Doctoral Thesis: 'Donor Efforts to Support Public Sector Reform and the 'Second Orthodoxy' in Mozambique and Uganda'

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Abstract

Responding to the failures of the 'good governance' agenda in the post-Cold War period, development scholars and practitioners have been advancing approaches that might better contribute to establishing stronger institutions in Africa. Sometimes referred to as the 'second orthodoxy' in donor practice, these models aim to take the politics of African contexts seriously and adapt to the realities of the institutional contexts in which they are applied. Despite widespread acceptance of the need for more 'politically sensitive' development practice, there remain questions about how such models work in practice and whether they lead to more effective development programming. For instance, by forwarding an approach that works 'with the grain' of prevailing political economies, do such models risk simply reinforcing the status quo in terms of how power and resources are distributed? This thesis examines the application of 'second orthodoxy' methods in efforts to support public sector reform in two UKAid-funded development programmes. The first is a public financial management technical assistance programme in Uganda: the Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI). The second is an economic empowerment programme for young urban women in Mozambique (MUVA); the research focuses on its efforts to promote the adoption of gender policy in the education and social protection sectors. Through qualitative within-case analysis, the research seeks to gain a clearer picture of how the 'second orthodoxy' is being applied in practice, and both the intended and unintended effects it produces in aid programmes.

The findings of this thesis demonstrate the potential of second orthodoxy practices that are more sensitive to the realities of local contexts. In the case of the MUVA programme, the thesis also demonstrates that the pull towards standardisation within the aid bureaucracy can come into tension with the requirement to be context-sensitive and responsive. Ultimately, however, it is local political realities themselves that stand as the main enabler of, or barrier to, public sector reform. The thesis demonstrates, conceptually and empirically, that the successful application of second orthodoxy practices is dependent on a conducive political environment already being in place. When such conditions are not favourable, the thesis points towards the risks and challenges associated with practices that involve aligning with local contextual realities. In an evolving field of practice, the findings indicate that both the contextual risks and conditions for success would benefit from further attention in future practice development and research on the second orthodoxy.

Introduction

The first orthodoxy: Policy without politics in the 'good governance' agenda

Politics and development have always been intricately connected in foreign aid to Africa. But the relationship they share has been far from straightforward. How, and the extent to which, foreign donors should account for politics in their theories of change and modes of engagement in aid-receiving states has been continually contested and redefined. In the early decades of development assistance to Africa, the pursuit of political reform remained of secondary importance to establishing liberal economic systems under structural adjustment, and was ultimately overridden by the need to maintain Cold War allegiances (Carothers & de Gramont, 2013). The 1990s, however, hailed an era of (at least ostensible) concern for 'good governance'. Freed from the constraints of Cold War politics and underpinned by the insights of new institutional economics, the World Bank declared in 1989 that 'underlying the litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of governance' (World Bank, 1989: 6).

A subsequent wave of donor-induced reforms swept across the continent in promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. But widespread failure of democratic reform and structural adjustment packages to generate socio-economic recovery or deter authoritarianism in Africa led critics to argue that they were designed 'with more respect for free market ideology than for the realities of African political economies' (Porteous, 2008: 17). With time, observers began to characterise donor-supported institutional change in Africa as a 'façade' (Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Booth, 2015). The correct rules, regulations and laws may have been put in place, but they did not function, at least not as they were intended to. The politics and economics of aid receiving countries could not be interpreted simply as 'immature' (Booth, 2015: 18) versions of their counterparts in the West, as the modernising

undercurrents of the ‘good governance’ agenda had assumed. Rather, they had their own institutional logics and character.

In the policy-orientated research of development studies, academics have interpreted the so-called ‘façade’ of reform as a ‘capability trap’. Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock use the ‘capability trap’ theory to explain how aid receiving countries are able to engage in ‘the logics of “development” and yet fail to acquire capability’ (2013: 2). They identify a ‘technique of failure’ called ‘isomorphic mimicry’, whereby the adoption of the forms of functional states and institutions ‘camouflages a persistent lack of function’ (Andrews et al, 2013: 2). But they do not attribute ‘neopatrimonial’ tendencies to this lack of function; rather, they look to the practice of aid itself. They point towards two problematic foreign aid tendencies. The first is the importing of blueprint models that do not adequately adapt and respond to specific country contexts. The second is what they call ‘premature load bearing’, whereby aid agencies place unrealistic expectations on the administrative capacities of aid-receiving institutions.

Elsewhere, the ‘good governance’ agenda has been widely critiqued for its limited understanding of how politics shapes development (Hickey, 2013b) and for its correspondingly technocratic approach to both political and economic reform (Carothers, 1997). Such critiques pivot around a central contention that donors have ‘misunderstood’ politics in their attempts to support governance in Africa (Szetfel, 1998). They have ‘depoliticised’ the process of reform by failing to acknowledge how key questions of structure and agency determine institutional change at any given point in a country’s history. From anti-corruption programmes to democracy assistance, donors have tended to focus on the solution or end point, rather than the underlying causes and processes that affect political

and economic reform. This has led them to provide templates and models, predominantly based on Western institutions, rather than trying to align their assistance to the local socio-political realities of aid-receiving African states.

In 1999, Thomas Carothers critiqued the 'missing link of power' in early governance programming. He argued that aid meant to reshape institutions was too often disconnected from the societies in which they are rooted. Moreover, aid agencies failed to accept the 'truth that politics involves harshly competing interests, bitter power struggles and fundamentally conflicting values' (1999: 101). Such concessions were accompanied in the development literature with assertions that the 'persistence of poor policy and dysfunctional institutions' was put down, not to a lack of knowledge and finance, but to the actions of those 'who gain from existing arrangements and resist change' (Leftwich, 2011; Laws & Marquette 2018: 2). On this basis, a central element of the critiques raised against the 'good governance' agenda has been its failure to account for the role of politics in processes of institutional change and development more broadly. According to Thomas Carothers and Diane de Gramont, the exclusion of politics from development has been connected to the following six problems in foreign aid:

1) Misunderstanding the causes of developmental problems (understanding them in predominantly technical terms);
2) Failing to pay attention to or to strengthen domestic institutional capacity to carry out development programs;
3) Trying to insert solutions conceived from the outside that lack domestic buy-in while failing to identify and thus help facilitate local impetus for change;
4) Overlooking how technocratically rational institutional reforms may threaten powerful domestic political interests and thus go nowhere;
5) Not anticipating unintended harmful political consequences of socioeconomic reform efforts;
6) Ignoring the broader aspirations of citizens beyond economic success, such as popular desires for political dignity and empowerment, leading to an aid effort that helps a country achieve certain economic changes but neglects profound underlying tensions on other, more political, matters (2013: 4-5).

A central critique raised against the development sector's engagement with aid-recipient institutions has therefore been its tendency to frame development as a technocratic administrative process, rather than a context-dependent, political one. In the context of Uganda, Awortwi and Helmsing (2014) have argued that until international donors understand the political economy of institutional reform, 'they will always be bewildered not only by the mismatch between policy objectives and outcomes but also by many unspoken rationales for implementing decentralization reforms' (2014: 766). Such interpretations of aid-supported development failures have led to what has been termed the 'political turn' (Dasandi & Erez, 2019: 3) in development practice, which is the subject of this thesis.

The 'second orthodoxy': 'politically smart, locally led' aid

Responding to the failures of the good governance agenda in the post-Cold War period, development scholars and practitioners have been advancing approaches that might better contribute to establishing stronger institutions in Africa. Increasingly, success in promoting developmental change has been claimed to be dependent on a 'deep understanding of and proactive engagement with local political and power relations' (Laws and Marquette, 2018: 2). Carothers and de Gramont, for instance, conclude in their assessment of the role of politics in development, that, '[t]o be effective in helping advance development, aid actors need to operate from a genuine understanding of the political realities of the local context, engage with a diverse array of relevant actors both inside and outside the government, and insert aid strategically and subtly as a facilitating element in local processes of change' (2013: 10-11). In more recent years, development scholars and policy researchers have placed greater emphasis on approaches that might enable donors to do this. Sometimes referred to as the 'second orthodoxy' (Teskey, 2017) in donor practice, these models aim to

take the politics of aid-receiving contexts seriously and adapt to the realities of the institutional landscapes in which they are applied.

Methods like political economy analysis (DFID, 2009; Hudson, 2016; McCulloch et al, 2017) have been explored as an approach to embedding donor assistance in the local context. However, recognising that political analysis alone is unlikely to move aid actors closer to 'politically smart' (Booth & Unsworth, 2014) practice, a community of policy researchers and development practitioners have been working together to develop models for not just 'thinking' but also *'working* politically'. Members of the 'thinking and working politically' (TWP) community of practice note that there is 'no single agreed definition, framework or set of formal tools for TWP' (Laws and Marquette, 2018: 2), but they are able to propose 'three key principles for more politically-sensitive ways of working':

- Strong political analysis, insight and understanding
- A detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context
- Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation (Ibid.)

In the TWP literature, 'thinking politically' is defined as 'understanding the formal and informal institutional contexts within which change and development occurs' (Hudson & Leftwich 2014; Laws & Marquette 2018: 3). Research from the Development Leadership Programme (DLP), influential to the development of TWP principles and approaches, distinguishes 'thinking' from 'working' politically in the following terms:

> Development outcomes cannot be achieved by technical solutions alone. This means that actors – politicians, bureaucrats, civil society, donors and so on – need to be able to better understand the local context ('thinking politically') in order to support the processes that enable local actors to bring about sustainable developmental change ('working politically'). Working politically is sometimes misunderstood as being about direct engagement with political actors and organisations, perhaps even interfering with a sovereign state's politics, but it is more nuanced than that. It means supporting, brokering, facilitating and aiding the emergence and practices of reform leaderships, organisations, networks and coalitions (Developmental Leadership Programme, 2018: 24-25).

It is important to note, therefore, that second orthodoxy approaches like TWP do not push practitioners to re-consider the goals or intended outcomes of development towards understanding them in more political terms. Rather, it is about recognising that the *process* of development is political. This is seen in following formulation of Carothers and De Gramont, who describe 'politically smart' aid as:

> less about doing *more* things – entering more political areas, working on demand-side efforts – than about doing things *differently*. It is about recognizing that developmental change at every step, at every level, is an inherently political process. The key to more effective assistance is to conceive of aid interventions as integral parts of productive sociopolitical processes that produce positive developmental change. In other words, politics is an approach rather than a sector' (2013: 159-160, emphasis in original).

As can be seen from both of these formulations, there is a preference in the second orthodoxy to see politics as process, over politics as outcome. Whilst underlying theory is able to point towards 'positive developmental change', it does not push practitioners to (re)define the parameters of what 'positive' development looks like. In fact, as Carothers and de Gramont outline, there is an orientation within 'politically smart' practice towards rejecting the pursuit of 'preset' political goals, in favour of outcomes that align with local socio-political realities. They note that, for some, 'using more political methods actually means questioning some of the most common political goals' (2013: 12). Indeed, the language of 'best fit', 'good enough' governance (Grindle, 2007; Yanguas, 2017) commonly associated with the second orthodoxy appears to reject normative conceptions of 'good governance' in favour of outcomes that align with local conditions. This is based on the critique that the ideals promoted through the agenda – including democracy, human rights and free markets – were underwritten by an assumption that African states could simply adopt Western-style liberal governance arrangements. In response, a discourse has arisen within debates influencing new aid models that donors should be more 'realistic' and pragmatic about their expectations.

The discourse of ‘best fit’, ‘good enough governance’ (Grindle, 2007; Yanguas, 2017) is therefore aligned with what the second orthodoxy views as the goal of a donor governance programme. Merilee Grindle defines ‘good enough governance’ as the ‘the minimal conditions of governance necessary to allow political and economic development to occur’. She states:

> Good enough governance, as a concept, suggests that not all governance deficits need to (or can) be tackled at once, and that institution- and capacity-building are products of time; governance achievements can also be reversed. Good enough governance means that interventions thought to contribute to the ends of economic and political development need to be questioned, prioritised, and made relevant to the conditions of individual countries (Grindle, 2007: 554).

Proposals for ‘good enough’ governance are associated with arguments for trade-offs between liberal, democratic principles, on the one hand, and growth on the other. Indeed, an important feature of the intellectual environment that has given rise to ‘politically smart’ models is comparative studies that have sought to identify African governance typologies that promote economic growth and development, while rejecting the tenets of liberal statebuilding embodied in the good governance agenda. For instance, seeing Rwanda as a primary example, Tim Kelsall proposes a form of ‘developmental patrimonialism’ (2013a), whereby rents become centralised and reinvested in the long-term development goals of strong and visionary leaders. This work formed part of the Africa Power and Politics consortium, which argued for ‘getting seriously engaged with country realities’ by opening up the ‘black box’ of ‘elite incentives’ (Booth, 2012a: 13-14). Being ‘politically smart’, therefore, may involve recognising that the corrupt, rent-seeking behaviour of African leaders is not always geared towards personal accumulation. Dasandi and Erez have gone so far as to note of the ‘political turn’ that: ‘proponents of TWP tend to take a favourable view of developmental regimes, even if they exhibit authoritarian characteristics or are involved in rights abuses’ (2019: 4).

Similarly, in the TWP literature, 'working politically' is defined as a mode of engagement that promotes 'tailoring and adapting development assistance to national and sub-national conditions' (Laws & Marquette 2018: 3). TWP advocates recognise that change is an inherently political process in that 'it involves the renegotiation of power and resources' (Ibid: 5) and therefore produces both winners and losers. Second orthodoxy scholars argue, on this basis, that development programmes need to understand and respond to the 'interests, motivations and incentives' that drive the behaviour of those who have a stake in the process (Laws & Marquette 2018: 5). In terms of donor governance practice and programming, 'good enough' governance connects to discourse around working 'with the grain' (Kelsall, 2008; Levy, 2014) of the local context. As well as political understanding, it involves avoiding comprehensive overhauls in government systems; instead, fostering and working with 'islands of effectiveness' and using targeted, problem-solving approaches. Reflecting this approach, Brian Levy argues that 'transformation occurs not in one fell swoop, but as the cumulative consequence of many initiatives, large and small, each involving ongoing experimentation, adaptation and learning' (2013: 620).

TWP emphasises local politics and leadership in this process by 'enlisting partners, building coalitions, and establishing working alliances amidst the interplay of diverse political interests' (Laws & Marquette 2018: 3). As well as understanding the opportunities and barriers for reform through political analysis, 'politically smart' practice therefore involves 'influencing and stakeholder management skills', for external actors 'to see themselves as political agents, rather than simply providers of funding and technical assistance' (Ibid). These are what Booth and Unsworth call 'political skills', which are different from political knowledge in the sense that they might be harder to acquire for external actors; they note:

> Donors or their partners need political skills. That is, they must be not just well-informed but clever operators, with the capacity to work with the politics or around them according to what works best in the context. Political skills may be harder to acquire than political knowledge. In the case of donor staff, the most important political skills may be those involved in devising funding and management arrangements for third parties who are more politically informed and astute than outsiders can ever be (2014: 1).

Indeed, political skills are where 'politically smart' practice under the second orthodoxy meets its accompanying prescriptions for 'locally led' practice. Booth argues that domestic actors will usually have the 'tacit political knowledge and access to networks that support politically astute ways of working'. Donors, by contrast, need to make 'deliberate efforts to be politically informed and to prioritise local leadership', if they are to influence policy as 'outsiders' (Booth and Unsworth, 2014: 4). In terms of the role of external actors, donors and their implementing partners, this implies a 'brokering' or 'facilitating' role, rather than a leadership one. As Booth and Unsworth note, this can be in the form of support to locally embedded 'third parties' as implementing partners. For reforms to be successful, according to second orthodoxy thinking, they must be 'locally negotiated and delivered':

> locals (broadly defined) are more likely than outsiders to have the motivation, credibility, knowledge and networks to mobilise support, leverage relationships and seize opportunities in ways that qualify as 'politically astute'. Deliberation and negotiation in local networks and organisations are essential in reaching an adequate understanding of complex development problems, and in finding ways of addressing them that are practical, appropriate and sustainable (2014: 4).

In a related second orthodoxy model, researchers at the Harvard Kennedy School have responded to the failures of the good governance agenda with 'doing development differently', based on a model that they have named 'problem driven iterative adaptation' (PDIA) (Andrews et al, 2012). Both TWP and PDIA aim to move donors towards more adaptive and context-driven models, as opposed to 'best practice' technical solutions, when supporting institutional change. The principles of PDIA are summarised below.

- Rather than enforcing externally designed "best practice" solutions, PDIA is driven by problems identified and defined by the 'local' (aid receiving) context and its actors;
- PDIA aims to cultivate an 'authorising environment' that allows for experimentation and risk taking, rather than promoting the neat execution of narrowly defined and linear plans;
- As opposed to waiting for the outcomes of *ex-post* final evaluations, PDIA approaches are built around 'tight feedback loops', which promote 'rapid experiential learning';
- Finally, its success relies on the ability to build and broker relationships with a broad range of 'local' actors, as opposed to working through 'a narrow set of external experts promoting the top-down diffusion of innovation' (Andrews et al, 2012).

PDIA aligns clearly with TWP in its rejection of the 'conventional approach to development programmes', where 'a linear theory of change is established at the outset, based on institutional best practice, with inputs delivered in accordance' (Laws & Marquette, 2018: 2). Due to 'contextual variations and shifting political interests' (Ibid) both TWP and PDIA propose that aid programmes are more likely to be effective if they adapt through 'experimentation' and 'risk taking'. They also both respond to the need for more 'locally led' aid by establishing or aligning technical assistance with the appropriate 'authorising environment' within the local institutional context.

It is important to make a distinction, however, between the two. PDIA is a more highly structured model; it is accompanied by its own toolkit (Samji et al, 2018) and training course. Whilst there are similar courses for political economy analysis (Booth et al, 2012), the TWP model considers itself to be a broader set of principles that does not propose a specific methodology. Leading thinkers in the TWP community of practice argue that it is based on the principle that 'politics is everywhere'[1]. Indeed, probably the most important distinction

[1] Heather Marquette, July 2019, 'What we're missing by not getting our TWP (Thinking and Working Politically) alphabet straight', at: https://heathermarquette.com/2019/07/15/what-were-missing-by-not-getting-our-twp-thinking-working-politically-alphabet-straight/ (accessed 14 January 2022)

between the two approaches, it is the extent to which, and how, they elevate the role of politics in an intervention's success or otherwise. As Rajesh Venugopal demonstrates in his paper on narratives of development failure, the 'existence of different social collectives, disciplinary traditions, and moral frames of reference within the development field means that there are different constructions of failure that are possible' (2018: 5). This is no less the case in the narratives that underpin the second orthodoxy aid paradigm. Differing accounts of failure lead to variation in the responses and solutions proposed.

