The Politics of Pro-Poor Service Delivery: Insights from Nigeria’s Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Government Areas

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACN</td>
<td>Action Congress of Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>All Progressives Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>APPP</td>
<td>Africa Power and Politics Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO(s)</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGS</td>
<td>Conditional Grant Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGS to LGAs</td>
<td>Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Congress for Progressive Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>Corruption Perception Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMO</td>
<td>Debt Management Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPO</td>
<td>Due Process Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRG</td>
<td>Debt Relief Gains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFCC</td>
<td>Economic and Financial Crimes Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>Earth Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBO(s)</td>
<td>Farmer Based Organisation(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCT</td>
<td>Federal Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEC</td>
<td>Federal Executive Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGN</td>
<td>Federal Government of Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>Guri Local Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDI/R</td>
<td>Human Development Index/Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICPC</td>
<td>HICP Independent Poor Countries Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA(s)</td>
<td>Local Education Authority(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA(s)</td>
<td>Local Government/Local Government Area(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEEDS</td>
<td>Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGFM</td>
<td>Local Government Financial Memoranda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGMPC</td>
<td>Local Government MDGs Planning Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGMTC</td>
<td>Local Government MDGs Technical Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDAs</td>
<td>Ministries, Department and Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs - LGDP</td>
<td>MDGs-Complaint Local Government Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Mashi Local Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSS</td>
<td>Midwifery Service Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPEP</td>
<td>National Poverty Eradication Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBS</td>
<td>National Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCGS</td>
<td>National Committee on the Conditional Grant Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy</td>
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<td>NHIS</td>
<td>National Health Insurance Scheme</td>
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<td>NL</td>
<td>National Level Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMIS</td>
<td>Nigeria MDGs Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPHCDA</td>
<td>National Primary Healthcare Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTI</td>
<td>National Teachers Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODI</td>
<td>Oversees Development Institute</td>
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OSSAP-MDGs  Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs
PAP    Presidential Amnesty Programme
PFM    Public Financial Management
PHC    Primary Health Care
PDP    Peoples Democratic Party
PSU(s)  Project Support Unit(s)
PTA    Parent Teachers Association
RMAFC  Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission
SAVI   State Accountability and Voice Initiative
SERVICOM  Service Compact
SBMC   School Based Management Committees
SFP    State MDGs Focal Person
SPARC  State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability
SSAP-MDGs  Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs
SUBEB  State Universal Basic Education Board
TA(s)   Technical Assistant(s)
UBEC   Universal Basic Education Commission
UNDP   United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF United Nations Children Fund
VHW(s)  Village Health Worker(s)
WGIs   World Bank’s World Governance Indicators
ZTO(s)  Zonal Technical Officer(s)

**Exchange Rates**

Year 2005: US$1 = ₦129
Year 2010: US$1 = ₦150
Year 2015: US$1 = ₦197
The Politics of Pro-Poor Service Delivery: Insights from Nigeria’s Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Government Areas

Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of the politics of the design and implementation of Nigeria’s Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Government Areas (CGS to LGAs) through the lenses of elite commitment and state capacity. The study employs Brinkerhoff’s (2000) and Fukuyama’s (2013) analytical frameworks for elite commitment and state capacity respectively. Utilising a process tracing methodology, this thesis reveals the complexity faced by attempts to improve service delivery to poor people in difficult governance contexts. Through detailed case study work, the study finds that the CGS to LGAs scheme was well resourced, well-designed in technical terms and was politically savvy, as it sought to ‘partly go with the grain’ of Nigerian institutions, rather than promote an ‘ideal’ model. Initially, the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Millennium Development Goals (OSSAP-MDGs) made considerable progress in the entire Debt Relief Gains (DRG) implementation, but sustaining such progress requires the continued commitment of political and bureaucratic elites along the implementation chain. At the local level, the scheme partially achieved its goals, as in Guri LGA, where a development coalition comprising of the state governor, the LGA chairman and benefitting communities, was able to seize the opportunity to increase spending and improve the capacity of the LGA to deliver health and education services. The reforms were less effective in other areas, such as Mashi LGA, where contextual factors, especially elite capture and high turnover of bureaucrats undermined reforms.

Ultimately, changes in the national political leadership (through democratic process) affected the governance reforms. Specifically, the emergence of patronage politics in the overall management of the CGS to LGAs scheme ensured reforms were not sustained and resources became thinly distributed. Thus, contrary to the view that capacity is exogenous to commitment and should precede it, our evidence shows that capacity without commitment does not deliver the expected outcomes. Indeed, in the absence of political elites’ commitment, existing bureaucratic capacity may be weakened. Relatedly, in the absence of genuine commitment to top-down accountability, fiscal decentralisation – theorised to improve service delivery for the poor – can lead to elite capture. Paradoxically, democratic process, hypothesised to increase transparency and accountability, weakened accountability of the US$1 billion per annum of DRG/CGS to LGAs implementation in Nigeria.
Declaration

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

I start this note by thanking God Almighty - the Lord of dominion and celestial domains - whose infinite wisdom and blessings made it possible for me to undertake and complete this study.

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Lastly, this study is dedicated to the memory of my late grandparents.
CHAPTER ONE

Background and Introduction: Improving Public Services to Poor People

‘Leaders, policy makers, and development professionals often worry that well-intentioned policies designed to improve the lives of their communities will fail to deliver results. The global development community needs to move beyond asking ‘What is the right policy?’ and instead ask ‘What makes policies work to produce life-improving outcomes?’ (World Bank, 2017: XIII).

‘Successful reforms thus are not just about ‘best practice’. They require adopting and adjusting institutional forms in ways that solve the specific commitment and collective action problems that stand in the way of pursuing further development’ (World Bank, 2017: 29).

1.1 Introduction

The analytical fields of elite commitment and state capacity have received significant attention from scholars and practitioners (Brinkerhoff, 2000; McCourt, 2003; Vom Hau, 2012; Fukuyama, 2013). However, much of this scholarship relates to national level examination, and few studies have examined these concepts at the sub-national level - e.g. commitment (Chopra, 2015; Lavers, 2016) and state capacity (Bukenya, 2012). This study extends our understanding of these concepts at the sub-national level. This thesis reveals the complexity state agents faced in reforming pro-poor service delivery in difficult governance contexts, such as sub-Saharan Africa. The study showed that even in these challenging contexts, service delivery programmes can be designed and implemented in a way that is both technically competent and politically savvy to achieve more development outcomes. State level political elites, specifically the state governors, were ‘co-opted and countered’ simultaneously in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. However, sustaining such approach requires the continued commitment of political and bureaucratic elites along the implementation chain, which includes building the capacity needed to sustain reforms.

The key findings of this study are as follows: (i) In the absence of political elites’ commitment, existing bureaucratic capacity is undermined. The initial success achieved by OSSAP-MDGs (2006-2011) is attributed to the presence of political and bureaucratic leaderships at the national level that were committed to improving service delivery to poor people, and that raised commitment
and capacity to achieving the scheme’s goals down the implementation chain. (ii) The decreased commitment observed in the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation at the national level is largely linked to the change in the country’s political leadership in 2011, change in OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucratic leadership and the increased role of patronage politics in the overall management of the scheme (iii) In the absence of strong top-down accountability, social forms of accountability are generally ineffective. (iv) Successful implementation of pro-poor reforms emerges at a moment in time when the interests of political elites overlap with the interests of the poor citizens. The CGS to LGAs scheme’s experience showed that achieving meaningful success at the implementation level occurred when an ‘informal’ developmental coalition was formed between the state governor, the LGA chairman and the benefitting communities. (v) The nature of the state governments involvement in the implementation of the scheme accounted for the variations in implementation and outcomes between the two-case study LGAs. Contextual factors could support or undermine the governance reforms built into the scheme. Through its innovative design, this study has deepened our understanding of elite commitment and state capacity and their explanatory powers at multiple levels.

Improving service delivery for the poor remains a major challenge for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), home to about 416 million poor people (World Bank, 2014). The inability of many SSA governments to deliver pro-poor services via public sector delivery mechanisms have been well documented (World Bank, 2004; Booth, 2011; Batley et al., 2012). Underpinning this challenge is the core issue of ‘governance’ that has attracted increasing interest among scholars and policy-makers (Tendler, 1997; Grindle, 2011; Booth, 2012). This concern is strongly expressed in the 2017 World Development Report, exemplified by the first opening quote of this chapter. Traditionally, the point of departure for the international development community has been to identify and propagate technocratic, ‘best practice’ solutions to development governance in the global South, under the ‘good governance’ agenda. However, for more than two decades, this ‘good governance’, ‘best practice’ approach has been strongly challenged by a growing body of literature on the political and institutional underpinnings of development (Leftwich, 1993; Grindle, 2007; Sundaram and Chowdhury, 2012; Booth and Unsworth, 2014; Booth and Chambers, 2014). Much of this literature points to why this ‘ideal’ approach fails to address some essential constraints and as such do not achieve their intended outcomes.
Scholarly opinions on the theory and practice of ‘good governance’ are contested and evidence on its contribution to development outcomes remained mixed, with certain critical issues raised. Back in the late 1980s, for example, the World Bank (1989:60) reported that the lack of development in Africa was due to a ‘crisis of governance’ and that ‘good governance’ would overcome this crisis. Good governance included: ‘an efficient public service; an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; the accountable administration of public funds; an independent public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature; respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government’ (ibid: 60). In a review of about 40 different studies, World Bank (2000) concluded that:

‘There is overwhelming evidence that good governance is crucial for successful development, as measured by high per capita income. Per capita income is a strong predictor of poverty rates, infant mortality and illiteracy, suggesting that good governance improves the well-being of the poor’ (ibid: 175).

Relatively, Kaufman and Kraay, (2002) argued empirically that ‘good governance’ makes development possible and that the relationship between governance and development is causal. Hope (2005) claimed to empirically show that good governance, in all its facets, is positively correlated with the achievement of better growth and development. However, such claims, especially those of the World Bank (2000), have been strongly challenged. For example, critics point out that some countries, especially in south-east Asia have achieved outstanding economic and social development outcomes without complying with the ‘good governance’ ideals (Leftwich, 1993; Kasahara, 2013). While acknowledging ‘good governance’ as desirable for successful development process, Leftwich (1993; 1994) argues that the preoccupation with it by the World Bank is naive and simplistic. That where ‘good governance’ is presented as part of a wider conception of democratic governance, as in the case of major western governments, there seems to be little awareness of how democracy sustaining conditions may be found in many developing societies. That an effective public capacity for promoting development is not simply a function of good governance, but of the kind of politics and state that can alone generate, sustain and protect such capacity (Leftwich, 1994: 365).
A well-established literature on developmental states in east and south-east Asia supports the above argument. It has been the existence of effective ‘developmental states’, be they democratic or not, that has accounted for the most successful records of economic development and poverty reduction over the last thirty years (Kasahara, 2013). Unattractive as many of these states (e.g. China, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Indonesia) may be from a liberal and/or human rights point of view, they have been highly effective in raising the material welfare of most of their citizens within a generation and dramatically reducing poverty (ibid). Thus, what became evident in terms of understanding ‘governance’ was that the capability to plan and implement development was largely a consequence of political commitment (Leftwich, 1994), capacity and the bureaucratic competence of the state (Fukuyama, 2013; Vom Hau, 2012). In the same vein, Grindle (2004; 2007) views ‘good governance’ as a council of perfection, unrealistically complicated and with too long list of requirements. That among the governance reforms that ‘must be done’ to inspire development and reduce poverty, there is little guidance about what is crucial and what is not; what should come first and what should follow; what can be achieved in the short term and what can only be achieved over the longer term; and, what is feasible and what is not (ibid, 2004: 525). If more attention is given to thinking through these kinds of issues, the end of the good governance imperative could be recast as ‘good enough governance’ - that is a condition of minimally acceptable government performance and civil society engagement that does not significantly hinder economic development and that permits the well-being of citizens to proceed (ibid).

Achieving development goals via ‘good enough governance’ requires an understanding of the evolution of state institutions (Grindle, 2007), taking the responsibility of government in poverty reduction genuinely and grounding actions within the contextual realities of each country (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). From a slightly different perspective, Colebatch (2014: 12) reminded us that with the ‘good governance’ idea, the World Bank was launching a political reform agenda, but as it was prohibited by its Articles of Agreement from involvement in political matters, it called this agenda ‘good governance’ and presented this as a technical issue. He then asks: ‘after all, who could be in favour of ‘bad governance’? With specific reference to Africa, the ‘good governance’ agenda has equally come under very strong criticism. Critics and analysts argue that its explanatory power is inadequate, because it contains a profusion of supposedly universal notions about what is good, which reflect an interpretation of certain rather precise
features of the history of the West (Booth, 2012). They point out that ‘good governance’ fails to reflect the more genuinely universal experience that institutions work better when they build on what exists, make use of indigenous institutional creativity or are otherwise embedded in their socio-cultural context. Thus, the ‘good governance’ agenda does not work, is not realistic, is not necessary and causes overload especially for Africa, and there is a need for pragmatic solutions that build upon what already exists (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 2012).

More recently, there is widespread consensus amongst academics and development practitioners for a ‘doing development differently’ movement, calling for ‘politically smart, locally led’ (Booth and Unsworth, 2014), ‘going with the grain’ (Levy, 2014), and ‘problem driven, iterative and adaptive’ (PDIA) (Andrews et al., 2013) approaches to address governance related development challenges. For example, Booth and Unsworth (2014) posit that development interventions often take place in contexts where governance is weak and political constraints are profound, and therefore there is need for ‘thinking and working politically’, which entails a sense of history and an in-depth understanding of context - including entrenched social structures, local informal institutions, relationships and actors. They argue that development implementers and their funders must not just be well informed but must be clever operators with the capacity to work with the politics or around them according to what works best in any specific context (ibid). From a slightly different perspective, Levy (2014: 1) posits that to make progress and achieve tangible development outcomes, there is need to begin by ‘seeing things as they are and to work from there’. This ‘going with the grain’ approach, directs attention away from ‘best practice’ blueprints towards the challenges of finding a ‘good fit’ and subtly influencing the forward development drive. By implication, development efforts centred on technical knowledge and capacity only are insufficient to tackle governance-related development challenges that are deep-rooted in power structures and bureaucratic norms that are shaped by the existing political dynamics.

Belatedly, the 2017 World Development Report team acknowledge that successful reforms are not just about ‘best practice’ and calls for an approach that adopts and adjusts institutional forms in a way that solve the specific commitment and collective action problems standing in the way of pursuing development (World Bank, 2017). This report forcefully argues that ‘...without paying greater attention to stronger governance, the World Bank Group’s goals of ending extreme
poverty and boosting shared prosperity, as well as the transformational vision of the United Nations’ broader Sustainable Development Goals, will be out of reach’ (World Bank, 2017: 29). Specifically, the report draws attention to the importance of commitment, coordination, and cooperation as the ‘three core functions’ needed to ensure that policies yield their desired outcomes. These are compelling statements and a departure from the long-established World Bank position of promoting ‘best practice’ or idealised ‘good governance’ over the last decades (World Bank, 1989; 2000). Indeed, many analysts have noted that the World Development Report 2017 presents a humble and more realistic governance agenda, with one analyst calling it ‘a landmark report’, with potentially far-reaching implications not just for governance practice, but for the entire development agenda (Kossoff, 2017). Nevertheless, to date, most of the emerging evidence on the efforts to ‘do development differently’ points to how non-state actors through development aid deliver development (APPP, 2012; ODI, 2012; Booth and Therkildsen, 2012; Bain et. al., 2016), and little is known about how African states and state actors might attempt to ‘do development differently’. This thesis examines attempts by the Nigerian state to reform service delivery so that it becomes pro-poor in a difficult governance context. The lenses of elite commitment and state capacity are key analytical elements of this analysis.

1.1.1 The politics of service delivery

Since 2001, the driving force of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has influenced the focus not only of policy, but also of research on the provision of core public services, particularly primary education, health and water & sanitation, that have implications for poverty reduction (Batley and Mcloughlin 2010). In many places, criticisms persist of inefficiency and patronage or outright corruption in the provision of these essential public services in developing countries (Hope, 2005; World Bank, 2012; Hulme et al., 2013). This development persists despite most countries in SSA having achieved sustained economic growth over the last decade (IMF, 2014). Some development agencies have been most impatient with the seeming inability of governments to play their part in delivering services, and have preferred to bypass them, setting up non-state structures to deliver services to poor people (Batley et. al, 2012). Thus, the persistent failure of governments to adequately provide services that meet the basic needs of poor people has been largely, though not exclusively, attributed to the problem of governance. Thus, politics, it is argued, is at the heart of analyses of the widespread under-provision of basic services and is seen as both a cause and consequence of service performance (Levy and Walton,
2013; Batley, et. al., 2012). With the renewal of analytical and practical concern with the politics of development, it is apparent that a purely technical, capacity-based explanation to the blockages and inefficiencies in public service delivery is insufficient.

It is now widely recognised that politics matters for the adoption, design and implementation of pro-poor programmes (Barrientos and Pellisery, 2012), influences the functioning of service delivery agencies (Levy and Walton, 2013) and reinforces institutional capacity (or lack of capacity) and more equitable delivery of public services (Wild and Foresti, 2013). Politics shape policy selection and the governance and implementation of public services, but in turn, the process and outcomes of service delivery are arenas of politics and can affect citizen formation and behaviour, political competition, and the development of state capacity and legitimacy (Mcloughlin & Batley, 2012; Hickey, 2011). That service delivery reforms are successful when they are aligned with a local support base that is powerful enough to generate reform impetus and overcome the resistance of those benefitting from status quo. It is from these perspectives that this study pays attention to the politics of the Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Government Areas (CGS to LGAs) implementation in Nigeria.

1.2 Rationale for this study

This thesis focuses on an important issue as it intends to shed light on current attempts to reform service delivery for the poor people in Nigeria and, by extension, in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Improving such services is central to poverty reduction and the promotion of long term national development across the global South. Nigeria accounts for 28% of the 416 million poor in SSA (NBS, 2014; UNDP, 2014), despite its middle-income status and potentials. Underpinning this challenge is the core issue of governance (Soludo, 2011; World Bank, 2014) at all levels – national, state and local. Existing fiscal decentralisation in the country provides the 36 states and 774 LGAs considerable policy and fiscal autonomy. The states and LGAs control about 50% of government revenues and have prime responsibility for the delivery of public services. Indeed, Booth and Chambers (2014: 4) argue forcefully that:

‘One of the places in the world where there is the most need for both understanding of a complex country reality and innovative practices to assist progressive change is Nigeria. The country’s oil wealth, sharp ethno-regional divisions and gross
inequalities have combined to make the politics of development unusually challenging’.

To date, the widespread consensus that politics matters has not been matched by rigorous research into how different forms of politics and governance are likely to determine whether and how services are delivered (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012). Currently, for example, little is known on the conditions under which elite commitment and state capacity emerge and become sustained. More importantly, comparative case studies of sub-national states, regions and districts, where resource levels are similar, but where outcomes are different, are rare in the literature (Chopra, 2015; Bukenya, 2012). Such studies could offer valuable insights into what accounts for relatively well performing and poorly performing states and propose a rigorous methodology for understanding the politics of what works (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012a). This study seeks to make an original empirical contribution, as it investigates the politics of the CGS to LGAs scheme along the policy chain. In 2005 Nigeria secured a historic debt relief of US$18 billion from the Paris Club of Creditors ‘outside’ of HIPC framework and promised to utilise the annual debt relief savings - called the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) for pro-poor spending and the achievement of the MDGs. Thus, as part of the DRG initiatives, the federal government designed the CGS to LGAs scheme to dramatically improve service delivery to poor people, while reforming governance at the LGA level (see chapter Five).

1.3 Research aim and questions

The aim of the study is to create original knowledge about the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in Nigeria with respect to its programme theory, processes and delivery at multiple levels. This study is not an attempt at a full-scale evaluation of this ambitious service delivery reform programme, but a predominantly qualitative inquiry into how the process unfolded over time, paying attention to the politics of its implementation in line with recent thinking around the politics of development. The study employs process tracing as its main method, utilising policy documents, academic and grey literature, key informant interviews and focus group discussions - building on the researcher’s comparative advantage of having strong personal contacts with relevant officials at the federal and local levels.
Specifically, the research poses the following inter-related questions:

1. How did the governance reforms of the CGS to LGAs scheme actually play out in practice, with a focus on elite commitment and capture?
2. Has the CGS to LGAs scheme (i) increased commitment (ii) avoided elite capture (iii) strengthened LGA capacity for pro-poor service delivery?
3. What are the implications of these findings for theory, policy and practice?

1.4 Overview of thesis structure

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the remainder is structured as follows:

Chapter Two provides a critical review of the theoretical literature on the key concepts to establish a conceptual framework for the study. It starts with the definition of key concepts for the study and critically examines their links. The key concepts include; governance, state capacity, elite commitment and service delivery. Following this, the chapter then explores the broader debates on the politics of service delivery in relation to elite commitment, capture and state capacity. This is followed by a critical review of the theory and practice of fiscal decentralisation, with specific attention to the mixed empirical experiences of developing countries. Subsequently the chapter presents the conceptual framework for the study and concludes.

Chapter Three analyses the background setting of the study country, Nigeria, and provides the context to the analysis in the succeeding chapters. This chapter critically analyses and highlights the key political economy factors that shaped commitment to pro-poor service delivery reforms. It begins by underlining the country’s political and socio-economic contexts, while highlighting the geography of poverty and the existing fiscal decentralisation in the country. The chapter then examines the country’s service delivery reform efforts following the return of democratic government in 1999 after a long period of military dominance of politics. Following the return to multi-party democracy, three democratically elected Presidents have served between 1999 and 2015 under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This is the country’s Fourth Republic and marked its longest democratic experiment since independence in 1960. Accordingly, the chapter focuses
mainly on the Fourth Republic service delivery reform efforts and analyses the reforms along
these three Presidencies: Obasanjo’s Presidency (1999-2007), Yar’Adua’s Presidency1 (2007-
2010) and Jonathan’s Presidency (2010-2015). Thus, the chapter creates a basis for
understanding the main drivers of service delivery reforms and the implementation of the DRG
resources in the later empirical chapters.

Chapter Four presents the detailed research methodology employed to investigate the politics
of pro-poor service delivery in Nigeria, using the CGS to LGAs scheme as the unit of analysis. It
starts by discussing the research paradigm and approach and provides justification for the case
selection. The chapter then discusses the data and data gathering methods, which are based on
a process tracing approach. Subsequently, it elaborates on the research design and discusses the
study’s methodological rigour. This is followed by a detailed description of the two field study
sites – Guri and Mashi LGAs. The Chapter offers a vivid account of how the data gathered were
processed, analysed and presented, as well as the challenges encountered in the conduct of this
study.

Chapter Five is the first of the three main empirical chapters and investigates the design and
implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national level. It pays particular attention to
the origin of the scheme’s ‘idea’ and the politics of its implementation. It starts by tracing the
source of the scheme’s funding following the 2005 Paris Club debt relief deal, the sequencing of
debt relief spending, the CGS to LGAs ‘idea’ and its eventual full-scale implementation. The
chapter discusses national level elite commitment and bureaucratic capacity in the scheme’s
implementation, specifically analysing what happened in relation to what was expected to
happen and its consequences for pro-poor service delivery at the local level. Hence, the chapter
creates the context on the design and implementation of the entire DRG initiatives, upon which,
the further empirical chapters (Six and Seven) build upon. The chapter partly addresses the
overarching research question on: how did the governance reforms of the CGS to LGAs scheme
actually play out in practice, particularly elite commitment and capture?

1 President Yar’Adua died while in office 3 years into his tenure in 2010 and his then Vice President Jonathan took over.
Chapter Six is the second empirical chapter and investigates the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the sub-national level. It analyses the role of the state and local governments in shaping, and mis-shaping, the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. It explores these by offering ‘thick descriptions’ of the processes of resource allocation ‘before and after’ the implementation of the CGS to LGAs in the two-case study LGAs. This is with a view to deepening the understanding of how these processes play out in practice, and to ascertain the extent to which the scheme’s reforms were able to avoid the usual ‘elite capture’ phenomena associated with state level governance (Khemani, 2010). It then analyses elite commitment to the scheme’s implementation and the impact of the scheme on reforming commitment to pro-poor service delivery in the case study LGAs. The chapter addresses two related questions – Has the CGS to LGAs scheme been able to promote elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery? Has the scheme avoided elite capture? Linked to the core of the thesis, it interrogates the CGS to LGAs scheme’s community engagement processes, social accountability and the ‘agency’ of the poor at work in the implementation of the scheme.

Chapter Seven is the third empirical chapter and examines the extent to which the CGS to LGAs scheme has strengthened its implementation capacity and capacity for pro-poor service delivery more broadly at the local level through the study of two LGAs. Linked to the discussion in chapter Five, it starts by investigating the key roles played by the CGS to LGAs scheme supported Technical Assistants (TAs) and the Zonal Technical Officers (ZTOs). Did they make service delivery to poor people more effective? It then examines its effect on the bureaucratic capacity and autonomy of LGAs for pro-poor service delivery. The chapter analyses this in relation to the scheme’s main focus areas - primary education and primary healthcare service delivery.

Chapter Eight compares and synthesises the main findings of the thesis and reflects on the broader theoretical and conceptual debates on the political economy of development in Nigeria and in developing countries. It examines the findings in line with current thinking on the politics of development and potential development outcomes. The chapter responds to the overarching research question on ‘how does the governance reforms of the CGS to LGAs scheme concerning elite commitment, capture and capacity actually play out in practice’.
Chapter Nine is the final chapter of the thesis and seeks to summarise the main findings and conclude. It starts by summarising the thesis’s main findings in relation to the research questions. The chapter then examines and discusses the key lessons learnt and their theoretical and policy implications. It concludes by offering suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO
Understanding the Politics of Service Delivery

2.1 Introduction

Having introduced the wider debates on the contemporary politics of service delivery (and development more broadly) in developing countries in the preceding chapter, this chapter reviews the theoretical perspectives on the key concepts, with a view to establish a conceptual framework for the study. It starts with a discussion of the key concepts employed and critically examines their links to the core thesis - governance, state capacity, elite commitment and service delivery. It then examines the broader debates on the politics of service delivery in relation to elite commitment, elite capture and state capacity. Subsequently, it elaborates and analyses the emerging literature on ‘doing development differently’ and on the role of developmental coalitions. This is followed by an examination of the theory and practice of fiscal decentralisation, with specific attention to the mixed empirical experiences in comparable contexts. The penultimate section presents the conceptual framework employed in this thesis while the final section concludes.

2.2 Definition of key concepts

This study uses a few concepts and in particular, governance, state capacity, elite commitment, elite capture and service delivery. These are discussed in turn below.

2.2.1 Understanding ‘governance’

The poor performance of public service delivery in SSA is commonly explained as a failure of ‘governance’. But, what is governance? It is a concept with many owners and various types of definitions and descriptions (Rotberg, 2014). For some writers, it is seen as a ‘slippery’ concept – a concept that has great appeal, but which lacks specificity. Definitions can be broad or narrow, as well as normative or descriptive. The World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) are widely accepted by many authors. They define governance as consisting of:
‘The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them’ (WGI, 2014:1).

This definition provides a broad perspective on governance with some sort of normative view. Table 2.1 presents a sample of conceptual viewpoints from leading official and scholarly sources:

**Table 2.1: Summary of selected definitions of governance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept of governance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an act or process of conveying direction and coordination to governmental organizations in an environment. Governance is viewed from administrative, economic and political perspectives (Bratton, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represents a process of how things are done and not just what is done, and that dialog on governance requires more than specific attention on government. It equally relates to the type of relations between state and society (ODI, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages economic and social affairs. It is the way a society organizes its self to make and implement decisions. (UNDP, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As the ability of government to craft and enforce rules and to deliver services, irrespective of whether that government is democratic or not. Government as an organization that can do its functions better or worse; governance is thus about execution, or what has traditionally fallen within the domain of public administration, as opposed to politics or public policy (Fukuyama, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The exercise of authority by governments on behalf of citizens. Thus, governance indicators should mainly focus on specific areas of engagement where governments perform on behalf of citizens (Andrews, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As the governmental delivery of essential political goods in acceptable quantities and of acceptable quality to the residents of a city, a district, a state, a province, a region and the nation. Residents seek to be well governed (Rotberg, 2014).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encompasses the exercise of power in the management of society’s resources at all levels, from the offices of presidents to the back yards of urban neighbourhoods and the killing fields of local conflict zones (APPP, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The author
Although there are some similarities amongst these and other definitions, they often differ significantly in terms of explanatory powers. For example, Bratton (2013), ODI (2006) and UNDP (2000) definitions emphasised governance as the process of conveying and providing direction in the broadest term. APPP (2011) view of governance is more about the exercise of power that enables institutions to function. To Bratton, governance is not about its performance but about its act in a normative form. For Fukuyama (2013) and Rotberg (2014) definitions are context specific and more functional. Rotberg’s definition emphasises the state-society interaction in the conceptualization of governance.

This study opts for a narrower and more functional definition of governance than the WGIs’ definition, which looks at governance from normative sense and as a process by which government is selected or elected – which is beyond the scope of this study. Thus, in this thesis, governance refers to the ability of government to effectively deliver essential goods and services for the benefit of the inhabitants of a district, state, region and the nation. So that the institutional and human capacities for governance shape the manner in which the effectiveness of service delivery is attained. This is in line with Fukuyama (2013) and Rotberg (2014) definitions and captures the functionality of government in the delivery of public services and is closely linked to its capacity for public provisioning. It strengthens our discussion on the key concepts explored in this study. When governments perform poorly via the institution of state, the effects are wasted resources and undelivered services, especially for poor people (Grindle, 2004).

2.2.2 State capacity

From the seminal work of Weber (1968) on state and its dominance, the concept of state capacity has theoretically developed overtime. Weberian theorists have traditionally conceived state capacity as a) bureaucratic professionalism, b) external embeddedness (Evans, 1995; Evans and Rauch, 1999) and, more recently, c) the infrastructural power of the state (Mann, 1984; Soifer and Vom Hau, 2008; Vom Hau, 2012). There seems to be a broad understanding around the notion of state capacity even though differences exist on precisely how it is defined. Scholars use different terminologies that reflect subtle conceptual differences. As an aspect of governance and one of the key determinants of public service provisioning via which development goals are achieved (Vom Hau et al., 2015), state capacity is often viewed as a multidimensional concept
that captures both the organisational and relational qualities of the state (Cammett and MacLean 2011; Vom Hau, 2012). It is argued that tracing variations in state capacity requires attention to the specific properties of both state structures and state-society relations (ibid; Enriquez and Centeno, 2011).

Savoia and Sen (2012) dissected state capacity according to the functions the state performs, i.e. - bureaucratic and administrative; legal capacity; infrastructural capacity; fiscal capacity and military capacity. The authors’ conceptualisation focuses on measurement. Others have defined state capacity as the ability of the state to dominate, coax compliant behaviour from individuals of a given territory (Ottervik, 2013), or as the ability of state to effectively collect taxes as a common measure of state capacity and institutional capability of the state to carry our various policies that deliver benefits and services to households (Besley and Persson, 2011). Vom Hau (2012: 5) defined state capacity in the broadest term as ‘the ability of states to apply and implement policy choices within the territorial boundaries they claim to govern’. To Vom Hau, state capacity is a multi-dimensional concept consisting of three distinct but interrelated dimensions of: bureaucratic capacity or organizational competence; territorial reach of state institutions and external embeddedness with non-state actors.

Table 2.2: Summary of conceptual definitions of state capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptualization of state capacity</th>
<th>Dimension emphasised</th>
<th>Source/Scholars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crucial to state capacity is ‘embedded autonomy’ in the form of administrative insulation of power and some level of state embeddedness with the wider society</td>
<td>Relational and bureaucratic</td>
<td>Evans (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As institutional capability of state to carry out various policies that deliver benefits and services to the households</td>
<td>Administrative, fiscal and legal</td>
<td>Besley and Persson (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As ‘the ability of states to apply and implement policy choices within the territorial boundaries they claim to govern’ – as a multi-dimensional concept</td>
<td>Organizational, infrastructural and relational</td>
<td>Vom Hau (2012:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability of the states to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently - including inputs to the bureaucracy.</td>
<td>Administrative/Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Fukuyama (2004: 9; 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The author
Fukuyama (2013: 10) elaborated the notion of state capacity by suggesting that the quality of government is the interaction between bureaucratic capacity and autonomy. This ‘two-dimensional framework’ uses the internal forms of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy as a measure of executive arm quality. Autonomy here refers to the approach in which the ‘political principal’ issues mandates to the bureaucrats who act as its agent (ibid). This study finds Fukuyama’s notion on bureaucratic capacity and autonomy quite useful and is employed based on the following reasons: It is important for policymaking and as such appropriate for the examination of a multi-level policy implementation, as in the case of the CGS to LGAs scheme. In the Nigerian federal system, where each tier or level has considerable fiscal autonomy, the interrelationship between political elites (principals) and bureaucratic elites (agents) at the lower levels can be usefully investigated following this framework. Additionally, this notion is closely linked to administrative or implementation capacity of the state that requires both skilled officials and financial resources.

2.2.3 Elite commitment

While analysts agree that ‘elite commitment’ is gradually investigated, the term is only recently used in the literature on institutional reforms and policy implementation. Closely related terms, ‘political will’ or ‘political commitment’, are far more commonly used and enjoy a significant popularity (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Post et al., 2010). Despite its common use, Post and colleagues argue that ‘political will’ remains a vague concept and called for a systematic and pragmatic approach to its definition (2010). They define ‘political will’ as ‘the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem (Ibid: 569). Earlier, Brinkerhoff provides an analytical framework for ‘political will’ and defines it as the ‘commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives…and to sustain the costs of those actions over time’ (2000: 242). From the above definition, while ‘political will’ clearly entails ‘commitment’, the term does not specify where the commitment emanates from. In a recent review, Chemouni and Hossain (2016) conclude that the most common notion of ‘political will’ is largely used in the literature concerned with the commitment of leaders to implement a policy, reform or even donor’s project. Thus, they define ‘commitment’ broadly as the ‘elite willingness to invest resources toward achieving a precise objective’ (ibid: 3). Here, the concept is object specific and not a free-floating concept, and resources are viewed broadly to
include both financial and political resources. It is noted that while ‘elite commitment’ can be used to describe broader dynamics, including the analysis of historical process, ‘political will’ appears as a form of ‘elite commitment’ confined to a precise level of analysis (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Malena, 2009). Thus, examining ‘commitment’ inevitably entails specifying the object of the commitment.

Evidently, elite commitment is at the heart of contemporary discourse on the politics of development and debates continue on its strategic role in the delivery of pro-poor services. But as noted earlier, authors are often vague about its precise meaning, so one must be exact about its connotation. So, who is an ‘elite’ and what is ‘commitment’? In this study, elite are defined ‘as individuals who can exert disproportionate influence over a collective action process’ (Beard and Phakphian, 2009: 2). They are a distinct group within a society which enjoys privileged status and exercises decisive control over the organisation of society (Amsden, et al., 2011). This understanding is useful as it recognises elites’ capacity for decision making and influence at all levels of the society. This study recognises both political and bureaucratic elites. Indeed, some analysts view the commitment of political elites as a necessary pre-requisite for delivering development (Leftwich, 1995; Booth, 2011). In an early work, Leonard (1982) argues that for services to benefit the poor, the implementing agency must have a ‘special’ commitment to the delivery of program services to the poor, must have or be able to find resources and technical skills for the programme and must be able to adapt to the lessons of its experiences. To Leonard, commitment is a necessary requirement for effective service delivery (ibid).

Having established the relationship between ‘political will’ and ‘commitment’, this study examines elite commitment following Brinkerhoff’s (2000) analytical framework. Defined as ‘the commitment of actors [elite] to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives... and to sustain the costs of those actions over time’. This commitment is manifested by ‘elite’ and includes elected or appointed leaders and public agency senior officials. While Brinkerhoff often uses ‘political will’, this framework is useful as it provides five concrete indicators for identifying elite commitment to pro-poor reform programmes and relates directly to the literature dealing with precise reforms. Crucially, the framework enables multi-level analysis along the implementation chain. The indicators are:
I. **Locus of initiative**: This relates to the ‘origin of idea’ or where the impetus for reforms lies – internal or external. It shows the extent to which policy actors or officials take initiatives for reform implementation, which indicates their willingness to adapt or change administrative structure. Low level of initiative implies ‘weak commitment’, while high levels of initiative implies ‘strong commitment’.

II. **Degree of analytical rigour**: This indicator of commitment entails the extent to which the reformer or reform team undertakes an in-depth analysis and uses that analysis to design a technically adequate and politically feasible reform programme. It is seen from the analytical steps taken in the design, implementation, problem solving and trainings. Hence, low level of analytical rigour indicates ‘low commitment’, while high levels of rigour indicates ‘high commitment’.

III. **Mobilisation of support for policy implementation**: This involves the willingness and ability of the reform team to identify and mobilize support for the policy, and to develop a strategy that is participative and able to muster adequate support to overcome resistance from those stakeholders whose interests are most threatened by reforms. Thus, weak or ineffective mobilisation signifies ‘weak commitment’ and strong or effective mobilisation entails ‘strong commitment’.

IV. **Application of credible sanctions**: This relates to the openness of the top level political and bureaucratic elites to identify incentives and apply sanctions - both positive and negative - in the context of reform strategies. It entails the recognition of positive actions and punishing negative actions which can send strong signals and motivate. Here, strong application of highly credible sanctions is associated with a ‘higher commitment’, while weak application of ineffective sanctions signifies a ‘lower commitment’.

V. **Continuity of effort**: This indicator involves assigning appropriate human and financial resources to program implementation and providing the necessary support over time to ensure that officials can achieve results. This entails staff continuity and continues provision of financial resources that are critical to sustaining reform initiatives. Thus, weak or one-shot efforts signals ‘weak commitment’, while strong and sustained continuity of effort would signal ‘strong commitment’.

(Brinkerhoff, 2000)
Recently, Chopra (2015: 25) while operationalising Brinkerhoff’s (2000) framework in her analysis of the India’s Mahatma Ghandi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), added ‘perception of political feedback’ as an indicator of commitment. This study explores the five characteristics (Brinkerhoff, 2000) and Chopra’s (2015) dimension of perception of political feedback, to provide empirical grounding to this growing literature that remains relatively abstract (Chemouni and Hossain, 2016).

2.2.4 Elite capture

‘Elite capture’ is an elusive concept and is used to connote several related, yet distinctly different situations (Lund and Saito-Jensen, 2013). Such conditions include domination and control of decision-making arenas (Ribot, 2007), monopolisation of public benefits and resources (Platteau & Abraham, 2002) or a combination of both (Labonte, 2011). It connotes situations in which political and economic elites misappropriate public resources or commit acts of malfeasance (Platteau, 2004). The literature has identified some factors in explaining elite domination. They include: disparate access to economic resources, lopsided social positions, varying levels of knowledge of political protocols, and different education attainment in some cases (Platteau, 2004). Elite influence is maintained via employment status, political and religious affiliations, family networks, wealth, personal history and personality (Dasgupta and Beard 2007). In some contexts, influence is also achieved by the use or more often the threat of use of physical violence. Studies have documented the cases of elite capture in different contexts, including under decentralised governance and at the local level (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000; Khemani, 2010). In this study, elite capture is defined as a circumstance where political and bureaucratic elites control the decision-making process or arena and obtain most of the benefits of a policy or programme.

Elite capture is usually seen as a problem and the literature identifies two main approaches to ‘dealing’ with the issue. They are ‘counter elite’ and ‘co-opt elite’ (Wong, 2010). The ‘counter elite’ approach advocates challenging elites by totally excluding them in the institutional design, assumes that all elites are bad in nature and conceptualises elite capture as entirely exploitative and suppressive (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007). This approach characterises opposition to elite domination as a ‘zero-sum’ game since weakening elite influence will return power to the
powerless (Lund and Saito-Jensen, 2013). It suggests that the solutions to elite capture are to, first, exclude elites from participating in a newly created or existing institution and, second, to empower poor people to take an active role in the decision-making process by raising awareness and capacity building (Wong, 2010). However, this approach has been criticised as having a simplistic view of power and not appreciating the diversity of elites—as not all elites are bad (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007). Indeed, Dasgupta and Beard highlighted that in cases where local development projects were controlled by elites, benefits continued to be delivered to the poor and where ‘power’ was most evenly distributed, resource allocation to the poor was restricted. Thus, they differentiated between ‘elite capture’ and ‘elite control’ and argue that the latter is not necessarily undesirable (ibid). Also, excluding elite can lead to elite totally sabotaging a development programme.

Others have similarly cautioned that some forms of elite capture may also benefit the wider community (Balooni et al., 2010; Fritzen, 2007) and call for the ‘co-opt elite’ approach. This approach considers elites as partners and suggests that cooperation, rather than confrontation, is the solution to delivering services to the less privileged members of the society. It emphasises the need to see elites as partners and that a pragmatic use of elites’ networks and resources can channel benefits to both elites and to poor people (Fritzen, 2007). Some analysts have argued that involving elites in the management can ensure ‘good leadership’ that builds on social capital in the community (Abe, 2009). This suggests that the solution to elite capture is to absorb the elites into the implementation process and to let them play an active role in the decision-making process. However, it has been cautioned that this approach may risk the repeat of the mistakes of the top-down, elite-driven approach to development (Lund and Saito-Jensen, 2013). In between this, Wong (2010) argues that both ‘counter elite’ and ‘co-opt elite’ approaches should not be seen as ‘either-or’, as elites can be engrossed and challenged in the same process and at the same time depending on the accountability mechanisms in place.

### 2.2.5 Service delivery

It is argued that the concept of ‘service delivery’ lies on a vague territory and many analysts stay away from providing operational definition (Bukenya, 2012), and often viewed as a ‘theatre of politics’ (Mcloughlin & Batley, 2012). However, the *World Development Report* 2004 offers a useful framing for understanding service delivery. *Service delivery is seen as the provision of*
**basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation, through both government and alternative provisioning** (World Bank, 2004). To improve service delivery, the report argued that it can be understood as a triangular relationship of accountability between policymakers, providers, and citizens (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Service Delivery Triangle

![Service Delivery Triangle](image)

Source: Author, based on World Bank (2004)

The above relationship is envisaged to operate under democratic contexts where citizens through elections ‘delegate’ oversight tasks to politicians and policymakers, who in turn ensure that service providers, discharge their responsibilities. This is the ‘long-route’ accountability relationship. However, it is argued that in contexts where democracy is not well entrenched, as in the case of most countries in Africa, service delivery through the ‘long-route’ often fails (World Bank, 2004; Joshi and Houtzager, 2012). The alternative ‘short route’ is the means through which poor citizens or service users exercise direct influence over service providers. Thus, some scholars have called for the strengthening of the ‘short-route’ channel for effective service delivery to be achieved (ibid; Unsworth, 2010). Detailed discussion on accountability mechanisms comes later in this chapter. The empirical focus of this thesis investigates service delivery through the lens of basic service provisioning – healthcare, education and water and sanitation, in relation to the ‘long-route’ accountability relationship. Specifically, it focused on the interaction between political and bureaucratic elites, frontline service providers and the poor citizens in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. Following the discussion of these key concepts, the subsequent section is dedicated to elaborating on the politics of service delivery in relation to these central concepts, and how they influence pro-poor service delivery.
2.3 The politics of service delivery

It is recognised that politics not only ‘matters’ but that they are the main influences on the functioning of service delivery agencies (Levy and Walton, 2013; Batley and McLoughlin, 2015). Politics in its broadest sense is ‘the activities through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live’ (Heywood, 2000: 33). In this thesis, politics is about the exercise of power and is defined as all the processes of struggle, co-operation and negotiation on taking decisions about how resources are to be owned, used, produced and distributed (Leftwich, 2004: 25). Thus, politics shapes and creates governance processes. Leftwich’s conceptualisation of politics has strong explanatory power, and can useful be applied in this study, as it enables careful examination of the processes of negotiation and cooperation in the distribution of the DRG resources and the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. It has been well established that different types of politics shape different dimensions of social and development programmes. For instance, the forms of politics that lead to conception and implementation of policies may be different to those needed to sustain such policies; and different again from the politics of identifying beneficiary groups (Hickey, 2007).

On the role of politics in development more broadly, Leftwich (1994) argues forcefully that neither complex institutional improvements nor the best-trained or best-motivated public service will be able to survive the weakening effects of corruption or favoured interests, if the politics and ‘power’ of the state do not sustain and guard them. Most analyses of long run governance improvements that emerged in the past few years place politics at the core of the narrative (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012; Fukuyama, 2011; Khan, 2010). Politics is not seen simply as something bad that weakens governance, but also as a positive force that can improve governance. With regards to the politics of public service delivery, recent analyses have been pursued in two main directions. Firstly, political interests, incentives, and institutions may affect the performance of public services (Keefer & Khemani, 2003; McLoughlin, 2014). Secondly, the processes and outcomes of service delivery may feedback and in turn affect politics, and even the legitimacy of the state itself (McLoughlin & Batley, 2012). Thus, there is some sort of political cause and effect in their relationship, especially as it relates to pro-poor service delivery. There is evidence that politics in the form of elite coalitions, the incentives to which elites respond and
the systems of accountability which ensure service quality, are essential to the effectiveness of service delivery systems in developing countries (Batley et al., 2012).

The expanding literature on the politics of development has identified key political actors and institutions that can be associated with development policy design and implementation in Africa. They include political elites, who set the terms of policy debates and the administrative or bureaucratic agencies that will either lobby for, or implement policy initiatives (Hickey, 2007; Lavers and Hickey, 2015). Political institutions present both major incentives for and problems to action, while the ways in which vital political actors and organisations connect with the wider citizenry (and the poor) is also important. Issues of elite discourses and organisational culture require as much attention as the more technocratic agendas of capacity-building (ibid), such as systems design and training. Formal and informal political institutions play an important role in shaping interests and in determining incentives for service provision. Informal institutions and personalised relationships are pervasive influences on policymaking (Unsworth et al. 2010). At the juncture of implementation, where policies and programmes often confront vested interests and tremble, whether and how services are delivered may depend on the structure of incentives facing providers and recipients (Collier, 2007; McLoughlin and Batley, 2012).

2.3.1 State capacity and service delivery

The organisational competency of a state, often termed as bureaucratic or administrative capacity, concerns the recruitment, training, expertise and professionalism of government bureaucracy that enables the state to design and implement policies to foster development (Savoia and Sen, 2012; Vom Hau, 2012; Fukuyama, 2013). The ability to merit hire, train and provide predictable career for government employees is crucial to the effective functioning of the state, and that this is central to the smooth operations of the state bureaucracy (Cammett and MacLean 2011). It is argued that state institutions exemplified by meritocratic recruitment and foreseeable career paths for bureaucrats are more likely to deliver better public services, such as education and health that will benefit the poor (Vom Hau et al., 2014). However, it is cautioned that while these may be necessary conditions for a competent and efficient bureaucracy, they are not sufficient in themselves. State agencies, it is argued, function better
with highly motivated and ‘autonomous’ bureaucrats who can take decisions independently (Fukuyama, 2013).

Thus, many analysts argue that state capacity is central to the delivery of public services that are beneficial to poor people and a tool for development. For example, the state agencies responsible for the delivery of health services to the citizenry require the necessary skills and competence to provide effective frontline services – diagnostic capacities, medical and surgical skills, professional judgement and others. Corbridge and colleagues (2005) drew attention to the means through which the skills and competences of those state agents at the frontline of service delivery helped in the effective delivery of social services and programmes that benefit poor people and achieved modest development outcomes. Earlier and relatedly, Tendler (1997) highlighted how the skills and experiences of locally recruited health agents in the state of Caera, Brazil, helped in the delivery of health and related services to poor households in rural communities under their jurisdiction. For Tendler, this is achieved through professional commitment on the part of the health workers and the ‘innovative’ central-local finance and accountability arrangements instituted by the central government (ibid). Here, the central government directly recruited frontline health workers while ceding the day to day management of these workers to the lower level government (municipality) that could better manage them. This is indeed at variance with the dominant, contemporary decentralisation argument in which such categories of employees are usually to be recruited, trained and managed by the lower level government. Thus, this is a ‘triangular’ arrangement to deliver health services to poor people (ibid). Tendler’s case is especially interesting for this thesis, as she analyses a successful reform that emerges from state-local politics – not donor of national government.

Since the performance of many service delivery programmes depends on the support of the benefitting communities, state bureaucrats need to map out strategies to ensure active community participation in the delivery of services (Evans, 2011; Tendler, 1997). Indeed, there is consensus among scholars (e.g. Evans, 1995; Hickey, 2013) that the ability of governments to stimulate inclusive development critically depends on the relationship with society. For example, non-state actors or societal groups can help the state in the provision of health and education services that benefit the poor often at little or no costs. More generally, broad connections to civil society help state agencies to effectively coordinate development efforts (Vom Hau, et al.,
2014). Similarly, it is observed that the capacity of various countries to achieve development outcomes, especially poverty reduction is predicated on the traits of the state (Grindle, 2007; Van de Walle and Scott, 2011). Van de Walle and Scott (2011) succinctly posit that several processes in nineteenth-century European state and nation building contributed to the increase in ‘visibility’ for the state through the construction of hospitals, schools, post offices, town halls and police posts. That people were employed and paid as health workers, village teachers, railway station masters, town hall clerks, and the rest. This, they argue, created a sense of loyalty and belonging to the state and that public service delivery contributed to the integration of geographical peripheries and to the consolidation of a territory (ibid). Thus, strengthening the presence of the centre in more remote and peripheral areas where the poor and the vulnerable population live helps in reducing poverty and raising state legitimacy (the feedback mechanism).

It is widely argued that a lack of frontline administrative capacity often leads to failure in service delivery - which is one of the key reasons people fall into poverty, e.g. through ill-health (Booth, 2011; Bukenya, 2012). In contrast, effective service delivery helps people transition out of poverty, for example through quality education. Indeed, the effective provision of basic services to the poor can contribute significantly to poverty reduction (Hulme and Lawson, 2010). Mcloughlin and Batley (2012) posit that there is a pressing need to strengthen capacity for service delivery in developing countries to improve service quality and expand access. Writing from a slightly different perspective, Savoia and Sen (2014) come to a similar conclusion; through the administrative capacity of the state to collect more tax revenue and thereafter spend these on social services, development goals and especially poverty reduction can be achieved. Other analysts find similar empirical evidence for improvements in development outcomes (e.g. Hallerod et al., 2013).

**Bureaucratic capacity and autonomy**

According to Fukuyama (2013) the quality of government depends on the interaction between bureaucratic capacity and autonomy. Fukuyama uses this ‘two-dimensional framework’ of capacity and autonomy as a measure of executive arm quality through the lens of ‘political-bureaucratic’ relationship (ibid: 347). For him, bureaucratic ‘autonomy’ is inversely linked to the nature and number of the mandates given out by the principal. The fewer and broader the
mandates given by the principal, the greater autonomy the bureaucracy possess. Whether autonomy aids capacity and performance or not is theoretically debated. On the one hand, if the bureaucracy is subordinated and micro-managed by the principal through excessive rules and mandates that must be followed, then in such circumstance, the bureaucracy has no room for independent decisions and is entirely bound by detailed rules set by the political principal that may be inappropriate for locally-specific situations (Georgious, 2014; Dasandi and Esteve, 2017). On the other hand, however, a fully autonomous bureaucracy receives no directives from the political principal and as such sets its own mandates independently (Fukuyama, 2004; 2013). Under this complete autonomy scenario, governance outcomes are likely to be bad since the bureaucracy would have escaped political control and sets not just internal procedures but its own goals as well (ibid). Indeed, there is evidence of distrust between politicians and bureaucrats (Turner and Hulme, 1997). This has implications for accountability, as in public service delivery, it is often difficult to monitor agent’s behaviour and hold them to account (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012).

For some analysts, extreme subordination often leads to poor performance in service delivery as the bureaucracy can be slow and indecisive due to excessive rules (Huntington, 2006). One of the worst causes of poor performance occurs when a bureaucracy loses control over internal recruitment and promotion to the political authorities and is operated entirely by political appointees (Fukuyama, 2013). Hence, Evans (1995; 2010) cautioned that bureaucratic agents need to be both isolated from certain influences of political and social actors, but also subordinate to the society with regards to broader goals. What Evans conceptualises as ‘embedded autonomy’ suggests that an appropriate degree of bureaucratic autonomy does not mean that bureaucratic agents should be isolated from their societies or take unilateral decisions but entails extensive cooperation with the civil society organisations in service delivery (ibid). In a very high capacity bureaucracy full of qualified and experienced professionals, it would be appropriate to allow considerable autonomy and flexibility to the bureaucratic agents to encourage innovation in service delivery (Huntington, 2006; Fukuyama, 2004). Conversely, a bureaucracy operated by incompetent political appointees needs to be subjected to clear rules and have very limited discretion (ibid). By implication, in a very low capacity bureaucracy, one would want to restrict the behaviour of bureaucrats with more rather than fewer rules, because one could not trust them to exercise sound judgment or refrain from corrupt behaviour (Dasandi
and Esteve, 2017). However, a relevant question here is how to objectively measure bureaucratic autonomy. Fukuyama (2013) posits that since autonomy is the direct opposite of subordination, it would be ideal to use the degree of political interference in bureaucratic operations as a proxy measure. This is an important argument as in chapters Five and Six I use this device to investigate the degree of political interference in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at multiple levels.

2.3.2 Elite commitment and service delivery

The analytical field of elite commitment is nascent, and few studies have empirically examined the link between elite commitment and service delivery in any detail (Abdulai, 2012; Chemouni, 2016). This is partly because identifying a leader’s commitment is challenging as ‘it is fundamentally unobservable directly’ (Chemouni and Hossain, 2016: 2). It is equally difficult to predict commitment, but it can be observed during or ex-post based on outcomes (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Post et al., 2010). Through our understanding of elites and their incentives, on the one hand, and service delivery as ‘an arena of politics’ (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012), on the other hand, the links between elite commitment and service delivery becomes apparent. As Besley and Ghatak (2007) noted, understanding what drives effective service delivery requires consideration to the motivating incentives of elite decision makers. Incentives are regarded as the punishments and rewards that are perceived by individuals to be related to their actions and those of others (Ostrom 1990). In pro-poor service provisioning, one needs to understand how the incentives of elites can be aligned with the interests of poor people and/or the larger society. Incentives may be shaped by many factors: availability of resources, delivery mechanism, accountability, information and decision-making (Pritchett and Woolcock, 2004; Batley et al., 2012). However, it has been argued that availability of resources alone does not determine outcomes on the ground - politics intervene either in an enabling or restraining role between policy intention and implementation (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012).

When elites perceive the positive political feedback that may be obtained from the delivery of a service, they often commit to it (Chopra, 2015). Chopra’s account of the MGNREGS implementation shows how the perceptions of political feedback effects provided incentives for elites to become committed to the implementation of the programme (ibid). Chemouni (2016) shows how commitment to expanding healthcare coverage for one-third of Rwanda’s population
was influenced by the broader efforts of the ruling elites to foster its legitimacy based on the goal of speedy socio-economic transformation in a context of a dominant political settlement. Relatedly, studies have shown that the character and nature of services often determine the extent to which elites commit to these services. Certain forms of public services attract the attention and commitment of the political elites more than other forms of services. For example, Abdulai (2012; 2016) shows how political elites in Ghana were more inclined to spend resources on ‘visible’ aspects of health and education services (buildings), than the ‘less visible’ but important aspects such as health worker and teacher trainings. He reveals how substantial resources were disproportionately spent on physical infrastructure due to its political mileage in the Ghanaian’s highly competitive clientelist political settlement. Building hospitals and schools creates political gains (visible ‘action’) and economic gains (contracts and bribes). Others have argued that pro-poor service delivery may result where political elites court the support of poor people in the service of their political careers (Unsworth, 2010; Kosack, 2009). This imperative is strongest where the political elite needs the support of poor people to stay in power and in a situation where poor are or were assembled by a ‘political entrepreneur’ able to advance their demands (Unsworth, 2010).

