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Social Grants Transfer Program: The Role of Policy Actors in Policy Implementation

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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2020

Abstract

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MA, University of Ghana, 2000

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The scholarly literature lacks the knowledge to support the view that policy actor activities in policy streams were not limited to the 3 initial stages of the policy cycle. Finding evidence through a study to either back or refute this view among scholars was important to explain how policy implementation effort works to yield results. Thus, the purpose of this general qualitative and policy implementation research was to generate additional knowledge about the role of policy actors in policy implementation. The 5-stream framework theoretical lens for this study suggested that the policymaking process involved 5 streams with active policy actors that cascaded through the entire policy cycle of a program. The key research question was to investigate how policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations within the policy implementation arena of the Ghana Social Grants Transfer Program influenced the overall policy outcome from 2008 to 2018. A purposive sample of 15 research participants that collaborated with and participated in major events organized by the secretariat were interviewed. The data were thematically coded and analyzed using NVivo 12 software. The study findings showed that the streams flowed beyond decision making stage of the policy cycle, all policy actors' presence were induced by corporate mandates with some becoming more influential than others, and interacted to achieve program intent. The study can impart positive social change by improving the appreciation for policy actors during policy implementation as a step towards knowing the way to harness their expertise for efficient service delivery to members of the Ghanaian community, and others across the West African sub region.

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Dedication

I dedicate the dissertation to my family members, namely Mabel, Carl, Adelaide, Lynn, and Benedicta for their understanding, sacrifice, and support during the entire period.

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I wish to acknowledge my Committee Chair, Dr. Marcel Kitissou, Committee Member, Dr. Gary Kelsey, and URR, Dr. Eliesh O'Neil Lane for the guidance. Every single comment on the draft submissions added to shape up the dissertation. I wish to also add Dr. Lynn Wilson and Dr. Karen Shafer whose initial comments on the prospectus and review of proposal, respectively, kept me alert and open minded throughout the rest of the journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Ghana is a lower middle-income country located in West Africa with a population of 27.7 million as of 2015, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (see Food & Agriculture Data Network, 2019). However, approximately 6.8 million people in Ghana are classified as poor (Ghana Statistical Service, 2018, p. 10). Moreover, an additional 2.4 million citizens are categorized as extremely poor (GSS, 2018, p. 14). Generally, poverty is high among uneducated and self-employed citizens in the agriculture sector and rural communities. Specifically, 90% of extremely poor Ghanaians (2.2 million) reside in the rural areas of the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2018, p. 14). Further, a high level of poverty (42.7%) in Ghana is found among self-employed heads of households working in the agriculture sector or those with low levels of education or no education at all (GSS, 2018, p. 34).

The main economic activity among most Ghanaians is agriculture and agriculture-related businesses. The primary agricultural products of the country included cocoa, coffee, and sheanuts along with some cereals. There are extractive industry products like gold, manganese, bauxite, and oil and gas (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014, 2018). According to the GSS (2018), between 2013 and 2017, the most significant contributors to the gross domestic product (GDP) in Ghana were the service sector (43.3%), industry sector (34.7%), and agriculture sector (21.9%; GSS, 2014, 2018). Pertinently, the agriculture sector is the primary livelihood for the rural community who form the most significant proportion of the poor and the impoverished citizens in Ghana.

The recognition of the poor living standards of rural communities led to a series of studies, including the commission of research to assess the levels of poverty in Ghana and the development of recommendations to address the situation. These study results and recommendations were described in the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) report of the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE et al., 2007). The NSPS report contained a recommendation to create an inclusive society by adopting sustainable ways of offering social protection to the people (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 6). The report revealed that about 40% of Ghanaians were poor with about 14.7% identified as extremely poor (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 8). Based on the NSPS report recommendations, the government instituted a Social Grants Transfer Program (SGTP) as a vehicle to address extreme poverty and provide social protection for the poor (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 6). In all, the NSPS authors noted that:

> The programme will not only provide a "spring board" to lift or assist beneficiaries to "leap" out of their current socio-economic status by improving their livelihoods but will assist them to access existing government and social services that will provide them with a buffer against various risks and shocks. (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 6)

The above statement was understood by all Ghanaians to mean that the policy intervention program would enable recipients to become self-sufficient. In other words, beneficiaries of the program would no more be considered poor by the end of their

participation in the program. Thus, the statement increased the expectation of Ghanaians about the program outcome.

In 2007, the government instituted a pilot program, and in 2008, commenced a nationwide rollout program (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2016). The policy goal of the program included the provision of temporary cash transfer to targeted categories of the people to supplement incomes and help smoothen their household consumption levels, assist in accumulating human capital and investment assets, and provide links to other social services like health and education resources. The program was designed to also graduate the beneficiaries out of the program after a maximum of three years (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 66). The authors of the report assumed that at the exit stage, the beneficiaries would have become empowered to live above poverty in a self-sustaining manner. After a decade of program implementation between 2008 and 2018, and engaging a beneficiary household population of 380,000 (Ghana LEAP Official, 2018), the scholarly community assessed that the program achieved some short- and long-term goals of the policy (Handa et al., 2014, 2017; Osei, 2011, p. 3).

In particular, the goals of the program were to create an all-inclusive society and provide citizens with livelihoods that ensure the capacity to live above the poverty line. The program management secretariat declared (Ghana LEAP, 2017) that the SGTP has achieved the policy intent of the NSPS report and the national social protection policy (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015). In contrast, Handa et al. (2014), in an evaluation of the program, lamented about the none enforcement of

administrative procedures for achieving critical outputs of the program. The impact

evaluation by Handa and colleagues described the implementation of the program as

inconsistent with the program policy (p. ii). The purpose of this study was to understand

the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actors operating alongside other actors

that together engaged and contributed to the achievement of the program policy intent.

      This study explored and documented how the interests and motivations of policy

actors, and their actions together contributed to the achievement of the SGTP policy

intent. Interests and motivations are the driving force behind the activities of policy

actors at any stage of the policymaking process but particularly at the implementation

stage (see Mugambwa, Nabeta, Ngoma, Rudaheranwa, Kaberuka & Munene, 2018).

During the implementation stage, the groups of policy actors apply their core

competencies and products to compete and influence decision processes. Howlett,

McConnell, and Perl (2015, 2017) identified three main policy actors engaged during the

first three stages of the policymaking process, as having and extending influences into the

policy implementation stage. These three main policy actors and stages were epistemic

communities (ECs) for agenda setting, instrument constituencies (ICs) for policy

formulation, and advocacy coalitions (ACs) for decision making. ECs brought their

expertise and knowledge as the unit of analysis (Haas, 1992, p. 3). ICs, on the other

hand, relied on their developed solution tools and models as the unit of analysis (Simons

& Voß, 2018). ACs depended on their group beliefs and ideology to propel and define

their actions as the unit of analysis (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994). As policy actors in

the various streams flowed down from the previous three stages of the policy cycle into

implementation, there was the need to understand how the actions, inactions, and interactions with any implementation stage specific actors supported or inhibited the implementation of the SGTP. This study was needed to fill a gap in understanding the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actors that helped determine the outcome of policies during implementation.

Problem Statement

There was a problem of a lack of knowledge about the activities of groups of policy actors extending beyond the initial three stages of a policy cycle (Howlett et al., 2015, 2017). That problem, specifically, is the lack of knowledge to support the view that policy actors in policy streams were not limited to the three initial stages of the policy cycle but extended to the other levels such as implementation and evaluation (Béland, Howlett, & Mukherjee, 2018a; Howlett, 2018; Shiroma, 2014). Currently, policy implementing agencies tend to lump different groups of policy actors together as a single stakeholder group (Howlett et al., 2017, p. 76; Simons & Voß, 2018, pp. 29, 32). However, lumping policy actors together as a single group denies policy implementing officials the opportunity to take advantage of the different knowledge and expertise of the different policy actor groups. Such knowledge and expertise from different policy actors helped to improve upon the delivery of goods and services to the targeted beneficiaries (Handa et al., 2014, 2017; Handa & Park, 2012; Howlett et al., 2015). Many possible factors contributed to that study problem. There was limited research on policy implementation, unexplained policy implementation gaps, and inadequate assessment of the policymaking processes. The literature reviewed for this study identified interests,

motivations, compromises, collaborations, transactions, perceptions, opinions,

attitudes/moods, ambiguities, and conflicts theme(s) as the foundation for the focus of the

study (Handa et al., 2017; Howlett, 2018; Immervoll, Jenkins, & Königs, 2015; Khan &

Khandaker, 2016; May, 2015; Mojsoska Blazevski, Petreski, & Petreska, 2015;

Mugambwa et al., 2018; Riphahn & Wunder, 2016; Seekings, 2017). None of the

literature reviewed looked at the role of policy actors from the qualitative perspective and

using the five-stream framework at the policy implementation stage of the policy process.

The study filled this gap by contributing to the body of knowledge needed to address the

problem of inability to achieve the policy intents. Through this study, data can be

provided to public policy decision makers to formulate or change policies in response to

how policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations tend to influence policy outcomes.

The added knowledge would also help contribute towards programs such as the SGTP

achieving the policy intents.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this qualitative and policy implementation research was

to explore, identify, and describe the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actor

groups and other actors to engage during the implementation stage of the Ghana SGTP. I

applied Howlett and colleagues suggested five-stream framework (FSF) explore and

understand how the framework helped to describe policy actor activities at the

implementation stage of the Ghana SGTP. I anticipated adding to the scholarship on

policy implementation research particularly in understanding how policy actors

influenced policy outcomes. My research filled the gap in the literature regarding

activities of multiple groups of policy actors during the implementation stage of the policymaking cycle (Howlett et al., 2017, p. 76; Simons & Voß, 2018, pp. 29, 32) of the Ghana SGTP.

Research Questions

The main research question of the study was as follows: Over the period of 2008 to 2018, how have the policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations within the policy implementation arena of the Ghana Social Grants Transfer Program (SGTP) influenced the overall policy outcome? The following supplementary questions helped to answer the main research question:

- Who were the subsystem policy actors active in the implementation of SGTP?

- What was the nature of subsystem policy actors, interests, and motivations?

- How did the subsystem policy actors interact to achieve program policy intent?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the dissertation was the FSF by Howlett et al. (2017). The FSF was derived from the merger of multiple streams framework (MSF) by Kingdon (1984), the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988; 1993), and the policy cycle model developed by Lasswell (1956, cited by Howlett, 2018, p. 13). The FSF harmonized the strengths and weaknesses of the original frameworks and model, including an extension component that addressed issues of policy

implementation and policy evaluation. Further details on the theoretical framework are covered in Chapter 2.

The framework by Howlett et al. (2017) recognized that groups of policy actors were active in the entire policymaking process and cycle. However, Howlett and colleagues focused their work on the first three stages of the policymaking cycle. They alluded to the existence of actors at the implementation stage of the same process. I applied the FSF to explore and describe the activities, motivations, and interactions of active policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation stage of the Ghana SGTP. Howlett and colleagues maintained the metaphor of the stream in the FSF which was initiated by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) and sustained by Kingdon (1984) to show that policy actor activity flowed downstream beyond the policy decision stage of the policymaking process. In the dissertation, I used the FSF lens to explore the activities of policy actors at the level of policy implementation of the Ghana SGTP.

Nature of Study

The nature of this study was to understand and describe the presence, interests, and motivations of groups of policy actors at the implementation stage of the Ghana SGTP. I used a general qualitative approach (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016) on policy implementation to explore and describe the presence, interests, and motivations, of active policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of SGTP. The study's general qualitative approach allowed me to achieve the ultimate goal of gaining insight into the activities of groups of policy actors within the implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP and then to disseminate the knowledge of activities and interactions of

policy actors during the implementation stage of the policymaking process (see Kahlke, 2014, p. 40). I used direct, in-depth interviews (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016) of active policy actors including public officials at the headquarters of the program management secretariat and identifiable policy actors such as epistemic communities (ECs), instrument constituencies (ICs), and advocacy coalitions (ACs). Giving the COVID-19 challenges and the need to practice social distancing with direct interviews, phone and internet technology were used for interviews at the convenience of any research participant.

The ECs were a group of policy actors comprised of experts and scientists who used their acquired expertise and knowledge to transform public policy issues into policy problems for policy solution formulation and decision making (Haas, 1992, p. 3). The ICs were another group of policy actors composed of experts, think tanks, and others interested in prescribing and putting forward developed policy solution models for the identified policy problems (Simons & Voß, 2018). Lastly, ACs are a group of individuals with common political beliefs and ideology, who sought to have policy solutions to apply to policy problems (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994; Sabatier, 2007). These three active groups of policy actors extended their activities and interests into policy implementation arenas of programs. My interest was to understand and describe how these policy actors operated alongside one another and with other actors at the implementation phase that consequently resulted in the achievement of policy intents.

I used the constructivist philosophy that regards qualitative inquiry as an exercise between a researcher and research participants (see Guba & Lincoln, 1995). The

outcome of the in-depth interviews or phone and internet technologies such as Zoom or Skype reflected both the knowledge of the research participants and my interpretation and understanding of the responses. The findings were not an aggregate summary of the views of only the research participants. The interpretative nature of the study agreed with the objective of exploring to understand, and then describing the active participation of policy actors in the SGTP.

In answering the research questions, I gathered information through direct, in-depth interviews using face-to-face or phone or internet technologies such as Zoom and Skype with individuals who belonged to the policy actor groups as well as other identified actors. I selected the sample purposefully from individuals who acknowledged themselves as policy actors representatives and provided detailed and rich information for the study (see Patton, 2015). I also used the snowball sampling method to identify potential research participants for the study. I applied open-ended and semi structured interview questions to assist in identifying the actor groups' presence in the SGTP implementation arena, and the interest and motivations of the policy groups of the research participants. Apart from those primary sources of data, I gathered information from official public documents, including those from government ministries, departments, and agencies. I accessed additional information from publicly available sources like newspapers over the program assessment period (2008-2018). The details of the methodology were discussed in Chapter 3.

I audio recorded the in-depth interview or the phone and internet technology-assisted sessions with permission from the research participants. I outsourced the

transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews to a professional firm and used

NVivo 12 software to analyze the data gathered through secondary sources, transcribed

audio recordings, and my field notes to reveal the common themes that were persistent

throughout the responses of the research participants to understand the role of these

policy actors during the policy implementation. The recordings captured the actual

interview, which did not include familiarity exchanges such as greetings, weather

situation and traffic challenges of a typical day that forms part of pre interview

conversations necessary to forge a rapprochement with a research participant. I reminded

the research participants about the commencement of recordings before pressing the start

recording button on the recorder. No biodata information was recorded whatsoever.

Recorded audio file titles were coded without any link to the identity of the research

participants. From the analyzed data, I identified the types of policy actors active at the

stage of policy implementation, revealed the various policy actor groups' interests and

motivations, and described the nature of the interactions of each actor group. Further

details are discussed in Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

For clarity, the section included definitions of terms that recurred in most parts of

the study document.

Advocacy coalitions: These policy actors were described by Sabatier (1988) and

further elaborated by Jenkins-Smith et al. (1994). The actors come together by sharing a

common belief and ideology and desiring to identify both policy problems and solutions

that aligned with those beliefs for approval and implementation. The members were

mostly politicians, parliamentarians, and cabinet ministers serving in government, including the president.

Bureaucrats: These were actors made up of operation bureaucrats (OBs) and street-level bureaucrats (SLB). They function together to translate policy decisions into strategies and actions for the purpose of delivering goods and services to beneficiaries of a policy project or program. They are also described in this general term by Lipsky (2010, cited by Adami, 2010; Gilson, 2015).

Cash transfers: Also known as social grants transfers, cash transfers are temporary cash advances provided on gratis that were extended to identified beneficiaries who were considered poor or impoverished to help smoothen either the consumption levels or to increase their levels of income (Kabeer & Waddington, 2015, p. 290; Kalebe-Nyamongo & Marquette, 2014, p. 1; Owusu-Addo et al., 2019, p. 2).

Conditional cash transfer: These social grants transfers were conditional on beneficiaries meeting certain outlined requirements for continuous receipt of cash transfers (Kabeer & Waddington, 2015, p. 290; Kalebe-Nyamongo & Marquette, 2014, p. 1; Owusu-Addo et al., 2019, p. 2). Some of the conditions included working for a minimum number of hours per day, accumulating capital, visiting health facilities, and consuming nutritious foods and oils (Kabeer & Waddington, 2015, p. 290; Kalebe-Nyamongo & Marquette, 2014, p. 1).

Constructivist philosophy: This was the belief that phenomenon existed in the natural settings of the people who experienced it and the role of an inquirer was to put

together a description or explanation that captured exactly the form and nature of the

phenomenon (Patton, 2015, p. 123; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 186).

Epistemic communities: These were actors described by Haas (1992, cited by

Zito, 2018, p. 37) as experts with authoritative knowledge in a particular area like climate

change or oceanography or environment. They were drawn to each other by their

expertise and desired to guide and define policy problems from public issues. The

objective of the community was to ensure the proper appreciation of the defined

problems placed on the government agenda.

Instrument constituencies: These were actors described by Voß and Simons

(2014) as experts consisting of academia, think tanks, public administrators, and

consultants interested in offering a policy solution for adoption to address an identified

policy problem. Their interest was the development, promotion, and expansion of their

policy instrument.

Operation bureaucrats: These were actors that form a subsection of Bureaucrats

described by Lipsky (cited by Adami, 2010; Gilson, 2015) as 'street-level bureaucrats.'

Operations Bureaucrats work at the national and regional levels in ministries,

departments, and agencies, and do not meet beneficiaries of any policy project or

program. The officials are career civil servants who work to support the administration

of government.

Policy arena: This was a single policy area of focus (e.g., environmental policy,

health policy, maternal and child health policy) where identified policy actors were active

(Béland & Howlett, 2016, p. 398, 2016, p. 5).

Policy implementation gap: Also referred to as implementation failures, these gaps referred to a situation where the policy intent and the policy outcome after policy implementation were different or do not adequately match (Hupe & Hill, 2016, p. 111; McConnell, 2015, p. 221).

Policy intent: This term was used to refer to differences that become apparent between policy goals or objectives at the end of decision making stage, and policy outcomes at the end of the policy implementation stage of the policymaking cycle (Adami, 2010, p. 1; Hughes & Condon, 2016, p. 94; Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 213).

Street-level bureaucrats: These were actors that form a subsection of bureaucrats who directly implement policy projects and programs. They are amply described by Lipsky (cited by Adami, 2010; Gilson, 2015) as leading in the implementation and can modify or adapt a policy to make it workable at their level of operations.

Subsystem policy actors: This phrase referred to individual members of a stream such as policy analysts, consultants and advisers under advocacy coalitions policy group (Howlett et al., 2017, p. 72) in the politics stream (Kingdon, 1984).

Tensions, stress, and strains: These were the result of interaction between various institutions, actors, and transactions within the policy process (Smith, 1973, p. 197).

Unconditional cash transfer: These were social transfers that were not conditional on any criterion but allowed the targeted beneficiaries to receive cash to improve consumption or income levels (Owusu-Addo et al., 2019, p. 3).

Unit of Analysis: This was the focus of the study (i.e., people, the structure of projects or programs, perspectives of people) and the primary source for the collection of information for analysis (Patton, 2015, p. 259; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 135).

Assumptions

My study was a general qualitative research into the role of policy actors in the implementation of a policy. The ultimate aim was to explore, understand, and describe the interaction of policy actors during the implementation of a policy. The general qualitative research method involved aligning with the constructivist approach to meaning making and knowledge acquisition (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 4). Further, Patton (2015, p. 123) summarized the general view in the literature that primary philosophical assumptions were underlying qualitative study and the constructivist paradigm. The philosophical assumptions for general qualitative research implied ascertaining how one gathered and interpreted the data collected from interviewing people.

One of the primary assumptions under the constructivist paradigm for the study was that truth was based on consensus gathered from the experiences of people regarding a phenomenon of interest (see Patton, 2015, p. 123). The assumption was ontological and recognized that there was no single truth but, instead, multiples of truth (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 1). Moreover, the researcher and research participants had different realities. There was no predetermined answer or view to work towards under the constructivist paradigm. I explored and provided insight from the emerging perspectives of individual policy actors to understand how interactions with others during implementation had led to the outcomes of the policy under implementation.

I again assumed, based on the constructivist paradigm for the study, that there was no place for facts or causal factors as applied by positivists in research (see Guba & Lincoln, 1995, p. 106). Facts were akin to generalizations that did not necessarily represent the world view of a group of people such as claiming that a certain proportion of people behaved or reacted in a particular way. Such conclusions described as facts did not fully represent the world view and experience of the targeted group regarding what formed the world view, and made meaning to individuals from their perspectives (see Guba & Lincoln, 1995, p. 106). The use of data compromised real meanings and purpose individuals attached to their view of truth leading to ambiguities in understanding a group of people. Through observation and interviews, perspectives on a phenomenon can be elicited from the target group to reduce ambiguity. I avoided any general data that drew from and depended on facts as conclusions.

Based on the constructivist paradigm for the study, I assumed that to understand a phenomenon of interest, one had to gather the information within the living context of the people (see Patton, 2015, p. 123). The social context within which the knowledge was acquired was essential to enable meaning making. Within this assumption, I did not seek to generalize and expect generalizations from other studies to influence the results or findings of the study. Similarly, the study did not produce generalizations to influence other studies. Data collected to gain knowledge are context-specific for the research; particularly, the study was within the context of the SGTP under implementation in Ghana.

Further, under the constructivist paradigm for the study, I assumed that data collected for any qualitative study was neither unusual nor legitimate (see Patton, 2015, p. 123). At best, the data collected represented another construction and a reflection of the people that provided the information. In other words, the data gathered and the knowledge gained comes from visiting the people in their environment or the field. The above epistemological assumption defined the best way to collect qualitative data from observations and talking to people in their natural environment. I employed a direct interview or phone and internet technology-assisted method of data collection from purposely selected research participants in Ghana and at their preferred local settings.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was the policy implementation stage of the policymaking process. The delimitation was necessary to add to the current knowledge on how policy actors interacted during policy implementation of a typical policy implementation like SGTP in Ghana. The information required to analyze the phenomenon of interest was gathered based on direct interviews or phone and internet technology such as zoom or skype with persons purposely selected and known to possess the requisite knowledge in policy actor interactions with the SGTP implementation. The scope and delimitations also provided focus on the policy implementation level of investigation and were also important due to time and resource constraints.

Limitations

I acknowledged that certain limitations existed and related to the choice of general qualitative research. The research type was not aligned with the traditional types of

qualitative research, and the method enabled the use of multiple attributes of qualitative

research methods to extract and share knowledge about the phenomenon of interest (see

Kahlke, 2014, p. 38). The method offered flexibility to combine the strengths of all the

other types of qualitative research while maintaining the integrity of the data in

interpreting and describing the phenomenon of interest (see Kahlke, 2014, p. 38). In

using the general qualitative inquiry method, the issue of assuring rigor was often cited

by critics of the method as a weakness (see Kahlke, 2014).

The second limitation is the small sample size for qualitative research (see Patton,

2015, p. 326; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The small sample size limited the study since it

made the findings not applicable to generalizations even though the lessons from the

research are transferable to similar policy implementation programs within the Ghanaian

context. The research participants were purposely selected from identified policy actor

groups and who volunteered after the invitation to participate in the study. The

participants were also lead representatives of their agencies in the work of the SGTP and

social protection interventions in general. The subtle differences in opinion on individual

responses did not affect the transferability of the study results to the implementation

arena of programs like the SGTP. The small sample size enabled the collection of rich

and in-depth information from knowledgeable research participants purposely recruited

for the inquiry. The small sample size did not lead to a bias.

The other limitation is the risk of researcher bias, which was an extension of the

study having a small sample size. I used triangulation and member checking strategies,

where necessary, to address such potential bias in data collection and analysis. The

strategies assisted in maintaining the integrity and reliability of the research (see Burkholder, Cox, & Crawford, 2016; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I had also acquired skills to ensure sensitivity and integrity in the handling and analysis of information. Moreover, I upheld the overall trustworthiness of the data collected for analysis including its reliability and validity.

The findings were transferable to other social protection and cash transfer policy interventions having similar contexts of the phenomenon of interest. In terms of reliability and validity, there were limitations to the findings. To avoid such limitations and enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I followed the rigorous procedures for collecting and analyzing qualitative data, as Patton (2015) and Saldaña (2016) opined. There were prior studies on individual policy actors but using other models and frameworks on Ghana.

The study was unique to adopt the five-streams framework of Howlett et al. (2015, 2017) as the theoretical lens. The use of the framework on Ghana posed a limitation. Previous studies using the same lens would have helped to provide a base for defining a better research problem. The absence of such prior research using the lens adopted limited the interpretation of the findings. The research participants became the sole leads in unraveling the policy actor engagements with the SGTP from the five-stream framework perspective.

The research participants may have provided answers to avoid challenges with their principals or employers. I worked to ally such fears by assuring confidentiality of the responses and the masking of their identities. I also assured the research participants

that their truthful answers would assist knowledge in the area. Thus, the limitations of the responses were addressed by me.

Significance

Through the study, I sought to extend the knowledge on how the presence, interests, and motivations of epistemic communities, instrument constituencies, advocacy coalitions, and other groups of policy actors within the Ghanaian context unfolded during the implementation phase of the policymaking process of the SGTP. I sought to understand and describe how those policy actors through their presence, interests, and motivations, succeeded in negotiating, influencing, and compromising on positions of influence that together contributed to the attainment of policy intent. With such knowledge, interested parties understood the nature of policy actors' involvement during policy implementation and perhaps led to an understanding of what happened, why it happened, and how to avoid negative policy implementation challenges. Other potential benefits, from the knowledge gained through the research and within the context of Ghana, were suggested for livelihood empowerment of more impoverished households towards improved health and nutrition, education, investment assets and human capital accumulation, and welfare and wellbeing (see Amin et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2017).

I addressed issues related to the study implications for positive social change. Social change is the way a scholar-practitioner applied the acquired skill and knowledge from advanced training into meaningful activities that changed the lives of the people in the community (see Walden University, 2014). The community refers to the immediate and broader population of that graduate student. The study of the SGTP had meaning for

all persons interested in social protection interventions in Ghana. Policy implementation

translated policy decisions into actions that led to the achievement of expected outcomes.

The outcomes involved a change in behavior that the government wanted the beneficiary

to experience. To the extent that my study sought to know how the policy

implementation of the program was pursued with the involvement of policy actors, I

found explanations for the changes that came to beneficiaries. Therefore, the study

brought positive social change by adding knowledge to understand policy actor behavior

during policy implementation to improve the delivery of the program, and also improve

the lifestyles of the beneficiary communities. Outcomes from my study were relevant to

policy implementation research and the application to other SGTPs in sub-Saharan

Africa.

Summary

This chapter introduced the study aim to understand how the presence, interests,

and motivations of groups of policy actors working alongside other actors influenced the

outcome of SGTP. The purpose was to understand the tensions, stresses, and transactions

that ultimately led to the achievement of the policy intent contained in the NSPS report

(Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007) and the NSPP (Ministry of

Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015). The study used the general qualitative

research method to elicit rich and in-depth information on the presence, interests, and

motivations of groups of policy actors during the policy implementation phase of the

policymaking process. The constructivist philosophical orientation guided the entire

study. In describing the presence, interests, and motivations of the groups of policy

actors, I applied the five-stream framework as the theoretical framework. The next chapter reviewed the available scholarly literature from the policy process, implementation, theoretical framework, social grants transfer program, cash transfers, social protection, and policy actors.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In the instance of the SGTP of Ghana, the problem addressed in the study was to understand the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actors during the policy implementation stage of the program spanning 2008 to 2018. The purpose of the study, therefore, was to explore, identify, and describe the activities, motivations, and interactions of active policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of SGTP. In the study, the interest was on the activities and contributions of groups of policy actors toward the outcomes of Ghana SGTP policy.

The scholarship on public policy recognized the existence and activities of policy actors in the various stages or cycles of the policymaking process (see Béland et al., 2018a; Howlett, 2018; Mugambwa et al., 2018). There were several scholarly works on the presence and activities of policy actors during the initial stages of the policy cycle. At the agenda setting stage, three policy actors, epistemic communities, instrument constituencies, and advocacy coalitions, were adequately described and their activities or core competencies recognized at the initial level of the policy process. Some scholarly attention also focused on policy formulation and at the decision making stages of the policy cycle (see Béland et al., 2018a; Howlett, 2018; Mugambwa et al., 2018). Few studies contained a detailed analysis of the presence and activities of policy actors beyond the decision making stage. The policy implementation stage was naturally the next level to investigate in order to appreciate the presence and activities of policy actors

(see Béland et al., 2018a, p. 11; Howlett et al., 2017, p. 76; Simons & Voß, 2018, pp. 29, 32).