The PDIA model treats politics as central to the plot but largely exogenous: like an unknown character in a murder mystery, whose path one will inevitably cross by 'crawling the design space' (Andrews et al, 2017: 194).[2] In developing their theory of the 'capability trap', Andrews, Pritchett, and Woolcock, are not concerned with explaining the historical, political or social reasons *why* the 'good governance' agenda has failed to bring about substantive institutional change in aid-receiving contexts. They argue that this would require an analysis that is 'unique to each country' (2012: 1). Rather, they look to establish a broader narrative that outlines the specific 'techniques of failure', which they view as arising from problematic aspects of development practice. One is the importing of blueprint models that do not adequately adapt and respond to specific country contexts. The second is what they call 'premature load bearing', whereby aid agencies place unrealistic expectations on the administrative capacities of aid-receiving institutions. By contending to start with a more realistic appreciation of such institutions, the PDIA principles have been designed as a practical approach to overcome the 'capability trap'.

Unlike TWP, however, institutional capability is interpreted in largely technical terms within

[2] Interview, Leading Second Orthodoxy Scholar, Oxford, November 2019.

the PDIA model. It is *"tied to implementation"*[3]: the *administrative* capacity to implement policy outcomes. Politics may hinder or support the process, but it cannot be anticipated or ever fully understood. Venugopal argues that this conception of politics as 'unknown' in part derives from the commonly prioritised forms of expertise in the sector – science, engineering, quantitative economics – which lends 'a mystique of the unknown to the political'. He argues that this can result in politics being used 'to box in a wide range of otherwise inexplicable acts of mundane misfortune' (2018: 7). Conversely, 'thinking and working politically' sees politics as a fundamental feature of the aid-receiving institutional context, which can, at least partially, be anticipated in analysis of the 'most likely drivers of development effort within poor countries' (Booth, 2011: 10).

Both PDIA and TWP point towards implementation deficiencies, particularly on the part of donor agencies: most obviously an adherence to linear implementation plans with pre-defined results frameworks. They also commonly highlight design failures, including insufficient understanding of the problem and its context. The main difference is that TWP elevates politics in these design and implementation failures more prominently than PDIA. What the second orthodoxy models have in common is that development practice should be context-sensitive. Whilst PDIA does not promote the discourse around 'politically smart' aid, the approaches commonly aim or claim to be in some way 'locally led'. Indeed, despite differences in their intellectual justifications and proposed solutions, in practice, the cases in this study show that practitioners are implementing a range of different approaches simultaneously. Whilst there are distinctions between TWP and PDIA on paper, in practice they are being applied in tandem within a bricolage of different strategies, principles and approaches all associated with the second orthodoxy.

[3] Ibid.

Research questions

Despite widespread acceptance of the need to take politics seriously and adapt to local contexts, there remain questions about how 'second orthodoxy' models work in practice and whether they lead to more effective development programming (Dasandi et al, 2016; 2019). In particular, questions have been raised about the capacity of such models to support inclusive, pro-poor development processes and outcomes (Yanguas, 2017; Dasandi & Erez 2019). By forwarding an approach that 'works with the grain' (Kelsall, 2008; Levy, 2014) of dominant political economies, do such models risk simply reinforcing the status quo? This question becomes particularly pertinent in semi-authoritarian states like Uganda. In such contexts, does 'working with the grain' risk further entrenching patterns of political or economic marginalisation? Does this 'politically smart, locally led' (Booth & Unsworth, 2014) model really enable aid programmes to shift entrenched inequities towards pro-poor, inclusive outcomes?

The politics that appears to emerge from second orthodoxy models like 'thinking and working politically' (TWP), is one of realism, pragmatism and 'trade-offs'. It has been influenced by the success of 'developmental states', which have managed to drive economic growth and prosperity without the commitment to human rights and democratic governance proposed under the good governance agenda. The language of 'best fit', 'good enough' governance rejects normative conceptions of 'good governance' in favour of outcomes that align with local socio-political realities (Grindle, 2007; Yanguas, 2017). This involves weighing up outcomes like growth against what Tim Kelsall names 'the vexed question of human rights' (2013a: 157).

On this basis, 'politically smart' aid pushes practitioners to recognise that the *process* of development is political, rather than its outcomes: 'politics is an approach' (Carothers & de Gramont, 2013: 160). Moreover, as Pablo Yanguas has highlighted, the second orthodoxy's emphasis on 'best fit', 'good enough' governance reflects a 'teleological approach to aid', which implies programmes should be designed 'in order to maximise results given the operating environment as shaped by the *existing* political settlement' (2017: 219, emphasis added). This indicates an instrumental approach to politics, which favours alignment and accommodation over pursuing pre-set political outcomes. This study seeks to understand how such an approach to local political realities works in practice and the kinds of political and institutional effects it produces in donor-supported reform processes.

The research, therefore, aims to establish a clearer picture of what the second orthodoxy is, and how it works in practice, than is available in the current literature underpinning new aid methods. In particular, it aims to understand if, and how, 'second orthodoxy' aid models support programmes to strengthen institutions and promote inclusive governance arrangements in two African states: Mozambique and Uganda. It defines 'inclusion' according to the goals of the two programmes under study, which have both process and outcome elements. In this study, process-based inclusion refers mainly to the Uganda programme's goal to deepen decentralisation, with respect to how decisions are made about the allocation of public funds. Outcome-based inclusion refers to the extent of distributional equity in the allocation of state resources at the local level (Uganda) and in policies that support women's access to economic opportunities (Mozambique). The thesis therefore aims to understand how and the extent to which the approaches associated with the second orthodoxy support aid programmes to achieves their objectives. But it also seeks to understand the wider – beyond the narrow frames of project effectiveness – political effects

of the second orthodoxy. These include the unintended, or unstated, consequences associated with aligning with 'local socio-political realities'. On a broader level, the analysis conducted in this thesis positions the 'second orthodoxy', and its intellectual underpinnings, in relation to established aid critiques of 'traditional' donor practice. In doing so, it promotes wider reflection on the extent to which the model diverges from the problems associated with more traditional practice, and how. The research, therefore, pursues two broad lines of inquiry:

1) Is there a common, criteria-based definition of the 'second orthodoxy' and to what extent do practical applications align with this definition?
2) What are the effects produced by the second orthodoxy in development interventions, both intended and unintended?

Summary of research design and thesis outline

This study focuses on the practice of Western development agencies that provide either financial or technical support to processes of institutional reform in aid-receiving African states. The study focuses on 'traditional' Western donors – as opposed to those from the global South – because their practice has been the primary object of dominant aid critiques in the literature and they are the donors funding and applying the development of new models under the second orthodoxy. The models themselves have been developed chiefly in the context of British and north American academic institutions and think tanks, and have been adopted primarily in the practice of Western donors and their implementing partners. Both of the cases in this study are UK aid-funded interventions, but the object of analysis is not the UK Department for International Development (DFID)[4]; rather, it is the methods themselves

[4] In September 2020 the UK Department For International Development (DFID) was merged with the Foreign Office to become the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO).

and what they uncover about the wider logics, possibilities and problematics of Western aid to Africa.

In chapters three and four of this thesis, the theory underpinning new aid methods is interrogated alongside established aid critiques and aid effectiveness literature. This process uncovers how, and the extent to which, the models respond to these critiques. The literature review and conceptual framing chapters establish a set of explanatory variables from within the literature underpinning the second orthodoxy, as well as a set of alternative explanations for aid's successes and failures from the wider literature. The analysis conducted in the first two chapters enables critical engagement with the discourse of the second orthodoxy and develops a detailed theoretical picture of its causal mechanisms. In doing so, it is able to point towards how, and the extent to which, the second orthodoxy might support the establishment of governance arrangements in the contexts being studied. It also aims to establish greater conceptual clarity over a set of discourses and approaches around which there has been a certain degree of ambiguity due to differing interpretations (King, 2020).

The remaining chapters are empirical and focus on how new aid methods are being applied in two aid programmes, both of which aim to strengthen institutions and promote more inclusive development in African institutional contexts. The first is a public financial management (PFM) technical assistance programme called the 'Budget Strengthening Initiative' (BSI). The research focuses on its work in Uganda, and specifically its support for budget transparency and fiscal decentralisation reforms. The second project, MUVA, is a female economic empowerment initiative in Mozambique. The study focuses on its attempts to promote the adoption of public policies that it hopes will enhance the socio-economic status of disadvantaged young women living in the country's urban areas. Both programmes

apply second orthodoxy methods in their attempts to bring about change, but they do so differently (see Table 1). The starkest contrast between the two is that the BSI programme is more embedded within the institutional context in which it works, whereas the MUVA programme attempts to influence government from an external position, primarily through evidence. The programmes reflect different aspects of the second orthodoxy, and aim to shift different institutional contexts, in different ways. The study, therefore, treats each project as an individual case that sheds light on different features of the second orthodoxy and its impacts on governance.

This study employs a qualitative case study design using within-case comparative analysis to answer these questions, looking at two donor programmes that have employed second orthodoxy methods to achieve their goals. Because of the emerging nature of second orthodoxy practice, very little is currently known about how it works and the kinds of results it produces, particularly outside of the policy literature (Dasandi et al, 2019). Due to the emerging nature of the evidence base, this research seeks to build rather than test the theory of the second orthodoxy. The two questions outlined above are therefore not meant to function as hypotheses to be tested, but framing questions to be pursued inductively. Qualitative case study inquiry is particularly suitable for theory building because it enables the researcher to work inductively, allowing empirical observations to form new hypotheses, concepts and research questions (George and Bennett, 2005). In taking this approach, the research is able to employ descriptive methods to elucidate and illuminate how the second orthodoxy works in practice. Qualitative methods also enable the analysis of causal processes and mechanisms. With this intention, the research aims to interpret the role of second orthodoxy mechanisms in the outcomes produced by the three project case studies, which include project successes and failures, intended and unintended consequences.

Rather than cross-nation comparisons, the units of analysis in this study are the programmes themselves and are therefore subnational. While both programmes aim to influence the uptake of policy in public sector contexts, they do so differently and reflect different features of second orthodoxy practice, as will be outlined in further detail in the following chapter. The study therefore treats each as an individual case, but it is possible to make more controlled comparisons *within* the two cases. In this sense, the within-case analysis applies a 'most similar' case selection strategy (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). While recognising that pure parallels are an aspiration within the research design, within-case analysis of the two programmes enables enough features to remain constant so as to isolate specific causal mechanisms. In the Uganda case, the programme actors and their embedded mode of engagement remains largely constant, as does the wider political context: the political economy of Uganda's decentralisation process. What changes are the specific intervention designs and types of incentives that they respond to, and therefore the extent to which the programme is forced to work 'with' or 'against' the grain of the prevailing political economy. In the MUVA case, the principal mode of engagement (influence through evidence) remains constant, but the types of intervention design change, as do their individual institutional contexts (e.g. education vs social protection sector). Within-case analysis using the 'most similar' case selection design enables this thesis to point towards the conditions under which second orthodoxy models are most likely to contribute to institution strengthening and inclusive governance, as well as the conditions under which they might hinder it. These include both contextual (external) conditions and design (internal) conditions.

In the MUVA project, three separate interventions are assessed, which reflect varying degrees of success in terms of achieving context-sensitive practice and supporting economic

empowerment outcomes. In the BSI programme, two connected interventions are evaluated. The first has been able to increase the resource envelopes of local governments, but failed to substantially enhance the discretionary power of local governments and distributional equity in terms of the allocation of resources across local governments. The second has contributed towards increased government budget transparency, but failed to substantially enhance accountability. The variation in terms of results across different interventions within the programme cases enables this thesis to isolate causal mechanisms.

Specifically, this study focuses on the role of three primary features of the second orthodoxy and connected aid critiques. Firstly, the MUVA case study (Chapter 4) of this thesis looks at the second orthodoxy's prescriptions for 'adaptive learning' and how they are being interpreted within the programme. It aims to understand whether the second orthodoxy's learning mechanisms supported MUVA to overcome the problems associated with top-down planning and the preference for universal and transferable knowledge over local knowledge. Secondly, in Chapter 5, the Budget Strengthening Initiative's approach to being 'locally led' is examined through its 'embedded' technical assistance model. This chapter seeks to understand how and the extent to which this approach supported the BSI to achieve its reform objectives in the area of decentralisation through aligning with the local context. In Chapter 6, the second BSI case study brings its 'locally led' and 'politically smart' features into conversation, through an assessment of how it used its embedded approach to design an intervention that aligned with 'elite incentives'. This chapter examines how the BSI's 'Budget Transparency Initiative' interacted with a set of political incentives that emerged in the aftermath of two large scale government corruption scandals in 2012. The final concluding Chapter 7 assesses and compares, to the extent possible, the empirical cases, bringing the findings into conversation with a wider set of second orthodoxy cases and other

literature to explore their generalisability. The concluding chapter enables the thesis to move beyond the narrow frames of project effectiveness to interpret the wider political and institutional implications of the programmes' efforts to align with, and respond to, local socio-political realities. The following chapter will outline the research design and methodological approach applied in this study in further detail.

Part I: the ‘Second Orthodoxy’ conceptualised

Chapter One: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed to interrogate the second orthodoxy in the two programmes under study. This study deploys a qualitative within-case comparative design to answer its questions, looking at two donor programmes that have employed second orthodoxy approaches to achieve their goals. Because of the emerging nature of second orthodoxy practice, very little is currently known about how it works and the kinds of results it produces, particularly outside of the policy literature conducted by programme 'insiders' (Dasandi et al, 2019). Due to the emerging nature of the evidence base, this research seeks to build rather than test the theory of the second orthodoxy – that is, the second orthodoxy is not viewed as a set of hypotheses to be tested quantitatively. Qualitative case study inquiry is particularly suitable for theory building because it enables the researcher to work inductively, allowing empirical observations to form new hypotheses, concepts and research questions (George and Bennett, 2005). In taking this approach, the research is able to employ descriptive methods to elucidate and illuminate how the second orthodoxy works in practice. Qualitative methods also enable the analysis of causal processes and mechanisms. With this aim, the research broadly applies the principles of process tracing to interpret the role of the second orthodoxy in the outcomes produced by the three project case studies, which include project successes and failures, intended and unintended outcomes.

In data collection, the approach combines traditional political science methods used in qualitative research, including elite interviews, with more embedded, ethnographic

approaches. The study's data collection strategy employs participant observation, which is particularly suitable for studies that aim to uncover power relations and the practice of politics 'from within' (Mosse, 2005; Schatz, 2009). Indeed, the practice of politics is notoriously difficult to operationalise. This study requires a more "bottom-up" design that can embed the researcher within specific political and institutional contexts, allowing the study to observe the practice of the programme actors, their relationships and their engagement with their context. This approach achieves a higher level of conceptual validity (George & Bennett, 2005) than achievable with a quantitative design that necessarily reduces complex and context dependent processes into single, generalisable variables. Moreover, the research is also concerned with the indirect ways in which second orthodoxy discourse affects the material realities of those to whom is it applied, or through whom it is applied. To assess such opaque processes, as well as divergence between what is stated and what occurs *in practice*, a qualitative approach that can assess causal complexity is able to uncover the unspoken rationales and subjectivities affecting political practice (Schatz, 2009).

In this context, my own positionality and role in the construction of meaning is a central consideration in this study. As a development practitioner, as well as scholar, my position as 'insider' and 'outsider' both complicates and enriches my perspective. The research is grounded in a constructivist philosophical foundation, where I aim to build theory "from the bottom up": from individual perspectives to broad patterns and understandings (Creswell & Clark, 2017: 36). I draw on the multiple, subjective perspectives of my research participants and recognise my own role as a researcher in the fundamentally social process of constructing meaning.

At the same time, by engaging with policy and practice that is designed to support social change processes, and my own role as a practitioner in these processes, I cannot disentangle my research from the central concerns of women's empowerment, equity and inclusive governance with which my programme case studies engage. While the central purpose of this study is to make a scholarly contribution, it is nonetheless hoped that my research will generate policy relevant findings that can be used to shape more effective (beyond the narrow frame of 'aid effectiveness') interventions in these areas of social change. From this perspective, the study's philosophical underpinnings include features of a more transformative paradigm (Creswell & Clark, 2017) that recognises the role that research can play in the pursuit of social justice and human rights. To demonstrate the methodological approach taken in this study in further detail, this chapter outlines its case selection rationale; approach to within-case analysis; positionality and limitations.

Case selection

This study uses a sub-national comparative method, where the unit of analysis is at the programme level. The research analyses two aid programmes, both of which aim to strengthen institutions and promote more inclusive development in African institutional contexts. The first is a public financial management (PFM) technical assistance programme called the 'Budget Strengthening Initiative'. The research focuses on its work in Uganda, and specifically its support for budget transparency and fiscal decentralisation reforms. The second project, MUVA, is a 'female economic empowerment' initiative in Mozambique. The study focuses on its attempts to promote the adoption of public policies that it hopes will enhance the socio-economic status of disadvantaged young women living in the country's urban areas. Both programmes apply second orthodoxy methods in their attempts to bring about public sector reforms, but they do so differently. The programmes reflect different

aspects of the second orthodoxy more prominently than others, and aim to shift different institutional contexts, in different ways. The study, therefore, treats each project as an individual case that sheds light on different features of the second orthodoxy and its impacts on governance. Using the 'thinking and working politically' (TWP) parameters for 'politically sensitive' practice presented in the introduction as broad indicators, Table 1 shows how each empirical chapter will investigate a specific feature of the second orthodoxy.

While recognising that the TWP parameters cannot be easily disentangled in the cases, the MUVA programme enables this thesis to focus on adaptation and flexibility in a way that the BSI programme does not. Most significantly, the MUVA programme has used a much more formally constructed approach to working adaptively through data collection and learning systems and is a stronger example of a more formal approach to 'adaptive management'. The BSI, meanwhile, has tended to rely on tacit contextual knowledge and understanding in order to adapt in real time more informally and in many ways reflects a less formalised expression of second orthodoxy thinking. It has not used monitoring and evaluation systems to adapt, but its experience implementing the programme, for instance, to adjust the reforms in response to political resistance or incentives. As a more external actor, self-consciously setting out to be a an adaptive 'learning' programme, MUVA has tended to rely more heavily on formal management practices, including data collection and analysis. However, the findings of the MUVA chapter indicate that where projects have been able to draw on tacit, contextual knowledge they have been more successful at aligning the interventions with the context and its politics than those that drew mainly from formal learning methods.

Thus, the MUVA project enables this thesis to examine a formal interpretation of second orthodoxy practice, while the BSI programme was already operating in a way that reflected

second orthodoxy practice when it was presented as one of the initial case studies during the first 'Doing Development Differently' event at the Harvard Kennedy School in November 2014. It was at this event that I was introduced to the BSI. From this perspective, the MUVA programme captures how adaptive programming is being interpreted on the ground, whereas the BSI's pre-existing approach resonated with the principles of second orthodoxy practice. The thesis uses this distinction to demonstrate the evolution of second orthodoxy practice and finds, in particular, the MUVA programme's approach to adaptive learning to be reflective of how, and the extent to which, the UK development sector has adopted principles of adaptive learning more broadly.