2.3.3 Capacity or commitment?

While capacity and commitment can be distinguished empirically, scholarly opinions seem to differ on the nature of the relationship between capacity to act and commitment to act. From our earlier discussion, it is noted that capacity is the tool for effective service delivery (Fukuyama, 2013; Vom Hau, 2012), while commitment is the impetus to use it (Brinkerhoff, 2000; 2007). But are the two independent of each other? Some scholars argue that an elite committed to a policy might fail to implement such policy due to the lack of capacity to translate that commitment into achievement (Morissey and Verschoor, 2006; Haan and Warmerdam, 2012). For Morissey and Verschoor, when elites commit to a certain policy knowing they lack the capacity to honour such, it becomes a ‘mere preference’ (2006: 269). From a similar viewpoint, Post and colleagues (2010: 668) argue forcefully that commitment without capacity becomes ‘undistinguishable from lip service’. By implication, from this standpoint, capacity is seen as a precondition for commitment and an integral part of it. In other words, creating capacity must precede commitment.
On the other hand, some analysts argue that genuine commitment automatically entails the sourcing and developing of the missing capacities to deliver on a policy goal (Brinkerhoff, 2007). For Brinkerhoff, ‘capacity development is fundamentally an endogenous process that engages not just the abilities and skills, but the motivation, support, and aspirations of people... in other words, the ownership and political will’ (ibid: 111-112). Routley (2012) illustrates this point by arguing that it is in part motivations and commitments that create professionalised bureaucracy and in turn a professionalised bureaucracy induces commitment. From this perspective, capacity is not seen as an exogenous feature of commitment, but as an object of commitment and can in turn shape commitment. This led to some analysts to argue that capacity and commitment are mutually strengthening, and that the level of analysis significantly determines how the relationship between the two is conceptualised (Chemouni and Hossain, 2016). Their point of departure, on the one hand, is that capacity in the form of resources is considered as an exogenous variable and a tool waiting to be used. On the other hand, for example, when examining commitment to state building, the issue of initial capacity does not matter much, as it is then not a fixed factor and can be built overtime (ibid). Much earlier and specific to service delivery, Leonard (1982) cautioned that for services to benefit poor people, the implementing agency must have a special commitment to the delivery of program services to the poor, must have or be able to find resources and technical skills for the programme and must be able to adapt to the lessons of its experiences. Thus, for Leonard, for effective service delivery to be achieved, commitment and capacity are not mutually exclusive (ibid).

2.3.4 Elite capture, accountability and service delivery

Much of the analysis of service delivery and the resources to provide services focuses on ‘elite capture’. It is argued that elite capture can only be undermined through strong interventions from central government to guarantee social equality (Platteau & Abraham, 2002) or when elites benevolently tackle the needs of non-elites (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). The former perspective entails the institutionalisation of upwards accountability mechanisms and the enforcement of these mechanisms to ensure development resources are safeguarded and judiciously applied in the provision of services that benefit poor citizens. It is this view point that this thesis focuses on, as accountability is seen as a ‘principal-agent relationship’ (Gauthier and Reinikka, 2007), and that elite capture is not a permanent or static outcome (Saito-Jensen et al., 2010). Principal-agent theory conceptualises the situation where one party to a relationship (the
principal) requires a service of another party (the agent), but the principal lacks the necessary information to monitor the agent’s performance in an effective way (Batley et al., 2012). It is assumed that the principal wants the service, and that the difficulty to be overcome is about the agent’s compliance and the ‘information asymmetry’ that affects it (Booth, 2012). Thus, following our earlier discussion on the ‘service delivery triangle’, this exemplified the difficulties that top government officials often face as ‘principals’ in restraining the behaviour of their bureaucrats as ‘agents’ or service providers, and the problems the citizens face as ‘principals’ in ensuring that the actions of politicians as ‘agents’ are aligned with their interest.

Within the analytical field of service delivery, accountability has been viewed from both top-down and the bottom-up (Hickey and Mohan, 2008; Unsworth, 2010). The top-down or upwards accountability viewpoint has been on how formal political institutions, including regime type, political parties and the dynamics of political competition influence the accountability of providers (Batley et al., 2012). From an economics discipline point of view, the dominant explanation for the pervasive failure of accountability systems in developing countries is that of ‘political market inadequacies’. It is noted that there exist glaring information asymmetries between politicians, providers and service users (World Bank, 2004). Thus, citizens who are service users simply do not know who to hold accountable when services are not delivered. The bottom-up or downwards accountability standpoint concerns the circumstances under which citizens’ engagement encourages service providers to perform as planned. Broadly, ‘social accountability’ is any form of accountability that relies on civic engagement and is often used as an umbrella expression to describe all forms of downward accountability to citizens or users (Mcloughlin and Batley, 2012). Joshi and Houtzager (2012) argue that social accountability is basically a political process and not a set of apolitical systems or technical ‘widgets’. It is about collective action to hold public service providers to account and its nature changes in response to changing circumstances and the priorities of collective actors (ibid). In different situations, local actors may prioritise accessing information, monitoring of services, making demands, expressing grievances or protesting poor quality of services (Hossain, 2010; Bukenya, 2012).

A narrative exists that citizens can bring to bear informal controls over public officials. Saito-Jensen et al. (2010) argue that all actors, even when confronting structural constraints and oppressive situations, possess ‘agency’ - the capacity to act according to their interests.
Nevertheless, they also warn that individual ‘agency’ by itself may not be adequate to challenge the prevailing social order. ‘Agency’ is likely to become effective when actors ally with others with similar interests (ibid). Tsai’s (2007) study of 316 villages across rural China discovered that even though official accountability mechanisms were weak, local officials had a strong incentive to deliver public goods and services, where citizens were able to award them ‘moral standing’ for doing so. The study found higher levels of public goods provision in villages where solidarity groups that were open to everyone and embrace local officials were able to make these officials hold to their public obligations through informal sanctions (ibid). By implication, social accountability may be more effective where it is anchored locally and builds on pre-existing citizen participation.

However, recent studies show that citizen-centred accountability is no more a remedy than top-down accountability, as informal controls over public officials are unlikely to be adequate substitute for vertical accountability (Hossain, 2010; Unsworth, 2010). Indeed, alongside our discussion on ‘counter elite’ strategy, the social accountability agenda also ignores the difficulties that local people have in challenging elites by themselves. Thus, when top-down controls are inadequate, direct user pressure may face severe limitations. Booth (2011; 2012) argues forcefully that citizen empowerment cannot be a sufficient source of pressure for better service performance by itself. Elaborating this point, with evidence from Africa, Booth (2012) indicates that direct pressure from service users to improve incentives for the delivery of local public services is possible to have only a weak or even negative effect unless it is matched by strong top-down, supply-side pressure from political leaders and senior officials. Thus, there is the general recognition of the need to work on ‘both sides of the equation’ - building alliances between politicians and senior public officials on one side, and groups representing citizens’ interests on the other (Benequista and Gaventa, 2011: 39). Hence, top-down and bottom-up forms of accountability are believed to be most effective when they are mutually reinforcing (Batley et al., 2012), even though top-down pressures for performance in public service delivery can be effective even where bottom-up pressures are weak or absent (ibid, Booth, 2012). The following section is dedicated to reviewing contemporary debates on the politics of development.

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2 Personal communication with Samuel Hickey
2.4 Contemporary perspectives on the politics of development

As discussed briefly in chapter One, a growing literature has been critical of the ‘good governance’ agenda and the technocratic ‘best practice’ approach to governance in developing countries that has dominated academic and policy discourse since 1990. Critics argue for more politically attuned approaches (Leftwich, 1995; Grindle, 2007; 2011; Kelsall, 2008; Booth, 2009; Booth and Cammack, 2013; Marquette et al., 2016). This argument is even more pertinent in difficult governance contexts, such as in sub-Saharan Africa. In the last two or three years a growing number of leading analysts have called for the need to ‘do development differently’ (Booth and Unsworth, 2014; Levy, 2014; Andrews et al., 2013) by thinking through the ways in which a deeper understanding of the politics of development should reshape policy and practice.

2.4.1 ‘Doing development differently’?

In line with contemporary thinking around ‘best fit’ approaches to governance improvement - which entails being prepared to query the ideological forces, vested interests and political pressures that promote institutional imitation at global and country levels (Booth, 2011), there have been proposals for ‘politically smart, locally led’ (Booth and Unsworth, 2014), ‘going with the grain’ (Levy, 2014) and ‘problem-driven iterative adaptation’ (Andrews et al., 2013) approaches to development governance. These are examined in turn below.

Politically smart, locally led?

For Booth and Unsworth (2014), ‘politically smart’ refers to ways of thinking and working, whatever the goal and the arena of action. It entails being politically informed and astute, which includes a sense of history, an in-depth understanding of country or sector context, embedded structures, local informal institutions, relationships and actors. It equally includes ways of working that use information about ‘the politics with intelligence and creativity’ (ibid: 3). That development implementers and their funders must not just be well informed, but also clever operators, with the capacity to work with the politics or around them according to what works best in specific contexts. The ‘locally led’ is a way of underscoring the importance of the implicit knowledge, relationships, capacities and motives that can be brought to bear on an issue by actors who are local in the sense of not being mere development implementers (Booth and Cammack, 2013). ‘Locally led’ involves being locally owned, negotiated and delivered – that is
concentrated on issues and challenges that have local salience, both for potential beneficiaries and for some individuals or groups with the power to support, influence or block change. It embraces giving priority to local leadership and local capacity in the search for solutions to contextually identified problems (Booth and Unsworth, 2014). It is argued that deliberation and negotiation in local networks and organisations are crucial in reaching an adequate understanding of complex development problems, and in finding creative ways of addressing them that are practical, appropriate and sustainable (ibid).

**Going with the grain?**

Levy’s idea of ‘going with the grain’, argues that to achieve tangible development outcomes and make progress, there is need to begin by ‘seeing things as they are and to work from there’ (2014:1). Levy’s central argument is ‘to work with the grain is to look for entry points that can unleash an ongoing, virtuous circle of cumulative change’, (2014: 32) This line of argument directs attention away from ‘best practice’ blueprints in development policymaking towards the challenges of discovering a ‘good fit’ that subtly influence forward development drive. For Levy, development programmes that focused on technical knowledge and capacity alone will be insufficient in addressing development challenges that are deep-rooted in power arrangements and norms that are shaped by the prevailing political subtleties (ibid). Illustrating this idea, with evidence from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, South Korea, South Africa and Zambia, Levy argues that incremental and unthreatening reforms, which take into consideration the incentives of critical stakeholders, are needed in virtually all low-income countries. However, in some cases, he admits, this will necessitate alignment with influential elites and an acknowledgement that they will try to obtain personal benefits from the relationship (Levy, 2014; 2015). Indeed, Levy accepts, that such an approach ‘comes perilously close to condoning corruption’, but that for many countries, the alternative is increasingly ruthless predation and stagnation as resources diminish (2014: 197). Nevertheless, critics point out that Levy’s explanation ‘under-examined’ the importance of each country’s longer-term history and its culture, and argue that the role of history, ‘path dependence’ and culture in the creation of ‘the grain’ with which development practitioners must work should be underscored more in his account (Morris, 2015). Might ‘going with grain’ mean reinforcing the power of predatory elites and promoting values such as exclusion and misogyny?
Earlier and specific to Africa, Kelsall (2008: 629) had made an argument like Levy’s. Kelsall defines the grain of society or social grain as ‘patterns of thought, organisation, and accountability in Africa that have been both widely distributed in space and durable across time’. He argues that the essential features of the social grain in Africa flow from a history rooted in an economy that is centuries old (ibid). Relying on findings from over twenty studies commissioned to reveal the formal and informal rules, power structures, vested interests and incentives informing state and development institutions, Kelsall (2008) concluded that the realities of power and culture in Africa posed remarkable obstacles for the implementation of ‘good governance’. Thus, effective development programmes in Africa must be grounded in an understanding of the political, economic and social factors that either block or drive change within a country (Golooba-Mutebi and Booth, 2008; APPP, 2012), and that ‘...outside prescriptions only succeed where they work with the grain of African ways of doing things’ (Commission for Africa, 2005: 35).

**Problem-driven, iterative adaptation approach?**

Andrews and colleagues argue forcefully that many development initiatives fail to improve performance because they promote ‘isomorphic mimicry’ and propose a new approach to doing development - problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA), that can help countries escape from the ‘capability trap’ (Andrews, *et al.*, 2013: 234). PDIA contrasts with the ‘best practice’ solutions and focuses on solving locally identified priorities and encourages positive deviance and experimentation (ibid). It entails creating feedback loops that facilitate speedy learning - instead of lagged learning from ex post evaluation and engages several agents in creating relevant and viable interventions. Summarily, PDIA approach suggests development interventions should:

‘(i) aim to solve particular problems in local contexts, (ii) through the creation of an authorizing environment that facilitates positive deviance and experimentation, (iii) involving active, ongoing, and experiential learning and the iterative feedback of lessons into new solutions, and (iv) engaging broad sets of agents to ensure that reforms are viable, legitimate, and relevant—i.e., politically supportable and practically implementable’ (Andrews, 2013a: 242)

Very recently, using data emerging from a survey involving thirty case studies, Andrews concludes that, compared to ‘solution-and leader-driven change’ (SLDC3), PDIA explains why

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3 SLDC proposes that unusual success results when reforms are introduced through a disciplined, formal project process: solutions are fully identified up-front and are the focus of change; the reform is fully planned out at the start and implemented as planned; a champion drives the process; and a pure-form best practice solution is produced (Andrews, 2015: 197)
some reforms are ‘positive deviants’ - instances where reforms lead to more functional
governments that solve problems, are the exception, not the norm (2015: 197). In analysing these
cases, Andrews theorised that PDIA suggests that unusual success results when reforms are
initiated via an iterative process more reflective of ‘muddling through’. That change is inspired
by a problem, not a solution and that the reform content emerges through a process of
experimentation and trial and error, with multiple agents playing different leadership roles and
producing a mixed-form hybrid that is fitted to the peculiar context (ibid). The central argument
is that several governance reform initiatives fail to achieve sustained improvements in
performance because organisations pretend to reform by altering what policy statements and
institutional structures look like instead of what they do. Taken together, from this growing but
influential literature, one can identify four potential development outcomes. These are
summarised below4.

(i) **Technically optimal**: a situation where resources are largely well used, but the incremental
development resources to a sector of intervention do not necessarily institutionalised
commitment to development, as political elites are technically excluded. As politicians do not
gain from being associated with the development initiatives, they ignore such programmes. Thus,
the intervention could appear to be technically optimal but politically naïve.

(ii) **Politically optimal**: this is the scenario that is mutually beneficial to all stakeholders in the
intervention. Bureaucrats deliver as expected, the citizens benefit from additional intervention
resources and local political elites derive gains from being seen to be associated with the
development initiatives – including potential for utilising resources in a patronage manner.

(iii) **Transformative**: this is the situation where the intervention is intended to transform the local
politics of development into a more progressive direction by promoting commitment to
development, building stronger forms of accountability and oversight among others.

(iv) **Elite capture of intervention resources**: This is the scenario when developmental resources
are not judiciously utilised for the benefit of citizens and the poor as promised, due to capture
by political elites and their networks. Thus, political elites have found ways around the
‘safeguards’. In this circumstance, oversights and accountability mechanisms that may appear

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4 This discussion includes substantial insights from Samuel Hickey via personal communication
‘strong’ on paper but are weak in practice. These potential scenarios have been deeply examined in this thesis.

In concluding this discussion, it is important to note that although the call to ‘do development differently’ just recently got momentum and organised, there had been similar call to development planning since early 1980s (Johnston and Clark, 1982; Rondinelli, 1993; Bond and Hulme, 1999). For example, in a critique to the ‘rationalistic’ techniques of planning in the 1970s and the structural adjustments models of the 1990s, Rondinelli (1993) calls for the reorientation of development programmes and continuous testing and verification, if development undertaking is to cope effectively with uncertainty and complication of the development process. For Rondinelli, ‘adaptive approach’ that relies on strategic planning and facilitates innovation and experimentation that join learning with action is needed. In the future, he argues, dealing effectively and responsively with development problems will depend on the capacity of development professionals to use more effectively the political, economic and social mechanisms of authority to influence behaviour (ibid).

On their part, Johnson and Clark (1982: 4) had earlier pointed out that ‘even the most sophisticated ‘thinking-through’ analyses are inadequate for the complex and uncertain world in which development policies are carried out’. They stress the need for development policy design to incorporate complementary ‘acting-out’ approaches, from political arrangements to trial-and-error experimentation and argue forcefully that development strategy should include a categorical emphasis on learning ‘how to learn’ from the actual experience of development (ibid: 4). Still on iterative learning and development approaches, Bond and Hulme (1999) cautioned that the approach best suited to any condition is dependent on the goals of the intervention and the specific context. To them, development agencies and practitioners should think through how their development strategies fit into a specific context to make meaningful progress (ibid). Taken together, these ideas show that there had been what I call ‘first generation doing development differently’ movement, but that was never well-coordinated and did not work collectively. Crucially, much of the emerging evidence from these new approaches to ‘doing development differently’ relate to interventions and programmes designed and supported by bilateral and multilateral development agencies. Little is known about the grounded experiences of national
government driven interventions and programmes at both national and sub-national levels. This study offers insights into this important but neglected arena.

2.4.2 The nature of African states? Implications for service delivery

While Khan (2010) noted the prevalence of clientelist political settlements in all developing countries attempting to move to democracy, others have characterised African states as neopatrimonial (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Crook, 2010), and even kleptocratic (Acemoglu et al., 2004). Whether called neo-patrimonialism, ‘big man rule’ or clientelism, the patron–client relationship is recognised to be the main mechanism shaping political and economic life in African states (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Crook, 2010; Kelsall et al., 2010). Indeed, Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 63) characterised Africa’s neo-patrimonial regimes into three types: ‘clientelism’, ‘presidentialism’, and the ‘use of public resources for political legitimisation’. Thus, neo-patrimonialism, ‘a system of personal rule held together by the distribution of economic rents to clients or cronies’ (Kelsall, 2011: 01), may mean that the distribution of public goods and services is diverted from ‘a need-based approach to one aimed at meeting the political objectives of dominant elites’ (Abdulai, 2012: 51).

In the same vein, the Africanist literature has shown that political leaders can employ patronage to facilitate intra-elite accommodation and, in that way, stabilise their regimes (Arriola, 2009). Hence, understanding the role that patronage politics play in the African context is crucial in examining contemporary challenges and solutions to public service delivery. Some analysts have critiqued the neo-patrimonial paradigm as not providing adequate analytical basis for understanding politics and administration in Africa (Therkildsen, 2010). For Therkildsen, analyses based on neopatrimonialism tend to ignore the often-considerable variations in organisational capacity in the public sector and the uncertainty that typifies relations in neo-patrimonial settings (2010). He concludes that proponents of neo-patrimonial paradigm are predispose to ‘interpret all evidence of informality and poor performance because of patrimonial practices thereby ignoring other relevant factors identified by human relations and organisational theory’ (ibid: 1). This study is not concerned with this criticism, as the focus is not on neo-patrimonial paradigm, but on understanding the nature of African state and its implications for service delivery.
Additionally, this thesis pays specific attention to the variations in organisational capacity of the state.

Indeed, some scholars have disagreed on the distributional effects of neo-patrimonial politics in Africa and its implications for pro-poor service delivery and development in general. While some analysts argue that through the support and services the political elites deliver to their relatives and communities, state resources are broadly distributed and that this will potentially trickle down to benefit more citizens. From this line of argument, clientelism is perceived as a way of redistributing state resources from the rich to the poor (Auyero, 1999; De Wit and Berner, 2009). Kelsall (2011) emphasises, with evidence from 11 African countries, that neo-patrimonialism is not always as economically detrimental as some imagine, and argues that it can be attuned with rapid, pro-poor economic growth. However, some have argued strongly that clientelism tremendously privileged limited socio-political elite and was hardly economically redistributive (Van de Walle 2009). And that even if benefits are secured via informal negotiations, they may not trickle down to benefit the most disadvantaged groups (Mitlin, 2014). One clear conclusion here is that political elites often allocate disproportionate share of public resources to their electoral strongholds in a competitive clientelist political settlement contexts. Abdulai’s (2012: 110) study of state elites and regional inequality in Ghana revealed how state elites deployed state resources to favour the ruling party’s regional ‘vote banks’ at the expense of other regions. Similar patterns prevail elsewhere in Africa and beyond.

Closely linked to the above discussion, and of interest to this study is the classification of some African states as not merely neo-patrimonial but as ‘kleptocratic’ (Acemoglu et al., 2004; Baylies, and Power, 2001). Acemoglu and colleagues (2004: 162) in their study of ‘kleptocratic politics’ argue that many African states have suffered under ‘kleptocratic’ regimes, where leaders implement highly ineffective policies, pocket the resources of their states and citizens, and even use the proceeds for their own glorification. In all their country cases, they argue, kleptocratic regimes appear to have caused the impoverishment of the citizens and are calamitous for economic performance (ibid). Thus, by implication, under kleptocratic regime, political elites deliberately weaken institutions and their ability to deliver public goods and services for most citizens. Indeed, kleptocracy emerges in weakly entrenched polities, where formal institutions neither place limitations on the actions of politicians nor make them accountable to citizens.
(Acemoglu et al., 2004). In line with our argument in chapter Three, Nigerian state can usefully be classified as ‘kleptocratic’. The following section examines the role of development coalition in (re)shaping elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery.

2.4.3 Development coalitions and pro-poor service delivery

Peiffer (2012) identifies ‘reform coalitions’ to include both state and business actors, working for policy and institutional reforms. To Peiffer, a ‘reform coalition’ is seen as ‘a formal or informal political mechanism and process utilised and formed by state and business actors, initiated by either, which enables them to work cooperatively to address specific state and market collective action problems through institutional and policy reforms...’ (2012: 4). By implications, this type of coalition can help address collective action problems constraining development that would be difficult to address in its absence. However, the writer cautioned that coalition may end due to a failure of the coalition to effectively address a specific difficulty, resolve differences between members, and when commitment to the coalition is weak or changes (ibid). It is argued that the focus of the international development practitioners and to lesser degree developing country bureaucrats, on endorsing institutional and structural change as the means to overcome poverty has almost completely overshadowed the role of human ‘agency’ in promoting or restraining development (Leftwich and Wheeler, 2011). That, political leaders and other actors, individually and collectively, in and outside the political and public sphere, work within formal and informal contexts, and play essential role in building and reshaping institutions, as well as influencing development processes and outcomes (Ibid).

From a similar perspective, Booth and Therkildsen (2012) suggest that what shapes success or failure in development, is the extent to which mutual interests, cooperation and synergies emerge between groups of actors (elites and non-elites). Hickey (2006) had earlier noted that successful implementation of pro-poor policies or reforms may emerge at particular moments when the interests of private and political actors converge with the interests of poor groups in the society. These lines of arguments point to the critical role played by elites and coalitions of elites in shaping development outcomes, including poverty reduction at different levels. Some analysts have argued that since elite capture is a ‘temporal phenomenon’, it can be undermined not only through state intervention or the benevolence of elites, but similarly through the actions
of non-elites by creating an effective ‘alliance’ among non-elites and other actors (Saito-Jensen et al., 2010). While examining the role played by coalitions in challenging gendered power structures and promoting women’s leadership and decision-making, through grounded case studies in the Pacific, Fletcher and colleagues (2016) argue that coalitions would develop over time and are integrally self-motivated entities influenced by a complex array of factors. That their leadership styles and memberships change, and they will operate and engage differently at different points of their life-cycle. To the authors, ‘formative events’, as ‘what brought people together to do something in a concerted way’, are essential because the event’s type appears to shape the future of a coalition and how it operates (ibid: 27). It is noted that different forms of common objective within a coalition helps coalitions increase their coherence, influence and support base. Different forms of coalition leadership can determine its capacity to respond to changing conditions, broker relationships and confront vested interests and be sustained over time (Fletcher et al., 2016). Here, the nature of coalition’s ownership is important as the extent to which its agenda is locally owned, and its methods of working are politically relevant, appears to be crucial in determining the effectiveness of coalitions (ibid).

Others suggest that where there are indications that elite commitment to pro-poor social provisioning is strengthened by pressure to meet subordinate groups’ needs, such pressure often comes due to the emergence of well positioned ‘elite champions’ of transformation (Chemouni and Hossain, 2016). Illustrating this point, with evidence from Ghana, Abdulai (2016) reported how ‘inclusive elite coalitions’ between traditional leaders, religious leaders, community members and political leaders led to significant improvement in maternal health outcomes and the quality of health service delivery in general. Thus, it is evident, as McLaughlin and Batley (2012) argue, whether or not pro-poor services are successfully delivered depends largely on the co-ordination between actors, the type of relationships between them and the conditions which collaboration occurs. Indeed, it has been suggested that where developmental coalitions exist, they should be nurtured and invested in (ESID, 2016). This includes supporting the role of politically salient stakeholders, such as parent teacher associations (PTAs) and health workers committees in the delivery of basic services to the poor.
2.5 Fiscal decentralisation and the politics of service delivery?

At the heart of the CGS to LGAs scheme lies the idea of fiscal decentralisation within Nigeria’s federal system (chapter Three). It is observed that one of the major impediments to the effective service delivery by public bureaucracies in most developing countries has been the concentration of decision-making authority within central government (Ahmad et al., 2005; Turner and Hulme, 1997; Turner et al, 2015). State institutions have often been recognized as geographically distant from their citizenry thereby making service delivery to remote areas and poor people challenging (Crook, 2003). Decentralisation, it is argued, will solve this problem by taking governance closer to the citizens (Manor, 1999; Crook, 2003; Francis and James, 2003). Decentralising governance refers to the reorganisation of authority so that there is a system of shared responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels, with the aim of increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of governance (Manor, 1999), and particularly increasing the authority and capacities at the sub-national levels (UNDP, 1999). One of the supports provided as to why improving service delivery is behind most decentralisation efforts, is that these services are utilised locally (Ahmad et al., 2005). Hence, concentrating the delivery of basic services, such as education, health and, water and sanitation would not be helpful to the citizens (World Bank 2003). Indeed, some analysts noted that many governments and their citizens often associate the problems of service delivery with the centralisation of these services (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2005).

Decentralisation has various components. A usual categorisation differentiates administrative decentralisation, political decentralisation and fiscal decentralisation (Manor, 1999). Recently, some scholars have considered market or economic decentralisation, which entails the transfer of decision making from the state to the private or non-state actors (see e.g. Turner, et al, 2015). Administrative decentralisation (de-concentration) entails the shifting of responsibilities from central government’s officials to those at sub-national levels under the authority of the central government (Turner, et al, 2015). This is usually considered as a weaker form of decentralisation. Political decentralisation refers to the devolution of responsibility for aspects of decision-making, finance and implementation of some public functions to the lower level, such as a local, state or regional government, aiming to empower elected officials of the citizens with additional power (Manor, 1999; Crook, 2003). This implies a significant devolution of power. Fiscal decentralisation
involves devolving expenditure and revenue generation to a lower level government, at the same time retaining financial responsibility (Weingast, 2014). It is argued that it is principally a means of increasing central government’s control of lower levels of government (ibid). Fiscal decentralisation can be in the form of intergovernmental transfers from central to local government via transfer payments or grants. Such grants can be given conditionally or unconditionally (Shah, 2007). Conditionality implies continual central control, while unconditionality indicates a much greater degree of delegation of control. This study focuses on fiscal decentralisation as the CGS to LGAs scheme represents its variant.

2.5.1 Fiscal decentralisation and service delivery

One of the theoretical benefits of fiscal decentralisation is the potential to improve service delivery, since lower level governments can be more receptive to the needs and preferences of the citizenry (Mascagni, 2016). These probable benefits, it is argued, include improved efficiency in service delivery and reduced information and transaction costs associated with the delivery of public goods and services (World Bank, 1997). In most countries, fiscal decentralisation is practiced through the instruments of intergovernmental transfers from the central to lower level governments (Shah, 2007).

Intergovernmental fiscal transfers for service delivery?

Scholars have observed that well-functioning governmental arrangement that delivers quality public goods and services for the citizens while managing fiscal resources judiciously, is considered critical to poverty reduction and rapid development (Galasso and Ravallion, 2004; Shah, 2007). Central governments normally shoulder responsibility for national public goods (e.g. defence), while sub-national governments (state and local) are often assigned the provision of vital public services, such as health, education, water and sanitation, in addition to state public goods, such as roads (Boadway, 2007). Intergovernmental transfers are often used to provide incentives for local governments to act as ‘agents’ of the central government (Shah, 2004). In this way, the central government benefits from local management in providing a service (Gamkhar and Shah, 2007). In theory, effective service delivery requires that those responsible for providing services have a clear mandate, adequate resources, and sufficient flexibility to make decisions and are accountable for the decisions they make (World Bank, 2007). However, there are no
guarantees that fiscal decentralisation will improve service delivery (later returned to in this section). Additionally, central governments may wish to support local government’s expenditures in certain areas, while covering only a portion of the total cost. Basic healthcare schemes and other social services are examples of services that a higher-level government may wish to encourage due to their pro-poor impact. Scholars have argued that ‘conditional lump sum transfers’ and ‘closed-ended matching grants’ are the appropriate instruments for such arrangements (Shah, 2004; Boadway, 2007). These instruments are discussed in turn below.

I. Conditional and unconditional grants

Intergovernmental transfers or grants can be broadly classified into two main categories. Specific purpose transfers (conditional or earmarked) and general-purpose transfers (unconditional) (Shah, 2007). Conditional grants or transfers are meant to offer motivation for lower level governments to undertake specific programs or activities that central government believes will achieve national priorities. These grants may be regular (mandatory) or discretionary (ad hoc) (Shah, 2007; Kitchen, 2007). Conditional transfers typically specify the type of expenditures that can be financed (input-based conditionality). These may be capital expenditures, operating expenditures, or both. Conditional transfers may also require attainment of certain results in service delivery (output-based conditionality). Shah (2007), adopting a ‘results-based’ theory, argues that input-based conditionality is often ineffective while the output-based conditionality can enhance grantor’s objectives at the same time preserve local autonomy.

Conditional grants may include matching (cost sharing) conditions by requiring grant recipients to finance a specified percentage of expenditures using their own resources (Boadway, 2007). By implication, conditional matching grants promote local commitment to the initiatives that demand to be ‘matched’ and motivate recipient governments to expend on grant-funded services rather than on services that are not supported by grants. Again, matching requirements can be either open ended, meaning that the grantor matches whatever level of resources the recipient provides, or closed ended, meaning that the grantor matches recipient funds only up to a pre-specified limit (McMillan, 2007). The Nigerian CGS to LGAs scheme is an example of the ‘open-ended’ matching grant. Indeed, it is observed that matching obligations encourage greater examination and local ownership of grant-financed expenditures, while closed-ended matching is helpful in ensuring that the grantor has some control over the costs of the transfer program.
(Shah, 2004; 2007). Nevertheless, some have pointed out that matching conditions create a greater burden for a recipient authority with limited fiscal capacity (Weingast, 2014). Fiscally constrained local governments may have a lower capacity to attract conditional grants that better better-off local governments. To address this challenge, it is argued, it may be helpful to set matching costs in reverse percentage to the per capita fiscal capacity of the jurisdiction to allow poorer jurisdictions to participate in grant-financed programs (Shah, 2007; Kitchen, 2007).

Empirically, it has been have shown that conditional grants distort jurisdictional boundaries and are often administratively complicated (McMillian, 1995; Kitchen, 2007). For example, McMillan (1995) argues that by stating where and how the funds are to be spent, central or higher-level governments stake a claim to responsibility in the area to which the grant applies. That their use may leave smaller or weaker local governments at a disadvantage since they may not be able to afford the expertise required to cope with administrative procedures associated with grant programs—or even to understand the programs (ibid). Such circumstance is compounded if the grant system comprises many conditional grants from different ministries or agencies with changing formulas and criteria for each program. The outcome may be a network of programs and bureaucracies that are administratively demanding in contexts where administrative capacity is known to be weak (Kitchen, 2007). Indeed, World Bank (2007) observed that jurisdictional uncertainty and operational complexities are major shortcomings to the use of conditional grant programs.

In contrast, unconditional grants are general purpose transfers that can be used for any local expenditure, especially in a federal system. Unconditional grants should promote fairness, efficiency, predictability, flexibility, and accountability (Kitchen, 2007). Not surprisingly, local governments or recipients of grants generally favour unconditional grants, which provide them with the flexibility to make their own spending judgements (ibid). In practice, a combination of formula-based and discretionary grants exists within most countries’ fiscal systems. While in some countries grant schemes are complicated, in others they are relatively simple and straightforward (Heymans 2006; Kitchen, 2007). In Nigeria for example, grants are automatic and shared vertically across the three tiers of government as - federal (52.68%), state governments (26.72%) and local governments (20.60%), (see chapter Three). Almost the entire grant is in the
form of unconditional lump sum, while the ‘conditional’ grants come in a form of a scheme and are incremental to the statutory arrangement, as exemplified by the CGS to LGAs scheme.

2.5.2 Fiscal decentralisation and service delivery outcomes in developing countries

While fiscal decentralisation is intended to strengthen local capacity for effective delivery of public services, it increases the likelihood of political capture at the lower level of governance (Manor, 1999; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2005; Khemani, 2010; Faguet, 2014). From available anecdotal evidence from a range of countries, including Brazil, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines, Khemani (2010) found evidence of political capture of decentralised public resources for personal benefits. Indeed, this capture was not restricted only to elites - even poor and traditionally disadvantaged voters demanded private goods from local politicians (such as jobs, subsidies, cash and in-kind transfers) instead of broader public goods such as health, education and water (ibid). In India, for example, where resources were transferred directly to local governments in the form of ‘schemes’ for poverty reduction, and the primary responsibility of the local council was that of identifying beneficiaries, Khemani (2010) argues that schemes based on fiscal decentralisation led to clientelist local politics. Based on these findings, he concludes that fiscal decentralisation on its own might not be inexpensive or effective in delivering improved public services, if the local jurisdictions supported are politically captured (ibid). Thus, careful planning is required to identify institutional designs or conditions under which political capture is reduced and accountability for local public goods increased. It can also be argued that fiscal decentralisation of this type is a political strategy by central governments to bypass or weaken intermediate or regional governments that pose a ‘political threat’ (Dickovick, 2007).

Shah (2004) reviewed the model of decentralisation for health care in Brazil – where results-oriented contracts were developed between central government (providing funds) and local clinics (providing services) that were to ensure accountability between levels of government. The contract system institutionalised greater autonomy for local governments than other forms of decentralisation, holding them accountable for their results—but not binding their processes (ibid). Judging by this, establishing appropriate accountability mechanisms is a necessary prerequisite for successful fiscal decentralisation of any form. The experience of the Ugandan Local Government Development Program (LGDP), initiated in 2000–2001, is informative here. The LGDP transfers funds to both sub-county and district levels based on agreed performance criteria.
and a required counterpart cash contribution of 10% (Francis and James, 2003). As part of a reformulation of local government financing, the LGDP makes resources available for initiatives at local levels, together with the capacity to plan and manage them, sanctioned by performance incentives and penalties. Following this, improvements in social services, especial health and education were witnessed and attributable to the increased central conditional funding under the LGDP (Francis and James, 2003; GoU, 2015). Nonetheless, the LGDP was not without challenges, as difficulty in obtaining the community’s contribution in areas of weak revenue base, insufficient support and monitoring of sub-counties by districts and inflated tendering were identified (Francis and James, 2003). While recognising the program to hold prospects for increasing local autonomy, Francis and James cautioned that genuine downward accountability will require more than a new set of procedures and institutions, as those with vested interests can turn the institutions and opportunities created through decentralisation to their own advantage (ibid).

Following evidence reviewed from a selected group of sub-Saharan African countries, Crook (2003) finds that after decentralisation, the degree of responsiveness to the poor and the extent to which there is an impact on poverty are determined primarily by the politics of central–local relations, and the general regime context, particularly the commitment of central political leaders to poverty reduction. Thus, Crook (2003) concludes that poverty related programmes implemented with the help of central funding, in cooperation with local governments, gets strong organisational impetus at the local level from the commitment of local employees and political actors. For Crook, a specific incentive comes from the political motivations to mobilise coalitions in favour of such policies, or from ‘counter-elites’ who, in the process of competition, see the policies as a way of constructing a new political base (ibid). From the above review, it is evident gap exists in the literature on how different forms of politics and governance arrangements (mis)shape service delivery to poor people in developing countries. Specifically, not much is known about the conditions under which elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery emerge and become sustained, as well as how state capacity is built and/or strengthened to deliver services effectively. Crucially, much of the literature on elite commitment and state capacity relate to national level analysis and less is documented at the sub-national level (e.g. Chopra, 2015; Bukenya, 2012). Flowing from these discussions, the conceptual framework developed for this study is presented next.
2.6 Conceptual framework for the study

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.2 was developed from the recent literature on the politics of service delivery and the review of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s documents. The framework hypothesised the links between the CGS to LGAs scheme and elite commitment, on the one hand, and state capacity, on the other hand. It was envisaged that the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Millennium Development Goals (OSSAP-MDGs) in trying to ‘do
development differently’ and to promote commitment to national development priorities, designed the CGS to LGAs scheme to reform governance at the LGA level – including strengthening capacity for pro-poor service delivery. Under the Nigerian federal system, the provision of primary healthcare, primary education and rural water supply falls under the statutory responsibility of the LGA. Thus, the framework formulated an inference that joins a governance reform programme (CGS to LGAs, Box A in Figure 2.2) with the processes of securing elite commitment (Box B) and strengthening capacity for service delivery (Box C). In tracing elite commitment, the framework employs Brinkerhoff’s (2000) analytical framework to operationalise the concept at multiple levels of implementation. The figure shows commitment characterised in terms of five distinct but interrelated indicators of locus of initiative, degree of analytical rigour, mobilisation of support, application of credible sanctions and continuity of efforts, adding Chopra’s (2015) dimension of perceptions of political feedback to the framework. On state capacity aspect, it utilises Fukuyama’s (2013) notion of ‘internal forms of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy’, to trace capacity strengthening activities in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national and local levels. As indicated by the two-way arrows, the inter-relationships between these key concepts are examined in this study with a view to understanding how they play out in practice.

The CGS to LGAs scheme resource allocation mechanism assumed that elite capture phenomena (Box D), associated with lower level governance (Khemani, 2010), would be avoided and allow poor citizens to benefit from additional resources through improved service delivery (Box E). This is the likely scenario that intervention resources are not judiciously utilised for the benefit of citizens as intended due to capture by political elites and their networks. Relatedly, it envisaged the ‘agency’ of the poor citizens through social forms of accountability to reinforce top-down accountability mechanism to check potential elite capture in the implementation of the scheme. This was duly investigated at various levels of implementation and its implications for pro-poor service delivery (chapters Five and Six). As politics shapes service delivery and in turn service delivery provides a sphere of politics (Batley, et al., 2015), the diagram attempts to capture the feedback mechanisms within the wider political economy context. Overall, the central proposition of this framework is that the CGS to LGAs scheme would catalyse commitment, avoid capture and strengthen state capacity. Chapter Eight analysed the outcomes of the scheme’s implementation in line with the recent thinking on the potential development outcomes.
2.7 Conclusion

This chapter sets out to define key concepts, review contemporary debates on the politics of service delivery, and development more broadly, and present the conceptual framework used in this thesis for investigating the politics of pro-poor service delivery. From the review, it is evident that the empirical literature concerning elite commitment and state capacity is evolving, but more empirical evidence is needed to help conceptually ground this emerging literature. For example, there is some consensus among analysts on the theoretical link between capacity and commitment. What is unclear is whether capacity is endogenous or exogenous of commitment. The question here is, in the condition of high capacity and the absence of genuine commitment, can ongoing policy implementation be sustained? Are the two mutually reinforcing? This study partly addresses these questions. This review equally showed that the practice of fiscal decentralisation is ongoing in most developing countries and different variants exist, while the outcomes remained mixed. While some successes in down-wards accountability are noted, it is evident that in the absence of commitment to top-down accountability, social forms of accountability seem ineffective. The key definitions used in this study are summarised in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: List of key definitions for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>the exercise of power and all the processes of struggle, cooperation and negotiation on taking decisions about how resources are to be owned, used, produced and distributed (Leftwich, 2004: 25)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State capacity</td>
<td>the ability of the states to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws openly and transparently - including inputs to the bureaucracy. Internal forms of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy as a measure of executive arm quality (Fukuyama, 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elite commitment</td>
<td>the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives... and to sustain the costs of those actions over time (Brinkerhoff, 2000: 242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elite capture</td>
<td>a circumstance where political and bureaucratic elites control the decision-making process or arena, and obtain most of the benefits of a policy or programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Service delivery</td>
<td>the provision of basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation, through both government and alternative provisioning (World Bank, 2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The author
On theoretical framing, this chapter draws on a wide set of theoretical fields. Originally, service delivery was viewed as a sociological issue (Weber, 1968) or a matter of development administration (Rondinelli, 1993). Political science, and specifically political economy analyses (Huntington, 2006; Fukuyama, 2004; Booth and Unsworth, 2014) and, more recently, critical theory have provided analytical frameworks often critiquing normative political theory (liberal democratic) frameworks. Most recently, economics, and particularly the new institutional economics (Besley and Ghatak, 2007) has taken a deep interest in service delivery. This study draws on most of these theoretical fields, but focuses mainly on political economy analysis, as the study specifically examines elites’ incentives to deliver services and/or raise state capacity, and their role in resource distribution and development more broadly.

On the broader ideas that inform this study, the ‘doing development differently’ ideas largely influence the central focus of this thesis and, closer to Booth’s ‘politically smart, locally led’ idea. As a critique to the technocratic, ‘best practice’ approaches to development governance under the ‘good governance’ agenda, the call to ‘do development differently’ is an appealing one. However, this review shows that much of the available evidence to date relates to policies and programmes largely driven by donors and development agencies. Little is known about African-state driven governance programmes, such as the CGS to LGAs scheme, which is the focus of this study and, to the ways in which informal institutions shape and adopt to reforms. Additionally, most of the available empirical literature is limited to the national level and little is known about sub-national or multi-level processes. The conceptual framework for this study offers a multi-level analysis along the policy chain. The research methodology and design for investigating the politics of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation is presented and discussed in chapter Four. Before that, essential information on Nigeria’s political economy and service delivery is presented next.
CHAPTER THREE

Nigeria’s Political Economy and Service Delivery Reforms

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the contextual setting of Nigeria and provides background to the analysis in the subsequent chapters. The overarching aim of the chapter is to critically examine and highlight the main political economy factors that have shaped (and mis-shaped) commitment to pro-poor service delivery and governance reforms more broadly. The chapter begins by highlighting the political and socio-economic contexts, while underscoring the country’s geography of poverty and the existing fiscal decentralisation arrangements. It subsequently assesses the country’s service delivery reform efforts following the return of democratic government in 1999, after a long period of military dominance of politics. Since the return to multi-party democracy, three democratically elected Presidents have served between 1999 and 2015, under the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Interestingly, this period, the country’s Fourth Republic, marked its longest democratic experiment since independence in 1960. Thus, this Chapter focuses specifically on the Fourth Republic service delivery reform efforts and analyses the reforms along these three Presidencies: Obasanjo’s Presidency (1999-2007), Yar’Adua’s Presidency5 (2007-2010) and Jonathan’s Presidency (2010-2015).

The US$18 billion Paris Club Debt Deal that led to the freeing of approximately US$1 billion of revenue annually for pro-poor spending was negotiated during the Obasanjo Presidency in 2005. The chapter argues that the commitment of the country’s political elites to governance and service delivery reforms facilitated the Paris Club debt relief ‘outside of HIPC6 framework’ and enabled the subsequent establishment of the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) funds that led to the implementation of various policies and programmes towards the MDGs agenda, including the CGS to LGAs Scheme. The processes of negotiation with the Paris Club did not simply produce state promises but created some genuine elite commitment to reform, especially at the top levels. However, with subsequent changes in the country’s political leadership, such commitment eroded over time.

5 President Yar’Adua died while in office 3 years into his tenure in 2010 and his then Vice President Jonathan took over.
6 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
3.2 Nigeria: A brief political and socio-economic background

Nigeria, a former British colony, is a federal republic located in West Africa and bordering Niger to the north, Benin to the west and Chad and Cameroon to the east. The southern regions are coastal and lie on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. The country’s total area is approximately 923,768 km² (comprising 923,768 km² of land and 13,000 km² of water) and lies between latitudes 4° and 14°N, and longitudes 2° and 15°E. Like most African states, Nigeria was an artificial creation of colonialism. British colonial rule began in the 19th century and led to the merging of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. British colonial administrative and legal structures were the instruments of governance across the country, whilst practicing indirect rule through traditional institutions especially in Northern Nigeria. Nigeria became an independent state on October 1, 1960 and since then the country has alternated between democratically elected governments and military rule that led to the country’s civil war between 1967 and 1970.

Figure 3.1: Political Map of Nigeria showing 36 States and the Federal Capital (FCT)
Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with a 2006 population census figure at 140 million people and projected to about 170 million in 2014 (NPC, 2014). The country has two major religions – Christianity and Islam with loosely half of the population being Christians who live mostly in the southern and central parts of the country and Muslims who live in the Northern and South-western regions. However, a minority of the population practise indigenous religions. It is ethnically diverse with over 250 ethnic groups (NPC, 2006). Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are the three major ethnic groups and account for over 70 percent of the country’s population (ibid). Analysts argue that these configurations of several large ethno-religious clusters, each of which could have been the basis of a nation, are the ‘fault lines’ and often the sources of tension in the country (Osaghae, 1986; Booth and Chambers, 2014). Nigeria is presently divided into 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT), which are further sub-divided into 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) (Figure 3.1). The current political configuration, though not constitutionally recognised, aggregated the country into six ‘geopolitical zones’ namely; North Central, North East, North West, South East, South-South and South West. However, in practice, the Northern zones are broadly classified as ‘Northern Nigeria’ and the Southern zones as ‘Southern Nigeria’. In 1999, after long years of military rule, the country returned to democratic rule and has remained stable with four successful democratic transitions. The 2015 general elections were adjudged to be one of the most credible elections ever conducted in the country’s recent history (Transparency International, 2016).

In terms of socio-economic characteristics, from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, agriculture was the major source of foreign exchange earnings for the country and employed around 80% of the rural labour force (Obadan, 2001). From the North to the South, agriculture was contributing greatly to the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), thus making it the mainstay of the Nigerian economy then. However, with the discovery of oil and the oil boom of the late 1970s, agriculture lost its place as the main driver of the economy and currently contributes 42% to the GDP (NBS, 2015). Presently, Nigeria is the 5th largest oil producing country in the world and with an average crude oil production of 2.4 million barrels per day; oil has become the dominant source of government revenues. Nevertheless, regulatory constraints and security risks in the oil producing zones have limited new investments in the oil and natural gas sector leading to sharp decline in oil production recently (IMF, 2012).
With the recent statistical rebasing exercise by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria has emerged as Africa's largest economy, with an estimated GDP at US$479 billion (NBS, 2015). The Nigerian economy has continued to grow at an average of 6%-7% per annum (ibid). Despite this economic performance and its huge potentials, the country still lacks adequate infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth and development and has not translated its wealth into a significant decline in poverty levels. Nigeria currently ranks 152 on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2016) and about 62% of the population live in extreme poverty (NBS, 2015). This situation evidently contrasts with the country's performance on the key macroeconomic indicators and points to a significant governance challenge of translating economic growth into appreciable improvement in the welfare of the citizens (IMF, 2012; ActionAid, 2015). For some writers, Nigeria is the classic example of the ‘oil curse’ – a country where natural resource extraction has undermined social and political development.

3.3 The geography of poverty in Nigeria

Official statistics show that the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is predominantly rural, especially in Northern Nigeria (NBS, 2012; ActionAid, 2015). Rural areas generally continue to experience disproportionate share of poverty compared to the urban areas, including ‘food poverty’ (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Nigeria’s rural vs urban poverty Incidence by different poverty measures (2010)

![Bar chart showing rural vs urban poverty incidence by different poverty measures (2010)]

Source: Author, based on National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2012)
Overall, the incidences of poverty continue to increase over the last three decades. For example, since 1980, the percentage of Nigerian population classified as ‘extremely poor’ has increased from 6.2% to 38.7% in 2010 (see Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3: Poverty Incidence in Nigeria (1980 – 2010)**

![Poverty Incidence in Nigeria (1980-2010)](image)

Source: Author, based on National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2012)

Evidently, the poverty crisis in Nigeria differs by region, sector and gender, and impacted youths, mothers and children than the adult male population (NBS, 2012; ActionAid, 2015). For example, poverty levels vary widely across the country’s six geo-political zones. Figure 3.4 shows the proportions of the population in these zones that were ‘relative poor’, ‘absolute poor’ and ‘food poor’ as at 2010.

**Figure 3.4: Regional incidence of poverty in Nigeria as at 2010**

![Regional Incidence of Poverty by different Povert Measures](image)

Source: Author, based on National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2012)
Figure 3.4 reveals that the three Northern regions have the highest levels of poverty across both absolute and relative measures. These pre-existing poverty levels would have implications for the way and manner development interventions were designed and implemented in Nigeria (chapter Five).

3.4 The politics of fiscal decentralisation and service delivery in Nigeria

At independence in 1960, Nigeria inherited a federal system comprising of a national government and three regional governments – Northern, Eastern and Western. This federal structure reflected the regions each dominated by the country’s major ethnic nationalities - Northern region dominated by the Hausa-Fulani; Western region dominated by the Yoruba and the Eastern region dominated by the Igbo. Analysts refer to the period before and immediate post-independence as the ‘golden era’ of Nigerian federalism (Asaju, 2010). During this era, the three regions became involved in a healthy economic competition via wealth creation and retaining significant portions for the development of these regions (ibid). This equally led to regional specialisation in commodities with comparative advantage to the regions. For example, the Northern region specialised in groundnuts and cotton production, the Western region specialised in cocoa and rubber production, while the Eastern region specialised in palm oil and the coal value chain (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

By 1963, an additional region - the mid-Western region - was created out of the Western Region, making the country a federation of four regional governments. These regions continued until 1967, when a twelve-state federal structure was established (Adamolekun, 1991). These patterns of states creation continued under the various military regimes until 1996, when six more states were created, bringing the total number of states to 36 and the federal capital (FCT). The country was initially divided into 304 local government areas (LGAs). But for largely political rather than economic logics, the number of LGA kept increasing as more states were created and currently there are 774 LGAs in the 36 states in the country. Thus, Nigeria has a three-tier federal system comprising of the federal, states and local governments. This arrangement was preserved in the 1979 Constitution and maintained in the consequent amendments to the Constitution in 1989 and 1999 (Akindele et al., 2002). Hence, Nigeria has a decentralised system of governance with revenue and expenditure responsibilities assigned to each tier of government. However, analysts
have long cautioned that the existing practice of concentrating power at the federal level and the unhealthy level of economic dependence of the states and LGAs on the federal government that depends largely on oil revenue is not a sustainable and economically viable fiscal arrangement (Adamolekun, 1991; Akindele et al., 2002) and would therefore prefer the inherited fiscal structure at independence. They contend that the regional economic competiveness, where each region focused on areas of competitive advantage, engendered a highly diversified economy with the potential of achieving sustained growth that is inclusive (ibid).

At present, revenues are shared among the three tiers of government through statutory monthly allocations using the ‘vertical and horizontal’ formulae. On the vertical side, monthly allocations are automatic and shared vertically as - federal (52.68%), state governments (26.72%) and LGAs (20.60%). The statutory allocations are in the form of ‘unconditional lump sum’ (FGN, 2015). When conditional grants are provided, they come in a form of a scheme and are incremental to this statutory arrangement. On the horizontal side, population is the key determinant in the grants allocation across the state and LGAs (NBS, 2013). This system of unconditional statutory grants has been embodied in constitutional provisions rather than in ordinary legislation, an indication of the political sensitivity of these arrangements. Adamolekun (1991) argued forcefully that although such an approach has made it difficult to adjust the system in response to fluctuations in the economy and the fiscal condition of the various governments, it has provided a degree of predictability and insulation for the states from sudden and impulsive changes in the volume of their grants from the federal government. Indeed, it is stated that since the period of colonial administration and the introduction of the Richard Constitution in 1946, almost every constitution making process has sought information on what principles to employ for the distribution of national revenue in Nigeria (Akindele et al., 2002).

Thus, different revenue allocation efforts have emerged as typified by the Aboyade Commission of 1977, the Okigbo Commission of 1980; the Allocation of Revenue Act of 1981; the Allocation of Revenue amendment decree 1984; and the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) of 1989 and 1999 respectively. The RMAFC has since 1999 been established as an ‘autonomous’ and permanent body backed by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with broad mandate to: (i) monitor the accruals into and disbursement of revenue from the Federation Account; (ii) review from time to time, the revenue allocation
formulæ and principles in operation to ensure conformity with changing realities - provided that any revenue formula which has been accepted by an Act of the National Assembly shall remain in force for a period of not less than five years from the date of commencement of the Act (RMAFC, 2015).

3.4.1 The politics of local government autonomy and service delivery

It is evident that local government autonomy remains an ‘unresolved’ issue in Nigeria’s fiscal federalism. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended) recognised the local government as a third tier of government but subject to the control of state governments (FGN, 2009). However, the same Constitution allocated the responsibilities for the provision of primary healthcare and education to the LGAs and guaranteed its financial autonomy. Some scholars have argued forcefully that LGAs in Nigeria are hardly autonomous from the state governments (Anyanwu, 1999; Orluwene, 2008). Anyanwu (1999) illustrated how financial autonomy for LGAs in Nigeria averaged 7.52% between 1993 and 1999 compared to 68% in developing countries. It is evident that the state governments have virtually total control of the LGAs funds through the operations of the ‘Joint Local Governments Account’, which is directly under the control of the state governments. Monthly statutory allocation from the federal government to the LGAs is ‘warehoused’ in this ‘Joint Account’. It is observed that most state governments execute programmes and capital projects on behalf of the LGAs under different arrangements (Okafor, 2010). Even the recruitment, training and promotion of senior LGA bureaucrats are handled by the state governments through the ‘States Local Government Service Commissions. Many critics have noted that in most states, LGAs are merely given fixed monthly sums to cover recurrent expenditure, such as administrative costs and the payment of salaries and allowances for junior cadre of LGA employees (Asaju, 2010; Okafor, 2010).

One consequence of this ‘micro-management’ by the state governments is that the LGAs are unable to effectively discharge their constitutional responsibilities of providing basic services to all citizens. It is observed that with the re-emergence of military rule, General Babangida’s regime (1984-1993) introduced some reforms aimed at granting autonomy to the LGAs (Asaju, 2010). Such governance reforms included the abolition of the state ‘Ministry of Local Government’, direct statutory allocation to local government by bypassing state government, and the
establishment of executive and legislative arms in Local Councils (Igbuzor, 2003). Similarly, the statutory allocation to the local government was also increased from 15% to 20% in 1992. Not surprisingly, it was reported that this attempt by the Federal government to radically transform the status of the LGAs provoked ‘negative reactions’ from the states and ‘suspicion’ about the federal motives in promoting the reforms (Gboyega, 2001; Asaju, 2010). Consequently, the reforms were not sustained as the General Abacha’s military regime (1993-1998) reversed most of the reforms. Since the emergence of the Fourth Republic in 1999, many analysts, including the labour unions, the civil society and some federal legislators have called for the review of the Constitution to grant greater autonomy to the LGAs. In 2006, then President Obasanjo set up the Ndayako’s Technical Committee to review the structure of the Local Government Councils in Nigeria with a view to addressing the constitutional impediment to the autonomy of the LGAs. However, it is evident that state governors are not favourably disposed to the attempts to grant greater autonomy to the LGAs. At present, LGA elections are organised by the state electoral commissions under the direct control of the state governors. Elections are barely conducted alongside national elections (Presidential, National Assembly and Gubernatorial) and serve as mechanism to install political associates and loyalists of the state governors at the LGA level.