This chapter contains an overview of the existing literature on the theoretical framework, policy process, policy implementation, policy actors, and social grants transfers. The effort in understanding prior work on the SGTP focused on how actions of groups of policy actors influenced the outcome of SGTP during policy implementation. I also reviewed the literature on cash transfers. The aim was to understand previous studies on policy actors during policy implementation as well as on the SGTP in Ghana. There was a challenge in reconciling policy expectations and policy outcomes after policy implementation giving the inconsistent implementation of the program.

The goal of the literature review was to explore and understand the extent of knowledge gained on the activities of policy actors at the implementation stage of the program by previous studies. From the literature, there were many frameworks and models that sought to explain portions of policy implementation within the policymaking process; however, there was no theory that explicitly explained the policy implementation stage. In addition, I explained the activities of policy actors during the implementation stage of the policymaking process.

Beyond the first 3 stages of the policymaking process, Howlett et al. (2017) suggested the use of the FSF as a tool to investigate the groups of policy actors that were involved throughout the policymaking process. At the policy decision making stage, ACs and ECs become prominent actors and interact to yield a policy decision by the decision-makers. The next stage of interest was identifying and describing the groups of policy

actors that took up the challenge of collaborating during policy implementation to result in the delivery of public goods and services. This study added to the scholarly literature on the activities of groups of policy actors during policy implementation stages of the policymaking process.

I documented in this chapter, literature related to the boundaries of this study and presented the current scholarly work and knowledge on the topic through a review of the theoretical framework, public policy, policy implementation, policy actors, social protection, and social grants transfer programs. I used the literature review to address the general methodology and approach of the study. Through the literature review, I provided further detail on the previous chapter and grounded the study in the qualitative and policy implementation research.

Literature Search Strategy

The searches for relevant literature for the study started with Walden University library. The search engines included Academic Search Complete, EBSCO eBook, Political Science Complete, ProQuest Central, and SAGE Premier. By linking the Walden Library to the Google Scholar search engine, I accessed several articles on public policy, policy implementation, and policy actors, among others. I also accessed Walden dissertations and identified previous work by Walden doctoral students, which guided my readings and further search for documents. I also followed-up on the references from articles I read to exhaust the literature on public policy, policy implementation and policy actors within the time frame of 2014-2019.

I further used the Walden University Library and resources, Google Scholar, and ordinary Google site search. Using Google Scholar to search for *policy implementation theory* yielded 3.3 million results. Filtered with relevant years starting from 2015 yielded 632,000 results. Next, using Google Scholar to search jointly for *policy implementation AND Ghana* yielded 18,300 results, which was then reduced to 6,160 after applying filtering to exclude citations and relevant years from 2015 to date. An additional search condition combining *policy implementation AND Ghana SGTP* yielded three articles.

Further filtering to exclude citations and relevant years from 2015 to date still yielded three articles. In the end, I accessed a substantial number of peer-reviewed articles and a few books in previous Walden University coursework from Public Policy and Administration. In all, I identified 21 relevant articles from Google Scholar and eight articles from Walden University dissertations on social grants transfer programs and policy implementation.

As part of the literature search, I used the following key search terms: *public policy, policy implementation, policy implementation theory*, *policy actors, Ghana, epistemic communities, instrument constituencies,* and *advocacy coalitions.* The results were encouraging although mostly focused on the initial stages of the policymaking process. The search term, *advocacy coalitions,* posed challenges due to the results often being related to the advocacy coalition framework.

Theoretical Framework Overview

The literature reviewed contained views that suggested that no clear and well-articulated policy implementation theory existed but rather frameworks including the top-

down, bottom-up, and hybrid development frameworks through three generations of the

scholarly effort (see Khan, 2016; P. Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). The theoretical

framework for this study was the FSF by Howlett et al. (2017). Howlett and colleagues

developed the FSF by combining the MSF by Kingdon (1984), the ACF by Sabatier and

Jenkins-Smith (1988; 1993), and the policy cycle model developed by Lasswell (1956,

cited by Howlett et al., 2017, p. 13). The proponents of FSF maintained the metaphor of

the stream used by Kingdon to analyze policymaking activities of the policy process,

including policy actors. I applied the FSF as the theoretical framework to explore and

describe the activities of groups of policy actors working alongside other actors during

policy implementation of the Ghana SGTP that influenced the policy outcomes.

The FSF originated from the three previously mentioned theoretical frameworks.

However, it was important to note that Kingdon (1984) was motivated by the work of

Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) on the garbage can model and organization choice.

Cohen and colleagues described the focus of the study on universities and their decision

making as organized anarchies that in their view, were shown by problematic

preferences, unclear technology, and fluid participation. Eventually, the study concluded

by suggesting the existence of four independent but interrelated streams of "problems,"

"solutions," "participants," and "choice opportunities" (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972, p.

3). The study, thus, introduced the streams metaphor and factors that aided in explaining

the activities of various actors during policymaking, which motivated Kingdon's

contributions to the scholarly work in 1984.

While accepting the metaphor and suggestions offered by Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), Kingdon (1984) noted that there were three streams of interest in studying policy agenda setting. Kingdon affirmed with a little variation the streams mentioned in Cohen and colleagues work as problem, policy, and politics as well as policy entrepreneurs and policy windows. Like the work of Cohen and colleagues, Kingdon also viewed the variables or factors that helped explained agenda setting as independent and at the same time, interdependent. The handling of the factors included limiting the application to agenda setting attracted criticism and interest than was generated by the study of Cohen and colleagues. The scholarly community did not accept the limitation of Kingdon's work on agenda setting. In appraising the MSF, Knaggård (2015, p. 450) observed that the framework by Kingdon was unable to fully explain the activities of policy actors. While not necessarily agreeing with Knaggård, Howlett et al. (2017, p. 66) opined that MSF is complicated and did not offer a clear understanding of how public policy agenda was set even in the United States. Despite this criticism, other scholars were of the view that nothing prevented the extension of Kingdon's work to the other stages of the policymaking process (Cairney & Jones, 2016; Howlett et al., 2015; Jones, Peterson, Pierce, Herweg, Bernal, Lamberta Raney, & Zahariadis, 2016).

Previous scholarly works contained reasons showing that it was possible to extend the MSF to other stages of the policy cycle. The extension of the MSF included policy formulation (Gearin, Turtura, Kame'enui, Nelson, & Fien, 2018), policy decision making (Zohlnhöfer & Rüb, 2016), and policy implementation (Fowler, 2018; Gardner, 2018; Sager & Thomann, 2017). In all, about 311 scholarly articles referenced MSF in various

studies, therefore, extending well beyond the agenda-setting phase. Most of these studies

did little to add to the explanatory power of the approach except to narrate the application

of the problem, policy, and politics factors with the accompanying policy windows and

policy entrepreneurs. Thus, Howlett et al. (2017) decided to combine the three previous

frameworks and models to deepen the understanding of the policymaking process. Their

study covered the first three stages of the policy cycle (i.e. agenda setting, policy

formulation, and decision making).

   Apart from Kingdon's (1984) MSF, Howlett et al. (2017) developed the FSF from

the ACF proposed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988; 1993). The activities of policy

actors during policy formulation, according to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, was based on

the sharing of common beliefs and ideology. Shared beliefs and ideology motivated the

policy actors to identify defined problems and align with alternative policy solutions

available during policy formulation. Like MSF, the ACF had a narrow focus and could

not adequately explain the activities of policy actors across the entire five policymaking

stages of the policy process (Howlett et al., 2017, p. 66).

   Howlett et al. (2017) incorporated a third and final model to develop FSF. The

model was the policy cycle model by Lasswell in 1956 (Howlett, 2018, p. 13). Lasswell

(1956) sought to simplify the policy process as cyclical activities that started with

intelligence gathering and ended with an appraisal. The proposal at the time was for

seven stages of the policy process including promotion, prescription, invocation, and

application termination (2017, p. 67). The suggestion by Lasswell followed, at the time,

the sequence of activities within the public sector in the United States. The scholarship

on the subject did not entirely accept the suggestion as proposed by Lasswell.

Eventually, the critics settled on a five-stage policy cycle comprised of agenda setting,

policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation, and evaluation (see Howlett

et al., 2017, p. 67). The policy cycle model has endured over 7 decades. However, the

model does not exhaustively explain the activities of policy actors.

The concept of the FSF was that policymaking involved five factors: problem

stream, policy stream, politics stream, process stream, and program stream Howlett et

al., 2015, 2017). These streams and the nature of their flows is captured
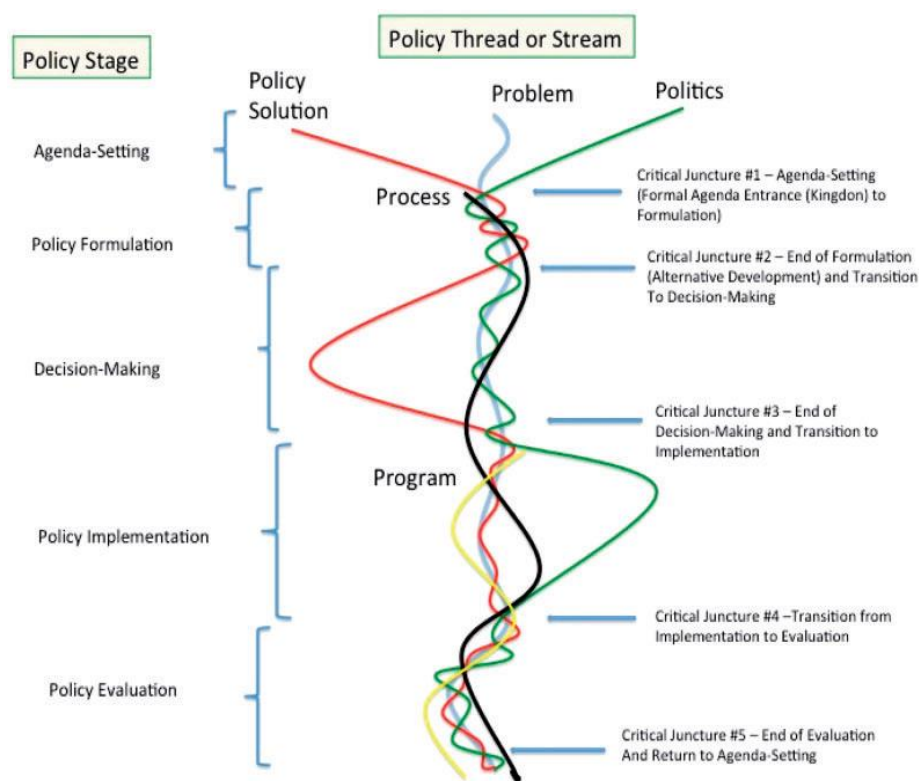
Figure 1. Five thread (stream) model of the policy process. Adapted "Moving policy implementation theory forward: A multiple streams/critical juncture approaches" by Howlett, M. (2018), *Public Policy and Administration.*

in Figure 1. These five interdependent factors operated within the policy cycle stages of the policymaking process. At the same time, the FSF concept made use of five critical junctures or transition points between the stages of the policy cycle. The framework allowed exploration of the activities of policy actors beyond the agenda setting stage, as Kingdon (1984) sought to portray. The activities of policy actors extended to policy implementation and evaluation (Howlett et al., 2015, 2017). The proponents of the FSF illustrated the framework with a chart (Figure 1, Chapter 2) to show that the activities of policy actors' streams throughout the stages of the policymaking process (2015, 2017). The proponents, nonetheless, admitted that the level of engagement or influence of any group of policy actors varied with the stage of the policymaking process. The proponents of FSF also acknowledged that epistemic communities, instrument constituencies and advocacy coalitions were not the only policy actors active throughout the policymaking process. Other actors, like Lipsky's "street-level bureaucrats," were also present at the policy implementation stage (Vedung, 2015).

I applied the framework to explore the role of groups of policy actors working alongside other actors during the policy implementation stage that influenced the policy outcome of the Ghana SGTP. In particular, the third through the fifth streams of the FSF is when policy implementation activities of the policymaking process take center stage (Howlett, 2018, p. 16), and that was the section of the framework that I applied to the implementation of the Ghana SGTP. In applying the FSF as the lens for the study, I sought to demonstrate the ability of the framework to adequately explain the activities of policy actors in the implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP.

Public Policy

Many scholars viewed public policy as a problematic term to define. Smith and Larimer (2017, p. 1) opined that public policy cut across various fields of study. The area of public policy, according to Smith and Larimer, had no unifying theory or conceptual framework, and any methodology could be used to analyze the subject in any field of study. However, some scholars viewed the public policy as any decision of the government to address an identified problem in society or among the population that resulted in a change of behavior on the part of the target population (Kraft & Furlong, 2016, p. 3; Smith & Larimer, 2017, p. 3). Owens (2008a, p. 3) agreed with the last definition but chose to regard public policy as the decisions of government that led to changes in the behavior of the targeted population either to do something or to cease doing something.

The decision to cause a change in behavior according to Smith and Larimer (2017, p. 3) depended on the action or inaction of policy actors working within a policy action space to effect the purposeful action or inaction as Anderson (2001) is cited as suggesting in an undergraduate textbook on public policy. The understanding from Smith and Larimer, and Owens (2008b) was that public policy was an intentional decision of government with a goal that required action or inaction to affect the changes in behavior in the target population. Public policy could be positive to improve the lives of people or negative to deny certain benefits or well-being from the targeted population.

Giving the challenges of a universal definition of public policy, and yet knowing what public policy contains, I adopted Birkland's (2016, p. 9) definition of public policy

as a government decision to use the knowledge and rational thinking as well as

experience to understand the challenges of society and adduce possible solutions in either

a written or verbal proclamation. The broad definition adopted meant that public policy

was premised on the existence of a problem and was used to prescribe at a higher level of

government ways to solve the challenge for the governed (2016, p. 9).

Policy Process

Birkland (2016) defined policy as "a statement by the government - at whatever

level, in whatever form - of what it intends to do about a public problem" (p. 9). Further,

Birkland also cited the Schneider and Ingram (1997) definition of policy as consisting of

or taking the form of "texts, practices, symbols, and discourses that defined and delivered

values including goods and services as well as regulations, income, status, and other

positively or negatively valued attributes" (Birkland, 2016, p. 10). With these definitions

and attributes in mind, then the policy process might well refer to the means of instituting

a policy.

The public policy process included policy analysis and policy evaluation. Policy

evaluation sought to understand the effects of government policy actions with respect to

solving a particular problem (Smith & Larimer, 2017, p. 5). On the other hand, policy

analysis is an ex-ante empirical exercise to determine the cause of action to take to

resolve an identified problem (2017, p. 5). Alternatively, Birkland (2016) defined the

policy process as consisting of "research on the formulation and implementation of public

policy … emphasizing national and domestic policy" (2016, p. 16). Therefore, the policy

process was the entirety of government activities from seeking to know the problem,

deciding action plans, addressing the problem, and consequently, assessing the effects among the targeted populations (Mvulirwenande, Wehn, & Alaerts, 2019, p. 15). As defined above, the policy process referred to five stages of the process, including the identification of a problem, formulation of solutions, the decision regarding a policy, the implementation of the policy, and evaluation of the subsequent outcome (2019, p. 15).

The scholarly community was reluctant to accept the stages or levels of the policy process. Howlett (2018, p. 9, cited Lasswell, 1956, 1971) suggestion that the entire policy process consisted of small discrete sections or stages. Lasswell's framework, according to Howlett opened up the debate about whether the policy process had levels or stages. The debate ultimately led to the reduction of the initial seven-stage process of policymaking to 5 stages. The seven stages initially proposed by Lasswell (1956, cited by DeGroff & Cargo, 2009, p. 48; Howlett, 2018, p. 9) included agenda setting, issue definition, policy formulation, policy decision, policy implementation, evaluation, and maintenance, succession, or termination. The views of Lasswell were also not supported by Sabatier (1991) and Kingdon (1984).

While criticizing the policy cycle of Lasswell (1956, 1971), Sabatier (1991) introduced the ACF. The ACF did not address the issue being debated (i.e., levels or stages in the policy process). Instead, the ACF sought to explain the role of policy actors in the formulation of public policy. The model-based discussions focused on ideas, learning, and coalition behavior of the active policy actors during policy formulation (Howlett et al., 2017, p. 66). Despite criticisms, new models, and frameworks notwithstanding, the policy cycle model survived and remained one of the fundamental

frameworks that guides the policymaking process today. The five stages were now accepted as agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Howlett, 2018, p. 9).

Policy Implementation

From the currently accepted five stages of the policy cycle framework, the study focused on policy implementation or the fourth stage of the policy process. Policy implementations were understood to mean the transformation of policy objectives into actions and activities at the lower levels of government like an implementing agency (DeGroff & Cargo, 2009, p. 49; Howlett, 2018, p. 3; Terpstra & Fyfe, 2015, p. 542). Howlett (2018) and Terpstra and Fyfe's (2015) concept of policy implementation was supported by Paudel (2009, p. 36). Paudel explained that policy implementation was taking the policy objective of a higher authority and carrying it out at the beneficiary or targeted population level. The views of Terpstra and Fyfe (2015), and Paudel (2009) was shared by many scholars who also viewed policy implementation as a deliberate effort to translate policy decision into actionable activities to reap the expected outcomes (Howlett, 2018; Hupe & Hill, 2016; P. Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). While agreeing with the definition, Ewalt (2001, p. 6) expanded the definition to include "… what happens after policymakers have decided to do something new, do something different, or stop doing something, and before the impact of this action." In terms of definition, the scholarship on the subject agreed that policy implementation was different from other stages of the policymaking process.

The differences between other stages of the policymaking process and policy implementation research was highlighted by the exposition of Pressman and Wildavsky's study that precipitated an increase in scholarly interest to explain the causes of policy failure according to Harris (2005, cited by Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 214). The situation also led scholars to pay more attention to implementation failure, especially after Hargrove (1975) drew attention to policy implementation as the critical issue to address in policy studies (see Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 213).

Howlett et al. (2017), Howlett (2018), and May (2015) all agreed that policy implementation research gained momentum after the study on implementation by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973). The referenced study focused on the USA federal jobs program in Oakland, California (Hupe & Hill, 2016, p. 106; Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 213). The study by Pressman and Wildavsky called on the scholarly community to focus attention on implementation research in order to unravel reasons for the frequent implementation gap between policy intent and policy outcomes. Following Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) study, other studies that aided the resurgence of implementation research included the works of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) on setting clear policy goals and implementation structures (see May, 2015, p. 279). Apart from the initial interest drawn to policy implementation, Goggin et al. (1990, cited by Khan, 2016) study also contributed to explaining ways of improving communication between intergovernmental agencies involved with implementation. Moreover, Stoker's (1991) study added to the growing knowledge by highlighting the provision of incentives for intergovernmental cooperation among agencies. Additionally, May (2015) provided

further insight on improving the capacity and commitment of intermediaries carrying out or involved with implementing public policies (2015, p. 279).

In the literature, policy implementation researchers were shown as uncertain about the development and use of a well-defined theory to explain the internal processes of policy implementation (Khan & Khandaker, 2016, p. 539; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). The search for such a theory was ongoing among the scholarly community. The first of such effort was the first generation of policy implementation research. The first generation viewed policy implementation as a given process that required no formal crafting to translate government objectives into action to yield results (Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 214). The first generation of policy implementation research concentrated interest in agenda setting and decision making at higher levels of government. The position of the first generation attracted criticism for failing to acknowledge and to craft ways for the other stages to function optimally, according to Matland (1995, cited by Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 214). Thus, the first generation of policy implementation research or theory making effort sought to make policy goals clear and consistent, with limited policy actors involved and implemented by a sympathetic public institution (2018, p. 213). However, there was nothing like a sympathetic public institution due to recruitment to fill positions in such an institution not based on one's support for the policy or political administration at the helm of political authority in a country. On the contrary, recruitment was based on academic and professional expertise. With these criticisms, the first generation gave way to the development of the second generation that saw two divergent approaches take hold of the policy implementation research.

The second generation of policy implementation scholarship started around the late 1970s through the 1980s. The two divergent approaches that dominated the second generation were the top-down and bottom-up approaches to explaining policy implementation. The second generation began with the studies that favored central control with policies identified, formulated and decided upon at higher levels of government (Howlett, 2018; Khan, 2016; Khan & Khandaker, 2016). The top-down perspective saw only value in policies that emanated from the top of government, with policymakers deriving authority directly from the electorate and targeted beneficiaries of the policy (2018; 2016; 2016). The top-down perspective attracted several criticisms. Scholars who supported the top-down approach assumed that implementation happened as a natural consequence of policy decisions (Khan, 2016, p. 6). They believed that once the policy decisions happened, the next stage followed, and ultimately the achievement of the outcome of implementation exactly matched to the decision-makers' anticipated results. In reality, policy implementation required careful design and a recognition of the role played by a network of actors with varied interests and motivations. The outcome of a top-down approach was unlikely to automatically yield the desired results.

To demonstrate that the top-down approach to policy implementation cannot be interpreted as the proponents envisioned, Mugambwa et al. (2018, p. 214, cited Meter & Horn, 1975) as introducing the communication process model within the implementation phase. The communication process contained resource factors that affected implementation. Mugambwa and colleagues also cited Mazmanien and Sabatier's (1983; 1989) suggestion that policy implementation was influenced by the activities of policy

actors engaged within a specific implementation arena. Mugambwa et al. (2018, p. 214) also summarized the main tenets of the top-down approach to policy implementation as including clear and consistent goals, reduced active policy actors' activities, reduced anticipated change, and the institution of a sympathetic agency to implement the policy. However, the communication model did little to reduce the dissatisfaction with the top-down approach. Views on policy implementation other than top-down emerged as part of the second generation of implementation research.

Still, within the second generation of policy implementation research, the bottom-up approach emerged to counter the top-down perspective. The bottom-up approach emphasized the active role of "street-level bureaucrats" (Khan, 2016, p. 6; Khan & Khandaker, 2016, p. 540) who tended to make and unmake policies as part of routine operations on the ground. Lipsky (1980) first used the description of street-level bureaucrats and opined that the public officials at all times make policies at the level of operations. Unlike the top-down approach, the bottom-uppers recognize the local level, target groups, and implementers as the critical components of policy implementation (Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 215). Like the top-down approach, however, the bottom-up perspective revealed a bias towards the opposite side (lower levels) of government. The bottom-up approach sympathizers were criticized for tending to undermine the principal-agent relationship that forms part of the policymaking process from top to bottom. In addition, street-level bureaucrats have no democratic legitimacy to redefine policies during implementation (2018, p. 216). While these observations were correct, street-level bureaucrats wielded strong influence in initiating changes to ongoing policies and

sometimes introduced new policy regimes through relevant policy actors to champion and affect such policies.

Stewart et al. (2008, cited by Khan, 2016, p. 6) opined that essentially whether top-down or bottom-up, the second generation sought to explain the success or failure of policy implementation. Khan (2016) also mentioned the suggestions by Goggin et al. (1990, cited by Khan, 2016) to illustrate the degree to which the second generation was also occupied with developing analytical frameworks and models to guide policy implementation. The bottom-up perspective was criticized as failing to recognize that street-level bureaucrats can usurp the interests of the targeted population and champion their own (Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 216). In addition, the authority of the implementers in a bottom-up approach was not derived from the people as compared to the top-down perspective to policy decision making (2018, p. 216). The second generation, and the ambivalence attached to the interests surrounding the approaches did not end the interest in policy implementation research, and the search for a parsimonious theory.

The third generation of policy implementation interest emerged around the 1990s. The third generation sought to combine top-down and bottom-up perspectives into a hybrid framework (Howlett, 2018, p. 4; Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994). The earlier perspectives of top-down and bottom-up were limited in explaining the policy implementation process. The third generation, therefore, aimed to become scientific and worked towards defining a theory to inform policy implementation (Khan & Khandaker, 2016, p. 540; Mugambwa et al., 2018). This generation also involved the development of

frameworks like the game theory (Hawkins, 1984; Thomas, 1989, cited by Howlett, 2018, p. 5). Howlett recounted the failure of game theory applied to policy implementation to consider the tendency of some actors to resist and direct actions. Another failure, according to Howlett (p. 6) was to acknowledge the divisions within governing bodies that adversely affected implementation outcomes, including the principal-agent theory. The challenge with the principal-agent application in policy implementation was the tendency of the agent to identify more with the beneficiaries than with the desires of the principals (Howlett, 2018, p. 6). Finally, the instrument choice theory application to policy implementation focused on policy processes and outputs, although the instrument also explained policy formulation and decision making (p. 7).

Mugambwa et al. (2018, p. 217) agreed with Elmore's (1979, p. 602) proposition on the forward and backward mapping method of analyzing policy implementation research. The mapping suggestion was an attempt at combining the top-down and bottom-up approaches. Whereas the forward mapping involves clear goals and ways of assessing outcomes, the backward mapping focused on the targeted outcome of change (Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 217). Another contribution to the third generation was Sabatier's (1991) opinion cited by Mugambwa et al that policies were best analyzed in cycles of ten or more years. In explaining the reasons for the suggestion, Sabatier (1991) advanced the ACF with beliefs and ideological posturing as the main unit of analysis for policy process analysis (2018, p. 217). The studies and instruments that formed the third-generation implementation research, particularly input from Elmore and Sabatier, did not yield a parsimonious implementation theory.

Some scholars did not give up on finding an implementation theory to explain why and how things happen during policy implementation. In that further quest, the fourth generation of implementation research emerged. Although the fourth-generation research introduced new perspectives to implementation research, the studies nonetheless built upon the previous body of knowledge in the policy process (see Howlett, 2018, p. 8). The generation accepted the subsystem and network of policy actors involved in understanding how a typical policy process unfolds as well as the implementation context as suggested by Bressers and O'Toole (1998, 2005, cited by Howlett, 2018, p. 8). Perhaps, the new ways of describing, explaining, and understanding policy implementation as part of the policy process involved the FSF proposed by Howlett et al. (2017). The FSF combined the best of the top-down and bottom-up perspectives with slight modifications, giving a new dimension to the purpose of explaining policy implementation and implementation performance. The FSF merged the MSF by Kingdon (1984), the ACF by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988) with a revision in 1993, and the policy cycle model or the stages heuristic developed by Lasswell in 1956 (p. 13).

The FSF harmonized the strengths and weaknesses of the original frameworks and model, including an extended component that addressed issues of policy implementation. The framework explored the network of actors and activities beginning with problem identification, through formulation and decision, implementation, and ending with evaluation. The FSF identified five streams, namely, policy solution, problem, politics, process, and program streams. Implementation activities covered between the third through the fifth streams (Howlett et al., 2015, 2017). All the streams

were visible through the entire policy process cycle with varying degrees of interest and energy, depending on the stage of the policy cycle. For the purpose of the research, I applied the FSF to explore, understand and describe the groups of policy actors working alongside other actors and their activities that influenced policy outcomes within the implementation stage of the policy cycle of the Ghana SGTP.

Policy implementation and the SGTP

Policy implementation was part of the public policy process that translated the intentions of government into actions and activities to realize the objectives of policy decision-makers (Howlett, 2018, p. 2; Khan, 2016, p. 3). While agreeing with the general definition of policy implementation, the views of Hupe (2011) were cited as suggesting that policy implementation involved conflict, resistance, ambiguity, and multiple influences from many actors at multiple stages (Pemer & Skjølsvik, 2018, p. 139). The definition clarified the role of policy implementation as a post-policy decision activity. The activities of the different actors in the arena of the three initial policy cycle stages did not end after a policy was defined and progressed to implementation Howlett et al., 2015). The question is whether the realization of policy intent involved the activities of policy actors and whether that involvement extended beyond decision making as the top-down perspective in the literature assumed of implementation.