As shown in Table 1, this study set out to examine three dimensions of 'politically sensitive' practice, as expressed in the three broad 'thinking and working politically' (TWP) parameters. The thesis originally sought to examine all three parameters in all three cases. However, it was later decided, in light of time and word restrictions, that each empirical chapter would focus on a single parameter; these were decided based on the second orthodoxy features most fully reflected by the specific interventions.

Table 1. Cases

Case	**TWP parameter examined**	**How it is interpreted**
MUVA	'Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation'	In MUVA's approach to testing different methodologies for supporting 'female economic empowerment', using the mechanics of 'test, learn, adapt'
BSI Case 1. Decentralisation reforms	'A detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'	In the BSI's 'embedded' approach to technical assistance to align with the local context

BSI Case 2. **Budget transparency reforms**	'Strong political analysis, insight and understanding'	How the BSI uses its embedded approach to interpret and align with 'elite incentives'

It is important to note that neither the BSI nor MUVA can be said to represent 'ideal' cases of second orthodoxy practice, in part because of the perennial divergence between conceptual or policy frameworks and empirical realities, but also because of the emerging nature of the second orthodoxy itself. As King (2020) observes, second orthodoxy principles lack clarity and can mean different things to different people, in different contexts. There may be widespread agreement and rhetorical convergence around the principles of being more sensitive and responsive to local political, social and cultural realities in international development practice. At the same time, evidence is limited on the application of successfully implemented context-sensitive approaches (Dasandi et al, 2019). For instance, Roche et al comment that '[d]espite general rhetorical commitments to supporting locally led change amongst aid agencies, in reality effective practice in this area is actually quite rare' (2020: 142). This meant that the universe of cases from which this project could draw was both weakly bounded, but also very small, if I intended to assess cases of 'effective' practice in this area.

At the time of initially identifying the cases, my preference was to choose programmes that had not already been widely documented in the literature to strengthen the study's contribution. Amongst these widely documented cases, the majority had been in practitioner orientated policy literature on the governance sector, where 'politically sensitive' approaches seemed to find their most conducive and natural home. Among these, Booth and Unsworth's (2014) report has been particularly influential as an empirical foundation for 'politically smart, locally led' aid, and is drawn on in the conceptual framing of this thesis. The policy

literature has been reviewed by scholars influential to the TWP community of practice. In connected reviews by Dasandi et al (2019; 2016) and Laws and Marquette (2018), 44 case studies were assessed in order to determine the quality of the evidence base. At this time, Dasandi et al (2019) reported only one case study from the academic literature, which was in press at the time. The review by Marquette and Laws (2018) underpins the conceptual framing of this thesis and is where the 'three principles of politically sensitive practice' were drawn from.

In their review of this policy literature, Dasandi et al conclude that the evidence base is weak: based on 'a small number of self-selected, relatively well-known success stories' (2019: 155) that seek to uncritically validate the approach. In this literature, they highlight the lack of comparative analysis and lack of engagement with programme failures or unintended outcomes. The cases have been written up predominantly by 'programme insiders' and the majority of the literature has been commissioned by donors, which has implications on its objectivity and ability to critically engage with the approaches.

However, since these reviews were conducted, further TWP cases have been published in the academic literature notably in a Special Issue of the Development Policy Review edited by McCulloch and Piron (2019). This thesis aims to contribute towards this small but evolving academic literature by addressing some key gaps in the more expansive policy literature. It does this by analysing both the intended and unintended outcomes of TWP approaches, programme successes and failures. This responds to McCulloch and Piron's claim that 'there is an urgent need for research that could help to identify the kinds of problems and the sorts of context where a TWP approach is more or less effective' (2019: 013). Similarly, Dasandi et al call for 'greater engagement with programmes that have adopted elements of TWP but

failed to achieve positive results' (2019: 162). This thesis's use of within-case comparative analysis to understand more clearly the relationship between the approaches and both their intended and unintended outcomes also responds to a lack of comparative analysis identified in the literature. Finally, as an independent doctoral project, this study also contributes towards filling the gap in external critical assessments.

In terms of content, Dasandi et al's (2019) review finds that the majority of the cases in the policy literature come from the governance sector, in the context of 'hybrid' states, where the politics is neither developmental nor entirely predatory. They also find the majority of the cases focus on the perspective of donors and note that more attention needs to be given to 'the demands that TWP places on the internal systems, capabilities and incentive structures of the organisations implementing programmes on the ground' (2019: 161). From the perspective of content, therefore, the main contribution of this thesis is its proximity to those implementing programmes on the ground. The researcher was embedded within the programmes during fieldwork and therefore gained detailed insights from within implementing agencies.

In the academic literature a similar pattern emerges. Of the eight cases reviewed (Whitty, 2017; Lucia et al, 2018; Williams et al, 2019; Hickey & Bukenya, 2019; Clarke, 2020; Craney & Hudson, 2020; Sims, 2021), all are within the governance sector, most within the context of what would be defined as hybrid regimes and most focus on the perspective of donors. Sims (2021) stands out as aiming to address the challenges and risks of applying TWP from the perspective of local actors in more authoritarian contexts, through a case that looks at the disappearance of an activist in Laos. The academic literature also helps to outline some of the challenges associated with second orthodoxy practices, through a more critical

engagement with programme failures as well as successes (McCulloch & Piron, 2019). The use of comparative, within-case analysis in two Nigerian cases studies (Lucia et al, 2018; Williams et al, 2019) are notable from this perspective. Hickey and Bukenya (2019) also highlight the risks associated with TWP practices in their analysis of DFID's support to Uganda's social protection sector. Through comparative within-case analysis of programme successes and failures, the cases in this thesis aim to build on the findings of these studies, which are brought into conversation with those of the thesis in the empirical chapters and conclusion. This also enables the study to position its findings in relation to a wider body of cases and explore their applicability beyond the thesis.

In addition to strengthening the study's contribution, not selecting and studying cases that had already been singled out as 'successful' applications of second orthodoxy approaches, helped avoid bias through being inclusive of a wider range of, potentially, less successful or more diverse applications.[5] At the same time, I wanted to choose cases that had not only aligned themselves with second orthodoxy thinking, but had also been recognised as reflecting second orthodoxy practice by second orthodoxy scholars. As noted, the BSI was showcased at the first 'Doing Development Differently' event at Harvard. Similarly, the MUVA programme was recommended to me by Michael Woolcock, one of the leading thinkers behind 'problem-driven, iterative adaptation' (PDIA), as an example of adaptive programming. This meant that both projects had been recognised in some way for doing things 'differently'.

[5] MUVA changed over the course of the research to become more and more recognised as a successful example of adaptive programming, particularly for its approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning (e.g. see: Sharp et al, 2022).

Finally, my choice of cases was at least partially determined by my ability to access them, which was dependent on the programmes' willingness to share data and facilitate interviews with their partners. Both the BSI and MUVA programmes were incredibly generous and engaged from this perspective, which was of great advantage for my fieldwork. This chapter will now outline the case selection rationale for each programme in further detail.

The Budget Strengthening Initiative, Uganda: 'politically smart, locally led'

Since 2010, the Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) has provided technical assistance in the areas of budgetary and public financial management (PFM) to ministries of finance in four African countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Uganda. It does so through a combination of 'strategic advice, technical assistance and hands-on support' for institutional reform (BSI, 2016). It sits within the Centre for Aid and Public Expenditure at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and has what it calls a 'strategic focus on the management of development resources as a whole, including budget and aid flows' (BSI 2016). It is of strategic interest to foreign donors – in this case primarily UKAid – who want to ensure that their aid investments are being spent appropriately. Its focus is on what the aid industry calls 'fragile' or 'challenging' country contexts, where formal financial management systems are 'weak' and where maintaining political power is often dependent on accessing and redistributing state resources. These countries are considered to pose the biggest threat to donors aiming to avoid the diversion of their aid money. Uganda is therefore less typical of its standard country context due to having higher relative levels of institutional capability and stability. Nonetheless, it is defined by the programme as a 'challenging' political context due to the combined impact of high-level government corruption and the ongoing politics of regime survival.

The thesis looks at two distinct but connected areas of the BSI's support to public financial management in Uganda. The first (Chapter 5) examines its efforts to support to fiscal decentralisation reforms that aimed to increase the adequacy and equity of local government fiscal transfers. The second (Chapter 6) looks at its efforts to promote budget transparency and accountability in the aftermath of several largescale government corruption scandals in 2012. The empirical chapters go into further detail on the specific interventions being studied in this programme, but it is important at this stage to outline how and why the BSI has been chosen as a programme of study for this thesis. The BSI was presented at the first 'Doing Development Differently' event at the Harvard Kennedy School in 2014, as an example of more context-sensitive practice and embodying some of the principles of 'problem-driven iterative adaptation' (PDIA) that underscored the 'doing development differently' manifesto.[6] In its intellectual underpinnings and description of its approach, key BSI actors like Tim Williamson have also used the language of 'politically smart', 'locally led' practice to describe its distinct approach to technical assistance (Williamson, 2015). This thesis set out to understand what this combination of second orthodoxy practices looked like in the BSI, as well as understand whether, and how, it supported the programme to achieve reform goals. Finally, Uganda is a highly relevant context in which to assess second orthodoxy practice because it is often considered the quintessential example of 'isomorphic mimicry', by presenting the 'façade' of reform: an observation that has been made specifically in the context of its PFM reforms by second orthodoxy scholars (Andrews & Bategeka, 2013). Moreover, leading second orthodoxy scholars like Booth have argued that the 'modest achievements' of Uganda's once celebrated reforms result from them having left 'the fundamental drivers of politics untouched' (Booth, et al 2014: 67).

[6] Doing Development Differently Manifesto, at: https://buildingstatecapability.com/the-ddd-manifesto/ (accessed 14 November 2021)

In this context, the chapters observe and examine two distinct features of the BSI's approach to technical assistance that align with the 'locally led' and 'politically smart' principles of the second orthodoxy. The first is explored in Chapter 5, within the context of the fiscal transfer reforms. Here the BSI's approach to working as 'embedded' technical assistance providers, within the Uganda government and most directly with the Uganda Ministry for Planning Finance and Economic Development (MoFPED) is examined.[7] The Chapter explores how and the extent to which this approach enabled it to be 'locally led' by becoming more embedded within its local institutional environment in the Ugandan government. It examines the roles of trust, social capital, 'cultural intimacy' and tacit contextual knowledge in its capacity to achieve reform goals by aligning with the realities of the local context, including the ongoing politics of regime survival.

Secondly, the thesis turns more directly to the BSI's 'politically smart' dimensions by analysing how it aligned with 'elite incentives' in the aftermath of large-scale government corruption scandals to push through budget transparency reforms, which aimed to increase the capacity of community members to monitor government spending, particularly at the local government level. Here, the chapter is interested in uncovering how local political realities were accounted for and responded to in the process of designing and implementing the reforms with the Ministry of Finance. In particular, the chapter examines the consequences and efficacy of what Booth has named opening up 'the black box' of 'elite incentives' (Booth, 2012a: 13-14). Indeed, in the BSI's explanation of a better approach to technical assistance, they position more context-sensitive practice against approaches that

[7] For ease of comprehension and to avoid overloading the text with acronyms, MoFPED is referred to as 'the Ministry of Finance' in this thesis.

have been said to ‘swim against the tide’ of the ‘prevailing political economy’ (Williamson, 2015: 15; Booth, 2012b). But what happens when programmes ‘swim with the tide’ of the prevailing political economy, even when they are pursuing goals that go against it? In Chapters 5 and 6, the thesis confronts this tension through assessing the effects and implications of adapting to local political conditions for reform in challenging contexts like Uganda.

The MUVA Programme, Mozambique: ‘adaptive learning’

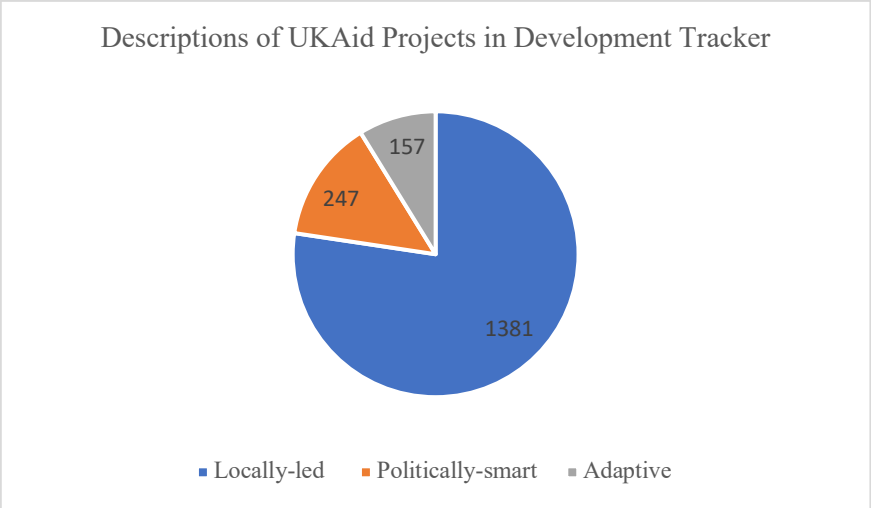
One of the most distinct differences between the BSI, which began in 2010, and the MUVA programme, which began in 2015, is that the BSI was already working in a way that resonated with second orthodoxy principles when it showcased its approach in 2014. The MUVA programme did not set out to be an ‘adaptive’ programme from the outset, but its original design by the UK Department for International Development (DFID/ now FCDO) intended for it to be a ‘learning’ programme that implemented ‘locally led’ interventions in support of ‘female economic empowerment’ (FEE). As the design of the MUVA programme was being developed by its implementing agency, Oxford Policy Management (OPM), during a year-long inception period, MUVA programme managers and monitoring and evaluation staff were attracted to the idea of ‘tight feedback loops’ used in experiential learning processes. They were influenced by the Harvard Kennedy scholars behind PDIA, including Michael Woolcock who came to visit the programme in Mozambique. I was introduced to the MUVA programme via Michael Woolcock, who shared its approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning. As a ‘learning programme’ that began with a question of ‘what do you do when you don’t know what to do?’, second orthodoxy principles of ‘adaptive learning’, where implementation occurs iteratively, through ‘small bets’ and is adapted in response to the local context seemed like a logical design for MUVA.

Chapter 4 examines MUVA's approach to 'adaptive learning' and assesses the extent to which it supported the programme to achieve its policy objectives within the social protection and education sectors. In particular, the chapter examines how the more results-focused, 'managerial' (Gutheil & Koch, 2022) approach to learning about 'what works' relates to, and sometimes comes into tension with, the more process-orientated and context-determined learning that the second orthodoxy promotes. Much like the BSI programme, MUVA also draws on the language of 'politically smart' and 'locally led' development in Booth and Unsworth's influential report (2014). For instance, in its UKAid Business Case, the following language is used as an underlying justification for MUVA's 'adaptive learning' approach:

> …the authors **recommend policy-makers focus on identifying the binding constraints in a given context.** A recent DFID-commissioned paper on 'politically smart, locally led development' also highlights the pros of working in an adaptive and context-specific way. It underlines the need for **iterative programmes, which enable implementers and donors to 'plan, do, check, and act' rather than to operate a 'blueprint model'** (DFID, 2018 – emphasis in original).

In many ways, the MUVA programme reflects the second orthodoxy principles that appear to have gained most traction within the UK development funding landscape. Despite reference to 'politically smart' practice in its Business Case, Chapter 3 shows that the programme is more focused on implementing 'locally led interventions' through adaptation and learning than engaging with political realities. As shown in Figure 1, using the UKAid Development Tracker, it is possible to demonstrate the most and least common second orthodoxy terms used to describe UKAid funded programmes. Using a simple word search of current and closed programmes, it is possible to see, for instance, that 'locally-led' is a far more common characterisation than 'politically-smart'. This reflects a greater normative alignment with the former within the aid bureaucracy.

Figure 1. Number of UKAid projects by key word/ phrase



Source: UKAid/ FCDO Development Tracker (2021), based on key word search of current and closed projects. Search based on project descriptions on the Development Tracker website and does not represent the universe of projects using these terms in their internal documentation, Business Cases etc.

Understanding the national contexts

Although I apply a subnational comparative method using the interventions as units of analysis, the likely success of the projects is conditioned by the context in which they are operating. On this basis, it is essential to understand the similarities and variations in context to: a) to fully understand the impact of the programmes and, b) to be able to assess what the findings of the cases indicate about the second orthodoxy more broadly. Table 2 shows that, in terms of political context, Mozambique and Uganda present similar contexts of post-conflict, dominant party regimes, in which there has not been a transition of government since they came to power. However, economically, Uganda has experienced a longer and more stable period of growth since the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power under President Yoweri Museveni in 1986. This is reflected in higher GDP, lower poverty levels and also less aid dependence than in Mozambique (Table 2). It can be argued on this basis that donors hold less sway in the Ugandan context than they once did, and less so than

in the Mozambican context. This is an important aspect of the institutional environment examined in the first BSI Uganda case (Chapter 5). To enable a deeper understanding of how context might affect the capacity of the interventions to achieve their goals, this section outlines some key features of the political economy of reform in the two case study countries, beginning with Uganda.

Table 2. National Comparisons

Country	Population (Millions)	GDP (US$ Billions)	Poverty (% population at national poverty line)	Governance	Aid dependence (Net ODA as % of GNI)
Mozambique	31.3	15.291	46.1	Dominant party (FRELIMO), post-conflict regime, without transfer of power; competitive-authoritarian: Freedom House finds Mozambique 'partly free'; EIU Democracy Index gives Mozambique 3.51 (Authoritarian)	12.7
Uganda	45.7	37.372	20.3	Dominant party (NRM), post-conflict regime, without transfer of power; competitive-authoritarian: EIU Democracy Index gives Uganda score of 4.94 (Hybrid); Freedom House finds Uganda 'not free'	6.131

Sources: World Bank (2021); Freedom House (2021); Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (2021).

Uganda's early successes under a 'developmentalist' political agenda

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), under Uganda's current President Yoweri Museveni, established legitimacy and international credibility based on a developmentalist agenda that marked itself in stark contrast to the violence and insecurity that had characterised Uganda's governance under Idi Amin and Milton Obote. Museveni came to power leading a guerrilla movement, the National Resistance Army, that

overturned the Obote government through a military takeover in 1986. Once in power, Museveni shifted from an original socialist agenda towards a neoliberal one that saw heavy donor investment in reforming Uganda's economy through structural adjustment. Indeed, during this period, Uganda was given what Graham Harrison names 'showcase status' (Harrison, 2004: 39) by international finance institutions for its successful adherence to the conditions of structural adjustment packages. According to Harrison, the Uganda case study was used to demonstrate that structural adjustment packages work and that the Washington Consensus had been the correct way to deal with African economies affected by the debt crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. It is true that, unlike many of the African economies that were encouraged to rapidly open up their economies in the 1980s and 90s, structural adjustment in Uganda established relative economic stability, along with a period of economic growth (Adam & Gunning, 2002).

