proliferation of social protection programmes across much of sub-Saharan Africa. These include social cash transfers (SCTs) which have emerged as preferred policy tools for addressing extreme poverty and vulnerability. Recent studies show that there is variation across the continent in the provision of social protection including in terms of

actors driving the agenda, types of programmes, methods of targeting beneficiaries and extent of coverage. In countries considered to be social democratic in approach to social protection (South Africa for example) governments provide cash transfers and other welfare benefits to a wider range of poor people with generous benefits or wages. Botswana also has “an extensive set of cash transfer programmes” which include public works programmes for poor and unemployed working-age adults (Seekings, 2015). In contrast, countries with governments that are not considered to be social democratic (like ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe) are characterised by minimal coverage of cash transfers and other social protection benefits with low entitlements for beneficiaries (Chinyoka & Seekings, 2016: 19-20).

The roles played by actors such as governments, donors, technocrats and civil society differ across countries and have important implications for funding sources as well as responsibility for designing and implementing programmes. Some countries have tax-funded grant based social programmes which have their origins in domestic policy initiatives and these include Botswana, Namibia and South Africa (Niño-Zarazúa *et al.*, 2010). Ghana’s social protection agenda also seems to have been primarily domestic-driven (see Grebe, 2015) much like Malawi-despite some donor involvement (see Hamer, 2016b). Donors have played little role in these countries but have had some influence in Lesotho (not initially but later, see Granvik, 2015) and did drive the agenda in Zimbabwe during the Government of National Unity (GNU) (see Chinyoka & Seekings, 2016) and initially in Uganda which later became domestic driven (see Grebe, 2014).

In Zambia, a pilot cash transfer programme was introduced in 2003-04 by the German *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) and remained almost entirely donor funded for about a decade with limited government involvement. One factor in the Zambian government’s ambivalence was an antipathy to statism within the governing party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), especially in the period to 2008 (Kabandula & Seekings, forthcoming). Presidential and parliamentary elections in 2011 resulted in a change of government to the Patriotic Front (PF) under President Michael Sata. The new Sata administration expanded the SCT scheme. Within three years, the scheme was mostly funded out of tax rather than by donors. The PF government emphasised a shift from farm subsidies (which had been preferred by the MMD) to cash transfers and increased the budgetary allocation to the latter by over 700% (in nominal terms). The number of districts implementing SCTs more than doubled as did the coverage of beneficiary households countrywide. The Sata administration further completed and published the country’s first National Social Protection Policy (NSPP).

Even though SCTs have become common in sub-Saharan Africa, the extent to which programmes have expanded differs markedly. There has been a greater incentive to expand programmes in countries where social protection initiatives were driven by domestic policy agendas led by governments. In countries where programmes were introduced and promoted by donors, reforms have happened at a slower pace with the expansion of programmes being limited by state ambivalence towards “unproductive handouts” and also due to fiscal constraints.

Yet, a change of government in Zambia resulted in a rapid expansion of cash transfers and a shift in primary financing responsibilities. Zambia is not the only Southern African country in which a change of government led to a notable shift in social protection. In Malawi, the transition from Bingu Mutharika to Joyce Banda in 2012 was followed by increased enthusiasm towards SCT (with Banda being the primary champion) but this proved to be more rhetorical with very little by way of actual expansion (see Hamer, 2016b). Similarly, a partial change of government in Zimbabwe [after the formation of a Government of National Unity involving ZANU-PF and two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) factions] in 2009 led to increased support towards cash transfers [in particular the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer (HSCT)] than existed under both pre and post GNU governments (see Chinyoka & Seekings, 2016).

Comparative literature on welfare state building has shown that in democratic settings, electoral competition for votes of poor citizens has encouraged leaders to introduce programmatic pro poor reforms. This is true for ‘developing’ countries like Mauritius which established a welfare system between the 1950s and the 1970s on the back of electoral competition by political parties that broadly agreed around social democratic social policy (Seekings, 2014). Similarly, in the industrialised Northern Europe and Britain (between the 1940s and 1960s) the expansion of welfare states was mostly driven by social democratic parties which had closer ties to the majority of social welfare beneficiaries including members of trade unions and workers, than centre or more conservative political parties had (Hicks & Esping-Andersen, 2005). While the extent of political competition and the importance of social democratic parties have been used to explain the expansion of welfare in Europe and more recently in Southern Africa, these arguments do not sufficiently account for why reforms happened in Zambia after a change of government.

Among factors relevant to the Zambian case are the importance of populist politics and the successful use of pro poor political branding during elections. The PF drew most of its support from urban and peri-urban voters in Lusaka and the Copperbelt

together with Bemba-speakers in the rural Northern region. Urban and peri-urban voters in particular were disillusioned with the failures of economic growth to address unemployment and poor living conditions. Resnick (2010) argues that rapid urbanization coupled with inadequate economic growth has been partly responsible for the increase in poverty levels in African cities which has in turn led to the resonance of populist electoral strategies among the urban poor. Sata was described as a populist politician whose promises to implement pro poor policies if elected were instrumental to his strong performances during presidential elections in 2006 and 2008 and his victory in 2011 (Larmer & Fraser, 2007; Cheeseman & Hinfelaar, 2010; Resnick, 2010; Resnick, 2014). Populist strategies have been defined as: “a mode of mobilization characterized by an anti-elitist policy discourse that aims to rectify the exclusion of economically marginalized constituencies traditionally espoused by a charismatic leader who professes an affinity with the underclass or a closeness with the common people” (Resnick, 2010: 1).

This paper makes three important contributions to understanding how and why social protection policy reforms happen in sub-Saharan Africa. First, it examines how and why a change of government can affect social policy making (including the importance of ideas and ideology). Second, it demonstrates how strong electoral competition contributes to the expansion of social programmes and to policy reforms and third, it identifies the important roles played by different actors in the reform process. Until now, most analyses on Sata and the PF (for example Helle & Rakner, 2012; Resnick, 2014;) have focused on how populist strategies contributed to the party’s success in presidential and parliamentary elections in 2011 but there has been a dearth of focus on reforms that took place between 2011 and 2014 (i.e. from the time of Sata’s election to his death in office). Undoubtedly, some of the most notable reforms that happened during Sata’s three year presidency happened in the area of social protection, thereby providing important insights into how public policy was affected by his government.

The analysis that follows shows that the modest expansion of SCTs under the MMD government between 2008 and 2011 gave way to a faster expansion under Sata (even though the extent of reforms was small). Initially, the PF took a programmatic approach by expanding SCTs to the poorest districts of the country, which contrasted with the MMD’s approach of implementing programmes such as the controversial Farming Input Support Programme (FISP) which allowed the party to establish clientelistic networks with voters (see Harland, 2014). But, a decision to pay cash transfers to disabled persons in (urban) districts which were not amongst the poorest and a decision late in October 2014 to significantly increase expenditure on FISP (which had remained relatively unchanged since

2011) undermined the PF's attempts at programmatic reform and demonstrated a retreat to the forms of patronage that prevailed under previous governments.

Nonetheless, the reforms that happened were possible because of a 'coalition' of donor technocrats and a "social democratic" faction within PF which supported SCTs and also because of the strategic interests of the PF to implement pro poor reforms to appeal to the party's electoral base and prospective supporters who might be attracted away from other parties in future elections. It is evident that the change of government in Zambia had the effect of influencing significant reforms to public policy. As a result, the extent of SCT coverage in Zambia increased much more rapidly than in some neighbouring countries like Malawi and Zimbabwe, but remained far much smaller than countries in the region with more comprehensive social protection programmes like Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

Social protection policy reform under Sata

Important social protection policy reforms happened between 2011 and 2014 during the Sata presidency. In his first presidential address to the National Assembly of Zambia in October 2011, Sata stated that chronic poverty experienced by vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with disabilities was an obstacle to developing a sound social and economic future for all.¹ In his address, Sata promised that:

'The government shall adopt a vibrant social protection policy aimed at ensuring that all citizens have access to basic social services such as education, health, water and sanitation. The policy shall also address the needs of the vulnerable groups that face special challenges such as the disabled and street children. In line with this, specific measures will be taken to strengthen the existing social safety-net and protection programmes. One such programme is the social cash transfer scheme which unfortunately is currently fully funded by donors thereby making it unsustainable and restrictive. My government will in collaboration with cooperating partners work out measures to improve the scheme and make

¹ Speech by His Excellency Mr Michael Chilufya Sata, President of the Republic of Zambia on the occasion of the official opening of the first session of the eleventh National Assembly, 14 October, 2011.

it more sustainable by gradually supporting it from our domestic resources in the national budget'.²

The promise to strengthen the existing social safety-net and social protection programmes was followed, two years later, by a government commitment to increase budgetary allocations to social programmes. In October 2013, Finance Minister Alexander Chikwanda presented the 2014 national budget to parliament and stated in his speech that: "In 2014, government's contribution to the social cash transfer scheme will be scaled up by over 700% in order to make a significant impact on reducing extreme poverty".³ This was aimed at providing a more effective means of targeting the most vulnerable, as opposed to subsidy programmes that had been favoured by the MMD that did not benefit the "intended poor".⁴

The decision to increase the budgetary allocation led to a significant expansion in the number of SCT beneficiaries. Prior to 2014, the number of beneficiary households had increased from 1,200 in 2003 (in Kalomo district only) to 24,500 (in five districts) by the end of 2010 (Chilombo & van Ufford, 2015). Although the PF was elected in 2011, the slow expansion that happened between 2011 and 2013 followed plans initiated by the MMD in 2010 as outlined in the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP) 2011-2015, published in 2011 under President Rupiah Banda. The SNDP included plans for the MMD government to increase the number of beneficiaries in phases from 26,500 households in 2011 to 69,000 households countrywide by 2015 (Ministry of Finance, 2011).