The translation of public policy objectives into actions and strategies to deliver services and goods to satisfy or improve the lives of the people was not direct or easily achieved. The situation where public policy objective was not achieved after policy implementation was a policy implementation failure. The implementation failure was the

difference between policy objectives and policy outcomes. This difference is described

as a policy gap (Hupe & Hill, 2016, p. 111; Terpstra & Fyfe, 2015, p. 527). Terpstra and

Fyfe (2015) affirmed the findings of Barrett and Fudge (1981) by observing that as a

result of the many actors involved in the policymaking process, the understanding of the

intent of the policy was likewise varied (2015, p. 528). The different understandings of

the policy created ambiguity (Kingdon, 1984) that led to different levels of discretion at

the 'street-level,' which ultimately caused the implementation gap or policy deficit (2015,

p. 528). The SGTP implementation of the NSPS report (Ministry of Manpower, Youth

and Employment et al., 2007), according to the program management secretariat, had not

resulted in a policy implementation gap. The evidence provided by the secretariat was

publicly available (Ghana LEAP, 2018), and the interest was now focused on how policy

actors engaged with each other and with others to achieve the policy intent.

Streams of the Five-Stream Framework

From the illustrative chart of the FSF (Figure 1, Chapter 2) five streams cascaded

down the policy cycle from agenda setting through to evaluation. The problem stream

comprised of experts, think tanks, researchers, and scientists who were knowledgeable in

a particular thematic area or sector (i.e., oceanography, and climate change). They

understood the trends in that thematic area and could readily frame public policy issues

into public policy problems. The policy stream also consisted of experts, researchers,

academia, and others who developed policy solution models to align with policy

problems identified for action. The politics stream, on the other hand, had members who

came together based on shared beliefs and ideology. They were often, but not always,

members of political parties and interest groups. The three independent but interdependent streams of problem, policy, and politics overcame their paths to temporarily converge at the first critical juncture that created or led to agenda setting (Howlett et al., 2015; 2017). The three streams continue to crisscross one another and become joined by another stream: process, at the start of the second stage (policy formulation) of the policy cycle.

The process stream at the upper course of the flow was active and intermingled with the other streams to result in policy formulation at the second critical juncture. Then the policy stream seemed to divert its course leaving the other three streams (i.e., problem, politics, and process) crossing paths. At the third critical juncture, all four streams merged to lead to decision making. At the end of the third stage of the policy cycle, the four streams clearly had expended much of their energies, and become slow but heavily charged with interests, motivations gained, and with each desiring to maintain influences acquired at the upper courses of their basins. Then a fifth stream at its upper course flows meandering together with the others to carry on the mandate of the decision makers.

The program stream of the FSF commenced flow as part of the combined flow comprising the policy solution, problem, politics, and process streams (Howlett, 2018, p. 16), as captured in Figure 1 (Chapter 2). The program stream formed the fifth and final stream to join the flow at the start of policy implementation (i.e., the fourth stage of the policy cycle). Policy process actors within the program stream were administrators, beneficiaries, or targeted community, and stakeholders. The administrators were

typically civil, and public servants often described as "street-level bureaucrats." The

main work of the actors within the program stream was to deliver, distribute, or consume

goods and services supplied by the government (Howlett et al., 2015, 2017). The public

administrators occupied positions within the implementing agencies and received the

policy decision containing the objectives set by the government. The program stream

actors, working alongside actors from the problem, policy, politics and process streams,

transformed the policy objectives into strategies, action plans, and activities (e.g.,

budgeting, coordination with responsible agencies, and collaboration with public and

private agencies) to deliver the policy on the ground. The administrators, forming the

bulk of actors in the program stream, possessed the knowledge, experience, expertise,

values to start, and appropriately modify the work plans, and budgets (Howlett, 2018, p.

16) as the implementation process unfolded.

Other subsystem actors, drawn from policy solutions, problems, politics, and

process streams, contributed in varying degrees to the delivery of government services

and goods during the implementation phase of the policy process. There were continuous

negotiations with all other policy actors with different policy interests to ensure complete

implementation. The interactions involved the tensions, stresses, and transactions that

Smith (1973) described as the behavior of actors within the implementation model. In

all, the actors within the streams had different energies (i.e., levels of involvement) while

flowing through the implementation phase of the policy process. The degree or intensity

of activity at the implementation stage of the policy cycle related to the policy interests

championed, and the importance of those interests in the flowing streams (Howlett, 2018,

p. 18). With all the actors and activities, the question was what role is played by the groups of policy actors that were part of the streams flowing through the implementation stage of a policymaking process of the Ghana SGTP.

<div align="center">**Social Protection**</div>

Ghana is currently a lower-middle-income economy that was not a welfare state. No previous administration of the Government of Ghana since independence in March 1957, had ever described the country as a welfare state. Nonetheless, the country prides itself on a long standing history of recognizing the need to support the poor and the vulnerable in society as part of the empowerment of the people for national economic growth and development (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 8). The effort of Ghana comes under the broad area of social protection.

The United Nations, through the website of the Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), defined social protection as *concerned with preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's well-being*." The UNRISD, on the same website itemized activities that comprised social protection, as

> the policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability, and old age.

The definition above suggested that governments ought to acknowledge the responsibility to reach out to people and provide opportunities for self-enhancement to

reduce abject poverty among the citizens. The effort to achieve such a goal was what led to the commissioning of the study on social protection in Ghana.

The National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) report of Ghana was the outcome of that study (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007). This report, which became an interim policy, affirmed and adopted the United Nations definition of social protection. The NSPS report (p. 8) contained a reaffirmation of the definition of social protection as

> a set of formal and informal mechanisms directed towards the provision of
> social assistance and capacity enhancement to the vulnerable and excluded
> in society.

The Ghana National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) document (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 2) defined the term social protection as

> … a range of actions carried out by the state and other parties in response
> to vulnerability and poverty, which seek to guarantee relief for those
> sections of the population who, for any reason, are not able to provide for
> themselves.

Both definitions recognized the existence of vulnerability and poverty as well as the need for the state to assist such households. The definitions also described social protection interventions implemented by Ghana as geared towards reducing extreme poverty and vulnerability among the people.

While the NSPS report focused at the time (2002-2007) on the state of social protection in Ghana, the policy itself firstly identified a social protection floor to guide

the support from government to the vulnerable and extremely poor. NSPP contained

provisions that limited the support from the government to certain identified basic needs

for all people living in Ghana. The social protection floor included access to basic health,

minimum income security, access to basic needs for children, minimum income security

for working people, and minimum income security for older persons (Ministry of Gender,

Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 2). In essence, the vulnerable were classified in

the policy as chronically poor in society, economically at risk persons, and socially

vulnerable. These were the guiding principles for the social protection policy of Ghana.

The policy guided all social protection initiatives in Ghana.

      Social protection initiatives. There were many social protection initiatives of the

government provided by various agencies. Some of those initiatives were listed below in

no particular order:

- Capitation Grant

- Free Bus Rides to School

- Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education program

- Free Exercise Books

- Free School Uniforms and Sandals

- Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW)

- Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty

- National Health Insurance Scheme

- School Feeding

Most of these programs were running concurrently in Ghana. The new and main policy document for social protection in Ghana was the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) of 2015. The GNSPP document contained the goal of government to oversee a comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated social protection system through different actions and on many fronts. The government codified legal frameworks and established a dedicated Ministry to lead social protection efforts. The NSPS report and later the NSPP recognized the existing social protection initiatives, together sought to rationalize the various interventions on social protection for effective service delivery (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 7) to the people. The rationalization was to ensure that there were no overlaps and contradictions in goals and objectives.

Program Tool

The program tool adopted by the Government of Ghana to operationalize the policy was a social grant transfer program or cash transfer payments made to identifiable, targeted, and selected beneficiaries. The transfers took two forms: conditional and unconditional cash transfers.

Cash transfers. To translate the above-listed expectations from the social protection policy outlined in the NSPS report into actions, a cash transfer mechanism to provide social protection opportunities to families of targeted populations was instituted by the government (Harland, 2014, p. 375). The scholarly community defined the phrase *cash transfer* to mean the receipt of temporary government support (i.e., cash) while unemployed or impoverished. Harvard University's Humanitarian Academy at Harvard (n.d.) on Cash Transfer defined the term as "… *the direct provision of cash to households*

in order to reduce poverty and vulnerability." The definition did not make clear the source of such cash transfers. However, a further explanation from the Humanitarian Academy at Harvard indicated that governments and international agencies extended the application of such solutions to reduce poverty and vulnerability. All the definitions captured above omitted support provided by and through aid agencies during emergency relief programs. In essence, cash transfers were funds mainly offered by governments to the poor and vulnerable persons assessed and identified to require support. The cash transfer payments enabled individuals and families to live a decent lifestyle above extreme poverty.

The literature on cash transfers affirmed the general view that the cash support improved the lifestyle of recipient families (Fisher, Attah, Barca, O'Brien, Brook, Holland, ... Pozarny, 2017, p. 299; Handa et al., 2017, p. 6). Araujo, Bosch, and Schady (2017) opined from the study on Ecuador that cash transfers improved the living conditions of recipients and their families. Earlier, Roelen, Chettri, and Delap (2015) discovered through their study of the Ghana Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program that both material and non-material transfers improved the wellbeing of households (2015, p. 80). Similarly, scholarly literature contained views on the varying but positive outcomes of cash transfers to recipient families (Kabeer & Waddington, 2015, p. 299; Owusu-Addo, 2014, p. 33) depending on the type of transfer.

The scholarly literature contained widely shared definitions of the two basic types of cash transfers, which are conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and unconditional cash transfers (UCTs). Conditional cash transfers referred to the provision of cash transfers

conditioned upon the reciprocal adherence to a specific behavior or change of attitudes, including working some hours and abiding by certain agreed behaviors (Owusu-Addo, Renzaho, Mahal, & Smith, 2016, p. 2). Earlier, Araujo, Bosch, and Schady (2017) gave similar views on conditional cash transfers while undertaking studies in Ecuador to ascertain the effects of cash transfers on the intergenerational poverty trap among beneficiary households. In contrast, unconditional cash transfers referred to the provision of funds without the demands made on conditional cash transfer recipients. The social grants transfer program of the current study implements both conditional and unconditional cash transfers to targeted individuals and households since 2007 as a piloted program with a full rollout that commenced in 2008.

Ghana SGTP: The first cash transfer program in Ghana was started in 2008 through the recommendations of the NSPS report (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007) and affirmed by the NSPP (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 10) document. The NSPS report recommended the creation of a social grants transfer program (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 6). The NSPP contained a revised tool that identified the next phase of program implementation to include the establishment of a case management system. The Case Management system was intended to give voice to the targeted beneficiaries, scale up the payment system to become fully electronic, the establishment of a National Household Registry for targeted beneficiaries, and improving institutional arrangements for efficient implementation of the program (2015, p. 10).

The NSPS report regarded the SGTP as the mechanism through which to achieve poverty reduction in Ghana (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 6). The NSPS report also described the program as a social grants transfer program (2007, p. 6). The report captured the statement that the program "*will provide target groups with a reliable and cost-effective cash transfer to support their basic human needs*" (2007, p. 6). The report further added that the program

> will not only provide a "spring board" to lift or assist beneficiaries to
> "leap" out of their current socio-economic status by improving their
> livelihoods but will assist them to access existing government and social
> services that will provide them with a buffer against various risks and
> shocks (p. 6).

In effect, the authors of NSPS report and the NSPP both regarded the program as capable of improving the living conditions of recipients and rendering them employable and self-sufficient. The above, extracted from the NSPS report, contained implicitly outlined expected outcomes of the program.

To achieve the expected outcomes in the lives of the beneficiaries, the government provided segmented social grants to two separate groups through the SGTP. One group received conditional cash transfer, and the other group received unconditional cash transfers. The two social grant channels targeted populations deemed extremely poor and vulnerable (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007, p. 11). Through the program, the government was to empower the targeted individuals by providing basic needs and facilitating access to essential government social services like

health, education, and social inclusion to enable such families to literally "leap" out of

extreme poverty (p. 11). The conditional transfers targeted the impoverished and selected

population that have no immediate alternative means of subsistence. The unconditional

transfers, on the other hand, targeted selected populations with no productive capacity,

such as the elderly poor, orphaned and vulnerable children, and persons with severe

disabilities, among others (p. 11).

All intended and unintended outcomes of the program were to be achieved, given

the structured policy objective of the program. The program managers believed that the

policy intent had been achieved (Ghana LEAP, 2018). Through an in-depth exploration

of the program implementation, the purpose of the study was to understand and describe

how groups of policy actors working alongside other policy actors contributed to

influence the delivery of cash transfers as part of the SGTP and achieved the program

policy intent. The next section identifies some of the outstanding short and medium-term

positively appraised outcomes of the program discussed in the literature.

Health and nutrition outcomes. The literature contained appraisals of SGTP as

having positive health outcomes for recipient beneficiary households. Debrah (2013)

observed that the program had increased beneficiary households' supply-side access to

social services (p. 51). To facilitate and widen access to other social services, the

program administrators endorsed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the

Sector Ministry, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP), and

the Ministry of Health (MOH). The MOU paved the way for the registration of all

beneficiaries of the program onto the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) without

the payment of the insurance premiums (Debrah, 2013, p. 51; Handa et al., 2014, p. 29).

The opportunity to join the NHIS without paying the required premium allowed

beneficiary households to access health facilities for various treatments, including

mandated immunization of children and antenatal visits by pregnant and lactating

mothers. Debrah also observed that infant and maternal mortality along with morbidity

rates reduced among recipient communities within the study areas (2013, p. 52).

The reported positive health outcomes of the program were collaborated by

Roelen et al. (2017, p. 8), citing the research by Seidenfeld et al. (2014) and Langendorf

et al. (2014) conducted in Zambia and Niger, respectively. Roelen cited the findings of

Seidenfeld et al. (2017, p. 8) that confirmed the reduction in the stunting of children in

beneficiary households as a result of cash transfers. In the case of Niger, Langendorf et

al. (2014) observed reductions in acute malnutrition among children from beneficiary

households (p. 8) as a result of similar programs in other West African countries.

However, Roelen also admitted that the positive outcomes of cash transfers on health and

nutrition were mixed. Specifically, Roelen et al. (2017, p. 10, cited Manley, Gitter, &

Slavchevska, 2013) findings that showed various barriers to attaining health and nutrition

outcomes such as inadequate knowledge of feeding practices or lack of access to clean

water. The barriers could, and did have the notorious capacity to erode the gains on

health and nutrition outcomes (Roelen et al., 2017, p. 7).

Education and human capital accumulation outcomes: Education and human

capital accumulation were other outcomes attributed to the Ghana SGTP. De Groot et al.

(2015, p. 22) discovered in their study that the cash transfer program had positive human

capital development outcomes. Roelen et al. (2017) and Fisher et al. (2017) confirmed

the opinion of de Groot (2015). However, the findings were not the same for learning

outcomes from Roelen and colleagues' study of the program in Ghana (2017, p. 7) in

which the outcomes on human capital accumulation were not identified as significant.

Fisher and colleagues on the other hand, aligned the positive outcomes to unconditional

cash transfer programs. Fisher cited the findings of Bosworth et al. (2016), Pearson et al.

(2016), Pellerano et al. (2016), and Seidenfield et al. (2016) to bolster the view of

positive education outcomes for conditional cash transfer programs in Africa including

Ghana (p. 301).

   Social inclusion outcomes. The literature contained evidence supporting the

claim that the SGTP had ensured and restored recipients' re-engagement into their

communities. Oduro (2015) noted from a study on Ghana that despite the numerous

challenges, the government through the SGTP had contributed to social inclusion (p. 32).

The view by Oduro (2015) was shared by de Haan (2017), who opined that cash transfers

enhanced the opportunity for beneficiaries to become part of the community social

interactions (p. 28). Similarly, the coping strategies of the recipients of cash transfers

were described as dire because they needed to demonstrate credit worthiness at all times

to be countered among and gain an opportunity to relate to other community members

(Ayerakwa, Osei, & Osei Akoto, 2015, p. 9). In the view of others, the program

increased the creditworthiness of beneficiaries. Creditworthiness means the ability to

borrow (Food & Agriculture Organization, 2013, p. 37; Niyuni, 2016, p. 16).

Accumulation of investment assets outcomes. Through the program, the government was viewed as having helped beneficiaries to accumulate investment assets for productive livelihoods. The link between the SGTP and development partner institutions like the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) enabled beneficiaries to rear small ruminants (i.e., goats, and sheep), keep poultry as well as to engage in soap making to generate additional income (Niyuni, 2016, p. 11). The view that cash transfer programs assisted beneficiaries in accumulating productive and investment assets was supported by the experience in Kenya's cash transfer to orphaned and vulnerable children's (CT-OVC) program, and in Lesotho where pigs were reared by beneficiaries (Daidone, Pellerano, Handa, & Davis, 2015, p. 95). The evidence abounds even for Niger, where cash and food transfer programs had allowed beneficiaries to engage in agro-pastoral investments and exported produce for additional income (Hoddinott, Sandström, & Upton, 2014). The income-generating activities went far in alleviating beneficiaries from extreme poverty.

Poverty outcomes. The Ghana SGTP was shown to have improved the poverty conditions of beneficiary households. Debrah (2013) undertook a study to establish the pathways that could lead recipients of the SGTP away from poverty. The results from the study indicated that the program, as designed and implemented, could not transform the livelihoods of the recipients to enable them to make the 'leap' out of poverty (Debrah, 2013, p. 57). The reasoning behind that conclusion was that the value of the cash transfers was too low to allow the accumulation of investment assets through savings. Debrah's finding was not supported by Handa et al. (2017) study intended to correct what

the authors' felt were misconceptions about cash transfer programs. The authors'

findings showed that cash transfers reduced extreme poverty among recipient households,

including those of the SGTP in Ghana (Handa et al., 2017, p. 6). Fisher et al. (2017)

agreed with the findings of Handa and colleagues.

Based on the literature, the study yielded information that added to the current

body of knowledge on how groups of policy actors and their activities contributed

towards achieving the policy intent of SGTP during policy implementation. From the

policy process lens, the activities and inactivity of policy actors working alongside other

actors during the policy implementation stage of the program were explored and

described. Through policy implementation research, the interactions of groups of policy

actors within the arena of policy implementation revealed information that added to the

shared knowledge. Specifically, the research question and sub questions were as follows;

RQ1   Over the period of 2008 to 2018 how did the policy actors' presence,

interests, and motivations within the policy implementation arena of the SGTP influenced

the overall policy outcome?

SQ1   Who were the subsystem policy actors active in the implementation of

SGTP?

SQ2   What was the nature of subsystem policy actors, interests, and

motivations?

SQ3   How did the subsystem policy actors interact to achieve program policy

intent?

Scholarly inquiries into the role of policy actors had tended to focus on one or two main policy actors, namely epistemic communities, instrument constituencies, and advocacy coalitions. Such inquiries had also been limited to the agenda-setting stage of the policymaking process. The challenge is to understand the nature of the interaction between the three main policy actors identified within the policymaking process and within other stages of the policy process. In the instance of the Ghana SGTP, the purpose is to understand how the interaction of the 3 policy actors working alongside other policy actors resulted in the Ghana SGTP outcomes.

Policy Intent

For the purpose of this study, the policy intent of the program was as outlined in the NSPS report (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007) and the NSPP document (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 16). The policy covers three policy objectives and eight targets expected as outcomes after policy implementation. The three objectives are

> to provide effective and efficient social assistance to reduce poverty, promote productive inclusion and decent work to sustain families and communities at risk, and increase access to formal social security and social insurance for all Ghanaians (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 16).

Linked to the first objective were two targets; eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 and reduce by at least 50% the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions by 2030. Linked to the second objective were five

targets. (a) reduce substantially the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training by 2020; (b) increase by 75%, the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship, including technical and vocational skills by 2030; (c) achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men including for young people, persons with disabilities by 2030; (d) achieve full equal pay for work of equal value by 2030; (e) protect labor rights and promote safe and secure environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women, and those in precarious employment; and (f) increase access to formal social security for 75% of Ghanaians of working age and 50% of older persons.

The Ghana SGTP aligned with the first policy objective of a short-term (1-3 years) objective of continuing the program and widening the coverage to reach all extremely poor individuals and communities. Over the medium-term (4-7 years), the policy objective was to review and scale-up, redesign, and implement expanded Ghana SGTP. For the long-term (8-15 years), the policy objective was to have created a social protection basket for all poor persons in Ghana. With these Ghana SGTP objectives under the NSPP (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015, p. 22), the program administrators asserted having achieved the policy intent. The purpose of the study is to understand the part played by groups of policy actors operating alongside other actors to achieve the policy intent.

The Idealized Policy

The idealized policy was the policy from which a policy intent for any policy implementation within the public sector is traced and referenced. For understanding how

policy actors interacted with the SGTP, the parent policy that contained the expectations

of the policymakers were as referenced under social protection above. Two documents

served as the idealized policy; these were the National Social Protection Strategy

(Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007) report and the National

Social Protection Policy (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, 2015).

The two documents contained an outline of the intention of the policy decision-makers.

The implementation stage of the policymaking process took the decisions as given and

worked towards translating into strategies and activities to be pursued to achieve the

outputs and eventually the outcomes. It is necessary to note as well that the policy

streams leading to the idealized policy remained active through the implementation stage.

The Implementing Organization

To operationalize the NSPS interim policy, the government established the

program management secretariat to have a dedicated focus on delivering the policy

intent. The choice of a dedicated organization confirmed the view of Smith (1973, p.

203) as captured by Howlett et al. (2017) that policy implementation may result in the

deliberate establishment of an organization to lead the translation of policy intent into

actionable deliverables. However, in the case of Ghana, the government formed the

implementing organization in 2015 after seven years of policy implementation. A

cabinet decision by the executive established a program management secretariat under

the MoGCSP. The program management secretariat was separated from the Department

of Social Welfare and placed under the MoGCSP (Ministry of Gender, Children, and

Social Protection, n.d.-a). The organizational structure of the program management secretariat is as displayed in Figure 2;
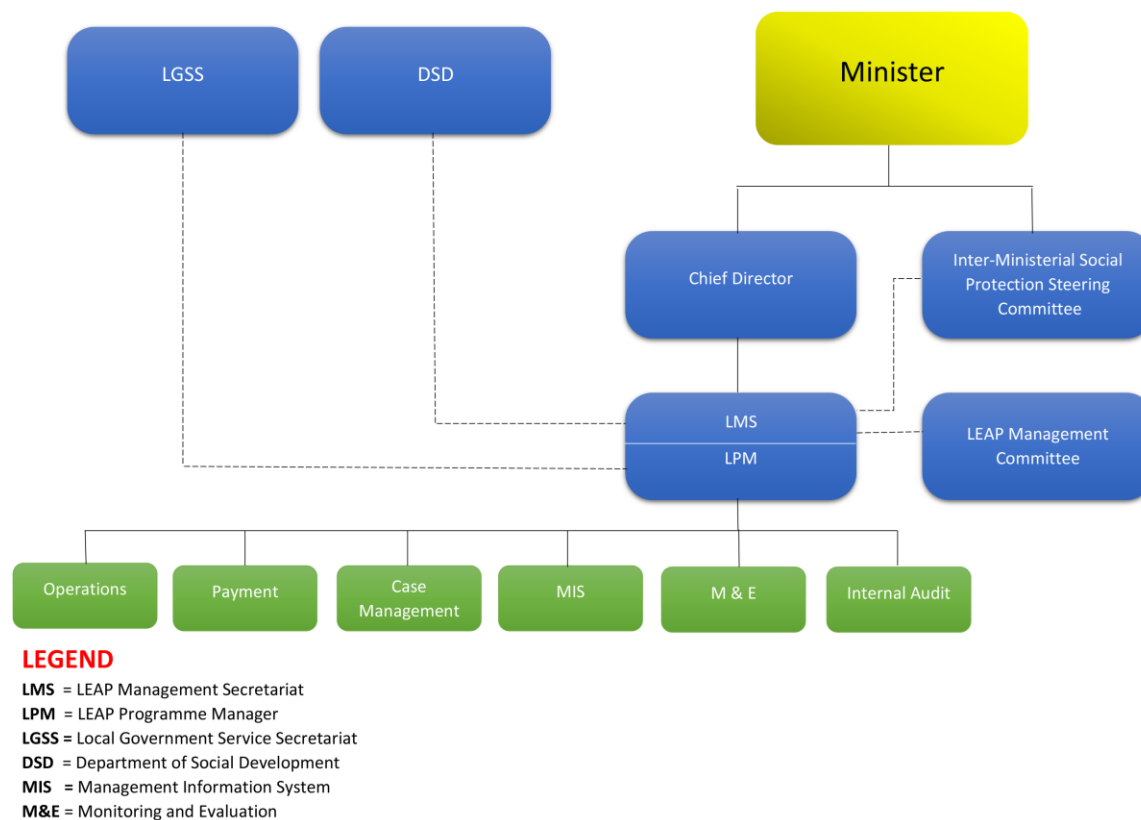
Figure 2. The organizational structure of the program management secretariat.

The organogram above displayed the reporting structure and collaboration between the management secretariat and the sector ministry as well as with other collaborating ministries. At the helm of the management secretariat was the program manager. The program manager was the administrative head of the management secretariat. The position was equal to the rank of a director or the analogous positions in the Civil Service in Ghana. The program manager and the deputy program manager reported directly to the chief director (principal secretary) for the MoGCSP. Through the

chief director, the program manager and deputy accessed the minister and deputy minister for the ministry.

The program management secretariat had 6 sub-units, including operations, payment, core management, management information systems, monitoring and evaluation, and internal audit. An officer without an assigned civil service rank or job description heads each unit of the secretariat. The only head of unit with a civil service rank was the internal auditor, who heads internal audit. Unfortunately, the 'Our Team' (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, n.d.-b) as presented on the program's website, included two positions not provided for under the organogram. The positions were that of the accountant and head of communications. The positions ought to be placed under the 'core management' unit of the secretariat. By implications, the operations and core management units had no heads, or the positions may be vacant. Possibly, the two positions were under the head of communications while the Core management supervises operations and the accountant.

Target Group

The target group of the SGTP in Ghana was the extremely poor and vulnerable in the Ghanaian society (Ghana LEAP, 2017). The targeted group was the beneficiaries identified in the NSPS report as follows;

- Social Grants for Subsistence Farmers and Fisherfolk

- Social Grants for the extremely poor above 65 years

- Caregivers Grant Scheme for OVCs, particularly Children Affected By Aids (CABAs) and children with severe disabilities.

- Caregivers Grants for incapacitated/extremely poor PLWHAs, and

- Social Grants for Pregnant Women/Lactating Mothers with HIV/AIDS.

The targeted group was not of particular focus in this study. The categorization of beneficiaries was captured clearly under the idealized policy (Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment et al., 2007). This study contained descriptions that provided an overview of the category of beneficiaries under the SGTP. Of particular focus were organized beneficiary groups, if possible.

Environmental Factors

The environmental factors were those influenced by the implementation activities and were equally affected by the implementation (Howlett et al., 2017, cited Smith, 1973, p. 205). The factors included other organizations within the same sector Ministry or others in different ministries, departments, and agencies within the government bureaucracy. Other factors of importance were organizations or individuals working with or against the achievement of the policy intent of the SGTP. There may also be other policy regimes under implementation in other government bureaucracy that influence or were influenced by the implementation of the SGTP.

The study contained assessments of the MoGCSP, local government service and secretariat, department for social development, national commission on children, and ministry of finance as organizations within the bureaucratic environment of the program management secretariat. In addition, the study contained contributions of nonstate actor organizations such as think tanks, academia, or related institutions that interacted in ways that either influenced or were influenced by policy implementation.

Policy Actors

  Policy actors in the policy process arena: Howlett (2018) acknowledged and shared the view of Kingdon (1984) that in the policy process, there were several interests and networks of interest involved in the policy decisions. The difference is what Kingdon understood and proposed as activities of streams of policy actors that did not extend beyond policy decisions. Kingdon's proposal excluded policy implementation and policy evaluation. Howlett (2018), on the other hand, extended the concepts and structure of policy actors in the policymaking process arena suggested by Kingdon to include policy implementation. To achieve that goal, Howlett and colleagues combined the ACF by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988) and the policy cycle model by Lasswell (1956) with Kingdon's MSF (1984). The policy actors in the policymaking process were highlighted by Kingdon's (1984) MSF. However, the policy actor activities were not articulated clearly to differentiate all the groups of active policy actors in a typical stream (Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015, p. 3). Additional exploration into the policy subsystem helped to clarify in relative detail the identities of policy actors. The new framework by Howlett et al. (2015, 2017) suggested that the policy actors identified in the first 3 stages of the policy cycle also participated in the later stages (i.e., policy implementation and evaluation). The main policy actors identified during the initial three stages of the policy cycle were ECs, ICs, and ACs.