Despite Obasanjo’s administration being widely credited for its commitment to governance reforms (IMF, 2005; Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007), it was unable to get the necessary support from the federal legislators and the state governors to amend the Constitution to grant full autonomy to the LGAs. To partly address this and to engender transparency and accountability, in 2004 Obasanjo’s administration began to publish the monthly statutory allocations to the federal, states and local governments in the major national dailies (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006). Thus, it is evident that while the federal government seems to be promoting local government autonomy, the state governments seem to be resisting this, and instead demanding the federal government to shed weight and reduce its overall control of 50% of national resources and to devolve some of its constitutional responsibilities to the states (Orluwene, 2008). Presently, there is a Bill at the National Assembly seeking to amend the 1999 Constitution to grant full autonomy to the LGAs.
3.4.2 The challenges of service delivery at the local government level

With the state governments’ continued control over finances and decision-making processes of the local governments (Ajasu, 2010), it is evident the LGAs continue to struggle to discharge their constitutional responsibilities of providing basic services to the citizens at the local level. The delivery of primary healthcare and primary education that are essential to poverty reduction are the responsibilities of the LGAs and are seriously challenged due to inadequate human and material resources. Awofeso (2010) argues, for example, that the numbers of all cadres of health staff need to be at least doubled in order to provide adequate health workers to address Nigeria’s health needs. It is important to note that most LGAs in Nigeria are rural, and as such they are unable to attract and retain qualified medical personnel, especially the doctors and nurses due to largely the ‘adverse living conditions in the rural areas’ (ibid: 2). Similarly, available evidence indicates that the main challenges to the effective delivery of primary education include the quantity and quality of primary school teachers and the systemic decay in physical infrastructure (Khemani, 2006; Alaba, 2010; ODI, 2012).

Primary healthcare delivery

WHO (2009) finds that the main challenges affecting the delivery of health services in Nigeria are inadequate decentralisation of services; dilapidated health infrastructure (buildings and equipment); and weak institutional capacity, such as ineffective system for supervision of health services in both public and private sectors. And where there is service delivery, it is hugely over-subscribed (ibid). As discussed earlier in this Chapter, the provision of primary healthcare services falls under the responsibility of the LGAs. In recognition of the challenges faced by the LGAs in the delivery of primary healthcare (PHC), the federal government established the Nigerian National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) in 1992 to ‘sustain federal assistance’ and provide technical and programmatic support to states and LGAs in the functioning of PHC services (NPHCDA, 2014). These efforts of the federal government notwithstanding, analysts have observed that huge challenges remain in the delivery of effective primary healthcare services at the LGAs and health outcomes across the LGAs remain poor (Oriakhi, 2006; Khemani, 2006; WHO, 2015). These challenges range from acute shortage of qualified and trained health workers; inadequate health facilities; limited employment capacity of the LGAs;
lack of adequate compensation; limited financial resources; to adverse living conditions in rural and remote areas (Awofeso, 2010).

Ironically, while the LGAs have been saddled with this array of responsibilities, in practice, dealing with these constraints are beyond the capacity or the jurisdiction of the LGAs. For example, the institutions that recruit and train all cadres of health workers are either under the control of the federal or state governments. The tertiary institutions that train medical doctors are owned and funded by the federal government while the health institutions that train nurses, midwives and community health workers are all under the control and funding of the respective state governments. This is arguably why the LGAs continue to virtually rely on the state government. Awofeso (2010) reported that approximately 60% of Nigeria’s states had to provide financial incentives to entice health workers to relocate to rural areas. It is for these reasons that some critics argue that the LGAs are mere creation of the state governments and ought not to ‘exist’ in the first place. Although there have been improvements in health outcomes over the past few years (ODI, 2012), there is still cause for concern. For example, under-five mortality rate has improved from 201 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 109 in 2016 (NPC, 2010; HDI, 2016). Similarly, infant mortality has reduced from 100 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 69 in 2016 (ibid). Again, these rates differ substantially between rural and urban areas as well as geographic zones in the country. For instance, in 2009, the under-five mortality rate is 121 deaths per 1,000 live births in urban areas, compared with 191 deaths per 1,000 live births in rural areas (NPC and ICF Macro, 2009). Geographically, under-five mortality ranges from 89 in the South West to 222 in the North East, while infant mortality ranges from 59 deaths per 1,000 births to 109 in the North East (ibid). Nonetheless, despite its huge economic resources, Nigeria ranks 152 out of 193 countries in terms of overall Human Development Index (HDI, 2016).

Primary education delivery

The National Policy on Education (NPE) that was formulated in 1977 and updated in 1981 and 1991, segmented the education system into six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary education and four years of tertiary level education, tagged as ‘6-3-3-4’ system (UBEC, 2004). The system shared the responsibilities for education delivery among the federal, state and local governments. While the responsibility for the delivery of the six years of primary education is assigned to the local government, the six
years of junior and secondary education falls within the responsibilities of the state government, while the federal government shoulders the responsibility for the four years of tertiary level education. However, with the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which was designed to allow an exit point after the first nine years of schooling to provide opportunity for careers through vocational training or apprenticeship has created some tension as to whose responsibilities it is between the states and LGAs. The UBE policy requires education to be ‘free and compulsory for all children at the primary and junior secondary school levels’ (UBEC, 2004).

Some experts have cautioned that with the UBE, the federal government has set up a complex set of institutional and inter-governmental relations for providing basic education, while, at the same time, leaving no government clearly accountable for results. Elsewhere in Africa, Winkler and Gershberg (2003) while offering explanation for the shortcomings with the education decentralisation noted that often the central government rather than moving to improve local governments’ capacity, it appears to use this lack of capacity as justification for retaining control over a large share of education expenditures. Taken together, all these leave the LGAs in Nigeria struggling to deliver quality primary education, and this is manifested in the resultant poor education outcomes. Table 3.2 shows vital statistics for primary education in Nigeria.

Table 3.1: Summary key primary education statistics in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total enrolment</th>
<th>Total No of teachers</th>
<th>Pupil/teacher ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>23,129,927</td>
<td>574,579</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>24,185,027</td>
<td>576,665</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While the national average for pupil-teacher ratio may look impressive, available statistics show that most rural LGAs are in practice grossly understaffed, as recruited teachers often prefer to remain in the urban LGAs (chapter Seven; also, Alaba, 2010). A higher proportion of boys, than of girls, enrol in both primary and secondary school, although enrolment of girls in school rose from 78% to 85% between 2000 and 2008 (NPC, 2010). The gross enrolment ratio has been consistently over 10% higher for boys than for girls. It is reported that dropout rates for girls tend to be significantly higher in schools that do not have separate toilet facilities for boys and girls (ibid.). As with poverty, the North-west and North-east geopolitical zones have the highest proportion of persons with no education – roughly seven in ten women and about half of men
The South-south geopolitical zone has the lowest percentage of those who have never been to school - 15% among females and 8% among males (ibid). The next section examines the Fourth Republic’s attempts at service delivery reforms.

3.5 The Fourth Republic’s service delivery reforms (1999 to 2015)

The country’s return to democracy in 1999 after 16 years of military rule marked the beginning of the Fourth Republic. Table 3.2 chronicles key political economy events that shaped service delivery reforms and of relevance to this study.

Table 3.2: Key political economy events of interest to the study since 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May, 1999</td>
<td>Obasanjo becomes President, winning 62.6% mandate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2000</td>
<td>Independent Debt Management Office (DMO) established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 2003</td>
<td>Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala becomes Nigeria’s Finance Minister and mandated to negotiate Paris Club Debt relief for Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January, 2004</td>
<td>Federal Government began publishing monthly allocations to federal, state and local governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2004</td>
<td>Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2005</td>
<td>Nigeria and the Paris Club reached an historic agreement on an US$18 billion or 60% write-off of Nigeria’s Paris Club debt. Nigeria committed to spending Debt Relief Gains (DRG) on pro-poor programmes towards achieving the MDGs. The Deal was fully negotiated and last instalment of $30 billion paid by April 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2005</td>
<td>Ms. Amina Mohammed appointed as the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>DRG implementation commenced at the federal level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2007</td>
<td>Yar’Adua becomes President having served previously as state Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>President Yar’Adua declared his assets publicly and advised all political office holders to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>National Committee on Conditional Grant Scheme (NCCGS) established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2010</td>
<td>Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Governments (CGS to LGAs) is designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2010</td>
<td>President Yar’Adua died and Vice President Jonathan becomes President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2011</td>
<td>President Jonathan elected as President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2011</td>
<td>Ms. Precious Gbeneol appointed as Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2015</td>
<td>Jonathan lost re-election bid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation
3.5.1 Obasanjo’s administration and commitment to service delivery reforms

The emergence of Obasanjo as President in 1999 following his release from prison on account of his alleged involvement in a ‘coup plot’ to overthrow General Abacha’s military regime is noted by many political analysts as an outcome of military elites’ bargain to transfer power to someone they trust of Southern origin and ensure political stability following long years of military intervention in the polity” (Ihonvbere, 1999; Olukoyun, 2004; Obi, 2004). It is observed that as a former military officer and having ‘voluntarily’ transferred power to an elected civilian government in 1979, President Obasanjo will ‘work to protect his former constituency’ and serve as a bridge builder between the Southern and Northern parts of the country (Walker, 1999). While Nigeria’s existence as a federal state has been preserved through long years of military rule, yet ethno-regional tensions have continued to undermine the nation’s democratic governance. Thus, Obasanjo’s administration inherited a bureaucracy populated largely by military appointees (ibid), and the early moves by the President were decisive in strengthening national security apparatus and making changes to key strategic agencies. Indeed, in a single sweep, President Obasanjo retired all military officers that held any form of political appointment as a way of neutralising the military and stabilising the polity. Observers argued that immediately after resumption into office, President Obasanjo began to appoint technocrats into key political and bureaucratic positions based on merit rather than political patronage (Olukoyun, 2004; Okonjo-Iweala, 2005; Porter and Watts, 2016). This was achieved largely because Obasanjo had little or no ‘political debts to settle’, and as such had considerable prospects for manoeuvre and reforms (Lewis, 2003).

Key governance and service delivery reforms

At the inception of President Obasanjo’s administration, human development indicators in Nigeria were comparable to those of the much poorer least developed countries (World Bank, 2015; IIAF, 2016), while widespread corruption weakened the effectiveness of various public expenditure programs (Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007). While that the first administration of President Obasanjo (1999-2003) focused on ensuring political stability and tackling corruption, his second administration (2003–2007) embarked on a comprehensive economic reform program based on a ‘home grown strategy’ - the National Economic

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7 Obasanjo was a former Military Head of state from 1976 to 1979.
Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (IMF, 2005; Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwako, 2007). As noted earlier, there appears to be a consensus that President Obasanjo assembled a highly competent ‘Presidential Economic Team (PET)’\(^8\) to drive his administration’s overall governance agenda. The NEEDS became the country’s medium-term development plan and its objectives were addressed in four main areas: macroeconomic reform, structural reform, public sector reform and institutional and governance reforms (National Planning Commission, 2004). The development of NEEDS at the federal level was accompanied by individual State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS), which were prepared by all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). At its core, the NEEDS underscored the significance of private sector development to support wealth creation and poverty reduction in the country. Some of the key reforms and programmes introduced by Obasanjo’s administration and of interest to this study included: The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); the ‘Service Compact with All Nigerians’ (SERVICOM); the Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC); Civil Service Reform; the Due Process Office (DPO) and the Debt Management Office (DMO) among others. Table 3.3 below provides the details of these reform efforts.

**Public service and institutional reforms**

Obasanjo’s leading advisers reported that the civil service in Nigeria was oversized, under-skilled and poorly remunerated, resulting in poor service delivery (Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwako, 2007). For instance, about 70% of staff in the Ministry of Finance were low-level employees with only secondary school qualification, about 13% were university graduates, and only 8% had degrees related to economics, finance or accounting. Broadly, it was estimated that about 70% of federal civil servants had a high school diploma or lower, with less than 5% possessing up-to-date computer skills (ibid). It was reported that civil servants largely received low pay but numerous fringe benefits, such as free vehicles, free housing and several other allowances that often led to waste and misuse of scarce resources (Okorie and Onwe, 2016; IMF, 2005). The reform of the civil service began with five pilot ministries and subsequently extended to most MDAs (Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwako, 2007). Internal verification exercises were said to be conducted to update personnel records and payroll data; organizational structures for the

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\(^8\) The PET comprised of 17 technocrats amongst them key Ministers and Special Advisers.
reforming ministries were reviewed and rationalized, while the appropriate professional skills needed were identified. Through these exercises, a total of 35,700 officials were disengaged from the civil service at an estimated cost of about N26 billion (US$203 million), while 1,000 high flying university graduates were recruited. More importantly, in the process of restructuring, about 8,000 ‘ghost workers’ were expunged from the payroll, and this enabled the upward review of competent staff salaries by up to 15% in 2007 (Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007: 14). As part of these processes, for the first time, the federal government’s payroll systems were computerised with the introduction of an ‘Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System’ (IPPIS) to help in the overall efficient management and monitoring of staffing within the federal civil service.

Table 3.3: Key reforms and programmes – 1999 to 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Reform/Programme</th>
<th>Mandate/Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NAPEP</td>
<td>Established in 2001 with the mandate to monitor and coordinate all poverty eradication activities in Nigeria. A development specialist - Dr. Magnus Kpakol was appointed as the Director General.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SERVICOM</td>
<td>Established in March 2004 as part of the Federal Government’s initiative to improve the quality of public service delivery in Nigeria. All federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies were mandated to establish a ‘SERVICOM Unit’ to comply with the initiative principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>EFCC</td>
<td>Established in 2004 through an Act of parliament to ‘rid Nigeria of economic and financial crimes and to effectively coordinate the domestic effort of the global fight against money laundering and terrorist financing’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ICPC</td>
<td>Established in 2000 through an Act of parliament to ‘rid Nigeria of corruption through lawful enforcement and preventive measures’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Civil Service Reform</td>
<td>Civil service reform began with five pilot ministries and subsequently was extended to all MDAs. This led to the establishment of the Bureau of Public Sector Reforms (BPSR) in 2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DPO</td>
<td>Established in 2001 to mainly conduct ‘Value for Money’ audit in the award of all public contracts and ensure compliance with due process public procurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Publication of Allocations</td>
<td>Introduced in 2004 a monthly publication (in major national newspapers) of federal, state, and local government shares of revenue from the country’s federation account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DMO</td>
<td>Established in 2000 to efficiently manage Nigeria’s external and domestic debts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation
As a demonstration of commitment to the public sector reforms, Obasanjo’s administration established the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) in 2004, as an independent and self-accounting body, with the mandate to ‘initiate, coordinate and ensure full implementation of government reform policies and programmes’ (BPSR, 2015: 4). The BPSR’s mission is to ‘facilitate the building of Nigeria’s public service into a highly functional, professional, customer-focused and result-oriented institution’ (ibid). Alongside the civil service reform, the federal government embarked on far-reaching institution reforms. At the time President Obasanjo resumed office in 1999, Nigeria had a reputation for corruption and scored 1.6 on the Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index\(^9\) (CPI) in the world and the overall governance ranking of 36 of the 54 African countries on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance\(^10\) (IIAG). Similarly, Nigeria’s ‘overall governance score’ of 42.5 out of 100 fell below the overall average of 46.7 out of 100 for Africa. Figure 3.5 shows the country’s trends on IIAG overall governance performance since year 2000, consistently below the average for sub-Saharan Africa.

**Figure 3.5: Nigeria’s overall IIAG governance performance (2000 - 2015)**

![Figure 3.5: Nigeria’s overall IIAG governance performance (2000 - 2015)](image)

Source: Author, based on IIAG data

The IMF (2005) argued that Nigeria’s corruption and poor governance affected its growth and effective public service delivery. In a corrupt environment, funds for development and investments, such as education, health and infrastructure are often diverted through procurement fraud, patronage for access to services, misuse of facilities and even absenteeism.

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\(^9\) Various at [www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview](http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview); CPI Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people, risk analysts and the general public, and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt)

\(^10\) Various at [www.mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag/downloads](http://www.mo.ibrahim.foundation/iiag/downloads)
For example, various studies on the extent of corruption in Nigeria before Obasanjo’s administration have revealed widespread perception of leakage of public funds and bribery across public institutions (Kaufmann et al., 2005). Indeed 100% of the Nigerian firms surveyed reported that public funds were diverted to private uses, in contrast to about 45% of firms in South Africa (ibid). Similarly, it is reported that:

‘A federal government survey noted that prior to 1999 the government lost an average of about ₦40 billion (US$300 million) each year from corrupt practices in public procurement. This occurred in various forms: inflation of contract costs; award of contracts for non-existent projects; over-invoicing; diversion of public funds to foreign banks; and low project quality because of the use of inexperienced contractors. Moreover, procurement costs in Nigeria were significantly higher compared with costs for similar projects in neighbouring countries such as Ghana’ (Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007: 17)

Thus, to address leakages in the public procurement systems, the administration established a Due Process Office (DPO) under the Office of the President to conduct ‘Value for Money’ audits in the award of all public contracts. As part of this mechanism, any projects exceeding US$400,000 require the approval of the DPO and a database of competitive international prices developed to serve as a guide to the new competitive bidding process (Omolara, 2013). Relatedly, the government started publishing ‘public tenders’ journal’ periodically as a way of reducing patronage in the awards of contracts. One direct consequence of this is that it saved the federal government about US$1.5 billion between 2001 and 2007 (IMF, 2007). It is argued that the Due Process reform is one of the most hated and resisted in the entire reform package, but one of the most effective in bringing sanity, transparency and competition in the procurement arena (ibid; Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007; Nwogwugwu and Adebayo, 2015). Indeed, it was observed that ‘many letters of commendation and appreciation’ were the then Head of the Due Process unit – Dr. Oby Ezekwesili (who later became Vice President of the World Bank), from contractors who never had an opportunity to win government contracts in the previous regimes but have begun to compete and won (Ezekesili, 2004).

As shown in Table 3.3, the ICPC and EFCC were established between 2000 and 2004 to fight corruption and related offences, as well as economic and financial crimes respectively. Observers believed this reform was one of the most difficult task any administration will undertake in Nigeria since ‘corruption will always fight back’ (NL2, 10/02/2016). The EFCC has at different
times been recognised internationally as an effective ‘anti-corruption’ agency. Lawson (2009: 1) reported that EFCC achieved a significant measure of success due to its ‘independent prosecutorial powers and the institutionalised strategies of its chairman’. By early 2005, it was reported that the EFCC has seized about US$700 million in assets and about 100 high-level public officials investigated and charged to court for economic crimes and corruption (IMF, 2005). Some examples include the two Ministers dismissed and the forced resignation of the then Senate President over corruption allegations (ibid). It is important to note that by the time President Obasanjo left office in 2007, the country’s CPI had improved with a 2.2 score (from 1.6 in 1999), largely due to the commitment shown in the implementation of the overall institutional reforms to tackle corruption and related offences (IMF, 2012). But at the peak of these reforms, Nigeria remained heavily indebted and needed ‘Debt Relief’ to free up resources to sustainably execute the NEEDS and related reforms and programmes (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006). This period coincided with a global push to implement the MDGs agenda.

The politics of debt relief negotiations

The IMF acknowledged that Nigeria was implementing its ‘home-grown’ programme and FGN invited the Fund to support reform under a non-borrowing instrument (IMF, 2005). Nigeria’s macroeconomic policies and structural reforms were broadly in line with IMF Executive Board’s recommendations (ibid). Many analysts observed that President Obasanjo was ‘highly committed’ to securing debt relief to enable his administration deliver on its electoral promises (NL1, 31/12/2015), and he used his first term in office to travel round the world in search of solutions to the country’s debt problem. It is widely believed that the appointment of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, from the World Bank, as Nigeria’s Finance Minister marked the beginning of Obasanjo’s successful debt relief negotiation strategy. Indeed, Okonjo-Iweala in her vivid account of ‘Nigeria’s fight for debt relief’, confirmed that negotiating and securing Paris Club debt relief was at the core of her terms of reference when she was appointed in 2003 (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006). Despite the high oil revenues, at the end of the country’s civil war in 1970, successive Nigerian leaders had borrowed ‘unsustainably’ to finance post war reconstruction and other state projects and infrastructure (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006). But it was during General Abacha’s Military regime in the mid-1990s that the relationship with the Paris Club of Creditors worsened and Nigeria could not service its Paris Club debt. By December 31, 2004, Nigeria’s external debt stood at US$35.994
billion, of which Paris Club debt was 86% or US$30.9 billion (ibid). Figure 3.6 shows the extent of Nigeria’s external indebtedness in 2004.

**Figure 3.6: Nigeria’s external debt outstanding by Creditor as at December 31, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creditor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral</td>
<td>7.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris Club</td>
<td>85.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Club</td>
<td>4.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Paris Bilateral</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promissory Notes</td>
<td>2.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on Debt Management Office (2005)

What made Nigeria’s quest for debt relief unique and more difficult to secure, was that it did not qualify for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative at that time (IMF, 2004). Nigeria needed a Paris Club debt relief involving substantial ‘debt write-off’ but did not meet the threshold of the IMF/World Bank’s ‘Debt sustainability analysis’ that would suggest the country’s debt was not sustainable in the long-term and could ultimately severely weaken growth (World Bank, 1996; Okonjo-Iweala, 2006). President Obasanjo had publicly declared his administration’s commitment to secure debt relief a key priority. It was reported that the President while campaigning for the debt relief once told an international audience: ‘Nigeria spends more on interest payments than it does health care and education. Given this debt level, Nigeria cannot achieve the Millennium Development Goals’ (Debt Management Office, 2005: 3). As at that time, Nigeria had rescheduled its Paris Club debts on four different occasions - 1986, 1989, 1991 and 2000 (ibid).

Thus, with the concerted efforts of President Obasanjo, the Ministry of Finance, the Economic Management Team, DMO, National Assembly, civil society and some development partners, the ‘credible implementation of the country’s NEEDS’, as well as the securing of an IDA only status with the World Bank, the creditors and multilateral financial institutions began to positively
consider Nigeria for debt relief (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006; Rieffel, 2005). It was noted that several negotiations and lobbying continued with the political and bureaucratic leadership of the G-8 and creditor countries. However, a key requirement for the Paris Club debt relief was for Nigeria to have a ‘formal agreement’ with the IMF - which it did not have at that time (Debt Management Office, 2005). To achieve this, Nigeria swiftly signed up to a new framework with the IMF known as a Policy Support Instrument (PSI) (ibid). The PSI is essentially an arrangement for IMF officials to endorse Nigeria’s ‘home-grown, locally driven’ economic reform program – the NEEDS. It was reported that with the country meeting most of the Paris Club’s ‘technical criteria’ and backed by strong political support from Paris Club member countries, especially the UK, Nigeria was eventually granted debt relief:

> ‘Paris Club statement was an agreement to negotiate a debt relief package on Nigeria’s US$30 billion debt whose essential elements would consist of a) payment of US$6 billion of arrears owed—a standard Paris club requirement; b) Naples terms treatment on the remaining US$24 billion of debt i.e. a two-thirds write off on this portion; and c) a discounted (at 25 percent) buyback on the remaining US$8 billion after reduction under Naples terms. This would yield another US$2 billion of debt relief for a total debt relief package of 60 percent or US$18 billion’ (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006: 14)

On June 29, 2005, Nigeria fully negotiated an US$18 billion or 60% Paris Club Debt Relief under the above terms and outside of the HIPC framework. A central part of Nigeria’s commitment to the Paris Club was that it would use the annual savings of US$1 billion that would have gone into debt servicing (the Debt Relief Gains) to improve human development and fast track progress towards achieving the MDGs. The debt relief was ‘unprecedented’ because the Paris Club had never agreed to a buyback of debt at a discount (Rieffel, 2005), and this was the second largest relief for any country in the Paris Club’s 50-year history (Debt Management Office, 2005).

**Service delivery effort: Pro-poor policies and programmes?**

President Obasanjo’s administration was credited with initiating various policies and programmes towards pro-poor service delivery. The established and funding of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001 to develop strategies and implement programmes to eradicate poverty was viewed by many analysts as a demonstration of ‘genuine’

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11 It was reported that Chancellor Gordon Brown was committed to Nigeria’s quest and convinced his colleagues at the G-8 Finance Ministers’ meeting in May 2005 to consider a debt relief package for Nigeria.
commitment to address poverty in the country (Obadan, 2001). Indeed, this commitment was exemplified by the establishment of the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC)\(^\text{12}\); the appointment of Dr. Kpakol (an accomplished technocrat) as head of NAPEP; the establishment of offices in all 36 states and the quality of some of the programmes undertaken. One of the key features of NAPEP is the adoption of the bottom-up approach to programme implementation and monitoring (Aliu, 2001). This did not come easily and Obadan (2001) reported the ‘opposition of state governors’ to NAPEP programmes in the fear that the PDP controlled federal government would use it as a campaign strategy, and as such they worked to frustrate the scheme. Despite strong efforts this study could not obtain the official impact evaluation of NAPEP programmes. However, a retrospective study argued that NAPEP as a programme targeted at eradicating poverty had not been effective and produced a mixed bag of limited success and continuing challenges, due to poor coordination, political interference and corruption (Anyebe, 2015). It is important to note that, post Obasanjo’s administration, NAPEP programmes were under-funded and eventually not sustained.

The introduction of the universal basic education programme and the establishment of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in the early days of the administration reinforce this view. The financing of basic education (primary six and Junior secondary three) is the joint responsibility of states and local governments. However, the federal government decided to intervene in the provision of basic education with 2% of its Consolidated Revenue Fund (UBEC, 2004). As mentioned earlier the, the UBE programme is aimed at the provision of ‘free and compulsory’ basic education across the country (ibid). Despite its aim of improving the delivery of quality basic education, huge challenges remain, especially with the quality and quantity of teachers (chapter Seven, also UBEC, 2013). In the area of primary healthcare delivery, it is seen as a sign of commitment, the establishment and funding of the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA), with the mandate to ‘provide technical and programmatic support to states, LGAs, and other stakeholders in the functioning, planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring of PHC services in Nigeria’ (NPHCA, 2014: 2). NPHCA is said to be well funded, as it is the ‘interfacing agency’ with key donors and development partners in the

\(^{12}\) NAPEC was chaired by the Vice President with the mandate to centrally coordinate all poverty alleviation related activities of all the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies.
coordination and delivery of primary healthcare services across the country (ibid; NL1, 31/12/2015). Similarly, the establishment of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in 1999 as a Public Private Partnership and aimed at ‘providing accessible, affordable and qualitative healthcare for all Nigerians’ (NHIS, 2012) was viewed as a way of transforming the health system in Nigeria (NL7, 10/02/2016). However, after 12 years of existence, the scheme is yet to achieve its objective as only about 1.5 million of Nigeria so far benefited from the scheme (NHIS, 2012).

Taken together, these efforts, including the establishment of the Office of Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) (discussed later in chapter Five), led leading scholars and many development partners to conclude that President Obasanjo had shown strong commitment to reforming governance and promoting pro-poor service delivery (Porter and Watts, 2016; IMF, 2005; SPARC, 2015; NL5, 14/01/2016). Obasanjo served the constitutional two terms of four years each, thus had a longer time horizon that enabled the continuation of policies and programmes overtime. As noted earlier, Obasanjo was able to undertake these reforms because he had little or no political debt to settle, was in control of the PDP’s decision-making organs, and ran the government like a ‘military dictator’ (Porter and Watts, 2016). Some argue that he wished to demonstrate results to achieve a controversial ‘third-term agenda (ibid, also Sahara Reporters, February 2006)’.

3.5.2 Yar’Adua’s administration and commitment to service delivery reforms

President Yar’Adua came to power in May 2007, having previously served as state governor for eight years. Although he had a track record for performance as a state governor, political observers viewed his emergence as a product of President Obasanjo’s resolve to hand over power to someone with a ‘mix of integrity and capacity’ to sustain his administration’s reforms (Adeniyi, 2011). Arguably, Yar’Adua perfectly fitted into the PDP’s ‘zoning arrangement’ to transfer power to the ‘Muslim North’ after President Obasanjo, from the ‘Christian South’.

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13 The Executive Secretary equally made this remarks during an interactive session with federal legislatures monitored by the researcher, May 2017.

14 It was alleged that President Obasanjo convened a ‘National Policy Reform Conference (NPRC)’ in 2005 to enable him to amend the Constitution to secure a ‘third-term’ in office. Obasanjo has publically denied this. [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article); [www.npr.org/templates/story/story](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story);
completed his tenure (ibid). It is also widely believed that as a former governor, Yar’Adua enjoyed the support of his former colleagues in the ‘influential’ Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF)\textsuperscript{15}.

Obasanjo, many believe, used his ‘power of incumbency’ and his control of the ruling PDP’s structure to get the party’s delegates to vote for Yar’Adua during the Presidential primaries of the Party in 2006, which he won. Yar’Adua eventually won the country’s presidential election in April 2007 with about 70% votes (INEC, 2007). However, the credibility of the 2007 presidential election was strongly criticised by election observers and opposition candidates\textsuperscript{16}. President Yar’Adua himself later acknowledged publicly (on national television) that the election that brought him into power was ‘marred by irregularities’ and promised to immediately reform the electoral system to improve the management of future elections in the country. Thus, many have described Yar’Adua’s Presidency as a continuation of what Obasanjo set in motion. Consequently, this ‘political debt’, it is argued, would have implications for President Yar’Adua’s ‘independence’ and his ability to initiate and execute policies and programmes in the same manner Obasanjo did (Adeniyi, 2011). However, on assumption of office, President Yar’Adua unveiled his ‘Seven Point Agenda’ as the major policy thrust of the government. This agenda targeted seven key priority areas, of which three were directly related to the MDGs (Box 3.1 below). Interestingly, ‘poverty reduction/or eradication was not explicitly mentioned in the Agenda.

In December 2007, Yar’Adua took the country by surprise, as he publicly declared his personal assets, and advised all his political appointees to do so. This act was viewed by many analysts as a demonstration of his administration’s commitment to run a more transparent and accountable government (NL1, 31/12/2015; FGN, 2014). It is important to note that Yar’Adua was the first President to do this. The administration continued to strengthen the institutions undertaking reforms, through the appointment of competent technocrats as cabinet members and heads of MDAs. It is widely observed that most heads of MDAs appointed by President Obasanjo continued to serve under Yar’Adua’s administration. An example of particular interest to this study is the promotion of Dr. Mansur Mukhtar, the then Director General of the Debt Management Office (DMO) to serve as the Finance Minister, and the retention of Ms. Amina

\textsuperscript{15} The NGF comprised of all the 36 state governors in Nigeria and quite influential within the country’s political settlement

\textsuperscript{16} See for example www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa
Mohammed as the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (SSAP-MDGs). Such a strategy ensured the retention of ‘institutional memory’ and the continuity of pro-poor reform efforts of the previous administration (NLS, 14/01/2016). It also indicated that technical competence, rather than political patronage, would determine ‘who’ gained key positions in the reform initiatives.

**Box 3.1: President Yar’Adua’s Seven Point Agenda**

1. Critical Infrastructure: This would involve paying attention to adequate power supply to facilitate industrialization. Development of Rail, Road, Air and Water transportation to facilitate movement of persons, goods and services.
2. Niger Delta: This would involve complete overhaul of the region to ensure provision of physical infrastructure and empowerment of the people.
3. Food Security: Through this vision, the administration has declared interest in enhancing agricultural and water resources to ensure adequate food supply for local consumption and export.
4. Human Capital Development: This would involve reform of education sector to improve skills and enhance standards.
5. Land Tenure and Home Ownership: Review of the Land use laws to facilitate proper use of the Nation’s land assets for socio-economic development; and citizens’ access to mortgage facilities.
6. National Security and Intelligence: Through this strategy, the administration intends to give adequate attention to the provision of security to lives and property.
7. Wealth Creation: This aspect would be used to initiate the process of diversification of the nation’s revenue base and increased production to provide jobs.


President Yar’Adua was credited with scaling-up investments towards MDGs and empowering the SSAP-MDGs to engage the states and LGAs in the implementation of the DRG (Dode, 2010; NL2, 10/02/2016; OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a). Relatedly, Due Process Office (DPO) was upgraded to a Bureau of Public Procurement (BPE), the anti-corruption agencies – EFCC and ICPC were strengthened, and a Public Service Institute (PSI) was remodelled to ‘strengthen the organisational capacities of public service Institutions through provision of transformational...
training, research & consulting\textsuperscript{17}. Within two years, Nigeria’s CPI score crept up from 2.2 in 2007 to 2.4 in 2010 (Transparency International, 2010). Thus, the political – bureaucratic relationship was similar to that of Obasanjo’s administration, where bureaucrats were allowed appropriate autonomy to initiate and implement policies and programmes in line with the broader mandate. President Yar’Adua’s Economic Management Team\textsuperscript{18} (EMT) led the development of the country’s long-term development plan, tagged ‘Nigeria Vision 20:2020’ (National Planning Commission, 2009). With ‘NV 20:2020’, Nigeria aspired to become one of the top twenty world economies by the year 2020 and identified two broad objectives to: (i) make efficient use of human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth and; (ii) translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens (ibid). The Yar’Adua administration’s ‘Seven Point Agenda’ was an integral part of the NV 20:2020. However, analysts cautioned that Yar’Adua’s vision 20:2020 might end up as another catchphrase, like ‘education for all’ by the year 2000; ‘health for all’ by the year 2000; ‘housing for all’ by the year 2000; ‘Vision 2010’; and other strategies and targets, which did not resolve the challenges facing such policy pronouncements (Dode, 2010).

One of the major achievements of the Yar’Adua administration was the restoration of peace in the troubled oil-rich Niger Delta through the initiative to grant ‘amnesty’ to ex-militants via a ‘Presidential Amnesty Programme’ (PAP). It is widely believed that the PAP enabled the administration to stabilised oil production in the troubled Delta region and ensured stable foreign exchange for the country (FGN, 2009). Additionally, the PAP, which was well funded, provided about 30,000 youths in the Niger Delta with various economic empowerment opportunities (ibid). Under the PAP, each ex-militant was entitled to ₦65, 000 (US$213.68) a month plus job training, as part of the reform package for a maximum period of two years. However, two years into his presidency, the continued absence from office of President Yar’Adua due to recurring ill-health began to weaken the implementation of these reforms and began to destabilise the political environment, as there were often tensions as to when the then Vice President could begin to ‘act as President’ (Adeniyi, 2011). At one point, the National Assembly had to invoke the ‘Doctrine of Necessity’ to allow Vice President Jonathan to act as President with ‘full executive

\textsuperscript{17} See www.psln.gov.ng

\textsuperscript{18} Comprised of key Ministers and Special Advisers
powers’ in the absence of President Yar’Adua. Eventually, Yar’Adua died in May 2010 and Vice President Jonathan became the country’s President.

3.5.3 Jonathan’s administration and commitment to service delivery reforms

President Jonathan ascended to the presidency to complete the remainder of Yar’Adua’s term in office. As the first ever ‘minority’ politician from the oil-rich Niger Delta region to occupy the Office of the President in Nigeria, the political elites (including the state governors) within the ruling PDP appear to have resolved to allow Jonathan to contest the 2011 presidential election, contravening the party’s usual ‘zoning arrangement’, which had already designated power to a Northern leader for two terms of four years (Adeniyi, 2017). But this new ‘agreement’ was to allow President Jonathan to serve for only ‘one-term’ of four years, after which the Party would revert to its ‘existing zoning formula’ (ibid). It was widely believed also that allowing President Jonathan to continue would further strengthen the relative peace achieved in the Niger Delta region following the Amnesty programme (FGN, 2009). Thus, Jonathan contested and won the 2011 presidential election. However, observers believed that these ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ arrangements made President Jonathan highly vulnerable to political manipulation, especially because of the ethno-regional nature of the Nigerian politics (Jega, 2000). More broadly, President Jonathan and PDP began to immediately face tough opposition following the merger of three main opposition political parties to form the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Little wonder, President Jonathan almost immediately jettisoned the ‘Seven Point Agenda’ of Yar’Adua’s administration for his ‘Transformation Agenda’ - a cardinal policy of his administration (IMF, 2012). However, the ‘Transformation Agenda’ was claimed to be ‘compatible’ with the Nigerian Vision 20:2020 (National Planning Commission, 2011). Indeed, this confirmed the concerns often expressed by analysts of the seeming lack of policy consistency and continuity in the Nigerian political economy (Obadan, 2001; Orluwe, 2008; Okonjo-Iweala and Osafo-Kwaako, 2007). Similarly, Jonathan immediately made key political and bureaucratic appointments in order to consolidate his hold on power. However, in comparison with Presidents Obasanjo and Yar’Adua, political observers and analysts believe President Jonathan’s appointments were based more on political considerations than technocratic competence (NL2, 10/02/2016; Adeniyi,

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19 President Yar’Adua was at that time hospitalised in Saudi Arabia and remained incommunicado.
20 ACN, ANPP and CPC merged to form the APC and eventually took over power from PDP in 2015
While the return of Dr. Okonjo-Iweala as the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy was viewed as meritocratic and highly commended, several other senior appointments were based on patronage (NL3, 21/01/2016; NL, 24/04/2016). One important component of the ‘Transformation Agenda’ was the structural reforms, which seemed to focus specifically on the MDGs (Box 3.2).

**Box 3.2: President Jonathan’s Transformation Agenda**

1. Improving human development and accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals;
2. Tackling Corruption
3. Promoting investment in sectors that foster economic diversification and job creation
4. Improving the business climate
5. Physical infrastructure development
6. Real sector development
7. Regional development


Improving human development and accelerating progress towards the MDGs and tackling corruption have implications for pro-poor service delivery, and as such are of significance to this study. Certainly, corruption is seen as undermining the capacity of the state and its institutions to function appropriately and to deliver public goods and services to its citizens (Johnson, 2004; Agbiboa, 2013). Thus, these efforts are elaborated and examined next.

**Sustaining service delivery effort? Pro-poor policies and programmes**

The Jonathan administration under it ‘Transformation Agenda’ set out to improve human development and accelerate progress towards the MDGs. To achieve this, it specifically aimed to ‘strengthen and pilot initiatives’ to improve education, healthcare and the targeting and delivery social safety net programmes – such as school feeding, youth employment, maternal and child services (National Planning Commission, 2011). Jonathan’s administration continued to implement policies and programmes towards human development and the MDGs (SPARC, 2015; NL5, 14/01/2016). Notable pro-poor programmes implemented included the Universal Basic Education Scheme (UBE); the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS); the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA); Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP); and the DRG supported...
MDGs programmes, including the CGS to LGAs scheme. However, critics and observers argued that the distribution of resources, programmes and services under President Jonathan largely favoured PDP controlled states and were used to secure patronage ahead of the 2015 general elections (NL10, 24/04/2016; NL2, 10/02/2016; also 21). Political patronage, not technically identified ‘need’, guided resource allocation. This line of argument is exemplified through the distribution of the DRG resources (chapter Five).

**Sustaining institutional reforms?**

It was expected that Jonathan’s administration would move to firmly strengthen the far-reaching institutional reforms introduced by the Obasanjo administration and sustained by President Yar’Adua (IMF, 2012; Shaxson, 2009). These included the strengthening of government procurement reforms; continued publication of detailed monthly fiscal allocations to all the three tiers of government; strengthening and ‘maintaining the independence’ of the anti-corruption agencies (EFCC and ICPC); and the overall public service reforms. In fact, Jonathan’s administration acknowledged that Nigeria’s development efforts have over the years been ‘characterized by lack of continuity, consistency and commitment (3Cs) to agreed policies, programmes and projects as well as an absence of a long-term perspective’, and promised to address this (National Planning Commission, 2011: 1). In tackling corruption, it promised to sustain the fight against corruption, and even planned to implement a ‘name and shame programme’ targeted at large tax delinquents (IMF, 2012). But available evidence showed it is the contrary that actually happened. EFCC, in its Annual Report for 2012, observed that:

> ‘Corruption in the public sector remains a sore spot in Nigeria’s quest to instil transparency and accountability in the polity. The failure to deliver social services, the endemic problem of power supply and the collapse of infrastructure are all linked with corruption...’ (cited in ActionAid, 2015: 6)

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21 Recently the National Economic Council reported that President Jonathan shared N2 billion ‘ecological funds’ to PDP controlled states only ahead of the 2015 elections; www.punchng.com/nec-accuses-jonathan-of-sharing-ecological-fund-to-pdp-states
Many analysts report that President Jonathan ran the most corrupt government since the return of democracy in 1999 (Adeniyi, 2017; Owasanoye, 2014; also\textsuperscript{22}). Adeniyi (2017: 22) in his vivid account of the corruption scandals within President Jonathan’s government, highlighted the following scandals: the 2012 Fuel subsidy scandal; the Nigerian Immigration Service recruitment scandal; the Pension funds scandal; the Oduah Bullet proof cars scandal; and, perhaps worst of all, the ‘missing’ Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation’s US$20 billion. Thus, he concludes that the inability of President Jonathan to deal with corrupt officials led to his portrayal as ‘a corrupt leader’, that hounded him throughout his tenure and became a major campaign point by the opposition in 2015 (Ibid). Following Jonathan’s defeat in the 2015 presidential election by President Buhari\textsuperscript{23}, several top government officials under President Jonathan – including the former National Security Adviser (NSA), former Ministers and former Military Chiefs, were arrested by EFCC and charged to court for ‘alleged’ misappropriation of US$2.1 billion meant for the procurement of ‘military hardware’ to fight Boko Haram insurgency in the country’s North-east. This case is now popularly known as ‘Dasukigate’.

As at the time of this study, most of the cases are still in courts with the accused remanded in prison custody. More than US$10 billion in looted cash and assets have been recovered so far (FGN, 2016; Transparency International, 2016). By 2015, the country’s CPI score had risen a little at 2.6 compared to the 2.4 score in 2010 (ibid). The 2015 data from the Afro-barometer survey indicates that 78% of Nigerians feel that the [Jonathan] government is ‘doing badly in fighting corruption’ (Afro-barometer, 2015). Relatedly, it is widely reported that President Jonathan in a bid to maintain power, promoted ethnic and religious differences, as well as dragged the military into the political space\textsuperscript{24}.

\section*{3.6 Discussion and conclusion}

\textsuperscript{22} Sahara reporters, March 12, 2013, Jonathan Pardons Ex-convicts, Alamieyeisegha, Bulama, Others - PREMIUM TIMES, www.saharareporters.com/2013/03/12/jonathanpardons-ex-convicts-alamieyeisegha-bulama-others-premium-times

\textsuperscript{23} President Buhari ran his campaign and won election based on his anti-corruption stance, and the promise to address insecurity.

This chapter has traced Nigeria’s political and socio-economic development since independence from Britain in 1960. It is evident that the country’s abundant human and material resources have not been translated into poverty reduction and overall socio-economic well-being of the citizenry, as poverty levels have remained high across the country. Nigeria’s fiscal federalism as presently constituted has inherent challenges that have hindered effective service delivery, which is largely the creation of the Constitution. The chapter noted that the lack of local government autonomy and the continued control of the LGAs by the state governments are some of the main challenges to basic pro-poor service delivery in Nigeria. This chapter argued that President Obasanjo’s administration demonstrated commitment and capacity for reforms through the initiation and successful execution of far-reaching institutional reforms. The administration assembled highly competent technocrats to drive the overall reform agenda. Obasanjo administration’s commitment is exemplified by its ability to secure an US$18 billion Paris Club Debt Relief for Nigeria outside of HIPC framework in 2005. This enabled the design and implementation of pro-poor policies and programmes towards achieving the MDGs.

In contrast to his two immediate successors, President Obasanjo served his full two terms of four years each, which gave his government a longer time horizon that enabled the continuity of policies and programmes overtime. However, while Obasanjo was credited with strong commitment to the fight against corruption and improving service delivery, critics observed that these efforts were somewhat limited to the federal level, as corruption and inefficiency in service delivery continued at the state and local government levels. Other critics even argue that the Obasanjo’s fight against corruption was used mainly to undermine opposition. While President Yar’Adua’s administration attempted to continue with most of the Obasanjo’s reforms, albeit not with the same vigour, the administration was short-lived, as Yar’Adua died three years into his presidency in 2010. It’s ‘Seven Point Agenda’ was designed to address critical service delivery issues but this was to be jettisoned after his death. The subsequent administration of President Jonathan with its MDG-focused ‘Transformation Agenda’ carried on with some of the reforms but was unable to sustain them due to a lack of commitment. Jonathan’s administration was characterised by high level corruption scandals and weakening service delivery. The weight of evidence suggests that President Jonathan’s government used service delivery largely for patronage, dragged the military into politics, and promoted ethnic and religious differences in a bid to sustain his power. This was the context under which OSSAP-MDGs implemented the DRG
Initiatives, including the CGS to LGAs scheme between 2010 and 2015. The implications of this context for this study are that inconsistency characterised service delivery reforms implementation during the three presidencies examined. Additionally, this contextual analysis suggests a highly contested political environment that is clientelistic in nature, prevalence of ethno-regional politics and the availability of human and material resources at the disposal of state elites. The following chapter presents the research methodology for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Researching the Politics of Nigeria’s CGS to LGAs Scheme
4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for investigating the politics of pro-poor service delivery in Nigeria using the CGS to LGAs scheme as the unit of analysis. It starts by discussing the research paradigm and approach, a brief discussion of the case and the key data gathering methods employed, which are based on process tracing. Subsequently, the Chapter offers elaborate discussion of the research design, data sources and methodological rigour. It then presents detailed description of the study sites – Guri and Mashi LGAs, followed by an account of how the data gathered were processed, analysed and presented. The chapter highlights the key challenges the researcher encountered during the research, discusses the ethical considerations and concludes.

4.2 Research paradigm for the study

Selecting a research strategy requires a careful reflection of the philosophical foundations of social science inquiry (Blaikie, 2000). That is the researcher’s assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology) and how to generate knowledge of the social reality (epistemology) (Blaikie, 1993). I approach this study from critical realism paradigm, with a predisposition towards interpretative approaches. Critical realists consider social reality to be socially constructed by unobservable underlying structures and mechanisms produced by the material and non-material (cognitive) resources of social actors (Blaikie, 2000; 108). Critical realists often use retroduction approaches by building models of the mechanisms or hypothetical descriptions of ways in which these underlying structures and mechanisms might work in the real world and go to the field in search of the mechanisms (ibid). I opted for the above philosophical paradigm for the following reasons. Firstly, the method adopted is appropriate with the epistemological paradigm and is accommodative of the conceptual framework for the study. Secondly, the research aims and questions, including the relationships being examined fit into the basic understanding of how knowledge is produced under these philosophical traditions. Indeed, I am motivated by the postulation that social reality is socially constructed but to the extent that the realities generated by actors, assisted by underlying structures and mechanisms, may be autonomous of social actors.

4.3 Research methodology and design
Based on the objective of this study and the research questions under investigation, the research approach employed in this study is largely qualitative but makes significant use of secondary quantitative data. Thus, the approach is what Johnson and colleagues (2007) termed ‘predominantly qualitative’. Depending on the weight of one method over the other, studies may be categorised as predominantly qualitative or predominantly quantitative (ibid). The study uses the CGS to LGAs scheme as the case unit. The justifications for the country and case selection have been discussed in chapters One and Three. However, it is important to briefly highlight the reasons for the CGS to LGAs selection. Firstly, the CGS to LGAs represents a current and most ambitious attempt by the Nigeria’s federal government at promoting commitment to national development priorities at the sub-national level, while reforming governance in the process – including strengthening capacity for service delivery. Secondly, the CGS to LGAs scheme represents a variant of fiscal decentralisation within a federal system. Thus, the scheme enables the researcher to conduct a multi-levelled analysis along the policy chain – from national to the local level. A case study is a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that examines a phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell, 2009). It relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions (ibid). Case studies are concerned with the ‘how and why’ things happen, allowing the investigation of contextual realities and the differences between what was planned and what actually happened. Indeed, in support of case study research, Flyvbjerg (2006:1) argues forcefully that:

‘A scientific discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars and a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one. Social science may be strengthened by the execution of a greater number of good case studies’.

However, case studies can be criticised by some as lacking scientific rigour and reliability and that they do not address the issues of generalisability. In this study, a major strength of the design is the opportunity to use different sources of evidence through triangulation (Yin 2003, Ryan-Nicholls and Will, 2009). This approach enabled the researcher to gain a holistic view of the case study – both exploratory and explanatory. Casey and Houghton (2010) argue that the use of multiple data collection sources provides a more ‘convincing and accurate’ case study. Crucially, however, this study uses comparative case studies, with well-chosen cases in line with the theories under investigation. Indeed, George and Bennett (2005) showed that comparative case
studies have special place in contemporary social science methodology and can produce results useful to theory building and policymaking.

4.3.1 The research design

As a multi-level analysis of the politics of CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation, the interrogation flows from national to local level. At the national level, research was conducted at the relevant government institutions targeting key decision makers on the CGS to LGAs design and implementation. This is at the level where most of the major design decisions on the scheme were taken. This study focused on depth rather than breadth. Thus, at the local level, two CGS participating LGAs from two states were selected for detailed investigation. This was to ensure that a detailed understanding of ‘how’ the CGS to LGAs scheme operated in practice was achieved rather than shallow, but apparently representative analysis across a larger number of LGAs. Since Nigeria is traditionally divided along North-South regions and diversity, the study originally selected one state each from northern and southern parts to represent this diversity. This ranges from socioeconomic characteristics, agro-ecology, culture and geo-political factors. However, upon critical review of documents during the national level fieldwork, it was decided that both LGAs should be selected from northern Nigeria. This is partly because there is significant variation in poverty prevalence between the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria, with poverty much more pronounced in the Northern region (Sowunmi et al., 2012; NBS, 2014). The Northern region equally lags behind the Southern region in terms of social economic indicators and institutional capacity (World Bank, 2014), and so should be the main focus of any genuine poverty reduction programme. Research was eventually conducted in two CGS participating LGAs from two Northern states as presented in Figure 4:1 below.
Selection of the study LGAs:

Based on the preliminary findings from national level interviews and the review of grey literature on the CGS to LGAs scheme, Guri LGA in Jigawa state was purposefully selected to represent ‘high implementation cases’ while Mashi LGA in Katsina state was selected to represent ‘low implementation cases’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c; NL7, 10/02/16). Both Guri and Mashi LGAs are rural and located in states with similar political and socio-economic contexts (NBS, 2010). Both LGAs are in the North-western geopolitical zone, where poverty is more pronounced in Nigeria – see Figure 4.2 below (NBS, 2010; CBN 2014). Both Guri and Mashi LGAs were among the pilot 113 LGAs that participated in the CGS to LGAs scheme implemented by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) in Nigeria between 2010 and 2015. Thus, while over the years more LGAs have been added to the scheme, Guri and Mashi LGAs are considered matured enough for this investigation. This would enable careful and detailed comparison on the factors that shape elite commitment and state capacity in these similar contexts but with varying implementation outcomes. Relatedly, while there had been insecurity in Northern Nigeria between 2009 and 2015 following the increased activities of ‘boko-haram’
terrorist group, Jigawa and Katsina states were not affected, as the insurgency was limited to North-eastern part of the country.

Figure 4.2: Map of Nigeria showing the geography of poverty

Based on the overall objective of the research, it is important to state that certain similarities in political contexts underpinned the selection of the two study LGAs. Both Guri LGA and Mashi LGA are in states where the state governors served two consecutive terms each between 2007 and 2015. During this period, the two states were under the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP), which happened to be in power at the federal level since the return of democratic rule in 1999. Interestingly, the two state governors had enjoyed what some political observers called ‘harmonious working relationship’ or were seen to be in ‘good terms’ with the PDP led federal government (NL10, 23/04/2016). This observation is underpinned by the researcher’s readings and his general understanding of the Nigerian political landscape. This selection meant that any major differences in the processes or outcomes of the CGS to LGAs scheme between these two cases are not simply due to their differing relationships to the federal government. The
Detailed political and socio-economic profiles of the two study LGAs are described in section 4.4 below.

4.3.2 Choice of the research techniques

Data for the study was collected via documentary sources, key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs). These are now discussed in turn next.

a) Documentary review and analysis

The researcher utilised secondary qualitative and quantitative sources to review and analyse documents related to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation. Secondary sources consist of written documents, published or otherwise and data which are recorded without the intervention of the researcher (Stewart and Kamins, 1993). On the qualitative side, CGS to LGAs implementation manual and guidelines, various annual comprehensive project implementation reports, development partner ‘evaluation’ reports, and official correspondences were reviewed and analysed. Additional, annual budgets, financial records and strategic planning documents of the two study LGAs were obtained by the researcher. By design, this was the first technique used by the researcher at both the national and local levels before employing other techniques. This is because it provided the background for understanding the programme and guided the researcher on what to specifically look out for during interviews and focus discussions; given that sometimes what people say may be different from what is done (Yin, 2003). On the quantitative source, a database from the Nigeria MDGs Information System (NMIS), developed by OSSAP-MDGs as part of the CGS to LGAs implementation, was accessed and utilised. The NMIS has survey data from all the CGS participating LGAs, including baseline facility inventory and needs assessment. Together with additional country wide data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the study employed mainly descriptive statistics to show mean values against national averages, the volume and direction of CGS to LGAs resources across the focus sectors and years of implementation. These are mostly presented in tables and figures.
b) Key informant interviews

The choice of this technique is based on its usefulness for investigating complex behaviours, opinions and for collecting a diversity of experiences (Ritchie et al., 2013). Key informant interviews are an important tool for process tracing, since they provide access to respondents that directly witnessed events and can therefore be used either to confirm information revealed by documentary evidence or to reconstruct an undocumented sequence of events (George and Bennett, 2005; Tansey, 2007). As shown in Figure 4:1, this study has two layers – national and local. At the national level, senior government officials and representatives of development partner institutions involved in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs were purposefully selected for the interview. The selection was purely based on their knowledge about the programme and related issues under investigation. The researcher conducted a total of 14 in-depth interviews at the national level, aimed at obtaining detailed information and perspectives on the programme design, processes and individual experiences in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. Officials at the OSSAP-MDGs office, CGS to LGAs Zonal Technical Officers (ZTO), officials at the DFID’s State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) Programme, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Earth Institute’s MDG Centre were interviewed. It is important to note that due to the nature of the issues under investigation, some respondents were interviewed more than once as a follow up to concerns that emanated either from documents review or for triangulation as an outcome of lower level findings.

At the local level, political and bureaucratic elites involved in the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation were targeted and interviewed. Like at the national level, the selection of the respondents was strategically made by the researcher in line with the key issues under investigation and the scope of the study. Here, the researcher conducted 16 in-depth interviews across the two study LGAs, involving mainly current and former LGA chairmen, key LGA officials and few local elites. All interviews were duly recorded to secure an accurate account of the conversations and avoid losing data, since not everything can be written down during an interview. In addition, two unstructured interviews were conducted. These consisted of conversations between the researcher and two local guides (one per LGA) that provided substantive perspectives into issues under investigation and were subsequently used as pointers.
to other sources. These interviews were not recorded, but notes were kept in a field journal. In all cases, interviewees were reassured that information was being collected for academic research only and based on strict confidentiality. Thus, statements that are direct quotes from interviewees have been duly acknowledged with no direct ascription to the source by name or designation. In conclusion, it is important to mention that this method generated huge volumes of textual data that was quite difficult to process and analysed. See Appendix 1 for key informant interview guide.

c) Focus group discussions (FGD)

A focus group study is a carefully planned series of conversations designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment (Krueger and Casey, 2009). As part of the research design, the researcher conducted five FGDs in Guri LGA and six FGDs in Mashi LGA. Within each study LGA, the selection of the cluster for FGDs was purposefully made based on the population, presence of CGS to LGAs interventions and the geographical spread. Focus group participants were purposefully and carefully identified during initial visits to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s benefitting communities. They included the local tradition leaders, community leaders, women and youths. The participants were individually and collectively approached and asked to voluntarily take part in the FGD at a future date. The discussions aimed primarily at understanding better how the scheme’s community engagement processes panned out, community members’ knowledge of and perception of the impact of the scheme as well as the forms of social accountability in practice. These discussions with diverse participants enabled an in-depth understanding of the political economy of these study contexts and the nature of the relationship between elites and non-elites, and how these shaped the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the two case-study LGAs.

This technique enabled the generation of insights into how the community engagement and dialogue processes of the CGS to LGAs played out in practice and provided a sense of the forms of social accountability in place. It is important to mention that all the FGDs were conducted in Hausa language, which is the main language of the local people in the two study LGAs. The researcher is a native speaker of the language and as such coordination and transcription went on with little difficulty. While this technique proved to be helpful and cost effective in terms of
reaching larger research participants, it is however, quite difficult to manage and required great deal of time to process and analysed. See Appendix 2 for focus group discussion guide.

4.4 Description of the study LGAs

The geographical locations of Guri and Mashi LGAs are represented in Figure 4.3 below. Like most of the LGAs in Nigeria, the two study LGAs hardly possess any up-to-date data about social and economic conditions. Thus, most of the sources they hold rely on outdated sources like the 2006 population census figures. Even though national growth rate has been factored into the national population estimates, this has not been factored into the LGAs estimates of population; so LGAs do not know the size of the population they are serving. Relatedly, the socio-economic indicators and vital statistics of the LGAs are hardly based on empirical studies, as most national level surveys and data on these are not disaggregated down to LGAs. This leaves the LGAs with inaccurate socio-economic data.