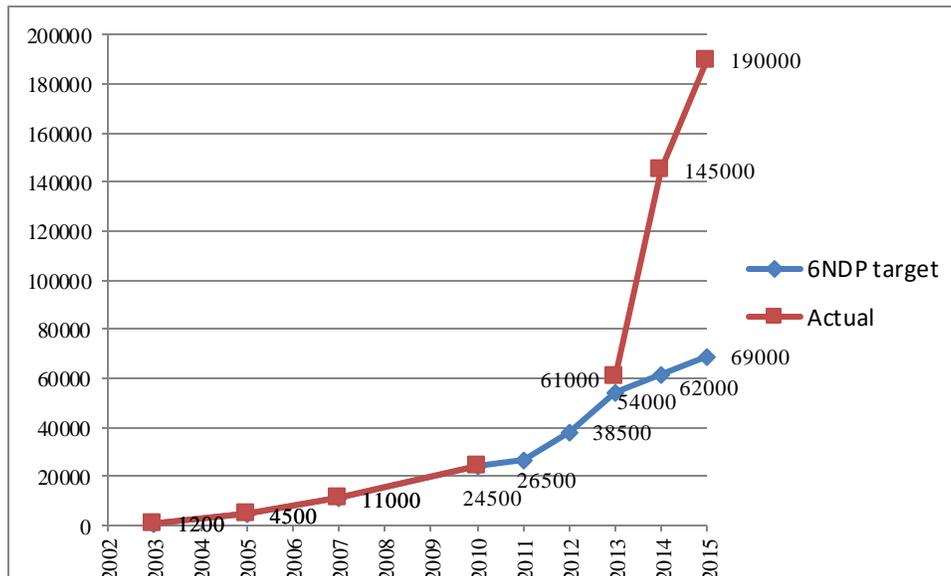
In 2014, Sata's government published a Revised-Sixth National Development Plan (R-SNDP) for the period 2013 to 2016, which incorporated the "priorities of the PF government" into the SNDP (Ministry of Finance, 2014). The R-SNDP did not provide an annual breakdown for the number of households to be added to the SCT scheme but it included a target of "over 500,000 households to receive transfers by 2016" (Ministry of Finance, 2014: 129). This is against a total of nearly 2,500,000 households in the country (CSO, 2011: 23). In 2008, an ILO report which assessed Zambia's social protection system proposed a "social cash transfer system targeting the 10% most destitute households" which was informed by the model adopted in the first pilot cash transfer in Kalomo (Aguzzoni, 2011: xi). This suggests that the PF plans to target 500,000 households would affect 20% of the population. By the

² *Ibid.*

³ 2014 Budget Address by Hon. Alexander B. Chikwanda, MP Minister of Finance, delivered to the National Assembly of Zambia on Friday 11th October, 2013.

⁴ *Ibid.*

end of 2013, a total of 61,000 households had been reached. The number increased to 145,000 households in 2014 and 190,000 in 2015. Figure 1 shows the expansion of the caseload from 2003 to 2015 which includes both the expansion plans for the period 2011 to 2015 as outlined in the SNDP and the actual expansion that happened during this period.



Sources: Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare

Figure 1: Expansion of SCT beneficiary households: SNDP vs. actual expansion

Figure 1 shows that under Sata’s Government, there were 83,000 more beneficiary households at the end of 2014 than had been targeted by the MMD government in the SNDP. The expansion of cash transfers continued in 2015 resulting in 107,000 beneficiary households more than the target set by Banda’s government. Whereas the MMD had proposed slow expansion, the PF implemented rapid expansion: the number of households in 2015 was almost three times higher than envisaged by the MMD. In terms of coverage, the SCT scheme expanded from 2% of all households in Zambia by the end of 2013 to 5% in 2014 and 6% by the end of 2015 (Chilombo and van Ufford, 2015).

The SCT expansion made by the PF government also included an increase in the number of implementing districts across the country. During the pilot phase of the SCT scheme between 2004 and 2009, which was funded mostly by donors (including GTZ, DFID and UNICEF) cash transfers were rolled out to 5 out of the

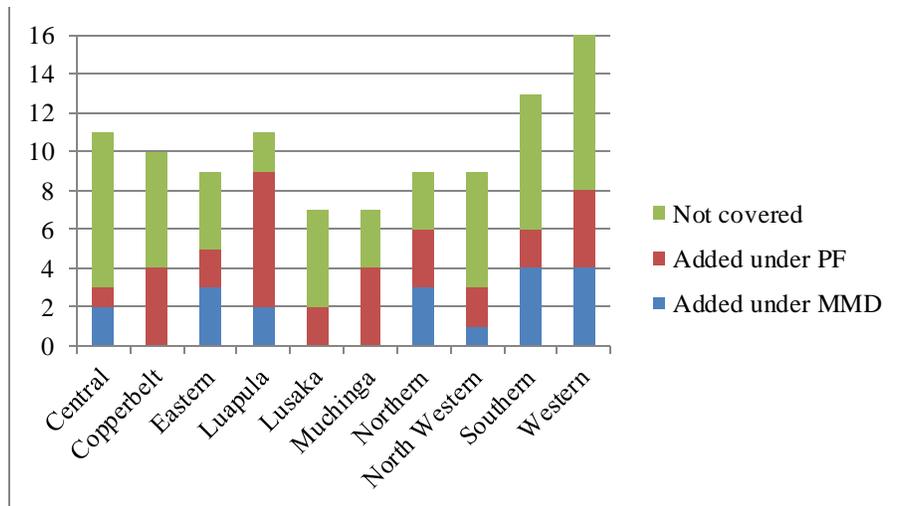
then 72 districts, although this number increased to 7 (out of 102 districts) after a realignment of districts in 2011.⁵ During the period which the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare (MCDSW)⁶ referred to as “scale up phase one” (2010-2013), which included districts added to the scheme by Banda’s government, 12 districts were added bringing the total number of implementing districts to 19 (out of 102 realigned districts). The poorest districts in the country were targeted first. In the period referred to as “scale up phase two” (2014-2015), 31 districts were added by Sata’s government. According to Emerine Kabanshi, the MCDSW minister, districts in this phase were selected according to extreme poverty rate although four urban districts, Kitwe, Livingstone, Luanshya and Lusaka were added in order to: “tackle the increasing urban poverty and the increasing population of persons with disability”.⁷ Technocrats in the MCDSW had responsibility for prioritising the selection of districts and targeting beneficiaries. Data from the 2010 Living Conditions and Monitoring Survey (LCMS) were used to determine the poorest districts in the country. The inclusion of urban districts (which were not among the poorest) was apparently due to the influence of some political leaders within the ruling party, however.⁸ In total, the scheme was extended to 50 out of 102 districts under Sata, approximately half the country.

⁵ Shortly after Sata was elected in 2011, the PF government realigned the boundaries of districts which resulted in an increase in the number from 72 to 102.

⁶ It was known as the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services until 2011 and changed to the Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child health (MCDMCH) under President Sata before taking on its current name when Edgar Lungu was elected President in January 2015.

⁷ MCDSW Ministerial statement on the scale up of the implementation of the social cash transfer programme presented by the Honourable Emerine Kabanshi, MP Minister of Community Development and Social Welfare, 26 February 2016.

⁸ This point was raised in separate interviews with a government official and a civil society representative.

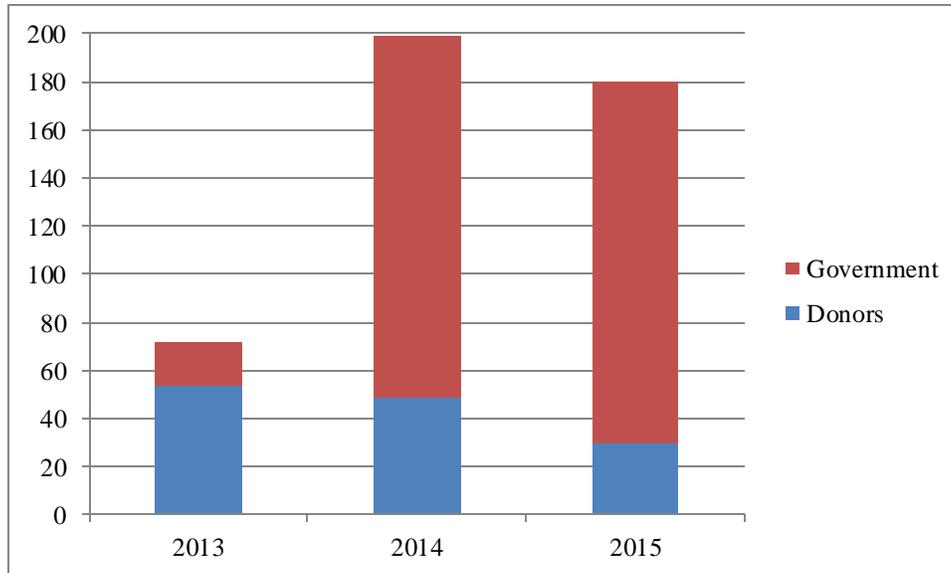


Source: Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare

Figure 2: Additional districts implementing SCTs by province

Figure 2 shows the number of districts that were added under donor and MMD expansion plans (from 2003 to 2013), the number added by the PF government (from 2014 to 2015), and the number of districts that are still uncovered in each of the 10 provinces of the country. Figure 2 demonstrates that Luapula was the province with the largest number of districts added to the programme. Out of 11 districts, only 2 were added under the MMD and 7 under PF, with 2 still uncovered. Although Sata won 74% of the 2011 presidential vote in Luapula province, the absolute and extreme poverty rates in Luapula were the highest among the 10 provinces in Zambia. This suggests that the rapid expansion in the province followed the MCDSW's targeting criteria and was not necessarily a reward to supporters of the ruling party. Other additions in 2014 included four districts in Western province (which had the second highest poverty rate among the provinces), four districts in Muchinga province, and three in Northern Province. Furthermore, four districts were added in Copperbelt provinces and two in each of Central, Southern and North Western provinces, and only one district in Central province. Fifty-two districts across the country remained uncovered. Of the 31 districts added under Sata, 20 included constituencies won by PF in 2011. Despite this, evidence from the LCMS showed that 27 of the 31 districts added by PF (excluding the four urban districts) were the poorest districts in the country. This demonstrates that the SCT reforms under Sata were largely programmatic although the addition of four urban districts which the PF had won in 2011 suggests that the ruling party may have been rewarding some of its urban supporters.