  Epistemic communities. The description of ECs came from the literature on international relations that referred to groups of scientists interested in getting their observations and views accepted by the policymakers. Béland & Howlett (2016, p. 404)

regarded the community as problem-focused. In other words, the community was

comprised of experts working from and with various interests (Figure D1, Appendix D).

The ultimate aim of the community was to redefine issues raised in the public domain on

their thematic area into policy problems for policy attention as found in areas like oceans

policy and climate change (Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015, p. 7). The EC tended to be

active in the problem stream of the FSF and likely even beyond agenda setting and policy

formulation. The community was united on thematic areas; for example, ECs within the

climate change policy arena were likely to be united on carbon credit and emission

control (2015, p. 7). The community aligned with other groups seeking to achieve the

same or similar themes but from complementary interests like legal experts desirous of

getting emission ceilings for each country executed in law (2015, p. 7). The ECs

ultimately got the problems defined within the boundaries of what was acceptable to their

entire community of experts (2015, p. 8).

Instrument constituencies. Mukherjee and Howlett (2015, p. 8, cited Voss &

Simons, 2014) described the group of actors as ICs. The ICs match solutions and models

to policy problems defined by ECs. The solution options were in the form of models and

instruments aligned to policy problems for possible adoption by decision-makers such as

transnational organizations (Foli et al., 2018a, p. 109). The constituency was united in

maintaining the tools and instruments they had developed and offered as choice options

for solving an identified and defined problem (Béland & Howlett, 2016; Foli, Béland, &

Fenwick, 2018b; Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015, p. 11). The members were drawn from

academia, policy consulting, public policy and administration, business, and civil society

(Béland & Howlett, 2016, p. 397) as was shown in Figure D2 (, Appendix D). The

constituency actively occupied the policy stream described by Kingdon (1984) and within

the FSF. They were also involved in the program stream since their instruments provided

implementation solutions (p. 397). The constituency membership changed at any time

depending on the policy issues being pursued (Béland & Howlett, 2016, p. 402).

 Advocacy coalitions. Mukherjee & Howlett (2015, p. 8) viewed ACs as active in

the political stream and were generally more publicly visible than the other two actor

groups of ICs and ECs. Béland and Howlett also shared this same view (2016, p. 397).

The key members of this coalition included the President and the appointees within the

executive arm of government, members of the congress or parliament, media

personalities, members of political parties, and other active non-state actors like civil

society members (2015, p. 8) as was shown in Figure D3 (Appendix D). The coalitions

were bonded together through a common belief in policy and were ready to compete

against other coalitions to transform their shared beliefs and ideologies aligned to policy

problems and policy solutions (2015, p. 9). ACs showed a keen interest in the definition

of public policy by EC and the policy solutions options offered by ICs. Generally,

members of a specific advocacy coalition maintained steady involvement (2015, p. 9).

<center>**Comparing Policy Actor Groups**</center>

 The literature contained one-on-one comparison studies between groups of policy

actors such as comparisons between IC and AC (Weible, 2018), IC and EC (Zito, 2018),

and between advocacy coalition and ECs (Weible, 2018). These comparisons related to

the policy actors as individual groups at the problem definition, solution formulation, and

decision making stages of the policymaking process. At the implementation stage of the policymaking process, there was a need to understand how interests and motivations of the groups of policy actors allowed each actor group to transact interests that jointly led to the achievement of policy intent. The purpose of the comparison was to identify the differences between groups of policy actors and to understand the nature of the operation of each group of identified policy actors.

Béland et al. (2018b, p. 6), in a study on ICs and public policymaking, regarded assessing the interaction between policy actors as necessary to unravel the subtle differences that existed between and among the groups of policy actors. In agreeing with Béland et al. (2018), Weible (2018, p. 60) in another study on ICs and the advocacy coalition framework underscored the need also to compare and contrast the theories of policy actors to facilitate scholarly discourse and deepen understanding of the actor groups. Further, Zito (2018, p. 36), in an article on ICs and EC theory, regarded any assessment that seeks to distinguish the networks of policy actors as necessary to appreciate the core elements that drive the policy actor groups in the policymaking process. Thus, the study will compare and contrast one actor group against another, as scholarly work in the literature has revealed.

Epistemic communities and instrument constituencies: The ECs were a group of policy actors whose main objective was to define policy problems from public issues for consideration by a government (Béland et al., 2018b, p. 7; Zito, 2018, p. 38). On the other hand, ICs were a group of policy actors whose aim was to identify the defined policy problems and develop policy solution tools and instruments for policy

implementation (Béland et al., 2018b, p. 7; Zito, 2018, p. 38). Despite the discrete difference in core interests between the two groups, the literature showed ECs veering into the development and diffusion of policy solution instruments. Similarly, ICs also define policy problems to fit such problems to an already developed policy solution. The two policy actor groups also shared membership. In other words, some members belong to both groups of policy actors.

EC members may become involved at different levels as members of ICs. The shift from epistemic core function to IC happens when the focus of the intended policy required appropriate policy solutions that appeared not to be readily available (Béland et al., 2018b, p. 9; Zito, 2018, p. 39). Similarly, IC members may join EC or even play their role to promote an already prepared policy solution tool (Béland et al., 2018b, p. 10; Zito, 2018, p. 44). The occasional dual roles become necessary to ensure proper alignment of either a defined problem or an identified solution.

Epistemic communities and advocacy coalitions: The EC is a group of actors whose main objective was to define policy problems from public issues for consideration by a government (Béland et al., 2018b, p. 7; Zito, 2018, p. 38). On the other hand, ACs were a group of individuals with a common belief and ideology desirous of controlling government as authoritative decision-makers, according to (Mukherjee & Howlett, 2015, p. 7), citing Howlett et al. (2009). Both policy actor groups were relatively more visible than any other actor group. There were subtle differences between the two policy actor groups apart from the uniqueness of their membership.

Weible and Ingold (2018, p. 328) regarded the two policy actor groups as informal organizations and usually fairly stable even though comparatively ACs were relatively more stable than ECs. Besides, ECs were experts in particular fields, whereas AC members were not necessarily experts (Dunlop, 2016). ACs were politically motivated with a desire to be elected into public office, including forming a government to push their preferred beliefs and ideology.

Instrument constituencies and advocacy coalitions: ICs were a group of policy actors whose aim was to identify defined policy problems and preferred solutions or offered sets of alternative tools as solutions for implementation (Béland et al., 2018b, p. 7; Zito, 2018, p. 38). ACs were a group of individuals with a common belief and ideology desirous of controlling government as authoritative decision-makers, according to Mukherjee and Howlett (2015, p. 7), citing Howlett et al. (2009).

The two groups of actors had unique characteristics. ICs were knowledgeable about the developed tools and instruments available to solve an identified public policy problem (Weible, 2018, p. 64). In relative terms, ICs were less visible and less likely to share membership with the ACs. ICs focus on the instrument or tool for policy solutions, while ACs were motivated by their belief and ideology (Weible, 2018).

Other Policy Actors

The literature also contained substantial information on other policy actors apart from those previously discussed in the study that was active during policy implementation. Lipsky (1980) first used the expression, "street-level bureaucrats" to describe frontline public officials such as traffic wardens, public transport operators, and

inspectors who dealt directly with citizens. However, the group also consisted of other professionals whose work did not directly bring them face-to-face with the public such as stockbrokers, and environmental engineers). Lipsky's view and description for this group, supported by Khan (2016, p. 6) as well as Khan and Khandaker (2016, p. 540), highlighted the policy group as capable of making and unmaking policies as part of their routine work. While the 'street-level bureaucrats' terminology may describe all such public and civil servants, in this study, the preferred term is "operational bureaucrats." This more generic description will allow a broader inclusion of officials such as medical doctors, civil servants, court workers, police officers, sanitation inspectors, and building inspectors.

Operational bureaucrats (OB), identified similarly as Lipsky's original identification of street-level bureaucrats (1980), were hired officers of the executive arm of government but are apolitical. The recruitment of OBs was based on their qualifications and office tenure spans many years beyond the administration of any government. OBs may or may not be known as working on government programs and projects. They were appreciated as technocrats and tended to possess the needed institutional memory of their respective sectors, ministries, departments, or agencies. OBs core business and the unit of analysis was policy implementation. OBs worked with other policy actors like ACs who become heads and chief executives or secretaries of government departments and agencies. OBs also got along with ICs who serve as advisers to various administrations of government, and with ECs who led in the thematic development of policy problems.

There were also the organized beneficiaries of government policies. These groups of policy actors were often interested in ensuring that the ultimate beneficiary of government policy received what was due during the implementation of the policy. The policy actor group was described appropriately as targeted beneficiaries (Smith, 1973). Target beneficiaries (TBs) consist of a heterogeneous group of people; virtually every member of the community belonged to this group. Depending on the issue, members of all the identified policy actors were part of TBs. TBs unit of analysis was their receipt of benefit, services and goods.

Challenges of Policy Actor Collaboration

The three main groups of policy actors had interests and were motivated to act anywhere to further their group's goal. In working alongside one another, the relationship could not be all smooth and comfortable for any. Certainly, the transactions will involve negotiations and compromises to achieve individual group goals and as an externality, the achievement of the policy intent after policy implementation. The complexities and challenges that herald the groups of policy actors working alongside one another are identified by Zito (2018, pp. 36–39) as technical uncertainty, instrument complexity, and political complexity.

Technical complexity emerged, according to Zito (2018, p. 39) and Haas (1992, pp. 13 - 14) when ECs encountered ACs at the level of agenda-setting. The encounter involved the two groups of policy actors working alongside to share expertise and learn the public policy issues and problems. The decision-makers (ACs) were not necessarily experts in any particular thematic area but sought to understand the issues and the

problems as presented by ECs. The ECs became the store of knowledge, and the AC became the recipient seeking to understand how to balance behavior and knowledge to interact with ECs in the pursuit of change.

Instrument complexity, on the other hand, was the challenge faced by ICs as they interacted with both ECs and ACs, according to Zito (2018, p. 39) and Haas (1992, pp. 3 - 4) at the agenda-setting stage of the policymaking process. The objective of creating solutions to the identified public policy problem also demands an understanding of the required governance arrangements to be instituted. The governance arrangements included cooperation at international, national, and local levels of the policy system as Zito (2018, p. 39) affirmed. ACs aligned their beliefs and ideological persuasion to that of the ICs who had solution options to offer. When the ACs became convinced, the policy solution was then championed through the decision making stage of the policymaking process (Haas, 1992; Howlett et al., 2017; Zito, 2018).

Another complexity that confronts the groups of policy actors as they interacted was political complexity. The political complexity emerged as ACs encountered and interacted with ECs and ICs, according to Haas (1992) and affirmed by Zito (2018, p. 39). The complexity surrounded the need for a common understanding between the groups of policy actors concerning a public policy problem as a precursor to facilitating the development of strategies to resolve the issue. In order to consider and potentially approve the policy agenda, ACs must be involved to lead the decision making process.

Summary

The literature reviewed for the study was relevant to the policy implementation research and in the examination of how groups of policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations while working alongside other actors influenced the implementation of a Ghana SGTP. The literature reviewed document support for the FSF as the guide for the study, theoretical framework and contextualized the main research questions by providing background on the policy process and the previous three generations of policy implementation theory. Through the review, I revealed the top-down and bottom-up, forward and backward mapping, and the hybrid approaches as well as the current (i.e., fourth generation) attempt at taking advantage of the previous suggestions to arrive at another level of research. The literature reviewed provided the base to understand what the issues were from the implementation of the Ghana SGTP. The social protection reviews also situated the study of the program in ways that lent understanding of the various implementation processes followed to date as well as the institutional framework of the program. In all, the Ghana SGTP had a specified objective to meet, and the implementing agency reported achieving the policy intent. The understanding was that the program delivered on the policy objectives. In the implementation assessment, the purpose was to explore and understand the role that groups of policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations operating in the implementation arena influenced the achievement of the policy intent of SGTP. The study will investigate the nature of the interactions of policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations leading to the

achievement of the policy intent of the Ghana SGTP. The next chapter of the study

outlined the research method that was used to gather study data.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The primary purpose of this qualitative and policy implementation research was to explore, identify, and describe the presence, interests, and motivations of active policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of SGTP. I adopted Howlett et al. (2015, 2017) suggested framework to describe policy actor activities at the implementation stage of the Ghana SGTP. By examining the actions of policy actors at the implementation stage of the policymaking process, I added to the scholarship on policy implementation research. My research filled the gap in the literature regarding activities of multiple groups of policy actors during the implementation stage of the policymaking cycle (see Howlett et al., 2015, 2017, p. 76; Simons & Voß, 2018, pp. 29, 32) and in the particular example of the Ghana SGTP.

Qualitative research is one where a researcher seeks to understand, explore, and observe people in their natural environment, and from their perspective, make meaning of their experiences of a phenomenon of interest (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I sought information from documents and made sense of the experiences of individuals to describe or interpret the phenomenon (see Patton, 2015). Qualitative inquiry enables an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the people and allowed a researcher to generate a rich and detailed description of the phenomenon of interest grounded in the perspectives of the people and guided by the knowledge of the researcher (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, & Taliaferro, 2017; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In the introduction to the research design, I sought to elaborate on the orderly and systematic

procedures for accessing information and analyzing that information for answering the research question and sub questions of the inquiry. I explored my role as an active participant in the research, explained my methodology sufficiently, and established the trustworthiness of the data and analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

Research questions. The main research question I addressed in my study was *Over the period of 2008 to 2018, how have the policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations within the policy implementation arena of the Ghana Social Grants Transfer Program (SGTP) influenced the overall policy outcome*? The supplementary questions to help answer the main research question were

- Who were the subsystem policy actors active in the implementation of SGTP?

- What was the nature of subsystem policy actors' interests and motivations?

- How did the subsystem policy actors interact to achieve program policy intent?

To identify groups of policy actors as captured in the first sub question, I elicited initial identification of policy actors collaborating with the management secretariat of the Ghana SGTP through staff and research participants of the study. From the management secretariat, I sought to know all persons or organizations that had been part of the implementation process, whether supporting or detracting implementation efforts. I

analyzed the following list to identify any common traits, such as individuals or groups, interests, and motivations among other factors.

I sought to associate individuals or groups of likely policy actors with their participation in major activities of the Ghana SGTP, such as seminars, workshops, symposiums, news conferences, and conferences and as captured from newspaper clippings over the period from 2008 to 2018. The additional each identified policy actor's contribution and subject area of interest was analyzed using statements made at important events of the Ghana SGTP such as comments and opinions captured in newspapers, journals, and other third-party sources. I gathered the latter information from the response of identified policy actors during interview sessions using semi structured and open-ended interview questions, and from public libraries in Ghana. The information gathered assisted to answer the second sub question of the study regarding the nature of sub system policy actors, interests, and motivations.

Lastly, I gathered the information for the third research sub question, regarding how subsystem actors interacted to achieve program policy intent through the direct interview or phone and internet technology-based interview sessions. I asked the research participants to demonstrate how they worked together with other policy actors. The purpose of the questions included understanding the circumstances under which the policy actor (research participant) gained or yielded lead positions to other actors in engaging the program management in certain identified activities of the Ghana SGTP. Another set of questions sought to understand what motivates the nature of the relationship with other policy actors and with the management secretariat of the SGTP to

cross check the consistency of previous answers. In eliciting these responses, I acknowledged the potential for me to influence research participants and consequently, the results of the interview, given my background as a civil servant.

Central concept. The central concept of the study was the exploration and description of the activities of groups of policy actors during the implementation stage or cycle of the Ghana SGTP policy. Specifically, I aimed to establish the main or lead policy actors during the implementation phase of the Ghana SGTP as well as identify and describe their interests and motivations to be involved in the implementation of the program. Additionally, I understood and described the nature of their interactions as they competed, negotiated, gained or yielded roles to one another, and together arrived at the declared outcome of the program. The main focus of the study was not, therefore, to determine the status of the Ghana SGTP outcome but to understand how activities among the policy actors during the implementation stage contributed to the outcome.

Research Tradition. The research tradition of the study was the general descriptive qualitative research design. The research design of choice for the study did not conform to the traditional qualitative research methods. This less defined and unstructured descriptive qualitative design fitted the inquiry because of the flexible attributes of the design. I was innovative in exploring any qualitative design attribute from the traditional forms of qualitative research (see Kahlke, 2014, p. 38; Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015, p. 78). I used the design to explore and understand the groups of policy actors' contributing influence within the policy implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP. The groups of policy actors included civil society organizations, think

tanks, academia, officials of the sector Ministry responsible for Ghana SGTP

implementation, and officials of development partner agencies were research participants.

I used the research to explore activities of groups of policy actors and their actions or

inactions that resulted in Ghana SGTP achieving the policy intent. I interviewed as many

different actors from different groups as possible until reaching data saturation. Focus

group discussions were not required giving the varied background of the intended

research participants. However, I used member-checking techniques to confirm the

reliability of the information gathered during data collection.

For the interviews, I applied semi structured and open-ended interview questions

to gain an understanding of the involvement of the groups of policy actors in the

operationalization of Ghana SGTP. I focused the information gathering process towards

understanding the reasons for actions or inactions, the policy actors' opinion on the

achievements of the Ghana SGTP, and the other activities or roles the individual or actor

group expected to play in the coming years to influence the operations of the Ghana

SGTP.

I audio recorded the interviews with permission from the research participants.

Before the start of each interview session, I administered the informed consent form and

guidelines issued by the institutional review board (IRB). I also verbally explained the

purpose of the informed consent letter and highlighted the assurances the IRB offered to

research participants. I outsourced the recorded audios for professional transcription and

used alongside my field notes. The audio recordings did not contain any biodata. Before

each interview, signed consent forms were collected physically for face-to-face

interviews. In the case of the virtual Zoom and Microsoft Teams conference interviews,

joining the session was considered as having volunteered to participate in the research.

Each of the interviews were audio recorded. The interview recordings were saved with

codes to ensure maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants.

For confidentiality, the interview recordings did not involve interviewee names. I used

the transcribed interviews and field notes to form the base of the thematic analysis (see

Burkholder et al., 2016). The themes were grouped for further analysis and interpretation

(see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I thematically coded excerpts to bring

out the meanings of the interview sessions. The final identified themes formed the views

of research participants shaped by my understandings of the Ghana SGTP policy actors'

contributing influence that had led to achieving the policy intent.

The practical assumption for the study was that all groups of policy actors in the

study recognized their contributions towards the achievement of the Ghana SGTP, that all

the groups of policy actors willingly shared their experiences on SGTP implementation,

and that the research participants shared in the achievements of SGTP. Under these

assumptions, I posed open-ended interview questions during interview sessions and

recorded the responses under permission. I had the audio recording of the interview

sessions professionally transcribed verbatim to precisely capture the research

participants' responses.

Rationale for choice of tradition. The research design was general qualitative

research. The general qualitative research does not align with any particular qualitative

methodological tradition (see Kahlke, 2014, p. 37). Kahlke (2014, p. 38, cited Caelli,

Ray, & Mill, 2003) distinguished between two standard types of general qualitative research. There was interpretive descriptive qualitative research and descriptive qualitative research (Kahlke, 2014, p. 38; Percy et al., 2015, p. 78). I undertook my research using descriptive qualitative research. The choice of the general descriptive qualitative research was to elicit from policy implementation actors of the Ghana SGTP on the contributory influences used to achieve policy intent. My interest in the inquiry was to explore, identify, and describe the activities, motivations, and interactions of active policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of Ghana SGTP. The interest in the actual activities of the policy actors and their interaction with other stakeholders or actors dictated the choice of the general qualitative research design (see Percy et al., 2015, p. 78). The choice of a research design also fitted into my epistemological viewpoint as a social constructivist. The viewpoint informed the nature of this study question and sub questions (see Kahlke, 2014, p. 38).

General qualitative inquiry design was part of the constructivist philosophy, and with this research design, I sought to explore, identify, and describe the activities, motivations, and interactions of policy actor groups and other actors present during the implementation of the Ghana SGTP. I applied the FSF (Howlett, 2018) lens to guide the exploration and description of the contributing influence of policy actors in the implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP. The descriptive qualitative research design was my preferred choice to undertake the study.

The choice of design for my study was important because it allowed me to identify the activities of policy actors within the implementation arena of the Ghana

SGTP, and to appreciate those contributions during the implementation stage of the policymaking process (see Kahlke, 2014, p. 40). The design also allowed me to articulate accurately the experiences of groups of policy actors working alongside other actors to influence SGTP policy implementation.

Role of the Researcher

Ravitch and Carl (2016, p. 10) agreed with Patton's (2015, p. 700) view that the researcher is the instrument of a qualitative inquiry. The views of the two authors suggest that whatever happens, the researcher influences the processes involved in a qualitative study. As an instrument of the study, I brought to this study my experience as a civil servant whose daily work involved implementing government policy decisions. The implementation of public policy decisions required a performance assessment to the management of any supervising ministry or authority. I possess the same or similar training and experience in public service like some officials of the Ghana SGTP management secretariat. I also possess expertise in development financing from the perspective of the Ministry of Finance. My professional background means that I was familiar with the operations of the Ghana SGTP at least from the Ministry of Finance perspective. However, the primary interest in the program was to understand the activities of groups of policy actors in the implementation of the Ghana SGTP. To explore the Ghana SGTP, I used the FSF to describe the nature of the interactions between groups of policy actors with other actors during the Ghana SGTP implementation that led to the current program outcome.

As a civil servant and a graduate student, I identify with the public officials of the Ghana SGTP. The initiative for skill upgrade to enable officers to perform better was a call that all civil servants accepted as contained in the service administrative guidelines. Some officials of the Ghana SGTP management secretariat had pursued graduate courses and opted to research other sectors of the public service. Thus, through official correspondence between the Ministry of Finance and the program sector ministry, MoGCSP, I gained permission to access material from the Ghana SGTP for research purposes.

The research topic on policy actor activities during the implementation stages of the Ghana SGTP using the FSF lens was an unexplored area. However, as part of the budgeting process, all ministries submitted estimated budgets and provided justification and defense for those budgetary items, including the MoGCSP. Through budget hearings organized and superintended by the Ministry of Finance, I was privy to the requests for financing and the challenges of releasing those funds over the years to cover the costs of the SGTP program.

I acknowledged any personal and subjective views that might influence the selection of research participants, and the analysis and descriptions of findings, among other potential biases. The knowledge of my role as a research instrument guided my reflexivity, and positionality to achieve objectivity (see Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). My social location and positionality were central to this study. My positionality refers to the links with the context and settings of the study area (see Ravitch & Carl,

2016, p. 10). I attached importance to dealing with the potential bias in the study due to my background and knowledge of the phenomenon of interest.

Researcher bias. I acknowledged the potential of researcher bias in this descriptive qualitative research. A researcher bias refers to a situation where the experience and value judgments of the researcher adversely influences the study and the results, especially data collection and analysis (Maxwell, 2009, p. 33). I possess a similar professional background as the public officials implementing the Ghana SGTP program. My background as a civil servant had the potential to influence the analysis. I had a certain level of empathy or understanding and familiarity with some challenges and opportunities public officials face in implementing the Ghana SGTP. I regularly recognized and dealt with potential researcher bias to avoid adversely influencing interview questions and data analysis (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 148). In dealing with this bias, I sought to minimize mistakes or inaccuracies in the analysis of information. I went further by indicating any issue that was likely to adversely influence my objectivity in the analysis of the data and in reporting the findings of this research.

Methodology

For the study, I chose a research method for data collection that fitted the general descriptive qualitative research into policy implementation and the research questions of interest (see Patton, 2015). Of additional importance in the choice of research method for data collection were the study purpose and theoretical framework that guides the inquiry.

Participant Selection

I selected research participants known to have had active interactions with the implementation of the Ghana SGTP. Active interaction was when a policy actor individually or representing a group participated in major events organized by the management organization of the program. The evidence was in attendance lists, providing views either in support of strategies to implement the program, and captured as interested party offering and supporting the management organization. In the first instance, I selected participants from the public and civil servants who administered the program from the management secretariat and allied civil service organizations such as the sector ministries, departments, and agencies. The reason for the initial selection was to receive guidance from each interviewed participant as to the next person or persons who had similar knowledge and experience. The process of using research participants as sources to get other well informed persons as next research participants is known as snowballing (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The snowball sampling strategy elicited from research participants interviewed to suggest other participants with similar knowledge and background who could provide similar rich information for this study (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 73). The strategy of snowball sampling ensured that the research participants were those who possessed the required information to share with me. To achieve the results of selecting additional research participants, I also reviewed major policy and policy implementation events organized by the management secretariat.

I sought the views of the management secretariat of the Ghana SGTP on which events organized under their auspices were important for consideration to determine sustained interest in the Ghana SGTP. Apart from this method of identifying research participants, I also sought secondary information from the Ghanaian press reporting on SGTP over the period (2008-2018).

I collated information from one major newspaper; Ghanaian Times, on all publications on the Ghana SGTP from 2008 through 2018. The Daily Graphic feedback was for only four years starting from 2015 to 2018. Ghanaian Times covered the entire twelve years. The information assisted in identifying additional and relevant individuals and members of policy actor groups present in the implementation arena of the SGTP as well as to invite as possible research participants. I coded generically the information gathered into interest group, individual, faith-based organization, students' movement, political parties, civil society organizations, development partner agencies and so on. The coding formed part of the analysis of the data gathered for answering the research question.

Sampling strategy: I used a purposive sampling strategy as indicated above under Participant Selection. Purposive sampling implied that the selection of the research participants was not random. The research participants were selected based on knowledge of the Ghana SGTP and engagement in policy relations with Ghana SGTP management secretariat either as an individual or as a member of a group (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 63; Patton, 2015, p. 244; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 127). I based the selection on actual knowledge of social protection and the SGTP. To be selected as a

research participant, the person must be a member of a stakeholder group or individual

known to have current interactions with the Ghana SGTP, and who possessed knowledge

about the assessment or evaluation of previous studies and findings of the Ghana SGTP.

I gathered information using the snowballing technique. I used this method to select

subsequent research participants after interviewing an initial set of identified research

participants to obtain context-rich and detailed information to answer the research

question and sub questions (see Patton, 2015, p. 264; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 128).

I aimed for a small sample size of 20, as was typical with qualitative inquiry

design guided by data saturation (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 74; Patton, 2015, p. 276).

Even though no specific rules existed for determining the sample size for qualitative

research, saturation point served as a guide, and by convention, the numbers were usually

below 35 (see Patton, 2015, p. 314). Saturation was reached when another interview

session with any research participant could not yield additional insight or understanding

of the phenomenon of interest (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 74). My expected

sampling size was 20 and even where saturation point was not reached, I did not

anticipate exceeding 35 people from the various identifiable and active groups of policy

actors in the policy implementation arena of the SGTP. The information provided

through responses to a combination of semi structured and open-ended interview

questions were valuable to this study. I assessed the value of the responses based on my

understanding generated through secondary sources to help unravel policy actors

contributing influence to achieve SGTP policy intent.

I contacted purposely identified and selected research participants via email (where possible) and cell phone (most often) to communicate the initial invitation to participate (Appendix B) in my study. The initial contact was to share with the identified individual research participant, the objective of the study, reasons for setting up an interview with the individual and shared the rights and protection available under the interview session (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 71). The initial information also included the mode of the interview, including recording, privacy, and confidentiality of the interview sessions (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 71). After the initial contact and positive response, I shared with the identified individual, documents relating to informed consent and confidentiality issues. I repeated the process for setting up, conducting and recording interviews with each research participant.

Instrumentation. Instrumentation was the way I collected data and elicited rich and thick descriptive information that addressed the research questions (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 8; Patton, 2015, p. 437; Saldaña, 2016, p. 176). I used open-ended interview questions as the instruments to collect data. The interview questions allowed me to elicit detailed and in-depth information from the research participants (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 187). The same instrument enabled me to pose follow-up questions and probes to further understand the information from the research participants (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 187; Patton, 2015, p. 439). The open-ended interview questions (Appendix C) enabled me to employ the same data collection instrument for several or all research participants and provided standardized measures for information gathering.

I used 2 data collection techniques. The first technique, secondary data gathering or documentary analysis, enabled me to review and collect data from documents (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 40). The information formed the body of the Literature Review (Chapter 2). The literature review covered topics such as social protection, cash transfers, policy process, and policy implementation. I collected information from the Ghana SGTP management secretariat, including the views of officials working at the Secretariat, scholarly literature as well as official documents from other agencies of the Government of Ghana. I used the secondary data gathering technique to synthesize documents, reports, and articles to gain understanding (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 40) about the research gap, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and on the Ghana SGTP. Typically, the documents were scholarly and peer-reviewed articles from the scholarly community on the topic of policymaking, policy implementation and social grants transfer. I accessed the documents and materials from Google Scholar linked to the Walden University library and official government documents that were both public and referenced material. The official documents included but not limited to correspondence, publications and reports, social media records, newspaper clippings, and website materials, among others. In the documentary analysis, I considered archival sources as spotty and incomplete, and a reflection of the views of the authors (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 40).