Figure 4:3 - Map of Nigeria showing the two study LGAs
4.4.1 Guri LGA

Guri LGA was created in December 1996, having been carved out of its mother Kiri-Kasamma LGA. It is one of the 27 LGAs in Jigawa state and is located about 200 kilometres from the capital of the state (Guri LEEDS, 2014). It is headquartered in Guri town and has an area of 1,060 km$^2$ with a population of 115,018 as at 2006 population census (NPC, 2006). Guri LGA is divided into 10 political wards and agriculture is the mainstay of the economy with majority of people engaged in small scale farming (Guri LEEDS, 2014). As with most parts of the state, poverty is widespread across the LGA (DFID SPARC, 2014; CBN, 2015). At the political level, the LGA consists of the executive and the legislative arms. The executive arm is headed by the elected LGA chairperson and comprises of supervisory councillors and the LGA secretary. The legislative arm is headed by a council leader and the elected councillors as members (Guri LGA, 2016). The council legislates and makes bye laws for the governance of the LGA. As discussed in detail in chapter Three, like majority of the LGAs in Nigeria, Guri LGA largely depends on Federal statutory grant allocation, including Value Added Tax (VAT) to implement its annual budgets (Guri LGA, 2016). Indeed, its capacity to generate internal revenue is highly underdeveloped and as such its IGR is insignificant in relation to the total budgetary resources (ibid).

Administratively, the civil service is headed by the Director of Personnel Management (DPM) supported by respective heads of departments, who are responsible for their respective departments. Guri LGA has a total of 377 staff members comprising 357 males and 20 females as at the time of field research (Guri LGA, 2016). The LGA had stable political leadership, with one LGA chairman serving full complement of two terms of three years each between 2008 and 2014. This has implications for continuity and institutionalisation of reforms. By 2014, the LGA had 62 public primary schools, with 290 teachers and 10 Health facilities, with 53 health personnel (1 doctor, 10 nurses/midwives and 42 others) (Guri LEEDS, 2014). See Table 4.1 for key characteristics in comparison with national averages. As with most rural areas in Nigeria, residents of villages in the LGA know each other and each other’s extended family and personal histories. There is a long history of collective action in most villages, as evidenced by the numerous self-help projects executed with little or no external support. The local elites here are mainly politicians (elected or appointed), civil servants and the traditional leaders. The non-elites, who are mainly the poor, engage generally in subsistence farming and off-farm petty trading with
structural asset dependence on the local elites. Thus, the elite and non-elite are separated by notable material and social gap. Most of those involved in leadership and decision making in the LGA are either economically or socially elite. Non-elite rely on the traditional leaders for guidance. Most successful local economic agents are equally politicians – either as active participants or their sponsors. Consequently, development resources can be captured by elites linked to public offices and the traditional institutions.

Guri LGA has a long history of popular uprising against ‘perceived injustice’ by the pre-independence native authorities. In the entire Hadejia emirate (one of the five emirates in the state), Guri has a reputation as a ‘home of radical politics’ (GL6, 04/03/16). Prior to 1979 general elections, most non-elites aligned with the ‘pro-poor’ political movement led by the late Malam Aminu Kano – the defunct Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). During a major political rally in late 1979, members of NEPU, who were mostly non-elites were arrested and tortured by the police on the instruction of the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) for daring to participate in a rally against police instruction. ‘Our parents were arrested and tortured for days by the police here and in Hadejia...’ (GL6, 04/03/16). By implication, there seems to be the appreciation of this tension among residents and political elite, which tends to shape the way political elites respond positively to the development needs of the poor people overtime and has helped in safeguarding local development resources from elite capture.

**Jigawa state political context**

The economy of Jigawa state is largely driven by the informal sector, with agriculture as the driver of the economy – about 80% of the population engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry (JSG, 2016). The public sector dominates the formal sector, with government as the largest employer of labour (ibid). Like most states in Nigeria, Jigawa state’s annual budgetary process starts with the executive arm preparing and presenting state-wide budgetary estimates to the state House of Assembly for appropriation. Following the ‘successful’ passage of the estimates into law (often with modifications), the Bill is subsequently approved by the state governor. The executive arm is organised into Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and are decentralised across the three Senatorial districts. As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, due to the control of LGA resources by the state government through the operations of the ‘Joint LGAs Account’, the capacity of the LGAs to wholly plan and execute budgetary plans is somewhat limited (GL2,
24/02/2016). While the LGAs in Jigawa state benefit from state-wide budgetary provisions through the execution of state level projects and programmes, the LGAs develop their respective annual budgets and plans (see detail on Guri LGA in Chapter Six).

Between 2007 and 2015, Sule Lamido served as the executive governor of the state under the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP). In addition to being a ‘grassroots politician’ (GL1, 23/02/2016), Lamido served as the Nigeria’s Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1999 and 2003. Thus, this positionality of the governor, coupled with PDP as a dominant party in the state, with little or no pressure from the ‘opposition’, and the two-term horizon enabled the initiation and sustainability of pro-poor programmes. The state governor embarked on massive infrastructural development, as such road rehabilitation and construction, rural electrification and water projects, and the new Jigawa Airport project. During this period, state government’s response to local political engagement was positive, as state government officials at various level were said to have maintained constructive engagement with the civil society (NL7, 10/02/2016; NL8, 11/01/2016; SPARC, 2015) in a way that strengthened the state’s relational capacity. Thus, like most LGAs in the state, Guri LGA benefited from state-wide projects and programmes, which in turn extend the territorial reach of the state in the LGA.

### 4.4.2 Mashi LGA

Mashi LGA is one of the 34 LGAs in Katsina state, north-western Nigeria and has an area of 905 km² and a population of 173,134 as at 2006 population census (NPC, 2006). It is headquartered in Mashi town and located about 30 kilometres from the state capital, while sharing international border with Niger Republic to the north. There are 11 political wards, divided into 14 main villages and the main occupation of the population is farming. Here, people are engaged in small scale farming and livestock rearing (Mashi LGA, 2014). As in other rural parts of the state, there is widespread poverty among the inhabitants (ibid). Mashi LGA consists of the executive and legislative arms. The executive arm is headed by the elected LGA Chairperson and comprises of supervisory councillors and the LGA secretary. The legislative arm is headed by a council leader and the elected councillors as members (Mashi LGA, 2016). The council legislates and makes bye laws for the governance of the LGA. As with the case in Guri, Mashi LGA largely depends on federal statutory grant allocation, including Value Added Tax (VAT) to implement its annual
budgets (Mashi LGA, 2016). However, the only caveat here is that due its strategic location (proximity to the state capital and as a border LGA, Mashi has the potential for generating internal revenue to support its activities.

As with all LGAs in the state, the civil service is headed by the Director of Personnel Management (DPM) and supported by respective heads of departments who are responsible for their respective departments. As at the time of field research, Mashi LGA had a total of 986 overall staff members comprising of 454 senior staff and 532 junior staff (Ministry for LGA, 2014). In contrast to Guri LGA, Mashi LGA has not had stable political leadership since 2007. Between 2007 and 2015, the LGA had four ‘Interim Administrations’ as the decision to conduct local government elections lies squarely on the state governor. This has serious implications for commitment and institutionalisation of reforms. By 2015, the LGA had 61 public primary schools, with 565 teachers (Mashi LEA, 2016) and 53 Health facilities (Mashi PHC, 2016).

As with Guri LGA, residents of Mashi LGA are generally familiar with each other, following longer period of coexistence (ML2, 24/03/2016). However, there is little evidence to show strong capacity for collective action within the villages in the LGA. Most development projects were either wholly executed by the government or by development organisations. Like with most rural LGAs in Northern Nigeria, local elites are mostly politicians and traditional leaders. Due to its strategic location (an international border LGA and just 30 kilometres from the state capital), local elites engage in high level commercial activities - trading strategic commodities across the border - and the proximity to the state capital enables top level state bureaucrats from the LGA to commute to work daily. Thus, the composition of local elite includes top bureaucrats, who arguably can use their position to mobilise development resources for the benefit of non-elites in the LGA. Non-elites in the LGA remain engaged in small scale agriculture and trading in local markets. Unlike Guri LGA, there is no history of peaceful or violent uprising in the immediate past in the LGA. Mashi’s geographically strategic position ensured that it remained in the mainstream politics of the state and national politics. Despite this strategic advantage, there is no clear evidence or history of residents planning, implementing and managing development projects on their own.
**Katsina state political context**

In Katsina state, annual budgets are prepared by the executive arm and presented to the State House of Assembly for appropriation. Like in Jigawa state, the executive arm comprises of the Ministries, Extra-Ministerial Departments and Agencies (MDAs). However, in contrast to Jigawa state, these MDAs were not decentralised across the three Senatorial districts. While most state governments exercise some control over the resources of the LGAs, Katsina state government between 2007 and 2015 exercised full control of the finances of the LGAs. A key respondent observed ‘...here it is absolute control of the local councils’[LGAs] resources. And this has history right from 1999’ (ML5, 24/03/2016). The state government often execute infrastructure projects across the state using the ‘Joint LGAs Project Account’. While the state government plans and executes annual budgets, the LGAs are only provided with ‘monthly grants’ to be used in running the recurrent expenditure of the LGAs (ML3, 24/03/2016). The LGAs must write and seek the approval of the state governor for any capital project to be executed. When such ‘approvals’ are granted by the state governor, it is the state Ministry for Local Governments that drives the procurement process (ML1, 23/03/2016). In effect, the LGAs in Katsina are totally dependent of the state government for their projects and programmes (see detail on Mashi LGA in Chapter Six).

Ibrahim Shema served as the executive governor of Katsina state between 2007 and 2015, under the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Prior to joining party politics in 1999, Ibrahim Shema was a private legal practitioner based in Abuja. Thus, the governor was hardly seen as a grounded politician with strong links to local politics in the state (Kilago FGD, 25/03/2016; Zabaro FGD, 26/03/2016). During this period, the state government executed many infrastructure projects across the state, including the new Government House project, Katsina state University and various road projects. The outcome and implications of this is discussed in Chapter Six. Agriculture and agribusiness remain the key driver of the economy, with majority of the population engaged in agriculture and strategic grains trading across the border. Historically, local political activism has not been effective in challenging state level political elites, as often the local elites are ‘co-opted’ and ‘controlled’ through patronage (Bamle FGD, 24/03/2016; Marke FGD, 26/03/2016).
### Table 4.1: Key characteristics of the case study LGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guri LGA</th>
<th>Mashi LGA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land area in Km²</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil-Teacher Ratio (2014)</td>
<td>46 (40 national average)</td>
<td>74 (40 national average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Public Primary Schools (2014)</td>
<td>62 (80 national average)</td>
<td>61 (80 national average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Public Primary Health Facilities</td>
<td>10 (28 national average)</td>
<td>44 (28 national average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Medical Personnel (2014)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of collective action</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on Guri LGA (2016); Mashi LGA (2016); NPC (2006); NBS (2010); NBS (2016)

### 4.5 Methodological rigour and triangulation

Triangulation involves the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of or extend inferences drawn from the data (Houghton et al., 2013). It has been widely adopted and developed as a concept by qualitative researchers as a means of investigating the ‘convergence’ of both the data and the conclusions derived from them. It is also cited as one of the central ways of ‘validating’ qualitative research evidence (Ritchie et al., 2013). There has been a longstanding debate about the extent to which triangulation offers qualitative researchers a means of verifying their findings. Two key points are recurrent in the challenges to its validating functions. Firstly, there is criticism from an ontological perspective, that there is no single reality or conception of the social world to ascertain and that attempting to do so using multiple sources of information is futile. Secondly, it is argued on epistemological grounds, that all methods have specificity in terms of the type of data they yield and thus they are unlikely to generate perfectly concordant evidence. Because of these concerns, several authors now argue that the value of triangulation lies in extending understanding - or adding breadth or depth to analysis – using multiple perspectives or different types of readings (Casey and Murphy, 2009). In other words, the ‘security’ that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one (Ritchie et al., 2013). Nevertheless, many authors argue that triangulation also has role in the validation of research findings (Houghton et al., 2013). My approach in this research is similar to that of Houghton and colleagues, where I used triangulation to test and validate preliminary findings.
The researcher’s comparative advantage of having strong personal contacts with officials involved with the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, at both national and local levels, was invaluable in accessing key informant interviewees, identifying the critical data sources and triangulating key findings for consistency. As an early career researcher, I was aware of a tension between my many years of experience as a development practitioner and my present status as an independent researcher. I had discussed the issue of positionality often with my supervisors before the fieldwork. The researcher’s prior knowledge of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation - having worked with a development partner institution to the Nigerian government for about eight years - helped in facilitating access to ‘hard to get’ programme documents and fast tracked the conduct of key informant interviews that proved vital for the study’s objectives. I have indeed utilised this privileged position in both providing fuller understanding of the politics of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation and in the validation of key findings. Interviewees in Nigeria knew that ‘I knew’ how things work and so the conventional answers to a researcher would make them look disingenuous.

Reflexivity, involves the recognition of the researcher’s integral part of the social world being studied (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). An existing body of knowledge supports the idea that research is socially constructed (Mulhall et al., 1999; Blaikie, 2000), and as such it follows that the researcher’s philosophy and beliefs and the context of the research may affect the chosen methodology and eventually the interpretation of findings. Self-reflection or reflexivity as a means of understanding the influence of the researcher’s interpretations is increasingly seen as acceptable means of adding credibility to qualitative research (Jasper, 2005, Houghton et al., 2013). Finlay (1998) suggests reflexivity as a means of turning the problem of subjectivity in research into an opportunity, while Alven and Skoldberg (2000) attest that self-reflection and critical analysis of feelings are important part of the qualitative research process, lending valuable insight and depth to the research. Indeed, as a former development practitioner, during data collection, I was wary of being too sympathetic to officials or not being critical enough to get to the root of issues under investigation. Coffey (1999: 2) termed similar situation as ‘having an ongoing conversation about experience, while simultaneously living the moment’. Indeed, I was concurrently an ‘outsider, insider and both’. Thus, the contradictions in my positionality and in-between status had to be constantly reflected upon during data collection, analysis and presentation. Additionally, all key informant interviewees and focus group participants were
made aware of the researcher’s positionality as a University of Manchester’s researcher and not as a governmental or non-governmental official. Indeed, the researcher used the University’s writing pad, pen and often wore customised jumper to portray this image, in addition to handing out official call card where appropriate. All these ensured that this study was conducted and presented professionally.

4.6 Data processing, analysis and presentation

In this study, all interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed in a manually developed logical matrix template, which enabled the researcher to document the processed data according to the respective themes. Due to the nature of the FGDs and the fact that they were conducted in the local language of the study sites, transcription took the form of meaning instead of verbatim. Similar template was used for the FGDs for easy retrieval and analysis. The study employed process tracing in the collection and analysis of data at both the national and local levels. Process tracing is a fundamental tool of qualitative analysis that focuses on the key actors involved in decision-making processes and the interests which influenced their options (George and Bennett, 2005). Collier (2011) asserts that process tracing can make critical contributions to diverse research objectives, including (a) identifying novel political and social phenomena and systematically describing them; (b) evaluating prior explanatory hypotheses and assessing causal claims; and (c) gaining insights into causal mechanisms. Following George and Bennett (2005), the researcher focused specifically on key policy actors directly involved in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national and local level to effectively describe and analysed how it processes played out.

At the national level, my analysis traced the origin of the scheme’s ‘idea’, its source of funding and the politics of the LGAs selection. Key informant interviews and documents review were used to triangulate preliminary findings. Wherever possible, these preliminary findings were further interrogated using ‘alternative explanations’. This is a vital approach in making causal interpretations in qualitative research, where one tries to recognise a wide range of ‘alternative explanations’ that would endanger the offered explanation and then explore pointers as to whether these claims are tenable (Maxwell, 2004). This strategy is used in making causal inferences in all the three empirical chapters. In some instances, I introduced secondary materials
to further evidenced critical events of interest. Additionally, I obtained the CGS to LGAs scheme’s financial expenditure since inception in 2011 and analysed the sectoral and regional patterns of the resources distribution (chapter Five). These are sufficiently presented in tables and figures. At the local level, I traced the LGAs’ resource allocation mechanisms ‘before and after’ the implementation of the scheme. Key informant interviews and documents review enabled careful account of phenomena of interest for the two years ‘before’ the scheme’s implementation. As with the national level, sectoral expenditure patterns were reviewed and analysed to establish causal link with the scheme’s interventions (chapters Six and Seven).

4.7 Challenges encountered in the field

As discussed in section 4.3, the study was conducted at the national and local levels. At the national level, research was conducted in Abuja, while at the local level, study was carried out in two CGS to LGAs participating LGAs in two states. This created many logistical challenges, as the researcher had to travel long distances to be able to carry out the fieldwork. Additionally, the rural nature of the two study LGAs made life somewhat difficult for the researcher. The two study LGAs are separated by around 406 kilometres. Within each study LGA, the villages are wide spread, roads are poor, and in some cases, the researcher had to travel for an hour on a motorbike to reach the next study village. Overall, these posed great logistical and resource challenges to the researcher. This was compounded by the persistent shortage of premium motor spirit (PMS) in the country for the greater part of the fieldwork duration, which made transportation more expensive and unreliable.

Similarly, the researcher had to conduct all the FGDs in Hausa language, which is the *lingua franca* of the people in the two study LGAs. Even though the researcher is a native speaker of the local language, translating certain concepts under investigation into locally comprehensible Hausa often proved challenging. In the same vein, the researcher encountered challenges in obtaining certain information from the case study LGAs. This was partly due to the absence of effective retrieval systems at the LGAs, as they mostly relied on manual records and the fact that the researcher was looking out for information that predates the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. At both study LGAs, the research had to work directly with planning officers or relevant officials to jointly retrieve information which should normally have been in place. This has led to
the incidence of missing vital records at the LGAs. It is equally important to mention that most parts of the study LGAs had no electricity, which posed significant challenge to the researcher in terms of both keeping equipment and communication gadgets powered for effective fieldwork. This forced the researcher to travel often to the nearest ‘major town’ to recharge equipment and get basic services – such as photocopying of relevant documents. Overall, due to the positionality of the researcher and his understanding of the terrain, all the challenges were discretely surmounted, and the fieldwork completed as scheduled.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Following the research strategy and methodology developed for this study, a few ethical issues needed consideration. The research involved human subjects and therefore significant care was taken by the researcher to ensure that the subjects of the study were not harmed in anyway during data collection, analysis and presentation. The main study respondents were senior government officials, politicians, local elites and benefitting community members – who include poor people. The researcher carefully considered the issues of privacy, voluntary consent, confidentiality, anonymity as well as the concern of ‘doing no harm’ at all either during or after the research. The nature of the research and what it involves were clearly explained to research participants and the ethical undertaking on anonymity was emphasised. In line with this, the study has concealed the identity of the participants and where names are mentioned, these are pseudonyms and not real names. Crucially, before embarking on the fieldwork, the researcher sought and obtained the necessary ethical approval for conducting research of this magnitude from the University of Manchester’s Research Ethics Committee (UREC). A copy of the ethical approval is attached as Appendix 3. Thus, the researcher endeavoured to strictly adhere to the highest ethical standards as prescribed by the University of Manchester’s ethics code for conducting primary research. On data storage, all electronic files of raw data have been stored on a password protected laptop, in an encrypted partition of the laptop and backed up on an encrypted USB drive. All audio-recordings were transferred to the encrypted partition of the laptop immediately after the interviews. Still images of development projects are stored in accordance with the University’s policy. Key findings from this study and their policy implications would be shared with key policymakers and research respondents accordingly.
4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explained how the researcher conducted this study, beginning from its philosophical foundation, the research design and the methodology employed. The rigor required in case-study research of this nature had been discussed and justified in the chapter. The study employed a process tracing methodology and used predominantly qualitative approach, with significant use of secondary quantitative data. It acknowledges that all research approaches have their strengths and weaknesses, but the choice of approach must be based on the research objective and questions. The chapter also provided essential background materials on the two study LGAs and justified their selection. The next chapter analyses the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national level.
CHAPTER FIVE

Reforming Service Delivery in Rural Nigeria? Capacity, Commitment and the CGS to LGAs Scheme

‘That time we were in a reform environment, so we were thinking we can use the CGS as a carrot to be able to get them [LGAs] to reform their systems and processes...that was what was clearly identified in the guidelines...’ (NL1, 31/12/2015).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national level. It pays attention to the programme’s theory and the politics of its implementation. The chapter aims to partly answer the main research question – how does the current generation of governance reforms actually play out in practice? It starts by tracing the origin of the scheme’s funding following the Paris Club Debt relief deal, the sequencing of pro-poor spending, the CGS to LGAs ‘idea’, its detailed design and its eventual full-scale implementation. It analyses national level bureaucratic capacity and elite commitment to CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation – paying attention to the politics of what actually happened in relation to what was expected to happen, and its implications for pro-poor service delivery at the local level. Thus, the chapter also lays the background for later empirical chapters (Six and Seven). The final section summarises and concludes.

5.2 Background – Nigeria’s Debt Relief deal and the International context

As discussed in chapter Three, on June 29th, 2005, Nigeria and the Paris Club reached an historic agreement on an US$18 billion or 60% write-off of the country’s Paris Club debt. The write-off was implemented between October 2005 and March 2006, ending Nigeria’s long quest for a Paris Club debt agreement (Okonjo-Iweala, 2006). The debt relief deal resulted in savings of approximately US$1 billion annually to the country, called the ‘Debt Relief Gains’ (DRG) (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011; NL1, 31/12/2015). In a promise to the Paris Club of Creditors, Nigeria ‘committed itself to spending the DRG on pro-poor projects and programmes in support of a national effort towards the achievement of the MDGs’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a: 8). Quite clearly, the Paris Club was not going to forgive debt and then see the DRG spent on the military, programmes for elites or white elephant projects.
It is important to situate the source of elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery at the national level within the broader international context and, specifically, the desire of the country’s political leadership to secure a ‘favourable debt relief deal’ and the global MDGs framework. It is essential to note that Nigeria successfully negotiated the Paris Club debt relief at a moment when multilateral and bilateral donors were favourably disposed to supporting developing countries to implement the MDGs. Thus, as highlighted in Chapter Three, the MDGs’ agenda and the desire to secure debt relief greatly influenced the President Obasanjo’s commitment to reform public service delivery and to deliver positive development outcomes broadly. Evidently, Obasanjo’s administration demonstrated commitment and capacity for reforms through the introduction and implementation of far-reaching public service reforms. The administration gathered highly competent technocrats to drive the overall reform agenda. This is exemplified by the reform team’s ability to secure an US$18 billion Paris Club debt relief for Nigeria outside of HIPC framework in 2005, which enabled the design and implementation of pro-poor policies and programmes towards achieving the MDGs.

This commitment was re-enforced by President Obasanjo’s personality and the ‘longer time horizon’ he enjoyed, as compared to his immediate successors. He served two-terms of four years each, which enabled the ‘continuity of effort’ in policies and programmes implementation. As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, while President Yar’Adua continued with most of the service delivery reforms initiated by Obasanjo through its ‘Seven Point Agenda’, Yar’Adua’s administration was short-lived, as President Yar’Adua died three years into his presidency in 2010. It is important to note that while President Obasanjo’s administration secured the Paris Club debt relief in 2005 and sets the institutional framework for the implementation of the DRG initiatives, it was during President Yar’Adua’s administration that the CGS to LGAs scheme was designed (see Section 5.3). President Jonathan, who completed Yar’Adua’s term, with its MDG-focused ‘Transformation Agenda’ carried on with most of the programmes, including the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. However, following his election in 2011, these service delivery reforms were hardly sustained due to weakening commitment. Our weight of evidence shows weakening service delivery and the use of DRG resources largely for patronage politics in a bid to seek re-election in 2015 (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL8, 11/01/2016).
Once the debt relief was secured, a Senior Special Assistant (SSAP) was appointed in the Presidency to coordinate efforts towards achieving the MDGs (NL1, 31/12/2015), and a powerful office called the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) was established. Following this, a Virtual Poverty Fund (VPF) in the national budget was adopted to report on the debt relief expenditures. The VPF is a coding system within an existing budget classification framework that enables the ‘tagging and tracking’ of government expenditures as ‘poverty reducing’, and funded by DRG (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011). According to key informant, by the time all the appointments were made, and all the agreements signed, it was too late for the DRG resources to be reflected in the country’s 2005 budget (NL2, 10/02/2016). Thus, the 2006 budget was the first that identified key MDGs-DRG funded interventions (ibid).

5.2.1 The DRG Funds: Sequencing pro-poor spending?

A key respondent revealed that the DRG resources were initially channelled exclusively to federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in 2006 fiscal year (NL1, 31/12/2015). To start with, key MDAs linked directly to the MDGs were identified and allocated part of the DRG funds to support specific programmes that would enhance the prospects of achieving the MDGs in Nigeria. Here, all the sectors that matched the specific eight MDGs benefitted in one way or another from the DRG funds (ibid). For example, the education sector benefitted from specific programmes such as National Teacher Training and the scaling up of the Girl Child Education Programme. Health sector benefitted from the scaling up of primary healthcare centres’ construction and equipping, as well as the funding to scale up immunisation against polio alongside other initiatives. As the implementation of these programmes began, several obstacles constrained their progress, so that lessons had to be learnt. Questions were raised about the capacity of national level agencies to implement programmes. Firstly, according to a senior government official, the federal government realised that some of the MDAs lacked the capacity to develop programmes on their own and to absorb the additional resources.

‘...For example, in the Ministry of Women Affairs, there was an allocation of ₦500 million at that time for the development of National Gender Policy, but it took them quite a while to access this funding because they had to approach partners to train them on the capacity to be able to roll out this particular programme. Others had issues with due process compliance...’ (NL1, 31/12/2015).
Secondly, there was also a reported ‘lack of ownership’ at the state and LGA levels, because implementation was at the federal level (NL5, 14/01/2016). Ministries designed interventions at the capital Abuja without necessarily engaging with sub-national governments (NL1, 31/12/2015). Crucially, there were concerns with duplication of efforts and lack of coordination in the delivery of pro-poor programmes (NL5, 14/01/2016). For example, as one of our sources explained ‘…you will find two primary health centres within 50 metres – one implemented by the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHDCA) and the other constructed by the state government’ (NL1, 31/12/2015). Thus, the federal government realised that the MDGs might not be achieved via the implementation of stand-alone federal initiatives in primary healthcare, basic education, water and sanitation, as activities and investments needed to address these relate more to the constitutional roles and financial responsibilities of the states and LGAs (SPARC, 2013; NL5, 14/01/2016). Indeed, as highlighted in chapter Three, the success of investments in these areas relies on recurrent expenditures supported by states and the LGAs.

Subsequent to the lessons learnt with the federal MDAs’ implementation of the DRG, it was reported that during the ‘Core Team’s’ meeting, which comprises of the representatives of OSSAP-MDGs and its key development partners, the ‘idea’ of engaging directly with the sub-national governments came about at the end of 2006 fiscal year (NL2, 10/02/2016). A former senior government official revealed ‘…we had been thinking about it, but we now tabled it during that discussion and it was strongly suggested’ (NL1, 31/12/2015). Thus, in 2007, the federal government appreciating the crucial role of the states in a federal system began the process of engaging with the states by working to get the buy-in of the state governors. This respondent emphasised:

‘So naturally, we felt it was important to get the buy-in of the state governors and the only way to do that will be to sit around and advocate to them, indicating that they will have the opportunity to access grants that will increase or scale up whatever it is they are doing at the local level…’ (NL1, 31/12/2015).

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25 The Core Team was chaired by SSAP-MDGs and comprised of the representatives of UNDP, DFID’s SPARC and relevant MDAs. With the support of the Presidency, the Core Team guided the overall implementation of the DRG Funds.
Consequently, the federal government through the OSSAP-MDGs was able to engage the states by offering the opportunity to access grant from the DRG funds for investments in MDGs related sectors – specifically in primary health, education and water and sanitation. These are sectors where the country needed significant progress to achieve the MDG targets. However, this was not without suspicion by the state level political elites, as the federal government was often seen by the states more as a ‘talker’ than a ‘doer’ (NL2, 10/02/2016). As part of the engagement processes, OSSAP-MDGs provided guidelines for accessing DRG resources to the 36 states. Following a call in 2006 for application from the states, 19 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) were successful and the sum of ₦20 billion/US$133 million was released in 2007 fiscal year for investments in the focus sectors (NL1, 31/12/2015). Evidence from KII’s revealed that the evaluation of the applications was done with the support of development partners (especially SPARC, DFID) and based on the following evaluation criteria:

**Box 5.1: DRG application - evaluation criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The State level criteria:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) The application must be signed off by the state governor to show ownership.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) There must be an indication that the application has been tabled before the state House of Assembly to ensure there is an approval for it since the Legislatures are the representatives of the communities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) An undertaking by the state to comply with ‘Due Process’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d) A MoU is expected to be signed between the federal and the state government.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**The Project Level criteria:**

| a) There must be an indication that the Project is contained in the state’s Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). |  |
| b) To demonstrate the Project is a priority, it must be captured in the Budget of the state |  |
| c) Provide a clear Gap Map towards the attainment of the MDGs. |  |
| d) Submission of approved design for the construction of health centres, classroom blocks, water and sanitation facilities etc. |  |

Sources: SPARC, 2013: 3; NL2, 10/02/2016

According to a former OSSAP-MDGs official, the guidelines were not specific with regards to counterpart funding from the states, as it only required that ‘there should be counterpart fund contribution from the benefitting state, which can be in cash or kind of not less than 20% of the

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26 A ‘Gap Map’ refers to a clear pathway towards meeting identified needs to enable the attainment of the MDGs.
grant’ (NL1, 31/12/2015). However, in practice, the level of counterpart contribution from the states was less than 10% (ibid).

Again, as with the federal MDAs implementation, the OSSAP-MDGs learnt some lessons with the DRG implementation by the state governments. These lessons are manifold. Firstly, there were limitations with regards to the governance structure of the grants. The state governments were required to open a ‘dedicated’ DRG bank account that they would operate and provide a ‘bank guarantee’ to secure the DRG funds against misuse (NL5, 14/01/2016). However, this requirement was not strictly adhered to in securing the funding, as most states provided some forms of ‘bank guarantees’ that made it practically impossible for the federal government to enforce any claim against a defaulting state. For instance, a commercial Bank that issued a ‘guarantee’ states that to call the bond, the federal government must co-sign a letter jointly with the state that it is accusing of default. ‘This is practically impossible as the defaulting state will never agree to sign such a letter…’, a former senior OSSAP-MDGs official reminisced (NL1, 31/12/2015). Secondly, there were delayed implementation of projects and in some instances, widespread cases of uncompleted projects (NL3, 22/01/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016). For example, many projects approved in 2007 fiscal year did not start implementation until 2008 fiscal year (ibid).

Thirdly, the federal government was not satisfied with the level of states’ engagement with the LGAs (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016). Although the projects were located in the LGAs, there were no evidence of state engagement with the LGAs for ‘ownership and sustainability’ (NL1, 31/12/2015). In effect, the federal government imposing plans on states/LGAs had been replaced by the state governments imposing plans on the LGAs. Following these challenges observed between 2007 and 2009, the federal government through OSSAP-MDGs began consultations with the ‘Core Team’ on how to deepen ‘genuine engagement’ with the LGAs (NL1, 31/12/2015). One senior government official central to the DRG implementation summarised this:

‘In a couple of years, it became clear that we were not as successful as we wanted to be because there were huge implementation challenges, coupled with politics…the interventions were not getting as far into the grassroots as we would have liked…’ (NL2, 10/02/2016).
Consequently, it was agreed that for DRG funds to contribute more effectively to the achievement of the MDGs, a mechanism for results-oriented expenditure at the LGA level, with oversight and coordination from the Federal level, must be created (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a). In addition to strengthening relationship among the tiers of government, the new mechanism aspired to leverage additional resources and policy reforms at the sub-national level (ibid). One former senior government official reflects the broader experience as;

‘We realised that if we really want to make a difference, then we need to improve governance at that [LGA] level. We needed to devise an intervention that will support the improvement of governance at that [LGA] level – that will build capacity that will allow for planning, budgeting and implementation to happen at that [LGA] level. It wasn’t happening before. I am not saying before CGS there was no governance at that [LGA] level, I am just saying it was weak…thus, we needed to do something to reach out to the LGAs in a meaningful way, not just throwing money at the problem. So the CGS to LGAs was born’ (NL2, 10/02/2016).

5.3 The Conditional Grant Scheme to Local Government Areas (CGS to LGAs)

Following these early experiences and the capacity problems they revealed, federal government in 2010, introduced the CGS to LGAs scheme to ‘foster genuine commitment to the achievement of the MDGs at the local level, while reforming governance in the process’ (NL1, 31/12/2015). The CGS to LGAs scheme provided the participating LGAs the opportunity to access funds annually from the DRG funds for investments in the focus areas of primary healthcare, education and water and sanitation. The CGS to LGAs is conditional upon the selected LGAs providing 50% counterpart funding and contingent on abiding with specific criteria and governance guidelines as outlined in the CGS Implementation Manual (OSSAP-MDGs, 2010, 2011, 2014a). The Implementation manual reads in part:

‘Through the CGS, the federal government seeks to build the capacities of LGAs in order to improve governance, service delivery, financial management, transparency and accountability. Ultimately, it is an opportunity to leverage spending towards supporting LGA programmes that are fully aligned with national policy objectives and the MDGs’ (OSSAP-MDGs 2014a:9).

27 State government was to provide 30% of this on behalf of the LGA due to the constitutional requirement of the operations of the Joint LGAs Account, domiciled with the state government. So, in effect, the intended financial contributions were Federal 50%; State 30%; and LGA 20%.
One senior government official posits:

‘I will tell you this is one of the most ambitious efforts towards meeting the MDGs... We were able to extend the conditional grant to the LGAs and getting the LGAs to key into our efforts towards meeting the MDGs. I would say that effort has brought development into the door step of the people that really need it. If I have my way today, I would rather strengthen only this scheme [CGS to LGAs]’ (NL4, 20/01/2016).

By implication, the CGS to LGAs scheme seeks to fast track the achievement of the MDGs and strengthens service delivery at the LGAs and local communities, through governance and financial reforms. According to the CGS Implementation Manual, by strengthening the role of the LGAs in articulating needs of the communities, responding to human development indicators, and managing development initiatives, the CGS seeks to ‘move beyond construction of infrastructure to improve all the aspects of service delivery and respond to emerging priorities and challenges’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a:10). This broad goal of the scheme is deeply interrogated through case studies in chapters Six and Seven. The implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme benefited hugely from technical support of development partners, such as UNDP’s Economic Governance Programme, DFID’s SPARC Programme and the Earth Institute at Columbia University – engaged by federal government as technical consultants. UNDP served as co-chair of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s ‘Technical Working Group’ and provided funding for the six (6) Zonal Technical Officers (ZTOs) and Citizen’s Engagement Project in 21 pilot LGAs (NL6, 19/01/2016; NL2, 10/02/2016). On its part, DFID SPARC provided technical support, particularly in the funding of the Team Leader and Database Manager positions, and systems review and monitoring (SPARC, 2013; NL5, 14/01/2016). But how would the participating LGAs be selected? Going forward, the analysis in this section is divided into three phases; the selection phase, the capacity development phase and the full implementation phase.

5.3.1 The selection phase: The politics of LGAs selection?

‘The selection of the participating LGAs can be hijacked by the state governors... as they can pick LGAs where they know they can get votes from and there is no way for you to say ‘no’ because of their influence...’ (NL1, 31/12/2015).

To avoid the potential problem of state governors selecting LGAs based on political patronage, OSSAP-MDGs obtained key human development indicators from the National Bureau of Statistics.

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28 This comprised of heads of relevant Units at OSSAP-MDGs and sector specialists from UNDP and SPARC.
(NBS) that enabled the pre-selection of the nine most deprived LGAs in each state (three per Senatorial Zone29) by OSSAP-MDGs leadership. This brings the total number of pre-selected LGAs to 333 across the country30. Armed with this information and considering the limited resources earmarked for the CGS from the DRG, OSSAP-MDGs decided to do a ‘pilot’ of three LGAs per state and the FCT. Thus, 113 pilot LGAs were to be selected from the pre-identified 333 LGAs with the poorest indicators in health, education and water and sanitation (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016).

To select three LGAs per state, the then Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (SSAP-MDGs) personally visited each state governor and presented a ‘background paper’ and a list of nine LGAs in the state with poor indicators in health and education to choose three pilot LGAs from. This high level of personal action provides evidence of the SSAP-MDGs commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme. According to a top bureaucrat at the federal level, ‘…so that any LGA that is eventually picked by the state governor would have met the criteria for selection… that way, the governors will not say they were not aware or have not been carried along…’ (NL1, 31/12/16). That was how OSSAP-MDGs through the state governors picked the pilot 113 LGAs (see Figure 5.1 below). This process was confirmed by key decision makers and development partners involved in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016; NL6, 19/01/2016). One former OSSAP-MDGs official observed;

‘…one thing that ensured the success of this programme is that the CGS office is domiciled at the Presidency, which meant it had the utmost political support. The political support we got was strong enough that we were able to implement this project across the levels, which was not easy at all’ (NL2, 10/02/2016).

29 There are three Senatorial zones in each state and it was accepted that the scheme would only make progress if CGS to LGAs projects were equally shared. This was a concession to political pressures as, in theory, DRG resources should focus on the poorest LGAs.
30 There are 36 states and the FCT.
At first sight, the process of selecting the three LGAs per state appears to be a purely technocratic exercise. However, a closer scrutiny reveals it was more of a political process than a technical undertaking. Firstly, the decision to select one LGA per senatorial zone within the state is a product of high level politicking. One key respondent revealed that OSSAP-MDGs were challenged to convince the members of the federal legislature to ‘agree’ to the CGS to LGAs idea.

‘The scheme [CGS to LGAs] was new to our federal system and there was the perception that if you transfer money to LGAs they will only spend it and will not account for it... so that gave us a lot of problem as we had to spend a lot of time trying to convince them [federal legislators] to get the appropriation that will enable us to run it...’ (NL1, 31/12/2015).
Evidence from this study revealed that the Senators influenced the decision to select one LGA from each senatorial zone in the state, in a move akin to ‘pork barrel’ politics by the legislatures. Indeed, a former Senator involved in the DRG implementation revealed to the researcher that ‘...there is no way the proposal [CGS to LGAs] will get the approval of the Senate without the required national spread. It just can’t fly in Nigeria’ (NL14, 10/02/2016). Judging by this, it is clear the federal legislators negotiated for the ‘national spread’ to get an LGA each selected from their respective senatorial constituencies in return for their support for the scheme. Thus, politics trumped technics (I return to this discussion later in this chapter).

Secondly, presenting a predetermined list of nine poorest LGAs to the state governors and asking them to select three pilot LGAs from the list is akin to what Wong (2010: 12) refers to as ‘countering and co-opting’ the state governors into the scheme. In line with our discussion in Chapter Two, it is argued that elites can indeed be challenged and engrossed in the same process, depending on the accountability mechanisms in place (Wong, 2010). Recognising the influence of the ‘powerful’ Nigerian state governors, the CGS to LGAs scheme would not have been successful without their involvement and co-optation at the initial stage. Based on this evidence, this thesis will argue that the CGS to LGAs scheme was designed in a ‘politically smart, going with the grain’ approach and a clear manifestation of the federal leadership’s desire to achieve the buy-in of powerful stakeholders, especially the state-level political elites, and at the same time achieve programme goals. Being politically smart in the design and implementation did mean, however, that the initial selection of LGAs did not map directly into the geography of poverty in Nigeria as discussed in chapter Three. It meant that CGS to LGAs resources where spread relatively thinly in a manner that undermines the potential impact of the scheme. As discussed later in this chapter, even urban LGAs ended up benefitting from scarce resources that were meant to reduce rural poverty. Following agreement on the selection of the 113 pilot LGAs, the stage was then set for the process of capacity development before full scale implementation across the selected LGAs.
5.3.2 The capacity development phase

This phase commenced with the process for the sensitisation of the 113 participating LGAs. To start with, OSSAP-MDGs invited all the chairmen and heads of departments from the pilot 113 LGAs to sensitisation workshops that were conducted simultaneously in the six geo-political zones in the country (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011). Each sensitisation workshop was divided into two sessions – a plenary session with all the chairmen of the LGAs and a technical session involving only the LGA bureaucrats. The sensitisation was intended to get the ‘commitment and buy-in to accelerate progress towards the MDGs by the participating LGAs, as well as achieving a consensus regarding CGS to LGAs approach, structure and implementation modalities’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a: 9). Indeed, to manage a programme of this scale and detail requires high level engagement along the policy chain. Fieldwork with local officials in the two study LGAs and development partners confirmed that these workshops took place; that chairmen and bureaucrats attended; and that participants where reasonably sensitised and satisfied with the CGS to LGAs approach (NL12, 14/01/2016; GL1, 25/02/2016; ML1, 15/03/2016). A former senior official at OSSAP-MDGs observed that;

‘It was amazing the quantum of human capacity at the LGAs that is underutilised... the capacity I saw during the workshops, in certain instances was much more than the capacity we have at the federal level in terms of engagement with the issues, and specifically how to interact with the local population. What we discovered was the lack of opportunity to do the job’ (NL1, 31/12/2015).

Thus, it appears that federal and development partner staff were both surprised and impressed with the potential of LGA bureaucrats to implement pro-poor programmes and projects (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016; NL6, 19/01/2016). Bureaucratic capacity and autonomy are discussed later in this chapter and in chapter Seven, with respect to the detailed investigation at the study LGAs. However, according to OSSAP-MDGs, to strengthen the capacity of the LGAs for implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme needed to engage Technical Assistants31 (TAs) to support the participating LGAs. The TAs needed high level planning and management skills and were to lead the LGA Technical Committee. The federal government through OSSAP-MDGs recruited one Technical Assistant (TA) for each of the 113 participating LGAs for a period of two years (2011-2013) in the first instance. The Federal Government outsourced the recruitment

31 See Appendix 4 for TA’s Terms of Reference
exercise for the TAs to two private companies. However, our evidence revealed that after the shortlisting of the candidates by the companies, the final selection of the TAs was done by the OSSAP-MDGs (NL1, 31/12/2015). According to a former federal official, ‘the TAs have highly diverse profiles, all deeply passionate about achieving the MDGs in their respective localities’ (NL2, 10/02/2016). Further, as part of its technical support, UNDP Nigeria decided to support the entire programme by engaging six experienced Zonal Technical Officers\(^{32}\) (ZTOs) to coordinate the activities of the TAs and provide technical support to the LGAs in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in the six geo-political zones. Each ZTO was domiciled in one of the states\(^{33}\) in the zone for logistical and operational effectiveness. The ZTOs were engaged and issued with UNDP contracts but with reporting and management responsibilities to OSSAP-MDGs, Abuja. ‘These [the ZTOs] are highly qualified individuals with rich experiences in development’ (ibid).

With the TAs and ZTOs in place, OSSAP-MDGs and its partners organised a two-week intensive orientation/training programme for the TAs and ZTOs, covering all aspects of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s concept and implementation (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011; NL3, 22/01/2016; NL12, 14/01/2016). This study was able to confirm the conduct of this exercise through key respondents from the technical partner organisations (UNDP, Earth Institute, SPARC), and in receipt of some of the training manuals. It was reported that all TAs and ZTOs attended as human resources records were kept during the programme (NL1, 31/01/2015; NL5, 14/01/2016). Subsequent, capacity building training and workshops were held during the scheme’s implementation (chapter Seven).

5.3.3 The full implementation phase

By December 2010, all the baseline studies and needs assessments had been completed with the support of technical partners and gap maps for all the intervention areas produced (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011; NL2, 10/02/2016). The CGS to LGAs implementation manual spelt out governing structures as well as roles and responsibilities of the policy actors. At the national level, the main governing structure has the National Committee on the Conditional Grants Scheme (NCCGS) - chaired by the Minister of Finance, with the following membership; Minister of National Planning,

\(^{32}\) See Appendix 5 for ZTO’s Terms of Reference

\(^{33}\) North East (Gombe); North West (Jigawa); North Central (Niger); South West (Ekiti); South East (Imo); South-South (Delta)
Ministers of key MDGs line Ministries, Director General of the Budget Office of the Federation, Accountant General of the Federation and the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs. The composition of this high-level Committee signifies high level of commitment on the part of the federal government. OSSAP-MDGs serves as the secretariat to the Committee. According to official documents, the NCCGS is responsible for taking final decisions on the CGS to LGAs interventions, setting application limits for the year, reviewing technical reports from OSSAP-MDGs on the evaluation of all applications received and proposing selected projects to Federal Executive Council (FEC) for final approval and reviewing progress on implementation (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011, SPARC, 2013).

Figure 5.2: CGS to LGAs Scheme’s governance structure

As shown in Figure 5.2 above, the main governing structure at the LGA level has two committees - the Local Government MDGs Planning Committee (LGMPC), chaired by the LGA chairman and the Local Government MDGs Technical Committee (LGMT), headed by the TA to the LGA. The LGMPC has a broad membership including:

I. Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the LGA
II. Two representatives of the LGA legislative council
III. Five representatives of CBOs, FBOs, Traditional Institutions and the private sector (At least two Females)
IV. The LGA TA (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011, 2014a)
The representatives of the communities were meant to be selected using objective and transparent criteria, but this study’s findings revealed it was the opposite that happened (this is returned to in chapter Six). The LGMPC is responsible for the review and endorsement of the LGA MDGs Plan, reviewing and endorsing the CGS to LGAs project proposal to OSSAP-MDGs, ensuring the LGA obligations for the implementation of the CGS to LGAs are met, ensuring synergy of the CGS to LGAs projects with other LGA projects and resolving conflict amongst LGA key players. On the other hand, the LGMTC is led by the Technical Assistant and composed of all the Heads of Departments in the LGA. The Committee is responsible for the preparation of ‘MDGs-compliant’ LGA Plans, facilitating the process of project identification and prioritisation by the community members, preparation of CGS to LGAs’ project proposals and the preparation of reports on the CGS to ZTO’s office and the federal government (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011).

On the financial and project management structure, each participating LGA was mandated to open a separate and dedicated CGS to LGAs special project Account that will be used specifically for the implementation of the scheme. In this account, the federal government’s share of the scheme and the LGA’s counterpart fund are deposited (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011). According to official guidelines, this is meant to ‘accommodate oversight requirements and audit procedures’ (ibid). The signatories to the Account are to meet with the requirements of the state’s Financial Instructions and LGA Financial Memoranda. With all these governing structures in place, this study observed that the ‘revised’ CGS Implementation Manual requires a state ‘Project Support Unit’ (PSU) to receive CGS to LGAs proposals from participating LGAs in the state and to ‘endorse’ the proposals to the OSSAP-MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a). Our evidence revealed that this is the point where the influence of politics mostly played out and the weight of our overall findings suggest that political elites at state level had influence over the resource allocation mechanisms, specifically the procurement processes (chapter Six). Central to the design of the CGS to LGAs scheme was the reform of project design, selection and implementation processes. Drawing from our discussion in chapter Two, this is conceptualised in terms of strengthening bureaucratic capacity and autonomy; promoting commitment to pro-poor service delivery and avoiding potential capture by political elites. Table 5.1 below presents a timeline of key events leading to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation.
### Table 5.1: Timeline of key DRG events/activities leading to the CGS to LGAs scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Events/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January, 2006</td>
<td>DRG implementation commences with federal MDAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 2006</td>
<td>Realisation that MDAs lacked delivery and coordination capacity and the ‘idea’ of engaging sub-national government (state) conceived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January, 2007</td>
<td>The process of engaging with the state governments commenced and ₦20 billion/US$133 million of DRG funds released to 19 states and the FCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2009</td>
<td>Realisation of ‘lack of genuine engagement’ with the state governments and the decision to extend DRG to the LGAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May – June, 2010</td>
<td>CGS to LGAs scheme designed and 113 participating LGAs selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2010</td>
<td>Sensitisation workshops for key LGA officials commenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 2011</td>
<td>TAs and ZTOs appointed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author

The following section reports findings on bureaucratic capacity and autonomy in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national level.

### 5.4 Bureaucratic capacity and the autonomy of OSSAP-MDGs

Bureaucratic capacity, here refers to the resources and the degree of professionalisation of bureaucratic staff (Fukuyama, 2004; 2013), while autonomy relates to the way the political principal issues mandates to the bureaucrats who act as its agent (ibid: 356). As discussed in chapter Two, in examining the quality of governance, one would want to know about both the capacity and the autonomy of the bureaucrats (Fukuyama, 2013). Since the debt relief deal and the establishment of the OSSAP-MDGs, there were what I call ‘two bureaucratic phases’ between 2006 and 2015. As this study covers this period, the analysis of the bureaucratic capacity and autonomy is conducted along these two phases. As some respondents noted, the two OSSAP-MDGs’ phases differ distinctively in terms of capacity and commitment. According to a senior government official who worked at OSSAP-MDGs ‘...when you look at even the two persons who were heading OSSAP-MDGs, in terms of capacity to engage with the process and the MDGs, the difference is clear...’ (NL3, 22/01/2016). Thus, the variations between these two phases are of considerable importance to our investigation into the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme.
5.4.1 OSSAP-MDGs Phase I (2006 – 2011)

This bureaucratic phase commenced immediately following the debt relief deal and was tasked with the responsibility of putting processes and programmes for the actualisation of the MDGs in Nigeria. Ms. Amina Mohammed was appointed as the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (SSAP-MDGs) to provide dynamic leadership for OSSAP-MDGs. There is considerable evidence that the appointment of Amina as SSAP-MDGs was based on merit, going by her track record\(^{34}\) - as with most of the senior appointments made during the Obasanjo Presidency (chapter Three, also SPARC, 2013; NL3, 22/01/2016). This is the phase that designed and institutionalised the framework for the CGS to LGAs scheme, following the sequencing of DRG spending as discussed earlier in this chapter. Additionally, to ensure smooth coordination, an autonomous CGS Unit was established within OSSAP-MDGs and headed by a senior bureaucrat. The Head of CGS reports directly to the SSAP-MDGs.

During this phase, OSSAP-MDGs was able to secure the ‘commitment’ of political elites and ‘mobilised’ the organisational capacity needed to commence the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. A former OSSAP-MDGs’ official observed ‘...OSSAP-MDGs was operating not like the typical civil service establishment because we had consultants who were coming either supported by UNDP, DFID or even ODI to strengthen those areas of observed capacity gaps’ (NL3, 22/01/2016). The decision to engage TAs and ZTOs based on merit to support the capacity of the LGAs in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme is clear evidence of a strengthening of internal forms of bureaucratic capacity (chapter Two). The federal government through OSSAP-MDGs engaged the services of two private recruitment agencies to advertise and shortlist candidates for the post of Technical Assistant. After the shortlisting by the private agencies, OSSAP-MDGs conducted the final interview and made the appointments, but this was logical as OSSAP-MDGs senior officers knew most about the role of TAs. A key respondent at OSSAP-MDGs official told this researcher:

‘...it was a transparent process of recruitment when we were to recruit 113 TAs. An advert was done in three national dailies..., there was computer-based exams in the different geo-political zones in the country and then based on the computer exams results, we picked the best five in every state and then we did the oral interview to pick the best three’ (NL3, 22/01/2016).

\(^{34}\) See Appendix 6.1 for Amina Mohammed’s profile. She is currently the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and had served as Nigeria’s Minister of Environment between November 2015 and March 2017.
This claim was supported greatly by triangulation by the researcher during field research (NL1, 31/12/2015; NL2, 10/02/2016; NLS, 14/01/2016). In an environment riddled with ‘nepotism’, this would not have been possible if not for the high degree of autonomy exhibited by the SSAP-MDGs. As discussed earlier, the selected TAs for the 113 LGAs were then trained and provided with the necessary tools (project vehicle, laptop, GPS Device etc.) to enable them to effectively support the participating LGAs. These TAs were also provided with the needed autonomy to work in remote LGAs to implement a national-level led initiative. These preparatory efforts and the initial implementation of the programme represent a high level of organisational capacity in project selection, design and implementation. However, following the 2011 general elections and the subsequent change in the country’s national political leadership, the SSAP-MDGs was replaced in August 2011. This marked the end of the first bureaucratic phase and was associated with a dramatic reduction in the drive for improved capacity and greater commitment.

5.4.2 OSSAP-MDGs Phase II (2011 – 2015)

With President Jonathan taking over leadership in May 2011, a new SSAP on MDGs was appointed in August 2011 to continue with the implementation of the DRG initiatives in general and the CGS to LGAs scheme. This happened despite the successful performance of the pioneer SSAP. The weight of this study’s findings suggests that this appointment was not based as much on merit as with the previous phase, but on the more usual political considerations (chapter Three). One key respondent was emphatic in criticising the 2011 appointment: ‘...I am not afraid to say these things... it became a South -South affair where you bring people from South-South region and say OK this is our turn lets empower you and things like that...’ (NL3, 22/01/2016). This concern was separately reported by several key interviewees (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016; NL11, 07/02/2016) and looking at subsequent events (discussed later in this chapter), there seems to be considerable evidence to support this claim – that the capacity of OSSAP-MDGs was greatly weakened. Additionally, this study examines and compares the credentials of the two SSAP-MDGs in terms of qualifications; previous experience, track record and reputation (see Appendices 6.1 and 6.2).

Immediately after the appointment of the new SSAP, the existing OSSAP-MDGs’ administrative structure was reported to have completely changed. New appointments were made to strategic
positions within OSSAP-MDGs, such as the Head of the CGS Unit and other departmental heads. About six core civil servants whose capacities had been built specifically for the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme were redeployed out of the OSSAP-MDGs (NL5, 14/01/2016). One key respondent reported that: ‘…these key people where unjustly removed…’ (NL9, 05/02/2016).

Indeed, initial SSAP actions weakened the smooth implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme with the calling back of all the TAs and requiring them to handover project vehicles until ‘administrative checks’ had been carried out (NL9, 05/02/2016; NL5, 14/01/2016). This and other issues took a very long time to be resolved and stalled initial programme implementation.

Although the new administration continued with the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, respondents interviewed by this researcher point out differences in their overall assessment of the leadership’s capacity and commitment to the reform initiative. One senior OSSAP-MDGs official’s observation reflects the broader responses received from key respondents regarding their evaluation of the two OSSAP-MDGs phases;

‘I think both Amina [first SSAP] and Precious [second SSAP] brought in two different styles of leadership and management. The first regime [phase], may be because the tempo was very high, they came in with lots of ideas and drive to deliver on the programme [CGS to LGAs] …all the tools were designed and developed then. But with the second regime [phase] and the set of leadership that came with it, I think the drive then was a sort of end-game strategy. But of course, that led to us losing some ground in the achievements of the first regime [phase], specifically in terms of interests and resources. So, I will want to say the second regime [phase] was highly politicised without mincing words. The first regime [phase] tried to follow due process as stipulated in the CGS implementation manual and a lot of governance structures were put in place. But due to the change in leadership and the subsequent redeployment of new set of people, the whole process [CGS to LGAs implementation] was distorted. We had periodic changes in the processes often communicated via policy briefs…Honestly the second regime [phase] was more like experimenting and that led to the hijacking of the entire process’ (NL7, 10/02/2016).

Another key respondent observed;

‘…what is fundamental to note is the second leadership [phase] didn’t discard any of the processes that were put in place, but I think it [the phase] was heavily influenced by politics. This didn’t allow them to technically enhance the processes that they met, even if they wanted to because there were all sorts of interests involved. And those interests sort of overtook sometimes the need to be transparent about the ways the funds were distributed’ (NL5, 14/01/2016).
From the above observations, it is evident that change in OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership heralded the emergence of new management style in the implementation of the DRG initiatives.

5.4.3 Bureaucratic continuity: Implications for policy implementation?

As discussed above, OSSAP-MDGs provided sizeable resources and worked systematically to support capacity development for the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme during 2006-2011. This happened through the establishment of a dedicated CGS Unit; the appointment of a highly competent technocrat as head; the engagement of 6 ZTOs and 113 TAs; the elaborate and effective sensitisation and training programme; and the subsequent capacity building programmes for administrators along the delivery chain. With the design of the CGS to LGAs scheme, bureaucrats at all levels were meant to be supported and empowered to undertake key responsibilities in the implementation of the scheme. Thus, in reference to our discussion in chapter Two, the OSSAP-MDGs made a systematic attempt to create high levels of internal bureaucratic capacity and autonomy to effectively implement the scheme.