Growth was accompanied by a technocrat-led period of reform in the 1990s that established Uganda as a world leader across various technical fields that included civil service restructuring, public financial management, decentralisation, service delivery and anti-corruption policy and legislation (Robinson, 2007; Kuteesa et al, eds, 2010). Drivers of reform are noted in the literature to be a combination of political commitment, technocratic insulation, and organisational autonomy (Robinson, 2007). For instance, in the case of political commitment, Tumusiime-Mutebile emphasises the importance of Museveni's 'conversion to the cause of fiscal discipline' (2009: 9):

> 'MoPED officials succeeded in persuading the President that inflation resulted from a lack of fiscal discipline, which was analogous to military indiscipline. This resonated well with a former military leader whose victory over the Obote regime owed much to the strong discipline of the National Resistance Army' (Ibid: 8).

The conversion to the cause of macroeconomic stability insulated the Ministry of Finance from the spending pressures coming from other ministries and supported the merging of the Finance and Planning agencies – becoming today's Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) in 1998 – with strong presidential backing and high levels of capacity (Robinson, 2007). As Tumusiime-Mutebile notes of this period, 'the economic technocrats had taken over' (2009: 9). Similarly, Robinson (2007) notes that the rise in strength and capacity of MoFPED was connected to Museveni's personal commitment, which resulted in responsibility for designing economic reforms to be vested in the hands of a small technocratic elite. Elsewhere, it has been argued of this period that key economic institutions like MoFPED and the Bank of Uganda were given a degree of 'embedded autonomy' (Evans, 1995) that enabled them to function like 'islands of effectiveness', operating with a degree of insulation and capacity that was not apparent in other areas of public service (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2013: 23).

These factors led the NRM regime to achieve what Hickey names a 'much vaunted "ownership"' over the development agenda (Hickey, 2013a: 195). The regime received international recognition for its 'commitment' and 'enthusiasm' for a wide array of different governance and poverty agendas (Tripp, 2004). Internal political commitment was also affected by transnational factors. During a period in which Uganda was both heavily indebted and aid dependent, the commitment to macroeconomic stability was influenced by the need to maintain strong donor relations (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2013). Similarly, the role of technical assistance, and particularly ODI Fellows, has been identified as an important feature in the development of capacity within the Ministry of Finance, with Museveni, unlike Amin, welcoming the role of 'outsiders' (Tumusiime-Mutebile, 2009).

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, despite Uganda's 'showcase status', governance reform in the country has been critiqued for its uneven and limited results, including in the area of public financial management (Andrews & Bategeka, 2013). In terms of pro-poor outcomes, by the mid-1990s, there was increasing public dissatisfaction with the quality and reach of service delivery, as well as progress on poverty reduction. This led the President to compel MoFPED to prioritise poverty reduction in the 1995 Public Investment Plan, which paved the way for the first Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). Over the next decade, access to basic services delivered by local governments also increased markedly under decentralisation reforms (Williamson, 2009). However, as Chapter 5 will outline, there remained major problems with the quality of those services.

Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2013) comment that despite impressive growth and significant poverty reduction in these earlier decades of reform, Uganda has performed less well on other indicators, including inequality, with both poverty and prosperity remaining highly unevenly distributed. Rural areas continue to lag behind urban centres along most development indicators, and the Eastern and Northern regions comprise 3/4 of the monetary poor (World Bank, 2020). Moreover, poverty reduction has slowed in recent years: between 2012 and 2016 poverty increased from 19.7 percent to 21.4 percent, and inequality rose as the Gini index went from 41 to 42.8 (World Bank, 2020). There also remain major issues with access to services across the country, with particularly low access to adequate sanitation and electricity (World Bank, 2020). In the Uganda chapters of this thesis (5 and 6), the efforts of the BSI to improve pro-poor outcomes in terms of increased equity and better access to quality services are examined. The next section looks at how the shifting nature of the political economy in Uganda has affected such development outcomes, as well as its relationship with its donors.

The shifting nature of Uganda's political economy and the aid relationship

In explaining the NRM regime's early successes, analysts note that the earlier dominant party/dominant leader political settlement proved to be 'largely successful at delivering political stability and securing impressive levels of economic governance and growth' (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2013: 20). They argue that largely populist measures linked to election campaigns played a key role in the rapid expansion of social services, including Universal Primary Education (UPE). In this context, the return of multi-party politics in 2005 is said to have 'deepened the populist logic of Museveni's ruling coalition', where elections have been won through a combination of seeking the support of lower cadres who can mobilise voters, and the promise of popular policies that appeal to many voters in the short-term (Ibid). The latter is seen in Chapter 5, where Museveni's 2016 election manifesto pledge to build health centres in every sub-county interferes with the ability of the BSI to promote equity through developing a rules-based approach in the design of local government allocation formula.

As the ruling coalition has become more vulnerable to the threats of excluded elites and factionalism with the party, the political economy of reform in Uganda has changed. Hickey and Izama note that 'these shifts were catalysed by processes of elite exit from the NRM before the 2001 elections, and growing pressures from its large client base' (2019: 6). In more recent years, as seen in the parliamentary debate surrounding key oil legislation and policy in the lead up to the passing of the 2016 Public Financial Management Act, is a growing body of MPs (even from within the NRM itself) who are critical of the government (Ibid; Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2013). More recently, the threat posed by popular opposition leaders like Bobi Wine, whose campaign and challenge to the NRM (officially

winning 38 percent of the vote) in the recent 2021 elections, reflects wider levels of discontent amongst Ugandan voters, particularly younger urban ones. While Wine won a similar share of the vote to the previous main non-incumbent challenger, Kizza Besigye, Museveni's 58 percent was the lowest of his six elections and appears to have been bolstered by more instances of rigging than in previous polls (Wilkins et al, 2021).

As examined in Chapter 5, one way in which the NRM regime has responded to threats is the rapid creation of new districts, which has enabled the coalition to keep opposition in-check, whilst meeting the demands of lower level factions. The damaging effects of this process of 'districtisation' on the quality of local service delivery, outlined by the World Bank in 2016 (World Bank, 2016), is one of the starting points for the fiscal decentralisation reforms supported by the BSI's technical assistance in Chapter 5. As outlined in this chapter, the increasing vulnerability of the ruling coalition has contributed towards reinforcing a politics of regime survival in Uganda, whereby the earlier developmentalist agenda has been supplanted by increasingly clientelist logics. Despite its liberalised political system and impressive anticorruption frameworks, Uganda, is, as Wilkins et al describe, an 'unambiguously authoritarian' (2021: 631) state in which political power is concentrated at the centre and sustained through informally accessing and redistributing state resources.

Even if one were to temporarily forgo the importance of free and fair elections in order to apply the 'illiberal state' (Jones et al, 2013) model to Uganda, where authoritarian, yet 'visionary' leaders preside over economic growth and infrastructural development, Uganda is not a developmental state. The literature suggests that, with the exception of maintaining political and macroeconomic stability, Uganda largely lacks the capacities of other developmental states, and analysts have concluded that there is 'little evidence to suggest that

Uganda's political settlement is conducive to achieving structural transformation' (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2013: 20).

Just as the political economy of reform has shifted under the NRM government, so too has the nature of the aid relationship. Historically, Uganda has been heavily aid-dependent, and, as noted, donors have played a significant role in shaping the agenda of economic reform in the country. Most notably, due to its pivotal role in implementing structural adjustment in the 1990s, there has been heavy donor investment in strengthening the technical capacity of the Ministry of Finance (Adam & Gunning, 2002). And Robinson notes that early reform success 'is strongly associated with the depth and persistence of donor support', including both aid money and technical assistance (Robinson, 2007: 454).

This support created a kind of dual dependency between donors and the regime, whereby donors were reluctant to critique the government because they 'were looking for a success story which could be used to justify their new approach' and were therefore 'willing to overlook the Government's tendencies in other areas, most notably the opposition to multi-party politics, growing levels of corruption and military involvement in the Congo' (Hickey, 2013a: 195). Uganda also serves as a key ally to Western donors in the global fight against terrorism, supplying troops to peacekeeping missions in Somalia, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. In return, Uganda has received large sums in military and development aid from key allies like the United States. This relationship has led to criticism of donors 'bankrolling' an oppressive regime[8] and the role of aid as an additional source of patronage within a fundamentally corrupt government (Tangri & Mwenda, 2006).

[8] Rita Abrahamsen and Gerald Bareebe, 'Internal aid for Museveni's Uganda can no longer be justified', The Globe and Mail, January 19 2021, at: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-international-aid-for-musevenis-uganda-can-no-longer-be-justified/ (accessed 22 September 2022)

From the mid-2000s the aid relationship began to shift alongside the changing nature of the political economy of development in Uganda. Aid dependency began to decline, with Uganda graduating from debt relief status and the accompanying withdrawal of debt related policy conditionality (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2013). Following the repressive tactics pursued by the regime around the 2006 elections, Uganda's relations with its traditional donors began to worsen (Ibid). And there have been examples of aid withdrawal following prominent corruption scandals, as examined in the context of the PRDP and ghost pensioner scandals of 2012, in Chapter 6. At the same time, the discovery of oil has attracted investors like China, who have played an increasingly prominent role in Uganda's economy. In this context, China has provided an alternative income stream apparently without the same strings attached as traditional donors seeking good governance.

The discovery of oil and the accompanying role of China in Uganda's economy has contributed to the reduced leverage and influence of traditional donors. As donor influence over reform has diminished, so too has the 'embedded autonomy' of the Ministry of Finance. As explored in Chapter 5, analysts find that Uganda's few 'pockets of bureaucratic efficiency' have been eroded in recent years, demonstrated by the declining capacity of economic governance institutions like the Ministry of Finance to resist populist policy measures, supplementary budgets and maintain macroeconomic instability (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2013; Bukenya and Hickey, 2019). In addition to the interest-based logics of regime survival, the Ministry's autonomy has been affected by ideological shifts within the NRM regime, away from the economics of neoliberalism towards a more nationalist,

'productivist' agenda, particularly in relation to the management of oil production and revenues (Hickey, 2013a; Bukenya and Hickey, 2019). The Ministry's declining autonomy and power to control public spending in Uganda has therefore coincided with an ideological and institutional challenge to its authority, including aspects of its neoliberal agenda (Bukenya and Hickey, 2019: 38).

Chapters 5 and 6 show how the Uganda reform context outlined in this section presents a number of challenges for the BSI, particularly in relation to its position as embedded within the financial technocracy. While the programme pursues approaches that enable it to align with its reform environment, the goals it pursues go against the grain of these fundamental politics in order to enhance pro-poor outcomes through strengthening economic governance. Historically, analysis points towards donor programmes having had worse outcomes in areas of governance deemed less critical to the regime's interests. In the context of reform efforts aimed at anti-corruption measures, for instance, 'donor efforts to promote higher levels of capacity and accountability have been largely unable to overcome the political incentives created by the prevailing political settlement' (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2013: 36). Chapters 5 and 6 explore how the BSI's embedded form of technical assistance enables it to navigate this reform context, in some places achieving positive outcomes, in others coming up against the same fundamental politics that have stood in the way of reform historically. This chapter will now turn to an overview of some of the key elements of the political economy of reform in Mozambique.

Post-conflict reconstruction and women's economic empowerment in Mozambique

Mozambique presents a similar context of post-conflict dominant party politics, in which there has not been a transition of power since the current Frelimo government took office in

1975. And, much like Uganda, in the past, Mozambique has been widely considered a 'success story' amongst international donors for its post-conflict reconstruction after a 16-year-long civil war (1976 – 1992). In 2007, the World Bank talked of Mozambique's 'blistering pace of economic growth', while the IMF said 'Mozambique is a success story in Sub-Saharan Africa, benefiting from sustained large foreign aid inflows, strong and broad-based growth and deep poverty reduction' (as quoted in, Hanlon, 2010: 78). Its progress is reflected in an array of impressive development statistics. Between 1990 and 2018, for instance, Mozambique's life expectancy at birth increased by 14.9 years. Mean years of schooling increased by 2.7 years, and expected years of schooling increased by 6 years in the same period (UNDP, 2019). Before the more recent economic downturn, the country experienced sustained growth for 25 years, averaging an increase in real GDP of 7.5 percent per year between 1991 and 2016 (Franco & Katiyo, 2017). However, the MUVA programme's premise, to enable more women to take advantage of the country's growth was challenged by a soaring economic downturn that saw growth rates fall from 7.4 percent in 2014, when the project began, to 3.4 percent in 2018. The downturn was caused by a global fall in commodity prices in 2015 and the so-called 'hidden debt crisis' in 2016, when undisclosed loans to state owned businesses worth up to US$2 billion were uncovered.[9]

Even before the more recent downturn, the formulation of Mozambique as a 'success story' has been rightly challenged by donors and scholars alike (Weinstein, 2002; Hanlon, 2010; Phiri, 2012; Cunguara, 2012). Indeed, despite impressive development statistics, the country has remained one of the poorest in the world and growth has been distributed unequally.

[9] Barclay Ballard, 'Mozambique's Dramatic Economic Reversal', World Finance, July 11 2018, at: https://www.worldfinance.com/special-reports/the-mozambique-debt-crisis (accessed 22 September 2022)

According to World Bank (2016) data, between 1996 and 2015, the poverty rate fell from 69.7 percent to 46.1 percent. For each percentage point of economic growth between 1996 and 2009, however, poverty reduced by only 0.26 percentage points, which is nearly half as fast as the average achieved by other sub-Saharan African countries relative to the same level of growth (Ibid). On the basis of these statistics, the World Bank predicted that more than two million Mozambicans could have been lifted out of poverty if the growth between 1997 and 2009 had been more equally distributed (Ibid). Following a period of liberalising reforms in the post-war years, growth in Mozambique has largely been driven by foreign direct investment (FDI) in its extractive industries. As persistent inequality indicates, however, for the most part this has only benefited a small subset of Mozambican society.

From the specific perspective of women's empowerment (the focus of the MUVA programme), it is widely acknowledged that the necessary gender legislation and policy frameworks have been adopted in Mozambique, but that they have not led to concrete outcomes in terms of enhancing gender equality or strengthening the socioeconomic status of women and girls (Tvedten, 2011). Tvedten has argued that when legislation with direct relevance for women is passed in Mozambique 'it tends to encounter socio-cultural realities and customary laws on the ground', which 'vary between different parts of the country and to which national legislation often does not relate' (2011). Like anywhere, gender relations in Mozambique are shaped by both formal and informal institutional arrangements and structures. Normatively, Mozambique is a predominantly male-dominated culture, with prescribed economic roles. For instance, data indicates a lack of support for women in the job market: 54 percent of Mozambicans believed that men should have more right to jobs than women in a 2019 Afrobarometer poll (Bhoojedhur & Isbell, 2019).

In broad terms, Mozambique's post-independence economic reform trajectory is marked by three principal stages: the post-independence socialist policies of the Frelimo government; the donor-led post-conflict structural adjustment reforms that liberalised its economy; and, finally, the renewed emphasis on state capacity and service provision under the influence of 1990s 'good governance' agenda. Observers have tended to stress the limited impact of Frelimo's socialist policies on gender relations in the post-independence period. Whilst political representation and employment rates for women increased, Frelimo's political decisions relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women were 'never really intended to change basic relations of provisioning and influence at the private and domestic level' (Sheldon 2002, quoted in Tvedten, 2011: 6). Ultimately, the implementation of these policies was obstructed by Mozambique's brutal civil war, which had direct and long-lasting effects on the lives of women and girls (Sheldon, 2003). Regions most affected by the conflict, for instance, had higher numbers of female-headed households and experienced higher levels of gender-based violence after the war (Tvedten et al, 2008).

Phiri notes that the post-independence period was marked by the 'forging of nationhood before statehood' (2012: 239). The principle of 'national unity' underpinned a consensus to fight colonialism and supported the defeat of Portugal's colonial grip on power, but 'the contestations that are found in virtually all African states surfaced' (Phiri, 2012: 239) leading to a civil conflict between Frelimo and its main political opponent Remano, which interrupted the socialist revolution envisaged by the former. In fact, the policies of the Frelimo government's post-conflict reconstruction were defined by the principles of market fundamentalism and Pitcher notes that the country became 'the model patient envisioned in neo-liberal prescriptions' (Pitcher, 2009: 3). Through a combination of internal and external political factors, the latter including external aggression from the apartheid government of South Africa, the socialist project in Mozambique collapsed and was overridden by the global

ascendency of free market capitalism. This paved the way for high levels of donor influence and also aid dependence (Niño and Le Billon, 2016).

Nonetheless, in terms of shifting gendered economic relations, perhaps the biggest shift resulted from the post-conflict period of economic liberalisation and the subsequent attracting of large amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI). This increased women's role in non-subsistence economic sectors, particularly in the informal sector. It had a more limited effect on women's access to higher quality jobs in the formal sector, which remains impeded by lower levels of education and, particularly, capacity to speak Portuguese (Gradin & Tarp, 2019). The sectors that have benefited from FDI tend to be capital rather than labour intensive and, as Tvedten notes, the formal labour market in the small-scale industry and service sector is often 'fiercely competitive' in ways that women tend to lose out (2011). Even for educated urban youth, there is high unemployment of both sexes (Franco & Katiyo, 2017). This points to a combination of failures on the part of the education sector to support young Mozambicans' transition into work, alongside the limited number of higher skilled jobs available, particularly in the formal sector.

Under the influence of the donor 'good governance' agenda, the 1990s saw a renewed emphasis on the role of the state in social service provision, and led to a number of progressive gender policies and reforms, including the establishment of a separate Ministry for Women and Social Affairs in 2000; the establishment of Gender Focal Points and Gender Units to promote gender equality in most public institutions; the approval of the Family Law of 2002 and the Law Against Domestic Violence of 2009 (Tvedten, 2011). Similarly, Mozambique achieved high levels of female representation in Parliament; in 2018 39.6 percent of parliamentary seats were held by women (UNDP, 2019). But despite the presence of these progressive policy frameworks, alongside high levels of political participation, the

socio-economic position of women and girls remains far behind that of their male counterparts.