The second data collection technique was gathering primary data. I gathered information from direct and in-depth qualitative interviewing sessions (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 40). The information was used in Chapter 4 of this study. I conducted

in-depth interviews using semi structured interview questions administered to purposively selected research participants. The interviews were the appropriate tool for gathering information for this in-depth study into the contributing influence of groups of policy actors working alongside other actors to achieve the Ghana SGTP policy intent.

I developed and used an interview guide. The interview guide contained standardized open-ended interview questions. I used an interview guide developed along thematic lines for all research participants. The interview guide questions and probes allowed me to capture the depth and breadth of the experience of the research participants. The use of the guide also provided a focus for the interview and assisted in time management (see Patton, 2015, p. 439). I based the questions on the literature reviewed on the research topic of interest. The open-ended questions also allowed for follow-up questions (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 146). The follow-up questions depended on the research participant responses to the open-ended questions. The line of open-ended questions contained in the interview guide sought information on the perspectives of the Ghana SGTP, how the program started, views on the implementation of Ghana SGTP, collaboration with the program management secretariat, and influences from other interested parties on the implementation of Ghana SGTP. I did not rigidly follow the interview guide from beginning to the end of the question list. The questions changed depending on the feedback from the research participant (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 115). I kept the semi structured interview guide available for general guidance as I set up the meetings to conduct the interviews.

Each interview session with an identified research participant was undertaken following several steps. The first step was to set up an interview session with the individual and to seek a convenient time and venue for the interview. I informed the potential research participants before the interview session about his/her rights and the mode of my data collection. I then explained the purpose of this study and the reason for identifying the individual as a research participant. After that I handed out copies of the informed consent forms approved by the IRB of Walden University to the identified interview participant. I verbally summarized the content of the consent form to the research participants and ensured that he/she understood the form's purpose and contents. Upon accepting the invitation to participate, I left the IRB consent form with the intended research participants with an understanding to subsequently meet at an agreed time and place for the interview session.

Before the start of each interview session, I orally recapped all the previous assurances on privacy and research participants' rights as well as retrieve the signed IRB consent form during face-to-face sessions. In the case of virtual Zoom and Microsoft Teams conference interviews, I shared the consent forms via email but considered joining the session for the interview as acceptance of the contents of the form. I commenced the session with another reminder that the recording of the interview session will start. The recording ensured accurate capture of the responses of the research participants. I again assured the research participants of the confidentiality of the audio recording and the protection of the material under the IRB guidelines for the use of human subjects in research work. At the end of an interview session, I sought permission from the research

participant to re-contact in the likely event that I needed clarity on certain answers

provided during the interview.

I had the audio recordings professionally transcribed immediately after the

interview session. The transcribed information was then loaded into NVivo 12 software

for data coding and thematic analysis. I identified themes within the policy process, and

the FSF lens captured to guide the analysis of the information for the study. I expected to

identify themes on the role of institutions, contributions of policy actors, influences,

factors enabling the implementation of Ghana SGTP, and the tensions and conflicts that

existed within the implementation arena.

Interview guide. I used the research interview questions to understand how the

actions of a group of policy actors influenced the outcome of Ghana SGTP. The sub-

questions for the study included:

- Who were the subsystem policy actors collaborating in implementing the

  SGTP?

- What was the nature of subsystem policy actors' interests and

  motivations?

- How did the subsystem policy actors interact to achieve SGTP policy

  intent?

I used the supplementary questions to elicit knowledge on how implementation

unfolded with the involvement of groups of policy actors in order to expand the frontiers

of understanding the policy implementation processes.

The policy implementation processes of interest were the actions and inactions pursued by groups of policy actors during the policy implementation of the Ghana SGTP that helped to achieve policy intent while also meeting the short-term goals of the program. I recognized the exact policy intent as captured by the NSPS report of the government as the idealized policy. The Ghana SGTP management secretariat was the implementing organization, the beneficiary individuals and households were the Target Group as well as the stakeholder agencies (e.g., think tanks, civil society organizations, academia and other research bodies), and other collaborating government agencies were the environmental factors (see Smith, 1973).

Other recurring themes, apart from interests and motivations included compromises, collaborations, transactions, perceptions, opinions, attitudes/moods, ambiguities, and conflicts. Keywords from the themes aided data and information analysis. The keywords and phrases that I used to guide the interviews were the qualitative inquiry standards including 'sharing,' 'understanding,' 'tell me about …,' and 'what are the experiences like …' The interview guide contained open-ended interview questions on the main structure of the implementation of SGTP. The guide contained thirteen open-ended interview questions in general, identifying the policy actors, understanding policy actor interests and motivations, and exploring the activities within the program stream of the Ghana SGTP.

I posed the open-ended interview questions referenced above to elicit views from the research participants during the interview sessions. The research participants were coming from the management secretariat, think tanks, academia, ministries, departments

and agencies of government, and development partner agencies, among others. There

were follow up questions depending on the responses from the research participants.

I conducted individual interview sessions per research participant, and I expected

each interview session to last between 35 to 45 minutes. I was flexible to have interview

sessions beyond an hour but within a maximum time limit of 90 minutes. At the same

time, with the permission of the research participant, I recorded the interview sessions.

The recording of the interview session was to aid the capturing of accurate responses

from the research participants.

I undertook secondary data gathering from publicly available reference materials.

I referenced all official government materials appropriately to give credence to the

researcher(s) and authors. Apart from the government sources, articles from peer-

reviewed journal articles were review to understand the social grants transfers as well as

the policy implementation literature. The purpose of the review of the literature was to

ground the study in theory and provide scholarly reasons for the study (see Patton, 2015).

The total duration for data collection and processing were within 60 days from the start

date.

Data Analysis Plan

I collect primary data from in-depth interview recordings of identified,

purposively selected, and volunteered research participants. I gathered secondary data

from documents, including articles and official documents from the Ghana SGTP

management secretariat and the MOGCSP. The analysis of the data involved

transforming the collected data into information that was meaningful and helpful to

answer the research question (see Patton, 2015). I used categorizing strategies, connecting strategies and memos, and displays to do the analysis (see Maxwell, 2009, p. 27).

The Plan

The plan for this study was to combine content with thematic analysis after the recorded interviews, and field notes had all been transcribed (see Smith & Firth, 2011, p. 54). The outcome of the content and thematic analysis were used to describe and interpret the data gathered from the research participants (see Smith & Firth, 2011, p. 54). Further, the data analysis consisted of common coding systems while also grouping the codes into categories. From the categorizations, I identified themes. To achieve this goal, I used NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) exclusively.

The data gathered were categorized using coding. I used the coding technique to break up the audio-recorded and transcribed interview sessions, and then grouped all similar codes into categories. I categorized the codes using as guide the FSF lens. The exact coding followed the identified policy actors and the policy implementation activities around the Ghana SGTP program. The reason for using the codes was to have a general understanding of what each group of actors was doing within the implementation arena of Ghana SGTP (see Maxwell, 2009, p. 28). The caution for me was to continue analysis at this stage because a lot of contextual meaning may be lost without further work on the data.

Subsequently, I sought to group the codes based on common thematic understanding (see Patton, 2015). Coding was an important method for analyzing the

information gathered from interviews, which were textual in nature (see Burkholder et

al., 2016, p. 85). Essentially, I used codes to analyze the information and then grouped

related codes to form themes (see Maxwell, 2009, p. 30; Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 212). I

matched certain words or phrases with particular words to represent codes. Using

thematic analysis assisted me in linking the recorded and transcribed interview sessions

to answer the research question guided by the theoretical lens for this study. The themes

were the basis for making meaning of the information gathered. Depending on the nature

of the information gathered, the data analysis did not terminate at the thematic level.

I used memos also to analyze the data. The memos were captured on the field to

offer further insight into how I felt or understood particular incidents and responses from

the research participants (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 85). The displays were

diagrammatic or graphic representations of such understandings of the themes from the

previous analysis. I then used the tools for analysis to bring out what I thought about the

nature of the information I had collected, how the research participants appeared to me,

and any other ideas about linkages that come from the information collected, including

theory and lens. Mostly, the memos captured my ideas about the overall data while in the

field (see Maxwell, 2009, p. 30).

I undertook the entire primary data analysis with computer-aided software. The

computer-aided software application of choice was NVivo 12. I used the software for

coding and thematic grouping to analyze the data and information. I also used the

software to categorize the codes into themes. I further used NVivo 12 to bring together

themes while I interpreted the information (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 239). I took full responsibility for the analysis.

In specific terms, the above data analysis plan applied to the research question and sub questions. To identify the policy actors active within the implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP, I used the semi structured and open-ended interview questions during the in-depth interview sessions. The interviews and participant selection were based on participation in the implementation activities of the Ghana SGTP management secretariat, including organized events over the last ten years. I also depended on major newspaper reports by Ghanaian Times over the period to identify which individuals or groups of policy actors made any statement and on which theme that related to the implementation of the Ghana SGTP.

In seeking to identify interests and motivations, I used the in-depth interview sessions to elicit much information. I juxtaposed interview responses to the information gathered from newspapers to understand policy actor interests and motivation. On the nature of the interaction between policy actor groups, I gathered the information entirely from the interview sessions.

Issues of Trustworthiness

I recognized the criticism against qualitative study, mainly that the method lacks rigor and trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004, p. 63). Positivist-oriented researchers who typically use quantitative methods level criticism. The intended study, like all other qualitative research, needed not to exhibit the same techniques for assuring rigor and trustworthiness as positivists. As a naturalist and constructionist study, I used at least 4

measures to demonstrate trustworthiness of the general qualitative research (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 76; Patton, 2015, p. 743; Shenton, 2004, p. 63). The trustworthiness of this study was based on credibility, transferability, dependability, and on confirmability as Patton (2015, p. 743) opined. The reason for the choice of the 4 measures was that this study was qualitative and belonged to the naturalist and constructivist philosophies.

Credibility

The term implied constructing the replica of the world of the respondents in this study (Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p. 14; Patton, 2015, p. 743). I used member-checking techniques to cross-validate the information from research participants where necessary. The member-checking method was used to seek clarity on particular answers provided during the interviews. One part of the strategy I used was to revert to particular research participants for confirmation or clarifications where necessary (see Patton, 2015, p. 651). I reverted to and sought the concurrence of research participants to confirm the accuracy or otherwise of certain captured (selective) responses. Another part of the strategy I used was to involve member checking with other research participants concerning the content of the previous interview responses without necessarily indicating to the respondent the sources of such information. Depending on responses from a research participant, follow up questions were posed to seek clarity on certain answers. Such follow up questions could not be anticipated and included in the current interview guide. In doing so, the credibility of previous information was checked for accuracy and consistency.

Transferability

The issue of transferability referred to the ability of others including readers of the results of the study being able to compare the situation and context of the research setting with other settings, context, cultural and time circumstances (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 65; Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p. 16). I achieved the transferability of this qualitative study through a detailed and rich description of the phenomenon, and that of the circumstance or context of the research participants and the phenomenon of interest. The detailed descriptions I made would allow the readership of the results to appreciate fully the ability to compare and associate the report with those of other similar circumstances for another or other studies (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 65; Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p. 16). In addition to the detailed description of the phenomenon, I ensured a full and comprehensive methodology description to enhance the transferability of the results of this study for application in other contexts similar to my study. Finally, I achieved transferability by assisting other researchers in tracing the study to its sources and context, including locations for subsequent research or study through detailed description of the research design and data collection and analysis.

Dependability

I ensured dependability of the entire research and findings. Dependability meant that there was flexibility on my part to modify and make adjustments to the research design, including research questions to fit the understandings from gathered data (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 65; Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p. 18). I also achieved dependability by being flexible to make adjustments where needed and making it reflect

in the findings. Further, I concentrated on capturing in-depth information from the

research participants to truthfully present the findings (see Burkholder et al., 2016, p. 65;

Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p. 18). In specific terms, I sought to present a study design that

agreed with the views gathered from the research participants, provided detailed

explanation of my role as the researcher, to clearly specify the theoretical lens for the

study, and to accurately capture in-depth and rich information from the research

participants.

Confirmability

The issue of confirmability related to the ability of some other researchers

undertaking the same or similar study and being able to get the same or similar results

(see Conrad & Serlin, 2011, p. 19). Conrad and Serlin (2011, p. 20, cited Lincoln &

Guba, 1985); Marshall & Rossman, 2011) opined that the confirmability of an inquiry

ought to relate to the research participants and the results of the study but not that of the

researcher's role. I establish an audit trail of data collection and analysis, as suggested by

Conrad and Serlin (2011), citing Lincoln and Guba (1985). In addition, I undertook a

form of member checking with other neutral colleagues to appraise the data analysis and

interpretation, as reflected in findings for consistency and reliability (see Conrad &

Serlin, 2011, p. 21).

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Ethical Procedures

</div>

I sought to uphold the research ethics that required respect for the use of human

subjects as research participants in research. To that extent, I followed the requirements

and guidelines of the IRB of Walden University throughout the study. I submitted all

interview guides for scrutiny and observed the accepted research methods that helped to protect the research participants' privacy and anonymity. I cataloged and securely stowed the recorded and transcribed material to avoid any link to research participants by maintaining confidentiality.

Based on IRB approval, I sought informed consent from all purposely identified and selected research participants before any interview session. I also ensured that all face-to-face research participants endorsed and submitted the informed consent form in accordance with the Walden University's guidelines. For virtual Zoom and Microsoft Teams, the joining of the conferencing was considered as having accepted the invitation and had read the consent form. Further, I shared the informed content document with all research participants and explained to each participant the right to continue or cease responding to any question at any time during an interview session. I also assured the respondents about the protection of their privacy and identity. In addition, I undertook these actions to assure the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants and, ultimately, their protection.

Summary

The general qualitative descriptive design for the study helped to elicit from research participants, rich and in-depth information for understanding the policy implementation of the Ghana SGTP. I used the information to understand the group of policy actors' contributory influence towards achieving SGTP policy intent. I used the research design to understand the role of policy actors in the implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP. As the role of the researcher was important in the entire study process, I

was mindful of reflexivity and the need for the trustworthiness of the inquiry. At the same time, I ensured the privacy and confidentiality of the research participants purposively selected for interviews guided by IRB oversight and human protection principles and guidelines. Chapter 4 which is the next chapter contained the actual primary data collection and the analysis of all information gathered from fieldwork as well as secondary sources.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this policy implementation research was to investigate the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actor groups and other actors during the policy implementation of Ghana SGTP. I employed the FSF proposed by Howlett et al. (2017; 2015) to better understand policy actor roles during policy implementation. I further explored and found support indicating that policy actors in policy streams are not limited to the three initial stages of the policy cycle but extended activities to the other levels such as implementation and evaluation (see Béland et al., 2018a; Howlett, 2018; Shiroma, 2014).

The main research question was formulated to understand how the policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations in the policy implementation of the Ghana SGTP between 2008 and 2018 influenced the overall policy outcome. In this study, I used the general qualitative research methodology to interview and elicit study information from representatives of active policy actors. Participants' responses focused on their lived experiences as they individually interacted with other representatives of policy actor groups at various levels of the SGTP implementation phase of the policy cycle. All the interview sessions were recorded and professionally transcribed in preparation for data analysis.

In this chapter, I presented a thorough overview of the data gathering process, and the subsequent data analysis. The data collection and analysis phases were completed back-to-back following each interview session; after collection and transcription of the

first interview, data analysis was initiated. Based on experiences from previous interviews, this approach allowed me to adapt subsequent interviews to ensure responses related to the research question would be obtained, and to enable me to anticipate responses to readily generate follow up questions. Additionally, I described the research settings, demographic features of the purposively sampled research participants, and the data collection process. Next, I explained the data analysis process, and how I assured trustworthiness in both the data collection and analysis. Lastly, I provided an overview of the research findings.

Research Settings

As this research is focused on the policy implementation activities of the SGTP, specifically the perspectives and experiences of policy actor representatives, I conducted the research in Accra, Ghana. Except for one individual, all research participants were current employees of policy actor groups and acting at the national or district level with an appreciation for policy actor roles. One research participant had retired one year previously and was not currently representing any actor group; however, the research participant had more than 30 years of working experience in social protection with 12 years of that period engaged with the SGTP. The policy implementation of the SGTP involved the following policy actors: management secretariat, the supervising ministry, the complimentary service ministries, development partners drawn mainly from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and multilateral organizations, civil society organization or nonstate actors, financial institutions, local government service, a metropolitan assembly, think tank, and academia.

I gathered in-depth and rich information through a combination of 6 direct (i.e., face-to-face) and 9 indirect (i.e., virtual) modes of interview with the purposively sampled research participants. The interviews were conducted one-on-one and recorded with the prior knowledge and approval of the research participants. All the interviews were conducted after IRB approval in June 2020 after Ghana has eased countrywide lockdown in mid-March 2020. Two of the six face-to-face interview sessions were conducted in my office at the Ministry of Finance when COVID-19 restrictions were eased in Accra. I solely occupy the referenced office space; this venue offered the necessary privacy required to ensure an undisturbed conversation between myself and the research participant without any third-party interference. My office has cement brick-walls on all sides of the room with single glazed windows between walls in the front and back of the office. The location made conversations inaudible to the next offices to the left and right of my office. The remaining 4 face-to-face interviews were conducted in the offices of the research participants; these office spaces offered similar privacy for conducting the interviews. Apart from the face-to-face interviews, the other interviews were successfully conducted virtually through Zoom and Microsoft Teams conferencing sessions.

A total of nine virtual interview sessions were organized at the behest of the purposively sampled and volunteered research participants. I had no control over the location or potential privacy issues of the research participants' choice of locations. The need to have undisturbed interviews without the possibility of a third-party listening in was made clear to the research participants. I received assurances that the locations were

protected from third-party interference or overhearing. The scheduling of the interview

dates and times were made through emails and WhatsApp messages; these virtual

exchanges also allowed me to establish a cordial rapport with each research participant

before the interviews.

The interview invitations and informed consent forms were physically handed to

participants engaged in the face-to-face sessions; virtual interview participants received

an email with the forms prior to the virtual sessions. Therefore, all participants were

aware of their voluntary and confidential participation as well as the right to end their

participation at any point or refuse to answer any question without any negative

repercussions. On average, the interviews lasted less than 40 minutes with the exception

of one research participant whose session extended to 56 minutes.

Demographics

The study sample consisted of individuals residing in or near the capital city

Accra with experience representing their policy actor group in the policy implementation

of the SGTP in Ghana. Two experienced individuals from the management secretariat of

the SGTP that I successfully interviewed subsequently shared names and contact details

of individuals they felt possessed experience representing their respective policy actor

organizations and were associated with the implementation of the SGTP. Thus, the

snowballing technique was used to recruit additional research participants. The

purposive selection of the research participants was based solely on role and experience.

In all, I initially anticipated 25 participants would be necessary to meet saturation, but

successfully interviewed 15 research participants. The general demographic features of

the research participants for the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Participants' Demographic Information

Research Participant No.	Gender	Organization	Years of Experience with SGTP
01	Male	Civil Servant	4
02	Male	Civil Servant	12
03	Male	Local Govt Servant	8
04	Male	Civil Servant	12
05	Male	Devt Partner	6
06	Male	Devt Partner	6
07	Male	Devt Partner	7
08	Female	Local Govt Servant	12
09	Male	Civil Society	12
10	Female	Civil Servant	4
11	Female	Dev Partner	6
12	Male	Academia	6
13	Female	Civil Society	10
14	Male	Civil Society	7
15	Female	Civil Servant	5

Overall, the research participants had between 4 to 12 years of experience either

working within or collaborating with SGTP implementation. While age was not

considered as an important factor to influence the nature of responses, one research

participant had retired in 2019 at the age of 60 years. The retiree was not considered a

vulnerable person given the vulnerable age bracket is defined as 65 years and above in

the NSPP (2016) that established the SGTP. The rest of the research participants were below the retirement age of 60 years.

The sample also consisted of five female research participants (33%) and 10 male research participants (67%). Although gender distribution was unequal, men and women reported a similar range of experience with SGTP. The proportion of male to female participants did not affect the responses of the representatives of the policy actors. It is important to note that the purposeful identification and selection of research participants was not based on gender but rather the representation of an active policy actor group in the implementation of the SGTP. The respective policy actor organizations assigned the research participants as lead persons in the engagement with the SGTP. Figure 3 illustrates the gender of research participants.
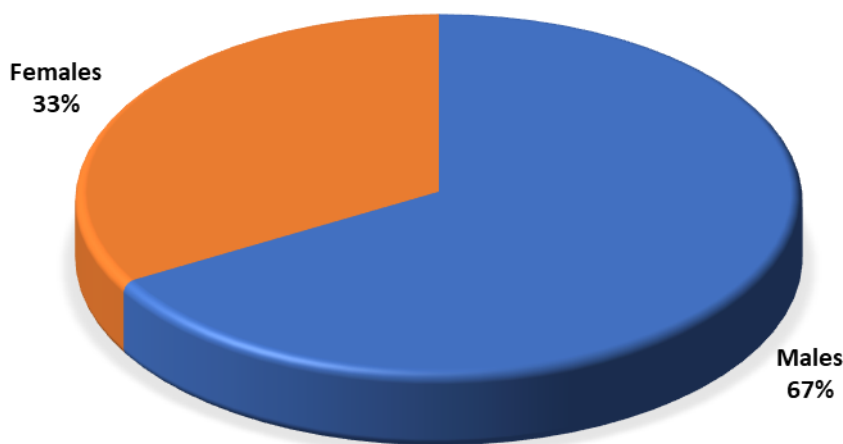
Figure 3. Research participants by gender.

Additionally, Table 2 provided details on the research participants' backgrounds. In terms of organizational representation, I purposefully identified and interviewed eight

state actors, composed of government departments and management secretariat staff, which accounted for a slight majority of the sample (53%). The remaining seven participants consisted of representatives from development partners, think-tanks, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

Table 2

A General Background of Policy Actor Research Participants

Category	Description of participants	No. of participants
Program Management Secretariat	Technical officers of the Secretariat with expertise in social welfare and social protection intervention management and administration	2
Government departments	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education	6
Non-governmental organizations	Civil society organization	1
Academia	A researcher from a local university	1
Think-tanks	Non-state research and advocacy groups.	2
Development partners	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) members and a multilateral organization	3

Additionally, the data collection also successfully covered the main policy actors known to operate in the policy cycle. The research participants were further identified as belonging to bureaucrats (40%), ECs (34%), ICs (13%), and ACs (13%). In all, the

sample was representative of the active policy actor groups aligned to the implementation of the SGTP.

Data Collection

I used interviews as the data collection method for the research. I had to relax the preferred mode of direct face-to-face interviews in response to the infectious disease pandemic (COVID-19) control measures such as social distancing. The situation allowed research participants the option to choose between a face-to-face and a virtual conferencing interview session to maintain their safety while assuring privacy as participants provided in-depth and rich information for the study. I accepted the choice of interview mode from research participants, which led me to conduct six face-to-face (40%) and nine virtual Zoom or Microsoft Team (60%) interview sessions at the convenience of the research participants. The interview mode varied due to circumstances beyond my control, and I allowed the potential research participants to determine which method of interview would be best to assure adherence to social distancing requirements as well as the wearing of face masks.

In terms of organizational representation, I purposefully identified and interviewed 8 participants. Two research participants, representing 13%, were selected from the management secretariat of the SGTP, who volunteered to participate in the research. Table 3 captures the details.

Table 3

Number of Research Participants by Organization and Percentage

Organization	Number	%
Mgt. Secretariat	2	13
Gender Ministry	3	20
Education Ministry	1	7
Local Government Service	2	13
Development Partners	3	20
Academia	1	7
Think Tank	2	13
Civil Society	1	7

Figure 4 is a summary of Table 3. The table contained a proportional contribution to the study by organizational representatives as research participants. In all, the sample was representative of the active policy actor groups aligned to the implementation of the SGTP.
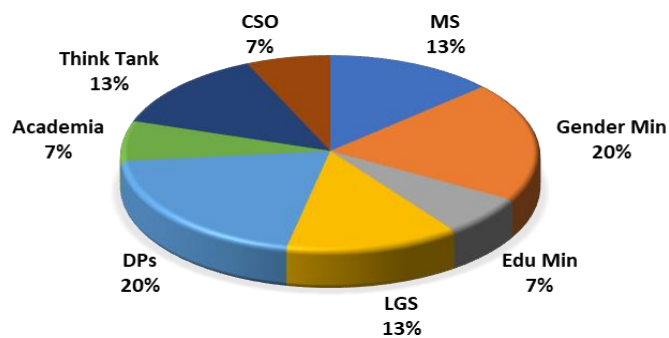
Figure 4. Research participants by organizational representation.

In addition, the data collection also successfully covered the main policy actors known to operate in the policy cycle. The same volunteered research participants were identified as belonging to epistemic communities (ECs), instrument constituencies (ICs), advocacy coalitions (ACs), and bureaucrats (B). I captured in Figure 5, the proportional representation of generic policy actor groups of the study.
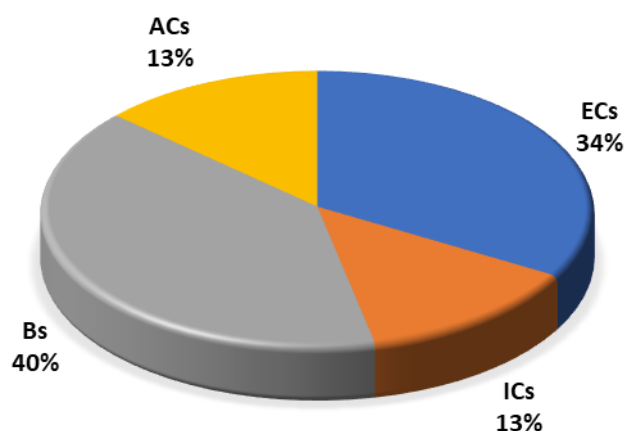
Figure 5. Research participants by generic policy actor group.

Data relating to the real-life experiences of these individuals were collected as each participant represented a policy actor group in the implementation of the SGTP in Ghana. I started the data collection for the study after receiving IRB approval (IRB No. 05-01-20-0578962) from Walden University. I used a purposive sampling strategy to identify individuals who represented policy actor groups and interacted with other policy actors during the implementation of the SGTP. The participant selection targeted persons with in-depth knowledge and experience with the policy implementation of the program. In response to the new social norms related to COVID-19, social distancing standards, and partial lockdown of the Ghanaian economy, as well as the likely possibility of

research participants having relocated to the rural regions (Outside Accra) of Ghana, the inclusion criteria for selection was based firstly on availability. The second factor considered was years of experience interacting with the SGTP; to be considered, participants must have at least 4 years of experience with the program. Also, the potential research participant should be a representative of a policy actor group either currently or within past two years.

I interacted with interested research participants using a cellular phone, WhatsApp messaging, and email exchanges; after the initial contact, I shared the informed consent form through email along with an explanation of the study background and purpose. I emphasized the voluntary and non-compensatory nature of the interview sessions to each interested and voluntary research participant. I also assured each participant of the confidentiality of their responses and that the information collected would be stored using encryption. I also reminded each research participant of the modes of the interview available at their convenience.

In all, I contacted and extended interview invitations to 25 potential research participants but successfully interviewed 15 research participants based on their availability. Mobile phone and internet network connectivity were generally unstable. While the unstable connectivity challenges did not adversely affect the virtual interview sessions with mobile devices, the research participants who opted for virtual Zoom conferencing encountered connectivity challenges. Unfortunately, internet connectivity influenced the availability of two interested research participants. Another two individuals were unavailable due to the work schedule at the time of data collection.

Additionally, 3 individuals did not respond to the emails nor returned phone calls. Lastly, another potential research participant agreed to participate in a virtual conference but failed to join the session at the agreed upon interview time.

The sample size for this qualitative research was determined by the saturation point which was arrived at after analyzing the transcript of the 11th research participant. However, I continued with the interviews to verify the saturation point by interviewing the next 3 research participants. According to Patton (2015), while the saturation point determines the sample size for a qualitative study, other concerns including study purpose, resources available for the study, and time available are equally important issues to be considered. In this study, the desire was to determine sample size by saturation point while also considering interviewing at least a representative of each policy actor group active in the policy implementation arena of the SGTP. The final sample size was sufficient to provide answers to the research question and sub questions.