The increase in districts and beneficiaries were not the only significant changes in policy under Sata. Until 2013, cash transfers were funded almost entirely by donors (including DFID, UNICEF and Irish Aid) with government contributing less than a quarter of total funding. The decision announced by Chikwanda to increase SCT funding by over 700% (nominally) resulted in the programme becoming mostly tax, as opposed to donor, funded. Figure 3 shows changes to budgetary allocations by donors and government in Zambian Kwacha (ZMW)⁹ from 2013 to 2015.



Source: Chilombo & Van Ufford (2015)

Figure 3: Donor and government contributions to SCT budget in Kwacha (millions)

The SCT budget was ZMW 72 million (USD 13 million) in 2013. Of this amount, donors contributed ZMW 54 million (USD 10 million), representing 76%, while government contributed ZMW 18 million (USD 3 million), or 24% of the budget. Donor funding was not targeted at selected districts but contributed to general costs. The increase in government expenditure in 2014 led to an increase in the SCT allocation to ZMW 199 million (USD 36 million). Government contributed ZMW 150 million (USD 27 million), which was an increase from ZMW 18 million (USD 3 million), while donor contributions reduced to ZMW 49 million (USD 9 million). As a result, government funding for the programme increased from 24% in 2013 to 75% in 2014 while donor funding reduced to 25% from 76% during the same period. In 2015, the total SCT budget was ZMW 180 million (USD 30

⁹ The exchange rate averaged around USD 1 = ZMW 5.5 between 2013 and 2014 and was around USD 1 = ZMW 6 at the start of 2015. Bank of Zambia, <http://www.boz.zm/>.

million). This was a reduction of ZMW 19 million (USD 3.5 million) from the preceding year. The reduction was the result of a cut in donor contributions which declined to ZMW 30 million (USD 5 million) while government's contribution remained fixed at ZMW 150 million (USD 25 million). The decision for donor funding to reduce was based on an agreement signed between donors and the Zambian government in 2010. When President Banda's government expanded cash transfers, a Joint Assistance Strategy (JAS) was signed between government and donors. The JAS was an agreement for donors to continue funding SCTs for 10 years but with a provision that donor funding would decrease each year, while government funding would increase gradually during the same period. After 10 years, government would take full responsibility for funding the programme.¹⁰

In addition to expanding the SCT programme and increasing government funding, the PF completed and published the first National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) in June 2014. The publication of the NSPP was significant after almost a decade since the first plans to formulate a national policy in the early 2000s by the MMD government. In collaboration with donors, the government had drafted a social protection strategy in 2005 (Schüring & Lawson-McDowall, 2011: 2). This was followed by the inclusion of a chapter on social protection in the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) 2006-2010, published in 2006. Donors had been influential in persuading the MMD government under Levy Mwanawasa (2002-2008) to include policies on social protection in national planning documents but the efforts did not result in actual policy reforms in part because of insufficient political support in key ministries such as Finance and Community Development (Kabandula & Seekings, forthcoming). The SNDP also included plans to implement a social protection policy during the implementation period of the Plan. However, having lost general elections in 2011, the MMD did not implement the policy.

The introduction of the NSPP under President Sata finally provided a notional framework for the government to coordinate programmes included in the policy. These include programmes falling under different ministries such as the social cash transfer and the Food Security Pack (FSP) in the MCDSW and FISP in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, that “aim to deliver social protection services to ensure that the quality of life of many Zambians is improved” (MCDMCH, 2014: 1). The publication of the NSPP was preceded by consultative meetings and the

¹⁰ Interviews with Mutale Wakunuma, Country Coordinator, Platform for Social Protection-Zambia (11 March 2015), Kelley Toole, DFID Zambia (17 November, 2015), Nkandu Chilombo, Social Policy Specialist UNICEF-Zambia (17 December 2015) and Situmbeko Musokotwane, Former Minister of Finance 2008-2011 (13 January 2016).

participants in the process included Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender and Child Development, as well as donors including ILO, UNICEF, DFID, Irish Aid and World Food Programme. Others were domestic civil society organisations including Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), Zambia Alliance for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), Platform for Social Protection Zambia (PSP) and Civil Society Scaling Up Nutrition Alliance (CSO-SUN). The government of Finland co-financed the process of formulating the NSPP with the Zambian government while donors and domestic civil society were part of the Social Protection Sector Advisory Group alongside the Ministries of Community Development and Labour that drafted the NSPP (MCDMCH, 2014: iv). Inasmuch as the preparation of the NSPP was led by government technocrats, it is evident that the process benefited substantially from the financial support and input of both donors and domestic civil society. This suggests that while the change of government from MMD to PF resulted in the introduction of the NSPP, the policy reform was not entirely driven by political actors in the PF but involved important contributions from non- state actors.

National development plans published prior to the election of Sata and PF (the FNDP and SNDP) recognized social protection as an important sector for poverty reduction and outlined programmes and strategies to contribute to the security of all vulnerable Zambians. While building on previous development plans and strategies, the NSPP “pioneered a paradigm shift in social protection implementation” by proposing a framework that provided a more “comprehensive and integrated” approach to social protection under four main pillars: social assistance, social security, livelihood and empowerment, and protection (MCDMCH, 2014: 1). Among the major shifts in the NSPP (when compared to previous national development plans) are the need for a multi-sectoral approach to social protection (i.e. collaboration between different government departments and between state and non-state actors), the importance of coordinating programmes (through a unit to be established within Cabinet Office), and increasing the priority given to social protection in achieving national development goals.

Apart from social cash transfers, other social protection programmes included in the NSPP also received a boost in budgetary allocations.¹¹ Funding to the FSP

¹¹ Data on budgetary allocations for FSP, empowerment funds and FISP obtained from National Budget Address speeches, 2011 to 2015.

which is a programme aimed at providing free farming inputs to “vulnerable but viable households”, more than tripled from ZMW 11 million (USD 2.3 million) in 2011¹² to ZMW 50 million (USD 9 million) in 2014. Allocations to empowerment funds for youth and women increased nominally between 2011 and 2014 i.e., from ZMW 76 million (USD 16 million) to ZMW 109 million (USD 20 million). FISP, which is described as an economic programme aimed at addressing national food security, accounted for the largest share of funds amongst programmes in the NSPP, with an allocation of ZMW 485 million (USD 101 million) in 2011 and ZMW 500 million (USD 91 million in 2014) for each year between 2012 and 2014. (a more detailed discussion of FISP is provided later in this paper).

Recent studies show that the reluctance to expand social protection programmes under the MMD was in part due to liberal (or neoliberal) ideological beliefs which included a focus on free enterprise, free markets and economic growth and also due to reluctance amongst influential members of government such as Finance Minister Ng’andu Magande (2003-2008), who opposed programmes such as SCTs because they created a “dependency culture” (Kabandula & Seekings, forthcoming). Other arguments have focused on the neopatrimonial nature of Zambian politics which was demonstrated through the distribution of benefits and resources to individuals whose loyalty helped to maintain the position of the political elite (Harland, 2014; Kabandula & Seekings, forthcoming). Although the MMD under President Banda made some progress on social protection, particularly the expansion of cash transfers to an additional 12 districts and the inclusion of policy objectives in the SNDP, these changes were rather small when compared to the reforms made by Sata and his government. However, important challenges to social protection remained despite the significant reforms made after 2011.

Limitations to social protection reforms

In 2005, DFID commissioned a study on “drivers of change for a national social protection scheme in Zambia” (Barrientos *et al.*, 2005). The study was conducted to understand the institutional factors that were constraining a move towards securing a “political contract” for social protection based on government commitment to its citizens (*ibid*: 4). The report proposed constitutional reform in Zambia to secure legally recognized social protection rights for deserving citizens (*ibid*: 17). The social protection reforms made during Sata’s presidency demonstrate that there was

¹² The exchange rate was around USD 1 = ZMW 4.8 in 2011. Bank of Zambia, <http://www.boz.zm/>

increased political will for state provision of protection for the extreme poor and vulnerable. Despite this, the Constitution of Zambia does not provide for the provision of social protection. As a result, the “majority poor who are unable to support themselves are not entitled to government protection” (MCDMCH, 2014: 5). Devereux (2010: 3) argues that one useful lesson from South Africa, which has a “comprehensive” social protection system, is that a “social contract” on social protection is formalized through a Bill of Rights and Constitution.

In Zambia, the PF government did not amend the Constitution to make social cash transfers justiciable despite expanding the scheme and publishing a social protection policy. Domestic civil society organisations such as PSP lobbied government to make constitutional amendments to provide social and economic rights that would benefit the majority of the poor.¹³ Guy Scott, who was Vice President under Sata between September 2011 and November 2014, and later Acting President (after Sata died) from November 2014 to January 2015, stated that the PF was committed to providing welfare for the poorest citizens but did not consider making constitutional amendments to address social protection. In an interview, Scott argued that:

‘I have got an organization [the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU),¹⁴ in the Office of the Vice President] which deals with food and we have policies which are obviously not counter to the interests of people so when people are hungry, we feed them. Now what do you hope to gain by putting that in the constitution?...What happens when someone needs money and I can’t afford, am I supposed to go to go court and start fighting? Just keep the DMMU there that’s what it is there for...what is in the constitution doesn’t make any difference’.¹⁵

The arguments made by Scott suggest that while the PF government was committed to expanding SCTs, there was concern that making social protection justiciable through the Constitution would create problems for the government in the event that paying beneficiaries became unaffordable. Scott also argued that it was the responsibility of any good government to provide assistance to the most vulnerable and that this did not necessarily have to be spelled out in the

¹³ Interview with Mutale Wakunuma, Country Coordinator, Platform for Social Protection-Zambia (11 March 2015).