The NCCGS, as the ‘political principal’ of the programme, set out clear mandates for OSSAP-MDGs as its ‘bureaucratic agent’ to follow and execute with respect to the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. As discussed earlier in this chapter, in executing this ‘broad mandate’, OSSAP-MDGs set up governing structures within it for the effective discharge of the mandate. The separate CGS Unit was to coordinate the activities of the Programme Support Units (PSUs) across the country, including the supervision of the ZTOs and the TAs (NL1, 31/12/2015). The findings reported earlier in this chapter show that, OSSAP-MDGs in general and the CGS Unit were initially well staffed with highly qualified bureaucrats from both within and outside of the core civil service. Being domiciled at the Presidency and its multi-sectoral nature, OSSAP-MDGs was able to influence the deployment of competent bureaucrats to serve in the office.

A senior bureaucrat at OSSAP-MDGs noted ‘...knowing the magnitude of the task to be accomplished, the office had to source for qualified personnel from within and outside of government... and engaged local consultants from time to time’ (NL11, 07/02/2016). Hence, OSSAP-MDGs was adjudged as a ‘high capacity’ office with a high quality complement of human resources and discretion to implement the CGS to LGAs scheme (NL6, 19/01/2016). The office equally benefitted from technical support of key development partners in Nigeria, such as the
DFID SPARC, UNDP and Earth Institute. Indeed, OSSAP-MDGs had at different times engaged experts from the private sector and the civil society organisations in a manner that strengthened its relational dimension of state capacity. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by OSSAP-MDGs enabled it to creatively design the scheme and to iteratively set its own rules to achieve the broader mandate. There is no clear evidence of multiple or conflicting political mandates given to OSSAP-MDGs by the NCCGS that might have hamstrung the initial implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. However, there is caveat here. While the first OSSAP-MDGs phase was reported to have enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy from political influence, that was not the case with the second phase, which was said to have been characterised by high level politicisation of bureaucratic appointments (NL3, 22/01/2016; NL9, 05/02/2016). Politicians, especially members of the parliament and cabinet Ministers were reported to have influenced the appointments of subsequent TAs and other strategic positions (ibid). This finding underpinned the broader pattern of appointments made by President Jonathan (chapter Three).

Consequently, the change in the bureaucratic leadership of OSSAP-MDGs and the subsequent changes in the administrative structure that followed had implications for the effective implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. For example, it was observed that these changes led to the loss in institutional memory that was needed for the effective implementation of the scheme (NL1, 31/12/2015; SPARC, 2013). This observation provides some support for Chopra’s (2015) argument that changing mix of key actors involved in policy implementation contributes to the variation in capacity and commitment overtime. This line of argument is especially relevant given the often person-centric nature of institutions and agencies involved in policy implementation in developing countries. The frequent political interference in the bureaucratic operations often led to subordination or low autonomy, which in turn effected the effective implementation of the scheme (this is returned to in chapter Seven). Analysts agree that the extent to which higher capacity translates into effective policy implementation is often a function of commitment (Routley, 2012). The following section examines elite commitment in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national level, while tracing elite capture phenomena as and when it happened.
5.5 The politics of CGS to LGAs resource allocation: Commitment or capture?

Following Brinkerhoff (2000: 242), commitment here refers to the ‘commitment of policy actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives and to sustain the costs of those actions over time’. These policy actors are elected or appointed senior public officials. Here, commitment is examined through six distinct but interrelated indicators – locus of initiative in policy implementation; continuity of effort in policy implementation; degree of analytical rigor applied in understating the policy context; mobilisation of key players in support of policy implementation; application of credible sanctions in support of implementation and perceptions of political feedback (Chopra, 2015).

5.5.1 Locus of initiative in policy implementation

This dimension of commitment is crucial for a successful policy implementation. The greater the initiatives taken by key actors leading the process, the greater the commitment for policy implementation (Brinkerhoff, 2000). Thus, in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, it can be implied that the degree to which OSSAP-MDGs bureaucrats took initiatives at every stage to ensure the implementation of the scheme is an indication of their commitment to policy implementation. Crucially, as discussed earlier in this Chapter, this indicator is exemplified through the origin of the ‘idea’ of the scheme. OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership and bureaucrats took a number of key initiatives in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme and the broader DRG initiatives, such as the extensive use of technology, the development of implementation guidelines and manuals, and the establishment of the Nigeria MDGs Information System (NMIS).

a) The use of technology and the establishment of NMIS

Here, the initiative by OSSAP-MDGs bureaucrats to use technology in the implementation of CGS to LGAs scheme across the country has been commended by development partners and key observers. One senior official of development partner institution adduced part of the ‘success’ of the CGS to LGAs implementation to the modest use of technology, especially at the planning stages of the scheme. ‘The use of technology in the CGS to LGAs track was part of its success’ (NL5, 14/01/2016). Our evidence revealed that OSSAP-MDGs had earlier in 2011 engaged Galaxy Backbone Nigeria Plc, a public company owned by the federal government, to deploy VSAT Network solutions to 156 identified locations across the country to support the implementation...
of the CGS to LGAs scheme for a two-year period in the first instance (OSSAP-MDGs, 2011, NL1, 31/12/2015; NL2, 10/02/2016). All the 113 LGAs, the six zonal offices and CGS Unit in Abuja were provided with VSAT and a networking and related services by way of common infrastructure platform with voice and data. According to our sources, this initiative is to enable the capturing of accurate data that will inform efficient implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme and enhance the capacity of the LGAs in strategic planning (SPARC, 2013; NL1, 31/12/2015).

This process enabled the generation of baseline facilities inventory data across the LGAs and was used as input into the Nigeria MDGs Information System (NMIS). OSSAP-MDGs had engaged the technical services of the Earth Institute (EI) at Columbia University to establish the NMIS. The NMIS now has Facilities Inventory data (health, education and water) on all the 774 LGAs in Nigeria. A senior official of development partner institution described the system as ‘very unique as it provided you with baseline information on all the LGAs that enables informed development planning’ (NL5, 14/01/2016). However, this initiative is not only capital intensive as shown in Table 5.1, but quite ambitious looking at the spread and the remote nature of the 113 LGAs. It equally raises questions about sustainability and the security of national strategic data. As it turned out, the contract with Galaxy Backbone expired in March 2013 and OSSAP-MDGs was unable to renew the contract as expected. One key respondent during fieldwork observed:

‘...as at December 2013, OSSAP-MDGs was yet to renew the contract and that stalled the timely deployment of VSAT facilities to the additional 148 LGAs under the CGS to LGas 2012 round. There is equally no plan on what the status of VSAT facilities will be on completion of the scheme’ (NL12, 14/01/2016).

Indeed, as at the time of fieldwork, the two-detailed study LGAs were completely disconnected from the national server and the IT equipment not in use (chapter Six).

b) The development of CGS to LGAs guidelines and implementation manual

OSSAP-MDGs drafted all policy guidelines regarding the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. To that extent, bureaucrats at this level have invested considerable level of initiative in the development of what is considered ‘an elaborate implementation manual’ (NL2, 10/02/2016). The CGS Implementation Manual provides detailed step by step guidelines geared ‘towards the enthronement of accountability and transparency in the process of implementing the scheme’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a: 6). Specifically, the manual attempts to guide project
identification and selection, planning, implementation and reporting for achieving the scheme’s objectives (ibid). The responsibilities of actors have been clearly spelt out. Our evidence revealed that the first implementation guidelines was published in 2009 and then revised in 2014. Given that the CGS to LGAs scheme was to end in 2015, then the belated 2014 manual could be seen as being purely procedural.

However, as laudable as this initiative by OSSAP-MDGs is, the weight of this study’s findings revealed that these guidelines have not been fully adhered to in the implementation of the scheme. This has happened through the issuance of various ‘policy briefs’ by OSSAP-MDGs to either counter the provision of the CGS implementation manual or to provide ‘additional guidance’ on what the LGAs should do in certain circumstances not envisaged by the provisions of the manual. Policy briefs cited by the researcher confirmed this. At first instance, the revision of the CGS manual may appear to be a purely technocratic endeavour, but a closer scrutiny reveals otherwise. As the scheme was designed to end with the MDGs in 2015, the ‘revision’ of the manual in 2014 raises more questions than answers (this is returned to in detail in chapter Six). Indeed, one key informant observed that the revision of the implementation manual by OSSAP-MDGs in 2014 was to consolidate the ‘distortions’ that have taken place overtime. A former senior OSSAP-MDGs official reflected on this:

‘...did I mention them rewriting the manual? The CGS manual was rewritten under the new SSAP-MDGs and a lot of the factors [accountability] that were built into it were left out... It was built as a governance reform programme to support the LGAs to deliver services. But because the local planning aspect was cut away, it became project implementation - just building schools, building clinics and water points’ (NL2, 10/02/2016).

According to an in-house Memo of a key development partner (SPARC, DFID): ‘...the immediate past head of the CGS Unit [2011 to 2015] took arbitrary decisions, many of which are in total disregard of the provisions of the CGS Implementation Manual’ (SPARC, 2013: not paginated). Thus, as this indicator ranges from high to low initiative, with higher signifying stronger commitment (Brinkerhoff, 2000), it is important to note that the locus of initiative in the implementation of scheme was higher initially but decreased over time.
5.5.2 Continuity of effort and allocation of resources

This indicator is vital in identifying commitment to a reform during its implementation (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Chopra, 2015). Continuous undertaking of actions to achieve certain policy objectives and to sustain the costs of those actions overtime is an indication of commitment. Strong and sustained continuity of effort would signal more commitment, while weakening or one-shot efforts would indicate less commitment (Brinkerhoff, 2000). As discussed earlier, despite the change in OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucratic leadership, it was claimed that the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme continued with even ‘greater’ speed in Phase II. But was this genuine effort? And what was the source of this commitment? For the desired impact to be achieved, DRG resources were meant to be channelled annually thorough the CGS to LGAs to the poorest 113 LGAs until 2015 – the MDGs deadline (NL1, 31/12/2015). As shown in Table 5.2 below, OSSAP-MDGs and its key partners ensured the provision of adequate direct costs to ensure the smooth launch of the scheme. Our evidence shows that the 113 pilot LGAs received grants for the implementation of approved projects and programmes in the priority sectors of primary healthcare, education and water and sanitation for the first project cycle year - 2011. Nonetheless, soon after the implementation kicked off, the scheme started facing challenges with regards to speedy implementation and continuous allocation of resources to the participating LGAs. Firstly, there have been delays in the implementation cycle of the scheme. For example, the 2011 round was not completed until mid-2012, and the 2012 round was not completed until mid-2013 (SPARC, 2013; NL8, 01/01/2016; NL10, 23/04/2016). Despite these developments, the new OSSAP-MDGs leadership decided to go for quantity over quality by massively expanding the coverage of LGAs.
### Table 5.2: Direct CGS to LGAs scheme’s costs for the pilot 113 LGAs (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Costs for 113 LGAs (USD)</th>
<th>Costs per LGA (USD)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Study</td>
<td>904,053.33</td>
<td>8,000.80</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA Study</td>
<td>853,113.33</td>
<td>7,549.66</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT, VSAT and Communication Costs</td>
<td>2,800,938.49</td>
<td>24,787.06</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI Consultancy Fees</td>
<td>3,671,294.88</td>
<td>32,489.34</td>
<td>2.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID/SPARC Support</td>
<td>602,350.00</td>
<td>5,330.53</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP Support</td>
<td>436,800.00</td>
<td>3,865.47</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGTFF/UNDP</td>
<td>325,000.00</td>
<td>2,876.12</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAs Salary</td>
<td>3,390,000.00</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
<td>1.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAs Operational Costs</td>
<td>1,586,520.00</td>
<td>14,040.00</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZTOs Operational Costs</td>
<td>167,760.00</td>
<td>1,484.60</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles (Purchase, Insurance, etc.)</td>
<td>5,162,666.66</td>
<td>45,687.32</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitization Workshops/Formal Lunch</td>
<td>2,026,666.66</td>
<td>17,935.10</td>
<td>1.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of TAs</td>
<td>416,666.66</td>
<td>3,687.32</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA Finance Study</td>
<td>75,004.00</td>
<td>6,690.30</td>
<td>0.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grants</td>
<td>75,333,333.33</td>
<td>666,666.66</td>
<td>43.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/LGAs Contribution</td>
<td>75,333,333.33</td>
<td>666,666.66</td>
<td>43.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>173,766,500.71</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,537,756.64</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s computation, based on OSSAP-MDGs (2011) and SPARC (2015)

#### a) Quantity over Quality? The subsequent addition of large numbers of LGAs

According to OSSAP-MDGs official records, 148 LGAs were added to the scheme in 2012; 210 LGAs in 2013 and 77 LGAs in 2014. Thus, by the time of general elections in 2015, there were 548 LGAs that have benefitted from the scheme. This critical development was confirmed by interviewees during the field research. Figure 5.3 below shows the annual CGS to LGAs scheme’s expenditure overtime. As at 2014, a cumulative of ₦109.6 billion/US$556 million has been invested.

---

35 Exchange Rate at N150/US$; N197/US$ for 2010 and 2014 respectively (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2014)
While these developments seem like continuous effort by OSSAP-MDGs leadership towards the implementation of the CGS to LGAs, careful analysis of the spread and pattern of resource allocation supports the argument by many respondents on the influence of high level politicking in the implementation of the scheme after 2011. Firstly, the decision to continue to spread development resources thinly instead of concentrating on the already identified ‘poorest 113 LGAs’ across the country can best be described as a strategy of pursuing ‘quantity over quality’.

Figure 5.4 below shows the average spread of CGS to LGAs resources per LGA decreased from ₦200 million (113 LGAs) in 2011 to just ₦28 million (548 LGAs) in 2014. Arguably, if the incremental resources were to be channelled to the initially 113 LGAs, more impact would have been recorded. Indeed, our evidence shows that resources meant to reduce poverty were eventually channelled to regions with lower levels of poverty at the expense of regions with alarming rates of poverty (chapter Three). In this process, even within the regions, urban LGAs with relatively good development indicators have benefitted from the CGS to LGAs at the expense of rural and deprived LGAs.
For example, in 2014, out of the 77 LGAs added to the scheme, 39 LGAs or 51% were from one geopolitical zone in the south. This is the region of the then President Jonathan and with poverty level significantly below the national average (NBS, 2010). Indeed, only 30 LGAs were added from the Northwest and Northeast geopolitical zones – the two most deprived zones with poverty rates above 70% (chapter Three). Except for 2011, where three pilot LGAs were selected ‘objectively’ from each state, this politically-determined pattern prevailed in 2012 and 2013, with no specified criteria for adding LGAs into the scheme. Although according to OSSAP-MDGs’ Joint Report of Independent Monitoring and Supervision for the CGS to LGAs scheme, between 2011 and 2014 ‘…60% of overall projects were situated in the Northern part of the country, while 39.4% were situated in the Southern part of the country’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c: 152). This may look as if there were deliberate attempts by OSSAP-MDGs leadership to channel resources towards the LGAs in the Northern part, where poverty is much more pronounced. However, careful analysis of specific cases based on official documents and supported by key informant interviews revealed a skewed pattern of resource allocation towards the Southern LGAs.

To deepen our understanding of this, in terms of the scheme’s cumulative interventions from 2011 to 2014, I examined three states as shown in Table 5.3 based on official documents from OSSAP-MDGs, to provide fuller understanding of the politics behind the CGS to LGAs scheme’s resource allocation. The states examined are selected from Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria, with certain political and economic similarities. During the period under examination,
two states were under the same political party with the national government and one state under the opposition political party.

**Table 5.3: Cumulative CGS to LGAs projects in some selected states LGAs (2011 – 2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>South East</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>2.8 Million</td>
<td>2,420</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>2.8 Million</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>APC</td>
<td>1.4 Million</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on NPC (2010); OSSAP-MDGs Reports (2014c); NBS (2014)

From Table 5.3 above, Abia and Jigawa states were under the ruling PDP between 2011 and 2015, while Yobe state was under the opposition APC. One would have expected that both Abia and Jigawa LGAs benefit in equal measure from resources distributed by the national government led by the PDP. While both states have approximately the same population figure, Jigawa has more LGAs and is poorer than Abia state. However, somehow, Abia LGAs managed to have more cumulative CGS to LGAs projects compared to Jigawa LGAs. From our evidence, Abia LGAs received 181% more projects and programmes than Jigawa LGAs received. The pattern is even more glaring when Abia is compared with Yobe state from an opposition party. With the same number of LGAs and from a more disadvantaged region, Yobe LGAs received only 9.5% of the CGS to LGAs projects Abia LGAs received. It is important though to mention here that there had been insurgency in the North-eastern part of Nigeria, which may partly explain the observed lack of CGS to LGAs projects in Yobe state. Indeed, in 2014, no LGAs were added to the scheme from either Jigawa or Yobe states, while 12 LGAs were added from Abia state (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c). One key informant interviewed by this researcher observed ‘...the office was no longer following the provisions of the CGS Implementation Manual in the allocation and disbursement of fund to LGAs and states...’ (NL5, 14/01/2016). Another former OSSAP-MDGs official when asked to explain the observed discrepancies in the pattern in resource allocation posits:

‘I believe it was captured...I mean this was a huge project and it did attract attention from everybody. From the policy makers, the legislators, particularly at federal and state levels...but yes, there were a lot of interests and we tried to carry them along... where there is huge amount of money being spent, it will naturally attract attention’ (NL2, 10/02/2016)
In terms of achieving full implementation targets, an Independent Report commissioned by OSSAP-MDGs in late 2014 reported in its findings that because 2015 was an election year, implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme was subjected to political pressures at all levels. The report asserts:

‘...Previous CGS to LGAs interventions garnered more interest than the current exercise. This was attributable to 2015 being an election year and most stakeholders paid more attention to politicking than they did to ensuring set targets on the implementations of the various projects were met’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c: 583).

This observation was confirmed by a former senior official at OSSAP-MDGs, that the DRG funds in 2014 were mostly channelled towards funding the 2015 general elections (NL8, 11/01/2016). This may partly explain the low CGS to LGAs spending pattern in 2014 as shown in Figure 5.3 above.

**b) ‘Hardware vs software’ interventions?**

There is clear evidence that CGS to LGAs implementers decided to pursue ‘visible’ interventions at the expense of ‘less visible’ types of intervention. According to OSSAP-MDGs Joint Report of Independent Monitoring and Supervision for the CGS to LGAs, between 2011 and 2014, 51.2% of all interventions were of general procurement and equipment type and 45.3% were of construction type (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c). Thus, as shown in Figure 5.5 below, about 96.5% of all CGS to LGAs scheme’s interventions were of the ‘hardware or visible’ category, while only 3.5% could be categorised as ‘software or less visible’ category. The ‘less visible’ category represents programmes related to reform processes and capacity development. This approach is indeed contrary to the key objectives of the scheme that ‘seeks to build the capacities of LGAs in order to improve governance, service delivery and accountability, as well as the attainment of the MDGs’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a:9).
One key informant eloquently captured this observation more broadly as:

‘...It is now very hardware-oriented intervention. Borehole construction, clinics construction, classrooms etc. The soft part was not taken into consideration and the soft part is the most important for me... planning supporting those things, capacity building supporting those things, internal resources mobilisation at the LGA level – all these were conspicuously missing. The problem is not health clinic, but the health system. It is not only schools, but education system. And that one was not there. A good development manager thinks about these soft issues when starting...’ (NL11, 07/02/2016).

With this approach, little wonder that as at 2014, 31% of projects were ‘off track’ in terms of completion timeline, 53% of completed projects had not been properly handed over, while 41% of completed projects were not in use and only about 65% of projects were of ‘good quality’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c: 153). These outcomes have serious implications for pro-poor service delivery at the LGAs level (chapter Six). In terms of sectoral distribution of the CGS to LGAs interventions, 41% of interventions went to the education sector, 35% went to the health sector and 22% went to the complementary water and sanitation sector (ibid).
5.5.3 Mobilisation of support for policy implementation

This indicator of commitment deals with the willingness and ability of the reformer to identify and marshal support for a policy implementation (Brinkerhoff, 2000). It tends to know whether the reform team have developed a vision for success and a strategy that incorporates the interests of key players along the implementation chain. In the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, OSSAP-MDGs was able to marshal the support of key elites within and outside the government cycle. As mentioned earlier, from the design of the scheme to its full implementation, key political elites, such as the legislators, states governors, LGA chairmen, local bureaucrats and development partner institutions were mobilised in support of the initiative. Development partners such as DFID’s SPARC, UNDP and Earth Institute were sufficiently engaged in the implementation of the scheme – with some providing own resources as part of technical support. Indeed, UNDP served as the Co-Chair with OSSAP-MDGs of the CGS to LGAs Steering Committee (OSSAP-MDGs, 2013 and various interviews). During fieldwork, I interviewed key actors to understand their level of engagement with the scheme. The following quotes are typical of responses I received from respondents regarding their engagement with the CGS to LGAs scheme:

‘...UNDP continued to be involved in the implementation of the scheme and review of progress etc. But what we were not involved in is the direct financing of [CGS to LGAs] projects. The funding for these comes strictly from the government resources’ (NL6, 19/01/2016).

‘...We also had what we called the ‘Core Team’ meeting that was taking place every month, bringing together development partners and briefing them on what was being done so that they are able to pick exactly where they would like to add value...The EI [Earth Institute] at a point became the main drivers of the CGS to LGAs scheme...’ (NL2, 10/02/2016).

Interview respondents converged on the claim that even though there were strong and effective mobilisation efforts for the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation, this had decreased overtime (NL5, 14/01/2016; NL3, 22/01/2016; NL8, 11/01/2016). Thus, it is evident that initially there was strong mobilisation, but this became weak over time and especially after 2011 and in 2014 (as the 2015 elections approached).
5.5.4 Degree of analytical rigor applied in understanding policy context

This entails the degree to which policy actors undertake an in-depth examination of policy environment and uses that analysis to design a technically adequate and politically feasible reform programme (Brinkerhoff, 2000). Actions that are obviously inadequate to tackle problems would demonstrate a weak commitment towards a scheme. Our evidence suggests OSSAP-MDGs exhibited considerable degree of analytical rigor in the initial design and implementation of CGS to LGAs scheme. In doing so, OSSAP-MDGs made good use of credible data to inform the initial design and prepare for the full-scale implementation, including an analysis of the complex Nigerian political landscape. Through the scheme, OSSAP-MDGs developed implementation guidelines and manuals to deal with institutions and behaviours that either promote or impede pro-poor service delivery at the local level. The commissioning of baseline studies and needs assessment exercises to produce ‘gap maps’ for all the participating LGAs towards the attainment of the MDGs, and to use these in the planning processes and eventual evaluation of the CGS to LGAs proposals, seem to signal a high level of analytical rigor in the implementation of the scheme. Indeed, according the scheme’s implementation Manual (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a), before CGS proposals are approved, the participating LGA must submit ‘MDGs-Compliant Local Development Plan’ (MDGs - CLDP). The MDGs-CLDP is supposed to be a comprehensive plan for the attainment of MDGs within the LGA and the content and format was provided by OSSAP-MDGs for adoption by the LGAs. A significant number of studies have been carried out by OSSAP-MDGs and its partners during implementation. This researcher has reviewed sizeable number of these studies. Based on the weight of our evidence, this study finds that the degree of analytical rigor was only high at the inception of the scheme and remained relatively low thereafter.

5.5.5 Application of credible sanctions in support of implementation

The openness of policy actors to identify incentives and apply both positive and negative sanctions in the context of policy strategies is strongly seen as a sign of commitment (Brinkerhoff, 2000). The desire of the policy actors to use careful consideration into conceiving credible and enforceable measures to induce and/or compel behaviour change reinforces this characteristic. Strong application of highly credible sanctions is associated with more commitment, while weak application of ineffective sanctions signifies a lower degree of commitment (ibid). At the national level, OSSAP-MDGs clearly spelt out procedures to be followed by the participating LGAs in the
implementation of the scheme and the implications for ‘non-compliance’ with the procedures. This is contained in the initial (2009) and ‘revised’ (2014) implementation manuals (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a). Specific to procurement, the manual states:

‘A situation where goods, works or services are procured without following the procedures as stipulated…is a breach of CGS procurement procedure…when that occurs, OSSAP-MDGs will cancel the portion of the funds allocated to goods or services that have been wrongly procured and demand refund of the affected funds from the bank guarantee. This will also adversely affect future applications of the LGA to the CGS Funds’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a: 23).

However, available evidence did not show the extent to which OSSAP-MDGs enforces strict compliance with the set guidelines and procedures, specifically, with respect to funds disbursement requirements and procurement procedures. One key respondent observed: ‘… the MDGs-Compliant Local Development Plans were not provided by most LGAs as a prerequisite for accessing [CGS to LGAs] funds’ (NL9, 05/02/2016). There is no evidence of identifiable mechanism in place to reward either individual bureaucrats at the national level or the participating LGAs for compliance with the laid down procedures and to rehabilitate compromised individuals or institutions. A key informant told me ‘… there is nothing to show how the office [OSSAP-MDGs] handled any deviant case creditably or incentivised positive behaviour during implementation …most people got away with whatever they committed against the scheme’ (NL3, 22/01/2016).

Relationally, a recent Independent Report commissioned by OSSAP-MDGs identified this gap and recommended that going forward, OSSAP-MDGs should consider involving federal government’s anti-corruption agencies to ensure compliance in certain instances. The Report strongly recommended that ‘…there would also be need to involve government bodies like EFCC and ICPC\(^\text{36}\) in this quest for accountability’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c: 586). Thus, it is evident that weak application of credible sanctions, both positive and negative, prevailed in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme.

\(^{36}\) Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission - these are the two federal government’s anti-corruption agencies (chapter Three).
5.5.6 Perceptions of political feedback

As discussed in chapter Two, this attribute of commitment is seen in the light of perception of electoral gains at the local level because of policy implementation. In implementing the CGS to LGAs scheme, which proved to be a technically crafted and politically feasible intervention, there seems to be the general recognition by the political and bureaucratic elites that successful implementation of the scheme would increase the national and state governments’ political capital (NL1, 31/12/2015; NL5, 14/01/2016). This strong feedback is understood to provide incentives for continued effort in the implementation of the scheme. Evidently, it turned out to be one of the rationales behind the desire by OSSAP-MDGs leadership to cover the entire 774 LGAs under the scheme by 2015 – the year of general elections. Thus, perceptions provided the impetus to the sustained implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. The following are typical responses from key interviewees regarding the source of elite commitment to the scheme:

‘...the elites were actually supportive because they looked at that [CGS to LGAs] as a mechanism or a scheme where they could boost their political profile. And so, some were going after CGS projects and ensuring that they are placing projects where they could secure political goodwill...even in the negative cases, it has some positive implications because the negative is that, they are trying to hijack projects and site them where they could secure patronage. But at least development is seen to be reaching people. So, I look at it as a more of a win-win situation’ (NL3, 22/01/2016).

‘Well in my own assessment there was clearly a political will by the elites but that was incentivise largely by the fact that they branded most of these projects and took credit for the projects to get re-elected. It was actually a low hanging fruit for them, so that sustained it’ (NL1, 31/12/2015)

‘To be honest I think there was [commitment]. I don’t think that it [CGS to LGAs] would have succeeded without [political elite] commitment...so they were heavily associated with it in terms of political mileage they were going to get from bringing these projects even though the money weren’t entirely theirs...’ (NL5, 14/01/2016).

Indeed, in the run off to the 2015 general elections, key informants reported that the entire DRG funds were channelled speedily in a way and manner intended to secure electoral gains. One key informant was emphatic: ‘...resources were channelled towards 2015 campaigns and some ZTOs were secretly given funds from OSSAP-MDGs office and campaign posters to campaign for the ruling party...’ (NL8, 11/01/2016). This claim got some support as a former senior official at OSSAP-MDGs revealed:
'We were hearing about states that were not complying with PDP’s directives or those that decamped from the party were not getting funds because of their political affiliations or not. By that time, it became so disfigured and so I couldn’t keep an eye on the funds anymore’ (NL2, 14/02/2016).

In line with our discussion in chapter Three, President Jonathan’s government became highly vulnerable in the run-off to the 2015 general elections, due to the merger of four major opposition political parties to form the APC. This was compounded by the emergence of a credible candidate as its presidential candidate. Of course, this phenomenon is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, as we have seen in the case of Ghana, where state elites motivated largely by the quest for re-election, opted to spread school feeding programme’s resources ‘thinly’ across the country, in a manner that rendered the programme less effective (Abdulai, 2012). This, he observed, happened due to the ‘fear of potential future electoral sanctions’ (ibid). Thus, while at the national level this feedback might not necessary reflect the extent to which political elites leverage on the political mileage through the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, the following chapter examines this characteristic more closely at the LGA level.

5.6 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has chronicled the DRG spending following the historic 2005 Debt Relief deal that enabled the ‘freeing up’ of approximately US$1 billion per annum for pro-poor spending. Since the debt relief and the establishment of OSSAP-MDGs in 2006, the federal government experimented with various initiatives at both national and state levels often with disappointing outcomes. The lessons learnt with the implementation of the DRG funds through the federal MDAs and state governments led to the CGS to LGAs concept, design and eventual full-scale implementation.

This chapter has analysed the CGS to LGAs design and implementation from the national level downwards, tracing methodically the phases of its implementation, while paying specific attention to the politics of its resource allocation. It is argued that the CGS to LGAs scheme was designed in both a technically competent and a politically feasible manner to partly ‘go with the grain’ (Levy, 2014). Political elites were ‘co-opted and countered’ in the same process. Collectively, these observations support the recognition of the influence of the political dimension over the technical dimension of policy implementation in a political patronage context.
like Nigeria (Booth, 2012). Operationalising Brinkerhoff’s (2000) framework, the chapter traced and identified elite commitment to the CGS to LGAs implementation at the national level. The initiative to design the CGS to LGAs scheme in a ‘politically smart’ manner was a clear manifestation of the OSSAP-MDGs initial leadership’s and development partners desire to get the buy-in of the political elites.

In the same vein, the design of the CGS to LGAs resource allocation mechanism in a manner that provides a ‘protective mechanism’ through a ‘dedicated project account’ to protect development resources against the usual elite capture phenomena at the local level seemed quite sensible. Linked to this is the requirement for the participating LGAs to provide a ‘bank guarantee’ covering the federal government’s portion of the grant as a way of instituting strong ‘top-down’ forms of accountability in the implementation of the scheme. Additionally, the condition for the LGAs and states to provide 50% counterpart funding as a way of promoting commitment to pro-poor service delivery (or ‘buy in’) is a clear manifestation of an attempt to mobilise support and development resources, which exemplified commitment. But has commitment increased and elite capture avoided at the local level? This is the focus of chapter Six. Taken together, the operationalisation of the six characteristics of commitment points to a decreasing level of commitment over time at the national level, which seems closely linked to the change in the bureaucratic leadership at OSSAP-MDGs and the growing influence of patronage politics in the overall management of the CGS to LGAs scheme. Tables 5.4 and 5.5 below summarise the study’s judgements on OSSAP-MDGs’ capacity and commitment respectively.

### Table 5.4: Summary of bureaucratic capacity at OSSAP-MDGs (2006-2015)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bureaucratic capacity</strong></td>
<td>High – meritocratic recruitment and high skilled technocrats</td>
<td>High initially, but weakened through patronage appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bureaucratic autonomy</strong></td>
<td>High degree of autonomy from inception and sustained</td>
<td>Low from inception due to high level political interference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s judgement based on analysis in chapter Five
In concluding, the key findings of this chapter are three. Firstly, with respect to the design of the scheme, politics rather than technics prevailed in the eventual selection of the initial 113 participating LGAs. Secondly, the initial success of the scheme is attributed to the presence of political and bureaucratic leadership that was committed to improving service delivery for the poor. Thirdly, the decreasing commitment overtime in the implementation of the scheme is linked largely to the change in the bureaucratic leadership at OSSAP-MDGs in 2011 and the increasing influence of patronage politics in the management of the scheme. Thus, this chapter has set the background context upon which the further empirical chapters (Six and Seven) build upon with respect to the detailed examination of the scheme’s field-level implementation at the two-case study LGAs.
CHAPTER SIX

The CGS to LGAs Scheme at the Local Level: From Elite Capture to Elite Commitment in Rural Nigeria?

‘...I can tell you these people [political and bureaucratic elites] just wait for the monthly grants and they meet somewhere outside [the LGA] to share the resources. This has been their pattern. Everything is done in secrecy and no one to hold them accountable...’ (NL8, 11/01/2016).

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter explored in depth the politics of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s design and implementation at the national level, with a view to understanding how these played out. This chapter investigates the politics of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation and pro-poor service delivery at the local level. As a multi-level analysis along the policy chain, it analyses the role of the state and local governments in (mis)shaping the implementation of the scheme. It addresses two key questions in particular – (i) Has the CGS to LGAs scheme been able to promote elite commitment to its reforms and implementation? (ii) Has the scheme avoided elite capture? It explores these by first providing thick description of the processes of resource allocation ‘before’ and ‘after’ the scheme’s implementation in the two-case study LGAs. This is with a view to understanding deeply how these processes played out and to ascertain the extent to which the CGS to LGAs reforms were able to avoid the usual elite capture phenomena associated with lower level of governance in Nigeria (Khemani, 2010). The chapter then examines local level elite commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation and the impact of the scheme on commitment to pro-poor service delivery in the study LGAs. Finally, it interrogates the scheme’s community engagement processes, social accountability and the ‘agency’ of the poor at play.

The chapter argues that the direct involvement of the state governments in the scheme’s implementation led to the variation in implementation outcomes between the two study LGAs. Crucially, the high turnover of local political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA level is one of the key factors that explain the low implementation outcome in Mashi LGA. It is evident that, where commitment seemed to be high and by extension implementation was effective, as in the case of Guri LGA, it is largely due to the combined initiatives and ‘agency’ of the benefitting
communities, the LGA chairman and the state governor. A ‘development coalition’ can create a context in which service delivery can become relatively effective.

6.2 The politics of LGAs resource allocation

The emphasis in this section is on the resource allocation mechanisms for service delivery at the LGA level. In line with our discussion and conceptual framing in Chapter Two, the aim here is to provide thick descriptions of the two key resource allocation processes - budgetary and procurement processes - ‘before and after’ the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in Guri and Mashi LGAs. These processes are understood to be key decision-making arenas that elites can manipulate to capture development resources for their own benefit. As highlighted in chapter Five and discussed later in this chapter, these are the key processes the CGS to LGAs scheme attempted to reform.

6.2.1 Guri and Mashi LGAs: Resource allocation processes ‘before’ the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation

With reference to the discussion in chapter Three, the operations of the ‘Joint LGAs Account’ at the state level across the country ensured that LGAs receive their statutory allocation via this ‘Joint Account’ arrangement. Both Guri and Mashi LGAs receive their monthly statutory allocation based on the vertical and horizontal allocation formulae from the Federal Government through their respective state governments (GL4, 25/02/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016; Guri LGA, 2016). Thus, both LGAs are funded from the Joint Accounts domiciled at the state level for the implementation of their annual budgets and programmes. It is important to note that, the state governments through their respective Local Government Service Commissions are responsible for the recruitment and promotion of LGA staff from Grade Level 08 and above. Thus, with harmonised payroll systems in place, all LGA staff salaries are paid centrally (GL4, 25/02/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016). Both Guri and Mashi LGAs receive their allocations after all the ‘necessary’ deductions at the state level (ibid).

37 The vertical formula allocates 20.6% of federal revenue to all 774 LGAs in the country, while the horizontal formula is based on equity, population and landmass (NBS, 2014).
a) **Planning and budgetary processes**

Guri LGA has developed a Medium-term Planning Document called the ‘Guri Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy’ (LEEDS), which is revised periodically. This researcher was able to obtain copies of Guri LEEDS (2007 - 2010) that predates the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in the LGA and a revised version covering 2011 to 2014. The two versions of Guri LEEDS contained detailed background information on the LGA, a SWOT analysis and annual revenue and expenditure estimates (Guri LGA, 2014). A senior LGA bureaucrat reported that the Guri LGA derives its annual budgets from the LEEDS document (GL3, 25/02/2016). In marked contrast, Mashi LGA did not have such a document to inform its annual budgetary planning and expenditure exercise before the implementation of the scheme or after (ML2, 20/03/2016; ML3, 23/03/2016). One senior bureaucrat at Mashi LGA observed that:

‘To be honest there was nothing like planning document at the LGA. We used to come up with annual budgets just to guide us. And even then, the budgets were hardly implemented as planned due to so many constraints...’ (ML5, 25/03/2016).

However, for both Guri and Mashi LGAs, there is no evidence that budgetary expenditures are tied to any planning documents. Unfortunately, the excellent Guri LEEDS document did not impact on actual practice. Evidence from fieldwork revealed that once the statutory allocation/grant is received by the LGAs, the key political leaders and senior LGA bureaucrats meet and decide which sector gets what and which area of the LGA should get a project. One key respondent was emphatic in criticising this approach to local governance:

‘Naturally, the LGA chairman has the final say on all matters and all others [political and bureaucratic elites] do his bid...so there was no clear guide or transparent way of doing things and that affected service delivery...’ (GL4, 25/02/2016)

However, a top bureaucrat at Mashi LGA when asked about this approach to governance reminisced:

‘...there were a lot of pressures on them [political elites] by the electorates demanding this and that. That often prevented the LGA leadership from appearing frequently at the LGA and that has affected their ability to plan and implement key programmes’. (ML1, 15/03/2016).

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39 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis.
The above statement by the LGA bureaucrat implies that the electorates are putting the political elites under unnecessary pressure by demanding ‘too much’ from their elected representatives. The two observations above were corroborated by 10 of the interviewees at the LGA level. This finding corroborates several observations by public analysts on local government administration in Nigeria. Achimugu and colleagues (2013) argued that LGAs in Nigeria have a few things in common, which include among others, lack of transparency and accountability. Additionally, as reported in chapter Four, administrative processes are observably very slow and inefficient and information retrieval, if attempted, still done manually.

b) Procurement processes

At the procurement level, it is important to note that both Guri and Mashi LGAs do not have specific procurement act or law guiding their respective procurement processes. They rely on their respective state’s government procurement laws to procure goods and services (GL2, 24/02/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016). In terms of financial management, the Local Government Financial Memoranda (LGFM) empowers the Director of Personnel Management and the council’s Treasurer to serve as signatories to the LGA Account and financial transactions (ibid; Guri LGA, 2016; Mashi LGA, 2016). In both LGAs, it was reported that there are certain categories of ‘big procurement’ usually done at the state level (GL1, 25/02/2016; GL4, 25/02/2016; ML5, 25/03/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016). In the case of Guri LGA, these types of procurement were usually executed across all the LGAs in the state under the ‘Joint Account Projects’ (GL2, 24/02/2016). A similar approach prevailed in Mashi LGA albeit with a different nomenclature.

In both LGAs, the respective state governments procured goods and services ‘on behalf’ of the LGAs, through the state’s control of the LGAs statutory allocations from the federal government (also chapter Three). For example, the Jigawa state government under the directive of the state governor decided to construct official residences for all the 27 LGA chairmen. The selection of the vendors and the award of contract were handled by the state government without the input of the LGAs (GL4, 25/02/2016). A senior LGA official argued that Guri LGA did not need another residence for the LGA chairman as it already had one: ‘... after all, the LGA chairmen hardly stays

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40 Fukuyama (2014) writes about such excessive democratic pressures fostering clientelism in both developing and industrialised countries (such as the USA)
in the official residence and so it is really misplaced priority and a waste of resources’ (GL2, 24/02/2016).

Relatedly, Katsina state government had previously procured five tractor machines each for the 34 LGAs in the state. At the time the tractors were procured, Mashi LGA had other pressing priorities in the areas of primary education and rural water supply (ML5, 25/03/2016). One respondent observed ‘...to be honest with you this is just one of the ways the state governors continue to micro-manage the resources of the local governments in the state...this has been a long tradition here...’ (ML7, 05/03/2016). Thus, majority of respondents, who are senior LGA officials directly involved in these procurements, were of the view that patronage politics rather than actual needs of the LGAs determined the pattern of these ‘big procurements’, handled by the state governments on behalf of the LGAs, and that the state governors determine who gets awarded the contracts (GL1, 25/02/2016; GL2, 24/02/2016; GL4, 25/02/2016; ML1, 15/03/2016; ML5, 25/03/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016).

One official response from a state level top bureaucrat represents the views of the state officials interviewed in this study: ‘...these are capital projects that need to be ‘coordinated’ at the state level, since the LGAs do not have the capacity to handle them individually... and you know their funds are together [Joint LGAs Account]’ (ML6, 06/04/2016). This explanation is not quite convincing as our findings revealed that LGAs do have the capacity to procure locally. Thus, like all the LGAs in the state, Guri and Mashi LGAs on their own have often initiated and procured certain goods and services after obtaining the approval of their respective Ministry for Local Government in the state (GL1, 25/02/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016). Ironically, in both LGAs, whenever procurements were initiated by the LGAs, such procurements were handled based on ‘selective tendering’ (GL2, 24/02/2016; GL4, 25/02/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016). In the case of Guri LGA, by selective tendering, ‘...the LGA chairman will direct his associates to submit three quotations [bids] for the identified jobs and one firm will eventually be awarded the contract’ (GL2, 24/02/2016). The situation was not any better in Mashi LGA. The following observation by a senior LGA bureaucrat, directly involved in the procurement processes, is typical of the responses received:
‘...here, past [LGA] chairmen have awarded contracts unilaterally to companies directly linked to them. They were the ones doing the contracts and paying themselves. Some bureaucrats are aiding them on this. At the end, it is the local people that suffer...because most often the jobs executed were of sub-standard quality. And some companies were paid up to 50% mobilisation before they commence work...’ (ML5, 25/03/2016).

While there are financial and procurement instructions in place, most respondents at both LGAs were of the view that LGA Auditors responsible for ensuring compliance to the institutional safeguards have been largely compromised (GL6, 04/03/2016; Guri FGD, 27/02/2016; ML3, 23/03/2016; Marke FGD, 26/03/2016). Although the situation in Guri LGA was comparatively better than in Mashi LGA before the implementation of the scheme, the situation at both LGAs can best be described as elite ‘control’ or ‘capture’, with a clear absence of effective safeguards to check outright corruption. Did the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme manage to change this? The next section examines the scheme’s reforms and resource allocation processes in the two study LGAs.

6.2.2 Guri and Mashi LGAs: Resource allocation processes after the CGS to LGAs Implementation - reform or business as usual?

With reference to our findings in chapter Five, the CGS to LGAs scheme was designed to promote commitment to national development priorities and reforming governance at the LGA level. Thus, this section examines specific CGS to LGAs scheme’s reforms that aimed to improve service delivery for the poor.

a) CGS to LGAs ‘special project account’?

The CGS to LGAs scheme required participating LGAs to open a dedicated ‘CGS to LGAs special project account’, where the federal government’s share and the LGA counterpart contributions will be deposited annually. According to the implementation manual, the requirement to maintain this dedicated account is to ‘accommodate audit and oversight requirements’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a: 24). The signatories to the account are in line with the requirements of the Local Government Financial Memoranda (ibid). One former senior bureaucrat at OSSAP-MDGs reported: ‘You know the federal government can’t easily trust the LGAs to deliver, so we need

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41 Mobilisation means advance payment to selected contractors before commencing the actual job.
appropriate safeguards such as the dedicated account...’ (NL1, 31/12/2015). Additionally, each LGA was required to submit a ‘bank guarantee’ from its bank covering the federal portion of the annual grant to prevent the CGS to LGAs resources from being diverted (ibid; OSSAP-MDGs, 2014). According to our evidence, both Guri and Mashi LGAs had opened and maintained the CGS to LGAs special project account. In Guri LGA, the account was operated by two signatories – one from the LGA and another from the state government. According to a key respondent:

‘The account has two signatories, Grade A and B. Grade A is the state’s Accountant General [representing the state] while Grade B is the Treasurer of the council [LGA]. Payments for contracts executed are made from this account...’ (NL8, 11/01/2016).

A senior government official revealed that the state government needed to ‘protect its share [30%] of the counterpart funding through the joint control of the project account...’ (GL8, 24/02/2016). In the case of Mashi LGA, the account was opened by the state government at the state capital in the name of the LGA (ML1, 15/03/2016). This was done in coordination with the state’s Accountant General and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Governor on MDGs. The Account has three signatories; the state MDGs Focal Person; Finance Director at the Project Support Unit (PSU) and the Mashi LGA Treasurer. It is important to mention that this arrangement applied to all the other CGS participating LGAs in the state. This ensured the state government’s control of the scheme’s project accounts, as the participating LGAs were reported to have been ‘micro-managed’ by the state government (ML1, 15/03/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016; NL7, 10/02/2016). As discussed later in this chapter, this explains partly the source of implementation challenges faced in Mashi LGA.

b) MDGs-compliant Local Government Development Plan

The CGS to LGAs scheme required participating LGAs to develop ‘MDGs-compliant Local Government Development Plan’ (MLGDP). This was supposed to be a ‘key requirement’ for accessing the scheme’s grant, as the issuance of ‘No objection’ to the LGA by OSSAP-MDGs is dependent on the submission of MLGDP. The LGA Technical Committee led by TA to the LGA was to anchor the process of developing the MLDP for the LGA. A specific template was provided by OSSAP-MDGs to guide this process (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014: 63). But have the participating LGAs

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42 This is ‘a comprehensive plan for the attainment of the MDGs within the LGA’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014:18)
developed and submitted the MLGDP in compliance with the CGS to LGAs requirement? In Guri LGA, with the existing LEEDS document, it was easier for the LGA technical committee to adopt and produce the MLGDP as part of its application process. This researcher reviewed the MLGDP developed by Guri LGA in support of its grant application for 2011 and thereafter. Key respondents were of the view that since the development of the MLGDP, it continues to serve as a ‘road map’ for the development of the LGA (NL8, 11/01/2016; GL3, 25/02/2016). Thus, subsequent expenditure patterns showed more LGA resources being channelled towards CGS to LGAs scheme’s priority areas of primary education, primary healthcare and water and sanitation (see section 6.5 for details). According to a former LGA chairman: ‘The CGS helped us to organise our development aspirations in one document and to continue to implement planned programmes and activities’ (GL1, 25/02/2016).

In contrast, Mashi LGA did not produce an MLGDP. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, Mashi LGA had not developed any form of medium or long-term development plan to guide its development efforts. Despite substantial efforts, I could not get hold of any document relating to ‘local development plan’ that was used in support of its CGS to LGAs applications with OSSAP-MDGs. One key respondent’s response is typical of responses received from senior LGA officials:

‘...In this local council or even most of the local councils in the state, it is difficult to find any document supporting overall decision-making process and guiding resource allocation. Here, we just implement what they [political elites] wish... and you know political considerations will always prevail...’ (ML5, 25/03/2016).

This issue raises questions as to how Mashi LGA accessed its CGS to LGAs funds without complying with this ‘necessary’ requirement. With reference to our findings in chapter Five, some participating LGAs across the country have indeed received ‘No objection’ approvals from OSSAP-MDGs without complying fully with the requirements of the CGS Implementation Manual (NL3, 22/01/2016; NL9, 05/02/2016; NL10, 22/04/2016). While it is evident that planning processes in Guri LGA have been strengthened and partially used to inform development interventions following the CGS to LGAs reforms, the planning processes for resource allocation in Mashi LGA remained ‘business as usual’.
c) Monitoring and reporting

OSSAP-MDGs has institutionalised an ‘Independent Monitoring, Supervision, and Data Collection (MSD)’ framework and reporting templates for the monitoring and reporting of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation progress by the participating LGAs. The Independent MSD framework was to provide ‘clear feedback, highlight challenges, identify lagging LGAs and serves as the basis for assessing performance and eligibility for further grants’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a:27). Thus, one would have expected the CGS to LGAs participating LGAs to embrace this reporting framework to aid their monitoring and reporting activities, both within and without the scheme’s implementation cycle. There is little evidence to show how OSSAP-MDGs enforced adherence to this by the participating LGAs (chapter Five).

d) Procurement and contract management processes

Through its implementation guideline, the CGS to LGAs scheme aimed at major reforms to the procurement processes of the participating LGAs. The CGS to LGAs manual states:

‘Without prejudice to state procurement law/guidelines and/or financial instructions, the procurement process for all CGS projects will be as provided by the federal government’s Public Procurement Act’

The CGS to LGAs procurement guidelines are presented in Box 6.1, below.

Box 6.1: CGS to LGAs scheme’s procurement guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The CGS Project Tenders Committee shall employ the following procedures among others, in selecting contractors, suppliers and consultants for implementing the CGS projects:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Advertise and solicit for bids from qualified contractors, supplies and service providers in accordance with the Procurement Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Invite a representative of the OSSAP-MDGs while reviewing expression of interest from bidders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Invite two credible persons as observers, one person each representing a private sector professional organisation whose expertise is relevant and a non-governmental organisation working in the areas of transparency, accountability or anti-corruption, while reviewing bid proposals from prequalified contractors, supplies and service providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Receive, evaluate and select the bids received in a transparent manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Debrief the bid losers on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Resolve complaints or disputes if any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Obtain a Certificate of ‘No Objection’ to Contract Award from OSSAP-MDGs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Obtain and confirm the validity of all performance guarantees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Award Contracts to preferred bidders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Announce and publicise the award of contracts’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OSSAP-MDGs (2014a: 22)

Section 15(1) (b) of the Public Procurement Act 2007 stipulates ‘due process’ to be followed for transparent public procurement by Federal Government Ministries, Department and Agencies.
From the above guidelines, it is evident that the federal government aimed to reform the procurement process at the local level through the CGS to LGAs scheme. It was reported that following the implementation of the scheme, Guri LGA adopted the ‘competitive’ procurement process of the CGS to LGAs scheme in its traditional ‘non-CGS’ procurements. One senior LGA bureaucrat summed up the views of most LGA officials:

‘Sure, we adopted the CGS approach and we now advertise all our big projects as against the usual selective tendering. We have taken initiative and borrowed the concept [CGS to LGAs] of competitive tendering here and we are satisfied with it as it has transformed our [LGA] contract management processes’ (GL2, 24/02/2016).

However, upon triangulation, one key respondent, while agreeing that the scheme’s procurement guidelines has impacted on Guri LGA’s procurement process, still argues that selective tendering continues in the LGA depending on the political elites and the interests they come with. The respondent asserts ‘...They [political elites] still select who they give contracts to even when they go through the process...interests vary with individuals’ (GL4, 25/02/2016). On the other hand, our findings revealed that in Mashi LGA, compliance with these guidelines were indeed limited to the scheme’s procurement activities. In effect, Mashi LGA did not institutionalise these processes in their ‘non-CGS’ procurements. The following quotes are typical of responses received from senior LGA officials on the procurement processes in Mashi LGA following the implementation of the scheme:

‘...To be honest with you nothing has changed here with respect to our procurement activities since the state government continue to be in charge of all major procurements...so there is nothing to adopt to as our hands are tied...’ (ML7, 05/04/2016)

‘...you think they [political elites] will follow those guidelines [CGS to LGAs]? They work closely with state officials to reward their supporters with contracts...how can they [political elites] adopt competitive procurement in the local government?’ (ML4, 23/03/2016).

These observations were sufficiently triangulated and reported by key community members during focus group discussions (Bamle FGD, 24/03/2016; Killago FGD, 25/03/2016). In effect, the Katsina state government’s direct hijacking of the procurement processes in Mashi LGA explains in part the variation in the scheme’s implementation performance compared to Guri LGA. The
following section investigates the state governments’ involvement in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme.

6.3 The involvement of the state governments?

The state governments’ involvement in the procurement processes of the CGS to LGAs through their ‘coordination’ role at the Project Support Unit (PSU) ensured that the state governors had full control of the processes and had indeed used that influence to dispense patronage to associates, albeit in varying degrees across the country (NL2, 10/02/2016; NL10, 22/04/2016). In the case of our study LGAs, the following are typical views expressed by key respondents regarding state government’s involvement in the scheme:

On Guri LGA:

‘This is where we had problem honestly... We were not involved in the process as stipulated in the implementation guidelines. This is precisely where things went wrong as we only saw contractors coming to inform us about their plans to commence work. But despite this [capture], we were able to hold the contractors accountable here, as we provided regular supervision of the ongoing projects. I would say I was satisfied with the implementation as we have benefitted from the resources as expected...May be the state government feels strongly that if LGAs are allowed to handle the procurement, might divert resources to other uses...’ (GL1, 25/02/2016).

‘The experience we had was basically when we finish developing our proposal [CGS to LGAs] at the LGA, we forward it to the state MDGs Support Unit [PSU] for onward delivery to the MDGs Office Abuja. At the MDGs office in Abuja, after all the necessary reviews, a certificate of No objection is issued for us to proceed. Unfortunately, that also must come back through the state office [PSU] and that is how things worked. We didn’t have any problem with the office what so ever... although majority of the big projects [construction of health centres and schools] were advertised at the state level while we [LGA] advertised for smaller projects such as water points etc.’ (GL2, 24/02/2016).

‘During the bidding process, the relevant LGA officials and the Technical Assistant are invited to take part in the process at the state level. At the successful completion of the exercise, successful contractors will be sent to us for the necessary documentation including the drafting of the contractual agreement’ (GL4, 25/02/2016).
Typical of what national level officials observed about Guri LGA:

‘What I can assure you is that Jigawa state has been following the due process [CGS guidelines]. But it is different in some other states... in fact, in other states it is the governors that award the contracts without going through these processes. Once the CGS Unit in Abuja issued the ‘No Objection’, the whole process is at the mercy of the state governor, period.’ (NL8, 11/01/2016)

‘[political elite] commitment differ from state to state... what I know for example in Jigawa state, right from 2011 till 2015, the political will was excellent. The state governor allowed the Focal Person, the CGS Assistant [Technical Assistant] and the ZTO [Zonal Technical Officer] to spearhead the implementation of the programme... (NL7, 10/02/2016)

On Mashi LGA:

‘Actually, the way it was done in Katsina State was that all the procurement activities for the CGS participating LGAs were handled at the MDGs state office headed by the MDG Focal Person, who happened to be directly under the governor’s Office. Basically, it was the state Focal Person that controls the funds and of course by extension the state governor who appointed the Focal Person and delegated that power. In all honesty that is what happened, may be due to the counterpart funding provided by the state. And as you know the governor controls all the funds of the LGAs... You can say the governor controlled 50% of the money while the MDG office [federal government] controlled the other 50%. But once Abuja [OSSAP-MDGs] paid their 50% into the account, all the monies became under the control of the state governor’ (ML1, 15/03/2016).

This key respondent who was directly involved in the procurement process elaborated further:

‘...To be honest, we were invited to participate in the tendering process at the state level, but our participation was limited to receiving bids from interested contractors only. After that, we were only informed of the approval of the selected companies. To be totally honest with you, the contractors that eventually got the jobs were handpicked by the state governor and were his political associates. So, the next thing was to see contractors coming to the LGA to commence work. At completion, the LGA treasure is asked to prepare the necessary documentation and payments eventually made. So, in terms of the control of funds, we didn't have any, so also the LGA Planning Committee. The funds were controlled by the state governor through the MDG state office. This was the situation in Mashi LGA and Katsina state generally’ (ML1, 15/03/2016).
Similar observations were reported by senior LGAs officials and key community members (ML2, 24/03/2016; ML5, 25/03/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016; Marke FGD, 26/03/2016). Below is typical of what national level officials observed about Mashi LGA:

‘...I would say the process was hijacked by the state in connivance with the national CGS office. Participating LGAs were completely side-lined in the procurement process. Contracts were awarded at the state level without strictly following the guidelines as stipulated in the Implementation Manual...’ (NL9, 05/02/2016).

However, as usual, state government officials justified their intervention at the procurement level of the CGS to LGAs scheme to ‘lack of capacity’ at the LGA level and the need to ensure full compliance with the state procurement law. One senior state government official reminisced:

‘...the state office [PSU] served as the coordinating Unit for all the participating local governments in the state. In doing this, the office supported the capacity of the LGAs to implement the [CGS to LGAs] interventions and that includes full compliance with due process in procurement...’ (NL10, 22/04/2016).