Prior to initiating the six face-to-face interview sessions, I sent the informed consent form via email and received an initialed form back from each participant. Specifically, I started each interview session by repeating the study purpose and background as well as emphasizing that the information gathered was for academic research only. Next, I reminded participants of the need to audio record the interview sessions in order to capture the shared experiences of each research participant accurately as well as to enable in-depth analysis afterward. Moreover, I explained the confidentiality of the audio recording and reiterated the assurance of confidentiality to each research participant before the start of the interviews and recordings. In addition,

their names were replaced by codes and their responses cannot be associated directly with the research. Participants were also informed that they were free to withdraw from providing answers to any question and could withdraw completely from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, that there would not be any compensation of any kind for agreeing to participate. I requested each face-to-face research participant to initial the informed consent form if they agreed to participate. I collected the initialed informed consent form and then started the interview sessions.

I gathered in-depth and rich information through a combination of six direct (i.e., face-to-face) and nine indirect (i.e., virtual) modes of interview with the purposively sampled research participants. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in my office or that of the participants; there were occasional unanswered office mainline and cell phone calls, but such interruptions did not affect the collection of data from the research participants. I assured each research participant that each interview would last for about 45 minutes. One interview lasted 56 minutes due to the in-depth knowledge of the research participant. Others lasted less than 40 minutes on average.

The other nine interviews were conducted using a virtual Zoom (eight interviews) and Microsoft Teams (1 interview). I had no control over the privacy of the locations of the research participants, but the audio recording did not contain sounds that suggested the presence of other persons during the interviews. The need for confidentiality and a quiet environment was explained during the initial exchanges with the research participants. Before each virtual interview session, I set up the link as host and sent an

invitation to join the meeting (i.e., interview) to the email address of the research

participant. In the virtual meeting invitation, I gave the meeting ID (identification

number) and password to allow the research participant to join the meeting. When the

research participant requests to join the meeting by using the meeting ID and password

previously provided by me, the action is considered as having accepted the informed

consent form and demonstrably agreed to volunteer and participate in the interview. The

implication is that no initialed informed consent form was required from the virtual Zoom

and Microsoft Team interview sessions. However, I started each interview by repeating

the same informed consent content I provided to participants in the face-to-face

interviews (e.g., study purpose/background, confidentiality, audio recording, encrypted

data storage, voluntary participation without compensation, and to withdraw at any time).

In particular, I explained to each participant that they were free to withdraw from

providing answers to any question and could sign out of the virtual meeting at any time

without any negative consequences. Similar to the face-to-face interviews, their names

will be replaced by codes and their responses cannot be associated directly with their

institutions and the research responses. Every virtual interview research participant

verbally agreed before audio recording and the interview started. I also reminded each

research participant not to mention their own name at any time during the interview.

Lastly, I assured the participant that each interview will last within 45 minutes.

To ensure consistency with the responses to the open-ended and semi structured

interview questions from my interview guide, I posed follow up questions to elicit clarity

in the responses from the research participants. All interviews followed the same

structure but with different probes based on the answers of previous research participants. The probing method deepened the depth of information gathered from subsequent interviews and enabled triangulation to be pursued during data collection. The open-ended and semi structured interview questions were administered to all research participants to ensure consistency in the responses. In some instances, I had to re-phrase questions upon demand from research participants who sought clarity. During all the interview sessions, I maintained neutrality and did not offer my own knowledge about working in the public sector. However, I kept and maintained field notes as memos on the procedures and observations including my own insights. I also engaged the services of an agency to transcribe the recorded interview audios. The audios did not contain names, and files were coded. Upon receipt of the transcribed audio recordings in Microsoft Word, I audited the transcription by listening to each audio and the submitted transcription to ensure consistency and accuracy. The audit enabled me to fill in gaps and omissions in the transcribed audio files as well as to ensure the transcribed version matched the same content as the audio recording. With these transcribed and verified interviews, I proceeded to upload each transcribed interview responses into NVivo 12 to prepare for my data analysis.

Data Analysis

I primarily analyzed the qualitative information gathered from the data collection in the field using a combination of in vivo and descriptive coding styles (see Saldaña, 2016, p. 4) with the aid of the NVivo 12 software. Additionally, the FSF provided a theoretical lens to guide my coding and thematic grouping which provided insights about

the lived experiences of the research participants. These steps enabled me to aggregate

codes into themes from the interviews for the actual analysis (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012,

p. 239). Using the NVivo 12 application, the analysis required that all the interview

transcripts were loaded into the NVivo project. I standardized my analysis across all in-

person and virtual responses by consciously not placing any value on facial expressions,

gestures, and mannerisms in my analysis. This approach ensured that the virtual

interview responses and the face-to-face responses were treated the same way.

The analysis began with the first level coding phase in which I looked for words

and patterns. This process implied that the coding was not conducted solely on

individual questions but the entire response of a research participant. I combined content

with thematic analysis with the transcribed interviews as suggested by Smith and Firth

(2011, p. 54). I completed the first level coding without creating any sub-codes. In all,

46 individual codes, based on a mix of in vivo and descriptive codes, were identified.

Appendix E lists the NVivo 12 codes and categories as well as final themes for the study.

I used Figure 6 to illustrate the coding processes and levels undertaken as part of the data

analysis using NVivo 12 software.
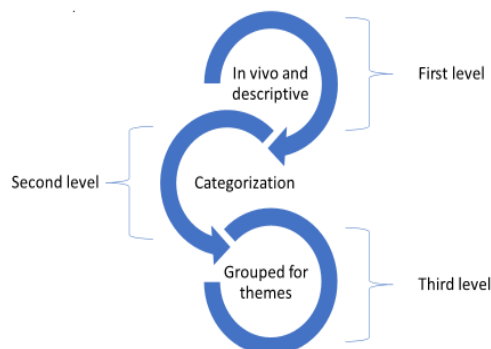
Figure 6: Coding levels and process.

 Next, the analysis proceeded to the second level coding using the mix of content

and thematic analysis guided by the FSF theoretical lens which reduced the codes from

46 to 6 categories and 28 sub-categories. I noticed that the first level coding resulted in

codes that were not directly relevant to the main research question and sub questions; this

led to further grouping based on the similarity of the content bearing in mind the research

focus. Coding was an important method for analyzing the information gathered from the

transcripts of the recorded interviews, which are textual in nature (see Burkholder, Cox,

& Crawford, 2016, p. 85). By combining the categories, four themes emerged from the

analysis: actor presence, interactions, mandates, and shared concerns. The exact coding

followed the identified policy actors and the policy implementation activities around the

Ghana SGTP program. The coding enabled the general understanding of what each

group of policy actors was doing within the implementation arena of Ghana SGTP (see

Maxwell, 2009, p. 28). It should be noted that the shared concerns theme was composed

of excess categories from the responses of the research participants; these codes remained on the list of codes for level three final coding but were not included in the detailed data analysis.

Further, the data analysis consisted of descriptive coding systems while I also grouped the codes into categories. Subsequently, I grouped the codes based on common thematic understandings (see Patton, 2015). Essentially, I used the codes to analyze the information and to group related codes to form themes ((see Maxwell, 2009, p. 30; Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 212). I matched certain words or phrases with particular words to represent codes (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 212). Using thematic analysis assisted me to link the recorded and transcribed interview sessions to answer the research question. The themes were the basis for making meaning of the information gathered. After conducting the three levels of coding, then categorization and finding common themes, the analysis ultimately concluded in four thematic clusters with sub themes.

While conducting interviews, I also wrote memos of my interviewing experience and thoughts on how to analyze the data. The memos were captured in the field and offered further insight into how I felt or understood particular responses from the research participants after each interview session just as Burkholder and colleagues suggested (see 2016, p. 86). I used the memo to bring out my impressions of the nature of the information collected, how the research participants sounded to me, and any other ideas about linkages between the information collected with the FSF theoretical lens. Essentially, the memos captured my ideas about the overall data collection exercise while in the field (see Maxwell, 2009, p. 30).

The data analysis was applied to examining my research sub questions with the primary research question aimed to identify the policy actors active within the implementation arena of the Ghana SGTP. I employed semi structured and open-ended interview questions during the interviews to seek rich and in-depth information from the research participants to answer the question. However, I did not capture the names of the policy actor groups except in generic terms to maintain confidentiality. Three sub questions were used to support fully answering the main research question.

The first sub question sought to identify all the subsystem policy actors active in the implementation of SGTP in Ghana. In response, I gathered information on the active policy actors present from the interview responses. Each research participant mentioned other policy actor groups that form part of their discussion platforms within social media, through certain SGTP management secretariat organized meetings, or other meetings organized by the supervising ministry for gender, children, and social protection. The management secretariat had sent those reports to the national archives, which was also undergoing record system upgrading from manual to an electronic system. Therefore, the records at the national archives of Ghana were inaccessible due to the system upgrade.

Apart from the interview transcripts, I gathered knowledge of policy actor groups present in the SGTP implementation arena through newspaper archives. The two newspapers of wide circulation in Ghana, considered as representative of the public opinion, were the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times. Unfortunately, the electronic library of the Daily Graphic did not cover the full study period from 2008 – 2018. Thus, I resorted to exclusively retrieving information from the Ghanaian Times that provided

full coverage for the entire study period which yielded 76 publications related to the

SGTP. Within those publications, policy actor groups active in the implementation arena

of the SGTP were also identified. The list of active policy actor organizations in broad

categorizations is displayed in Table 4 and the graphical representation captured in Figure

7.

From the Ghanaian Times selected archived publications, the most frequently

mentioned policy actor group was ACs (59%). Bureaucrats, who typically lead

implementation, were the second most featured as leads in these publications. ACs were

more prominently in the news items on the SGTP compared to Bureaucrats as was often

assumed by Mugambwa et al. (2018). I captured in Table 4 the level of prominence of

the various actor groups in the Ghanaian Times newspaper.

Table 4

Generic Actor Group Leads in Ghanaian Times, 2008-2018

Generic Policy Actor	No. of Publications	%
Advocacy Coalitions	45	59
Instrument Constituencies	5	7
Bureaucrats	21	28
Epistemic Constituencies	0	0
Others	5	7
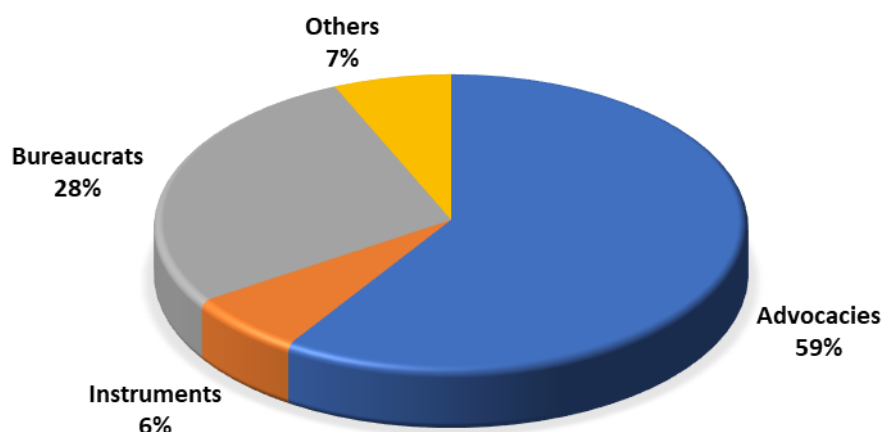
Figure 7. Generic actor group leads in Ghanaian Times, 2008-2018.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I took several steps to address the rigor and trustworthiness of the data collected during the study. Specifically, I employed four measures to assure trustworthiness including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability just as Patton (2015, p. 743) suggested for all naturalist and constructivist studies like the current research. These four measures depended on the lived experiences of the research participants who volunteered to participate in the study. The process of assuring trustworthiness was captured in Figure 8.
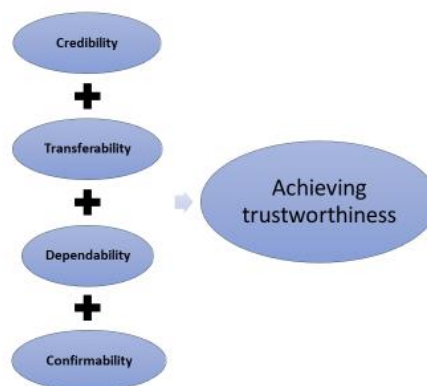
Figure 8: Illustration of achieving trustworthiness.

The first measure of trustworthiness I employed for this study was the credibility

of the information gathered and analyzed for the study. Generally, research has shown

that assuring credibility required the researcher to replicate as closely as possible the

worldview of the research participants about a phenomenon (see Conrad & Serlin, 2011,

p. 14; Patton, 2015, p. 743) which in this case was the engagement of policy actor groups

with the SGTP implementation in Ghana. With each completed interview, I gained more

knowledge and experience in interviewing; in particular, I improved my technique for

eliciting additional information from initially incomplete responses. I rephrased

questions, used probes to cross-check on previous answers, and I reverted to interviewed

research participants for clarity as part of the member-checking method. Thus, I

sharpened the open-ended interview questions from previous interview experiences and

learned appropriate follow-up questions to pose to get rich and in-depth information from

the research participants.

The second measure I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data gathered and analyzed was transferability. Burkholder et al. (2016, p. 65), as well as Conrad and Serlin (2011, p. 16), suggested that to achieve transferability, the consumers of my research should be able to arrive at similar results and conclusions from other studies given a similar research setting and context. I gave a detailed and rich description of the circumstances of Ghana and the SGTP to enable readers to appreciate the settings of the research. I also described the SGTP in sufficient details to enhance understanding of the entire research environment for the purpose of enabling transferability.

The third measure of ensuring trustworthiness was achieved through the dependability of the study findings. Based on the information gathered from research participants, I considered any need to modify the research design or research questions to fit the understandings from gathered data (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Conrad & Serlin, 2011). That allowance to modify the research frame based on responses received from interviews was considered for the study. The current study design was aligned with the responses from research participants and I had explained my role as a researcher as part of this research.

The last measure to ensure trustworthiness was achieved through confirmability, which, as opined by Conrad and Serlin (2011, p. 19), is the ability of some other researcher undertaking the same or similar inquiry to find the same or similar results. I had established an audit trail of the data collection and analysis process to enable any researcher to confirm the results of the study. I achieved confirmability by keeping detailed documentation on the selection of research participants, reasons for the use of

face-to-face and virtual conferencing methods of data collection, challenges with getting research participants, and issues related to ensuring the appropriateness of venues for interviews. This detailed information is captured in various sections of this chapter. Thus, this study was conducted in a manner to ensure consistent and reliable findings as expected of a scholarly inquiry.

<div align="center">

Study Results

</div>

The 13 interview questions, both open-ended and semi structured, used for collecting the data were intended to generate responses that revealed the lived experiences of policy actor representatives as they interacted and participated in the policy implementation of the SGTP. These questions guided the interview process and were intended to elicit as much detailed information as possible from the research participants. The analysis that followed using the NVivo 12 software was performed to code and unify the rich and in-depth information about lived experiences into themes (see Saldaña, 2016). The interview guide was a tool used to elicit responses from research participants to answer the primary research question and sub questions. The findings of the study related to the critical open-ended and semi structured interview questions are discussed under this session based on the resulting four themes: actor presence, mandates, interactions, and shared concerns.

Presence of Policy Actors

I sought to elicit responses to the first research sub-question on regarding the presence of policy actors. The main focus was to ascertain whether policy actors that were active and played a part during agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy decision making, were present during the implementation stage of the policy cycle where program streams commenced flow as Howlett et al. (2015, 2017) postulated. One of four themes gathered from thematic analysis of responses obtained from the research participants was "policy actor presence." Under this theme, I coded 3 sub-themes including "policy actors," "institutional capacity," and "politics and politicization."

Policy actors. Research participants' responses identified the various policy actor groups that were known to participate in the implementation of the SGTP. A response from a research participant revealed the names of other active policy actors that are involved with the SGTP implementation.

from 2013 together with the development partners, the [Policy Actor 1, Policy Actor 2, Policy Actor 3, Policy Actor 4] together with the Government of Ghana and the Civil Society looked at the program then realized that there is the need to ensure that the targeting is 100 percent transparent.

Further, in a response of another research participant, additional names of policy actor groups were mentioned as shown below

the assistance of local partners and the other countries where cash transfers have taken place. So, when I am talking about local partners, I

am looking at the [Policy Actor], the [Policy Actor] which is [Policy

Actor]. We also have other CSO organizations, CSOs like the [Policy

Actor].

In addition to the above, a research participant identified a policy actor apart from the government agencies that have consistently collaborated with SGTP implementation. This policy actor representative indicated the nature of financial support extended to the government through the SGTP implementation.

So, 2018 we did not support because our initial support ended in 2017 in

December. So, in 2018 we did not support at all. It was the [Policy

Actor] and the Government of Ghana that were providing funds for that

initiative.

To protect the identities of the research participants, I masked the names of the policy actors mentioned above. Particularly, given the small number of research participants, I was aware of the potential risk of revealing the identities of the research participants. Thus, the masking was necessary given that for each of the policy actor groups there was an identified person who represented such interest in social protection intervention efforts including SGTP. The responses quoted above revealed the agency names of some of the policy actors working together with the management secretariat of the SGTP, and with the supervising of Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection to reach out to the extremely poor and vulnerable in the Ghanaian communities.

The information was confirmed by almost all the research participants of the study except for three participants who focused on providing background information about themselves. The method of knowing and confirming the presence of policy actors was based on the suggestions of Brockhaus, Di Gregorio, & Carmenta (2014); the process of knowing policy actor groups involved with any phenomenon starts with asking policy actors about their interactions followed by identifying policy actors through the participation in major events connected with the phenomenon and through publications including newspaper coverage over a period on that phenomenon. Thus, the first sub question on the presence of policy actors revealed several actors including state, nonstate, and foreign. The past newspaper publications also confirmed and highlighted the extent of involvement of those policy actors in the implementation arena of the SGTP.

Some of the policy actors named in the interview responses showed a link to previous actor groups during the initial three stages of the policy cycle: agenda setting, policy formulation, and decision-making stages. For example, ICs helped shape the policy environment in Ghana including the policy environment of the SGTP according to Foli et al. (2018). Moreover, some of the identified policy actors in this study were shown by Foli and colleagues to have played the role in Ghana as both ECs and ICs. Further, these same policy actor groups were identified by the research participants in this study as active in the implementation arena of the SGTP.

Institutional capacity. Participants' responses also revealed institutional capacity as a sub-theme including identified concerns of human, logistics, and financial resource capacity constraints of both the SGTP management secretariat and other agencies of

government that offered or were expected to offer complementary services intended for

the same target beneficiaries. The research participants, except for two, identified the

need to improve the institutional capacity of the management secretariat and the

community level implementing officials. One of the participants indicated that

> another area has been the area of capacity strengthening, right. How do
>
> you strengthen the various capacities of institutions that are involved in
>
> implementing social protection programs to be able to deliver on their
>
> mandate?

The response was rhetorical and underscored the need to continuously build

capacity especially when viewed in relation to other responses. For example, another

participant mentioned:

> you don't see capacity being built which will be the reason why you can't
>
> see innovation in the implementation of the SGTP cash transfer.
>
> The same research participant continued and added that
>
> if you want to sustain SGTP, because you are working on it. If you want
>
> to sustain SGTP, you need a lot of capacity and good structures.
>
> Furthermore, another research participant added that
>
> if we are able to build the capacity of people in Ghana, the implementing
>
> agencies of the management of social protection, I believe we can move
>
> forward.

Taken together, the above responses lamented the limited capacity of not only the

management secretariat but other complementary government agencies to carry out the

responsibility or the objective of the SGTP. Other research participants revealed the need

to have "uniform capacity building, uniform capacity building for the implementers and

then also equitable distribution of resources." A different participant similarly added:

>Sometimes they put personnel especially within the secretariat. They sit in
>
>the secretariat and they provide technical support for two to three years up
>
>to 4 years. That one the donor picks it for that. So right now as we speak
>
>right now, when you look at most of the people who are there now, their
>
>salaries are being paid by the donors because we have recruited specialists,
>
>finance specialist, reconciliation specialist, SGTP national manager,
>
>Assistant director, M&E specialist, IT specialist and finance and payment
>
>specialist.

Moreover, another participant also touched on the specialization and technical

capacity of the workforce:

>resources to build the technical capacity of people in social protection,
>
>they are new. … Because some of these staff who are employed as social
>
>workers, they are not trained social workers in the strict sense of it ... So,
>
>once the person has a first degree or a second degree may be the person is
>
>taken on. And the person may now have to learn on the job, but it's
>
>important to reiterate that this is a specialized field where you need people
>
>to actually, who know exactly what they are doing.

When examined together, all three areas of the concerns on institutional capacity

were mentioned by the research participants. Indeed, research revealed from studies in

Africa that the capacity of state and nonstate policy actors to reasonably undertake social

protection interventions were weak (see Mugambwa et al., 2018, p. 216; Roelen et al.,

2017, p. 310; Ulriksen, 2016, p. 2). These previous studies raised the concern and the

need to build such capacity through training, resourcing, and engaging of experts where

necessary to augment the low capacity of state agencies. The situation of low capacity

allowed other policy actor groups to recruit staff to fill into the capacity gap for policy

implementation. The situation leads to the eroding of the roles of some policy actors

known to dominate implementation like bureaucrats.

Politics and politicization. The third sub-theme under policy actor presence was

politics and politicization of social protection interventions including the SGTP. The

issue came from four research participants who regarded the presence of politics and

politicization as adversely affecting the delivery of the cash transfer program. The issue

related to the presence of AC policy actors that led the politics stream among policy actor

groups. The research participants indicated firstly the participation of district assemblies

at the community level to assist with the targeting mechanism of the program as cited

below that

> left to the District Assembly to be able to select those towns or villages
>
> where they had to concentrate in and that in a way amended itself to some
>
> kind of political consideration in my view.

Adding to the previously cited responses, the role played by district assemblies

led to situations that influenced the selection of beneficiaries based on political

affiliations. The next research participant's response elaborated on a peculiar occurrence in a community. The research participant responded that

> where every older person in the community whether a pensioner or not is on SGTP. Meanwhile for older people, we are looking at people without any source of income. So how can a pensioner be on it? When I investigated, apparently one of their own is a presiding member of the assembly under which the community falls. You need political determination authority to implement programs but not the politics in the program.

Other research participants lamented in their responses to the exploitation of the SGTP by making recipients believe that ACs were extending a favor to the beneficiaries rather than assistance provided by the state; this was captured by the following response:

> SGTP beneficiaries are suffering from politicians. [They believe] that the politician is doing them a favor, it cannot be a right so even if there is no transparency, even if there is no predictability of when the next amount is coming they cannot really question, because they think that the people are doing them a favor instead of seeing it as their right.

> Along the same lines, another participant mentioned:

> I think one major challenge of social protection is the politics of social protection. Yes. Every regime comes and they want to turn social protection into something else. So, the technocrats and the experts are not allowed to work and we like turning people around. Those who have been

trained to handle matters, when there is a change in government, we push people around. We bring in inexperienced ones there and they are not performing. But the thing has been there, this person comes and changes director, another person comes and we bring our own person. Because politics of social protection in Ghana is so huge that it's not helping matters.

The responses from the research participants demonstrated that ACs that dominated the politics stream had gained a lot of influence in the implementation of the SGTP. Bureaucrats and street-level bureaucrats, as Lipsky cited by Gilson (2015) prefers to describe them, are the main policy actor groups known to take the lead in the implementation and function within the program stream; however, these bureaucrats were replaced by ACs' preferred persons who often had no experience in social protection management and administration. Research has shown that policy actor groups that dominated politics or the political economy of a social protection implementing country tend to influence targeting and the regional spread of those interventions within that country (see Abdulai, 2019). Specifically, Abdulai (2019) referred to the AC policy actors as "political economy drivers" who are controlling the implementation of the SGTP. That group of policy actors had not attracted sufficient interest in past scholarly work. In effect, policy actors, also described as drivers of the political economy, had gained influence in implementation or had taken over the program stream of the policy process.

Mandates

The second research sub question for the study sought to understand the nature of the interest and motivations for policy actor groups that were involved with the SGTP. The authors of previous research suggested that policy actors were driven by interests in the program and that generic policy actor groups had interests that influenced their engagement at any level (see Haas, 1992; Voß & Simons, 2014; Zito, 2018). Also, I gained knowledge that suggested that policy actor groups sustained activities in a program based on motivation understood as that which enables long term interest of policy actors in an intervention (see Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994). The research participants' responses led to the coding of "Mandate" with 2 sub-themes of "interests" and "motivations."

Interests. The interest sub-theme is related to the institutional objectives or goals for which an organization operated or participated in a social protection program. The research participants responded with descriptions like "mandate," "that is what we do," and "it is our objective." Further examples are seen from various responses, such as:

> Social Protection is at the heart of everything the [Policy Actor] does and I say this because our twin goals are to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. So basically, the idea there is that we will reduce inequalities across the countries we support and also ensure that extreme poverty is no more and at that, you know, the core of that really is the social protection work that we do.

> Continuing this narrative, another participant explains:

So, every program that Government undertakes to support the poor, as a think tank, we are interested in providing novel ideas. We are also interested in holding government accountable to all of these policies and programs and also advocating for change when there is need to be. Further, another participant expands to include education supporting: has the mandate to educate, to give even the poor an opportunity to be educated and then be lifted out of poverty. So, most of our interventions are social protection, giving education to the poor, making sure that equality, everybody is equal in education like improving access and all that.

In relation to interests, another participant shares concern and vision that one of the key areas that we are interested in are the issues of women and issues especially related to pregnancies, child birth. We want to ensure that every woman who gets pregnant get pregnant because she wants to get pregnant. And giving life should not end into the woman dying. So, we want to ensure that the result of pregnancies is always safe.

Some research participants' responses demonstrated a link between the interests of the organization they represent and the official mandate of those policy actor groups. All the interests were not necessarily directed at social protection but to act as a checking mechanism on the delivery of social protection interventions by the government. The interests cited by research participants also underscored the point that the policy actor representatives had no choice in the matter. The interest is a given position and pursued

as a corporate responsibility to be carried out by representatives. The literature supports

the view that policy actors were driven by interests and that policy actors' decisions are

based on corporate interests, especially policy actors who were also financiers of the

SGTP (see Abdulai, 2019, p. 17; Béland et al., 2018a).

  Motivations. In addition to interests, further investigation into the second sub

question leads to the sub-theme of the motivation of organizations to sustain involvement

with the SGTP. I understood based on the research participants' responses that the

reason for the continued engagement with the SGTP implementation was due to the

progress on delivering the cash transfer to the beneficiaries, and witnessing changes in

livelihood of the recipient families. For example, one participant explained

> So, that is the interest really and because we've seen progress, I think for
>
> us the big part is progress and then also the fact that the government takes
>
> lead. You will know that government pays 60% of SGTP grant and that is
>
> amazing. It doesn't happen in a lot of countries, you know. So, they have
>
> shown commitment and so when we are supporting. It's very easy.

Another research participant identified the motivation of seeing positive change

by describing:

> To see change in the lives of the common. That is what we want to see
>
> like less dropouts, create more access, technical, vocational, give them
>
> opportunity to be something, to be better people in the future. That is
>
> what drives ministry of education to do more of social protection
>
> intervention.

I wouldn't say motivates but you see like I said, it is our mandate. It's our

mandate to implement social protection. But as I said earlier on, the other

ministries also have some responsibilities. When you take education for

instance, there are some people who cannot afford to pay for their

education.

The quote is an admission that what interests and motivates policy actor groups

relate to their corporate mandates or responsibilities. Additionally, one participant

clearly described their motivation:

because as I said, because of our objective, our mission of ensuring that

there is equity, we have a system that ensures that people who are

vulnerable are catered for and because also we are to ensure that such ones

are protected. That actually motivate us a lot to see that what we are

doing. We are at least achieving some kind of impact.

From the above extracts of responses from some research participants, the issue of

motivation was derived from corporate goals and objectives. Others were motivated to

continue supporting SGTP because their agencies were satisfied with the outcomes of the

program. In their view, once there was progress, there was a reason to sustain interest in

the SGTP. Yet others also viewed motivation as a core responsibility to ensure that there

was equity for all beneficiaries. These responses agreed with previous researchers that

showed a mix of interest and motivation as only interests or sometimes only mandate

especially among policy actors that were also state actors and financiers (see Simons &

Voß, 2018, p. 22; Weible, 2018, p. 62; Zito, 2018, p. 45).