For example, impressive rates of primary school enrolment for both boys and girls have not been matched by progress in terms of educational outcomes. Only 14 percent of women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 27.3 percent of their male counterparts (UNDP, 2019). As a result, literacy rates are nearly 30 percentage points lower for working-age women, and women are much less likely to be able to speak Portuguese, limiting their access to more secure and lucrative jobs in the formal sector (Gradin & Tarp, 2019). This is connected to qualitative differences in the kinds of work that women and men are engaging in. Women are mainly in the informal and agricultural sector, as unskilled workers and especially in crops subsistence. Women's limited access to credit is another major barrier for female entrepreneurship (DFID, 2017). The next section positions these dynamics in relation to the wider political economy of reform in Mozambique.

The political economy of reform and the aid relationship in Mozambique

Scholars have tended to explain the disparity between policy and its outcomes in Mozambique through a combination of internal governance failures, including high levels of elite corruption, alongside a relationship with donors and international financial institutions that is characterised by dependency and extraversion. Graham Harrison, for instance, has described the results of Mozambique's liberalising reforms as 'rendered hollow' by a broader political economy (1999). He argues that Mozambican society is characterised by 'a peripheral capitalism which is strongly subordinated to external powers, especially the international finance institutions' (1999: 177). Others scholars note that aid could also be judged as successful on the basis that a relapse to war has been largely averted and elections

have been regularly held. However, Niño and Le Billon also highlight how the 'peripheral capitalism' that Harrison observes is connected to 'the emergence of investment enclaves that do not contribute to the national economy via job creation or taxation' (2016: 156). They note that Frelimo has been dependent on such groups to build its support base and that:

> Western donors have not forcefully opposed this regressive macroeconomic policy either because they endorse these ideas of market-led growth as the main channel for poverty reduction or because they face the pressures from their own national firms, which compete in Mozambique for tenders and concessions and benefit from the fiscal and investment regime (Ibid).

At the global level, economists such as Thomas Piketty (2014) have brought attention to the limitations of free market capitalism in bringing about equality. In fact, it can be argued that capitalism has inherent qualities that work in contradiction to the achievement of gender equality. Most notably, the commodification of labour does not lend itself to the correction of engrained, institutionalised gender norms that inhibit women's ability to access and benefit from the labour market. As economist Vicky Pryce (2019) highlights, despite operating under a capitalist system of more or less free markets for several decades, the most advanced Western economies are still marked by significant gender disparities across almost all domains of public and private life, including gender pay gaps.

Other observers have drawn attention to a 'pathological equilibrium' in the relationship between the Mozambican government and its donors, whereby the latter have been under pressure to uphold the narrative of Mozambique as success story to legitimise aid expenditure. At the same time, the Frelimo led government has been 'allowed to enrich itself through privatization and corruption' (de Renzio & Hanlon, 2009). This situation has been exacerbated by limited pressure from civil society, Parliament or the media, which 'lack political clout and technical capacity' (Ibid: 254). As a result, there has been limited domestic pressure on the political leadership to take strong positions against donor policies, or to

engage in debates about policy alternatives that could call into question the predominant development paradigm (Ibid).

Other scholars have pointed towards the limited potential for Mozambican citizens to influence policy outcomes due to the incomplete nature of the democratic transition. For instance, Phiri (2012) refers to Mozambique as a 'managed democracy', in which there exists a strong presidency with weak institutions; state control of the media; control over elections allowing elites to delegitimise their decisions; visible short-term effectiveness and long-term inefficiency. In her analysis of the collapse of the socialist project in Mozambique, Pitcher emphasises that, despite the divergence in political ideology, there is also continuity in the relationship between the pre- and post-conflict periods of reform. Pointing towards the Frelimo government's sustained hold on power, she argues that 'at the same time that the emergence of a market economy heralds a break with past economic and political practice, it may also serve to sustain a certain level of power and control' (Pitcher, 2009: 7). In this context, she identifies a form of 'transformative preservation' to draw attention to the continuing influence of the socialist period on the emerging market economy. Moreover, through historical analysis, she demonstrates variation in the extent to which external forces have influenced the political economy of economic reform in Mozambique, emphasising that:

> the history of the political economy of Mozambique should not be written as a narrative about a poor dependent country overrun by imperialism, globalism, capitalism, or any other "ism." The international perspective needs to be complemented by a focus on internal or domestic factors that may have influenced Frelimo's economic policy choices, outcomes, and changes (Pitcher, 2009: 14).

Assessing such internal dynamics, the discovery of significant natural resources, including one of the largest off-shore gas deposits in the world, has led scholars to highlight how the prospect of natural resource rents has affected the political economy of governance in Mozambique (Macuane et al, 2017). Notably, scholars have identified a relationship between

prospective rents and increasing instability, including renewed violence between Frelimo and Remano in 2012, and an Islamist insurgency in the north of the country, where the majority of the country's natural resources have been found. Similarly, the aforementioned 'hidden debt crisis' resulted from illegitimate loans that were made on the basis of prospective rents. In this context, Macuane et al (2017) note that current President Filipe Nyusi's capacity to tackle the root causes of the political crisis with Renamo have been affected by internal ruling elite struggles over access to potential short-term resource rents.

Understanding such endogenous, interest-based dynamics is particularly relevant for examining the political economy of reform in the two sectors that feature in the MUVA case study (Chapter 4). Whilst limited, the literature provides cases, including in the social protection sector, where endogenous demand has emerged out of and alongside international policy agendas (de Renzio & Hanlon 2009; Buur & Salimo 2018; Hanlon 2017). Indeed, the most successful case of policy influence in the three MUVA interventions studied is in a sector in which a degree of endogenous demand has been identified, in Mozambique's social protection sector. In the context of stagnating poverty reduction, an international policy coalition around social protection interventions like the government's public works programme (PASP) emerged. In this context, Buur and Salimo (2018) argue that the PASP has been of strategic value for the government's political survival, particularly in the aftermath of urban social protests in 2008 and 2010. In the MUVA chapter, a similar degree of political demand is not identified in the secondary education sector, and more generally in the donor emphasis on improving the quality of education in light of a widespread 'learning crisis' (Hickey & Hossain eds, 2019), following the introduction of universal primary education. Due to a lack of political demand, the education sector presents are more challenging reform environment for the programme. Chapter 4 compares these two sectoral

reform contexts to demonstrate the role of the political economy in more and less successful attempts to influence policy uptake in the MUVA programme.

To summarise this section, the presence of dominant party authoritarian governance alongside a lack of more 'developmental' leadership, mean that both Mozambique and Uganda reflect challenging environments in which to pursue working 'with the grain' strategies. Both countries have seen their status as success stories weakened by a politics of regime survival marked by corruption and clientelism. From this perspective, they present relevant contexts in which to assess the risks and potential unintended outcomes associated with second orthodoxy approaches. With this aim, the political economies outlined above are used in the empirical chapters to explain both project successes and failures. But the two countries also present different contexts, with Uganda demonstrating higher levels of organisational capacity, particularly in its financial technocracy and longer periods of growth, alongside lower levels of poverty. Because the programmes are so different and aim to influence different reform contexts in different ways, this thesis relies on a sub-national comparative method, which this chapter will go on to outline.

Within-case comparative analysis

The cases in this thesis have been chosen because they reflect different features of second orthodoxy practice, in different ways. Most significantly, the MUVA programme incorporates adaptive practice into its efforts to learn about 'what works' in 'female economic empowerment' programming. From an external position of evidence-generator, it attempts to influence the uptake of policy in the social protection and education sectors. In Uganda, meanwhile, the BSI programme is embedded within its institutional context and acts something like an intermediary and broker within this context: attempting to influence reform

from the inside. It therefore reflects features of politically smart practice that are not as evident in the MUVA case. At the same time, the MUVA case demonstrates features of adaptive practice that are not evident in the BSI's less formal approach.

While the BSI and MUVA programmes are not similar enough to compare with one another, it is possible to make more controlled comparisons *within* the two cases. In the MUVA project, three separate interventions are assessed in one chapter, which reflect varying degrees of success in terms of contributing to the uptake of policies it believes will advantage the socio-economic status of young urban women in Mozambique. These interventions include two within the education sector and one within the social protection sector. The chapter compares the application of 'adaptive learning' approaches in all three sub-cases and seeks to explain why the social protection intervention was more successful at influencing policy uptake than the two education interventions. In the BSI programme, two connected interventions are evaluated across two chapters, as outlined above (Table 1). The first has been able to reshape governance arrangements through increasing local government resource envelopes, but failed to achieve its equity goals in terms of distribution of funding across districts. The second has contributed towards increased government budget transparency, but not been able to shift political behaviour through increased accountability. The variation in terms of results within different interventions enables this thesis to isolate causal mechanisms and therefore understand more deeply what the role of second orthodoxy mechanisms are, in both the intended and unintended results of the programmes.

In this sense, the within-case analysis applies a 'most similar' case selection strategy (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). Whilst recognising that pure parallels are an aspiration within the research design, within-case analysis of the two programmes enables enough features to

remain constant so as to isolate specific causal mechanisms. In the Uganda case, the programme actors and their embedded mode of engagement remains largely constant, as does the wider political context: the political economy of Uganda's decentralisation process and the broader politics of regime survival. What changes are the specific intervention designs and types of incentives that they respond to, including the extent to which they need to challenge the 'prevailing political economy' to achieve their goals. In the MUVA case, the principal mode of engagement (influence through evidence) remains constant, but the types of intervention design change, as do their individual institutional contexts (e.g. some in the education sector, others in social protection sector). Within-case analysis using the 'most similar' case selection design enables this thesis to point towards the conditions under which second orthodoxy models are more likely to contribute to reform, as well as the conditions under which they might hinder it.

While the study looks at two different country contexts, its units of analysis are the donor interventions and their institutional environments. I am therefore using a subnational comparative method. Richard Snyder (2001) distinguishes between two strategies for controlled comparisons in subnational analysis. The first is 'within-nation' comparisons that focus on subnational cases within a single country, and the second is 'between-nation' comparisons that focus on subnational cases across countries. He states that 'these two strategies can be fruitfully combined in a single study' (2001: 96). This seems like an appropriate case selection strategy for this study. Rather than historical episodes of large-scale institutional transformations, this study focuses on micro-level institutional shifts and analyses the role of donor interventions in these shifts. Snyder argues that, by increasing the number of observations in small-N research, subnational units can help overcome the problem "many variables, small N" (Lijphart, 1975). And, by minimising the sphere of

analysis (both temporally and spatially), this type of comparative work can also increase the probability of making valid causal inferences. While 'between-nation' comparisons across the Mozambique and Uganda cases are challenged by the variation in institutional context and nature of the interventions, the final conclusory chapter of this thesis assesses the extent to which the outcomes of the two cases produced similar kinds of results, in terms of both their effects on governance arrangements and their ability to overcome the problems associated with traditional aid methods. Table 3 outlines the parameters against which within-case comparisons can be made.

Table 3. Within-case comparisons

Case	Intervention	TWP Parameter	Internal context: programme level	External context: institutional environment	Outcomes	Comparisons
MUVA	*Aprender* ('Learn')	'Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation'	Same programme design (influence through evidence), but different project & project manager	Education sector; secondary education agencies (at municipal and national levels); Mozambique Pedagogical University (UP)	Unsuccessful project outcomes for learning & female economic empowerment (FEE), limited policy influence	Even with limited or no evidence, policy influence possible
MUVA	*Assistentes* ('Assistants')	'Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation'	Same programme design (influence through evidence), but different project & project manager	Social protection sector; government public works programme (PASP); influential role the World Bank (90% of PASP budget)	Successful project outcomes for FEE and advanced policy influence	Social protection sector of strategic importance to the government's political survival (endogenous demand) & MUVA staff with more tacit contextual knowledge of the sector
MUVA	*Horizonte* ('Horizon')	'Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation'	Same programme design (influence through evidence), but different project & project manager	Education sector, secondary level; Mozambique Pedagogical University (UP)	Successful project outcomes for the development of career plans, but no policy influence/ uptake	Even with positive evidence, no policy influence possible

BSI	Fiscal Decentralisation Reforms	'A detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'	Same programme, programme actors, but different project	Multiple government agencies involved in public finance & service delivery (esp. Ministries of Finance, Education & Health); political history and economy of decentralisation; influential role of World Bank	Successful increases in adequacy; adoption of reforms across government but failure to increase local government (LG) discretion and the overall equity of disbursements (LG)	= same/ similar outcome: Comparisons within specific intervention show that reform features that did not challenge prevailing political economy were more successful
BSI	Budget Transparency Initiative	'Strong political analysis, insight and understanding'	Same programme, programme actors, but different project	Ministry of Finance engagement with budget transparency reforms, and wider government context of corruption and corruption scandals post-2012	Increases in budget transparency, but failure to significantly advance accountability (shape political behaviour)	= same/ similar outcome: Comparisons within specific intervention show that reform features that did not challenge prevailing political economy were more successful

Within-case analysis through using a 'most similar' case selection strategy, where the outcome variable of reform varied, but in which there was enough consistency in the explanatory variables enabled the research to pinpoint specific mechanisms to make valid inferential claims about causal relationships. In doing so, the research broadly applied the principals of process tracing, but did not employ a formal process tracing methodology. There is now fairly common agreement across the literature that process tracing is one of, if not the, most important tool of causal inference in qualitative case study research (Mahoney 2012; Collier et al., 2010; George & Bennett, 2005). Bennett and Checkel (2014: 16) define process tracing as an approach to analysis that 'uses evidence to affirm some explanations and cast doubt on others'. Importance, therefore, 'is placed on the probative value of evidence relative to competing explanations, and on diverse or independent evidentiary tests, rather than on the number of pieces of evidence' (Ibid). Process tracing is closely related to Bayesian logic, in which hypotheses are assigned a probability relative to alternative

explanations, rather than being tested through frequency or propensity (n). Unlike Bayesianism, however, process tracing is not tied inflexibly to its original hypotheses. Process tracing works through a combination of deductive theory testing and inductive theory building, whereby new observations can be introduced and explored.

This thesis predominantly seeks to build the theory of the second orthodoxy by understanding how it works in practice, including how it is being interpreted in practice, and the effects it produces in development programmes. This analysis is conducted predominantly across the three empirical chapters, allowing the last concluding chapter to reflect on how, and the extent to which, the second orthodoxy overcomes the problems associated with 'traditional' donor support for reform. In establishing the effects of the second orthodoxy approaches examined, both intended and unintended, the research applies the principles of process tracing, by examining the causal relationship between programme outcomes and the models that they applied. However, due to its theory-building orientation the research worked predominantly inductively and did not seek to test hypotheses in a formal sense. It sought fundamentally to understand what the second orthodoxy is and how it works in practice.

Data Collection: Interviews and Participant Observation

The data collection in this thesis is based on a combination of traditional political science methods in qualitative research, including elite interviews, alongside more embedded approaches. The latter involved data collection in the form of participant observation. By incorporating participant observation, the methodology reflects features of political ethnography, which is suitable for studies that aim to uncover relations of power 'from within' (Mosse, 2005; Schatz, 2009). Primary data collection also involved analysis of programme documents and the second orthodoxy's policy propositions. In total, across both

cases, 134 interviews were conducted, involving 126 participants. In addition, 10 focus group discussions were held with a further 84 participants (see Appendix; Table 4). The data was collected between 2016 and 2019, and involved almost one full year of fieldwork in Uganda and Mozambique.

Table 4. Data collection (totals)

Case/ category	No. of Interviews	No. of interview participants	No. FGDs	No. FGD participants	Total participants
Uganda BSI	71	72	5	45	117
Mozambique MUVA	47	38	5	39	77
Global perspectives	16	16	0	0	16
Total	**134**	**126**	**10**	**84**	**210**

Following Tansey (2007), to identify this study's research participants, the study applied a form of 'nonprobabibility' sampling, as a method most suitable for research that aims to produce detailed descriptions of individual cases. Tansey argues that probability sampling is necessary when aiming to make generalisations about a wider population. In qualitative case studies, however, the aim is often to learn as much as possible about 'very specific episodes of decision-making at the elite level, where a limited set of actors are involved in deliberations, decisions, and actions regarding a particular political outcome' (2007: 771). In qualitative case studies, random sampling could hinder this objective by excluding key actors or information. A more purposive and yet open sampling method was therefore used.

Based on existing knowledge of my cases, the study applied nonprobability sampling to identify key actors and categories of actors to be interviewed in the study. This included:

programme actors and implementers working at country and headquarter levels; their partners in the Mozambican and Ugandan governments; academics and policy researchers involved in the development of second orthodoxy approaches (see Appendix). During fieldwork, I allowed interviewees to recommend further participants, using a snowballing model. As Tansey (2007) notes, a snowball sampling approach can identify not only the individuals that occupy key positions researchers have identified in advance, but also has the ability to capture important actors who may not have been immediately apparent or predictable. In addition to elite interviews, I interviewed the intended beneficiaries of the two programmes, including members of community budget monitoring groups in Uganda and the young urban women involved in MUVA's economic empowerment initiatives in Mozambique. Engagement with such actors was predominantly in the form of focus group discussions, which were organised with the support of the programme teams and usually took place in close proximity to programme activities.

In Uganda, data was collected in two periods of fieldwork. The first occurred in April and May 2016; it was conducted for the MSc African Studies dissertation, under a 1+3 ESRC DPhil funding structure. This involved 6 weeks of fieldwork in Uganda, as well as preliminary interviews with BSI staff in London. In total, 31 formal interviews were conducted, including ODI/ BSI staff participants (5), Ugandan civil society (2), members of the Uganda Ministry of Finance (7), and local government (9). Three districts were visited outside of Kampala: Kabale, Sheema and Soroti. Five focus group discussions were held in five different sub-counties, involving 45 people. As these field visits were held in conjunction with BSI civil society trainings, the people participating in the focus group discussions were mostly members of community budget monitoring clubs. During the field visits, they were trained by BSI staff in how to use the Budget Website and Hotline, and I was able to observe

the process. During this time, I was also able to observe how the programme actors engaged with local government actors, and how local government responded to the Budget Transparency Initiative.

The second round of data collection took place in 2018. In this round, there was a stronger focus on the BSI programme's work on fiscal decentralisation reforms. The most intensive period of data collection occurred between March and July 2018, when 46 interviews were conducted, including 41 different research participants from within ODI/BSI, the Uganda government, development partners and individual experts. The majority of the participants came from central government (21) because they are the programme's main counterparts. The data collected also included participant observation from weekly BSI team meetings (7) and meetings at the Ministry of Finance (2). Additionally, during fieldwork I spent significant amounts of time working on my thesis from the BSI office and was able to speak to a wide range of BSI staff and consultants both in formal interviews and informally. Both periods of fieldwork also involved collecting and analysing programme documents.