At first sight, the above statement looks logical but on closer scrutiny, this argument is unconvincing for three reasons. Firstly, as discussed earlier in this chapter, there is evidence of capacity for procurement at the LGA level. Indeed, that is partly what the federal government sets out to achieve with the scheme by strengthening the capacity of the participating LGAs to improve service delivery (chapter Seven). The Technical Assistants (TAs) are supposed to work closely with the LGA officials to strengthen this. Secondly, the federal government required all participating LGAs to comply fully with its Public Procurement Act (2007) in the procurement of goods and services under the scheme. Thirdly, the weight of our evidence did not support the claim of full compliance with due process in procurements at the state level.

Judging by this, it is evident that state governments had significant influence in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in both study LGAs. While there is evidence of active participation due to the agency of the political elites in Guri LGA, that ensured appointed contractors delivered on their contractual terms, there seemed to be complete absence of participation and local elites’ agency in Mashi LGA. Most CGS to LGAs scheme’s projects in Guri LGA were reported to have been successfully executed by contractors and service providers according to specifications, due largely to the joint efforts of the local elites and non-elites (this issue is revisited later in this chapter). It appears reasonable to stress that Jigawa state’s
institutional setting and the ‘reform minded’ nature of the then state governor ensured that the PSU and the participating LGAs in the state worked closely to implement CGS to LGAs projects free from unnecessary political interference. For example, as required by OSSAP-MDGs, the Jigawa state governor appointed a seasoned bureaucrat at the level of a Permanent Secretary to serve as the state’s Focal Person and the head of PSU. The PSU was located at the state’s Directorate of Budget and Planning, and it was reported that the PSU was granted reasonable autonomy to support the implementation of the scheme across the state (NL8, 11/01/2016). This researcher obtained documentary evidence on this appointment and other official communications that emanated from the state office.

The institutional arrangement in Katsina state differs significantly from that of Jigawa state and ensured that the governor remained firmly in control of the scheme’s resources. In effect, the CGS to LGAs reforms were blocked by the governor. The then state governor appointed a full-time politician to head the PSU and located the PSU directly under his office. Thus, as reported earlier in this chapter, the then state governor through the PSU continued to directly dispense patronage to political associates with contracts and little was done to ensure compliance with contractual obligations by contractors. Consequently, in Mashi LGA, a few CGS to LGAs projects were reported by officials and community members to have been executed in substandard manner (ML1, 15/03/2016; Killago FGD, 25/03/2016). For example, three water points constructed in remote communities were reported to have developed problems and stopped pumping water only a few days after commissioning (Baude FGD, 24/03/2016; Killago FGD, 25/03/2016). I inspected these water points during fieldwork and found them not to be functioning well. Thus, with respect to Mashi LGA, the CGS to LGAs scheme has not been able to avoid the elite capture phenomenon that has been so widely reported in Nigeria.

6.3.1 States’ electoral contexts: Implications for Commitment?

Hickey (2007) noted that political institutions, including elections, offer significant incentives for and against accomplishment. Thus, elections serve as incentive towards the design and implementation of pro-poor programmes. However, more crucial is how political elites and bureaucratic agencies engage with the poor, and that pro-poor initiatives have been shaped by the existence of a form of political contract between state and citizenry (ibid). As discussed later in this Chapter, the perceptions of political feedback provide the needed incentives for policy
actors to be more committed towards the implementation of a policy (Chopra, 2015). The electoral contexts of Jigawa (Guri LGA) and Katsina (Mashi LGA) states differ slightly since the return of democracy in 1999. While Jigawa state had regime change in 2007 from the ruling All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Katsina state, as with the federal level, was under the PDP since 1999. Thus, in Jigawa state, electorates have demonstrated capacity for regime change, which continue to provide incentive for political elites at the state level to deliver on their mandate (GL1, 24/02/2016). In Katsina state, there was no major ‘opposition’ since 1999, as the opposition parties in the state remained highly fragmented and unable to effect regime change (ML3, 23/03/2016). It is important to highlight that during the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme (2011-2015), both governors of Jigawa and Katsina states were serving their second and final constitutional term in office and were not seeking re-election in 2015.

Thus, this context might not serve as ‘incentive’ for the governors to be committed to programmes with potential electoral gains. What accounted for the variations in commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation in the two states include: the personality and ‘reform nature’ of the Jigawa state governor, the existence of political and bureaucratic elites committed to the implementation of the scheme at Guri LGA and the active engagement between state actors and the poor citizens. As highlighted in Chapter Four, the personality of the governor was a key determinant of commitment in Jigawa state. The governor served as a Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Obasanjo (1999 – 2003). He has been a ‘grassroots politician’ since the Second Republic. Observers noted that the governor was popular with the masses and often referred to as ‘Gwamnan Talakawa’ (Governor for the poor) due to his pro-poor policies and programmes. As one SPARC report noted, the then Jigawa state governor was referred to as ‘reform minded’ (SPARC, 2015). This personality helped to shape the governor’s ‘commitment’ to pro-poor service delivery. However, this commitment is person-centric and might not be sustained beyond the tenure of the state governor. In Katsina state, the governor’s control and use of CGS resources for patronage, the high turn-over of political and bureaucratic elites at Mashi LGA and the seeming lack of state society engagement combined to undermine commitment to the scheme’s implementation. This is coupled with the fact that the governor was serving his final term and was not seeking re-election. As such, the governor can afford to dispense patronage to friends and associates without the fear of electoral sanction (NL10,
Now, the question is, has the CGS to LGAs scheme been able to promote local-level elite commitment to its implementation? The following section analyses elite commitment to the implementation of the scheme in the two-case study LGAs.

6.4 Commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme?

Employing Brinkerhoff’s (2000) analytical framework (and see chapter Five), the following characteristics of elite commitment are analysed in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the two-case study LGAs.

6.4.1 Locus of initiative in policy implementation

Here, the extent to which LGA level actors take initiatives in the implementation of the scheme signifies their motivation to ensure the success of the scheme. Thus, taken together, the degree of initiatives of LGA bureaucrats, the autonomy of LGA officials, political elites’ support for initiatives and feedback to the federal government, signposts the degree of initiative towards the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in the study LGAs. As discussed in chapter Five, from the design of the scheme, guidelines were formulated at the national level and as such the extent to which LGA political and bureaucratic elites take initiatives were somewhat limited. However, within the LGA itself, locus of initiative is dependent upon the autonomy granted to bureaucratic elites as ‘agents’ by the political elites as the ‘principals’ (this is deeply interrogated in chapter Seven).

In Guri LGA, with the help of state level bureaucrats, political and bureaucratic elites responded positively to the scheme’s implementation and took initiatives to adopt to the CGS implementation guidelines. While most directives came from OSSAP-MDGs and sometimes from the state PSU, the political and bureaucratic elites in Guri LGA made appropriate changes where necessary and provided feedback to OSSAP-MDGs. There was evidence of considerable LGA level instructions and documentations through Departmental Memos and Circulars from the Director of Planning, Research and Statistics, whose office coordinates the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation. Such memos in some instances were cascaded down to the community representatives involved in the implementation of the scheme. Interviews with relevant heads of departments revealed high level of initiative in Guri LGA. One senior LGA bureaucrat reported:
‘Here we customise instructions either from the state or the federal to suite our objectives…’ (GL5, 23/02/2016). Indeed, this researcher was able to review circulars directing officials involved in the scheme’s implementation to respond to specific issues that require the attention of the LGA chairman. The then LGA chairman was reported to have been ‘highly’ committed to the success of the CGS to LGAs scheme. One community leader observed: ‘As for Hon. Bulama [former LGA chairman], he was determined to see the success of the programme [CGS]…he was attending all the meetings and giving directives…’ (GL6, 04/03/2016). It is important to note that this LGA chairman served two tenures of three years each, which gave him longer time horizon to institutionalise reforms. Thus, this thesis argues that this continuity partly contributed to the overall success of the scheme at Guri LGA.

By contrast, compared to Guri LGA, our evidence revealed low level of initiative in Mashi LGA, where most instructions were hardly adopted or customised to suit local context. High turnover of local political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA contributed the loss of Institutional memory in the implementation of the scheme (ML1, 15/03/2016). Between 2011 and 2015, three ‘Interim Administrators’ were appointed by the then state governor to head Mashi LGA, due to the inability of the state government to conduct LGA elections (ibid; ML7, 05/04/2016). As reported earlier, most of the key functions requiring the LGA to take initiative were somehow handled by the PSU at the state level. In effect, apart from initial documentation that was carried out at the LGA level, most initiatives were taken by the PSU on behalf of the LGA. Thus, LGA level bureaucrats were not given the autonomy and flexibility to take initiatives in the implementation of the scheme. In line with our discussion in chapter Two, this indicator of commitment is important in ensuring the success of policy at the implementation level. In the absence of flexibility, LGA bureaucrats are constrained to take initiatives that will enable the successful implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme and similar initiatives. From our evidence, Mashi LGA had exhibited low initiative overtime, while Guri LGA had demonstrated a relatively high locus of initiative, and as such strong commitment.
6.4.2 Continuity of effort and allocation of resources

This characteristic is important for successful policy implementation as it ensures continuity of effort and resources in support of a specific policy. Thus, continues provision of human and financial resources is seen to demonstrate high level of commitment (Brinkerhoff, 2000). As discussed in chapter Five, in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, participating LGAs were required to fulfil certain conditions annually before accessing the federal portion of the grant. These include the opening of CGS to LGAs special project account; the provision of counter-part funding; the development of MDGs-Complaint Development Plan; the provision of physical infrastructure and deployment of adequate personnel to support the scheme’s implementation at the LGA level.

Guri LGA established functioning bank accounts dedicated to the scheme’s implementation. The CGS to LGAs ‘operations account’ at the LGA was funded 100% by the LGA to support the administrative cost of implementing the scheme. This includes the costs of arranging meetings, trainings, field visits/monitoring and stipend for personnel implementing of the scheme. For example, a fully furnished office space with ICT equipment was provided for the use of the CGS Technical Assistant. The LGA equally provided a modest accommodation for the Technical Assistant and supported his activities, even when some falls under the federal government’s responsibilities (NL7, 10/02/2016; NL8, 11/01/2016). There were few redeployments of senior LGA bureaucrats involved with the implementation of scheme out of the LGA. This ensured high level of bureaucratic continuity in the implementation of the scheme. The commitment of the then LGA chairman ensured that the scheme’s implementation did not suffer due to ‘lack of funds’. One senior LGA official told this researcher:

‘...once it is CGS programme, the [former] chairman will look for money to support it. And this ensured we did not lag behind in our implementation drive...everyone knows this including state officials...our allowances were paid timely’ (GL4, 25/02/2016).

The situation was comparatively similar in Mashi LGA, with respect to the initial efforts at establishing the structures for the implementation of the scheme. Office accommodation was provided for the CGS Technical Assistant, LGA personnel were assigned to work as the implementation team among others (ML5, 25/03/2016). However, a senior Head of Department at the LGA reported inadequate staffing to support the implementation of the scheme as a major
constraint (ML4, 23/02/2016). Thus, it is evident that strong leadership in the continued provision of human and financial resources in support of the scheme’s implementation was missing in Mashi LGA. Again, the high-turnover of political and bureaucratic elites and the state government’s micro-management of the scheme were largely responsible for this low continuity of effort. One key respondent summed up the views of LGA officials interviewed on this:

‘Even if the respective leadership [political and bureaucratic elites] wanted to fully support the initiative [CGS], they were constrained due to lack of resources. As you know, the state holds all our resources...we only receive overhead here... so it is difficult to ascertain’ (ML7, 05/04/2016)

In effect, what explains the variation in this indicator of commitment between Guri and Mashi LGAs, can largely be attributed to the agency of the political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA level, the high turnover of bureaucrats involved in the implementation of the scheme at Mashi LGA and the extent of their respective state governments’ involvement. While Guri LGA had shown strong and sustained continuity of effort often supported by the state governor, Mashi LGA demonstrated rather weak and ‘one-shot’ efforts (Brinkerhoff, 2000).

6.4.3 Mobilisation of support for policy implementation

Here, the willingness and ability of the political and bureaucratic elites to identify and mobilise support for the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme is examined in the two-case study LGAs. On the internal mobilisation within the LGA, both Guri and Mashi LGAs were able to motivate relevant Heads of Departments and lower level employees in support of the scheme. Interviews with senior LGA officials revealed many efforts were made at various time in mobilising the support of LGA staff towards the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme (GL2, 24/02/2016; ML3, 23/03/2016). However, the combined support of the LGA chairman and bureaucrats in Guri LGA was stronger than that of Mashi LGA. With respect to the mobilisation of support from the benefitting community members, Guri LGA made strong and effective efforts at getting the buy-in of the community members. Through the traditional leaders, the LGA leadership carried out initial sensitisation outreaches to communities within the LGA. Community members believe the LGA made considerable effort to mobilise the communities in support of the scheme’s implementation (Guri FGD, 27/02/2016; Gagiya FGD, 28/02/2016). The then Guri LGA chairman was reported to have consistently chaired the CGS to LGAs Planning Committee meeting – comprising Heads of departments and community representatives. Local elites
reported knowing fully about the scheme and their support towards its implementation (GL6, 04/03/2016; Guri FGD, 27/02/2016).

By contrast, community members in Mashi LGA reported lack of ‘adequate’ sensitisation of the communities by the LGA officials on the intent and purpose of the scheme, including their expected role. While a senior LGA official claimed the LGA has ‘sufficiently’ reached out to the benefitting communities (ML2, 24/03/2016), several community members during FGDs reported not to have been ‘adequately’ carried along in the implementation of the scheme – this issue is revisited later in this Chapter (Baude FGD, 24/03/2016; Killago FGD, 25/03/2016). It was reported that the CGS to LGAs Planning Committee meeting was not held regularly as expected in Mashi LGA (ML1, 15/03/2016). This is largely connected to the Katsina state government’s ‘capture’ of the scheme’s implementation processes through the PSU. Largely due to the remote nature of both LGAs, there was near absence of support and engagement with the civil society organisations in the implementation of the scheme. Development partners such as UNICEF, working in water and sanitation, for instance, were not mobilised to support the scheme’s implementation in Mashi LGA. Thus, it is evident that the nature of mobilisation efforts for the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation varies across the two LGAs and among the key implementation actors. Higher willingness and ability of actors to rally support for policy implementation indicates higher commitment (Brinkerhoff, 2000).

6.4.4 Degree of analytical rigor applied in understanding policy context

In examining this characteristic in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, two key processes are examined – the extent to which the LGA conducts in-depth technical analysis of the implementation context and the administrative strategies employed to overcome implementation challenges. Thus, actions taken by the LGA in the timely identification of problems and the provision of solutions towards the scheme’s implementation reflect certain degree of analytical rigour. It is important to note that, both Guri and Mashi LGAs relied mainly on the federal government’s driven needs assessment exercises to provide fuller understanding of the implementation contexts. This is mainly because the CGS to LGAs scheme was nationally driven. The baseline needs assessment exercises were conducted by the federal government (OSSAP-MDGs and technical partners) in both LGAs at the inception of the scheme in 2011. Both LGAs were reported to have supported the conduct of the exercises by providing the required
local manpower and logistics (GL4, 25/02/2016; ML1, 15/03/2016). However, comparatively, Guri LGA ranked better than Mashi LGA in terms of timely identification of implementation problems and the provision of timely solutions. The following statement by a senior LGA bureaucrat in Guri LGA summed up the observations of most LGA officials involved in the implementation of the scheme:

‘...we were constantly looking for solutions to the unending implementation challenges...you know this is a new thing [CGS to LGAs] to us and we were all committed to its success for the benefit of our people... we were always finding solutions’ (GL2, 25/02/2016).

Similarly, LGA officials in Mashi LGA reported to have been on the lookout for implementation challenges and proffered solutions to the identified challenges (ML3, 23/03/2016; ML2, 24/03/2016; ML5, 25/03/2016). However, the same officials claimed since they have not been ‘holistically’ involved in the procurement and contract award processes, there was little they could do (ibid). In effect, both Guri and Mashi LGAs fall in between the high and low grades in terms of the aggregate degree of analytical rigour applied in the implementation of the scheme. Taken together, adequate preparation and sufficient actions taken to address the identifiable implementation challenges demonstrate strong commitment, while inadequate preparation and insufficient actions towards problem solving demonstrate weak commitment.

6.4.5 Application of credible sanctions in support of implementation

Committed policy actors appreciate the need to provide positive incentives for conformity with implementation guidelines; reform the principal-agent relationships; publicise positive outcomes of reform and to rehabilitate compromised persons and institutions (Brinkerhoff, 2000). Thus, strong application of highly credible sanctions is associated with higher degree of commitment, while a weak application of ineffective sanctions signifies a low degree of commitment (ibid). In the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in the two study LGAs, application of both positive and negative sanctions can play vital role in shape its outcomes. In Guri LGA, the then LGA chairman in leading the LGA Planning Committee was reported to have made several integrity pronouncements and encourage all Committee members to ensure strict compliance with the scheme’s implementation guidelines and to cascade same to their immediate reports (GL3, 25/02/2016; GL6, 04/03/2016). This demand for compliance was extended to CGS contracts
and service providers, and defaulting contractors were appropriate sanctioned. The following account by a senior bureaucrat summarised how this played out in Guri LGA:

‘We mandated all benefitting communities through their representatives to be monitoring projects as they are being implemented and to report any perceived deviation or use of substandard materials to us...Together, we were able to provide effective supervision and monitoring. I remember we had problem in one Village called Dagyana, during the renovation of a primary school. The work was going as planned but the community observed that the contractor was using old materials such as old roofing sheets and wood materials. The community members reported to us. We went to confirm the community’s claim and immediately summoned the project consultant, who then instructed the contractor to remove all the substandard materials before proceeding with the work’ (GL2, 24/02/2016).

This claim was satisfactorily triangulated during focus groups with benefitting communities (Guri FGD, 27/02/2016; Matara FGD, 01/03/2016). Communities that have consistently complied and supported the implementation of the scheme were rewarded with more interventions. This has happened in two communities where the LGA Planning Committee allocated additional water project and an Ambulance in recognition of their ‘continued support’ for the scheme’s implementation (GL2, 24/02/2016; Gagiya FGD, 28/02/2016). However, apart from timely payment of allowances to the LGA staff involved in the scheme’s implementation, positive contributions by staff were not singled out and rewarded. Similarly, no evidence of sanctions meted against LGA officials for negative actions during the scheme’s implementation. One LGA Head of department claimed ‘...everybody was committed to the success of the scheme so there was no need to sanction anyone...however contractors were sanctioned accordingly’ (GL3, 25/02/2016).

In the case of Mashi LGA, as discussed earlier, the high turnover of political leadership and bureaucrats did not allow the stability needed in the implementation of the scheme. Thus, the CGS LGA Planning Committee meetings were highly irregular and were often chaired by the ‘most senior’ head of department in place of the LGA chairman (ML1, 15/03/2016; ML5, 25/03/2016). Therefore, the much needed political leadership to inspire and enforce compliance with the scheme’s implementation guidelines was missing. The capture of the procurement processes by the PSU ensured that political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA were not able to sanction deviant contractors as in the case of Guri LGA. Accordingly, contractors and consultants see the LGA as a ‘mere project site’ and answerable only to the state level elites (ML3, 23/03/2016).
the benefitting communities were not engaged in supporting the LGA officials to ensure contractors comply with the scheme’s implementation guidelines. Relatedly, benefiting communities were not identified and recognised for their support towards the implementation of the scheme. The following quotes are typical of comments during focus groups:

‘...to be honest we have been expecting either the state or the LGA to provide these interventions as part of their long overdue [election] campaign promises. And when these interventions [CGS to LGAs] came we all concluded that it was the government that finally came to our aid. We were not really informed that it was a different programme from above [national] and what is expected of us as benefitting community’ (Male participant, Killago FGD, 25/03/2016).

‘We were only contacted to provide locations for the construction of health centre within the community. So since is something we needed badly, we did not hesitate to oblige. This is as far as we are involved’ (Community Leader, Marke FGD, 26/03/2016).

Here, FGD participants agreed that they only knew about the CGS to LGAs interventions when they were asked to provide suitable locations for the proposed interventions. In conclusion, while political and bureaucratic elites in both Guri and Mashi LGAs appreciate the significance of rewarding positive contributions, as well as reprimanding negative actions by LGA officials involved in the implementation of scheme, there is no evidence to show that these incentives have been used. While in Guri LGA the application of credible sanctions on deviant contractors and service providers helped to positively shape the implementation of the scheme, this was not the case in Mashi LGA, as contractors and service providers were not closely monitored in the execution of various projects.

6.4.6 Perceptions of political feedback

Following Chopra’s (2015) addition to Brinkerhoff’s (2000) analytical framework, this characteristic of commitment relates broadly to the feedback that provides political elites incentives for successful policy implementation. This includes electoral gains at the state and local levels if they are seen to implement schemes effectively. It is theorised that perceptions of strong positive feedback would provide the necessary incentives for policy actors to be more committed towards the implementation of a policy (Chopra, 2015). Thus, ‘it can be posited that the higher the political competition, or the lower the margins of victory, the greater the responsiveness’ (Ibid: 20).
As discussed in chapter Five, the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme has provided national level elites with positive political feedback through its conversion to a ‘pork barrel’ approach, by attempting to spread CGS to LGAs resources across all of Nigeria’s 774 LGAs. In the case of Guri and Mashi LGAs, the perception of political feedback has to be examined jointly between the LGAs and their respective state governments. As discussed in chapter Four, both Jigawa (Guri LGA) and Katsina (Mashi LGA) states were under the ruling PDP at state and national levels. Thus, during the period under review (2011 to 2015), there was no major opposition party to challenge the PDP at the national level and about 27 states out of the 36 states were PDP-controlled. Katsina state was under the ruling PDP since the return of democracy in 1999 until 2015, while Jigawa state was under the PDP from 2007 to 2015. Thus, the opposition was highly fragmented and as such the margins of victory in the two states were very wide. Table 6.1 shows the margin of victory in the 2011 general elections among the three main political parties in Jigawa and Katsina states as 62% and 64% respectively, while the margin of victory at the national was 59%. However, as discussed in chapter Three, this was not the case in the run-off to the 2015 general elections due to the merger of the three major opposition political parties. The LGA elections are organised and managed by the State Electoral Commissions (SEC), and were not regularly organised, as in the case of Katsina state, where the then governor characteristically continued to appoint ‘Interim Caretaker Administrators’. Crucially, when elections were eventually conducted, they were often rigged in favour of the ruling party at the state.

Table 6.1: The 2011 general elections results for Jigawa and Katsina states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>PDP</th>
<th>CPC</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>Margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>22,495,187</td>
<td>12,214,853</td>
<td>2,079,151</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa state</td>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>676,307</td>
<td>56,911</td>
<td>343,177</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina state</td>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>1,027,912</td>
<td>555,769</td>
<td>19,990</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), (2011)

In Guri LGA (Jigawa), despite the wide margins of victory in the previous general elections, political elites at both local and state levels have demonstrated strong understanding of the CGS to LGAs scheme and its positive feedback effect, which in turn shapes its implementation. A former LGA chairman revealed:
‘...Following the CGS, I personally arranged the budget planning sessions at the council [LGA]. We consulted and came up with council [LGA] wide intervention plan to be executed under the scheme. We were all involved, and I continued to support staff working directly with the scheme to deliver services to thebenefitting communities in all the focus areas [health, education and water and sanitation] ...I know this has lifted my political profile within the local government. For example, before the CGS, our Guri Town Health Centre was in a dilapidated condition. So, it was the first thing we did with the CGS. We renovated it and equipped it. Also, the Health centre at Margadu Village was renovated and equipped among others all in a bid to improve health services for our people (GL1, 25/02/2016).

The above insight from the highest local-level political elite at the inception of the scheme was corroborated by a senior bureaucrat at the LGA:

‘...appreciating its [CGS to LGAs] political value and visibility the local council [LGA] used to add its own resources to increase the scale and scope. For example, we were paying VHWS [Village Health Workers] from our budget to support CGS health sector initiatives, paying incentives to support staff involved in the CGS implementation among others. In fact, the then LGA chairman had concluded arrangements to scale up most of the CGS interventions with the council’s own funds but could not accomplish that till the end of his electoral term’. (GL2, 24/02/2016).

Similarly, and surprisingly, state level elites that substantiated the ‘capture’ of the scheme’s implementation in Mashi LGA, appreciate the value of the scheme in boosting the political mileage of the then ruling PDP in the state, through the spread of visible (even though thinly distributed) interventions such as the construction of water points, healthcare facilities and classroom blocks. One key official observed:

‘Honestly speaking these are politicians and whatever they will do to polish their image in the communities they will love to do that especially when it is at no cost to them. You know is like free money, projects that they can use to enhance their political goodwill. The poor has no idea where the resources came from and so they often capitalised on that to take all the credit... In that sense, they were really committed to the CGS... and accorded us all the necessary assistance for the work to proceed seamlessly...’ (ML1, 15/03/2016).

Another key respondent reminisced:

‘...they [political elites] have shown high level commitment to the initiative [CGS to LGAs]. Because of the visibility and immense political goodwill, the construction of water points can bring, they [political elites] provided all the resources and support needed. In fact, it is the easiest thing to do. Just provide resources and water points are constructed within a short timeframe. And because the impact can easily be seen... they [elites] fell in love with the provision of boreholes in our communities.’ (ML5, 25/03/2016).
In conclusion, political elites at both Guri and Mashi LGAs and, in their respective states, have shown considerable understanding of the potential impact of successfully implementing the CGS to LGAs scheme, they openly associated themselves with the scheme and bureaucratic and political elites have equally teamed up to be seen to be associated with the scheme’s implementation. Even in the case of Katsina state (Mashi LGA), where state level elites hijacked the key decision-making process, it was mainly to dispense patronage to political associates. Following the above analysis of commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation using six characteristics of commitment, the subsequent section examines the extent to which the scheme caused commitment to pro-poor service delivery more broadly in the two-case study LGAs.

6.5 The impact of CGS to LGAs scheme on commitment to pro-poor service delivery

As discussed in chapter Four, this study did not aim at rigorous impact evaluation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, but an in-depth analysis of how the processes of its implementation played out in practice. Thus, the analysis in this section relied mainly on available secondary data and the primary data generated via in-depth interviews with key political and bureaucratic elites and linked that to the expenditure patterns in the scheme’s key targeted areas – primary education, primary healthcare and rural water and sanitation. Deliberate and meaningful spending in these areas would have direct bearing on the livelihoods of rural poor people. It was reported that the implementation of the scheme had helped strengthened commitment to pro-poor service delivery, where the initial baseline studies allowed the participating LGAs to know their starting point, the gaps that needed to be filled by 2015 and to consciously channel their own resources towards these areas (NL1, 31/12/2015; NL8, 11/01/2016). This has happened largely through the help of the TAs in assisting the LGAs to continually identify gaps that needed to be addressed across the priority areas (ibid). This claim is revisited and examined in detail in Chapter Seven. Since the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, our evidence shows progressive annual expenditure pattern towards the scheme’s priority sectors through the traditional ‘non-CGS’ budgetary mechanisms in the study LGAs (see Figures 6.1; 6.2 and 6.3).
Figure 6.1: Non-CGS primary education expenditure in Guri and Mashi LGAs (2009 – 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mashi LGA</th>
<th>Guri LGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>59.90</td>
<td>99.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>79.50</td>
<td>118.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>103.74</td>
<td>148.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>173.39</td>
<td>155.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>195.30</td>
<td>163.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>190.83</td>
<td>180.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on Guri LGA (various; 2016); Mashi LGA (various; 2016)

Figure 6.2: Non-CGS primary healthcare expenditure in Guri and Mashi LGAs (2009 – 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mashi LGA</th>
<th>Guri LGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>120.00</td>
<td>79.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td>90.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>161.00</td>
<td>88.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>194.00</td>
<td>107.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>258.00</td>
<td>148.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>274.00</td>
<td>189.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on Guri LGA (various; 2016); Mashi LGA (various; 2016)
Figure 6.3: Non-CGS water and sanitation expenditure in Guri and Mashi LGAs (2009 – 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mashi LGA</th>
<th>Guri LGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>45.50</td>
<td>40.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>52.11</td>
<td>55.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>49.21</td>
<td>64.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>70.46</td>
<td>77.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>98.90</td>
<td>78.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>102.55</td>
<td>81.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on Guri LGA (various; 2016); Mashi LGA (various; 2016)

From a quantitative lens, these figures look encouraging. However, our interrogation of these figures revealed the actual narratives behind these patterns are not so positive. The observation of one key respondent summed up the views expressed by LGA officials regarding the impact of CGS to LGAs on commitment to service delivery and the reasons behind the observed figures in Guri LGA:

‘Following the [CGS to LGAs] implementation in Guri, our approach to service delivery has changed for good. You see, we were motivated and encouraged by the projects executed under the programme, so on annual basis thereafter, we followed similar pattern to renovate our existing primary schools and health centres modelling the CGS type structure. We incorporated this commitment into our medium-term development plan tagged ‘GURI LEEDS’ backed with adequate resources’ (GL1, 25/02/2016)

Unlike in Guri LGA where the political and bureaucratic elites made deliberate efforts to use its own resources to fund the sectoral gaps annually following CGS to LGAs scheme’s intervention and supported by a ‘road map’ (Guri LEEDS), in Mashi LGA, the annual increases were hardly based on any conscious attempt by the political and bureaucratic elites to fund the gaps identified following the scheme’s intervention, as there is no documented evidence to support this (section 6.2.2). Indeed, a key respondent reported that the observed expenditure patterns were ‘auto-run’ annual increases in sectoral spending due to largely the annual increase in statutory revenue from the federation account (ML5, 25/03/2016). Another key respondent was emphatic:
‘...these [expenditure increase] are not as a result of careful planning based on any document...we project expenditure based on estimated revenue. Since personnel costs are taken from source [state level], the decision on capital projects allocation to the sectors is at the discretion of the chairman and the council members...’ (ML7, 05/04/2016).

Thus, the evidence suggests that the CGS to LGAs scheme might have caused reasonable commitment to pro-poor spending in both LGAs (Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3). While there is credible document to support the expenditure pattern in Guri LGA, there is no such document to support the observed increases in Mashi LGA. Figure 6.4 shows the total number of CGS to LGAs projects against the non-CGS to LGAs projects in the study LGAs over a four-year period.

**Figure 6.4: Total No. of CGS and Non-CGS projects in Guri and Mashi LGAs (2011-2014)**

![Graph showing the total number of CGS and Non-CGS projects in Guri and Mashi LGAs (2011-2014)](image)

Source: Author, based on OSSAP-MDGs (2013); Guri LGA (various; 2016); Mashi LGA (various; 2016)

From Figure 6.4, Guri LGA executed more CGS to LGAs projects (75) compared to Mashi LGA (51) in the focus areas of primary education, healthcare and water provision. Non-CGS construction projects (classroom blocks and health facilities) were modelled using CGS to LGAs type design in Guri LGA. Based on percentage increase between CGS and non-CGS projects, Mashi recorded higher percentage increase between 2011 and 2014. However, in both cases, these are mostly ‘visible’ projects as the ‘invisible’ aspects - such as quality and quantity of teachers and health workers, were relegated to the background (see chapter Seven). The following section analyses the scheme’s community engagement mechanisms, with a view to understanding the extent to
which the agency of the poor people or lack of it contributed in (mis)shaping the implementation of the scheme.

6.6 CGS to LGAs community engagement, social accountability and the ‘agency’ of the poor?

‘The technical team shall in collaboration with community leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, women leaders, youth leaders and other representatives of Community Based Organisations in the Local Government using participatory approach model, develop the MDGs-complaint Local Government Development Plan’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a:17)

‘The communities who are the beneficiary of the projects are to constantly watch the progress of work done by the contractors and report to the LGC and/or PSU any problems associated with the projects’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a:29)

The analysis in this section is guided mainly by the above CGS to LGAs scheme’s guidelines, stipulated in the implementation Manual. The section interrogates key official explanations and the views of key informants in the benefitting communities within the two study LGAs, on the extent of compliance or non-compliance with the above requirements. The agency of the poor and how the social accountability plays out in practice, including the extent to which they shape the implementation of the scheme are investigated. As reported in chapter Five, the composition of the LGA MDGs Planning Committee44 ‘must’ include ‘five representatives of CBOs, FBOs, traditional institutions and the private sector (at least two females)’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a:15).

Our findings revealed that both Guri and Mashi LGAs did not enlist the required five community representatives at the MDGs Planning Committee. In both LGAs, the community representatives were not elected but ‘nominated’ by the political and bureaucratic elites, and did not include any female (GL2, 24/02/2016). This deliberate non-inclusion of women in the Committee is closely linked to the patriarchal society typical of Northern Nigeria. In the case of Guri LGA, the Committee was duly inaugurated but only two male community representatives were ‘co-opted’ into the Committee. As discussed earlier in this chapter, our evidence revealed that the LGA Planning Committee held regular meetings under the guidance of the then chairman. This study has analysed various Minutes of Meetings to triangulate this. However, even though LGA officials claimed to have ‘effectively’ engaged the representatives, one of the representatives interviewed

44 This is the highest decision-making body on the CGS implementation at the LGA Level.
noted that their involvement was somewhat limited to attending the committee’s meetings, being informed what to expect and providing feedback to the communities (GL6, 04/03/2016). He, however, reminisced: ‘…despite not carrying us along when it comes to the award of contracts…we were able through our efforts to ensure contractors were closely monitored during project execution…we have severally reported contractors to the local officials’ (ibid). Another community leader’s response summed up the views of most respondents:

‘…we allowed them [contractors] to reach initial milestones and we go to supervise the quality of the work being done since we are the beneficiaries. If we observe substandard work, we immediately report to the LGA Chairman. For example, when the contractor for the construction of Latrines came, we were not involved in the siting of the project. But when they started moulding the blocks, we took time to visit the location to ascertain the quality of the blocks. I used my right leg to hit the block and to our surprise, the block was broken into pieces… we immediately reported the substandard work to the LGA Technical committee. This led to the issue been critically looked at by the LGA Chairman and the contractor had to redo the blocks to continue the work…’ (Community Leader, Guri FGD, 27/02/2016)

The above statements were substantiated by members of the various focus groups across the LGA. Indeed, with the state governor’s policy of providing a ‘dedicated’ phone number for citizens who are ‘dissatisfied’ with service provision to send an SMS, community members via their representatives have often notified the state governor directly on various service provision issues involving contractors - such as not meeting project specifications and delays in contract execution among others (Margadu FGD, 27/02/2016; Matara FGD, 01/03/2016). A senior LGA bureaucrat highlighted a specific case to explain further:

‘A classic example was when a particular community observed that the Facility being built was small in size, they grouped together and contacted the Governor through this medium [SMS] to report the case and requested for the review of the scope of work. The Governor directed the LGA to oblige and fund the contract variation from its own resources because of the review of the scope’ (GL8, 23/02/2016).

On other occasions, these were reported to have elicited action from the government by mandating the contractors to stop work immediately pending investigation (NL8, 11/01/2016; GL4, 25/02/2016). On two reported cases, the contractors were compelled to redo certain phases before final certification by the bureaucratic elites. Our findings revealed that community members where reasonably involved in the development of the MDGs-complaint Local Development Plan as stipulated in the CGS to LGAs Implementation Manual. Most community
representatives served as guides during the Baseline study and Needs Assessments facilitated by the federal government (GL3, 25/02/2016; Guri FGD, 27/02/2016).

Thus, with reference to our discussion in chapter Two, community members in Guri LGA in demonstrating their agency were able to demand accountability from service providers through the political elites or via the ‘long-route’ accountability. They have exhibited high level of awareness and were able to closely monitor the progress of work being executed in their communities and reporting problems to the political elites in a timely manner. Evidently, elites and non-elites seemed to have worked collaboratively to ensure free flow of information that helped strengthened the implementation of the scheme. This finding supports the argument by Saito-Jensen and colleagues (2010) that all actors, even when facing constraints and repressive conditions, possess the capacity to act according to their interests and concluded that this agency is likely to become effective when actors ally with others with similar interests.

In Mashi LGA, there was a ‘ceremonial’ inauguration of the MDGs Planning Committee with bureaucratic elites, traditional and religious leaders in attendance (ML5, 23/03/2016). The four community representatives were selected among the traditional and religious leaders, and as such side-lining the contribution of the poor or the non-elites in the implementation of the scheme. On like in Guri LGA, where the MDGs Planning Committee held meetings regularly under the leadership of the LGA chairman, the meetings of the Planning Committee in Mashi LGA were less frequent and community members not sufficiently involved. A former senior official involved with the implementation reported:

‘Generally, the communities gave their maximum cooperation. They were happy about the [CGS to LGAs] interventions and at the initial stage their priority needs where taken into consideration. But as I said earlier, when it came to the actual implementation of the interventions they didn’t have any power to determine how things proceed and thus were not actively engaged. This was partly due to the bypass of the local government administration itself’ (ML1, 15/03/2016).
Indeed, during FGDs, members of the communities expressed their non-involvement at every stage of the scheme’s implementation in Mashi LGA. The following quotes are typical of responses from key community members regarding their involvement with the scheme’s implementation:

‘...we just saw people coming to say they want to construct a primary school here and that they are looking for appropriate site. We showed them where our temporary school was located, and they eventually constructed the school there – you can see it there. Even though we needed the school badly, but no body consulted with us’ (Male Community member, Bamle FGD, 24/03/2016).

Thus, the extent of community’s involvement in the above community was limited to in-kind contribution of land for the construction of a primary school. One community leader observed: ‘We were only contacted by the [LGA] officials to provide locations for the construction of health centre within the community’ (Community Leader, Marke FGD, 26/03/2016). In the same community, FGD participants agreed that they know about the CGS to LGAs scheme only when they were being asked to provide suitable locations for the proposed projects. Upon discussion with a senior LGA official as to why this happened, the official argued that:

‘We had already conducted needs assessment in all the potential communities and therefore there was no need to go through another round of consultation with the communities. What we did was to involve the community in the selection of the specific locations for the projects’ (ML7, 05/04/2016).

While the above official explanation appears to have some credence, it is argued that such explanation is unconvincing. Specifically, when the needs assessment was conducted, it was driven by the LGA officials with the guidance of national officials. Equally, community members were not involved in the development of the MDGs-complaint Local Development Plan as stipulated in the CGS to LGAs implementation Manual. As reported earlier in this Chapter, Mashi LGA did not produce this vital document as required. What it used instead was a CGS to LGAs application template provided by OSSAP-MDGs to key in the contents in support of its application.

In comparison with Guri LGA, community members (elites and non-elites) in Mashi LGA have not shown the agency to effectively engage in the implementation of the scheme and to hold contractors or service providers accountable for non-performance. This is linked to the absence of sanctions discussed earlier. There were no reported cases of community members closely
monitoring and supervising the execution of projects by themselves. However, there is a new variant in Mashi LGA. Firstly, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and the School Based Management Committees (SBMC) of the benefitting primary schools, were reported to have provided the needed supervision and monitoring during construction or renovation of classroom blocks, water points and latrines in schools (ML3, 23/03/2016; Baude FGD, 24/03/2016). Secondly, each healthcare facility has a ‘Health Facility Development Committee’ and is headed by the Village Head and supported by few ‘knowledgeable’ members of the communities. The Health Officer in-charge of the health facility serves as the secretary to the Committee (ML2, 24/03/2016). It was this committee that provided the basis supervision and monitoring during the construction or renovation of any health facility in the communities (ibid; Bamle FGD, 24/03/2016).

Despite these ‘sector specific’ efforts, there is no evidence of collaborative efforts between community members and the political elites to hold contractors accountable for service provision. In consequence, completed CGS to LGAs projects were hardly ‘official’ handed over to the benefitting communities in Mashi LGA. This has far reaching implications for ownership and sustainability. For ownership and sustainability, the community members need to be carried along and supported to provide the critically needed monitoring and supervision during and after the implementation of the scheme. Indeed, this researcher observed during fieldwork that a particular borehole constructed under the CGS to LGAs scheme next to the venue of a scheduled FGD was not functioning and participants had to walk a long distance to fetch water for the mid-day prayer. Upon enquiry with the participants, it was revealed that the borehole had been faulty for eight months without the community members making any attempt to fix it. Indeed, the community members had been waiting for the LGA officials to fix the borehole for their use (Killago FGD, 25/03/2016). It is argued here that this is partly due to lack of ownership of the interventions from inception, and as such the community members hardly appreciate the need to mobilise resources within and outside the communities to sustain them.
6.7 Discussion and conclusion

As argued in chapter Five, the CGS to LGAs scheme was designed in a technically logical and politically savvy manner to create commitment to its implementation from political and bureaucratic elites at the state and LGA levels. It does that through what Wong (2010) refers to as ‘countering’ and ‘co-opting’ elites in the same process, in the recognition that not all elites are bad. This chapter has analysed the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in Guri and Mashi LGAs. It provided a thick description of the budgetary and procurement processes ‘before and after’ the implementation of the scheme, in the recognition that these are the key decision-making arenas, which elites often control or manipulate. The overall findings are mixed across the study LGAs with respect to the key processes and concepts under investigation. In terms of elite commitment to the scheme’s implementation, taken apart, both LGAs have shown commitment to the continuous implementation of the scheme through the annual provision of financial resources (counterpart funds) and the required human resources (see chapter Seven). However, in terms of the other characteristics of commitment, which must be taken together (Brinkerhoff, 2000), Guri LGA has demonstrated strong commitment compared to Mashi LGA. Table 6.2 below provides the summary of these characteristics across the two-case study LGAs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Commitment</th>
<th>Guri LGA</th>
<th>Mashi LGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locus of initiative</strong></td>
<td>Bureaucratic initiative</td>
<td>Very high, and sustained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political elites support</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback to OSSAP-MDGs</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity of effort</strong></td>
<td>Provision of financial resources</td>
<td>Strong, and continuous at the LGA level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of human resources</td>
<td>Strong, and efforts undertaking for the long term</td>
<td>Weak and one-shot efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of impacts efforts</td>
<td>Strong, planning document in place</td>
<td>Weak, absence of guiding document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobilisation of support</strong></td>
<td>Internal mobilisation/consultation within the LGA</td>
<td>Strong, and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From non-state actors</td>
<td>Strong with community members</td>
<td>Weak with community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From development partners</td>
<td>Weak, absence of local development partners</td>
<td>Weak, absence of local development partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree of analytical rigor</strong></td>
<td>In-depth technical analysis of context</td>
<td>Medium, analysis and Needs assessments conducted by OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem identification and solving</td>
<td>Medium and ongoing</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment in governance structure</td>
<td>High, all governance systems operating at the LGA level</td>
<td>Low, governance systems operating at the state level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application of credible Sanctions</strong></td>
<td>Recognition of positive actions</td>
<td>Strong application, communities recognised and rewarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative sanctions for service providers</td>
<td>Strong, service providers sanctioned</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative sanctions for LGA bureaucrats</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions of political feedback</strong></td>
<td>Perceptions of feedback</td>
<td>Very high with political elites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral competition</td>
<td>Low, strong dominant party</td>
<td>Low, strong dominant party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment of overall commitment</strong></td>
<td>High political and bureaucratic elites’ commitment from inception and sustained</td>
<td>Initial bureaucratic commitment, but decreased overtime due to lack of sustained political elites’ commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s judgement based on fieldwork and analysis in chapter Six
The reasons for the variations across these characteristics are manifold. Firstly, the direct involvement of the state governments in the implementation of the scheme led to significant variation in implementation outcomes. While the then Jigawa state governor (2007 to 2015) was ‘reform minded’ and allowed the participating LGAs the autonomy needed to take lead in the implementation of the scheme, the then Katsina state governor was evidently in control of the scheme’s implementation, which led to the ‘capture’ of the scheme’s implementation at that state level. As our evidence showed, patronage in the form of contracts was dispensed to political associates. As discussed earlier, the then state governor appointed his close political associate to head the state PSU, against the scheme’s recommendation for a seasoned bureaucrat, and as such the scheme’s implementation was somewhat politicised. Consequently, political and bureaucratic elites at Mashi LGA were not allowed the autonomy and flexibility to implement the scheme as planned. This finding lends some support to a recent Political Economy Analysis Report (SPARC-SAVI, 2015) on selected Nigeria states, which noted that the ‘deeply entrenched’ patronage system in Katsina state ensures that reform prospects remained a ‘mirage’. The report concludes that appointments in the state appeared to be mostly patronage based. On the other hand, the same report observes that Jigawa state had demonstrated considerable ‘commitment’ for reform over the years and projected a ‘positive outlook’ for the state over a ‘four-year horizon’ (ibid).

Secondly, the high turnover of local-level political and bureaucratic elites in Mashi LGA ensured the scheme’s comparative low implementation outcomes, due to largely lack of continuity and loss of institutional memory. For instance, between 2011 and 2015, Mashi LGA had three ‘Interim Administrators’ appointed by the state governor. Several senior LGA bureaucrats initially involved with the scheme’s implementation were redeployed to other LGAs. It is argued that this is one of the key factors that explain the successful implementation of the scheme in Guri LGA, where the then LGA chairman served two consecutive terms of three years each, which provided a longer time horizon for continuity of effort and the retention of key LGA bureaucrats involved in the scheme’s implementation.

Thirdly, where commitment seemed to be high and by extension high quality implementation, as in the case of Guri LGA, it is largely due to the combined initiatives and ‘agency’ of the benefitting communities, the LGA chairman and the state governor. This point is vital, because even within
the state, Guri LGA did comparatively better than the other initial two CGS to LGAs participating LGAs (Miga and Sule-tankarkar LGAs) in terms of programme delivery (OSSAP-MDGs, 2013: 146). Even though projects were executed across the two study LGAs, the quality and quantity varies, mostly due to the absence or presence of the combined agency of the benefitting communities and the political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA level. This combined agency and sanctions, ensured service providers and contractors were held accountable and the scheme’s projects delivered timely and according to the scheme’s specifications in Guri LGA. Thus, the top-down and bottom-up accountability processes reinforce each other. The seeming absence of this combined agency or ‘coalition’ and sanctions in Mashi LGA, due mainly to the state government’s control and high turnover of political and bureaucratic elites, ensured projects were often of sub-standard quality and delayed in many cases. These findings support the viewpoint that top–down and bottom–up forms of accountability are most effective where they are mutually reinforcing, even though top–down pressures for performance in service delivery can be effective even where bottom–up pressures are weak or absent (Batley et al., 2012, Booth, 2012). Thus, this study’s findings suggest that in the absence of strong top-down accountability, social forms of accountability are generally ineffective.

On the possible impact of the CGS to LGAs scheme on elite commitment to service delivery for the poor at the local level, again the scheme’s impact was more pronounced in Guri LGA, as there is little evidence to link the scheme’s impact on commitment to pro-poor service delivery in Mashi LGA. For instance, through its Local Development Plan (Guri LEEDS), Guri LGA has clear roadmap for continuous implementation of pro-poor services beyond the scheme’s implementation phase, and this is backed with adequate annual financial resources. Our evidence revealed conscious attempts by both the political and bureaucratic elites at incremental spending along the CGS to LGAs focus areas of primary education and healthcare delivery. This finding resonates with the view as to whether or not services are delivered to poor people, depends on the conditions which collaboration occurs, the co-ordination between actors, and the nature of relationships between them (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012). In conclusion, while it is evident that the scheme has instigated elite commitment to its implementation and to pro-poor service delivery in general in Guri LGA, it is largely ‘business as usual’ in Mashi LGA, as with many other LGAs in Nigeria (chapter Three). In line with our conceptual framing on the link between commitment and capacity, and the CGS to LGAs scheme’s explicit intent of
strengthening capacity for service delivery, the following chapter investigates state capacity in the implementation of the scheme.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Strengthening Capacity for Pro-Poor Service Delivery through the CGS to LGAs?

‘...It was amazing the quantum of human capacity [at the LGA] that is underutilised. Because when we did the North-west and North-east sensitization, the capacity I saw in that hall, in certain instances was much more than the capacity we have at the federal level in terms of engagement with the issues and specifically, how to interact with the local population. What we discovered was the lack of opportunity to do the job...’ (NL1, 31/12/2016).

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the politics of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation at the local level. Specifically, it examined the role of political and bureaucratic elites at both the state and local governments in shaping and mis-shaping the implementation of the scheme. The chapter argues that the direct involvement of the state governments in the implementation of the scheme led to dramatic variation in implementation outcomes. Secondly, the high turnover of political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA level is one of the key factors that explain the low implementation outcome in Mashi LGA. Thirdly, where commitment seemed to be high and by extension high quality implementation, it is principally due to the combined initiatives and alignment of the ‘agency’ of the benefitting communities, the LGA chairman and the state governor in development coalitions.

As highlighted in chapter Five, OSSAP-MDGs aimed at raising the service delivery capacities of participating LGAs to implement the scheme. As discussed in chapter Three, there is dearth of capacity at the LGA level in Nigeria. This chapter examines the extent to which the CGS to LGAs scheme has strengthened capacity for pro-poor service delivery at the LGA level. Specifically, it explores the degree to which the scheme has strengthened its implementation capacity in the two study LGAs as intended. With reference to our discussion in chapter Five, it starts by examining the role played by the CGS-supported Technical Assistants (TAs) and the Zonal Technical Officers (ZTOs) in shaping the scheme’s implementation. This is followed by an examination of its potential impact on the bureaucratic capacity and autonomy for service delivery. It analyses this within the context of the scheme’s focus areas of primary education and primary healthcare delivery. The rest of the chapter is organised along this structure and the final section discusses and concludes.
Taken as a whole, the chapter argues that while the scheme has strengthened implementation capacity for pro-poor service delivery at the LGA level through the use of TAs and ZTOs, however, the prioritisation of visible interventions by political elites at the expense of less visible but crucial interventions, the lack of autonomy for LGA bureaucrats and the acute shortage of human resources at the service delivery level meant that the expected outcomes were not achieved.

7.2 Strengthening CGS to LGAs implementation capacity at the LGA level?

The design of the CGS to LGAs scheme took into consideration the capacity of the LGAs to implement the scheme and recognised the need to support the participating LGAs to successfully implement the scheme. Thus, at the inception of the scheme in 2011, the leadership of OSSAP-MDGs decided to engage the services of 113 Technical Assistants (TAs) through a competitive process\(^\text{45}\) and deployed to each of the participating LGAs. The TAs were to assist the LGAs in setting up key structures and catalyse new processes for the scheme’s implementation, and to serve as a reporting channel on progress in the scheme’s delivery (see Appendix 4 for TA’s Terms of Reference). Additionally, six high-level Zonal Technical Officers (ZTOs) were engaged through a partnership arrangement with UNDP and deployed to the six geo-political zones in the country. The ZTOs were to support and coordinate the TAs and provide technical backstopping in the discharge of their responsibilities. The ZTOs operated more at a strategic level (between political and bureaucratic elites) and facilitated peer learning between LGAs within each geo-political zone (see Appendix 5 for ZTO’s Terms of Reference). A senior OSSAP-MDGs official summed up the understanding of federal government on the LGA capacity and the role of TAs:

‘…they [LGAs] lacked the adequate manpower with the right skills and capacity to articulate such proposals and deliver on them. What we tried to do was to bring in strong TAs with cognate experience to strengthen their capacities to do that. We provided ongoing trainings to the LGA Planning and Technical Committee members to enable them to perform optimally. We conducted several pre-proposal workshops in this respect. Trainings on the tools were provided regularly…’ (NL7, 10/02/2016).

\(^{45}\) As discussed in chapter Five.
7.2.1 The role of Technical Assistants (TAs) in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs

After the detailed orientation programme discussed in chapter Five, OSSAP-MDGs deployed a TA each to Guri and Mashi LGAs in line with the scheme’s implementation plan. It was reported that the two TAs deployed to both LGAs have obtained higher degrees at masters’ level and are experienced in programme management (NL3, 22/01/2016; NL7, 10/02/2016). Interviews with the TAs and reviews of their resume validated the above assertion – with their average age put at 47 years at the time of appointment (ML1, 15/03/2016; NL8, 11/01/2016).

The establishment of LGA-MDGs Technical Committee

The LGA-MDGs Technical Committee is led by the TA to each participating LGA. The Committee has all the Heads of Departments in the LGA as members, with overall responsibility for the development of the LGA ‘MDGs-compliant’ Plan (see Table 7.1 for composition and responsibilities of the Committee).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
<td>a. Preparation of MDGs-compliant LGA Plans (Agreed projects, justification for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>selected projects, Implementation timeline and Work Plan, project design, budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Health Department</td>
<td>including detailed costing, recurrent costs, sustainability provisions, etc.) in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>collaboration with community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Education and Social Development</td>
<td>b. Preparation of Reports to ZTOs and Federal Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>c. LGA wide MDG Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Agriculture Department</td>
<td>d. Assisting the local coordination of survey and data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>e. Local coordination of the LGA Needs Assessment Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Works Department</td>
<td>f. Facilitating the process of project prioritization and identification by the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>community members as well as preparation of CS to LGAs project proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary LGA Education Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA Planning Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author, based on OSSAP-MDGs (2014a)
In addition to this, as highlighted in chapter Five, the TA in each LGA served as a member of the LGA MDGs Planning Committee – chaired by the LGA chairman and responsible for reviewing and endorsing the LGA MDGs Plan and the overall implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. The TAs in both Guri and Mashi LGAs reportedly catalysed the processes of establishing the implementation structure through their engagements with the Technical Committee. The observation below is typical of the responses received regarding the role and contributions of the TAs in the study LGAs:

‘They [TAs] helped in improving the quality of the LGAs submissions that were made...they were able guide the committee to the specific areas that needed intervention based on the baseline studies that have been carried out. The TAs made the work of the MDGs office easier because they were then used in things like monitoring and supervision and it was easier for them to build the capacity of the LGA staff while working hand in hand. So it is not like top – down, but working among yourselves which was quite helpful’ (NL5, 14/01/2016)

However, this same respondent was quick to state that the use of TAs in the implementation of the scheme was an expensive undertaking. In both Guri and Mashi LGAs, members of the Technical Committee attested to the critical role played by TAs in convening and facilitating the activities of the Committee as exemplified by some responses below:

‘The TA here really facilitated our work and ensured that we did not lag behind in the implementation of the scheme...he would send me reminders of what needed to be done with the specific timeframes... so we did not miss any deadline here’ (GL1, 25/02/2016)

‘He [TA] happens to be from this local government and so he is familiar with the environment in addition to his technical expertise. His [TA] perseverance in convening meetings and following up with the leadership [political and bureaucratic elites] helped a great deal’ (ML5, 25/03/2016)

The establishment of ‘MDGs Desk’

In the two study LGAs, the TAs helped to establish the MDGs Desk, which was meant to serve as the coordinating Unit for the CGS to LGAs implementation at the LGA level. The TAs received the initial support and cooperation from the political elites at the LGAs. In both Guri and Mashi LGAs, office accommodation and furniture were provided for the smooth running of the office. CGS to LGAs IT equipment and Server were installed in this Unit and served as the TAs operating Unit. However, this happened with some varying degrees of challenges. It was reported that some
bureaucrats felt threatened by the presence and ‘seeming’ influence of the TAs in their midst. One key informant revealed:

‘They [LGA bureaucrats] thought he [TA] was sent from Abuja to take over certain aspects of their jobs... so there was some form of resentment initially. But I think overtime and the recognition of the contributions, they [LGA bureaucrats] were able to provide the needed support’ (NL8, 11/01/2016).

This observation was corroborated by a senior LGA official involved in the implementation of the scheme:

‘To be honest with you I initially felt intimidated with the facilities mounted in the office [MDGs Desk] ...with all the technology in place you just don't know what will happen next... but we needed sensitisation to appreciate that’ (GL3, 24/02/2016)

These observations reflect the broader experience in the establishment of MDGs Desk across the two study LGAs. While in Guri LGA, it was a dedicated office space, in Mashi LGA it was a shared office space. Thus, it is evident that the TAs worked closely, although with varying degrees of challenges, with the political and bureaucratic elites to establish the key governance structures for the scheme’s implementation at the LGA level. These include – the Planning Committee, Technical Committee and a functional MDGs Unit. The TAs were to be supported technically by the ZTO responsible for each geo-political zone.