The interests of generic policy actor groups were sustained even within policy implementation, the fourth stage of the policy cycle. The ECs' major concern with properly framing the issues to become agenda items continued to drive the actions of two policy actors in relation to the policy implementation of the SGTP. The same is true of the ICs' concern of having and ensuring the adoption and use of solution models which they chaperon through the earlier stages of the policy cycle. ICs made up of think-tanks and civil society organizations were still driving those interests at the current stage of the SGTP implementation. In the same vein, ACs' facilitating role in tying up all the agenda issues that met their beliefs and ideology with that of the solution models that furthered their interest was still being pursued during the implementation of the SGTP.

Interactions

The third research sub question for the study sought to explore the interactions between the various policy actor groups within the implementation space of the SGTP. The theme that evolved from coding and the grouping of codes based on the similarity of content was "interactions." The interactions theme examined the actual actions or inactions of these policy actor groups as they worked within the implementation arena of the SGTP. The interaction theme revealed three sub-themes: "collaboration," "coordination," and "conflict and resolution." The three sub-themes were derived from interrelated responses; specifically, through collaboration, there were bound to be conflicts in opinions on strategy and, through coordination, there were bound to be issues on remit and responsibility that ought to be recognized and resolved to maintain policy actor interactions.

Collaboration. The research participants, in their various responses, recognized the existence of different aspects of social protection that was outside the remit of the Ministry for Gender, Children, and Social Protection. The other social protection support comes from education, health, local government, agriculture, and industry ministries of government. To illustrate the various components of social protection, one participant stated:

> if you are going to talk about social protection only at the national level, we would not be able to move fast. The fact that we don't link the cash transfer to other social protection interventions [is a challenge]. Why can't we link SGTP to even School Feeding Program? And then if we say we have a poverty map, can the school feeding program be linked to the poverty map if it cannot be universal? And then that is one way you make cash transfer or social protection interventions effective.

Moreover, another respondent discussed the link between SGTP, national health insurance, and school feeding program by explaining:

> It took some time to link the SGTP to National Health Insurance. I am not sure whether they succeeded in linking the SGTP to the school feeding program but what they did drastically is to bring the school feeding secretariat under the Ministry of Gender from education and then they left the capitation grant.

Another respondent emphasized the need for complementary services to become available to SGTP beneficiaries. The policy actor representative described the impact of

various collaborative relationships that truly improved the well-being of the beneficiaries saying:

> There are complementary measures that go to make it take people out of
>
> poverty. For example, I am receiving a SGTP, my child is going to school
>
> free, I am having health free through the health insurance; these are three
>
> major things that can cushion me, right?

One research participant in particular referred several times to the need to create collaborative links to other social intervention programs running in Ghana under different ministries and agencies.

> implementation is strictly done mainly in the various districts and the
>
> districts also fall under the Ministry of Local Government … without our
>
> collaboration with, for instance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade
>
> and Industry for that matter, National Board for Scale Industries and the
>
> Business Assistance Centers, we cannot create livelihoods for these
>
> people.

Yet another respondent lamented the lack of collaboration between the program and the regional coordinating councils (RCCs) of the various regional decentralized departments to be involved with monitoring activities of the management secretariat of the SGTP. The participant voiced that:

> the RCC's are supposed to do monitoring. So why not let us see the way
>
> that they can also be involved in the monitoring. So that, it is the way of

preparing them that when you go for monitoring, this is what you look out

for and all these things.

Further, one research participant underscored the importance of collaboration at

various levels:

SGTP management secretariat or for that matter the ministry cannot do

this alone. Implementation even though we are at the national level,

implementation even happens at decentralized levels and so the ministry

and for that matter, SGTP management secretariat has to collaborate with

all other MMDAs, MDAs that are, you know, working towards the same

goal.

Overall, the situation was regarded as frustrating, as was vividly captured in the

responses; each policy actor research participant appreciated the need for collaboration

among implementing government agencies. These other government agencies were

policy actor groups or stakeholders whose core mandates together could improve the

livelihoods and wellbeing of the beneficiaries.

However, research has shown that collaborative work between policy actors in

public sector space like the implementation arena of the SGTP was uneven and

oftentimes erratic (see Butcher & Gilchrist, 2016, p. 23). This observation by Butcher

and Gilchrist (2016) underscored the responses voiced by research participants in my

study. Further, Butcher and Gilchrist explained that the officials of these departments

required narrative skills to communicate effectively and to be able to analyze multiple

forms of evidence with collaborating partners to effectively administer interventions like

the SGTP. The observation by Butcher and Gilchrist was also supported by Gollata and

Newig (2017, p. 1316) who revealed that collaborative planning and strategies enabled

smooth implementation of programs across several levels of government.

Coordination. The second sub-theme developed from the interview responses

was coordination by the lead implementing ministry and a state policy actor.

Coordination entailed bringing unity in the work among policy actor groups within a

single policy implementation arena like that of the SGTP. Coordination involved holding

every aspect of the implementation process together and knowing what goes on at any

particular moment especially with collaborating policy actor groups. One participant

described the nature of policy actor groups involved stating:

> we have a Social Protection Sector Working Group and that typical has
>
> about a hundred participants, government, development partners, private
>
> sector, civil society organizations, other ministries and departments related
>
> to Ministry of Gender.

> Another research participant described the different relationships by sharing:
>
> Yes, I think they have a strong relationship with the international
>
> organization or the donor agency. Locally, when it comes to their
>
> engagement with CSOs that is where we need to look at it very carefully.

> A different research participant responded with the recollection of historical

coordination efforts related to SGTP stating:

> we used to have the community SGTP implementation what we're calling
>
> the CLIC? The CLIC and as we started the plan was that after the

registration you come back and the community SGTP implementation

committee will then confirm who is really a poor person.

Responses also touched on the coordination of information and identification of

implementation gaps; one participant explained:

We also have monthly meetings with the Secretariat, the SGTP secretariat.

… but now we do it virtually because of COVID. Yes, so at least every

month you know what is happening. They give monthly updates, figures

and narratives, everything, everything and because they know that now we

are partners, everything where there are gaps, they say it so that we also

see how best we can contribute to kind of bridge that gap especially in

terms of financials.

Similarly, another respondent described the manner of coordination stating:

So, the technical teams of these various interventions in all the sectors like

in education, in health, and in agriculture, we try to meet quarterly. We

use that avenue to plan together because we need to form a kind of

synergy in what to do. So, we plan together. If we plan together, we are

able to achieve, for instance, the data that is needed by education to

implement the educational sector, the health sector and those things, we

provide that data through the Ghana National Household Registry

targeting system.

Overall, the research participants had mixed responses on the level of

coordination of the program. The typical mechanism of coordination, which was

meetings, had a large attendance by all policy actor groups. Such a meeting was difficult to manage and use as a means to address pertinent issues affecting program implementation. Research participants also indicated that collaboration and coordination are biased towards policy actor groups that also financed the SGTP. There was also a bias against the local level coordination mechanism needed to ensure smooth implementation at the district level. Whereas some research participants regarded coordination as good, others expected improvements to help carry all policy actor groups along. Authors of previous research have shown that coordination was a problem within the developing world especially with social protection programs (see Aiyede & Ogunkola, 2017, p. 33; Ansell, Sørensen, & Torfing, 2017, p. 471). The responses from the research participants seem to confirm this challenge in Ghana.

Conflict and resolution. The third sub-theme developed from the responses was conflict and resolution. The conflict was understood by some research participants as an adversarial relationship between policy actor groups. However, the important issue for research participants were differences in opinion on how to progress in working together towards delivering cash transfer and other social support services for the benefit of the targeted population. Some responses were focused on how to resolve issues once a difference of opinion has been identified; for example, one participant explained a typical scenario as:

> So, we share this information with our partners and our stakeholders. And
> when there is differing opinions, well that is how research is. The only
> alternative is you conduct another research to find out why this opinion is

coming up. … [again] it's about providing exactly what the data is telling you to members and if they have differing opinions they run similar research or alternative research to find out why that finding is coming up to ensure that it is consistent with exactly what is really happening on the ground.

Similar to the identified need for research in response to a conflict of opinions, another participant described a specific example and how the situation was managed; they described that:

There was the need, development partners and some other organizations felt that let us go the electronic way. But what we did was that we rather commissioned a study. So, the NGO was engaged by [Policy Actor] to do a survey, and impact study of our cash transfer payment using the manual system as against the electronic and it became very clear that the way to go was what, using the electronic system instead of just the hard-core paper. There hasn't been any kind of stiff resistance but what actually the development partners make sure that we actually understood some of the things that they were pushing ahead and government on its own side will also come and say this is what we want to do and at the end of the day, it is all in the interest of the work. We disagree to agree.

Another research participant shared the experience in resolving misunderstandings in a collaborative manner by stating:

So, when that misunderstanding comes we all get back to the drawing

board especially with the support or the mediation of the Ministry of

Gender that oh, the very people you said you are trying to support under

this exemption is the same group we support so why not take them on

board. Because we have used the rightful approved instrument for getting

them on board as beneficiaries. So, this is how it is resolved.

A fourth research participant described the importance and implications of how

one approaches a conflict that determines the outcome; they explained:

Well, for me it depends on how you present it. If you present it as if you

are looking down on what they are doing and they don't know what they

are doing, they will not accept it. You must appreciate that they are also

coming from somewhere. You are only contributing to improving on what

they have so I haven't had problems with them in any of our engagements,

either workshop or whatever. So, it is the presentation, the way you

present it that will make it more acceptable or not.

Similarly, another response focused on the process and outcome of how one issue

was handled by the various policy actor groups and a consensus was reached; they

described the situation as:

So, there has been a discussion and that amount that cash grant size should

be increased but then government came back realized that if we increase

the cash implication, it has budgetary effect that it would create problems

but at the same time the development partners were also interested that we

also increase the number of beneficiaries for the SGTP program. So, they

wanted the number of beneficiaries increased and wanted a grant size to

increase. So, it becomes push and push among all the stakeholders.

Eventually, they agreed that we increase the number of beneficiaries and

drop the grant size.

The responses from the research participants indicated that there were occasions

and certain issues that policy actor groups supported different views. These

disagreements were often discussed at the working group meetings on social protection.

When a mutual understanding could not be achieved, the issue was deferred to a think-

tank or academia to research and provide findings for discussion. Indeed, authors of

previous research had shown that policy actor groups do not always agree on a strategy,

and no one expected that from such a partnership (see Ansell et al., 2017; Mugambwa et

al., 2018). The conflict in strategic decisions becomes a challenge when there are

ambiguities in the way forward as responses from research participants' show. The

suggestion that policy actor groups agreed to disagree was an interesting development.
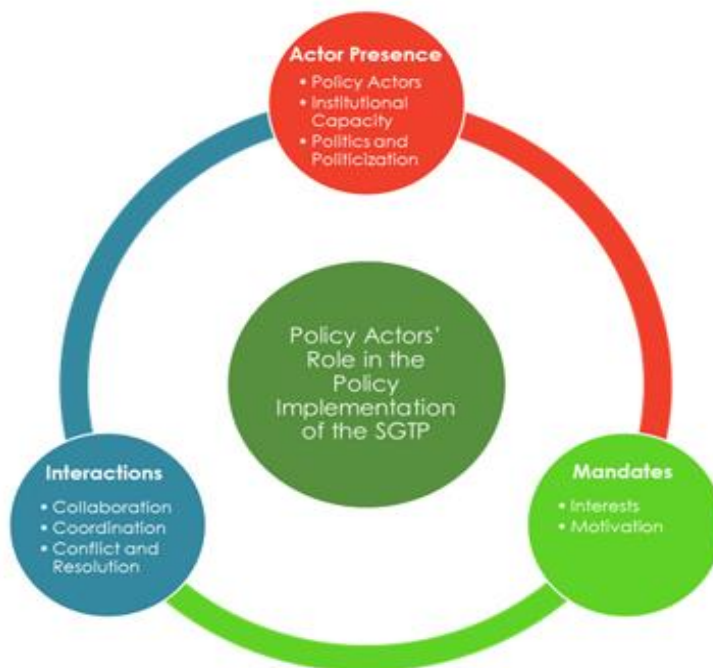
Figure 9: Illustration of research themes and sub-themes.

I used Figure 9 as an illustrative summary of the themes and sub-themes found after analyzing the data for this study. These themes and sub-themes were discussed in turns as findings of the study.

Discussions on the Findings

The main research question of the study was to ascertain the role of policy actor groups in the policy implementation of the SGTP. To this aim, I posed three research sub questions to fully examine the primary research question. First, I wanted to better identify which policy actors were present in the implementation of the SGTP; this sub question aimed to uncover which policy actor groups, known to function within the first three stages of the policy cycle, were also active during the fourth stage of the policy cycle. Second, it was important to ascertain the nature of the various policy actors'

interests and motivations for participating in the implementation of the SGTP. Lastly, the

research aimed to understand the interaction between these policy actors in supporting the

implementation of the SGTP. Answering the sub questions were guided by the FSF

theoretical framework postulated by Howlett et al. (2015, 2017).

Importantly, the study results did support the view that policy actors engaged in

the previous three stages of agenda setting, policy formulation, and decision making

continued their activities into the fourth stage of the policy cycle (i.e., policy

implementation). The various actors at the policy implementation stage of the policy

cycle possessed different attributes; see Table 5 for a summary by policy actor type. In

answering the first research sub question, the responses of the research participants

identified all the policy actors active in the implementation arena of the SGTP. I

interviewed members of the bureaucratic policy actors (i.e., operations and street-level

bureaucrats), ECs, ICs, and ACs in their new roles as directors and managers of

bureaucratic positions.

Table 5

Overview of Policy Actors involved in Implementation Stage of SGTP

Policy actor type	Description	Action/Role
Bureaucrat	Operations Bureaucrat	implementing the SGTP policy at national level
	Street-level Bureaucrat	direct and daily contact with beneficiaries to implement program
Epistemic communities	Development partners: OECD or multilateral agencies, think-tanks, academia	funding research and offering training or capacity building, consulting, technical advisers
Instrument constituencies	Academia and think-tanks, development partners	guiding the application of policy solutions tools and models for implementation
Advocacy coalition	Bureaucratic positions as managers, consultants, and advisers	extended control beyond politics stream into program stream, directing implementation based on ideology and beliefs

One notable policy actor group that became active during implementation was described as bureaucrats. The bureaucrats described in the participants' responses were distinguished into two groups. One group of bureaucrats, including the staff of SGTP management secretariat, worked from the national level and were assigned the role of implementing the SGTP policy. The other group of bureaucrats bore the exact description given by Lipsky as "street-level bureaucrats"; these bureaucrats actually implemented the program at the community level through direct and daily contact with beneficiaries.

Additionally, there were policy actors known and described as ECs who, during the fourth stage of the policy cycle, preferred to be known as development partners, think

tanks, academia and interest groups. The development partners among these policy

actors influenced the implementation though finance and advocacy. Some of the

development partners were members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD); others were multilateral agencies with a focus on supporting

development in member countries. The influence of these two types of development

partner groups among ECs was far-reaching and sometimes involved the cooperation of

think-tanks and academia to support their goal to be relevant in the implementation of

programs by funding research and offering training or capacity building.

Research participants also identified ICs and ACs policy actors as active in the

implementation stage of the policy cycle of the SGTP. Research participants recalled

academia and think-tanks as known members of ICs. The ICs design solution options for

identified policy agenda items and lead policy formulation within the policy cycle. ACs

were found to play a major role in the implementation and took bureaucratic positions as

managers, consultants, and advisers. Apart from occupying such positions, ACs were

found as heads of all state actor agencies at the level of ministries. In such positions,

ACs were revealed, through the responses of research participants, as influential in

implementation efforts. There were directors, advisers, and technical experts who

belonged to and were appointed into bureaucratic positions by ACs. Such appointments

almost fully replaced the existing trained and experienced bureaucrats (i.e., civil servants)

during implementation.

Next, to answer the second research sub question, research participants' responses

revealed that the interests and motivations of all the representatives of policy actor groups

were heavily influenced by institutional mandates. For example, the development partner

representatives as research participants revealed that their employers or principals had

corporate interests and motivations in social protection and especially cash transfers for

the extremely poor and vulnerable people. Several of the research participants identified

that their corporate mandates were to support women and girls as well as their

reproductive health, provide an inclusive growth through livelihood enhancement efforts,

support poverty-reducing activities in former colonies, and operate as a watch-dog and

think-tank to ensure that the vulnerable and the marginalized were provided for on all

government projects and programs including SGTP. The state actors were mandated to

supervise the development of social protection, gender, children, health, education,

agriculture, trade and industry, finance, and manpower initiatives among others. Thus,

policy actor representatives as research participants demonstrated that their activities with

the SGTP were the result of corporate mandates of their various institutions or

organizations.

Lastly, to answer the third research sub question, I found that the level of

interaction between the policy actor groups was based on the fundamental principles of

collaboration and coordination from the supervising ministry of the SGTP

implementation. The Ministry for Gender, Children, and Social Protection was the

supervising agency of government over the implementation and the SGTP. The level of

collaboration voiced was mixed; some participants viewed the collaboration with the

supervising ministry and management secretariat of SGTP as good, others felt that the

collaboration could be better. The community-level collaboration was regarded as almost

absent especially with other state actors whose responsibility was to supervise

development programs at the district level. Nonstate actors, such as civil society

organizations, would like to have more engagement with the ministry on social protection

interventions. Conversely, academia seemed to occupy a special position in the sense

that they have forged a closer working relationship with the ministry and management

secretariat.

Venues for coordination were proposed to ensure the inclusive participation of all

policy actors. Some venues for discussion were created at the beginning of the policy

implementation of the SGTP; others were inaugurated later but are yet to become

functional such as community implementation committees. These committees were

envisioned to allow community members including the department of social development

officials, community leaders, NGOs operating in the communities, and beneficiaries to all

take part in the process. In many implementing areas, the committees had not met since

they were first established. Thus, the situation is believed by some of the research

participants to negatively affect coordination.

Conversely, some responses from the research participants revealed that

coordination is believed to be strong among development partners, some CSOs, some

think-tanks, and academia as well as between the management secretariat and the

ministry for gender. For other policy actors like nonstate actors, invitations came when

their contribution was most needed; otherwise, these policy actors were excluded because

they tended to raise "too many questions" when they participated in such coordination

meetings, according to a research participant. Besides, the nearly one hundred attendees

to such meetings, as a research participant indicated, had its own challenges for effective engagement.

I never sought recommendations from representatives of policy actor groups; rather, the aim was to determine the way forward for engagement with social protection interventions including SGTP. While policy actors in the policy cycle streams were flowing through the implementation stage, the common concerns were indicated as the lack of a legal framework to back the national policy on social protection under which SGTP operates. The bill had been presented to the government before the previous administration left office; however, the bill had been with the current government since its inauguration into office and had not passed through to become a law.

Further, the research participants also indicated the need to reduce political interference in the management of the SGTP. The preference for some policy actor representatives was to have the head of the management secretariat to become apolitical position to ensure the security of tenure. Finally, the research participants desired for the sustainability of the program for beneficiaries and for financing options. In the case of the beneficiaries, the research participants looked for livelihood empowerment through capacity building and training for able-bodied beneficiary household members apart from school-age children. The capacity building would enable the program to graduate and exit such beneficiaries from the SGTP as appropriate. In the case of financial sustainability, some research participants desired the government to earmark a percentage of annual gross domestic product (GDP) to be dedicated to social protection intervention and to reduce over-reliance on development partners.

As part of the literature review for this study, I identified themes associated with policy actor engagement, especially during the first three stages of the policy process. After analyzing the research participant responses, I recognized the themes and sub-themes as overlapping with the fourth stage of the policy cycle including "identified interests," "motivation," "collaborations," "compromises," "opinions," and "ambiguities and conflicts" (see Handa et al., 2017; Howlett, 2018; Immervoll et al., 2015; Khan & Khandaker, 2016; May, 2015; Mojsoska Blazevski et al., 2015; Mugambwa et al., 2018; Riphahn & Wunder, 2016; Seekings, 2017). Some of these themes and sub-themes are recurring during policy implementation.

Summary

The data collection and analysis revealed the detailed role of policy actors in the implementation arena of the SGTP. The main research question sought to ascertain whether, from 2008-2018, the policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations within the policy implementation arena of the Ghana Social Grants Transfer Program (SGTP) enhanced the overall policy outcome. After reviewing documents and the transcripts of interview responses of research participants who volunteered to be part of the study, the coding, using NVivo 12 software to analyze the data, revealed themes that guided the presentation of the findings of the study. The first research sub-question was answered with a confirmation that the policy actor groups known to operate in the policy cycle were present and active; however, some policy actor groups have gained more influence than others. The second research sub-question led to the conclusion that the interests and motivations of policy actor groups were primarily a result of corporate mandates. The

third research sub-question was answered with a confirmation that collaboration and coordination of activities were part of the policy actor groups' interaction; however, given the presence of differing opinions among policy actors, room for improvement was voiced. The interpretation of the research findings of Chapter 4 as well as conclusions drawn from the data analyzed are presented in Chapter 5. Further, Chapter 5 includes recommendations for future research and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The qualitative and policy implementation research aimed to explore, identify, and describe the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of Ghana SGTP. The use of general qualitative research was suitable to elicit detailed and rich lived experiences of policy actor representatives in the implementation of the SGTP. I pursued this research to add to the existing body of knowledge related to policy implementation in Ghana in the context of the FSF lens provided by Howlett and colleagues. In particular, my research addressed the gap in the literature regarding activities of multiple groups of policy actors during the implementation stage of the policymaking cycle (see Howlett et al., 2017, p. 76; Simons & Voß, 2018, pp. 29, 32) of the Ghana SGTP.

The findings from the study revealed the lived experiences of policy actor representatives during policy implementation of the SGTP. Through the interviews and data analysis, I discovered four themes, of which three directly related to the research question. The main themes were policy actor presence, mandates, and interactions. Results related to the first research sub question confirmed the active policy actor groups known to operate in the implementation of SGTP but also revealed through this research that some actors have gained more influence than others as an extension of knowledge. Next, the second research sub question results largely confirmed previous knowledge (see Simons & Voß, 2018; Weible, 2018; Zito, 2018) that the interests and motivations of policy actors were primarily driven by corporate mandates. Lastly, results from the third

research sub question regarding policy actors' interactions to achieve the program policy intent confirmed that collaboration and coordination of activities occurred but could be improved to reduce differing opinions among policy actors and to resolve the complexities related to the interaction between bureaucrats and ACs.

Interpretation of the Findings

The three main themes from the study collectively demonstrate that the policy actor groups active in the previous stages still functioned during the fourth stage of the typical policy cycle, referred to as the implementation stage, albeit with sometimes modified roles. The themes are further interpreted using the FSF as a theoretical lens provided by Howlett and colleagues.

Extended Application

The study has extended the application of the FSF postulated by Howlett et al. (2015, 2017) into policy implementation. Kingdon's MSF (1984) that was limited to the agenda setting stage of the policy cycle was varied and extended to cover policy formulation and policy decision-making stages of the policy cycle by Howlett and colleagues. Howlett and colleagues hinted at the possible behavior of policy actors beyond the third stage of the policy cycle. Therefore, the current study adopted the FSF as the theoretical lens and applied it to the fourth stage of the policy cycle - policy implementation. In other words, the application of FSF has enabled an understanding of policy actors beyond the third stage and into the fourth stage of the policy cycle. Thus, the FSF applies to the implementation stage of the policy cycle to explore and understand policy actor presence and activities.

Actor Presence

I used the FSF lens to explore and understand the presence of policy actors in the implementation arena of the SGTP. From the results of the study, I confirm that policy actor groups categorized as ECs, ICs, and ACs that were known to operate in the first three stages of the policy cycle (i.e., problem, solution, and politics streams) remained active during the policy implementation stage of the SGTP. These policy actor groups had different agency titles and interacted frequently with the management Secretariat of the SGTP. Using the FSF (Howlett et al., 2015, 2017), I recognized and confirmed that ECs took the lead role in agenda setting within the problem stream while ICs were operationalized as leads for policy formulation within the solution stream. The ACs directed the policy decision making within the politics stream. The process stream that flowed into the implementation stage of the policy cycle was the institutional arrangement through which approvals were secured. Thus, the policy actor groups were confirmed as present during the implementation stage of the SGTP policy-making process.

New Actor and Stream

Through this study, I confirm the presence of a new policy actor group - bureaucrats. The bureaucrats were known to start functioning during the implementation stage and led the program stream. For this study, based on qualitative interview responses, bureaucrats were divided into two sub-groups consisting of operation bureaucrats (OBs) and street-level bureaucrats (SLBs); both types of bureaucrats operated within the policy implementation arena of the SGTP. The operations bureaucrats (OBs)

functioned as staff of the implementing agency of the program but were not in direct and daily contact with beneficiaries. The OBs served to deliver the policy program through SLBs who operated at the level of the district assemblies and the communities. Specifically, the staff of the SLBs belonged to the local government service while that of the OBs were part of the civil service. Bureaucrats, both OBs and SLBs, were the lead actors for policy implementation within the program stream that started flowing during the fourth stage of the policy cycle. The bureaucrats also represented ministries as state actors with different areas of focus such as education, health, food and agriculture, trade and industry, finance, local government and rural development, department of social development and gender, children and social protection. These policy actors have maintained unique roles within the policy cycle.

Modified Roles

From this study, I revealed that the policy actor groups took different forms during the fourth stage of the policy cycle. The understanding of the mandates of the various policy actor groups enabled an appreciation of the roles of these policy actors. ICs and ECs that swapped membership depending on the issues were identified as operating within the implementation arena of the SGTP. In other words, some members of ICs and ECs tended to belong to both policy actor groups. In the instance of the SGTP implementation, the actors acquired different roles. The policy actors became known as development partners and financiers of the SGTP policy. Their unique corporate agendas became part of the social protection policy of the country.

Other members like think-tanks, academia, and some civil society organizations joined ranks with the ICs and ECs policy actor groupings. ACs were operational in forms that differed from their traditional role as ministers and heads of government departments; sometimes ACs took on roles like heads of specialized sub departments, and agencies as managers, chief executive officers, directors of specialized civil servant positions, consultants, and advisers. These various forms of the visible ACs allowed the group to gain more influence during the implementation stage of a typical policy cycle (see Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1994; Weible & Sabatier, 2017). The bureaucrats, identified as lead actors in the program stream, were appraised by research participants as lacking the adequate capacity to implement social protection programs except where capacities were built through training, resourcing, and technical assistance support by way of recruited experts.

Overlapped Roles

From this study, I revealed that ACs and bureaucrats cooperated during the implementation stage of the SGTP. The third research sub question considered the interacting roles of policy actors within the implementation arena of the SGTP. ECs and ICs were strong in pursuing their known functions including financing of the SGTP. However, the acknowledged capacity challenges of the bureaucrats had caused the ACs to gain additional influence in the program stream. ACs recruited and placed in civil service positions individuals they deemed qualified to replace the bureaucrats to deliver on the promised social protection intervention. Such public officials work as bureaucrats but who are known to belong to the ACs actor group. Consequently, the ACs' earned

influence implied the reduced presence of the bureaucrats' actor group in policy implementation. Moreover, this increased influence was new and happened only during the implementation stage of the policy process where bureaucrats were expected to take the lead. The cause of the ACs' earned influence was due to the existence of capacity gaps in policy implementation. ACs presence, through directing the implementation and appointing experts from among ACs ranks into civil servant positions, had further weakened the ability of bureaucrats to run the program stream. Appointed experts were replaced immediately there are changes in the ruling administration after elections. Sometimes, the ACs influenced the selection of beneficiaries to favor those affiliated to the ACs' ideology and beliefs which contributed to errors of inclusion and exclusion of targeted beneficiaries. For these identified reasons, bureaucrats' role in the implementation stage clearly became modified from the original intention.

Additionally, these changes to the ACs and bureaucrats' roles revealed insight into the level of interactions based on collaboration and coordination as well as the admission of conflict or differing opinions on strategy; such differences required venues for resolution. The interpretation of the findings suggested that discourse and compromises were still available among policy actors in the implementation arena of the SGTP. The various streams led actors to recognize the need to accommodate other policy actors' concerns while pursuing the course of action flowing through and beyond the implementation stage of the SGTP. Thus, from the findings I confirmed and explained via the FSF lens that despite different views and opinions of the policy actors

in the various streams, their collective actions reflected compromises and resolutions that were necessary to move the processes forward.