Data in Mozambique was also collected in two periods. The first occurred in Maputo over a period of seven weeks, between July and September 2018. Primary data was collected through a combination of interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). In total, 27 interviews were conducted and four focus group discussions, which included a further 29 participants. The interviews were predominantly made up of the MUVA team in Mozambique (14), but also included their partners: DFID (now FCDO) (1); Mozambique government members (2); civil society (3). Other interviews involved participants in their projects, including Mozambican teachers (3) and teaching assistants (4). The FGDs were

mostly made up of project participants: students (5); youth mentors (6); teaching assistants (15). A small FGD was also held with one of the MUVA's civil society partners (3).

The second round of Mozambique fieldwork was conducted in December 2019, over a period of three weeks. In this second round of data collection, a stronger focus was given to understanding the influence MUVA was having with its government partners. In total, 16 interviews were conducted, involving MUVA team members and consultants (8) and government partners (5), as well as individual experts/ academics (2) and MUVA's donor, the UK government. The latter involved an interview with the UK government learning advisor, and a presentation and discussion of my preliminary findings with a group from the DFID (now FCDO) Mozambique office. Like the Uganda fieldwork, during my time in Mozambique I also worked from the MUVA office, which supported participant observation and more informal engagements.

Interviews at the country level have been complemented by those at the international level (16), with academics and practitioners involved in the development and piloting of new aid methods under the second orthodoxy. A number of remote interviews were also conducted with team members in the two case studies across the whole period of the research; these calls were predominantly used to discuss the preliminary findings of this study, as an approach to validation. I also attended two ODI policy events in London, where BSI Uganda side meetings were held, in which I was able to participate.

There are, of course, methodology concerns about the status of interview data and the reliability of respondents. Berry (2002) warns, for example, that 'interviewers must keep in mind that it is not the obligation of a subject to be objective and to tell us the truth' (680).

However, this should not be taken so far as to infer all interview data is better described as opinion than fact. Interviewing is often the best tool for establishing how subjective factors influence political decision-making, the motivations of those involved, and the role of agency in events of interest (Rathbun, 2008). Data collection through intensive interviewing is particularly appropriate for social science inquiry because it allows the researcher to shed light on "human beings' effort to intentionally transform their environment on the basis of cognition, reflection, and learning' (Rathbun, 2008: 8). Indeed, as Rathbun (2008) has persuasively argued, the disadvantages rarely outweigh the unique advantages of elite interviewing.

Moreover, there are several strategies that can be employed to establish the reliability of interview data. Most obviously, researchers are required to triangulate interview data with multiple sources (Berry, 2002), which could be written documentation or other interviews to encompass diverse or divergent perspectives. George and Bennett (2005: 99) propose a framework of four key questions when assessing the value of interview data: 1) who is speaking? 2) to whom are they speaking? 3) for what purpose are they speaking? 4) under what circumstances? These questions are helpful in avoiding the challenges posed by 'strategic reconstruction'. They help the researcher to consider incentives and motives of both the interviewer and interviewee in interpreting the evidentiary value of the data. In this study, I employed both data triangulation and these reflexive strategies in my research. For instance, it is understandable that the programme participants want to highlight their successes and defend their less successful components. In these cases, triangulation, through either further interviews, or different data sources, helped me build a full picture of what had occurred in the different interventions that I examined. Being aware of the positionality of the

interviewees enabled me to interpret how their specific contexts may affect the way they responded to my questions.

I developed individual sets of questions or themes for each category of my research participants (see Appendix), to allow me to tailor the interviews to the different kinds of research participant and individual perspectives. I used a semi-structured approach, which enabled me to establish a conversation with my participants. I allowed them to lead the interviews into new directions, which I had not necessarily anticipated. Some interviews were very short, especially with government actors who had less time. Others took place over several different interview sessions, allowing me to develop a thick description of how the programmes had developed and engaged with their environments. I did not send questions to my participants in advance, unless requested to do so, as I wanted to avoid strategic reconstruction of the processes I was interested in.

For the fieldwork that took place in 2018 and 2019, I decided not to record my interviews. In the case of interviews with programme participants (MUVA and BSI staff), I found that this facilitated more open conversations and sometimes more informal ones. In the case of interviews with government officials, civil society and the young people involved in the MUVA programme, I perceived that it would support a less intrusive or extractive interviewing approach. Many of my interviews in Mozambique were supported by a translator, which went well but could have created an additional barrier between myself and my research participants in these interviews.

To analyse the data, I relied mostly on my notes from the interviews and participant observation. Immediately after each period of fieldwork I wrote up my notes into a

preliminary analysis of the cases and shared them with the BSI and MUVA programmes. For both, I had opportunities to present my preliminary findings in meetings at the end of fieldwork periods. For the BSI, this took place within a weekly team meeting in Kampala. For the MUVA programme, it took place in a specially arranged presentation at the DFID offices in Maputo. Both of these presentations gave me an opportunity to validate my interpretations of the two programmes with those close to their implementation. Overall, there has largely been convergence around my analysis and, where there has not, this has created further avenues for me to explore. This form of co-constructed meaning has been ongoing throughout the research process, including through sharing my high-level thoughts and promoting conversation around key questions in emails and through remote calls. Using this approach had direct implications on my own and my study participants' positionality in the research process, to which this chapter will now turn.

Positionality

The 'insider-outsider' position I adopted enabled me to gain a closer, ethnographic understanding of the projects. As noted, the study's data collection strategy employs participant observation, which is particularly suitable for studies that aim to uncover power relations and the practice of politics 'from within' (Mosse, 2005; Schatz, 2009). As a development practitioner, as well as scholar, my position as 'insider' and 'outsider' both complicated and enriched my perspective. The research is grounded in a constructivist philosophical foundation, where I aim to build theory "from the bottom up" (Creswell & Clark, 2017: 36), drawing on the multiple, subjective perspectives of my research participants and recognising my own role as a researcher in the fundamentally social process of constructing meaning. At the same time, by engaging with policy and practice that is designed to support social change processes, and my own role as a practitioner in these

processes, I cannot disentangle my research from the central concerns of women's empowerment, equity and inclusive governance with which my programme case studies engage. From this perspective, the study's philosophical underpinnings include features of a more transformative paradigm (Creswell & Clark, 2017) that recognises the role that research can play in the pursuit of social justice and human rights. As a research project that aims to have policy relevance and influence within the development sector, taking on the role of 'critical friend', particularly in the MUVA programme, enabled me to participate in and contribute towards the learning of the programmes.

Due to the fact that I travelled with the teams I was researching and spent significant amounts of time working from their offices, I was able to advance my understanding of my cases through participant observation and more informal conversations and interactions. For example, in Uganda, field visits at the subnational level were held in conjunction with BSI project activities. This enabled me to gain a great deal from observing how BSI project staff interact with other actors, including how they presented the project to media, local government and community-based groups, as well as how these actors responded to the project. I was also given office space at the BSI office in Kampala, and was invited to attend numerous BSI meetings, both internal and external. This was an important way to gain the trust of my research participants. It also enriched and increased substantially the number of observations that I was able to draw from in my analysis. Similarly, in Mozambique, I worked from MUVA's Maputo office and, as already noted, contributed to programme learning through presentations and promoting discussion around my findings.

However, my closeness to the projects also posed challenges for data quality. For instance, in visits to local government in Uganda, my interviewees often mistook me to be someone who

worked for the Ministry of Finance. In fact, as a part of their 'behind the scenes' approach to fostering 'ownership', the budget transparency project was presented as a Ministry of Finance initiative during the trainings and in meetings with local government. Despite introducing the project as a thesis, it is possible that the perceived closeness of the researcher to the BSI project affected how information, especially on wider government accountability issues, was shared. Overall, however, more was gained than lost through the participant observation approach. Moreover, this experience during the data collection that took place in 2016 influenced my decision not to record my interviews and rely on field notes in the 2018 and 2019 data collection periods. This chapter will now turn to a closer consideration of the study's limitations.

Limitations and Challenges

Process tracing is a method geared towards establishing causal inference, which involves 'learning about causal effects from the data observed' (King et al, 1994: 8), as opposed to descriptive inference, which uses 'observations from the world to learn about other unobservable facts'. Whilst causal inference is not an approach to prediction, King et al (1994) argue that the 'key distinguishing mark of scientific research is the goal of making inferences that go beyond the particular observations collected' (1994: 8). According to the principals of constant conjunction, generalisability of results increases as the n increases. The approach taken in this study is context specific and the degree to which findings can travel is therefore limited. This does not mean, however, that qualitative case studies cannot be used to make generalisations about a wider population of cases. In fact, once the mechanism at work has been identified, it is often the researcher's goal to generalize about this mechanism to other contexts (Tansey, 2007; George & Bennet, 2005). Whilst I recognise the validity of contextually specific analysis, the final concluding chapter of this thesis explores the

generalisability of the findings in the three case studies. It does this by attempting to draw comparisons across the cases, as well as with other studies of second orthodoxy and wider aid practice from other contexts.

In addition to this limitation, I have faced three principal challenges in this study. The first relates to researching processes that are evolving in real-time, which, as noted, necessarily pulled me into the process of the projects themselves, but also created something of a 'moving target' in attempting to pinpoint the projects and their outcomes. Not only the projects themselves, but also their political contexts have changed dramatically since I began my research. Most significantly, in 2020, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) was merged with Foreign Office, forming the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), which has been followed by significant UK aid cuts (from the UN target of 0.7% of GNI to 0.5% of GNI). This has created an unstable institutional and political environment in which to research UK aid, and has made it challenging to make conclusions about the relationship between the outcomes of the projects and the wider UK aid bureaucracy, which appears to remain in a state of flux.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed towards the volatility of the UK context, and cannot be separated from the government's decision to cut aid and merge the two departments. The pandemic, merger and UK aid cuts have also had direct effects on the projects I have researched and their wider country contexts. However, this study finished its fieldwork at the end of 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic struck. From this perspective, I have decided to place a boundary around how much of the current political climate I can account for and reflect in my study. While I have drawn on some later, 2020, written results of the two programmes, I have focused my analysis on this study's period of fieldwork, up to December 2019. It is worth noting, however, that in the current context, the

discourse around ‘locally led adaptation’ and ‘localisation’ has continued to be a high priority within UK’s development sector, even if the extent of the FCDO’s engagement with this agenda remains unclear. For example, the FCDO has signed up to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) principles of ‘locally-led adaptation’ for its global work in the area of climate adaptation and financing.[10]

The second challenge relates to the study’s methodology. It was challenging to identify the parameters to apply in determining whether projects had ‘failed’ or ‘succeeded’. In the end, the study has used the goals and objectives of the two programmes as parameters of success and focused specifically on their efforts to support reform or policy outcomes. This is because the second orthodoxy approaches have been designed to increase the effectiveness of development projects and the study seeks to understand if and how the second orthodoxy does this. This has meant that the study has not sought to argue whether these goals were the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ ones to be pursuing in any normative sense. Rather, the study has examined the extent to which the design and implementation of the interventions, including their application of second orthodoxy practices, supported them to achieve their goals.

While the study also looks at unintended outcomes that may end up reinforcing the problems the interventions aim to address, using their own parameters of success is problematic. It projects an assumption that they were the ‘right’ goals to be pursuing, when in fact the study has not sought to make this judgement. Secondly, as more normative goals (e.g. gender equality and decentralisation), aligned with the ‘good governance’ agenda, they could be argued, from a second orthodoxy perspective, to be donor goals that are disconnected from

[10] See: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) ‘Principles for locally-led adaptation’, at: https://www.iied.org/principles-for-locally-led-adaptation (14 January 2022).

the realities of the local context. This research shows, however, that these objectives cannot be said to have been either 'donor' or 'local' ones in any binary sense. In line with Mac Ginty's theory of 'critical localism' (2015), the cases demonstrate the complex networks of actors involved in the projects, where there is both convergence and divergence around the objectives being pursued. In the Uganda case, for instance, the BSI was aligned with the reform goals of the Local Government Finance Commission and technical levels of the Ministry of Finance, but not necessarily the political levels of government. Ultimately, the question of whether decentralisation is 'right' for Uganda should be answered by Ugandans themselves and it is beyond the frames of this research to make such judgments.

Most fundamentally, as Venugopal notes, 'development is famously a fluid, contested category with competing goals and metrics of success, so that every successful project can also be found to have failed by a different measure' (2018, 2). This means that any observations of 'success' and 'failure' in this study are contingent on its alignment with the projects and their objectives, recognising that beyond the frames of these projects they may be considered differently. Ultimately, however, this study is less concerned with making an authoritative claim of project 'success' or 'failure' in an evaluative sense, according to their own parameters. Rather, it aims to understand *how* second orthodoxy practice is being applied and interpreted, and whether it is supporting interventions to overcome the historical problems associated with 'politically blind' approaches.

Finally, the third challenge relates to my positionality as embedded within the programmes. For instance, because I was able to establish greater levels of trust and closeness with programme actors, the interview data that I obtained from BSI interviews differs from that of their government counterparts. Especially in the second round of data collection for the

Uganda case in Chapter 5, most of the interview data I obtained from government was descriptive of the reforms, rather than the political environment and incentives shaping them. This may have been due to the fact that there was some suspicion in relation to the World Bank loan used to finance the reforms, including from the President himself. The interviews that I had with the BSI were much more illuminating of the different political factors driving the process, including the challenges that the reforms met. As a result, my findings may appear disproportionately shaped by the perspectives of programme actors in this chapter. However, I have tried wherever possible to triangulate the insights from these interviews with government perspectives, documentation and secondary literature in order to overcome any potential bias. And, taken together, the two Uganda chapters include insights from more government counterparts than BSI actors. In the case of MUVA, a similar dynamic of being embedded within the programme emerged and, because they were working more externally to government, I gained fewer insights from the latter than I did the programme actors. As Sims (2021) argues, there is certainly a case to be made for further research into the effects of second orthodoxy practices that focuses more heavily on the perspective of local actors. However, as outlined in this chapter, the present study gained a great deal from being embedded within the programmes in terms of informal discussions and trust.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodological approach applied in this study to examine the second orthodoxy. It has shown how the study employs qualitative within-case analysis to indicate the casual relationships between the approaches taken by the two programmes and their effects, both intended and unintended. Recognising the application of second orthodoxy principles is emerging, alongside the evidence base, this study seeks predominantly to build theory, rather than test specific hypotheses about how the second

orthodoxy might contribute to outcomes. The case study design used in this study is particularly well suited to theory building because it enables the researcher to work inductively, feeding in new observations as they arise during the research process. The chapter also outlines the limitations associated with this approach, especially for making wider generalisations beyond the two programme cases. This thesis recognises the validity of context specific analysis. But using the national level and within-case parameters outlined in this chapter as scoping conditions, the study is also able to compare the findings to existing aid critiques and other second orthodoxy cases to explore their generalisability in the empirical and final concluding chapters.

Before turning to the empirical analysis, the next two chapters of this thesis engage in further depth with the literature that this study applies to examine and interpret the second orthodoxy. The literature review (Chapter 2) identifies three broad 'narratives of development failure' that provide a contextual framing for the intellectual environment that has given rise to second orthodoxy approaches. It identifies aid critiques to which it responds both directly and indirectly. This allows the thesis to make broader reflections on the extent to which the approaches overcome the problems associated with apolitical aid in established aid critiques, as well as providing alternative explanations for the less successful outcomes in the project cases. The following conceptual chapter (3) applies this literature to develop a conceptual framework that can be used to identify and operationalise the 'second orthodoxy' in this study, across the three parameters addressed in each of the three empirical chapters: 'adaptive', 'locally led' and 'politically smart'.

Chapter Two: three narratives of development failure

Introduction

This chapter explores the intellectual landscape that has given rise to new aid methods under the 'second orthodoxy', as well as the less policy orientated critiques of aid to which it responds indirectly. Specifically, the chapter explores three primary 'narratives of development failure'. Although there is a great deal of empirical evidence that points to the failures of development in aid-receiving contexts, Venugopal argues that failure has also received 'disproportionate attention' (Venugopal, 2018: 2). Moreover, in the context of governance programming, narratives of development failure frequently feed into wider pessimism about 'the African state' and its role in development. This literature review also recognises that defining development 'success' and 'failure' is not entirely straightforward. Recognising the 'famously fluid' (Venugopal, 2018: 2) nature of development success or otherwise, this literature review frames the aid critiques with which it engages as three 'narratives of development failure' (Table 5 below) to indicate their nature as constructed. Engaging with these narratives enables the thesis to demonstrate the intellectual environment that has given rise to second orthodoxy practices, contributing towards the conceptual framing chapter that follows.

The *first narrative* addresses those discussed in the introduction, which point towards reform implementation failures on the part of African governments and leaders. Such readings tend

to emphasise the distance between the African state's fundamentally 'neopatrimonial' character and the legal-rational Weberian state. This study attempts to move beyond the problematic representations of the African state and its institutions in such readings. The chapter engages with literature that enables a more nuanced and useful analytical understanding of the state. The study uses this literature to propose that the state's informal dimensions work not against, but in support of, the rules that 'shape human behaviour'.

The *second narrative* explores two different types of critique that have pointed towards the 'apolitical' or 'depoliticised' nature of donor support to processes of reform. These readings are distinguished by the extent to which they have fed into the formation of new aid methods under the second orthodoxy. The first (a) set of these readings is policy-orientated and therefore more closely correlated with prescriptions for better aid practice. It argues that development programmes have failed because they have been donor-driven, apolitical and insensitive to the realities of African institutional contexts. This has resulted in the transplantation of technical 'quick fixes' and institutional templates that are not aligned with the political or administrative realities of the aid-recipient context. On this basis, the models argue that aid should be both 'politically smart' and 'locally led'. This literature tends to begin from the same assumptions as the state failure literature: that there has been a persistent 'gap' between the form and function of policies in African institutional contexts. However, under the influence of theories of 'developmental leadership', it views African politics as embodying the endogenous drivers of development effort, as well as its barriers. This study uses this literature to gain a preliminary understanding of the 'second orthodoxy' aid methods and their intellectual underpinnings, which is developed further in the following chapter.

The second (b) type of critique under the narrative of apolitical aid also focuses on the sector's depoliticising tendencies, but has tended to avoid prescribing alternative modes of engagement. This literature pays closer attention to power differentials in the aid relationship, and Africa's relation with the West more broadly. It seeks to show how power is reproduced through certain discursive strategies adopted within the 'development apparatus'. The post-development scholarship, and connected literature, provides insights for this study's theory development because it posits alternative explanations for the failure that is produced by processes of 'depoliticisation' in aid programmes. Fundamentally, the post-development scholarship argues that the 'rendering technical' of aid and development functions discursively to secure the reproduction of elite power and prevent challenges to the status quo.

Whilst the post-development literature provides useful insights for this study's theory development, the chapter challenges some of its more universalising tendencies and the power that it ascribes to the development discourse, which is exclusively dominant and tends to sacrifice the role of human agency in aid-receiving contexts. Drawing from later anthropological studies of aid programmes 'from within', the thesis interprets the 'development discourse' as being defined by its capacity to be shaped by the contexts in which is interpreted and applied. As a product of the 'development apparatus', the study also views the discourse of the second orthodoxy in these terms. Development discourses are defined as often by their capacity to be reshaped and repurposed, as they are by their capacity to govern through 'disciplinary power'. This enables the thesis to examine the second orthodoxy not only in its discursive forms, but also in its practical interpretation within the aid programmes under study.