¹⁴ DMMU is a special unit under the Office of the Vice-President that provides support in response to natural disasters or shocks to people at risk of rapid deterioration in economic and social well-being and security (MCDMCH, 2014: 22).

¹⁵ Interview with Guy Scott (17 November 2015).

constitution. This could also mean that the PF preferred to take credit for providing social protection rather than implementing programmes because of a constitutional mandate.

Another important challenge relates to the design of programmes and targeting methods for SCTs. The PF inherited programmes from the MMD which had some challenges. For example, the monthly entitlements for SCT beneficiaries remained relatively unchanged after the 2014 expansion. Beneficiaries were entitled to monthly payments of ZMW 70 (USD 13) which they received bi-monthly. Civil society organizations argued that the entitlements were meager and suggested an increase that would be adequate to address the high cost of living.¹⁶ In addition, concerns remained regarding the targeting criteria. The first SCT pilot in Kalomo was designed to capture destitute or incapacitated households i.e. households with a high dependency ratio which suffered from extreme poverty (including those affected by HIV and AIDS) (Schüring, 2012: 7). It was estimated that nationally, 10% of all households fell into this category and this informed the decision to target the 10% poorest households, through community based targeting (*ibid*: 7-8). Four other pilots were introduced between 2003 and 2009 which included a Child Grant in Kaputa district in Northern Province, and an Old Age Pension (also referred to as the Social Pension Scheme) in Katete district in Eastern Province which targeted older persons 60 years or older, regardless of economic status. Later in 2010, another targeting method, the Multiple Categorical Targeting Scheme (MCT) was introduced which targeted households headed by women or elderly persons with at least one orphan, or households with at least one disabled member. A 2013 study commissioned by MCDWS and conducted by Oxford Policy Management and the Zambian based Rural Net Associates indicated that the incapacitated (labour-constrained) model (used in Kalomo) had a higher correlation with poverty (OPM *et al.*, 2015 cited by Micheelo 2015). The evidence informed the MCDSW's decision to streamline the focus only on the incapacitated household model although districts in which the Child Grant and the Old Age Pension were piloted have continued with those models.

Nonetheless, the NSPP included proposals for the Old Age Pension to be implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (and no longer as part of the SCTs implemented by MCDSW). Roll out of the Old Age Pension is set to start in 2016 with 20,000 beneficiaries which should reach 30,000 in 2017 and 50,000 in 2018 (MCDMCH, 2014: 21). However, the incapacitated model will also

¹⁶ Interview with Vince Chipatuka, Research, Advocacy and Social Engagement Officer-Platform for Social Protection (3 November 2015).

target children under 19 years and elderly persons above 64 years old, provided they are members of households in which all members are unfit for work (Kabanshi, 2015). The decision to streamline the targeting method took effect in the districts added in 2014 (even though the four urban districts targeted the disabled) while the districts added under the MMD continued to implement disparate targeting methods. The lack of consistency in identifying beneficiaries has had the potential of excluding some deserving citizens who would otherwise be targeted if they resided in different districts.

Importantly, funding towards SCT remained low both as a percentage of the national budget and of GDP despite a nominal increment of over 700% to the SCT budget in 2014. Seekings (2014) noted that for most African countries, spending on social protection as a percentage of GDP remains very low, at less than 3%. Although the SCT budget as a share of GDP increased between 2013 and 2015, it averaged 0.1% of GDP for the three years. As a share of the national budget, SCTs accounted for 0.2% in 2013, 0.5% in 2014 and 0.4% in 2015 (Chilombo & van Ufford, 2015). The increase in SCT spending as a percentage of GDP remained much smaller than that spent by some countries in the region. In South Africa, the government provided grants and pensions to about 16 million people at a cost of about 3.5% of GDP in 2014 (Seekings, 2015: 14).

The Parliamentary Committee on Estimates calculated that cash transfer programmes could be extended to all districts in the country and would have a more significant impact on reducing poverty and vulnerability if at least 3% of the national budget was allocated to the scheme.¹⁷ The Committee argued that Zambia's national budget had grown from ZMW 21 billion (USD 4.4 billion) in 2011 to ZMW 47 billion (USD 8 billion) in 2015, suggesting that there was fiscal space to expand the coverage of SCTs and increase beneficiary entitlements. The Ministry of Finance took a different view on this matter, however. The ministry argued that even though the size of the budget had grown, it was important to keep the share of the budget allocated to social protection fixed while increasing the allocations to social protection programmes in proportion to the increase of the budget.¹⁸

While Sata's government did not address some challenges to social protection, the decision to expand SCTs and the shift from a scheme that was mostly donor funded

¹⁷ Interview with Highvie Hamududu (17 November 2015); Hamududu is an opposition Member of Parliament from the United Party for National Development (UPND) and chairs the Parliamentary Committee on Estimates.

¹⁸ Interview with government official, Ministry of Finance (15 December 2015).

to a predominantly tax funded scheme, represented significant policy reforms when compared to reforms under MMD even though the size and coverage of programmes under PF remained much smaller than some countries in the region. That notwithstanding, it is evident that public policy was affected by a change of government and it is necessary to consider how and why the change from MMD to PF resulted in significant policy reforms. In this regard, it is important to understand the character of Sata, the origins of PF and his rise to the presidency.

The rise of Sata and the origins of PF

Sata's political journey and the origins of PF are both crucial to understanding his presidency and the policy reforms that he made. Sata's first elected position was as a ward councillor in Bauleni in Lusaka district in 1981 (Ruwe, 2014). He then went on to hold more senior positions during the rest of the 1980s, including an appointment as District Governor of Lusaka from 1985 to 1988 [under the United National Independence Party (UNIP) government of President Kenneth Kaunda] (Larmer & Fraser, 2007: 624). Sata earned a reputation of being "the hardest working governor" in Zambia and was subsequently elected MP for Kabwata in Lusaka district in 1988, before taking up a post as Minister of State in the Ministry of Decentralization (Resnick, 2014; Ruwe, 2014).

As popular demand for a return to multiparty democracy grew in 1990-91, and despite his previous loyalty, Sata was among the first MPs to resign from UNIP and aligned himself with the MMD (Larmer & Fraser, 2007: 624). When MMD took office in 1991, Sata became a very close ally of President Frederick Chiluba and held a series of ministerial positions over a period of ten years, including as Minister of Local Government and Housing, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Minister of Health, and latterly the powerful position of Minister without Portfolio, which he combined with the highly influential position of MMD National Secretary (Resnick, 2014; Ruwe, 2014). Sata expected to succeed Chiluba at the end of the latter's second term of office but instead, Chiluba influenced the election of Levy Mwanawasa¹⁹ as his successor (*ibid*). Incensed by this move, Sata resigned from MMD and ran for president under his newly formed Patriotic Front in presidential and parliamentary elections in 2001 (Rakner, 2003: 114-5). In the elections which Mwanawasa won, Sata placed seventh in a race contested by 11

¹⁹ Mwanawasa was the first Vice President under the MMD government, from 1991 to 1994. He resigned his position in 1994 citing corruption in Chiluba's administration.

presidential candidates finishing with a meagre 3% of the vote while his party earned only one parliamentary seat in his ethnic Northern Province (*ibid*: 116).

In response to his dismal 2001 performance, Sata began to transform PF from a party with support limited to ethnic Bemba voters to one that articulated “the frustrations of the working class and urban poor” (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar, 2010: 64). In the economically strategic Copperbelt province, Sata built support around the important networks of employed and retired mineworkers who were affiliated to the Mine Workers Union of Zambia (MUZ) (Larmer & Fraser, 2007). According to LeBas (2011) trade union structures had been important for mobilizing support on behalf of the MMD in 1991 and it is these structures that Sata began to take control of.

By the mid-2000s, Sata shifted from relying more on trade union support to populist branding. Recent studies such as Hamer (2016a) and Hamer (2016b) show that voting behaviour can be understood not only by analysing specific election issues or programmes but by also analysing how candidates and parties appeal to voters by offering political brands. One example of a political brand is the adoption of a “pro-poor” platform, which involves a candidate showing support for programmes that favour the most poor and marginalised (Hamer, 2016b: 3).

Sata’s use of a pro poor brand helped to differentiate him from MMD leaders Mwanawasa and Banda, as well as from other opposition parties, to the voters. During Mwanawasa’s first term, the MMD government presided over a growing economy supported by rising copper prices and also recorded successes such as attaining massive debt relief, as well as “cutting back on corruption, controlling inflation, and balancing the budget” (Cheeseman *et al.*, 2014: 345). Despite these achievements, the living conditions for the urban poor did not improve and the fact that foreign investors benefited more from high copper prices than local residents created urban resentment towards MMD policies (Resnick, 2014). Sata addressed these issues in his efforts to appeal to urban voters. Resnick (2010: 9) writes that after 2001, “Sata spent a majority of his time campaigning amongst street vendors, marketeers, bus and taxi drivers, and the youth (24 years old or younger), in Lusaka Province”. His campaign focused on salient issues such as “health and safety standards in Chinese-owned mines, the shortage of market stalls for informal traders, inadequate urban housing, and the disorganized nature of bus stations” (Larmer & Fraser, 2007: 613), all of which proved to be important to voters.

With regard to the organization of the party, PF was built around Sata’s charisma and the support of his close allies such as his Vice President Guy Scott (who was

elected PF MP for Lusaka Central constituency in 2006) as well as party Secretary General Wynter Kabimba²⁰ and the National Treasurer, Emmanuel Chenda²¹ (who had known Sata since the 1980s).²² The PF was unlike the MMD in 1990-91 that was built around an alliance of trade union leaders, disgruntled UNIP politicians, academics and business leaders (Rakner, 2003; LeBas, 2011).