The three research sub questions converged to answer the main research question providing an understanding about the activities of groups of policy actors extending beyond the initial three stages of the policy cycle. The three sub questions provided knowledge to support the view that policy actors are active in the typical policy cycle of the SGTP, and the five streams of the policy cycle continued to flow to deliver goods and services which was the dominant role of the joint efforts of the policy actors during the implementation stage. However, the role of ACs in the politics stream had expanded and overlapped that of the bureaucrats in the program stream. Thus, the two streams appear to flow almost together and the winding nature of the politics stream becomes constricted by the gentle flow of the program stream to deliver services. Neither the politics stream nor the program stream flowed as Howlett and colleagues proposed but become influenced mainly as a result of the expanded influence of the ACs role in implementation. Perhaps the combined effect of the modified flows of the two streams during program implementation informed the perception of research participants for the study as leading to slow delivery of services.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation most commonly akin to qualitative research was the small sample size. The small sample size limited the study's potential to make the findings applicable to generalizations. The findings were specific to Ghana and the policy implementation of the SGTP. The research participants were purposely selected from the

identified policy actor groups and limited to those who volunteered after the invitation to participate in the study. The participants were also lead representatives of their agencies in the work of the SGTP and social protection interventions in general. The subtle differences in opinion on certain responses did not affect the transferability of the study results to the implementation arena of any social protection intervention in Ghana.

The findings may be transferable to other social protection and cash transfer policy interventions having similar contexts of the phenomenon of interest. In terms of reliability and validity, there were limitations to the findings. To avoid such limitations and to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I followed the rigorous procedures for collecting and analyzing qualitative data, as opined by Patton (2015) and Saldaña (2016). Although there were prior studies on individual policy actors in Ghana, those studies used other models and frameworks.

The study was unique to adopt the FSF of Howlett et al. (2015, 2017) as the theoretical lens; however, the use of the framework in the context of Ghana posed a limitation. Previous studies using the same lens would have helped to provide a base for defining a better research problem. The absence of such prior research using the FSF lens also limited the interpretation of the findings. The research participants became the sole leads in unraveling details on the policy actor engagements with the SGTP from the perspective of the FSF.

Lastly, the research participants may have provided answers to avoid challenges with their principals or employers. I worked to alleviate such fears by assuring confidentiality of the responses and masking their identities by referring to their generic

policy actor group roles. I also assured the research participants that their truthful answers would assist in building important knowledge in the area. Thus, I sought to address these limitations of the responses from research participants.

Recommendations

Future research should focus on replicating the results of the study by focusing on the same intervention of this study (i.e., SGTP) or another social protection intervention such as a school feeding program, capitation grant, or district assembly disability grants. Such verification would require the use of the FSF theoretical lens. Future research could also explore the complexities associated with ACs encountering other policy actor groups, including bureaucrats, ECs, and ICS under similar settings using the FSF or the modified framework by Howlett and colleagues. Moreover, potential future studies could utilize qualitative or mixed methods approaches to study the effect of ACs expanded or bureaucrats reduced role in policy implementation. Future research could also focus on factors that account for changes in the policy decision during implementation.

Implications

The findings of the study advanced knowledge of this phenomenon by providing new insights into policy actor group activities during the implementation stage of the SGTP. The knowledge gained revealed which policy actors were active during the implementation stage, emphasized the mandates that ensured the policy actors' interest and motivations to operate within the program, and indicated the need to improve collaborations and coordination with other policy actor groups to achieve the goals of a

policy under implementation using the FSF variant of Kingdon's multiple streams framework (see Cairney & Jones, 2016).

The potential impact for positive social change will be through an improved understanding of policy actors' activities and roles in implementation. Policy implementation was the stage for delivering goods and services to the beneficiaries in their various communities. A deeper understanding and harnessing of the different policy actors' expertise and knowledge will enhance the content of service delivery for the benefit of the community. Through this research, I have tried to add new knowledge about policy actors, and lends itself to improving their engagement to bring about even greater positive social change towards the lives of my immediate community in Ghana as well as the larger African community in terms of effective packaging of programs, more appropriate targeting to avoid inclusion or exclusion errors, and ensuring better delivery of goods and services. The improved delivery of public services through harnessing the expertise of and roles of policy actors will lead to changing the lives of my immediate community and the larger African communities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore, identify, and describe the presence, interests, and motivations of policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of the SGTP. The research question posed was, over the period of 2008 to 2018, how have the policy actors' presence, interests, and motivations within the policy implementation arena of the Ghana Social Grants Transfer Program (SGTP) influenced the overall policy outcome? I defined three research sub questions to

outline the scope of the study. I collected data from 15 purposely selected and volunteered research participants who were representatives of policy actor groups. All the research participants had experience in dealing directly with the SGTP.

Three main themes emerged from the data analysis directly related to the three research sub questions' scope. The theme of policy actor presence addressed the first research sub question by revealing the presence of all the known policy actor groups active in the implementation of the SGTP. Specifically, there were policy actors that had gained influence while another group lost control and their lead in the implementation of the program. The second theme of mandates related to the second research sub question. In particular, policy actor groups' activities were solely determined by the corporate mandates of their respective agencies. Moreover, some of those agencies had increased influence including having those interests reflected in the social protection policy under which the SGTP was established. Lastly, the third theme on policy actor groups' interactions reveal that collaboration and coordination were necessary to keep the streams flowing through the implementation stage, and that these efforts of coordination could be improved. Policy actors recognized that conflicts were unavoidable but venues for resolution existed and must be functional.

The study findings extended application of the FSF to include the implementation stage of the policy cycle, confirmed policy actor groups presence, added knowledge on modified policy actor roles during policy implementation, confirmed the new policy actor group, bureaucrats, presence and program stream, and added knowledge to overlapped roles of ACs and bureaucrats during policy implementation. Thus, the study provided

additional knowledge to support the claims of the proponents of the FSF that policy actor

activities and streams do extend through the implementation stage of the typical policy

cycle. Perhaps, the knowledge gained from this study can encourage programs like the

SGTP to enhance their capability to change lives by changing the delivery of social

protection programs through a better understanding of the roles of policy actors in

implementation.

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Appendix A: List of Acronyms

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
ACs	Advocacy Coalitions
Bs	Bureaucrats
CABAs	Children Affected By Aids
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CT-OVC	Cash Transfer to Orphans and Vulnerable Children
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECs	Epistemic Communities
FSF	Five-Stream Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNSPP	Ghana National Social Protection Policy
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ICs	Instrument Constituencies
IRB	Institutional Review Board
JSDF	Japanese Social Development Fund
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
LGSS	Local Government Service Secretariat
LIPW	Labor Intensive Public Works
LMS	LEAP Management Secretariat
LPM	LEAP Program Manager
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MIS	Management Information System
MMYE	Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment
MOGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Multiple Streams Framework
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NSPP	National Social Protection Policy
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
OBs	Operations Bureaucrats
PLWHAs	People Living With HIV/Aids
QDAS	Qualitative Data Analysis Software
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus
SLBs	Street-Level Bureaucrats
SGTP	Social Grants Transfer Program
TBs	Target Beneficiaries
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfers
UNRISD	Research Institute for Social Development

Appendix B: Sample Letter of Invitation to the Research Participants

Social grants transfer program: The role of policy actors in policy implementation

Dear Mr./Mrs.,

I am a doctoral student presently researching on *Social grants transfer program: The role of policy actors in policy implementation*. I am undertaking the in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a PhD degree in Public Policy and Administration from the Walden University. The research explores, identifies and describes the activities, motivations, and interactions of active policy actor groups and other actors during the implementation of SGTP. My area of concentration public policy analysis and Dr. Marcel Kitissou is the Chairman of my Dissertation Committee.

I am therefore seeking individuals with in-depth knowledge of the implementation of the social grants transfer program in Ghana. I am interested to know how the individuals I find willing to share experience have related on a professional level with the management secretariat of the program. The knowledge from the interview will be useful in providing insight and information for the research. If you agree, I will share an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Consent Form with you to read and complete within 10 minutes of your free time.

The purpose of the Consent Form is to safeguard your interest as a research participant in my research. The IRB requires me to let you know your rights before you agree to participate in the study. I am required by the IRB to treat your responses as confidential and I am required handle all materials relating to your interview confidential and private. I will code records whether audio or text from the interview to completely hide your

identity as demanded by the Walden University. After signing and knowing your rights as a research participant, I will interview you at your convenient date, time and venue on your experiences and this will take another 50 minutes. Your involvement in this study is strictly voluntary.

Additionally, the outcome of this research is solely for research purposes and likely to be published in journals or books. You are at liberty to stop the interview session at any time or refuse to answer any question you feel uncomfortable. Although there are no foreseeable risks to you, the interview may contain questions that might sensitive to you. If you think questions of this type would distress you, you can decline from participating the project. Please indicate your acceptance or otherwise by completing the IRB Consent Form. I will personally retrieve the Consent Form before we begin the interview session.

I appreciate your assistance.

David Quist

PhD Candidate, Public Policy and Administration
Walden University

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Introduction

1   Kindly tell me about yourself or organization, its relationship with the SGTP
        and your role in these interactions.

Main questions

2   Why is social protection of interest to you or your organization?

3   What are the advantages or disadvantages with the strategies or mode of
        operations of the management secretariat of the SGTP?

4   What motivates you or your organization to engage with stakeholders and
        management secretariat on SGTP issues?

5   How would you or your organization appraise the Social Protection Policy
        under which comes the SGTP implementation?

6   Kindly share your particular interests as an individual or a member of a group,
        where SGTP implementation is concerned.

7   What is the level of coordination between your organization and with others in
        the implementation of the SGTP?

8   Where there are conflicts in opinion, how are these differences resolved from
        three or more instances that you recall?

9   What venues were available for interaction between yourself or your
        organization and other policy actors?

10   What changes would you or your organization expect to happen in the
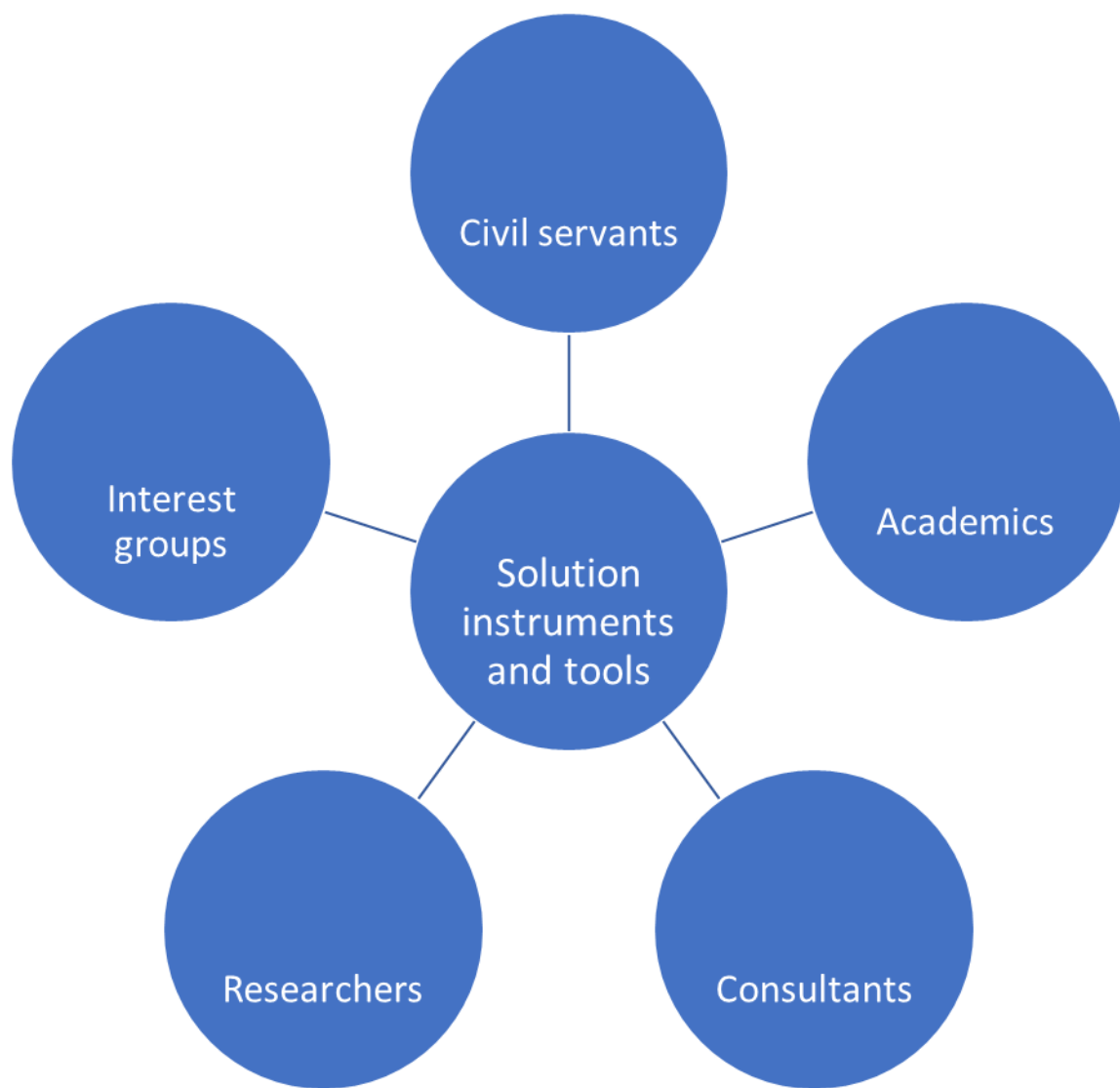   interaction between stakeholders going forward?

Conclusion

11   Do you have any information you wish to share beyond the questions I have
        posed in this interview?

12   You may ask me any question on the interview.

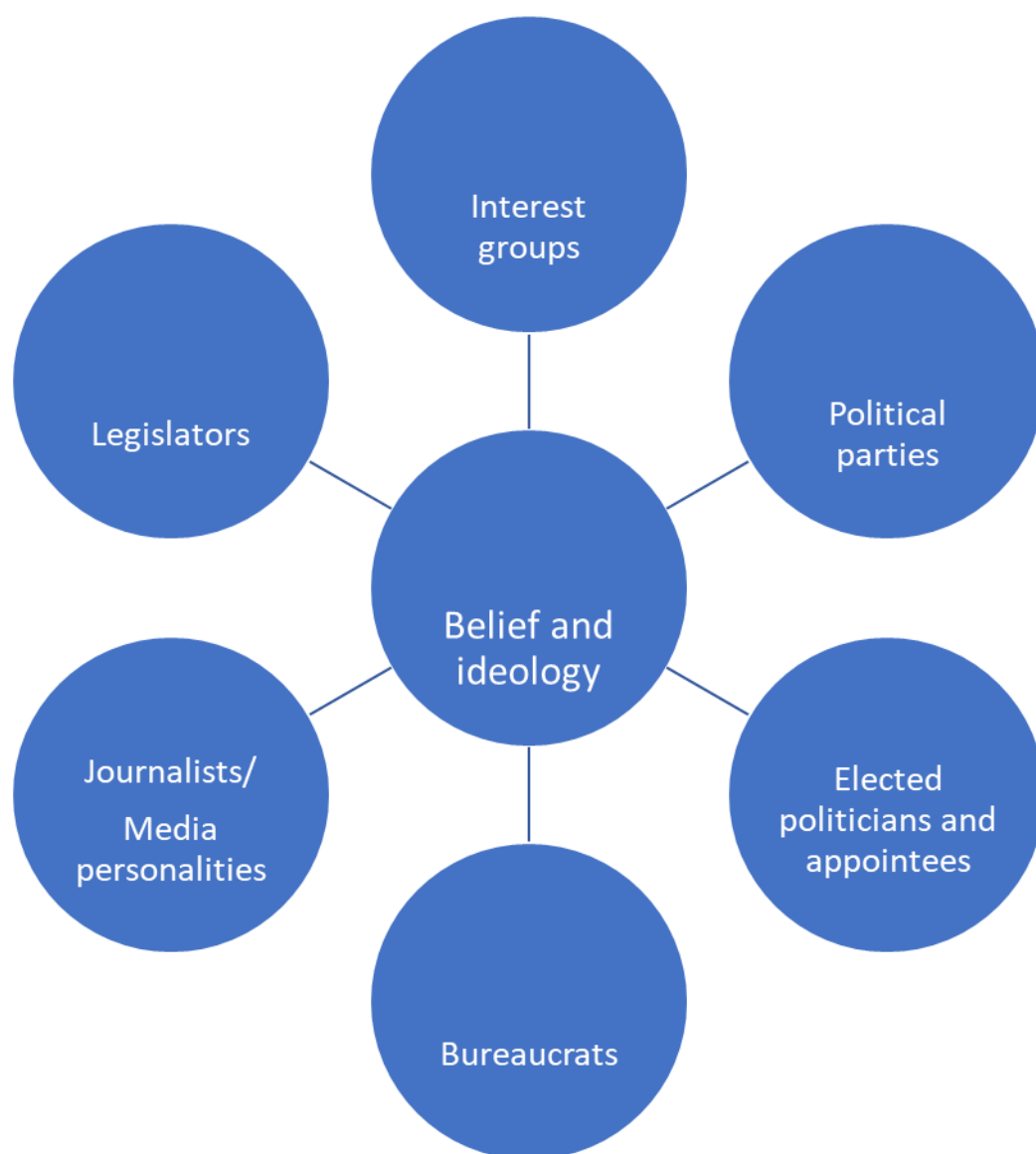13   Can I get back to you for clarification on your answers if need be?

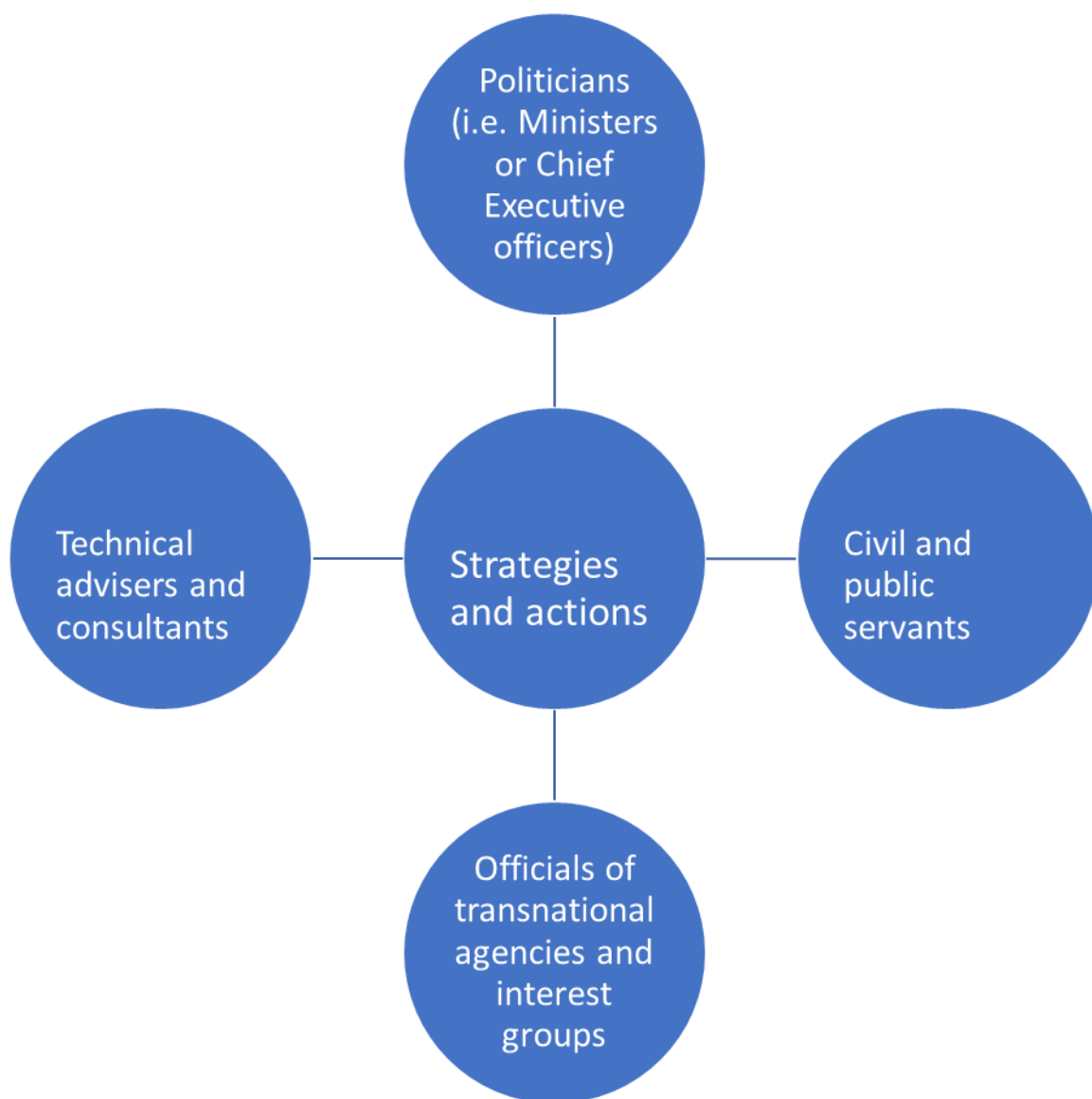Appendix D: Concept Maps on Policy Actor Groups
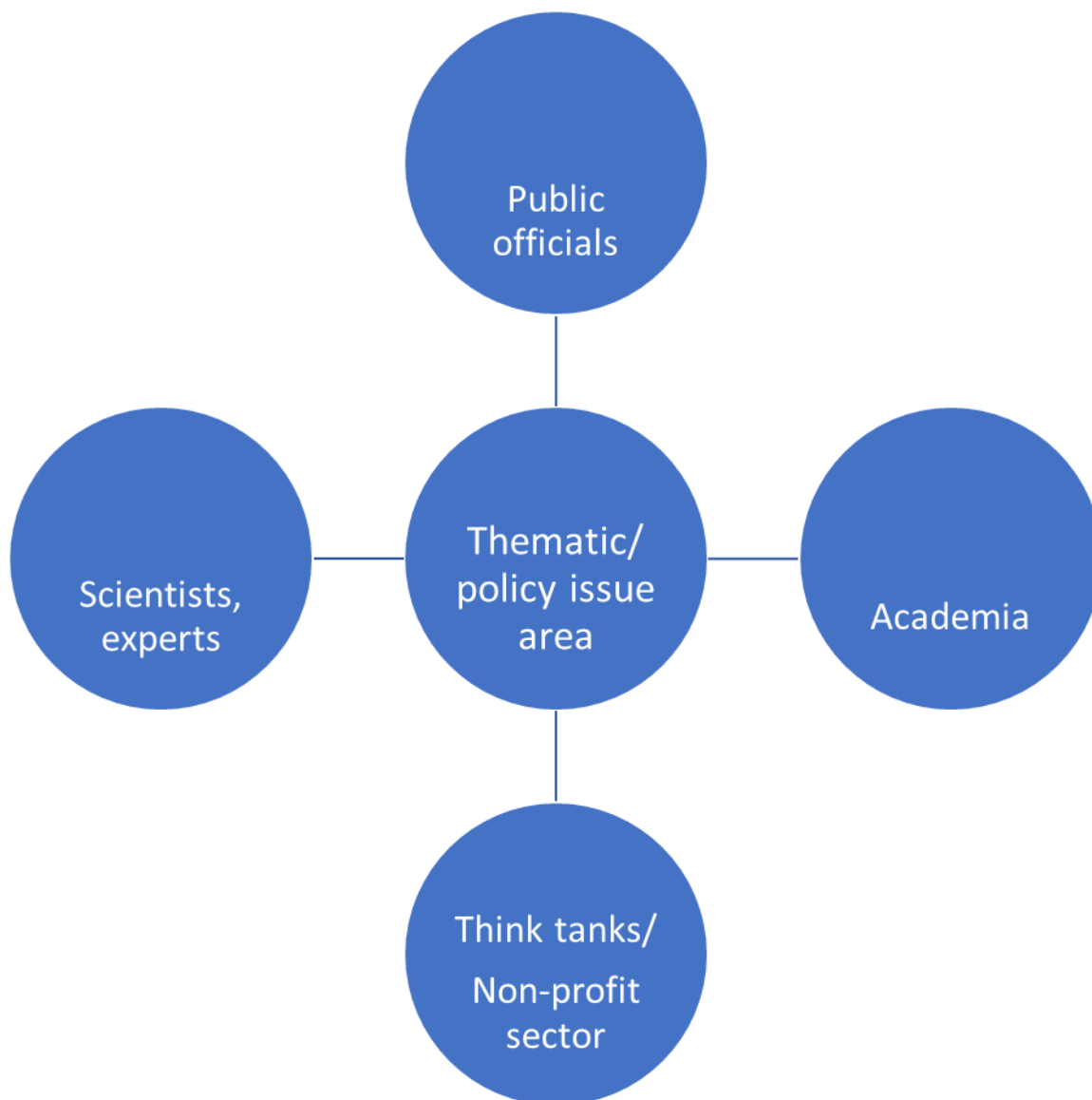
Figure D1. Map of epistemic communities

Figure D2. Map of instrument constituencies

Figure D3. Map of advocacy coalitions

Figure D4. Map of operation bureaucrats

Appendix E: List of Three Levels of NVivo 12 Codes

Table 6E

NVivo 12 List of first level codes

Name of Node (Code)	Files/No. of Research Participants	References
Academia support	2	6
Accountability	1	1
Assemblies operations	1	1
Beneficiary Popn	3	5
Champions	1	1
Collaboration	14	70
Commitment	3	3
Complimentary services	6	13
Constitutional right	2	3
Coordination	13	49
Corruption	1	1
Coverage	5	7
CSOs	4	15
Data	8	19
Decentralization	1	4
Digitization	2	4
District level impln	3	7
DPs	6	8
DSW Objective	1	1
Graduation_exit	6	23
Grant Amount	4	6
HR	6	9
Human rights	3	6
Institutional structure	4	9
LEAP Objective	3	5
LEAP relevance	2	4
Legal framewk	7	15
LMS Role	3	4
M&E	3	9
Mandate	11	27
Meetings	10	19
Misplaced strategies	3	8
Motivation	9	15
Payment modalities	6	9
Policy actors	5	12

table Continues

Name of Node (Code)	Files/No. of Research Participants	References
Politics and politicization	4	12
Poverty	3	5
Program Integrity	1	3
Program resources	11	26
Resolving conflict	7	17
Results	5	23
Role	1	2
Sensitization	4	5
Social Protection	10	31
Supervision	2	2
Targeting	3	8

Table 7E

NVivo 12 List of second *level codes*

Name of Node (Code)	Files/No. of Research Participants	References
Actor presence	10	54
Academia support	2	6
CSOs	4	15
DPs	6	8
Policy actors	5	12
Politics and politicization	4	11
Role	1	2
Background	10	29
Assemblies operations	1	1
Beneficiary Popn	3	5
Institutional structure	4	9
LEAP Objective	4	6
LEAP relevance	2	4
LMS Role	3	4
Interactions	15	182
Collaboration	14	74
Complimentary services	6	12
Coordination	14	52
District level impln	4	8
Meetings	9	15
Resolving conflict	7	21
Mandate	15	88
Commitment	3	3
DSW Objective	1	1
Motivation	9	15
Social Protection	11	42
Others	7	13
HR Capacity	6	10
Sensitization and Awareness	3	3
Shared concerns	14	163
Constitutional Right and Legal framewk	9	18
Data and Coverage	10	39
Graduation_exit	7	26
M&E and Results	10	38
Payment modalities	7	10
Program resources and sustainability	12	32

Table 8E

NVivo 12 List of third level codes

Name of Node (Code)	Files/No. of Research Participants	References
Actor presence	13	93
Institutional capacity	12	39
Policy actors	10	43
Politics and politicization	4	11
Interactions	15	184
Collaboration	14	93
District level impln	4	8
Conflicts and resolution	8	22
Coordination	15	69
Meetings	9	15
Mandate	14	57
Interests	12	17
Motivation	10	13
Shared concerns	15	208
Constitutional Right and Legal framewk	9	18
Data and Coverage	10	39
M&E and Results	12	64
Graduation_exit	7	26
Payment modalities	7	10
Program resources and sustainability	12	32
Sensitization and Awareness	3	3
Social Protection	11	42