Finally, the *third 'narrative of development failure'* with which this chapter engages examines the problems that have been outlined in relation to the lack of 'ownership' over reform processes and their outcomes. These critiques have drawn attention the problems connected to 'upward accountability' in the aid relationship between donors and African governments. They have pointed not only to the effects this has on reform outcomes, but also more broadly on the quality of governance by damaging accountability to local constituents in aid-recipient contexts. These critiques provide background the second orthodoxy's prescriptions for 'locally led' practice; but, as the following chapter will demonstrate further, the second orthodoxy can only be said to partially respond to such critiques, by focusing more fully on the instrumental value of 'developmental leadership' than addressing the problematic nature of power differentials in the aid relationship.

Table 5. Three Narratives of Development Failure

Narrative	**Arguments**	**Influence on Second Orthodoxy (SO)**
1. *The 'African state' and its neopatrimonial politics*	Political science and interdisciplinary political analyses, influenced by the state failure readings' emphasis on a gap between the reality of African states and the legal-rational Weberian state.	The second orthodoxy also begins from an identification of a gap between the form of institutions and their function or capability, but differs in its emphasis on identifying the endogenous drivers of development in African governance typologies.
2. *Policies without politics in the 'good governance' agenda*	Two different readings: (a) the first arises mostly in the policy or policy orientated literature, claiming that aid in support of reform has failed because it is 'politically blind'; (b) the second (e.g. post-development readings) also identifies depoliticisation as the reason for failure, but points more firmly towards structural political and economics rationales, which make failure both instrumental and inevitable.	The first set of policy-orientated readings constitute the second orthodoxy's immediate intellectual environment; the second is more remote but offers alternative explanations for why 'politically sensitive' practice may fail to take root in aid bureaucracies.

3. *The problem of 'ownership'*	Both political science and economics literature that has highlighted the challenges associated with the 'democratic deficit', or 'choiceless democracies', whereby government accountability to its citizenry is damaged by upward accountability to donors, who enforce their own agendas in the absence of endogenous demand.	Responded to in the SO in its emphasis on aligning with the 'most likely divers of reform effort', particularly 'elite incentives'. Power differentials in the aid relationship and the broader challenge of accountability only partially responded to.

In reviewing these narratives, three conclusions emerge for this study's theory development. *Firstly*, the critiques that have influenced new aid methods under the second orthodoxy tend to begin with a similar assumption to the 'state failure' literature: that there has been a persistent and prevailing gap between policy and its implementation in African aid-receiving contexts. However, the more policy orientated literature that has informed the second orthodoxy differs from 'neopatrimonial' readings in its identification of politics as also being an endogenous driver of developmental change, seen in theories, for instance, of 'developmental patrimonialism'. *Secondly*, and connectedly, the chapter uncovers a significant tension in the second orthodoxy's intellectual underpinnings, which has remained largely unexplored. The readings indicate a 'political turn' whereby politics is both the problem and the solution: it has been the cause of historical failures, but is also offered as the solution to those failures. This leads the thesis to address the question of how 'politically smart' practices overcome political barriers by aligning with 'elite incentives' in contexts in which those incentives have historically stood in the way of reform. *Thirdly*, the chapter's engagement and critique of the post-development scholarship enables the thesis to develop a conceptual model for the second orthodoxy as a development discourse in its own right. Drawing on later anthropological readings of aid bureaucracies 'from within', the chapter asserts that development discourses are defined as often by their capacity to be reshaped, repurposed and, indeed, 'localised' by the contexts in which they are applied, as they are by

their capacity to govern through 'disciplinary power'. This interpretation of the second orthodoxy enables the thesis to examine the interaction between its discursive forms and practical application on the ground within the programmes under study.

Narrative of development failure I: the 'African state' and its neopatrimonial politics

Beyond the façade

What connects explanations of state and development failure in readings of African public sector reform is the common identification of a 'gap': between the form and function of institutions, or between policy and its implementation. Scholars that view African politics as a barrier to reform typically align with the neopatrimonial readings discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Rather than striving for national betterment, they view African bureaucracies as undermined by the logics of personal and particularistic interests, often read along ethnic lines (Whitfield & Fraser, 2009). For instance, Van de Walle (2001) argues that African elites resist full implementation of donor reforms because applying them would damage access to their sources of patronage. He also claims that partial implementation of reforms benefits African elites because it simultaneously enables the continuation of aid, whilst leaving sources of patronage intact (2001). Such arguments imply that policy conditioned aid under structural adjustment, and later the 'good governance' agenda, failed not because of the nature of the policies themselves, but because of implementation failures on the part of African governments, many of which derive from their fundamentally neopatrimomial nature (Whitfield & Fraser, 2009).

It is, of course, necessary to interrogate and challenge some of the more problematic assumptions underpinning the 'state failure' (Rotberg, 2004; Bates, 2008) literature. First and foremost, it is difficult to assume that because institutions have not developed according to the logics of adjustment and the 'good governance' agenda, that they are somehow lacking in capability. Indeed, the question is not whether or not state capability exists in Africa. It is rather to establish an appropriate model for interpreting how it manifests itself in the political life and complex processes of institutional change in which the continent is engaged. To establish an appropriate theoretical model for the outcome variable of reform, we must first establish a more useful and nuanced interpretation than is available in Chabal and Daloz's 'façade' (Chabal & Daloz, 1999), where African institutions mimic the modern state but fail to abide by its legal-rational rules and expectations.

In a comparative study of African bureaucracies, Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan define the state 'as a vanishing point of macro-historical processes everywhere— a vanishing point that by its very nature is never attained' (2014: 7). State institutions are formed through processes 'that can always be deflected and (at least partly) reversed' (2014: 7). Since the 1980s, the standard approach to studies of African public sector reform has been to observe discrepancies between the empirical realities of 'states at work' and the legal-rational features of a Weberian bureaucracy, or, at the very least, between formal policies and their incomplete or distorted implementation. This has, however, proved to be a problematic and sometimes fruitless scholarly endeavour. As indicated in Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan's characterisation, the state and its institutions are an empirical, and therefore somewhat unstable, reality. The Weberian bureaucracy or 'modern state' is fixed and immutable. It is a formally constructed, ideal-type that is by its very nature 'never attained'. As sociologist Richard Hilbert argues, 'Weber never intended his characterization as an

empirical description of an actual state of affairs' (1987: 71). There is, then, no peculiar logic in the gap between institutional form and function in the context of African bureaucracies. The complex and sometimes contradictory interplay between formal and informal rules, policy and its implementation, is true of bureaucracies everywhere.

Indeed, Bierschenk and Sardan conclude that 'the most likely outcome of a complex policy is partial or selective implementation, the unpacking of policy packages, re-purposing and other actor strategies which convert the end result into something very different to what the policy-makers had in mind' (2014: 37). This aligns with aspects of James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen's (2010) framework for interpreting the role of ambiguity in institutional change. Rather than stability or resilience, Mahoney and Thelen see 'ambiguity as a more permanent feature of institutions, even where rules are formalized' (2010: 5). This, they argue, is because 'institutions are always embedded in assumptions that are often only implicit' and because 'rules are not just designed, but also have to be applied and enforced, often by actors other than the designers' (2010: 13). The implicit nature of assumptions 'opens up space (as both an analytic and practical matter) for change to occur in a rule's implementation or enactment' (2010: 13). This characterisation of institutional change provides a useful starting point for a theoretical model that can be used to analyse how aid actors align with the pre-existing institutional logics of aid-receiving contexts; systems that are characterised not by formal rigidity, but by a 'great deal of "play"' in the interpreted meaning of rules or in the way rules are instantiated in practice (Ibid, 2010: 11).

The first problem with studies of African bureaucracies, therefore, has been a preoccupation with identifying the distance between two apparently dichotomous institutional logics, rather than taking this distance or 'gap' seriously as a site of empirical analysis. The second, closely

connected, problem has been the implicit definition of an 'institution' within neopatrimonial readings, as something that is predominantly formal and therefore opposed to the informal rules of 'traditional' and 'deeply personalised' African politics. A leading thinker in the school of institutional economics that gave rise to the 'good governance' agenda in the 1990s, Douglas North, defines institutions as 'any form of constraint that human beings devise to shape human interaction' (1990: 4). He states that these constraints can be both formal – 'the rules that human beings devise' – as well as informal, such as 'conventions or codes of behaviour' (Ibid). As Nic Cheeseman (2018) outlines, 'institutionless' readings of the African state lack sufficient attention to the interaction between the formal and informal features of institutions.

Almost a decade before Chabal's neopatrimonial reading, Jean-Francoise Bayart had proposed the relation between state and society in Africa as characterised by 'interplay' and 'osmosis' rather than detachment. Indeed, later readings of the neopatrimonial state, place more emphasis on interaction over the separation implicit in Chabal's 'façade'. For Ulf Engel 'the patrimonial system penetrates the legal-rational system', rather than existing independently of it (2005: 8). Formal and informal rules have not simply coexisted, but they have also shaped and sometimes strengthened each other in African institutional contexts. As more recent scholarship is beginning to show (Cheeseman ed., 2018), the ability of formal institutions to shape both informal rules as well as the behaviour of leaders in Africa should not be overlooked.

One example of scholarship that has challenged such 'institutionless' readings is presented in the detailed work of Catherine Boone (2003; 2018). The subject of Boone's work is the role of rural societies and their politics in processes of African state formation. Viewing property and the state as mutually constitutive, Boone uses the evolution of land tenure regimes across

colonial and post-colonial African contexts to understand non-centralised, and locally variant, forms of institutional change. Boone's work offers compelling intellectual justification for a more nuanced interpretation of institutions than is available in the dominant narratives of neopatrimonial states. Boone challenges the associated misconception that land tenure in Africa is predominantly 'informal' and therefore politically, economically and socially disconnected from the state. Boone (2018) notes that the absence of freehold in Africa does not equate to the non-existence of state-recognised rights to occupy and use land, or the absence of structured relations that inform surplus production and appropriation. She writes:

> Like all rulers, rulers in Africa have been constrained and incentivised to seek compliance from subjects and citizens, to build institutions to lower the costs of securing acquiescence, and to enhance the predictability of rule. They have pursued institution-building and state-building strategies that are shaped by the societies they seek to govern. Contemporary land tenure institutions are one outcome of this process (Boone 2018, 61).

Boone's work offers important insights for this study's theory development. If the aim of the 'politically smart' aid model is to align more effectively with endogenous forms of state formation, then Boone's analysis reminds us that existing 'demand' for institutions should not be restricted to the national or formal level of political action and incentives. Indeed, as will be discussed, the 'developmental state' literature influencing some aspects of the second orthodoxy pays little attention to the role of societies and politics, including tensions and conflict, at the state's peripheries. In this model of 'illiberal' statebuilding, centralised forms of political leadership drive state formation processes. Boone's work is particularly relevant to the Uganda case study in this thesis, where the BSI programme operates within the context of Uganda's decentralisation process, and seeks to reverse a political and economic trajectory that has restricted the budgets and discretionary power of local governments.

In summary, just as the fundamental ambiguity and interpretability of institutions must be recognised, so too should the ability of formal rules to 'shape human interactions' in African

contexts. As Boone's work emphasises, the potential for societies to shape statebuilding strategies and outcomes does not preclude the role of formal rules. These two assumptions underpin the theoretical model for interpreting institutional capacity and change in this study, which is developed further through closer attention to how the second orthodoxy defines 'state capability' in the conceptual chapter (2) that follows.

Narrative of development failure II: policies without politics in the 'good governance' agenda

Interpretations of African state failure – the 'gap' between reform and its outcomes – influenced a conception in the development literature that the 'persistence of poor policy and dysfunctional institutions' was put down, not to a lack of knowledge and finance, but to the actions of those 'who gain from existing arrangements and resist change' (Leftwich, 2011; Laws & Marquette 2018: 2). On this basis, a central element of the critiques raised against the 'good governance' agenda has been its failure to account for the role of politics in processes of institutional change. Despite an ostensible move towards politics in the emphasis on 'good policies' (World Bank, 1989; Burnside & Dollar, 2000), the agenda continued to interpret 'governance' in largely apolitical and technical terms throughout the 1990s. A central critique raised against the development sector's engagement with aid-recipient institutions has therefore been its tendency to frame development as a technocratic administrative process, rather than a context-dependent political one.

There are various ways in which the preference for technical solutions played out under the good governance agenda. In the context of democracy assistance, for instance, donors have over-prescribed simplistic institutional solutions to complex problems. They have tended to favour the holding of elections over engaging in messier and longer-term conflict resolution

mechanisms (Cheeseman, 2015). This has led to premature elections in weak institutional contexts of fragile peace, where there is little trust between participating actors, and commitment to democratic norms is low (Cheeseman, 2015: 117). In the context of Uganda's decentralisation project, Awortwi and Helmsing (2014) have argued that until international donors engage with the political economy of institutional reform, 'they will always be bewildered not only by the mismatch between policy objectives and outcomes but also by many unspoken rationales for implementing decentralization reforms' (2014: 766). Tangri and Mwenda (2006) have gone so far as to argue that donors have 'abetted elite corruption' through their unwillingness to confront politically challenging questions. In gender programming, the preference for technical solutions can be seen in approaches that aim to enhance women's empowerment without challenging engrained social and political norms that marginalise women. Feminist development scholars have argued that donor programmes have depoliticised gender equality by failing to address deep-rooted power imbalances and normative structures (Cornwall & Edwards eds., 2014).

Staunch aid critics like William Easterly have gone so far as to claim that the sector's limitations stem not from monetary shortfalls, but from an 'technocratic illusion' (2016: 143). He argues that foreign aid efforts focus on technical solutions administered by a 'tyranny of experts' (2006), rather than engaging in the politics of social and economic change, which he defines as the 'battle of values between freedom and dictatorship' (2016: 143). Easterly claims that 'the problem of poverty is not a shortage of experts: it is a shortage of rights' (2016: 143). When foreign aid actors favour technical solutions over engaging with political struggles, they reinforce dictators who agree to implement the 'good policies' that influential aid effectiveness scholars like Burnside and Dollar (2000) advocate, but fail to provide the social, economic and political rights required to achieve development.

Amartya Sen (2006) critiques Easterly's emotive language as a 'radically oversimplified' (177) dismissal of how the development sector deploys technical expertise. He argues that the problems Easterly raises call for better economic and political reasoning and a bigger voice for the poor in the governance of aid organisations, rather than simple dismissal (Sen, 2006: 175). Easterly's argument is also strongly underpinned by neoliberal values of free-market capitalism. It would be fair to critique, for instance, the way Easterly underplays, and even villainises, the role of the state in his rights-based development model (Okereke & Agupusi, 2015). Nonetheless, there are important and valid claims made by Easterly, which are relevant to the second orthodoxy models being explored in this study and therefore its theory development. Particularly pertinent are his critiques that aid actors have tended to view development as a technocratic administrative operation rather than a political, context-dependent and incremental process in which external actors can only play a limited role.

Forwarding a similar argument, Whitfield and Fraser claim that aid interventions that are geared towards state (re)construction 'tend to view the state as a purely administrative vehicle for development, and thus depoliticize it' (2009: 12). As the introduction outlined, the second orthodoxy's prescriptions for more 'politically smart' practice through 'thinking and working politically' appear to respond directly to such critiques. One this basis, the thesis seeks to understand if practical applications of second orthodoxy approaches enable donors and their programme implementers to overcome the problems associated with 'politically blind' support outlined in the introduction. But there is another interpretation of the 'rendering technical' of aid and development that provides a potential set of alternative explanations for why development had been 'depoliticised' by donors, and thus why it fails. This set of 'post-development' and connected scholarship provides an alternative framework for interpreting the apparent failures of aid to be politically sensitive, but they cannot to be said to feed

directly into the development of the second orthodoxy. The review will now turn to this set of connected of readings.

The 'rendering technical' of aid – its rationales and effects

In their review of the evolving significance of politics in the development sector, Carothers and de Gramont (2013) present a number of reasons for persistent resistance towards political goals and methods among aid actors. They include a lack of confidence in the value of political analysis to produce constructive ideas or alternatives; resistance among donors to appear as if they are interfering with the internal politics of recipient countries; fundamental tensions between the bureaucratic rigidity of the aid industry and the need for greater flexibility that political approaches require; and, a 'shifting international ground' in which the West has lost much of its ideological legitimacy and therefore ability to promote political models (2013: 273). Carothers and de Gramont, however, shy away from a more direct and critical discussion of the incentives behind depoliticising donor engagement in aid-receiving countries. Others have more firmly pointed towards underlying political and economic rationales.

For instance, Graham Harrison, defines governance programmes as being promoted through 'a strongly technical policy discourse' (2010: 51), which operates as a discursive strategy to make them less susceptible to resistance on the basis of normative or ideological grounds. Far from being value-neutral, however, the governance agenda has, according to its critics, functioned as a technocratic veneer masking the extension of a global hegemonic order. Rita Abrahamsen argues that it is 'politically naïve' to treat donor policy agendas – both political and economic – as merely technocratic. For Abrahamsen, donors 'do not seek simply to understand and describe the world, but to actively shape it' (1997: 46). Harrison makes

similar contentions in his discussion of 'governance states', which are formed through the neoliberal policies and practice of international financial institutions (IFI) (2004). For both Harrison and Abrahamsen, the 'good governance' agenda is driven by an underlying economic rationale that opens up aid-recipient economies to international capital. It is a largely external contrivance: an 'elite project' that benefits only a narrow set of participating government and civil society actors (Harrison, 2010: 67).

Both Harrison and Abrahamsen draw from discourse analysis to show how 'visions of development' are constructed and manifested through the deployment of language, science and technical expertise. In her analysis of the good governance agenda, Abrahamsen argues that a focus on discourse is important because it uncovers how 'particular forms of actions and interventions' are legitimised and justified (2000: 23). Specifically, she argues that 'the good governance discourse sanctions the right of Western countries to intervene in the third world to promote their vision of development and democracy, while simultaneously marginalising alternative interpretations' (Ibid: 23). Critics of the good governance agenda like Abrahamsen propose that this vision aligns with certain norms whereby the market is seen as the principle agent of development: a vision in which democracy is "thin" and fully aligned with the rationales of economic liberalisation. Not only is a specific vision of development normalised through the development sector's 'representational practices' (Abrahamsen, 2000; Escobar, 1995), but discourse reconfirms and further entrenches unequal relationships of power between the Western donors and aid recipients.