**Additional technical support from Zonal Technical Officer (ZTO)?**

The ZTO responsible for the Northwest geopolitical zone covered 21 LGAs across 7 states in the zone (chapter Four). Guri and Mashi LGA are among these 21 LGAs. The ZTO operated from Dutse - the capital of Jigawa state\(^6\) and coordinated the activities of 21 TAs. Regular meetings (monthly and rotating) and feedback sessions were reportedly held to provide technical support to the TAs and the state CGS focal persons. It was reported that during these meetings, TAs shared their respective experiences, which facilitated peer learning (NL7, 10/02/2016; ML1, 15/03/2016). However, the nature and scope of the support provided by the ZTO depended largely on the initiative by each TA and the ‘autonomous’ relationship with the political leadership at the state and LGA. According to a senior government official, the timely interventions of the ZTO ensured

\(^6\) Guri LGA is in Jigawa state
that most of the implementation challenges across the LGAs were resolved through direct contact with the state level officials. The official observed:

‘The Zonal Officer [ZTO] was really instrumental in getting the state governors’ intervention where implementation challenges come up... she really did well in rallying their [state governors] support...I can attest to the fact that during our meetings she tried to carry all the TAs to obtain the needed feedback’ (NL10, 22/04/2016).

This observation was corroborated by one of the TAs:

‘...Indeed due to her [ZTO] background in monitoring and evaluation of health interventions, she [ZTO] will call you regularly to obtain feedback on implementation and follow up at the higher level where necessary... and it is the same with others [TAs]... she used her network very well to get things done...she ensured we prepared and submitted our periodic reports timely to OSSAP through her office... ’ (NL8, 11/01/2016).

In sum, the weight of our evidence revealed that the LGAs implementation capacities and the TAs respective capacities were closely supported and strengthened through the office of the ZTO. Our findings revealed that the ZTO was highly ‘motivated’ and was there from the inception of the scheme (ML1, 15/03/2016; NL9, 05/02/2016). This continuity in office ensured some uniformity of interventions across the zonal LGAs and the sharing of lessons learnt across the implementation chain. Indeed, Chopra’s (2015) findings drew attention to the implications of changing mixes of policy actors on continuity of effort in policy implementation. Thus, the ZTO had helped in reinforcing and shaping the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in the two study LGAs. I examine the specific capacity strengthening activities for LGA bureaucrats next.

7.2.2 Capacity building for LGA bureaucrats involved in the scheme’s implementation?

Various trainings and workshops were reportedly conducted for LGA bureaucrats involved in the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation. Specifically, members of the LGA Technical Committee attended a few trainings aimed at building their capacities to ‘articulate CGS proposals and deliver on them’ (NL7, 10/02/2016). LGA bureaucrats were of the view that the periodic trainings on ‘MDGs Needs Assessment’ and ‘proposal development’ have changed their perspective on MDGs and what is required to ensure successful implementation of the scheme. The following responses from senior LGA officials from the two study LGAs are typical of the responses received regarding their overall assessment of the trainings:
‘The trainings were quite impactful especially on the way we view development generally. The Needs Assessment component was quite relevant to our work at the grassroots level being the closest to the people... I have really benefitted and look forward to more opportunities...’ (GL2, 24/02/2016)

‘...they [the pre-proposal workshops] helped us in understanding what to do, how to do and the implications of what we do at the council [LGA] for the benefit of our citizens. We have been enjoying all the capacity building efforts of the programme [CGS to LGAs] ...’ (ML2, 24/03/2016)

However, while a senior OSSAP-MDGs official reported that each ‘proposal round’ was preceded by a ‘pre-proposal workshop’ for all the participating LGAs (NL8, 11/01/2016), our findings revealed that this has not happened for all the rounds in our two-case study LGAs. While the frequency varies between Guri and Mashi LGAs, one key respondent in Mashi LGA recalled that ‘pre-proposal workshop’ was conducted only twice for the LGA officials (ML5, 25/03/2016). This study was unable to adequately triangulate this claim, due to the turnover of LGA bureaucrats that were initially involved in the scheme’s implementation as they were redeployed out of the LGA. As argued in chapter Six, this partly explains the variations in implementation level between the two study LGAs.

Relatedly, our evidence revealed that OSSAP-MDGs in collaboration with SPARC47 provided periodic trainings on Public Financial Management (PFM) for Treasurers and Heads of budget from the 113 participating LGAs (NL5, 14/01/2016; SPARC, 2015). A senior OSSAP-MDGs official reflected: ‘...it is with a view to promoting proper planning and targeting of the much needed resources to accelerate progress towards the MDGs...’ (NL3, 22/01/2016). The PFM training manual and assessment instruments were developed by ‘consultants’ and the trainings delivered on regional basis twice annually (NL12, 14/01/2016; ML1, 15/03/2016; SPARC, 2015). While senior LGA officials reported that the PFM trainings have helped in ensuring ‘compliance’ with the CGS to LGAs scheme’s reporting requirements (GL2, 24/02/2016; ML7, 05/04/2016), it is however difficult to assess the impact of these trainings on the financial management practices of the LGAs. Key LGA officials are frequently transferred across the LGAs and in some instances outside the Local Government Service Commission (ML3, 23/03/2016; GL2, 24/02/2016). As

47 State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) is a United Kingdom’s DFID funded governance programme in Nigeria.
reported by one key respondent, this led to the ‘loss of institutional memory and skills’ for the participating LGAs (ML1, 15/03/2016).

Thus, to mitigate this, in Guri LGA for example, a ‘dedicated’ accountant was hired specifically for the CGS to LGAs implementation and to strengthen the capacity of the Accounts Department (NL8, 11/01/2016). However, our findings revealed that this also applies to the two other CGS to LGAs participating LGAs in Jigawa state. The designated accountants were hired under the directive of the state government and were to liaise with the state and federal officials for ‘smooth operations’ of the scheme (ibid). Additionally, there was a state level directive that key LGA officials involved in the scheme’s implementation should not be redeployed out of the LGA ‘under normal circumstances’ (GL3, 24/02/2016). Thus, with reference to our discussion in chapter Two, bureaucratic capacity signifies the availability of adequate and trained manpower in the critical pro-poor sectors of health and education, and a necessary pre-requisite for effective service delivery. These issues are examined in the following section.

7.3 CGS to LGAs scheme and the challenge of inadequate staffing at the LGAs?

Here, our focus is on primary healthcare and education staffing - two key focus sectors for CGS to LGAs scheme’s intervention. These sectors have direct impact on the quality of life of rural poor households within the participating LGAs. According to NPHCDA\textsuperscript{48} Report (2013), most rural LGAs in Nigeria remained grossly understaffed and majority of the primary health facilities do not have the minimum complement of health personnel to deliver effective healthcare services (also Chapter Three). Similarly, our evidence showed that both Guri and Mashi LGAs remained hugely understaffed in terms of trained health personnel and primary school teachers during the scheme’s implementation between 2011 and 2015. I examine the challenge to primary healthcare delivery next.

\textsuperscript{48} National Primary Health Care Development Agency is a federal government’s agency with broad mandate to provide technical support for planning, management and implementation of primary healthcare in Nigeria.
7.3.1 Primary healthcare delivery

With reference to our discussion in chapter Three, primary healthcare provisioning is the sole responsibility of the LGAs. Primary healthcare is the first point of contact for most poor people with the Nigerian public healthcare system. Senior LGA officials agree that effective healthcare service delivery is constrained due to the shortage of skilled health personnel. The following responses by LGA bureaucrats reflect the broader lamentation on the human resource challenge to healthcare service delivery in the two study LGAs:

‘...If I must be honest, we have a lot of challenges with the shortage of health personnel. Due to their scarce nature across the state, our health facilities are seriously understaffed. For example, in the entire [Mashi] LGA, we have only one Medical Doctor, who happens to be doing his national service. Other categories of health workers are equally in short supply across the local government. This is no doubt affecting service delivery even in the presence of newly improved health facilities...’ (ML2, 24/03/2016).

‘Our major challenge has been the acute shortage of health workers here [Guri LGA]. And this is across all the categories. No matter how hard we try to deliver health services, we need the minimum complement of manpower to do that... we have not recruited lower cadre of health workers in the last five years here. This is because of the embargo on recruitment across the state...’ (GL4, 25/02/2016).

As shown in Table 7.2, in Guri LGA, there were only 53 healthcare personnel across the cadres providing basic healthcare services across the 10 primary health facilities as at the end of 2015. Similarly, there were 210 healthcare personnel across the cadres providing services in the 44 primary health facilities in Mashi LGA as at 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Health Facilities</th>
<th>Total No. of Health Personnel</th>
<th>Average staff per Health Facility</th>
<th>No. of Medical Doctors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guri LGA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashi LGA</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation based on Guri LGA PHC Department (various, 2016) and Mashi LGA PHC Department (various, 2016)
OSSAP-MDGs, in recognition of the challenges to effective primary healthcare service delivery, largely due to the inadequate number and proportion of the various cadres of healthcare workers, was reported to have linked up with NPHCDA to help bridge the human resource gap across the participating LGAs (NL1, 31/12/2015). Thus, through the Midwifery Service Scheme (MSS) of the NPHCDA, ‘retired but able’ midwives were hired and deployed to primary healthcare facilities in rural areas across the 774 LGAs in the country. Additionally, newly graduated Basic Midwives were to serve a one-year mandatory service at primary healthcare centres across the country under the MSS. Our findings revealed that both Guri and Mashi LGAs benefitted at some point from these initiatives, aimed at strengthening primary healthcare delivery (GL4, 25/02/2016; ML2, 24/03/2016; Guri PHC, 2016 and Mashi PHC, 2016). However, these were hardly adequate and predictable. For instance, it was reported that the two midwives posted to Guri LGA to serve under the MSS in 2012 were ‘grossly’ inadequate to meet the pressing needs in the LGA (GL2, 24/02/2016). Additionally, one did not honour the full length of her contract as she only served for a year and left due to personal reasons. Similarly, in Mashi LGA, the three trainee midwives served the mandatory one year and left the LGA thereafter, while the LGA remained in dire need of their services (ML8, 26/03/2016).

**Village Health Workers: Mobilising paramedics while losing staff?**

In addressing the challenges to primary healthcare service delivery, Guri LGA piloted an initiative tagged the ‘Village Health Workers’ (VHWs) under the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation framework. The VHWs initiative was to achieve two key objectives: (i) To help address the shortage of health workers and (ii) To catalyse demand for health services at the community level. Respondents reported that in Northern Nigeria, due to cultural beliefs, attending antenatal clinic and giving birth at the health facility is a sign of weakness (GL6, 04/03/2016; Lafiya FGD, 28/02/2016). Thus, in 2012, twenty (20) females who have completed their secondary education were identified and recruited by the LGA as VHWs to support primary healthcare delivery and, especially child birth (see Appendix 7 for VHWs Terms of Reference). Two VHWs were deployed to each of the 10 main Villages in the LGA on a two-year renewable contract. They

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49 The MSS was introduced by NPHCDA in 2009 as one of the Federal Government’s flagship Programmes to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality in Nigeria.

50 This researcher can confirm this claim based on his experience in the implementation of an integrated rural development Programme in Northern Nigeria.
were sensitised, trained, and paid the equivalent of $100 as monthly stipend (NL8, 11/01/2016). According to one VHW:

‘We were trained on how to successfully mobilise community members, especially women and children. We do door to door campaign to encourage community members to access basic health services...we faced initial resistance from some pregnant women due to traditional barriers...’ (GL5, 04/03/2016)

Respondents reported that the VHWs have consistently expressed satisfaction and appreciation for the opportunity given to them to serve the communities and the financial rewards that comes with that (Guri FGD, 27/02/2016). On their part, the benefitting community members believe the VHWs were effective in convincing the ‘resistant’ members to access health services:

‘... they [VHW] will come immediate after evening prayers when everybody is home to inform us on the need to attend the health clinic... if you are pregnant, they will not stop coming until you attend [antenatal]’ (Female FGD participant, Gagiya FGD, 28/02/2016).

On their part, local political elites believe the VHWs in addition to strengthening service delivery, have helped to increase their ‘visibility’ and enhanced their ‘popularity’ within the LGA (GL1, 25/02/2016; GL8, 24/02/2016). Parents and relatives of the VHWs feel a sense of benefit that their relatives are involved in a scheme of this nature. This finding is in line with Tendler’s (1997) findings from a study of a Preventive Health Programme in rural Brazil. Tendler reported that the hiring of unskilled health agents to catalyse demand for health services at the community level was cost effective, produced the desired outcomes and increased the popularity of some elected Mayors (ibid: 25). However, as Table 7.3 shows, while there seems to be general increases in antenatal coverage, skilled birth attendant and immunisation coverage across the two study LGAs, the number of trained healthcare personnel decreased between 2011 and 2015. Staff strengths declined by 14.5% and 3.7% in Guri and Mashi LGAs respectively. In both cases, this decline has been attributed to statutory retirement without appropriate replacement due to embargo on the recruitment of health personnel by the state government.
Table 7.3: Selected primary healthcare indicators for Guri and Mashi LGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Indicator</th>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff strength</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antenatal coverage</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>1,809</td>
<td>3,803</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>2,516</td>
<td>9,713</td>
<td>286%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled birth attendant</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>3,895</td>
<td>346%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunisation coverage</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>1,548</td>
<td>6,192</td>
<td>299%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>1,921</td>
<td>9,089</td>
<td>373%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation based on Guri LGA PHC Department (various, 2016) and Mashi LGA PHC Department (various, 2016)

Again, caveat on the reliability of the above LGAs’ own data (Table 7.3) is needed here. As highlighted in Chapter Four, the vital statistics and socio-economic indicators of the study LGAs are hardly reliable, as most national level data on these are not disaggregated down to LGAs. While Mashi LGA’s figures look comparatively better than Guri LGA, these figures are hardly reliable, as the researcher had to work with LGA officials to generate these figures that were manually documented and not systematically collated. Crucially, unlike in Guri LGA, where the researcher was able to trace causal mechanisms with the observed outcomes, the researcher was unable to link Mashi LGA’s figures with genuine commitment to such outcomes (Chapter Six).

Although the CGS to LGAs scheme’s health sector guidelines describes and enumerates the staff capabilities required to increase service delivery at the primary healthcare level, it is evident that in the implementation of the scheme, little attention is paid to the continuous training and capacity building of health personnel that are critical to health service delivery at the local level. As discussed in chapter Six, in both Guri and Mashi LGAs, the scheme’s investments in primary healthcare were largely in the health infrastructure or the ‘visible’ aspects and the capacity component (human resources quantity and quality) or the ‘soft’ aspects were generally ignored. Indeed, an earlier SPARC (2012) assessment review drew attention to the skewed nature of most

51 These figures do not include the VHWs
CGS to LGAs proposals in favour of physical infrastructure and that training component were only found intermittently and often unclear in terms of specific skills building focus.

7.3.2 Primary education delivery

The responsibility of primary education lies jointly with the state and LGAs in Nigeria (chapter Three). Primary school teachers are recruited locally by the LGAs but are to be trained via the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). It is evident that effective primary education provisioning depends to a large degree on the quality and quantity of primary school teachers (UBEC, 2014). However, in Nigeria, qualified primary school teachers are very scarce, especially in the rural areas, where monitoring is less effective and education outcomes are hardly achieved. Indeed, recently during the opening of a National Teacher Training Programme, a serving Nigerian state governor52 acknowledged this and asserts:

‘...this initiative should be taken to all the states of the federation. Most schools in Nigeria do not have enough teachers, especially the ones in the rural areas. And there is this attitude that every teacher must teach in the cities, and most of the teachers who are privileged to have relations as Directors or Commissioners or LGA Chairmen will not teach in the rural areas. You see so many teachers in one school in the urban areas but in the rural areas you see one teacher teaching more than 500 students. These are the areas where we must work on to ensure that our children in the rural areas get the best of education...' (02/08/2016)

Our evidence supports this claim as key respondents converge on the notion that the main challenge to primary education delivery remains the lack of qualified teachers in rural schools. A senior government official involved in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme emphasised:

‘This is where we have the greatest of our challenges. Following the construction of additional primary schools and the sensitisation efforts of the PTA, enrolment has increased but unfortunately the number of primary school teachers has not increased over time. Thus, you find that pupil - teacher ratio remained very high at the LGA’ (ML3, 23/03/2016).

52 The governor made the remarks in his capacity as the Chairman of the Nigerian Governors’ Forum. The programme was organised by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) on Tuesday 02, August 2016 in Abuja and monitored by the researcher via Channels Television News (www.channelstv.live)
Focus group participants across Mashi LGA agreed with the above statement and observed that some primary schools in the LGA headquarters are over staffed, while the remote primary schools remained acutely understaffed (Bamle FGD, 24/03/2016; Zabaro FGD, 26/03/2016). It is reported that teachers resist postings to remote primary schools due to distance and absence of basic amenities, coupled with very low salary package for primary school teachers (also chapter Three). In fact, during weekly market days, primary schools’ teachers often desert their schools, as reportedly, most of them run petty businesses in the local market (Baude FGD, 24/03/2016). Evidently, this continues to affect the quality of primary education delivery in the study LGAs. Additionally, due to retirement of teachers and death, the number of primary school teachers kept reducing while the embargo on recruitment of teachers remained in force across our study LGAs (GL7, 24/02/2016; ML3, 23/03/2016). Thus, state level policy constrained effective primary education delivery.

In response to this, at the national level, OSSAP-MDGs made attempts to address teacher shortages by liaising with the National Teachers Institute\textsuperscript{53} (NTI) to strengthen the capacity of primary school teachers across the country (SPARC, 2015; NL2, 10/02/2016). OSSAP-MDGs provided institutional support in terms of funding to NTI to achieve this goal (NL1, 31/12/2015). However, in the absence of adequate teachers and credible monitoring framework, this effort did not yield the desired results. Our findings revealed that newly constructed primary schools in rural areas remained grossly understaffed and existing teachers are poorly trained. One primary school Head Teacher during FGD was critical on this: ‘I established this school three years ago and I have not received any training from anywhere on the work that I do...If anyone should be trained in this place [LGA] it should be me...’ (Male Participant, Baude FGD 24/03/2016).

\textsuperscript{53} NTI has a broad mandate to enhance the professional skills of serving teachers for quality education delivery at primary and secondary levels in the country.
Table 7.4: Key primary education statistics for Guri and Mashi LGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic session</th>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Total Enrolment</th>
<th>No. of Teachers</th>
<th>Pupil - Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>No. of Primary Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>13,344</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>1:37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>42,648</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>1:72</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1:40*</td>
<td>80*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>13,106</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1:36</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>43,275</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>1:69</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>10,002</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>1:27</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>42,217</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>1:68</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>8,441</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1:26</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>41,001</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>1:64</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>8,492</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1:29</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>36,834</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>1:57</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>7,894</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>1:27</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td>35,356</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>1:53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation based on Guri LGA Education Authority (various, 2016) and Mashi LGA Education Authority (various, 2016). *National Bureau of Statistics (2015)

This study made attempts to obtain credible data on the number of primary school-age children out of school in the study LGAs, but the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) did not have such data. Indeed, as discussed in chapter Four, most of the data presented here were compiled by the researcher, with the help of relevant LGA officials. From Table 7.4, it’s evident that pupil-teacher ratio in Mashi LGA remained significantly higher than the national average at 1:72 between 2011 and 2015. However, in Guri LGA, the ratio remained almost at par with the national average at 1:37 for the same period, largely due to relatively lower enrolment rate compared to Mashi LGA. Nevertheless, it is reported that even the available primary school teachers are hardly qualified (ML1, 15/03/2016; GL2, 24/02/2016).
7.4 The scheme’s impact on the LGAs’ bureaucratic capacity and autonomy?

As discussed in chapter Five and earlier in this chapter (section 7.2.1), through the instruments of the LGA Planning and Technical Committees, the CGS to LGAs scheme aimed to impact broadly on the capacities of the participating LGAs to deliver pro-poor services. Following Fukuyama’s (2013: 360) notion of ‘internal forms of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy’, the quality of government is the outcome of an interface between capacity and autonomy. Thus, with reference to our discussion in chapter Two, in this section, I examine capacity from the perspective of both resources and the level of qualification and experience of bureaucratic staff, while autonomy is examined from the way the political leadership issues mandates to bureaucrats and the discretion they are allowed.

7.4.1 LGA Planning Committee as ‘political principal’?

The LGA Planning Committee,54 chaired by the LGA chairman, has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the LGA level. In this capacity, it mandates the LGA Technical Committee (comprising of mainly of LGA Heads of departments) to prepare and submit to it for approval an elaborate MDGs-compliant LGA Plan. The Plan was to serve as a ‘roadmap’ for the development of the LGA. Thus, it is argued here that the LGA Planning Committee represents the ‘political principal’, while the LGA Technical Committee acts as its ‘bureaucratic agent’. From our evidence, the LGA Technical Committees in the study LGAs assembled skilled human resources to operate in a structured organisational hierarchy headed by the Technical Assistants to the LGAs, as required by the scheme’s design and implementation guidelines.

However, the inclusion of the TA in the LGA Technical Committee represents an ‘emerging’ variant in the central-local relations within a decentralised system of governance. The TA represents an additional skilled human resource to the LGA’s bureaucracy. Thus, the federal government used the TA to reinforce the bureaucratic capacity of the participating LGAs. The Heads of Departments that served in the LGA Technical Committees in our study LGAs at different periods during the implementation of the scheme were adjudged to be ‘highly skilled’ bureaucrats with public service experiences ranging between 25 and 30 years (NL8, 11/01/2016; 54 The Committee has all the political and bureaucratic elites and five community representatives as members.

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However, due to the high turnover of these senior LGA bureaucrats, this study was unable to obtain the résumés of all the heads of departments that served between 2011 and 2015. Nevertheless, the few résumés obtained and reviewed by the researcher, and the civil service guidelines on the qualifications and experience required of a bureaucrat to head a department at the LGA, provide sufficient triangulation to this claim.

Additionally, in both Guri and Mashi LGAs, the respective LGA Planning Committee provided financial resources to the LGA Technical Committee to enable it successfully executes its mandate. For example, in Guri LGA, our findings revealed that the then LGA chairman paid special attention and provided ‘special imprest’ for the smooth running of the activities of the LGA Technical Committee (GL3, 25/02/2016; GL8, 24/02/2016). This ‘special imprest’ was in addition to the LGA’s own contribution to the scheme’s implementation. In Mashi LGA, heads of departments reported being adequately supported ‘logistically’ to implement their assigned responsibilities as members of the LGA Technical Committee (ML2, 24/03/2016; ML3, 24/03/2016; ML4, 24/03/2016). Having fully established the extent to which the LGA bureaucrats in the study LGAs acquired the needed bureaucratic capacity to implement the scheme, and to deliver pro-poor services more broadly, but were the LGA bureaucrats autonomous from the political elites as their ‘principal’?

7.4.2 LGA Technical Committee as ‘bureaucratic agent’?

Fukuyama (2004; 2013) posits that the issuance of multiple contradictory mandates or the setting of excessively detailed rules for bureaucrats signifies low autonomy. Thus, once there is political interference in the bureaucratic operations, it signifies low autonomy or ‘subordination’ (ibid). Our evidence showed that in both Guri and Mashi LGAs, members of the Technical Committee were not autonomous from political interference by the political elites at the LGA level. One senior bureaucrat captures this concern broadly:

‘...I can tell you no official will operate independent of the politicians...they [political elites] determine everything... but where you function, and you are not subjected to some controls by some political forces, you are bound to deliver to the best of your abilities and make impact’ (NL10, 22/04/2016).

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55 Small amount of money set aside to support the daily running costs of a particular activity.
On the other hand, one of the political elites in Guri LGA noted:

‘I empowered my staff [LGA bureaucrats] to work assiduously towards the implementation of the [CGS to LGAs] interventions...we ensured the committee [LGA Technical Committee] members were supported to undertake their responsibilities as stipulated. And they did all that was required in terms of initiating and designing the interventions... But they [LGA bureaucrats] have to be accountable to us’ (GL1, 25/02/2016).

Contrary to the above statement, some senior bureaucrats reported that the work of the LGA Technical Committee was closely monitored and ‘influenced’ by political elites in terms of the initiation of proposed projects and the location of such projects (GL3, 25/02/2016; GL7, 01/03/2016). For instance, in Guri LGA, the Technical Committee recommended the construction of a health facility and water point in strategic locations based on World Health Organisation’s (WHO) recommendations. However, the LGA chairman relocated these projects to a location closer to his home village. According to key respondent, most of the discussions and decisions that were taken at the LGA Planning Committee were just ‘formalities’ to meet the requirements of the CGS to LGAs scheme (GL3, 25/02/2016). The testimonies of some community representatives at the LGA Planning Committee reinforce this, revealing how the decisions on projects were politically motivated. In the case of Mashi LGA, the political interference was reported to emanate from the political and bureaucratic elites at the state and LGA levels (ML1, 15/03/2016; ML8, 14/03/2016). For example, the decision to construct primary schools and motorised boreholes, including the locations were taken at the state level and not the LGA level.

As argued in chapter Six, the state government had huge control of the entire scheme’s implementation across the state. So, while the political inference in Guri LGA happened mostly at the LGA level, in Mashi LGA, this happened at both the state level and the local level.

The above findings resonate with the literature that approaches accountability from the top-down perspective and views it as a ‘principal-agent relationship’ (Gauthier and Reinikka, 2007; Booth, 2012). Political elites at the state and LGA levels seem to trust less the bureaucrats to successfully discharge the broad mandates to their satisfaction. Although key LGA bureaucrats could be said to have possessed the capacity to successfully implement the scheme and to deliver services in general, but they were granted little autonomy to do so.
7.5 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter has generated some clear findings on the strategies employed by OSSAP-MDGs in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the local level. Firstly, it is evident that the capacity building strategies have helped raise the scheme’s implementation capacity. This happened via the use of TAs and ZTOs to work closely with the political and bureaucratic leadership at the LGA level to establish the scheme’s governing structure and provide technical advice. The skills and experiences of the federal government’s recruited TAs and ZTOs facilitated the conduct of Needs Assessments, the development of CGS to LGAs proposals, as well as monitoring and evaluation at the LGA level. Additionally, the TAs and the LGA bureaucrats involved in the scheme’s implementation were trained and retrained through various capacity building programmes to enable them to discharge their assigned responsibilities. Nevertheless, as argued earlier in the chapter, the frequent redeployment of some senior LGA bureaucrats involved in the scheme’s implementation meant that the capacity built was hardly retained and adequately utilised as intended. This happened because all the senior LGA bureaucrats\(^{56}\) are not employees of the LGAs, but the respective states’ Local Government Service Commission.

Secondly, at the service delivery level, such as primary healthcare and education, it is evident that the CGS to LGAs scheme made little impact on the capacity of the LGAs. This is largely due to the acute shortage of trained primary healthcare personnel and primary school teachers. As discussed in Chapter Three, while in theory, LGAs in Nigeria have been delegated with the responsibilities for primary healthcare and primary education, in practice, these responsibilities are largely discharged by the state governments, whom in any case control the finances of their respective LGAs. For example, in both Guri and Mashi LGAs, staff from Grade Level (GL 08) and above are recruited by the state governments under the Local Government Service Commission. Equally, the institutions that train health workers and primary school teachers are funded and controlled by the state governments. Crucially, the state governments often impose ‘embargo’ on the recruitment of LGA staff from time to time. For example, between 2011 and 2015, there was an embargo on the recruitment of health personnel in Katsina state (Mashi LGA). Similarly, Jigawa state (Guri LGA) had their embargo lifted just before the 2015 general elections. It is for

\(^{56}\) All LGA staffs from Grade Level 9 are employed by the state Local Government Service Commission and can be redeployed to serve in any LGA in the state.
this that some analysts argue that LGAs in Nigeria are mere creation of the state governments and ought not to ‘exist’ in the first place (Awofeso, 2010).

The attempt by OSSAP-MDGs to use federal agencies, such as NPHDCA, NTI and the National Midwifery Service Scheme (MSS) to address these challenges as part of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s delivery strategy did not yield the desired outcomes. While in Guri LGAs, senior LGA officials involved in the implementation of the scheme were retained in the LGA, in Mashi LGA, such officials were frequently redeployed to other LGAs or elsewhere in the civil service of the state. This high turnover of bureaucrats in Mashi accounted for the ‘loss in institutional memory’ and in turn impact on the overall delivery of the CGS to LGAs scheme. As discussed earlier, pupil-teacher ratio in Mashi LGA remained much higher than the national average at 1:72 between 2011 and 2015. In Guri LGA, it remained almost at par with the national average at 1:37 for the same period, largely due to low pupil enrolment rate in Guri LGA. Similarly, staff numbers in primary healthcare delivery declined in both Guri LGA (-14%) and Mashi LGA (-3.7%) between 2011 and 2015. However, the innovative use of VHWs by Guri LGA to catalyse demand for health services has demonstrated the capacity of local initiatives to help bridge local level human resource deficits in some of the most difficult service delivery contexts. This finding supports the influential finding by Tendler (1997:28) on the cost-effective way of utilising ‘unskilled meritocrats’ to deliver preventive healthcare programmes in rural settings.

Thirdly, although senior LGA bureaucrats, as evidenced by their respective skills and experiences and through their membership of the LGA Technical Committee, could be said to have possessed the needed capacity, our evidence showed they were hardly autonomous from political interference in their decision making by their political ‘principals’ at both the state and LGA levels. Thus, the LGA bureaucrats, including the TAs, were highly limited in their discretion. This is contrary to the scholarly views reviewed in chapter Two, which posit that a high capacity bureaucracy should have more rather than less discretion (Fukuyama, 2013).

Fourthly, it is evident that political elites largely prioritised the provision of physical infrastructure and supplies at the expense of less visible aspects in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. Construction and renovation of primary healthcare facilities and classroom blocks, as well as the supply of medical equipment and educational materials attracted significant CGS to
LGAs resources. As argued in chapter Six, the considerable attention given to the procurement of buildings and goods in the implementation of the scheme provides opportunity for political elites to dispense patronage in the form of awarding contracts. This meant insignificant investments were made in the ‘less visible’ aspects of quality and quantity of health workers and primary school teachers, which are crucial for effective pro-poor service delivery. Not surprisingly, Jigawa (Guri LGA) and Katsina (Mashi LGA) states have some of the worst human development indicators in Nigeria (NBS, 2015).

In conclusion, this chapter has analysed the capacity building strategies employed by OSSAP-MDGs and the two-case study LGAs in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. While the scheme has helped in strengthening implementation capacity at the local level, the lack of bureaucratic autonomy, the prioritisation of visible interventions (especially buildings) by the political elites and the huge human resource deficits in primary healthcare and education, however, combined to hamper the effective delivery of pro-poor services. The subsequent chapter synthesises the findings of the empirical chapters (Five, Six and Seven) and provides theoretical interpretations.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Synthesis of Findings and Theoretical Interpretations

8.1 Introduction

The three preceding chapters have presented and analysed the study’s primary and secondary empirical materials. There are many findings across the key concepts under investigation – elite commitment, elite capture and state capacity, with broader conceptual and theoretical implications. This chapter synthesises the main findings and highlights the extent to which they relate to broader theoretical and conceptual debates on the political economy of development. In doing so, the chapter aims to respond to the overarching research question on ‘how the governance reforms of the CGS to LGAs scheme played out in practice, with attention on elite commitment, capture and state capacity?’ The central arguments of the chapter are as follows:

(i) Governance reforms can be designed in both technically competent and politically sensible ways to achieve more development gains out of a programme, but sustaining such progress requires the continued commitment of political and bureaucratic elites along the implementation chain;

(ii) Contrary to the standpoint that capacity is ‘exogenous’ of commitment and should precede it, this thesis argues that capacity is endogenous of commitment, and in the absence of political elites’ commitment, existing bureaucratic capacity is weakened;

(iii) Successful implementation of pro-poor reforms emerges at moments in time, when the interests of political elites overlap with the interests of the poor citizens. The CGS to LGAs scheme’s experience showed that ‘going with the grain’ and achieving meaningful success at the implementation level occurred when a developmental coalition was formed between the benefitting communities, the LGA chairman and the state governor;

(iv) Top-down and bottom-up forms of accountability are most effective where they are mutually reinforcing. In the absence of strong top-down accountability, social forms of accountability are generally ineffective (also Booth, 2012);

(v) Political elites’ prioritisation of visible programme outputs (building schools, healthcare facilities, water points etc.) at the expense of less visible but crucially important capacity aspects (e.g. more and better trained staff), ensured that the CGS to LGAs scheme made little impact on the LGAs’ capacity for pro-poor service delivery.
8.2 Elite commitment and pro-poor service delivery reforms

A key question addressed in this study relates to elite commitment and pro-poor service delivery. In line with our discussion in chapter Two, the literature posits that the evidence of commitment to a reform is often recognised ‘ex post’, from a retrospective view point (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Chopra, 2015). Indeed, in an ex-post approach, this study traced the origin of the CGS to LGAs scheme following the historic debt relief deal between Nigeria and the Paris Club of Creditors in 2005, which enabled the utilisation of approximately US$1 billion annually for pro-poor spending (chapter Five). As argued in chapter Three, the Obasanjo Presidency demonstrated strong commitment to improved service delivery through the successful negotiation of the debt relief, the establishment of OSSAP-MDGs and the appointment of a very competent Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (SSAP-MDGs) to lead the process for the implementation of the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) resources (chapter Five). As Lavers (2016) argues, establishing the institutions needed to implement a programme and committing adequate resources to it are essential indicators of elite commitment.

However, resources alone are not likely to be sufficient, as McLoughlin and Batley (2012) cautioned that between policy objective and implementation, politics intermediate either in an enabling or restricting role. This study’s evidence provides more support for the above argument. The CGS to LGAs scheme was consciously designed in a technically optimal and politically savvy manner to enlist the commitment of the influential state governors from inception. The locus of initiative and creativity exemplified by the pioneer SSAP-MDGs, for example, to obtain a pre-determined list of nine poorest LGAs per state from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and thereafter visited each state to meet personally with the state governor to facilitate the selection of three pilot LGAs from the pre-determined list, was an effort to ‘counter’ and ‘co-opt’ the state governors in the same process and at the same time. As argued in chapter Five, on the one hand, presenting nine poorest LGAs per state to the state governors to choose from, means they are technically ‘countered’, as that limits their selection of the three pilot LGAs to within the ‘poorest nine’ in the state. If the governors were to select the three pilot LGAs by themselves, it is most likely that the empirically-documented poorest LGAs might not be selected by the governors due to political considerations. On the other hand, allowing the governors the opportunity to select the three pilot LGAs from a ‘predetermined technical list’, meant they were ‘co-opted’ in the
design of the scheme from inception, and this helped ensure their buy-in and commitment to the scheme’s implementation. Thus, contrary to the ‘counter elite’ or ‘co-opt elite’ approaches to development governance (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007), our findings suggest that both ‘counter elite’ and ‘co-opt elite’ approaches should not be seen as ‘either-or’, as elites can be engaged and challenged in the same process and at the same time depending on the accountability mechanisms in place (Wong, 2010: 12).

8.2.1 National level elites and commitment to pro-poor service delivery reform

At the national level, it is evident that the first OSSAP-MDGs bureaucratic leadership worked round the clock to establish the needed governance structures and secure the buy-in of political elites along the policy chain (chapter Five). Taken together, the six characteristics of commitment – locus of initiative, continuity of effort, analytical rigour, mobilisation of support, application of credible sanctions and perception of political feedback - point to a sustained level of commitment to the entire DRG implementation and the CGS to LGAs scheme between 2006 and 2011. The case of the two OSSAP-MDGs bureaucratic ‘phases’ resonates with the current debates on the relationship between commitment and capacity. It is argued that commitment and capacity are not autonomous forces at work (Chemouni and Hossain, 2016), and that capacity is seen as a precondition for commitment and an integral part of it (Post et al., 2010). To Post and colleagues, commitment without capacity is ‘undistinguishable from lip service’ (ibid: 668). By implication, capacity is ‘exogenous’ of commitment and must precede it. Others argue that genuine commitment entails tackling missing capacities, and that capacity development is essentially an endogenous process that engages the abilities, skills, motivation and aspirations of the people (Brinkerhoff, 2007: 111). Reinforcing this view, Routley (2012) argues that it is in part motivation and commitment that create professionalised bureaucracy and in turn a professionalised bureaucracy induces commitment. Thus, capacity is ‘endogenous’ of commitment and serves it as a tool. From this reading, commitment to a certain policy objective is not sufficient to guarantee the achievement of such goal in the absence of the capacity needed to translate the commitment into accomplishment.
The experience of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s design and initial implementation offers support to the argument that genuine commitment entails building the capacities needed to achieve a policy objective (Brinkerhoff, 2007). OSSAP-MDGs recognised from inception the need to assemble and build the missing state capacities to enable the successful implementation of the scheme. As evidenced, sectoral specialists were sourced from within and outside the core civil service to be part of the scheme’s implementation team at the national level and the external recruitment of ZTOs and TAs through a merit-based system to support the implementation scheme at the local level (chapters Five and Six). Additionally, high quality orientation, trainings and workshops were carried out to strengthen its implementation capacity along the policy chain.

8.2.2 Change in bureaucratic leadership: Implications for commitment?

The observed decrease in commitment during the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme is closely linked to the change in the bureaucratic leadership at OSSAP-MDGs. As argued in chapter Five, following the change in the political leadership of the country through electoral process in 2011, and the subsequent removal of the initial OSSAP-MDGs’ leader, the second OSSAP-MDGs bureaucratic ‘phase’ between 2011 and 2015 was characterised by decreasing commitment fuelled largely by the growing influence of patronage politics in the management of the DRG resources and CGS to LGAs scheme. Senior bureaucrats whose capacities had been built specifically for the implementation of the scheme were either redeployed out of OSSAP-MDGs or were deliberately rendered ineffective. Subsequent appointments were made mostly on a patronage basis (chapter Five). Routley and Hulme (2013) suggest that once a lack of commitment was overcome, public bureaucrats would be able to utilise their knowledge and technical skills to development policy design and implementation that would achieve speedy progress. These findings suggest the initial conditions that support effective implementation of development interventions and service delivery more broadly can easily be reversed when the composition of political and bureaucratic elites change. As reported elsewhere, the changing mix of actors involved in policy implementation contributes to the variation in commitment over time (Chopra, 2015: 29). This suggests that political and bureaucratic elites do make a difference, but we need to pay attention to the structures that shape their interests to commit to pro-poor service delivery. Thus, this thesis argues that in the absence of elite commitment, existing bureaucratic capacity is undermined.
8.2.3 Local level elites and commitment to pro-poor service delivery

The literature on the political economy of service delivery views the local level as a ‘theatre of politics’, where different forms of politics are likely to determine whether and how services are delivered and for whom (Batley et al., 2012; McLoughlin and Batley, 2012). As argued earlier, with respect to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation, the LGA level served more as the ‘theatre of politics’ where different forms of politics played out (chapter Six). This is the level where local political and bureaucratic elites interact with service providers to deliver services to the citizens. Specifically, in line with our discussion in chapter Two, the LGAs budgetary and procurement processes serve as the key decision-making arenas, which local elites often manipulate to obtain personal benefits. With regards to the conscious reform of the LGAs resource allocation mechanisms as part of the scheme’s implementation, it would seem the specific requirements to establish ‘separate’ and ‘protected’ resource allocation mechanisms, including dedicated bank accounts, were aimed at avoiding elite capture of the scheme’s resources by the local elites.

As Grindle (2005) has observed, quality reforms that lay emphasis on re-organisation, upset the political balance of actors and interests and meet with strong opposition. Thus, the expectation of resistance to a reform from local political elites may in certain situations explain why some reforms are pursued to conclusion, while others are not (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012). At the implementation level, whether and how services are delivered may specifically depend on the structure of incentives facing providers and beneficiaries (Collier, 2007). Indeed, McLoughlin and Batley (2012) while investigating a decentralised Healthcare Programme in Bangladesh identified key political influences underlying successful implementation of pro-poor service delivery. These include consistent commitment despite changes in regime, perception of high political returns from health service delivery, a stable political settlement and political party competition.

In line with the focus of this study, the key concern here is: what makes local elites committed to the CGS to LGAs reform and to pro-poor service delivery more broadly? This study’s evidence suggests that state and LGA elites were incentivised by the 50% conditional matching grants provided by OSSAP-MDGs to the participating LGAs. As argued in chapter Six, the CGS to LGAs scheme was regarded as a ‘low hanging fruit’ for state and LGA levels political elites to utilise and
provide pro-poor services with high political returns. Some analysts have argued that computations of political returns on the part of political actors at all levels, have been essential in certain cases where significant improvements in service delivery have been attained (Batley, 2004; McLoughlin and Batley, 2012; Chopra, 2015). However, this equally depends on the characteristics of specific services and the extent to which such services are ‘visible’ and as such easily credited to actors (McLoughlin and Batley, 2012).

Our evidence shows how the ‘perceptions of political feedback’ by the state and local political elites in the two-case study LGAs sustained their commitment to the scheme’s implementation, albeit with some variations between the two cases. Both LGAs have shown commitment to the continued implementation of the scheme through the annual provision of financial resources (counterpart funds) and making LGA personnel available (chapter Seven). In turn, the CGS to LGAs scheme has impacted on elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery. As evidenced in the better performing case of Guri LGA, over the implementation years, non CGS resources were consciously channelled towards the scheme’s focus areas through the Guri Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (Guri LEEDS). Indeed, the Guri LEEDS document provides a clear roadmap for incremental pro-poor spending beyond the scheme’s implementation cycle (chapter Six).

As argued in chapters Six and Seven, a significant percentage of CGS to LGAs resources in both Guri and Mashi LGAs was channelled towards ‘visible’ or ‘hardware’ interventions across all the focus areas of primary healthcare, education and water provision. For instance, to ensure political elites fully take the credit for these ‘visible’ interventions, physical infrastructure such as health facilities, classroom blocks and motorised boreholes were duly branded with completion years conspicuously written on them (chapter Six). As Keefer and Khemani (2003) had warned that there is ‘sufficient proof’ political elites have greater motivations to deliver narrowly targetable goods, such as infrastructure provision, rather than improvements in broad public services. In sum, the experience of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation reinforces the view that calculations of political returns and the extent to which services are ‘visible’ and easily credited are essential in explaining political elites’ commitment to reforms and service delivery more broadly. However, this study finds that disproportionate investment in ‘visible’
interventions at the expense of ‘less visible’, but crucially important aspects, such as bureaucratic capacity at the service delivery level is often counter-productive.

8.2.4 Elite capture, accountability and pro-poor service delivery

In line with our discussion in chapter Two, the literature on service delivery and decentralisation more broadly, have highlighted the extent of elite capture at the local level, relative to that happening at the central level (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 1999; Dasgupta and Beard, 2007; Khemani, 2010). Conversely, the literature on elite capture has identified significant relationships between specific factors and elite capture (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007). The first factor has to do with the design of the programme - including the governance structure, implementation guidelines, participatory decision making with non-elites and transparency. The second factor is the community’s capacity for collective action – the capacity to supportively deliver public good and services, and to create structural change. The third factor is the pre-existing community context in terms of power relationships, social hierarchy and community cohesion. The fourth factor has to do with the broader political, economic and social context – including political reform movements, economic crises and heightened sensitivity towards corruption and nepotism (ibid).

This study finds relationships between elite capture phenomena with the above mentioned factors in many ways. Evidently, the design and governance structure of the CGS to LGAs scheme at LGA level was only effective in avoiding elite capture and ensuring smooth implementation of the scheme to the extent that it was accompanied by top-down – bottom up forms of accountability, exemplified by the ‘agency’ of the benefitting communities and their capacity for collective action (chapter Six). This resonates with cautions by Francis and James (2003) that genuine accountability requires more than a new set of procedures and institutions, as those with vested interests can turn the institutions and opportunities created to their own advantage. Similarly, much of the recent literature on the politics of service provisioning locates social accountability as part of iterative forms of state-society relations, with its focus on citizens as collective actors (World Bank, 2004; Gaventa and Barrett 2010; McGee and Gaventa 2010). It entails collective action from the ‘demand side’ to hold service providers accountable for service performance. This may involve local community-level actors making demands, protesting poor quality of service delivery and prioritising access to information among others. Indeed, some
analysts have argued forcefully that social accountability is a political process and not a set of apolitical systems or a ‘widget’ (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012:2). To these analysts, even though social action at the local level is frequently continuous and incremental, it is more probable to have an effect at moments of opportunity. Such moments can arise due to external schemes, such as public sector reforms or political predicaments that affect the commitment of key actors to a set of policies or related institutional arrangements (ibid). At such moments, the potentials for change are heightened via the creation of new alliances that empower previously fragile actors.

As discussed in chapter Six, the case of Guri LGA showed that the CGS to LGAs scheme’s governance structure functioned effectively due to the ‘reform posture’ of the state governor and the LGA chairman, which enabled the creation and functioning of informal development coalition that proved crucial in the implementation of the scheme. The then state governor hardly interferes with the scheme’s implementation, but instead reinforced top-down forms of accountability. Similarly, the then Guri LGA chairman showed commitment to the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme by empowering LGA bureaucrats and instituting top-down accountability at the LGA level. These combined, provided space for social accountability to be effective in Guri LGA, by allowing local bureaucrats and community members to actively participate in the scheme’s implementation as stipulated in the governance structure. With the pre-existing context of Guri LGA, in terms of power relationships, community cohesion and capacity for collective action (chapter Four), community members were then able to demand accountability from LGA bureaucrats and service providers. Service providers/contractors were held accountable for the quality and timely execution of CGS to LGAs projects and services in Guri LGA.

In contrast, the case of Mashi LGA showed clearly how the then state governor did not allow the scheme’s governance structure to operate as stipulated, but instead turned the structure and opportunities created by the scheme to his personal advantage. As argued in chapter Six, while various projects have been executed under the scheme across Mashi LGAs, the scheme’s governance structure was completely hijacked at the state level and as such political associates and friends of the state governor were awarded contracts on a patronage basis without following due process. Again, this was enabled by a combination of other factors, including - the high
turnover of political and bureaucratic elites (instigated by the state government); the LGA’s close geographical proximity to the state capital; seeming absence of community cohesion that enables collective action; and, the broader socio-political context (chapter Four). Thus, projects were initiated without consulting the potential beneficiaries, were often of sub-standard quality and reported cases of delayed execution, largely due to the absent or weak top–down accountability. In a few instances, where community members demonstrated capacity to demand accountability from service providers, these were not supported by strong top-down demands and as such were largely unsuccessful (chapter Six). Judging by this, it is evident that top-down demands are key determinants here, and in the absence of genuine commitment to top-down accountability, social forms of accountability are ineffective.

This echoes with earlier studies’ findings that direct pressure from service users in Africa to improve incentives for local public service delivery is likely to have only a weak or even negative effect, unless it is matched by robust top–down, supply-side pressure from political leaders and senior officials (Booth, 2011; 2012). Thus, it implies that citizen empowerment cannot be an adequate source of pressure for improved service performance on its own, there is need to work on ‘both sides of the equation’, developing coalitions between politicians and senior officials on one side, and citizen representatives on the other (Benequista and Gaventa, 2011: 39). Indeed, Saito-Jensen and colleagues (2010) cautioned that while all actors have the capacity to act according to their interests (agency), individual agency alone may not be sufficient to circumvent the prevailing social order. Thus, agency is likely to become successful only when actors associate with others with similar interest (ibid). Closely linked to the above discussion, the next section analyses the role of development coalitions.

8.2.5 Development coalitions and service delivery?

With reference to our discussion in chapter Two, it is argued that political leaders and actors, in and outside the political and public sphere, work within formal and informal contexts, and can play vital roles in (re)shaping institutions, as well as influencing development processes and outcomes (Leftwich and Wheeler, 2011). To some analysts, what shapes success or failure in development, is the extent to which mutual interests, synergies and cooperation occur between groups of actors - elites and non-elites (Booth and Therkildsen, 2012). More narrowly, Hickey
(2006) noted that successful implementation of pro-poor policies or reforms may emerge at certain moments when the interests of private and political actors converge with the interests of poor groups in the society. These lines of argument point to the critical role played by elites and coalitions in deciding development outcomes, including poverty reduction at different levels. Recent scholarship suggests that where there are indications that elite commitment to pro-poor social provisioning is strengthened by pressure to meet subordinate groups’ needs, it is evident that this happens where such pressure comes due to the emergence of well positioned ‘elite champions’ of transformation (Chemouni and Hossain, 2016). Indeed, inclusive coalitions between community members, traditional and religious leaders, and political elites led to significant improvement in maternal health under a clientelist political settlement in Ghana (Abdulai, 2016).

To a significant extent, this study’s findings indicate that whether the CGS to LGAs interventions are delivered effectively as planned or its benefit are captured by political and bureaucratic elites depends to a high degree on the existence of ‘reform-minded’ political elites at both the state and LGA levels, and the agreement and relationships with non-elite actors. The relatively high quality implementation status of Guri LGA was achieved largely due to the emergence of a successful development coalition between the state governor, the LGA chairman and the poor citizens (chapter Six). The CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation met the moment where the interests of the political elites could converge with that of the non-elites. While the then LGA chairman made himself easily accessible to the citizens through their representatives (including traditional and religious leaders), the then state governor made available a ‘dedicated’ short service messaging (SMS) for citizens who are dissatisfied with service provision to report directly to him. Indeed, this provided the non-elites the needed impetus to hold service providers accountable and continually advance their interests. As argued in chapter Six, the absence of a similar development coalition in Mashi LGA partly explains the low quality implementation of the scheme in particular, and broader service delivery challenges observed (chapters Six and Seven). Here, our findings reinforce Hickey’s (2006) argument that successful implementation of pro-poor policies emerges at specific moments when the interests of political actors meet with the interests of poor citizens in the society.
8.3 State capacity and pro-poor service delivery

The contemporary literature on state building offers different conceptual and theoretical interpretations of state capacity and their implications for effective public service delivery, and inclusive development more broadly (Evans, 1995; Savoia and Sen, 2012; Vom Hau, 2012; Fukuyama, 2004; 2013). In line with Fukuyama’s (2013) notion of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy, a cluster of this study’s findings relates to the wider theoretical understandings of state capacity. Bureaucratic capacity relates to the training and expertise of government employees (Evans and Rauch, 1999; Vom Hau, 2012), and among the structural factors postulated to enhance the bureaucratic performance of state to deliver on its mandate are meritocratic recruitment, training, and availability of predictable long-term career rewards (Evans and Rauch, 1999; Henderson et al., 2007).

8.3.1 OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucratic capacity and autonomy?

At the national level, OSSAP-MDGs had two bureaucratic phases between 2006 and 2015 (chapter Five). As argued in chapter Five, these phases differed greatly in terms of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy. The first bureaucratic phase (2006 – 2011) that conceptualised and designed the CGS to LGAs scheme made systematic attempt to build its internal bureaucratic capacity to effectively implement the scheme. This is evident through its ability to attract competent staff on a meritocratic basis from within and outside the core civil service. Where certain capacity was missing, OSSAP-MDGs sought the assistance of its development partners such as DFID and UNDP to acquire such expertise. During that phase, appointments in OSSAP-MDGs were made on merit following competitive recruitment and continuous capacity building was evident (chapter Five). In line with our discussion in chapter Two, bureaucratic autonomy is inversely connected to the number of mandates given out by the ‘political principal’. The fewer and broader the mandates given by the principal, the greater autonomy the bureaucracy possess (Fukuyama, 2013).

However, all these were possible due to the significant autonomy granted to OSSAP-MDGs by the country’s political leadership between 2006 and 2011. Being directly under the Office of the President, OSSAP-MDGs was provided with sizeable resources under the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) and granted considerable autonomy to design and implement programmes that would fast-track
the attainment of the MDGs in Nigeria. Contrary to the view that under a high autonomy scenario, governance outcomes are likely to go bad since the bureaucracy would evade all political control and sets not just internal procedures, but its own goals as well (Evans, 1995), our evidence showed that the first OSSAP-MDGs bureaucratic phase created a high capacity bureaucracy with qualified and experienced staff that kept programme implementation well on track. This was due to the autonomy granted to it by the political leadership via the NCCGS (chapter Five).

Conversely, following the change in the country’s political leadership through electoral process in 2011 and the subsequent change in OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership, the second bureaucratic phase (2011 - 2015) lacked autonomy from the political leadership. Some analysts have observed that a bureaucracy is subordinated and micro-managed through mandates and excessive rules that must be obeyed (Cingolani et. al., 2015; Fukuyama, 2013). A highly micro-managed bureaucracy has no room for discretion and independent decision making. It is argued that such extreme subordination often leads to poor performance, and the worst forms of poor performance is when bureaucracy loses control over internal recruitment to the political authorities and becomes managed completely by political appointees. Political interference in the bureaucratic operations of OSSAP-MDGs post 2011 was highly evident, and that impacted on its internal capacity and autonomy. Appointments were highly politicised, as with the overall implementation of the scheme (chapters Five and Six). The scheme’s implementation manual that was carefully designed to ensure accountability across the implementation chain was revised and hardly used (ibid). These findings lend support to the view that a bureaucracy run by incompetent or self-seeking political appointees needs to be subjected to clear guidelines and limited discretion (Cingolani et. al., 2015). As Fukuyama (2013) posits, in a low capacity bureaucracy, one would want to limit the conduct of bureaucrats with more rather than fewer rules, because one could not trust them to exercise good judgment or desist from corrupt behaviour.
8.3.2 Sub-national level bureaucratic capacity and autonomy?

At the sub-national level, chapter Seven showed how the CGS to LGAs scheme attempted to build the implementation capacity of the participating LGAs, through the Technical Assistants (TAs) and the Zonal Technical Officers (ZTOs), working closely with political and bureaucratic elites. The scheme’s governance structures at sub-national level were established through this strategy. The qualified and experienced TAs and ZTOs were to guide the LGAs to conduct the appropriate Needs Assessment and to develop the LGA Local Development Plans. Similarly, key LGA bureaucrats, mostly Heads of Departments involved in the scheme’s implementation, were trained and retrained through various capacity building programmes to enable them to discharge their assigned responsibilities. Based on our primary evidence, this study argues that the CGS to LGAs scheme has strengthened implementation capacity at the sub-national level (chapter Seven), demonstrating the ‘ability to apply and implement policy choices’ within the territory its claims to govern’ (Vom Hau, 2012: 2). A significant number of CGS to LGAs projects were executed across its focus areas of primary health, primary education and water and sanitation. Nevertheless, the findings vary significantly across our two-case study LGAs. The initial implementation capacity built was not really sustained and utilised in Mashi LGA, due to the high turn-over of bureaucrats involved in the scheme’s implementation and the resultant loss of capacity and ‘institutional memory’ (chapter Seven).

In terms of bureaucratic autonomy, this thesis argues that bureaucrats at both case study LGAs were hardly autonomous from political interference in their decision making from political elites at both the state and LGA levels. As discussed in chapter Three, this is largely because political and bureaucratic elites in Nigeria are not mutually exclusive at the sub-national level. For example, even in the relatively high-quality implementation case of Guri LGA, where senior LGA bureaucrats were allowed some discretion to plan and execute projects, they were still subjected to the approval of the LGA chairman. In the low-quality implementation case of Mashi LGA, the excessive subordination came from the state level. In this case, both local-level political and bureaucratic elites were heavily subordinated (chapter Seven). Most recently, Rasul and Roggery (2014: 2) in their study of management practices for bureaucrats in Nigeria found that ‘a one standard deviation increase in autonomy for bureaucrats corresponds to significantly higher project completion rates of 18%’. Thus, it is the contention of this thesis that political and
bureaucratic elites are indeed embedded at the sub-national level, and this is even more pronounced at LGA level.

8.3.3 Front-line capacity for service delivery?

As argued in chapter Seven, the CGS to LGAs scheme made little impact at the service delivery level in primary healthcare and education, due to the dearth of front-line capacity. Qualified healthcare workers and primary school teachers were in short supply and the existing ones lack the capacity to effectively deliver on their responsibilities. In the Nigerian context, the hiring and capacity building of front-line health workers and primary school teachers is the constitutional responsibility of the state and local governments (chapter Three). The scheme’s attempt to assist the participant LGAs to bridge the capacity gap using federal agencies’ programmes did not yield the desired goal. As evident from our findings, primary school pupil-teacher ratio in both Guri and Mashi LGAs remained much higher than the national average (chapter Seven). In the area of primary healthcare delivery, the number of trained health workers declined in both LGAs between 2011 and 2015 largely due to retirement, cases of death and an embargo on fresh recruitment. Additionally, during the implementation of the scheme, it is evident that political elites prioritised visible interventions, such as the construction of health centres and schools at the expense of less visible outputs. Thus, fewer resources were allocated to the quantity and quality of health workers and primary school teachers, which are so essential for front-line service delivery.