In the 2006 general elections, the PF increased its share of votes. Importantly, Sata improved remarkably from a seventh finish in 2001 to runner up in 2006 after amassing 29% of the presidential vote while PF won 42 out of 150 parliamentary seats. He finished first in three provinces, including Luapula, where he drew support from the Bemba speaking population, the urban Lusaka province and the Copperbelt, which in addition to being urban, also comprises a large Bemba speaking population (Larmer & Fraser, 2007; Simutanyi, 2013). In the remaining five provinces, Sata and the PF performed poorly: Sata himself obtained on average only 8% of the votes while his party failed to win any parliamentary seats in these provinces (Simutanyi, 2013: 129). Mwanawasa won the presidential vote with 43% and the MMD won 73 out of 150 parliamentary seats (Larmer & Fraser, 2007; Helle & Rakner, 2012).

The untimely death of Mwanawasa in August 2008 necessitated a presidential by-election, held on 30 October 2008. The election was closely contested by the MMD candidate, Rupiah Banda,²³ Sata of the PF, Hakainde Hichilema of UPND and Godfrey Miyanda of Heritage Party (HP). Similar to his 2006 campaign, Sata focused on issues that resonated with the urban underclass. He favoured more state intervention in the economy and less foreign influence which led Cheeseman *et al.* (2014: 344) to argue that: “as with all populists, his worldview was an explicitly interventionist one: the government can make things better for ordinary Zambians, and it can do so quickly”.

²⁰ Wynter Kabimba served as legal advisor to Sata when he was District Governor for Lusaka and later served as Town Clerk for Lusaka City Council in the 1990s when Sata was Minister of Local Government and Housing, lusakavoice.com/2013/09/18/wynter-m-kabimba.

²¹ Emmanuel Chenda became Lusaka City Council's City Treasurer in 1986. He served as Town Clerk of Ndola City Council from 1991 to 2001. He was elected PF MP for Bwana Mukubwa in 2011 and held ministerial positions between 2011 and 2014 including Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, and Minister of Local Government and Housing, www.leadersmag.com/issues/2014.3_Jul/ROB/LEADERS-Emmanuel-Chenda.

²² Lusaka Times, 2 November 2013.

²³ Banda had served as Mwanawasa's Vice President between September 2006 and June 2008 and as Acting President from June 2008 to October 2008, the period from Mwanawasa's incapacitation after suffering a stroke until presidential by-elections held after Mwanawasa's death.

After obtaining 40% of the vote, Banda won a narrow victory, receiving roughly 33,000 more votes than his closest rival Sata who obtained 38%.²⁴ Third placed Hichilema received 20% while Miyanda finished last with less than 1%.²⁵ According to Simutanyi (2010: 3) Banda's win was unexpected in part because he had joined MMD from UNIP shortly before his appointment as Vice President in 2006, and therefore lacked grassroots support within the ruling party. In addition, Banda's selection as MMD candidate during an intra-party election, in which he defeated his closest rival (former Finance Minister) Magande, left the MMD National Executive Committee (NEC) and Cabinet divided between pro and anti-Banda factions (Simutanyi, 2010; Cheeseman & Hinfelaar, 2010).

PF's electoral strategy and policy proposals in the 2011 general elections

Sata's victory in the 2011 elections made him "only the seventh opposition candidate in Sub-Saharan Africa to win presidential elections in a non-founding election since 1990" (Helle & Rakner, 2012: 1). After three unsuccessful attempts, Sata won his fourth attempt with 42% of the vote. He defeated the incumbent, Banda, who obtained 36%, and Hichilema, who won 18%. The PF won 61 of the 150 parliamentary seats, while the MMD won 55 seats and the UPND won 29 seats.²⁶

Explaining why Sata and PF won in 2011 despite losing in all presidential and parliamentary elections between 2001 and 2008 probably has as much to do with decline in support for MMD as it did in Sata's ability to broaden his support base. In an Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2009, 31% of respondents blamed Zambia's economic problems on Banda's administration and only 7% blamed Mwanawasa's government, despite the fact that Banda had only been president for about a year at the time of the survey (Cheeseman *et al.*, 2014). This suggests that Banda was a less popular candidate for Sata to compete against when compared to Mwanawasa. Banda's failure to contain the factionalism that emerged in MMD after his selection as the party candidate in 2008 also weakened his chances of winning in 2011. According to Simutanyi (2013) Banda expelled two MMD MPs

²⁴ Data from Electoral Commission of Zambia, <http://www.elections.or.zm/>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ 2011 election results obtained from Electoral Commission of Zambia, <http://www.elections.or.zm/>.

for criticising him in 2009 and fired two ministers in 2010. These included individuals who were close to former president Mwanawasa, such as Former Defence Minister George Mpombo, who then supported Sata in 2011. By the time of the elections in 2011, a number of prominent MMD members had defected to PF or endorsed the candidature of Sata. For the most part, the defectors were not drawn to PF on ideological grounds but rather to revive their (declining) political fortunes by supporting a popular presidential candidate who stood a chance of unseating Banda. This was reminiscent of the MMD in 1991, which benefited from disgruntled senior UNIP leaders who defected to the then opposition movement (LeBas, 2011).

The PF also made inroads in MMD strongholds such as Western Province which increased Sata's share of the vote. Resnick (2014) argues that Sata capitalised on Banda's failure to address grievances among the Lozi speaking people of Western Province, who were advocating for secession. The secession calls emanated from arguments that the Barotseland Agreement²⁷ of 1964 had been abrogated. Using populist appeals, Sata promised to recognise the agreement to "restore the special rights and privileges" of the Lozi people (*ibid*: 220). The fact that PF now had prominent politicians within its ranks who originated from Western Province such as Inonge Wina²⁸ and Given Lubinda²⁹ (who were appointed party Chairperson and Spokesperson respectively) appears to have contributed to the appeal of PF in Western Province. In the presidential vote, Sata obtained 23% of the vote in Western Province, which was a significant improvement from 10% in 2008. The PF won two parliamentary seats in the province (including Nalolo constituency which was won by Wina).³⁰ In total, PF won 6 parliamentary seats in provinces where it did not finish first, including 3 in Central Province and 1 in Eastern

²⁷ According to Resnick (2014: 220) "the Barotseland Agreement was signed in 1964 by the king of Barotseland, the British colonial secretary and Kenneth Kaunda in order to bestow the king and the Barotse Royal Establishment with particular rights and privileges that were not awarded to other traditional leaderships. In exchange, the king was to cease overtures for secession and the formation of an independent Barotseland. Yet in 1969, Kaunda abrogated the Agreement."

²⁸ Inonge Wina was elected UPND MP for Nalolo constituency in 2001. She left UPND to join United Liberal Party (ULP) in 2006 which was a breakaway from UPND. She re-contested and lost her seat in 2006. ULP formed an electoral alliance with PF in 2006 and although the alliance did not last after the election, Wina later joined PF.

²⁹ Given Lubinda is MP for Kabwata constituency in Lusaka. He was first elected in 2001 as a UPND MP but left the party in 2006 to join ULP following an internal split. He later joined PF after the short lived electoral alliance with ULP in 2006.

³⁰ Data from Electoral Commission of Zambia, <http://www.elections.or.zm/>.

Province. It obtained on average 19% of the presidential vote in MMD and UPND strongholds.³¹

Sata's pro poor brand and populist appeals to the electorate were undoubtedly also important to his 2011 success. He is reported to have had a "no nonsense approach to duty" when he served in different ministerial positions which earned him the tag "man of action".³² During election campaigns, Sata presented himself to the electorate as a "man of action" while promising to transform the lives of the poor "within 90 days" of getting elected.³³ The PF's pro-poor brand rested on the charisma and popularity of Sata and was not necessarily a reflection of the entire party, although some of his closest allies appeared to share his leftist (social democratic) views.

The PF further benefited from the use of slogans, including the official campaign slogan: "vote PF for lower taxes, more jobs and more money in your pockets" and *Donchi Kubeba* (don't tell in Bemba) which "proved to be an effective way of dealing with political competitors (particularly the MMD) who could afford to comprehensively outspend the opposition" (Sishuwa, 2011). According to Resnick (2014: 220) "the implication of the slogan was that voters should accept the campaign handouts of the MMD but refuse to tell who they were planning to support in the elections." The slogan proved to be effective as it encouraged voters not to be influenced by vote buying (*ibid*).

The PF also differentiated itself from the MMD on policy positions and adopted a far more interventionist platform than its main competitors that generally supported liberal (or neoliberal) economic policies. For example, Banda of the MMD campaigned on a platform of "providing a liberal economic environment to create renewed local and foreign investor confidence" (MMD, 2011: 4), while Sata campaigned on a platform of "pro-poor economic growth that would benefit people in villages and urban townships" (PF, 2011: 4). Both parties also addressed social protection in general as well as cash transfers in particular. The MMD manifesto reaffirmed the SNDP commitments to scaling up cash transfers while the PF promised to adopt a comprehensive social protection policy and to ensure that cash transfers would continue receiving government funding even in the event that donor funding ceased (PF, 2011: 21).

³¹ Data from Electoral Commission of Zambia, <http://www.elections.or.zm/>

³² "Man of Action sets his mark", New African Magazine, 14 November 2011, <http://newafricanmagazine.com/man-of-action-sets-his-mark/>.

³³ "Zambia's 90-day promise broken", Obert Simwanza, 25 December 2011, <http://news.iafrica.com/worldnews/770000.html>.

The PF's policy commitments were contained in the 2011 party manifesto which was drafted by a team of academic researchers, mostly from the University of Zambia, and members of civil society who were sympathetic to PF.³⁴ Sata explained to the drafters that PF was a pro-poor party and expected a manifesto that would propose policies that would benefit the poorest and most marginalized in Zambia. Various working groups contributed to different chapters of the manifesto including a group chaired by Charlotte Harland-Scott (the wife of Guy Scott) that developed the "social sectors" chapter that addressed social protection.³⁵ Harland-Scott is credited for designing and setting up Zambia's cash transfer scheme.³⁶ She had been involved in social protection since 1995 when she was hired by the then Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) as a consultant to redesign the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme (PWAS)³⁷ and later worked in the MCDSS as a consultant within the ministry implementing the redesigned PWAS. While still in the MCDSS, Harland-Scott wrote a social protection strategy for the ministry between 2004 and 2005 and when she joined UNICEF-Zambia as Chief of Social Policy and Economic Analysis in 2007, she became among leading donor officials who worked closely with the MMD government to expand the scheme in 2010.³⁸

The PF Central Committee (the highest decision making organ of the party) had responsibility for approving proposals made by the various working groups that drafted the manifesto.³⁹ Although the Central Committee adopted a pro poor (social democratic) manifesto, the document reflected more of Sata's preferences and the influence of a few of his close allies. With regard to social protection, Guy Scott stated that senior members of the Central Committee including himself, Kabimba and Chenda were in support of the social cash transfer programme. However, Sata did not initially buy into the proposals and questioned where resources would come

³⁴ Interview with Charlotte Harland-Scott (9 November 2015) and correspondence with Daniel Kumitz (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung-Zambia).

³⁵ Interview with Mutale Wakunuma, Country Coordinator, Platform for Social Protection-Zambia (11 March 2015) and Daniel Kumitz, Programme Manager, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung-Zambia (26 February 2015).

³⁶ Profile of Charlotte Harland Scott, <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/2016/03/interview-mwabus-charlotte-scott-discusses-the-evolution-of-tech-in-the-education-sector/>

³⁷ PWAS is the oldest welfare programme in Zambia introduced by the colonial government in the 1950s that was also implemented by the UNIP government after Zambia's independence in 1964. It had become moribund by the early 1990s due to erratic funding.

³⁸ Interview with Charlotte Harland-Scott (9 November 2015).

³⁹ Interview with Guy Scott (17 November 2015).

from to support the scheme.⁴⁰ In the end, Scott who had responsibility for finalising the manifesto unilaterally took a decision to maintain the section that referred to cash transfers without Sata's approval.⁴¹ Two years after getting elected, the PF government implemented the party's proposals to expand cash transfers and provide increased financial support for social protection programmes.

Why did social protection policy reforms happen?

The fourth round of the Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2009 found that 90% of respondents rated the MMD government's performance on economic issues negatively while PF supporters favoured "high levels of state intervention in the economy" (Cheeseman *et al.*, 2014: 341). This led Cheeseman *et al.* (*ibid*) to predict just after Sata's election that:

'the great pressure on President Sata to deliver public services and "money in people's pockets" will make it extremely difficult for the PF to contain spending within manageable levels, while the strong public support for state intervention means that the government is likely to come under intense pressure to implement subsidies and handouts'.

An analysis of Sata's presidency shows that his administration was inclined to implement reforms that were consistent with his pro poor mantra. This was mostly due to the influence of Sata and his close allies within PF who supported pro poor reforms, although it was also strategic for other members (including ministers and MP's) to support these reforms. Between 2011 and 2015, the PF increased its number of MPs from 61 to 87, as a result of parliamentary by-elections, caused mostly by the nullification of some opposition seats due to alleged corruption in the 2011 elections and due to defections (from both MMD and UPND) by MPs who were later offered ministerial positions in the PF government.⁴² Evidently, the PF was not a coalition of politicians with a shared ideology, but rather an alliance of Sata and his close allies (who crafted the pro poor brand), his co-ethnics,⁴³ and

⁴⁰ Interviews with Guy Scott (17 November 2015) and Emmanuel Chenda (17 November 2015).

⁴¹ Interview with Guy Scott (17 November 2015).

⁴² Data on parliamentary by-elections available at: <http://www.parliament.gov.zm/>.

⁴³ Almost half of all PF MPs were from the Northern region (including Luapula, Muchinga and Northern Provinces).

other politicians who previously belonged to the liberal (or neoliberal MMD) but later joined PF to take up positions.

Within Sata's first year, his government increased the minimum wage for poorly paid workers such as domestic workers and shop assistants and also increased civil servants' pay "by between 4 and 200%" in addition to "raising the threshold where Zambians start paying income tax to ZMW 3,000 a month from ZMW 2,200".⁴⁴ However, the most defining feature of Sata's presidency was the launch of the Link 8000 project in September 2012, which was a massive infrastructure project aimed at constructing 8000 kilometres of road countrywide within five years (Chelwa, 2015). This was aimed at addressing the country's decrepit road infrastructure, which was a concern for urban voters while also aiming to promote employment creation. This was in line with the PF's 2011 election pledges to create jobs and put more money in people's pockets.

Decisions regarding subsidies and handouts were made in 2013 and predictions made by Cheeseman *et al.* (2014) that Sata would likely increase spending on both turned out to be partly true. Sata's government announced a decision in May 2013 to remove consumer subsidies on fuel while also reducing production subsidies to maize millers and maize inputs for farmers arguing that subsidies did not target the most vulnerable groups in society.⁴⁵ This move was welcomed by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which argued that subsidies were a drain on public resources and a distortion to the economy.⁴⁶ Later in October 2013, the government announced the expansion of social cash transfers. Some senior leaders who served in Sata's cabinet submitted that the PF government had a strong incentive to expand the SCT scheme because they found it to be a better means of redistributing wealth to the poor than other existing interventions such as FISP.

FISP is a programme that was launched by Mwanawasa's government in 2002 to provide subsidized input packages of maize to smallholder farmers (World Bank, 2010). By the 2009-10 farming season, an estimated 500,000 farmers across the country had been provided assistance through FISP (Ministry of Finance, 2011).

⁴⁴ SABC News, "Road builder Sata enthuses Zambians", 24 November 2013, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/38361e8041f145559678bflc2eddf908/Road-builder-Sata-enthuses-Zambians-but-unnerves-foreign-investors-20131124>.

⁴⁵ Media statement on the removal of subsidies issued by George Chellah, Special Assistant to the President Press and Public Relations, 15 May 2013, www.statehouse.gov.zm.

⁴⁶ Interview with Paul Van Ufford, Chief of Social Policy and Economic Analysis, UNICEF-Zambia (30 March 2015).

Despite its extensive reach, a World Bank evaluation conducted in 2007-08 found the programme fraught with a number of important challenges such as rapid escalation of costs, late delivery of inputs to farmers and huge discrepancies between the amount of inputs released by government and what was successfully delivered to farmers (World Bank, 2010). Notwithstanding these challenges, the MMD continued to implement FISP amidst accusations from the then opposition PF that the government was using the programme to extend patronage to rural voters (Resnick, 2014). An evaluation of FISP conducted by independent researchers in 2013 found that during elections held between 2006 and 2011, households in constituencies won by the MMD received significantly more subsidized fertilizer than those in areas lost by the former ruling party. The study also found that FISP generally targeted better off households that could afford to buy fertilizers at commercial rates (Mason, 2013: v). On the basis of the FISP evaluations, there were recommendations (between 2011 and 2013) from donors (mostly the World Bank and the IMF) and local associations (chiefly the Economics Association of Zambia) for the government to reduce spending on input subsidies and to redirect resources towards interventions that would target the extreme poor.⁴⁷ Chenda noted that when PF formed government, the concerns surrounding the inefficiencies of FISP contributed to the decision by Sata's government to invest in the expansion of SCTs which were considered to be more effective for targeting the most vulnerable. Chenda said that:

‘FISP...would have been better administered if we followed the mode of the social cash transfer by identifying the actual vulnerable persons and paying them actual cash so that they will use it to sustain themselves than to go the FISP route which had so many middle persons and players. The costs of administering the programme was actually much higher than the benefits which were getting to the people and you are not hitting the proper targets, so the cash transfer, it was easy!’⁴⁸

Although the PF government reduced the quantity of inputs delivered to farmers, spending on FISP increased from ZMW 485 million (USD 101 million) in 2011 to over ZMW 1 billion (USD 166 million) in 2015.⁴⁹ It is likely that PF may have maintained spending on FISP for similar reasons that the MMD did. A former minister in President Banda's government noted that the MMD government was

⁴⁷ Interviews with Nkandu Chilombo, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Zambia (17 December 2015) and Paul Van Ufford, Chief of Social Policy and Economic Analysis, UNICEF Zambia (30 March 2015).

⁴⁸ Interview with Emmanuel Chenda (17 November 2015).

⁴⁹ Data from 2011 to 2015 National Budget Addresses.

aware of the challenges that FISP had but it was concerned that abandoning the programme could have political ramifications especially with rural voters. It is possible that the PF in government also recognized this concern and this might explain why FISP continued to receive the largest share of government funds amongst programmes coordinated under the NSPP. Importantly, this demonstrates that there was some reversal in the initial emphasis to shift from farm subsidies to cash transfers, even though the SCT scheme continued to expand. The reversal also shows that while the PF opted for programmatic reform with regard to the implementation of SCTs, the government also maintained some of the clientelist attitudes of previous MMD governments.

Moreover, the decision to reform seems to have been strategic for PF. On the one hand, it was strategic for the government to invest in pro poor programmes such as SCTs that had proved to be effective in addressing rural poverty in order to demonstrate the PF's commitment to pro poor reforms in line with its pre-election promises.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the ruling party also recognised the importance of broadening its support base in future elections. Sata and the party Secretary General Kabimba believed it was important for PF to extend its support beyond urban areas by implementing programmes that would benefit the rural poor.⁵¹ The concern about future elections was evidently in recognition of the competitive nature of Zambian politics and an effort to increase support in provinces where PF had performed poorly in previous elections. However, the policy reforms that happened after 2011 can also be understood by looking at the internal dynamics within PF and how these may have shaped policy. Looking at these dynamics also helps to demonstrate who some of the champions of social protection policy reform were.