Indeed, it has been argued that the core problem of public service provision in Africa is acute under staffing and lack of resources to do a good job, especially at the front-line or local level (Crook, 2010). For Crook, the best way to improve service delivery is to identify and work with existing competent and committed front-line officers in specific rural districts where services are needed the most (ibid). However, our evidence suggests that in the absence of appropriate quantity of these front-line staff, service delivery efforts remain ineffective. As argued in chapter Seven, the innovative use of ‘unskilled street level’ bureaucrats, called the village health workers (VHWs), to catalyse demand for primary healthcare at community level, was quite helpful in the absence of adequate health personnel but it could not ‘fill the gap’ created by doctors and nurses not being in the post.
8.3.4 Multidimensionality of state capacity?

Although in line with our conceptual framing, this study specifically examines state capacity using Fukuyama’s notion of bureaucratic capacity and autonomy (2013), the findings of this study resonate with the wider and contemporary literature on state building. Weberian theorists have traditionally considered state capacity as consisting of a) bureaucratic professionalism, b) external embeddedness (Evan and Rauch, 1999; Evans, 1995), and most recently, c) the territorial reach of the state (Soifer and Vom Hau, 2008). Vom Hau, (2012) reemphasised the need to view state capacity as comprised of these three distinct but interrelated dimensions, with each dimension reinforcing the others iteratively.

Our evidence lends some support to the above standpoint of state capacity. For example, the CGS to LGAs scheme was able to build the bureaucratic capacity of the state through meritocratic recruitment and training of bureaucrats involved in the implementation of the scheme along the policy chain. This dimension in turn enabled the state to provide functioning physical infrastructure such as healthcare facilities, classroom blocks and water points. Thus, the bureaucratic dimension simultaneously helped to extend the ‘infrastructural capacity of the state to exercise control and implement chosen policies and programmes across the territory it claims to govern’ (Mann, 1984: 186). In both Guri and Mashi LGAs, the CGS to LGAs scheme has extended the infrastructural power or territorial reach of the state. Health outreach by VHWs serving as ‘street level bureaucrats’ in Guri LGA helped to increase the ‘sighting’ of the state across the LGA. In turn, the engagement and activities of VHWs helped to embed the state with non-state actors, thereby extending the relational capacity of the state. Indeed, the CGS to LGAs scheme’s community engagement and dialogue mechanism required the representation of benefitting communities at the Local MDGs Planning Committee in a manner akin to strengthening bottom up set of state-society ties (chapters Five and Six). As Evans (2010; 2011) posits, successful delivery of social services, such as education and health require a kind of ‘state-society interaction’. Elsewhere in Africa, Bukenya (2012) finds similar inter-relationships between the dimensions of state capacity in his study of HIV/AIDS Programme in rural Uganda.
8.4 The Politics of Development

8.4.1 ‘Doing development differently’?

In line with the recognition that development interventions often take place in contexts where governance is weak and political constraints are profound, a major focus in the recent literature has called for the need to ‘do development differently’. Specifically, there is a call for ‘politically smart, locally led’ (Booth and Unsworth, 2014), ‘going with the grain’ (Levy, 2014) and ‘problem-driven, iterative adaptation’ (Andrews, et al., 2013) approaches to confront governance-related development challenges and achieve more development gains. Taken together, these lines of thinking critique the more technocratic ‘best practice’ solutions to development challenges that have held sway in development practice for decades (World Bank, 2017). ‘Politically smart’ refers to ways of ‘thinking and working politically’ and entails being politically informed and astute in difficult governance environments (Booth and Unsworth, 2014). This includes a sense of history and an in-depth understanding of country or sector context - including embedded structures, local informal institutions, relationships and actors. It equally involves the intelligent and creative use of information on the political and governance underpinnings of development (ibid: 3). Therefore, development implementers and their funders must not just be well informed, but clever operators with the capacity to work with politics, or around them, according to what is feasible in a specific context.

Equally, the idea of ‘going with the grain’ presumes that to achieve tangible development outcomes and make progress, there is need to begin by ‘seeing things as they are and to work from there’ (Levy, 2014:1) Thus, ‘with the grain’ approach to governance and development policymaking directs attention away from ‘best practice’ blueprints towards the challenges of finding a ‘good fit’ and subtly influencing the forward development drive. By implication, development initiatives focused on technical knowledge and capacity alone are inadequate to address governance related-development challenges that are deep-rooted in power structures and bureaucratic norms that are shaped by the existing political dynamics.

As argued in chapter Five, a cluster of evidence shows that the leadership of OSSAP-MDGs made a conscious attempt to work in a manner that was both technically informed and politically savvy and to partly ‘go with the grain’, in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership had recognised the need to enlist the support of the political elites -
federal legislators, state governors and LGA chairmen – from the inception if meaningful progress were to be made. This is even more pertinent since, on the one hand, the entire DRG spending required the approval of the National Assembly through annual appropriation and, on the other hand, the CGS to LGAs scheme required counterpart contribution from the states and LGAs. Thus, the commitments of the federal legislators, state governors and the LGA chairmen were crucial to the success of the scheme. While OSSAP-MDGs set up technical criteria for the selection of the participating LGAs, it had to court the support of the federal legislators by ensuring the initial 113 pilot LGAs were spread nationally to cover all the 109 Senatorial Districts in the country. This resonates with the argument by Booth and Therdkildsen (2012) that development outcomes depend largely on the political incentives facing political elites and leaders. It is how the political elites and public officials respond to the specific incentives that they face when they make choices about policies and their implementation. Similarly, while OSSAP-MDGs sets out to promote commitment to pro-poor spending and reform governance in the process at the LGA level, it did not attempt to set up parallel structures to implement the CGS to LGAs scheme, but rather used the existing governance structures at the LGAs to implement the scheme. It is the argument of this thesis that this way of thinking and working is indeed ‘politically smart’ and partly ‘going with the grain’.

As our evidence in chapters Five and Six showed, the initial success recorded in the implementation of the scheme is largely linked to this strategy of ‘thinking and working’ politically based on the political economy realities in the country. Political elites, specifically the state governors, were ‘countered’ and ‘co-opted’ in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. This approach is what I call ‘partly going with the grain’ of Nigerian state and argue that OSSAP-MDGs leadership had demonstrated high locus of initiative and strong mobilisation of support. These findings suggest that an understanding of the political dynamics is often the essential missing ingredient in the design and implementation of development programmes. Thus, the experience of the CGS to LGAs scheme suggests that development interventions can indeed be designed in both technically competent and ‘politically smart’ way. Nevertheless, as our evidence in chapter Six showed, sustaining this approach requires the sustained commitment of political elites at the implementation level. Crucially, however, being ‘politically smart’ in the design and implementation of the scheme, did mean that the selection of the pilot 113 LGAs did not reflect the geography of poverty in Nigeria, which is more
pronounced in Northern Nigeria (chapter Three, also CBN, 2011; NBS, 2010). Consequently, DRG resources where spread thinly across the country in a manner that undermines the potential poverty reduction impact of the CGS to LGAs scheme.

However, there are limits to what can be achieved by ‘going with the grain’. These were revealed in terms of the continued focus of local political and bureaucratic elites on the ‘hardware’ of development and not able to get implementing agencies/LGAs to focus on human resources upgrading.

8.4.2 Patronage politics and pork barrel allocations of CGS to LGAs resources?

In line with the characterisation of developing countries’ political settlements as clientelist (Khan, 2010) and the African state as neo-patrimonial (Crook, 2010) and even kleptocratic (Acemoglu et al., 2004), a cluster of findings from this study deals directly with these literature on contemporary politics in Africa. One clear conclusion is that African leaders allocate disproportionate percentage of public resources to electoral strongholds to maintain political advantage. As argued in chapter Five, following the change in the country’s political leadership after the 2011 general elections and the subsequent change in the leadership of OSSAP-MDGs, which culminated into the replacement and redeployment of key bureaucrats out of OSSAP-MDGs, there were observed deviations from the initial design of the CGS to LGAs scheme (chapter Five). For example, even urban LGAs with good human development indicators ended up benefitting from the scheme’s limited resources that were designed to target rural LGAs with poor human development indicators. While this seemed to look like a purely technocratic endeavour, strong political incentives came to play. As highlighted in chapter Three, the political developments in Nigeria at that time strongly shaped this pattern of resource distribution. The then President Jonathan and the ruling PDP were so desperate to retain power in 2015 that they ‘did everything humanly possible to remain in office beyond 2015’ (NL, 10/02/2016). Indeed, Adeniyi (2017) in his acclaimed book ‘Against the run of Play: How an incumbent President was defeated in Nigeria’, noted that in the run up to the 2015 general elections, politicians were busy distributing patronage to corner state power at the federal, state, local government levels.
Our findings showed that the patterns of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s resource allocation were largely influenced by the desire to implement the scheme across all the 774 LGAs in the country by the year 2015, as opposed to the initial design to concentrate on the poorest LGAs (chapter Five). The weight of this study’s evidence showed how members of the parliament and political elites at sub-national levels lobbied OSSAP-MDGs officials for the extension of the scheme to cover more LGAs. Thus, by the end of 2014, even ‘resource-endowed’ urban LGAs ended up benefitting from CGS resources intended to benefit ‘resource-poor’ rural LGAs and to reduce poverty. This can usefully be viewed as ‘dispensing patronage’. These findings resonate with a recent study by Lavers (2016: 24) on Rwanda’s Vision 2020 Umenge Programme (VUP), where the nature of the political settlement evidently influenced the initial design and implementation of the VUP by rolling out the programme ‘equally in all the districts to avoid any perception of bias against any region’. At the local level, this study’s findings noted patronage in the form of procurement contracts awarded to friends and political associates of a state governor (chapter Six). Taken together, these findings support the view that service delivery is ‘a theatre of politics’, where wider political processes play out (Batley et al., 2012: 131). However, it is evident the initial conditions that supported effective service delivery can rapidly be undone when political elites’ incentives change.

8.4.3 The politics of local government autonomy in Nigeria: Implications for pro-poor service delivery?

As discussed in chapter Three, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) recognised the local government as a third tier of government, subject to the control of state governments (FGN57, 2009a). The same constitution assigned LGAs the responsibilities for the provision of primary education and primary healthcare services and granted the LGAs financial autonomy via the statutory allocation of federal revenue under the vertical and horizontal fiscal arrangements (ibid; FMoF, 2013). The vertical allocation formulae provide that federal revenue is shared amongst the three tiers of government as: Federal (52.68%); 36 States (26.72%) and 774 LGAs (20.6%) (FMoF, 2013). However, contrary to this constitutional provision and the tenets of fiscal decentralisation, LGAs in Nigeria have very limited autonomy in terms of both financial control and control of staff (selection, appointment, redeployment and promotion.

57 Section 7, Schedule 4, 1999 Constitution of Nigeria
State governments continued to warehouse allocations for their respective LGAs under the ‘State Joint Local Governments Account’ (chapter Three; also, Anyanwu, 1999). Anyanwu (1999) showed financial autonomy for Nigeria’s local governments averaged 7.52% between 1993 and 1999, compared to 68% in developing countries more broadly and, conclude that there is little or no financial autonomy for Nigeria’s local governments. This ensured that the state governments have virtually total control of the LGAs funds and often execute projects and programmes on behalf of the LGAs under the guise of ‘Joint LGAs Projects’ (also Okafor, 2010). Senior LGA bureaucrats are hired, paid and managed by the State Local Government Service Commissions. Thus, in most states, LGAs are only given monthly fixed sum for recurrent expenditure and the payment of junior cadre of Local government employees.

This anomaly within Nigeria’s federal system has attracted several calls from analysts, the wider civil society and some federal legislators for the review of the 1999 Constitution to put in place checks against state governments’ abuse of these loopholes and to grant greater autonomy to the LGAs58 (Asaju, 2010; Okafor, 2010). Our evidence showed that it is in recognition of this challenge and the desire to reform governance at the LGA level, that OSSAP-MDGs designed the CGS to LGAs scheme to ensure that the LGAs receive funds directly from the federal government and use it specifically for pro-poor service delivery – in effect, trying to bypass state government. Hence, it is not surprising that OSSAP-MDGs required state and LGA to contribute 50% as counterpart funding for the scheme. As argued in chapter Five, the requirement to have a ‘dedicated CGS to LGAs account’ and to be operated solely by the LGA is a clear attempt to check the state government’s control of LGAs funds and to avoid the usual resource capture by state-level elites, associated with lower level governments (Khemani, 2010). This study’s findings suggest that the federal government’s attempt through the CGS to LGAs scheme at strengthening the LGAs to deliver on their constitutional responsibilities of providing basic services to the poor, even though in an ad-hoc manner, succeeded only where the state governors allowed that to happen. How LGAs in Nigeria will escape domination by state governors remains a major challenge.

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58 Currently there is a Bill at the National Assembly seeking to amend the 1999 Constitution to grant Local government full autonomy.
8.5 Theory and practice of fiscal decentralisation: CGS to LGAs as a variant?

In line with our discussion in chapter Two, one of the theoretical benefits of fiscal decentralisation is the potential to improve service delivery, since local government can be more responsive to citizens’ preferences and needs (Mascagni, 2016). The potential benefits include increased efficiency in service delivery and reduced information and transaction costs associated with the delivery of public goods and services (World Bank, 1997). However, some analysts relying on empirical findings have argued that while fiscal decentralisation intends to strengthen the effective delivery of public services at the lower level, it has similarly increased the likelihood of capture within the lower tiers (Manor, 1999; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2005; Khemani, 2010; Faguet, 2014). On the other hand, Smoke (2013) cautioned that even when intergovernmental system is designed to give autonomy to the sub-national level, this may not happen in practice, as the central governments may have interest in exerting more control than necessary and this prevents true autonomy.

In a manifestation of fiscal decentralisation, intergovernmental transfers or grants are often used to provide incentives for local governments to act as agents of the central government (Shah, 2004). Theoretically, intergovernmental transfers or grants can be broadly classified into two categories – conditional and unconditional grants (Shah, 2007). Conditional grants may include matching (cost sharing) conditions by requiring grant recipients to finance a specified percentage of expenditures using their own resources (Boadway, 2007). Thus, conditional matching grants generate motivations for recipient governments to expend on grant-funded services rather than on services that are not supported by grants (ibid). In line with our conceptual framing, the CGS to LGAs is an example of a conditional-matching grant from the federal government to the LGA meant to offer motivation for the LGA to commit its resources towards national development priorities and reforming governance at the LGA level in the process.

A cluster of findings from this thesis speaks directly to this body of knowledge. Some analysts have warned that conditional grants distort jurisdictional boundaries and are often complicated (McMillian, 1995; Kitchen, 2007), for instance by stating where and how the funds are to be spent, the central government stake a claim to responsibility in the area to which the grant applies (ibid). Contrary to this view, the weight of this study’s evidence showed that the federal
government has succeeded in motivating the participating LGAs to commit their own resources towards the scheme’s focus areas of primary healthcare, education and water and sanitation. As shown in chapter Six, both Guri and Mashi LGAs were consistent in providing their annual counterpart funds to the scheme’s implementation and sustained an incremental spending patterns towards the scheme’s priority areas through the traditional LGAs’ budgetary mechanism (chapter Six). However, as argued, these expenditure patterns are more pronounced and closely linked to the scheme’s intervention in Guri LGA than in Mashi LGA, where there was weak link between the observed expenditure patterns with the scheme’s goals. Thus, the case of Guri LGA is in line with earlier argument that conditional grants can generate motivations for recipient governments to expend on grant-funded services (Boadway, 2007) and that matching obligations encourage greater local ownership of grant-financed expenditures (Shah, 2004; 2007), when the local authority has both capacity and commitment.

Indeed, a number of empirical studies have reported cases of how political elites capture resources following the implementation of fiscal decentralisation schemes (Francis and James, 2003; Khemani, 2010). Francis and James (2003) while examining the Ugandan Local Development Programme (LDP), reported cases of inflated tendering by officials in the implementation of the scheme and cautioned that genuine downward accountability will require more than a new set of procedures and institutions. Similarly, Khemani (2010) cautioned that fiscal decentralisation in the form of resource transfer to lower level might not be effective in delivering improved public services, if the local jurisdictions being supported are already ‘politically captured’. The findings in this study lend some support for Khemani’s view and, as argued previously in this thesis, very careful planning is required to identify innovative institutional designs or conditions under which elite capture is reduced and accountability for local public services increased.
8.6 Conclusion

As a critique to the ‘technocratic’ approaches to development governance, the recent call to ‘do development differently’ is an attractive one. However, much of the evidence to date focused on how donors and development agencies engage in a ‘politically savvy’ ways, and little is known about African-state driven governance programmes, such as the CGS to LGAs scheme, and to the ways and manners in which state agents at multiple levels shape and adopt to reforms in difficult governance contexts. This thesis offers insights into this important but neglected arena and explores the explanatory powers of elite commitment and state capacity at the sub-national level.

This study’s findings show how state agents themselves employ key strategies that are both ‘technically optimal’ and ‘politically smart’ to secure elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery at multiple levels. To secure the commitment of state governors in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme and at the same time to achieve the objective of the scheme in terms of ‘pro-poor targeting’, OSSAP-MDGs officials had to ‘counter’ and ‘co-opt’ the influential state governors in the same process. This is exemplified by OSSAP-MDGs’ technically pre-selecting nine poorest LGAs in each state based on the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) human development indicators and presenting this to each state governor to select three pilot LGAs. This tactic ensured that the three LGAs eventually selected by the state governor meet the pro-poor targeting criteria and at the same time the governor having the sense of ‘influence’ in the selection of the LGAs, which makes them ‘committed to the implementation of the scheme. Nevertheless, sustaining such approach requires the continued commitment of political and bureaucratic elites along the implementation chain, including strengthening capacity for implementation. As highlighted in Chapters Six and Seven, one of the key challenges faced by local level bureaucrats in the implementation of the scheme was the ‘embargo’ on the recruitment of key personnel imposed by the state government. As noted, LGA personnel from GL 8 are recruited and deployed at the state level. Although OSSAP-MDGs made attempts to strengthen its implementation capacities at the LGA level, through relevant federal agencies, this was limited by the availability of these critical manpower at the LGA level. The lesson here is that to achieve more development gains, there is need to employ both techniques and politics in the same process.
This chapter has synthesised the main findings and offered conceptual and theoretical explanations. The main arguments put forward are broadly structured along the following conceptual fields - elite commitment to reform implementation, the politics of service delivery, state capacity and pro-poor service delivery, the politics of development, and the theory and practice of fiscal decentralisation. Drawing on the key findings of the thesis, the chapter has theoretically analysed the extent to which an important set of governance reforms played out in practice. At the national level, the key findings are summarised as follows: (i) The CGS to LGAs scheme was designed in both a technically competent and politically savvy manner, to ‘partly go with the grain’ (Levy, 2014). State level political elites, specifically the state governors were ‘co-opted and countered’ simultaneously. But, politics trumped technics in the eventual selection of the initial 113 participating LGAs. (ii) The initial success achieved by OSSAP-MDGs (2006-2011) is attributed to the presence of political and bureaucratic leaderships at the national level that were committed to improving service delivery to poor people and that raised commitment to achieving the programme’s goals down the implementation chain. (iii) The decreased commitment observed in the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme at the national level post 2011 is largely linked to the change in national political leadership, OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucratic leadership and the increased role of patronage politics in the overall management of the scheme. By implication, the practice of democracy and the emergence of new political leadership in Nigeria undermined programme performance and weakened existing capacity and accountability of the CGS to LGAs scheme.

At the sub-national level, the key findings are summarised as follows: (i) The nature of the state governments’ involvement in the implementation of the scheme accounted for the variations in implementation and outcomes between the two-case study LGAs. Contextual factors could support or undermine the governance reforms built into the scheme. (ii) Where commitment seemed to be high and by extension high quality implementation, it is principally due to informal development coalition that combined the initiative and ‘agency’ of the benefitting communities, the LGA chairman and the state governor. (iii) Top-down and bottom-up forms of accountability are most effective where they are mutually reinforcing. Thus, in the absence of strong top-down accountability, social forms of accountability are ineffective. (iv) While the CGS to LGAs scheme has strengthened its implementation capacity at the LGA level, LGA bureaucrats were hardly autonomous from political elites’ interference in their decision-making at both the state and LGA
levels. Thus, LGA bureaucrats, including the TAs were highly limited in their discretion to implement the scheme effectively. (v) At the service delivery level, such as primary healthcare and education, the scheme made little impact on the capacity of the case study LGAs. This is largely due to nation-wide problems and policies creating the acute shortage of trained primary healthcare personnel and primary school teachers in rural areas across the country. This was compounded by the political elites’ prioritisation of allocating funds to physical infrastructure and material supplies in the implementation of the scheme at the expense of ‘less visible’ capacity development aspects – such as recruiting more and better trained staff.

Overall, this thesis provides an illustration of the great difficulties faced by attempts to reform service delivery in sub-Saharan Africa. The CGS to LGAs scheme was well resourced, well-designed in technical terms and was politically sensible, as it sought to ‘partly go with the grain’ along the implementation chain instead of promoting an ‘ideal’ model. However, the change in the country’s political leadership, coupled with contextual factors at the sub-national level, especially elite capture and high turnover of bureaucrats, combined to undermine reforms. Contrary to the view that capacity is exogenous of commitment, this study argues that capacity is indeed endogenous of commitment, and in the absence of genuine elite commitment, existing capacity is weakened. The final chapter summarises the thesis along the research questions and concludes.
CHAPTER NINE

The Politics of Pro-Poor Service Delivery: Summary and Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This thesis investigated the politics of pro-poor service delivery, using the Nigeria’s CGS to LGAs scheme as the unit of analysis. The central objective was to deepen the understanding of how the governance reforms of the CGS to LGAs scheme play out in practice, with specific focus on elite commitment and state capacity. The CGS to LGAs scheme sought to promote commitment to pro-poor service delivery while reforming governance at the local government level and strengthening state capacity. The scheme was initially implemented in 113 LGAs across the country and this study focused on two case study LGAs – Guri and Mashi – for detailed examination. This study has found that development programmes can be designed in a technically optimal and politically savvy manner to achieve development outcomes at multiple levels of implementation. However, sustaining such approach requires the continued commitment of political and bureaucratic elites along the policy chain. This chapter summarises the study and conclude. It is structured as follows: The next section summarises the thesis’s main findings in relation to the original research questions, while the penultimate section discusses the key lessons learnt and policy implications. The final section offers suggestions for further research.

9.2 Summary of the study’s findings

This study has shown that the CGS to LGAs scheme initially delivered some significant gains in terms of promoting commitment to national development priorities, specifically, the achievement of accelerating MDGs at the sub-national level. The ‘conditional-matching’ requirement for LGAs to provide 50% counterpart contribution to the federal share of the scheme ensured additional local resources were channelled towards pro-poor spending – primary healthcare, primary education and rural water and sanitation, considered national priorities in line with the commitment to fast track the MDGs in Nigeria following the 2005 Paris Club debt relief. However, the CGS to LGAs scheme also served as a ‘low hanging fruit’ for political elites at the state and local governments to utilise for pork barrelling and the distribution of patronage, which explains partly why they prioritised the provision of visible infrastructure, such
as healthcare buildings, classroom blocks and water points. However, this preference meant that political elites paid little or no attention to the ‘less visible’, but crucial aspect of capacity for pro-poor service delivery through more and better-trained staff. At the service delivery level, acute shortage of health personnel and primary school teachers persist, so the healthcare facilities and primary schools constructed have remained grossly understaffed (chapter Seven). The overall implementation success of the scheme varied across the two-case study LGAs, as well as its impact across the characteristics of elite commitment – locus of initiative, continuity of effort, degree of analytical rigor, mobilisation of support, application of credible sanctions and perception of political feedback - analysed here. The remainder of this section summarises the study’s findings along the three broad research themes: elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery reform; elite capture and accountability in service delivery; and strengthening capacity for pro-poor service delivery.

**9.2.1 Elite commitment to pro-poor service delivery reform**

Has the CGS to LGAs scheme increased commitment to pro-poor service delivery? This thesis has shown that following the Paris Club debt relief in 2005 and the establishment of OSSAP-MDGs, the federal government tried various initiatives at both national and state levels with both disappointing outcomes. The lessons learnt with the implementation of the DRG funds through the federal MDAs and state governments led to the idea of the CGS to LGAs scheme and eventual implementation. Two bureaucratic ‘phases’ at OSSAP-MDGs occurred during the implementation of the scheme. As argued in chapter Five, these ‘phases’ differ in terms of commitment and capacity, and this shaped the implementation of the scheme overtime. The initial leadership of OSSAP-MDGs (2006-2011) conceived the idea of the scheme and designed the institutional framework for its implementation. The commitment demonstrated by OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership in enlisting the support of political elites in a politically feasible manner ensured the scheme’s initial implementation was a success. OSSAP-MDGs equally mobilised the support of development partners such as UNDP and DFID in strengthening its implementation capacity. OSSAP-MDGs provided sizeable resources and worked to support capacity development for the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. The establishment of a dedicated CGS Unit; the appointment of a highly competent technocrat as head; the recruitment of six ZTOs and 113 TAs; the elaborate and effective sensitisation and training programmes; and the subsequent capacity
building programmes for hundreds of administrators along the delivery chain provide strong evidence of the commitment and capacity on the part of OSSAP-MDGs.

However, the change in the country’s political leadership in 2011 and the subsequent change in OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership heralded a shift back to ‘business as usual’ - day-to-day patronage politics in the overall management of the scheme (chapter Five). As discussed in chapter Five, President Jonathan’s appointment of a new SSAP on MDGs was recognised to be purely based on patronage rather than on merit. Thus, the change in OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucratic leadership and the subsequent changes in its administrative structure, affected the smooth implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. Evidently, the changes led to the loss in ‘institutional memory’ and undermined capacity that was needed for the effective implementation of the scheme (chapter Five and Six). Similarly, the increased political interference and patronage politics in the scheme’s implementation led to the observed deviations from its initial design.

**Locus of initiative in policy implementation**

Evidently, the leadership of OSSAP-MDGs has demonstrated initiative in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme in many ways. Firstly, the idea of the scheme originated from the then SSAP-MDGs following extensive consultations. The tactic of ‘co-opting and countering’ the state governors at the inception of the scheme ensured its successful take-off. Secondly, the extensive use of technology provided OSSAP-MDGs the opportunity to roll out the scheme simultaneously across the country. The deployment of VSAT Network solutions to 156 locations across the country to support the implementation of the CGS to LGAs for the first two years exemplified this. Thirdly, the development of the CGS implementation manual and guidelines in partnership of its technical partners ensured that roles and responsibilities are clearly spelt out between the federal and local governments. Fourthly, the establishment of the Nigeria MDGs Information System (NMIS) that provided a platform to capture nation-wide baseline facilities inventory data (health, education and water) on all the 113 participating LGAs typified this indicator of commitment.
At the LGA level, as discussed in chapter Five, the extent to which local political and bureaucratic elites take initiative were highly limited. Our findings showed that in both study LGAs, political and bureaucratic elites responded positively to the scheme’s implementation and took initiative to adapt to the scheme’s implementation guidelines. For instance, political and bureaucratic elites in Guri LGA made appropriate changes where necessary and provided feedback to OSSAP-MDGs. Considerable LGA level instructions and documentations via departmental memos and circulars were circulated across the LGA and communities in support of the scheme’s implementation. In Mashi LGA, level of initiative was affected by high turnover of political and bureaucratic elites at the LGA and the eventual micro-management of the scheme by the state government (chapter Six). Thus, within the context of this study, it is important to state that this characteristic of commitment has better explanatory power and more useful at the national level than at the local level.

**Continuity of effort and allocation of resources**

This is one of the key characteristics that better exemplified elite commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation. Political elites at all levels continued to provide financial resources to support the implementation of the scheme. As argued in chapter Five, despite the initial logjam following the change of OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership, the implementation of the scheme continued with even ‘greater’ speed and desire to cover more LGAs. For example, 148 LGAs were added to the scheme in 2012, 210 LGAs in 2013 and 77 LGAs in 2014. Thus, by 2015, there were 548 LGAs that have benefitted from the scheme (chapter Five). However, this development is contrary to the initial plan to concentrate the CGS to LGAs resources to the poorest 113 LGAs for intensity and impact. At the local level, as evident from the findings in chapter Six, state and local governments’ level political elites continued to provide the required counterpart funding and the available human resources that ensured the continuous implementation of the scheme. For example, although there were variations between the two study LGAs, both Guri and Mashi LGAs established functioning bank accounts dedicated to the scheme’s implementation. These local operations accounts were funded by the LGAs to support the administrative costs of implementing the scheme – such as the costs of arranging meetings, trainings, and field visits/monitoring, as well as stipend for personnel supporting the implementing of the scheme. As argued in chapter Six, while Guri LGA has shown strong and sustained continuity of effort,
Mashi LGA demonstrated rather weak and ‘one-shot’ effort (Brinkerhoff, 2000). Indeed, what explains the variations in this characteristic of commitment between the two study LGAs is largely attributed to the development coalition between political elites, bureaucrats and community members (Guri), the high turnover of bureaucrats involved in the implementation of the scheme (Mashi) and the extent of the state government’s involvement.

**Mobilisation of support for policy implementation**

Our findings showed that OSSAP-MDGs successfully mobilised political and bureaucratic elites, key development partners, the academia and the wider civil society in support of the scheme (chapters Five and Six). This is evident in the way the scheme received the approval of the federal legislators, the buy-in of state governors and LGA chairmen, support of the federal bureaucrats and the backing of development partner institutions. UNDP, DFID’s SPARC, and Earth Institute were sufficiently engaged in the implementation of the scheme – UNDP provided initial two-year funding for six ZTOs as part of its technical support. Additionally, UNDP served as the Co-Chair of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s Steering Committee, alongside OSSAP-MDGs. At the local level, both Guri and Mashi LGAs made significant progress in terms of internal mobilisation, where relevant heads of departments and junior employees were sensitised and motivated in support of the scheme. However, better successes were recorded in Guri in terms of mobilisation of support from the benefitting community members. As argued in chapter Six, the bureaucrats in Guri LGA made strong and effective efforts at getting the buy-in of the community members. Through the traditional leaders, the LGA leadership carried out initial sensitisation outreaches to communities within the LGA. Few sensitisations were carried out in Mashi LGA. Nevertheless, there was near absence of support and engagement with the civil society organisations in the implementation of the scheme in both study LGAs. This is partly due to the remote nature of both LGAs and civil society organisations’ preference to operate in the urban areas (WHO, 2010).

**Degree of analytical rigor**

In the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme, OSSAP-MDGs displayed considerable analytical rigor, specifically in the manner its bureaucrats employed the use of credible data to inform the mapping of the poorest LGAs and its overall analysis of the implementation context. The development of the scheme’s implementation guidelines to deal
with institutions and behaviours that either promote or impede pro-poor service delivery is a sign of analytical rigour (Brinkerhoff, 2000). OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucrats commissioned baseline studies and Needs Assessment exercises to produce ‘gap maps’ for all the participating LGAs and, were eventually used by LGAs for MDGs-based planning. On annual basis, the leadership of OSSAP-MDGs commissioned an ‘Independent Monitoring and Assessment Report’, which were carried out jointly by independent consultants and representatives of its development partners (e.g. SPARC DFID, UNDP). These findings suggest high level of analytical rigor on the part of OSSAP-MDGs. However, at the local level, while outcomes vary across the two study LGAs, both Guri and Mashi LGAs depended on OSSAP-MDGs’ led scientific needs assessment exercises to understanding better the scheme’s implementation context. This is largely because the scheme was driven by the national government and the need for uniformity in implementation (chapter Five). Nevertheless, both LGAs reportedly facilitated the smooth conduct of these exercises, providing the required local manpower and logistics. As argued in chapter Six, comparatively, Guri LGA ranked better in terms of its timely identification of problems and providing timely solutions. Similarly, the development of Guri LEEDS (a comprehensive medium-term plan) ensured that annual development plans are extracted from the LEEDS documents. This document is revised every four years.

Application of credible sanctions

This is where the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation made little progress. As noted, OSSAP-MDGs spelt out procedures to be followed by the LGAs and the implications for ‘non-compliance’ with the procedures (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014a). Our evidence showed that the requirement for submitting a MDGs-Compliant Local Development Plan, as a necessary pre-requisite for accessing the scheme’s funds was hardly complied with by most LGAs, and in our specific case of Mashi LGA (chapters Five and Six). Thus, there was seeming lack of credible sanctions from OSSAP-MDGs to the erring LGAs across the country. Similarly, this study could not find evidence of identifiable mechanism in place to reward either individual bureaucrats at OSSAP-MDGs or the participating LGAs for compliance with the laid down procedures. Thus, there is no evidence to show OSSAP-MDGs handled any deviant case creditably or incentivised positive behaviour during the implementation of the scheme. Not surprisingly, a recent ‘Independent Report’ commissioned by OSSAP-MDGs, identified lack of credible sanctions against deviant cases and recommended strict enforcement as ‘...there would also be need to involve government bodies
like EFCC and ICPC in this quest for accountability’ (OSSAP-MDGs, 2014c: 586). This suggests that weak application of credible sanctions, both negative and positive prevailed.

In the high quality implementation case of Guri LGA, the periodic ‘integrity’ pronouncements by the then LGA chairman encouraged bureaucrats to commit fully to the scheme’s implementation guidelines. Same demand for strict compliance was extended to contractors and service providers, while defaulting contractors were appropriate sanctioned (chapter Six). On the other hand, communities that have constantly conformed and reinforced the scheme’s implementation were rewarded with additional interventions. Nevertheless, positive contributions by staff were not singled out for reward, neither were sanctions meted against LGA officials for any possible negative actions in the scheme’s implementation. There was seeming absence of sanctions in Mashi LGA, largely due to the state government’s micro-management of the scheme and the high turnover of political and bureaucratic elites.

**Perceptions of political feedback**

Political elites along the scheme’s implementation chain acknowledged that successful delivery of CGS to LGAs interventions would increase their political gains (chapters Five and Six). This political feedback is understood to provide incentives for continued effort in policy implementation (Chopra, 2015). Our findings suggest that the desire by the second OSSAP-MDGs’ leadership to extend the scheme to cover all the 774 LGAs in the country was strongly shaped by this feedback. Together with continuity of effort, this indicator explains the impetus that characterised the continued spread of CGS to LGAs scheme’s resources in the build–up to the 2015 general elections. Indeed, our evidence showed that much of the DRG funds were directed hurriedly towards PDP controlled states, in a manner intended to secure electoral gains (chapter Five). On the other hand, political elites at the state and local governments considered the scheme as a ‘low hanging fruit’ to utilise in consolidating their local influence. As argued in chapter Six, several political elites used the branded CGS to LGAs scheme’s projects to campaign for re-election in 2011. Indeed, our findings showed that the scheme has impacted on elites’ commitment to pro-poor spending in both Guri and Mashi LGAs, although with varying degrees. Thus, this perception of positive feedback became the source of elite commitment to the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation.
9.2.2 Elite capture and accountability in service delivery

Has the CGS to LGAs scheme avoided elite capture of its resources? OSSAP-MDGs attempted to avoid elite capture by way of institutionalising safeguards in the design and implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme. The requirement to open a separate and protected bank account to warehouse the scheme’s funds and the condition for the LGAs to submit ‘bank guarantees’ to secure the 50% federal portion of the grant scheme against misuse, are clear indicators of OSSAP-MDGs’ commitment to institutionalise accountability and avoid elite capture of the DRG resources. While ‘dedicated’ bank accounts have been opened in both Guri and Mashi LGAs, this study’s findings revealed that OSSAP-MDGs did not enforce strict compliance with the provision of ‘bank guarantee’ by the participating LGAs. Similarly, as evident in the case of Mashi LGA, OSSAP-MDGs was unable to block elite capture - by way of patronage in the implementation of the scheme. Our evidence showed that state level political elites and associates of the then state governor benefitted immensely from procurement opportunities (chapter Six). Relatedly, the seeming absence of bottom-up forms of accountability in Mashi LGA ensured that contractors and service providers were hardly held to account. In the higher performing case of Guri LGA, it was the commitment of the then state governor to reform and to institute strong top-down accountability, the commitment of the LGA then chairman, combined with bottom-up forms of accountability through citizens that made the difference.

9.2.3 Strengthening capacity for pro-poor service delivery

Did the CGS to LGAs scheme strengthen capacity for pro-poor service delivery? This study’s findings showed how OSSAP-MDGs employed various strategies to strengthen both its bureaucratic capacity to implement the CGS to LGAs scheme and the capacity of the participating LGAs to deliver pro-poor services. As argued in chapter Seven, the idea of staffing the CGS Unit with technocrats from outside the core civil service, the partnership with UNDP, EI and SPARC-DFID, and the hiring of TAs and ZTOs, combined to raise capacity and facilitate the smooth launch of the scheme. Coupled with the availability and deployment of the DRG resources, the federal government via OSSAP-MDGs was able to enhance its organisational competence and to implement policies and programmes within the territory it claims to govern (Vom Hau, 2012; Fukuyama, 2013). Nevertheless, the weight of our evidence suggests that the change in OSSAP-MDGs’ bureaucratic leadership in 2011 and the increasing influence of patronage politics in the
management of the scheme undermined the initial bureaucratic capacity and autonomy (chapter Five).

Similarly, at the LGA level, it seemed the scheme made some gains in terms of reinforcing the organisational capacities of the participating LGAs to implement the scheme, and to deliver pro-poor services more broadly. Various high quality trainings and workshops were conducted for LGA bureaucrats involved in the implementation of the scheme, specifically the members of the LGA Technical Committee (chapter Seven). While OSSAP-MDGs provided the LGAs with additional development resources, the positioning of TAs in the participating LGAs only facilitated the scheme’s implementation processes, in terms of needs assessments, proposals development and technical evaluation at the LGA level. In both study LGAs, it is evident that TAs and indeed the LGA bureaucrats were limited in their discretion and barely autonomous from political interference. In terms of LGA capacity at the service delivery level – primary healthcare and education, the scheme made little or no impact (chapter Seven). In line with our discussions in chapters Three and Eight, this is largely due to the constitutional requirement that assigned responsibilities for the provision of primary healthcare and education to the LGAs, without the corresponding autonomy to recruit its manpower. Our findings showed pupil-teacher ratio remained high and higher than the national average in both Guri LGA (1:37) and Mashi LGA (1:72) between 2011 and 2015. Thus, there exist critical shortage of front line health workers and primary school teachers in most rural LGAs in Nigeria (also Awofeso, 2010). The attempt by OSSAP-MDGs to use federal agencies such as NPHCDA and NTI to address these challenges as part of the scheme’s implementation strategy failed to achieve the expected outcomes (chapter Seven). Additionally, local political elites’ prioritisation of physical or ‘visible’ interventions at the expense of capacity strengthening compounds this challenge to frontline pro-poor service delivery. However, the initiative by Guri LGA to use community level VHWs as trained ‘street level bureaucrats’ to help catalyse demand for primary health services helped to partly address the human resource challenges of primary healthcare in the LGA.
9.3 Lessons and policy implications

This thesis has shown the difficulties of improving service delivery for poor people in Nigeria. This section highlights key lessons and policy implications of the findings of the study. Firstly, political elites and to some extent the bureaucratic elites are more interested in delivering visible interventions at the expense of less visible, but crucially important capacity aspects at the service delivery level. Primary schools and healthcare facilities are constructed without the minimum package of human and organisational capacity to enable effective delivery of these essential pro-poor services. The provision of services despite being expanded does not seem adequate as many facilities lacked essential materials and staffing. Thus, the overall quantity and quality of services provided in poor/rural areas remain very low. This preference is underpinned by the competitive clientelist political settlement in Nigeria, which seems to incentivise political elites to deliver short-term visible gains to secure the next electoral victory. It also provides a means of dispensing patronage by the award of construction contracts to clients. The assumption that democratic processes will strengthen the quality of service delivery through enhanced accountability and transparency must be challenged. An implication of these findings is that future interventions should prioritise raising capacity at the service delivery level, and to identify and nurture ‘pockets of bureaucratic excellence’.

Secondly, continuity of effort by policy actors is crucial in sustaining development gains. Change in leadership that is not accompanied by continuing effort to sustain policy actions can affect momentum and reverse some gains made in the implementation of policies and programmes of governments at all levels. Thus, high turnover of key policy actors should as much as possible be avoided. Thirdly, it is evident the CGS to LGAs scheme suffered from weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at the national and local levels. Development implementers should strengthen M&E during the implementation cycle, instead of waiting to conduct an ‘ex-post’ evaluation. Building effective development coalitions between elites and non-elites is an effective means of successful implementation of pro-poor programmes at the local level. This has implications for instituting and shaping top-down and bottom up forms of accountability that are mutually reinforcing and often more effective. In the absence or presence of weak top-down sanctions in the implementation of programmes, social forms of accountability are generally ineffective. Relatedly, lack of genuine ownership of development projects by the benefitting communities
threatens the sustainability of such projects and programmes, and as such efforts should be made to get the ‘buy-in’ of benefitting communities from inception. Thus, progressive local level development coalitions should be identified and strengthened to sustain reforms.

Fourthly, bureaucratic capacity and the associated autonomy along the implementation chain are essential for successful policy implementation. There is need to allow appropriate autonomy to LGA bureaucrats in their decision making, if meaningful progress in service delivery is to be achieved. Crucially, within the wider decentralisation in Nigeria, pro-poor service delivery is seriously constrained due to the lack of local government’s financial autonomy. The continued control and micro-management of the LGAs by the state governments means the LGAs are unable to effectively deliver on their constitutional responsibilities of providing basic services to the citizens. Finally, in the absence of sufficient development resources, policy actors should aim towards intensification of pro-poor investments rather than spreading resources thinly in a way that undermines the potential development impact of the interventions. It is more useful to concentrate resources where they will produce the greatest impact.

9.4 Suggestions for further research

The analytical fields of elite commitment and state capacity have received significant attention from scholars and practitioners (Brinkerhoff, 2000; McCourt, 2003; Vom Hau, 2012; Fukuyama, 2013). However, much of this scholarship relates to national level examination, and few studies have operationalised these concepts at the sub-national level - e.g. commitment (Lavers, 2016; Chopra, 2015) and state capacity (Bukenya, 2012). This study extends our understanding of elite commitment and state capacity at sub-national level. Thus, conceptually, further research is needed to investigate the explanatory power of these related concepts at the sub-national level. The central arguments put forward in this thesis are based on the examination of Nigeria’s CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation along the policy chain, while focusing on two case study LGAs for detailed investigation. There is need for further research to ascertain the extent to which such arguments hold true across the country and in comparable contexts in sub-Saharan Africa.
As various approaches to development governance are increasingly implemented across developing countries, future research could usefully take a comparative form, such as a comparative examination of the Nigerian experience with that of Ghana or Uganda or both. The common pattern of national governments promising foreign agencies and institutions that they will target resources on the poorest, and then spreading resources across all constituencies, is of interest. Similarly, further evidenced-based research is needed to identify how local level bureaucrats in developing countries can best strengthen service delivery in ways that respond more effectively and equitably to the needs of poor citizens. At the local level and specific to this study, for example, in the more successful case of Guri LGA, further research will be useful to investigate the sustainability of the ‘agency’ demonstrated by the poor citizens in the implementation of the scheme. For instance, do community members continue to hold service providers accountable beyond the context of the CGS to LGAs scheme’s implementation, and even more importantly in the absence of top-down accountability and complementary agency from local political elites?

In rounding-off, this study showed that even in difficult governance contexts, development interventions can be designed and implemented in a manner that is both technically adequate and politically savvy to achieve more development gains. However, such approaches can only be sustained through continued commitment of political and bureaucratic elites along the implementation chain.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Key informant interview (KII) guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Level Elites/Officials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please can you explain to me how you become involved with the CGS to LGAs scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What specific role did you play?</td>
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<td>3. What were and are the key issues of concern to you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How do beneficiaries get involved with the CGS to LGAs scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Which sector(s) is/are top priorities for the LGA before the CGS to LGAs? Can you shade lights on why this is priority and whether they receive considerable budgetary allocation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. In terms of resource allocation to the key sectors (e.g. health, education and water and sanitation), has anything changed following the implementation of the CGS to LGAs scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Kindly describe how the LGA used to carry out procurement activities?</td>
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<td>8. How is the procurement done since the implementation of the CGS to LGAs?</td>
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<td>9. Please describe how the financial transactions were carried out before the scheme? Has anything changed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. In terms of resource allocation, what kind of relationships existed between federal, state and local governments over the last 5 OR 6 years?</td>
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<td>11. Who do you consider having considerable influence over resource allocation at the LGA level?</td>
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<td>12. What have been the key administrative procedures in the LGA? Has anything changed with the CGS implementation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. To what extent do the LGA officials have considerable autonomy in taking initiative and decision making before the CGS? If no, has anything changed with the CGS?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. What is your view on the quantity and quality of health workers/teachers/technicians at the LGA before the CGS? Has anything changed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Can you describe to me how the LGA recruit its employees? Has anything changed with the CGS implementation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. What type of support do the LGA receive from federal or state government in the area of human capacity?</td>
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<tr>
<th>National Level Elites/Officials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please tell me about the CGS to LGAs scheme and how you become involved with the scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What are the key issues that are of concern to you with respect to the implementation of the scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Would you say the scheme has been interfered with?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What is your overall assessment of the CGS to LGAs scheme?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there anybody you think I should talk to that is knowledgeable on the CGS to LGA implementation for the purpose of this research?</td>
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Appendix 2: Focus group discussion (FGD) guide

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<tr>
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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Please discuss the main development priorities of the communities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Describe how decisions are taken or arrived at in pursuance of these priorities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Who do the community members see as having influence with respect to their collective decision making?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How do the community members get public services (health, education and water and sanitation) delivered by the LGA and how has their experience been?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How do they hold their leaders/representatives at all levels accountable?</td>
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The CGS to LGAs Scheme

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<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What do we understand or know about the CGS to LGAs scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What specific development projects were undertaken in the communities under the scheme?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>How do community members and beneficiaries get involved in the planning and implementation of the CGS to LGAs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What were and are the key issues of concern to them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What is their overall assessment of the CGS to LGAs scheme?</td>
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</table>
Appendix 3: University of Manchester’s Ethical Approval

Ref: ethics/021215
Mr. Bala Yunusa Yusuf
School of Environment, Education and Development

Date December 22, 2015

Dear Mr. Yusuf

Study title: The Politics of Pro-poor Service Delivery in Nigeria: An Analysis of the Conditional Grant Scheme, 15499

Research Ethics Committee [3]

I write to thank you for coming to meet the Committee on the 2nd December 2015. I am pleased to confirm a favourable ethical opinion for the above research on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation as submitted and approved by the Committee.

This approval is effective for a period of five years. If the project continues beyond that period an application for amendment must be submitted for review. Likewise, any proposed changes to the way the research is conducted must be approved via the amendment process (see below). Failure to do so could invalidate the insurance and constitute research misconduct.

You are reminded that, in accordance with University policy, any data carrying personal identifiers must be encrypted when not held on a secure university computer or kept securely as a hard copy in a location which is accessible only to those involved with the research.

Reporting Requirements:

You are required to report to us the following:

1. Amendments
2. Breaches and adverse events
3. Notification of Progress/End of the Study

Feedback

It is our aim to provide a timely and efficient service that ensures transparent, professional and proportionate ethical review of research with consistent outcomes, which is supported by clear, accessible guidance and training for applicants and committees. In order to assist us with our aim, we would be grateful if you would give your view of the service that you have received from us by completing a feedback sheet https://survey.manchester.ac.uk/pssweb/index.php/153715/lang-en

We hope the research goes well.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Mr. Adrian Jarvis
Secretary to University Research Ethics Committee
Appendix 4: Terms of Reference for CGS to LGAs Technical Assistants (TAs)

a. To assist the Local Government in setting up key structures for the Conditional Grants Scheme to Local Government in line with the Addendum to the CGS Implementation Manual – Local Government Operational Procedures;
b. To coordinate the functions of the CGS to Local Government Technical Team;
c. To liaise with the Secretary of the Local Government to ensure that the CGS to Local Government Planning Committee meets regularly to discharge their functions in line with the Addendum to the CGS Implementation Manual – Local Government Operational Procedures;
d. To identify human resource needs through a capacity assessment within the institutions of Local Government for effective planning and implementation of MDGs-related activities;
e. To assist the Local Government in applying a sector-by-sector needs assessment for the achievement of the MDGs using instruments and tools provided;
f. To facilitate the identification and design of effective interventions to meet Local Government needs. This will draw from a menu of interventions to be determined in agreement with States and Local Government;
g. To coordinate the preparation of a costed Local Government integrated development plan mainstreaming MDGs;
h. To advise on the institution and development of timely monitoring activities by the Local Government;
i. Reporting to the designated Zonal Technical Officer (ZTO) on the activities and progress of implementation of CGS projects within the Local Government and the status of planning and monitoring tools within the Local Government;
j. Liaison with other Local Governments and relevant bodies at the State level through existing mechanisms in order to share lessons and ensure the consistency of interventions;
k. To interpret and communicate the outcomes of the baseline survey and needs assessment of the Local Government to Local Government institutions;
l. To undertake and promote appropriate and targeted capacity building for staff of the Local Government in response to needs and/or to facilitate/organize appropriate technical training and capacity building where needed;
m. To provide additional technical support and advice to Local Government institutions in relation to MDGs processes, interventions and outcomes as and when required;
n. Engagement with a number of regional and global networks to connect Local Government to the information and expertise of key partners including the UN, DFID, World Bank, Earth Institute and other partners;
o. To initiate and convene workshops with key stakeholders at the Local Government level to address emerging issues and challenges

Source: OSSAP-MDGs (2014a)
Appendix 5: Terms of Reference for CGS to LGAs Zonal Technical Officers (ZTOs)

a. To provide technical support to the TAs within the Zone in identifying human resource needs within the institutions of participating Local Government for effective planning and implementation of MDGs-related activities;
b. To provide technical support to the TAs in applying a sector-by-sector needs assessment in the participating Local Government within the Zone for the achievement of the MDGs using instruments and tools provided;
c. To provide technical support to the TAs within the Zone in the identification and design of effective interventions to meet participating LGs needs. This will draw from a menu of interventions to be determined in agreement with States and LGAs;
d. To ensure that States and participating LGs within the Zone prepare and forward monthly, quarterly, yearly and other reports on a timely basis to OSSAP-MDGs and the Office of the Zonal Technical Assistant;
e. Consolidating reports of the Technical Assistants on the activities, progress and status of planning, implementation and monitoring of CGS in participating LGAs within the zone;
f. Liaison with states, Local Governments and relevant bodies at the State and LG levels through existing mechanisms in order to share lessons and ensure the consistency of interventions;
g. Organise monthly (rotating) meetings of State MDGs/CGS Focal Persons and TAs within the Zone;
h. Coordinate and promote appropriate and targeted capacity building for staff of the Local Government within the zone in response to needs, or to facilitate/organize appropriate technical training and capacity building where needed;
i. Engagement with a number of regional and global networks to connect Local Governments to the information and expertise of key partners including the UN, World Bank, DFID and Earth Institute;
j. Initiate and convene workshops with key stakeholders at the Zonal level to address emerging issues and challenges.

Source: OSSAP-MDGs (2014a)
Appendix 6: Profiles of the two Senior Special Assistants to the President on MDGs (2005 – 2015).

Appendix 6.1: Profile of SSAP-MDGs (2005 – 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amina J. Mohammed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed assumed office as the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations in March 2007. She was Minister of Environment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from November 2015 to December 2016, where she steered the country’s efforts on climate action, protecting the natural environment and conserving resources for sustainable development.

Prior to this, she served as Special Adviser to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Post-2015 Development Planning, where she was instrumental in bringing about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Before joining the UN, Ms. Mohammed worked for three successive administrations in Nigeria, serving as Special Advisor on the Millennium Development Goals, providing advice on issues including poverty, public sector reform and sustainable development, and coordinating programmes worth $1 billion annually for MDG-related interventions.

She is also an Adjunct Professor in Development Practice at Columbia University, and serves on numerous international advisory boards and panels, including the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, the Global Development Program of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the African Women’s Millennium Initiative, Girl Effect, 2016 African Union Reform and the ActionAid International Right to Education Project.

Ms. Mohammed began her 35-year career in the private sector with architects and engineers responsible for the project management of health, education and public-sector buildings.

Born in 1961, and educated in Nigeria and the UK, Ms. Mohammed is married with six children.

Appendix 6.2: Profile of SSAP-MDGs (2011 – 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Precious K. Gbeneol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Precious Gbeneol is Consultant family physician and public administrator, appointed as Senior Special Assistant on Millennium Development Goals to the Nigeria President on September 2011. She was Secretary of Health in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja from 2009 to 2011.

Prior to that, Dr. Gbeneol was a Deputy Director of Medical Services at the Health Services Department of the Rivers State University of Education. She holds a masters’ Degree in Public Health from the University of Liverpool in 2011. She also had Leadership Training Course for Chief Executive Officers from the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston in 2011.

Born on the 28th August 1966, she had her Primary and Secondary Education in Rivers State and was admitted to the University of Port- Harcourt to study Medicine in 1984. She decided to complete a B.Sc. in Pharmacology 1988, before proceeding to complete her medical degree in 1991. She did her houseman ship at the University of Port-Harcourt Teaching hospital from 1991-1992. Dr. Precious Gbeneol did her compulsory National Youth Service at Ringim Local Government Area of Jigawa State, North-West Nigeria between 1992 and 1993. She worked with the Jigawa State Government as a Medical Officer from 1993-1994, worked with Ministry of health, Kaduna State from 1994-2000, from where she resigned as Senior Medical Officer. She enrolled for her Post Graduate Residency Training at the University of Port-Harcourt teaching Hospital in 2001 and completed her Post Graduate Training in 2007 in the same institution, where she received the Fellowship of West African College of Physicians and Fellowship of National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria.

Source: [www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org)
Appendix 7: Terms of Reference for Village Health Workers (VHWs) in Guri LGA

I. To conduct door-to-door sensitisation of women of reproductive age (15 – 49 years) in the communities on the need to access health services at the nearest health posts.

II. To identify and refer all pregnant women in the communities to the nearest health clinic and provide follow up services as required.

III. To report daily to the relevant health post Officer-in-Charge for appropriate briefing and to address any major concerns.

IV. To prepare and forward monthly report on referrals and follow-ups

Source: Guri LGA (2016)
Appendix 8: List of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Designation and Institution</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Head, CGS Unit (2007-2011), OSSAP-MDGs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2  Technical Assistant to the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (2007-2011), OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Team Leader, CGS State Track (2009 – 2011), OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Head, CGS Unit (2014 – 2016), OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Regional Director, MDG Centre, West and Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Acting National Programme Manager, DFID SPARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Senior Technical Officer (Federal), DFID SPARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Team Leader, Economic Governance, UNDP Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  ZTO North-West (2010-2014), OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ZTO North-West (2014-2016), OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Director, Office of the Governor on MDGs</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Principal Budget Officer, Budget Office of the Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Former Senator and Member of the Senate Committee on MDGs, National Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Technical Assistant, OSSAP-MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Former Chairman, Guri LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Secretary, Guri LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Director Planning, Research and Statistics, Guri LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Director of Personnel Management, Guri LGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Local Education Secretary, Guri LGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Primary Healthcare, Guri LGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Community Leader, Guri LGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Village Health Worker, Guri LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Technical Assistant, Mashi LGA (2011-2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Technical Assistant, Mashi LGA (2013-2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Former LGA Chairman and Special Advisor to the State Governor</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Secretary, Mashi LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Council Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Primary Healthcare Coordinator, Mashi LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Local Education Secretary, Mashi LGA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Water and Sanitation Coordinator, Mashi LGA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Actual Names of Interviewees were deliberately withheld to ensure full anonymity of respondents.
# Appendix 9: List of focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date of FGD</th>
<th>FGD Village/Community Name</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GURI LGA</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27/02/2016</td>
<td>Guri FGD</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27/02/2016</td>
<td>Margadu FGD</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28/02/2016</td>
<td>Gagiya FGD</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28/02/2016</td>
<td>Lafiya FGD</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>01/03/2016</td>
<td>Matara Babba FGD</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MASHI LGA</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24/03/2016</td>
<td>Bamle FGD</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24/03/2016</td>
<td>Baude FGD</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>25/03/2016</td>
<td>Killago FGD</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>25/03/2016</td>
<td>Makau FGD</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>26/03/2016</td>
<td>Marke FGD</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>26/03/2016</td>
<td>Zabaro FGD</td>
<td>9</td>
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