PF internal dynamics and policy reform

In the three years that Sata was president, numerous media reports suggested he was suffering ill health.⁵² Concerns regarding his health led to the emergence of

⁵⁰ According to a government official in the MCDSW, two major evaluations have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of cash transfers. The first study was a baseline study on the Monze cash transfer commissioned by MCDSW and conducted by Dr Gelson Tembo, a consultant from the University of Zambia and the second was a randomised, control trial commissioned by UNICEF and conducted by the American Institutes for Research in 2012.

⁵¹ Conversation with Academic Researcher (8 May 2015).

⁵² See for example "Zambia's Sata after appears in public after three months", <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Zambias-Sata-appears-in-public-after-three-months-20140910>.

two major factions within PF which tried to position themselves for a possible succession. One faction has been referred to as the left wing faction of the party and its most prominent members were Kabimba and Scott.⁵³ This group was considered to be a “leftist” (or social democratic) faction that championed social welfare and job creation. Sata is believed to have been part of this faction in the early days of PF rule but appeared to be drifting closer to members of the moderate faction of the party in the latter stages of his presidency.⁵⁴ This faction included Finance Minister Chikwanda (who was a close family relation of Sata) and Defence Minister Geoffrey Mwamba, who were considered to be opposed to some of Sata’s statist policies.⁵⁵ In November 2013, during a period of intense factionalism within the ruling party, Scott mentioned that he and Kabimba had known Sata for 23 years and that the three of them formed the “A Team” of the PF and could not be hounded out of the party by “some people with money”.⁵⁶ This was an attack seemingly directed at both Chikwanda and Mwamba who were considered to be part of a strong pro-business faction within PF and were among wealthy businessmen who contributed to funding Sata’s 2011 election campaign.⁵⁷

It is not clear whether the factions were in agreement or differed on decisions regarding social protection and the expansion of SCTs but it is evident that the faction that included Scott and Kabimba generally favoured social welfare provision. Although Sata had reservations about cash transfers while in opposition, he was a proponent of interventionist policies and it is likely that the “social democratic” faction of the party persuaded him to support the SCT programme. This could explain why Sata championed the idea of cash transfers during public addresses immediately after becoming president despite having had reservations about the scheme while in opposition. Apart from Sata, a few members of cabinet also made public statements regarding social cash transfers. Evidence from media reports show that Scott commissioned cash transfers schemes in various parts of the country during which he stated that the programmes were an indication of the government’s commitment to addressing inequality and achieving pro poor

⁵³ This information is based on an article published by Africa Confidential. The article is based on sources from within PF and is available at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/5756/Sata_sacks_Kabimba.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Africa Confidential, 29 August 2014, http://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/5756/Sata_sacks_Kabimba.

⁵⁶ Lusaka Times, 2 November 2013, <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2013/11/02/sata-kabimba-and-myself-form-the-a-team-in-pf-we-cant-be-hounded-out-guy-scott/>.

⁵⁷ Africa Confidential, 1 November, 2013, “Fights over Kabimba wrack the PF”, http://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/5101/Fights_over_Kabimba_wrack_the_PF.

development. In addition, Chikwanda announced government's decision to make a huge increment on SCT spending during his 2014 budget address while MCDSW minister, Kabanshi, made various statements in parliament during which she implored MPs to support the SCT scheme noting that that the programme had a significant impact on reducing poverty in rural areas.⁵⁸

Whilst Kabimba did not address social protection issues specifically, he on various occasions issued statements, in his capacity as party Secretary General, in which he suggested that the PF manifesto would be “implemented to the latter”⁵⁹ while also imploring government ministers to: “use the manifesto as a guide in all their policy pronouncements instead of resorting to common sense or personal opinions as we have seen in some cases”.⁶⁰ By defending the manifesto strongly, Kabimba was in effect showing support for the PF's pro poor reform agenda. According to Chenda, who was also part of the “social democratic” faction, senior members of the party including himself, Scott and Kabimba had been discussing the importance of programmes such as cash transfers both before and after the 2011 general elections and were convinced that they had to be implemented.⁶¹

In an interview with Guy Scott, he mentioned that his wife, Charlotte Harland Scott had also been a strong supporter of cash transfers.⁶² While Harland Scott was not a member of government, she had worked as a technocrat both in government and with a donor agency. The fact that she was strongly involved in designing Zambia's cash transfer programme, was responsible for drafting proposals on SCTs in the PF manifesto, and had close links with the “social democratic” faction of PF, makes it reasonable to conclude that she was one of the champions of the social policy reforms that happened during Sata's presidency. Aside from the internal dynamics within PF, other actors contributed to policy reforms.

The role of donors, technocrats and civil society

The announcement in May 2013 to remove consumer subsidies on fuel and production subsidies on maize for farmers and millers drew the attention of donors.

⁵⁸ See for example, Ministerial Vote-45, Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health, 28 November 2014, <http://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/506>.

⁵⁹ Lusaka Times, 24 September 2011.

⁶⁰ Ernest Chanda and Moses Kuwema, 22 February 2012, <http://maravi.blogspot.co.za/2012/02/kabimba-challenges-ministers-to-explain.html>.

⁶¹ Interview with Emmanuel Chenda (17 November 2015).

⁶² Interview with Guy Scott (17 November 2015).

The World Bank convened a meeting later in May 2013 that was attended by 10 permanent secretaries representing various government ministries and the Secretary to the Cabinet in which the positive impacts of cash transfers were demonstrated and a draft policy to expand SCTs was proposed.⁶³ The meeting was convened to encourage government to channel resources saved from the removal of subsidies to cash transfers where they would have a direct impact on the poor.⁶⁴ As a result of this meeting, an understanding was reached that the Secretary to the Cabinet would discuss the proposals with the Minister of Finance to increase SCT expenditure in the 2014 budget.⁶⁵

The precise impact of the meeting between donors and permanent secretaries is unclear. However, various donor and civil society representatives interviewed confirmed that the Secretary to the Cabinet and the Permanent Secretaries present at the meeting responded positively to donor proposals to expand SCTs. Guy Scott refuted suggestions that the scale up of cash transfers was due to successful lobbying by donors and argued that SCTs were a PF manifesto programme. He further stated that Cabinet made a unanimous decision to expand SCTs when the matter was discussed in the months leading to the presentation of the 2014 national budget in October 2013.⁶⁶ Yet, Scott could not explain how discussions regarding SCTs were introduced to cabinet and it is possible that the Secretary to the Cabinet could have played a very important role in this regard.

The foregoing demonstrates that donors and technocrats forged a ‘coalition’. The ‘coalition’ also extended to the provision of technical support (including training of MCDSW staff) and budgetary support to meet administrative costs. To the contrary, the relationship between donors and the PF government appears to have been less cordial. Scott argued that some donors were “very troublesome” and tried to influence the model that government used to implement programmes.⁶⁷ Scott’s attitude towards donors reflects a change in donor and government relations that occurred after 2011. A number of donor representatives noted that under the MMD, donors and government held regular consultative meetings, and the government stuck to agreements, even though the MMD (especially under Mwanawasa) was rigid in accepting donor proposals on social protection. On the other hand, the PF government consulted less with donors and did not always stick to agreements even

⁶³ Interview with Paul Van Ufford, Chief of Social Policy and Economic Analysis, UNICEF-Zambia (30 March 2015).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Interview with Paul Van Ufford (30 March 2015).

⁶⁶ Interview with Guy Scott (17 November 2015).

⁶⁷ Interview with Guy Scott (17 November 2015).

though both parties agreed on the expansion of cash transfers. As an illustration of this relationship, the PF government's decision to nominally increase spending on cash transfers by 700% in the 2014 budget came as a surprise to donors who expected the expansion to be in line with the agreement in the Joint Assistance Strategy (which would have seen donors contribute more to SCTs than government in 2014).⁶⁸

The foregoing shows that while donors were important actors in the reform process, they appear to have had a much more direct influence on technocrats than they did on the political leadership. At least two factors could explain the attitude of the government towards donors. First, by 2011, there was improved fiscal space which allowed the government to expand SCTs without relying heavily on donor support. Second, Sata had a reputation (especially while in opposition) of fiercely attacking foreign investors and donors for having undue influence on domestic policy setting (a view generally shared by PF supporters) and it is likely that this would have contributed to the PF government's decision to implement policy reforms without appearing to be under external influence.

Apart from discussions between donors and government, there were also discussions between officials from MCDSW and Ministry of Finance to increase the SCT budget for 2014. Under Mwanawasa's government, MCDSW had been unable to persuade the Finance ministry to provide funds for SCT expansion. This changed after 2008 when Banda was elected president and Situmbeko Musokotwane was appointed Finance Minister replacing Magande who was a strong opponent of SCTs (see Kalandula & Seekings, forthcoming). In 2007, the MCDSW conducted an evaluation of the Kalomo SCT programme (with technical support from GTZ) which provided evidence of increased food security and financial relief for destitute households (MCDSS, 2007). Donors (including UNICEF and DFID) and MCDSW technocrats persuaded Musokotwane and the Ministry of Finance to expand SCT based on this evidence. Musokotwane confirmed that he was convinced by the evidence which informed the decision to expand SCTs modestly in 2010.⁶⁹ Musokotwane's was much less rigid towards SCTs than his predecessor Magande and this paved the way for improved relations between the Ministry of Finance and MCDSW with regard to funding of social protection programmes. This relationship (between the two ministries) continued under the PF government and further evidence from evaluations of SCTs conducted

⁶⁸ This point was raised in interviews with two donor officials and with Charlotte Harland Scott (9 November 2015).

⁶⁹ Interview with Situmbeko Musokotwane (13 January 2016).

between 2010 and 2012 (with financial and technical support from UNICEF, DFID and Irish Aid) (see Seidenfeld *et al.*, 2013) contributed to continued budgetary support from the Ministry of Finance. Despite this, Finance Minister Chikwanda appeared somewhat sceptical of cash transfers. For example, in 2013, he stated that poverty reduction would be achieved through “inclusive growth, education, agricultural productivity and employment but also including social transfers as long as they did not turn into handouts or create dependency” (Kumitz, 2013). Some donor and domestic civil society representatives believed that Sata may have prevailed over Chikwanda to support the 2014 SCT expansion, although MCDSW officials perceived Chikwanda to be less rigid to social protection than some of his predecessors (like Magande).⁷⁰

With regard to the policy framework, the MCDSW led the process of developing the NSPP in collaboration with donors and civil society organisations who participated in drafting and funding the publication of the policy.⁷¹ This demonstrates that the reforms during the Sata presidency were not only the result of political support but also included the contributions from technocrats in the key ministries, donors who continued to provide funding to the budget and technical support to the MCDSW, as well as civil society who also participated in drafting a national policy in addition to lobbying parliamentarians for political support.

However, critics of the PF government challenged the notion that the cash transfer expansion happened due to PF’s commitment to pro poor reforms. Opposition parties (mostly UPND and MMD) argued that it was opportunistic for the PF to reform suggesting that reforms were aimed at extending patronage to attract rural voters (in opposition strongholds) away from other parties in future elections. Some former MMD ministers argued that Zambia had a strong economy by the end of 2011 and that the former ruling party had grown the country’s reserves which provided fiscal space for SCT expansions.⁷² The former ministers also noted that there had been a general decline in the Zambian economy since the PF got elected which had constrained fiscal space and had the potential to retard the progress that has been made. Between 2012 and 2015, the Zambian government faced recurring fiscal deficits which were attributed to debt repayments resulting from increased government borrowing for infrastructure projects and declining government revenues due to a drop in copper prices (Chelwa, 2015).

⁷⁰ Interview with MCDSW official (31 March 2015).

⁷¹ Interview with Sheila Nkunika, Social Policy Officer, UNICEF-Zambia (23 March 2015).

⁷² Interviews with Bradford Machila (12 November 2015), Geoffrey Lungwangwa (19 November 2015) and Situmbeko Musokotwane (13 January 2016).

Former Independent MP, Patrick Mucheleka,⁷³ added that civil society organisations (CSOs) had played an important role in the reform process even though the PF government took most of the credit.⁷⁴ According to Mucheleka, CSOs such as CSPR (of which Mucheleka was Executive Director until 2011) and PSP had been advocating for government support towards SCTs since 2008. Between 2008 and 2011, the CSOs lobbied parliamentarians and organised tours for MPs to visit pilot schemes for them to meet beneficiaries and understand the importance of the scheme⁷⁵. PSP continued to lobby parliamentarians and gained the support of some opposition MP's who formed a parliamentary caucus on social protection to promote the social protection agenda.⁷⁶ The impact of the parliamentary caucus remains unclear, however. Even so, MP's (mostly from opposition parties) regularly debated cash transfers in parliament, although their debates were mostly limited to imploring government to introduce SCTs in their constituencies and raising concerns regarding deserving citizens who had not been targeted. Leaders of opposition parties hardly raised issues on social protection and some, like Edith Nawakwi (President of the opposition Forum for Democracy and Development) remarked that the solution to eradicating extreme hunger and poverty was through support to farmers (a view shared by UPND's Hichilema) and not "the government mocking people with handouts".⁷⁷

Conclusion: The importance of ideology, ideas and strong electoral competition

Zambia's cash transfer programme started off as a donor funded pilot in 2003-04 and attempts by donors and later domestic civil society organisations to convince the MMD government to expand the scheme and complete a national social protection policy dragged for almost seven years with very little success. A partial change of government in 2008 from Mwanawasa to Banda resulted in a small

⁷³ Patrick Mucheleka was elected Independent MP for Lubansenshi constituency in Northern Province in 2011. His election was petitioned by the losing Patriotic Front candidate citing electoral malpractices. Following a lengthy court process, the Supreme Court nullified his election in 2015. Mucheleka re-contested the ensuing by-election, on September 2015, on a UPND ticket but lost to the PF candidate.

⁷⁴ Interview with Patrick Mucheleka (11 November 2015).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Interviews with Vince Chipatuka, PSP Zambia (3 November 2015) and Patrick Mucheleka (11 November 2015).

⁷⁷ Edith Nawakwi, "Trying to eradicate poverty by increasing cash transfer is mockery" in Lusaka Times, 17 October 2014.

expansion of the SCT programme but the scale of the expansion was very small when compared to the expansion that happened under Sata (which itself was hardly massive when compared to some countries in the region).

It is evident that a change of government from MMD to PF resulted in significant social protection policy reforms which included the rapid increase in the number of SCT household beneficiaries, the introduction of SCTs to an additional 31 districts (from 19), a 700% increase in funding towards the programme as well as the publication of the NSPP. The reforms to SCTs were also accompanied by increased budgetary allocations to other social protection programmes such as FISP, FSP and empowerment funds.

Comparatively, Zambia's SCT programme expanded much faster than programmes in some neighbouring countries. In Malawi, the change of government in 2012 was also followed by increased support towards cash transfers. Even then, the SCT programme was only extended to 7 out of 28 districts (from an initial pilot in Mchinji district in 2006) despite a commitment by President Joyce Banda to expand the scheme countrywide by 2014 (Hamer, 2016b). At the same time, the coverage of cash transfers in Zambia remained much smaller than neighbouring countries with more comprehensive social protection systems. For example, South Africa expanded its provision of pensions and grants from 2.4 million to 16 million beneficiaries between 1994 and 2014 (Seekings, 2015). Additionally, the monthly entitlements for beneficiaries in Zambia remained far less generous than in South Africa and Namibia.

With regard to the impact of a change of government on social policy reforms, parallels can be drawn with the partial change of government in Zimbabwe that occurred in 2009. The formation of the GNU led to increased support for the HSCT and a shift from food aid to food (or cash) for assets programmes, much like the shift from farm subsidies to cash transfers in Zambia. The reforms under Zimbabwe's GNU government were attributed to the strategic relationship between ministries responsible for social protection programmes that were controlled by the MDC on the one hand and donors such as UNICEF on the other hand, which "drafted strategy documents, formulated the detail of proposed programmes, and largely funded and drove implementation" (Chinyoka & Seekings, 2016: 24). In Zambia, the reforms were driven by the ruling PF government which provided primary funding for social programmes and led the process of drafting a national policy. A major difference between the Zambia and Zimbabwe reforms was that they were led by the state in the former and by donors in the latter. The existing fiscal space (after a decade of sustained economic growth since the early 2000s) in

Zambia meant the government could expand programmes without much donor dependence unlike Zimbabwe that needed donor support due to severe fiscal constraints resulting from an economic crisis that persisted since the early 2000s.

Nevertheless, donors were present in the reform process in Zambia. Donors supported SCT expansion plans in 2013 as a response to FISP which was largely ineffective in targeting the extreme poor and lobbied senior bureaucrats to buy into the proposal. Despite this, political support from PF appeared to have also come from the diffusion of donor ideas through a coalition of an influential (former) donor official and an important faction within PF. Seekings (2014: 18) posited that: “donors and international organizations clearly facilitate diffusion through spreading awareness of policy models, funding and evaluating pilot schemes, and advising on the design of new policies”. The process of policy diffusion had been led by donors such as the World Bank, UNICEF and ILO which have persuaded governments of some African countries to adopt social protection models by producing reports of successful programmes from other parts of the world and flying politicians and technocrats to attend international workshops (Granvik, 2015). However, the diffusion process in Zambia did not take the form discussed by Seekings (2014) and Granvik (2015). Rather, donor ideas were diffused into the PF manifesto through a donor official with the support of a few senior leaders of the party. It was probably significant that senior leaders within the PF, including Sata, believed in implementing pro poor reforms and were generally supportive of social welfare programmes.

In view of the foregoing, it is necessary to consider whether Sata and his close allies supported social protection because of a strong commitment to a social democratic ideology or whether there were other strategic reasons. Cheeseman *et al.* (2014) observed that the populist nature of Sata’s politics and the pro poor brand of Sata’s election campaigns resonated strongly with urban Zambians who generally favoured interventionist policies. The implication is that the PF was impelled to take a more interventionist approach than the MMD in order to distinguish itself from the former ruling party that had governed on a liberal (or neoliberal) framework for twenty years. It was therefore strategic for the PF to reform not only because this would appeal to its electoral base but because the PF understood that the competitive nature of Zambia’s electoral system (characterized by the first past the post system of electing a president) meant that the ruling party had to broaden its support base to rural areas to guarantee success in future elections by implementing pro poor programmes. It was probably prudent for Sata to adopt a social democratic position even though he was not an early proponent of SCTs. This also gives some credibility to some of Sata’s opponents who argued

that reforms under his presidency were not entirely due to ideology but could also have been opportunistic.

The Zambian case demonstrates that strong electoral competition and a resulting change of government are both important factors for influencing significant social protection policy reforms. The electoral dynamics in Zambia had the effect of influencing political leaders to buy into the social protection agenda and to implement reforms. Evidence from the pre and post GNU governments in Zimbabwe shows that social protection policy reforms are less likely to occur where there is little incentive for party's and presidential candidates to distinguish themselves from opponents due to weak electoral competition.

Whilst reforms in Zambia were driven more by political leaders within the ruling party, donors, technocrats and civil society were not absent from the reform process. Elsewhere on the continent, non-state actors played a crucial role in promoting cash transfers in places like Uganda. This was achieved through a coalition of donors and bureaucrats who then successfully lobbied political leaders in both the executive and the legislature. Similarly, donors in Zambia did form a coalition with technocrats in government and civil society but did not lead the reform process. The fact that leaders in PF and especially President Sata took center stage, resulted in technocrats and civil society having a less visible role in the Zambian social protection agenda setting than their counterparts (especially technocrats) in Uganda, who were influential in the process that led to that country's first pilot in 2010 (Grebe, 2014). The expansion of Zambia's cash transfer programme (and the shift from farm subsidies) under the PF was mostly programmatic, aimed at reaching the poorest in the country. However, a decision to expand the farming input subsidy later in Sata's presidency demonstrated a shift towards a more clientelistic approach to social protection.

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