As a 'technology' of governance, the post-development scholars (Ferguson, 1990; Escobar, 1996; Li, 2007) are concerned with the effects of development discourse in constructing and ordering social realities, which they see as rendered through the assumed superiority and

universality of Western modernity and positivist scientific traditions. Under the influence of Foucault, they trace the relationship between the development sector's discourse and outcomes of power and reproduction. Donors deploy technical expertise, reflected in 'regimes of truth' that construct and secure their right to develop the 'underdeveloped' (Escobar, 1995). In doing so, the post-development scholars see the development discourse as governed by the same principles as the colonial context in its capacity to 'invent Africa' through certain representational practices (Mudimbe, 1990). Escobar argues that, much like the colonial project, the development apparatus successfully deploys 'a regime of truth' that creates the 'Third World' as 'a space for 'subject peoples'' and ensures certain control over it (Escobar, 1995: 9). Post-development critiques, therefore, strike at the very notion of development as a desirable objective (Argawal, 1996). In the 'Post Development Dictionary', Wolfgang Sachs famously claims that 'it is not the failure of development which has to be feared, but its success' (1992; 2009: xxxi), illustrating the power ascribed to a discourse that is perceived as sacrificing human agency (Lie, 2008).

Post-development critiques are useful for demonstrating the ways in which features of the 'development apparatus' like planning can be pursued through methods that appear rational and objective, but are in fact highly ideological and political. Planners employ numbers, statistics and social categorisations that place boundaries around what is possible and on, or through whom, development should be enacted; planning creates the 'objects' of development and therefore also has the potential to create the 'objects of power' (Abrahamsen, 2000; Escobar, 1992; 1995). Through such scientific processes of apparent objectivity and neutrality, Escobar, for instance, shows how planning can allow 'experts and elites to delink explanations of 'the problem' from themselves as the non-poor, and assign them purely to factors internal to the poor' (1992: 155). He concludes that:

> Inevitably, people's lives at the local level are transcended and objectified when they are translated into the professional categories used by institutions. In short, local realities come to be greatly determined by these non-local institutional practices, which thus have to be seen as inherently political (Ibid).

A central tenet of the critiques raised against the 'development apparatus' in these studies, therefore, is that the 'rendering technical' (Li, 2007) of development functions discursively, enabling certain political effects in aid projects. Tania Li proposes that '[q]uestions that are rendered technical are simultaneously rendered nonpolitical' (2007: 7), and this depoliticization process is connected to a number of omissions. She notes that depoliticised programmes 'pay astonishingly little attention to the character of ruling regimes, which they continue to treat as development partners desiring only the best for their citizens' (275). She also notes that interventions continue to exclude from their technical domain the structural sources of inequality; rather, they focus on the incarcerated "local" and forward a logic whereby the poor can be guided to improve their own conditions by their own efforts. She terms this exclusion as the omission of 'political-economic' questions (7). The failure to ask 'political-economic' questions results in the design of programmes that fail to address the structural sources of inequality and inhibit challenges to the status quo.

Such processes of depoliticization ultimately lead development programmes to fail in their proclaimed objective to empower the poor. But, as Li's reading indicates, in this failure, certain political effects are produced that may explain why failed development projects are replicated again and again. As she argues, new programmes routinely embody the limitations of the programmes that they replace. This may be explained by the instrumental value of "failure"; as Arun Argawal (1996) notes in his review of the post-development scholarship:

> 'the real impact of "development" is the extension of state capacities, the legitimization of the state and its asymmetrical relationship of power that it defends,

> and the delegitimization of transformative challenges to the status quo at the local, national and international levels' (471).

This line of reasoning is reflected in the seminal work of James Ferguson's 'Anti-Politics Machine' (1990), where a process of de-politicisation is observed in an ethnography of a specific aid programme. Ferguson looks closely at how a decentralisation project in Lesotho interacts with participating government and civil society actors. He argues that by 'uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of the powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of development is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicised today' (1990: 256). For Ferguson, the development apparatus is 'a machine ("the antipolitics machine") for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power, which incidentally takes "poverty" as its point of entry' (256). Ferguson argues that the extension of state power is an unintentional consequence of the development apparatus, but it nonetheless serves to explain why failed development projects should be replicated again and again. This chapter will now turn to a closer inspection of the post-development critique, to demonstrate how, and the extent to which, it will be applied in this study.

Beyond the Anti-Politics Machine

There is much that can be drawn from the post-development scholars in understanding the operation of aid programmes and the development discourse. The idea that power and politics are not restricted to the formality of the state and electoral competition, but are present in discourse, subjectivity, and even everyday forms of behaviour has enabled scholars to uncover how power operates in far more complex and sophisticated ways (Venugopal, 2018). As Venugopal argues, the 'implications of this expansive ontology of politics are significant, and have opened up new landscapes of investigation and speculative reflection' (2018: 7).

However, there are also reasons to be cautious about applying these theories of development failure. In attempting to uncover and deconstruct metanarratives, the post-development scholars can be said to have produced one of their own: one in which failure is inescapable and therefore the development project must be done away with altogether. There are three connected problems associated with this narrative. The first is a lack of attention to variation in outcomes and corresponding effort to explain variation. The second is a tendency to discount the value or capacity of the state to further the interests of its citizens in aid-receiving contexts; alignment with the state is intrinsically problematic for human agency in these readings. And, thirdly, the post-development scholars propose a model of power that is almost exclusively hegemonic and authoritarian; this is connected to the exclusion of self-determination and agency in the aid-receiving context, and, indeed, amongst aid practitioners themselves.

The cases in this study point towards variation in the extent to which, and how, 'political-economic' questions are used to address the conditions underlying the development problems that they aim to shift. There is also corresponding variation in the extent to which the programmes achieve their goals, and therefore succeed or fail. In some instances, the framing of problems in technical terms may simply serve to enable aid practitioners to gain access to, and influence, political spaces that they may not have otherwise been able to. In other instances, programme implementers seem to genuinely overlook or disregard 'political-economic' questions, which appear beyond their capacity to address. This study uses the variation presented by its cases to challenge some of the more universalising assumptions in the post-development literature, and to show the conditions under which the second orthodoxy might be more or less successful.

If the post-development scholars advocate any alternative to development at all, then it involves supporting 'transformational' grassroots movements that are able to challenge the authority of the state. Much like the narratives of African 'state failure' and Easterly's reading of the development sector, these critiques often work from a vison of the state as corrupt, despotic and incapable of forwarding the rights of its citizens. The state is viewed as an accomplice to 'development' and all of its hegemonic tendencies in the post-development narratives. At the same time, the 'peasant' is romanticised as the source of indigenous knowledge and alternatives to the dominant Western vision of development (Escobar, 1995). As outlined earlier in this chapter, this study argues against this recurring pessimism towards the African state. At the same time, it recognises that alignment with a dominant political economy that fosters growth at the cost of human rights poses clear moral and ethical questions that cannot be ignored in aid programmes (Dasandi & Erez, 2017; Yanguas, 2017). This study begins from a position that it is not alignment with state power that is intrinsically problematic, but the type and form that that power takes.

Finally, there is a distinction to be drawn in readings on the depoliticization of aid. On one hand, scholars like Abrahamsen and Harrison identify the 'technocratic veneer' as something both purposive and opaque, used by donors aiming to 'actively shape' the governance of aid-receiving states, but wishing to do so undetected. On the other, post-development readings appear to consider the preference for technical solutions as a form of misguided oversight or naiveté on the part of programme architects and implementers. For instance, Ferguson, who identifies an underlying political rationale in the failures of technical solutions, finds that project staff and planners are unable to do much about the political obstacles they encounter 'because they *sincerely* saw "decentralization" as an apolitical administrative reform' (1999, 225, emphasis added). The former fall under the dependency theory frame, whilst the latter

allow the 'will to improve' to be taken on its own terms (Li, 2007), as a genuine endeavor on the part of development agents and agencies. However, all of these readings forward depoliticisation, and therefore failure, as an inevitable feature of the development apparatus because it is written indelibly into the logics of its discourse.

At the macro level, it would indeed be naïve to believe that donors are not driven by underlying political and economic rationales when engaging in aid-receiving countries. Scholarly attention, for instance, has been paid to the securitization of aid and international relations following the 9-11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Western aid to Uganda, and the resistance of donors to call out its repression of civil and political rights, cannot be separated from its geopolitical position as an ally in the fight against global terrorism (Hagmann & Reyntjens, eds., 2016). At the same time, framing aid interventions as administrative and technocratic endeavours is likely to make them more palatable to aid-receiving governments averse to political interference in their domestic affairs. Moreover, Abrahamsen, Harrison and the post-development scholars present useful theoretical models for interpreting the 'governance effect' of depoliticising aid. Foreign aid interventions reproduce structures of political authority and state power in aid-receiving contexts and a primary mechanism through which this is done is the 'rendering technical' of the development field (Li, 2007).

However, the individual incentives, beliefs and strategies of aid actors when engaging in these processes are likely to be far more complex and contested than these broad structural narratives imply. In many ways, the 'thinking and working politically' models are geared towards the individual level of action: the incentives faced by aid implementers and how they interpret and negotiate the intimate political spaces in which they work. In fact, very little

attention is paid to explaining historical, cultural and political context, at either national or international levels, in the case studies that have been used to develop these approaches (Booth & Unsworth, 2014), reflecting their own omission of 'political-economic questions'. As products of the development apparatus themselves, it is not surprising that second orthodoxy models should replicate some of its de-politicising and de-contextualising tendencies. But the focus on individuals and agency also provides a potentially useful counternarrative to the construction of a hegemonic discourse in the post-development accounts.

As David Lewis and David Mosse have observed, later anthropological studies aiming 'to uncover more of the inner workings of development agencies' (2006: 3) have challenged the formulation of power as dominance. They have exposed 'the complex and autonomous agency' of the diverse actors within government bureaucracies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or markets that ensure that the capacity to produce order is in practice very limited (2006: 3-4). Whilst the inherently political nature of development planning cannot be dismissed in colonial and post-colonial contexts, the extent to which the development sector's planning enterprise has been able to order and control social realities is more limited than the post-development readings imply.

What the second orthodoxy responds to, fundamentally, is the failure of planning to bring about 'development', as envisaged by development projects and planners. As James Scott (1998) observes, top-down planning embodies inherent limitations. Most centrally, its capacity to order social realities is defined by informal factors beyond its control; formal order, he notes, 'is always and to some considerable degree parasitic on informal processes, which the formal scheme does not recognize, without which it could not exist, and which it

alone cannot create or maintain' (Ibid: 310). Across a number of 'extreme instances of massive, state-imposed social engineering', Scott shows how the 'necessarily thin', schematic model of social organisation and production employed in planning is inevitably inadequate as a set of instructions for creating a successful social order. Without embodying, responding to, and engaging, the informal, simplified rules can never generate a functioning community, city, or economy (Ibid: 351).

As Tania Li herself admits, 'claims to order are always fragile, contested, built on compromise; hegemony is not imposed but has to be worked out' (Li 1999, as quoted in Lewis & Mosse, 2006). In forwarding a model of power that is exclusively dominant – a discourse regime that works through dominance and exclusion – the post-development readings produce their own exclusionary narrative, one in which the potential for human ingenuity and agency to shape alternatives is extinguished. The universalist assertions of the development discourse have undoubtably been deployed as mechanisms of control and subjugation in African colonial and post-colonial contexts. But the potential for such contexts to reshape, adopt and even 'localise' the development discourse should not be underestimated. This point is made in Cooper's historical account of the post-war years, in which the concept of development became entangled within justifications to end the imperial project in Africa. In his analysis of the imperialist 'modernizing bureaucrats', Cooper (1998) shows how 'Africans took over the development project' in order to reject colonial rule:

> Much as one can read the universalism of development discourse as a form of European particularism imposed abroad, it could also be read […] as a rejection of the fundamental premises of colonial rule, a firm assertion of people of all races to participate in global politics and lay claim to a globally defined standard of living (1998: 84).

Cooper emphasises 'the openings as well as the closures around the elusive and multivalent concept of development' (1998: 85). By pointing towards its complexity, he also highlights

its capacity to shift and change in relation to the contexts in which it is applied. This set of observations informs how this thesis interprets the second orthodoxy, as a development discourse in its own right. It highlights the importance of understanding not simply the effects of the discourse, but how it is being interpreted and applied within the specific localities of the two programmes under study. The study observes for instance, the tensions that arise when practices like 'adaptive learning' are practically interpreted within the frames of pre-existing scientific management principles, aligned with the UK aid bureaucracy's 'efficiency' agenda. This allows the study to point towards the *interaction* between the second orthodoxy's prescriptions and its empirical, and therefore somewhat unstable, application on the ground. This aligns with the interpretation of reform being operationalised this study. To return to Bierschenk and Sardan: 'the most likely outcome of a complex policy is partial or selective implementation, the unpacking of policy packages, re-purposing and other actor strategies which convert the end result into something very different to what the policy-makers had in mind' (2014: 37). As a model, or set of models, designed to influence changes in practice, studying the second orthodoxy in its 'localised' and empirical forms is as important as interrogating its discursive underpinnings, which will be the full focus of the following conceptual chapter. Before turning to this conceptual chapter, the final, third narrative of development failure is examined to assess the wider intellectual environment of the second orthodoxy's 'locally led' prescriptions.

Narrative of development failure III: the problem of 'ownership'

A central proposition in the literature on aid is that it creates perverse incentives, which have negative consequences for accountability between citizens and the state. Scholars, for instance, have pointed towards the impact financial aid flows have had by substituting domestic taxation (Moss et al, 2006). According to this argument, aid reduces the incentives

of governments to collect taxes and therefore improve public services by making them more accountable to donors than to their own citizens. Donors, however, cannot claim to be representatives of recipient country populations and they cannot be held accountable by them. Aid, therefore, results in a 'democratic deficit' (Whitfield & Fraser, 2009: 13) or what Mkandawire named 'choiceless democracies' (Mkandawire, 2006; 2010), which impede the development of public sectors in aid-receiving countries (Moss et al, 2006; Mkandawire, 2010).

Lindsey Whitfield and Alastair Fraser (2009) have interpreted this deficit in relation to degrees of 'ownership' that aid-receiving governments have over donor-supported reforms. They claim that external state building interventions 'create an alternative system of rule where a range of actors – states, donors, civil society, the private sector, supranational institutions – all take a slice of decision-making authority and play a role in the construction of multiple accountabilities' (12). They name this 'multilayered governance', which obscures clear lines of accountability and therefore also hinders the possibility of representative politics. By taking authority and accountability further from the people of aid-receiving countries, multilayered governance also threatens ownership over development policies. Within this structure of governance, 'ownership' over development policies and processes becomes defined as commitment to externally designed reform agendas, rather than the potential for governments to attach their policies to 'popular aspirations' (Whitfield & Fraser 2009, 13; Mkandawire, 2010; Abrahamsen, 2004; 2013).

This, Whitfield and Fraser argue, is why 'politics matters' in development assistance. Without achieving ownership, which they define as 'the degree of control recipient governments are able to secure over implemented policy outcomes', external actors face the

same criticisms as past colonial rulers (2009: 4). And, as Francis Fukuyama has argued, institutional change is unlikely to occur without attaching to internal political demand (2004). The literature underpinning the second orthodoxy takes seriously the need for endogenous demand, which it sees as reflected in 'the most likely drivers of development effort within poor countries' (Booth, 2011: 10). TWP argues that donors should seek out, identify and respond to these drivers in reform interventions. For developers of the TWP approach like Booth, however, internal demand for institutions takes the form of 'elite incentives', rather than attachment to broader popular aspirations implicit in the model of Whitfield and Fraser (2009). This chapter now turns to a more detailed discussion of how endogenous demand in the form of 'elite incentives' has been theorised in the literature underpinning the second orthodoxy.

Endogenous political demand & 'Developmental leadership'

An important feature of the intellectual environment that has given rise to 'politically smart' models is comparative studies that have sought to identify African governance typologies that promote economic growth and development. Particularly notable is Tim Kelsall's work on 'developmental patrimonialism' (2013), within the Africa Power and Politics (APPP) research consortium (2007-13). Aligning with the working 'with the grain' (Kelsall, 2008; Levy, 2014) approach to supporting institutional reform in Africa, the APPP consortium argues for 'getting seriously engaged with country realities' by opening up the 'black box' of 'elite incentives' (Booth, 2012a: 13-14). Reflecting this approach, Brian Levy argues that 'transformation occurs not in one fell swoop, but as the cumulative consequence of many initiatives, large and small, each involving ongoing experimentation, adaptation and learning' (2013: 620). Broadly speaking, this translates into going 'with the grain' (Kelsall, 2008; Levy, 2014) of the context and avoiding comprehensive overhauls in government systems;

instead, fostering and working with 'islands of effectiveness' and using targeted, problem-solving approaches. Within the TWP literature, Tony Blair's African Governance Initiative (AGI) is given as an example of such a model, where 'technical assistance is closely targeted to releasing specific bottlenecks in performance at the centre of government, rather than supporting comprehensive reform' (Booth, 2011). In his evidence to the International Development Committee on Tackling Corruption Overseas, scholar Mushtaq Khan makes a similar proposal in recommending that, rather than a "zero-tolerance" policy, the UK Department for International Development should use a 'targeted' approach that focuses on specific instances of corruption that constrain social and economic development. This, he argues, will be more effective than 'broad-based and untargeted anti-corruption strategies' (Khan, 2016).

Being 'politically smart' also involves recognising that the corrupt, rent-seeking behaviour of African leaders is not always geared towards personal accumulation. Using Rwanda as a primary example, Tim Kelsall proposes a form of 'developmental patrimonialism', whereby rents become centralised and reinvested in the long-term development goals of strong and visionary leaders. Rwanda is also used in the APPP research to serve as an example of 'practical hybrids', which successfully adapt 'modern' institutions (based on Western models) with the 'grain' of 'local' 'social practices and expectations' (Kelsall, 2013b: 354). The APPP research argues for 'local anchorage' in governance programming on the continent. Much like 'practical hybrid' models, this idea is based on observing the success of local public service provision that combines both 'traditional' and newly constituted forms of public authority. In Malawi, for example, the APPP research observes that 'town chiefs' emerged in urban areas that were lacking in both local government and 'traditional' forms of service provision. Rather than being driven by an externally constituted development

challenge (or funding opportunity), the town chiefs responded to a self-defined and locally specific 'collective action problem' to provide service delivery to local communities in the state's absence.[11]

Tim Kelsall's work on developmental patrimonialism provides supporting theory for literature on the 'illiberal state' in Africa. Drawing on comparative analysis of Angola, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Sudan, Will Jones, Ricardo Soares de Oliveira and Harry Verhoeven argue that 'illiberal states' are defined by their rejection of inclusive, democratic institutions (see Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012), whilst demonstrating strong and conventional state-building capabilities. Illiberal states exercise territorial control and sovereignty, stimulate economic growth, and apply developmental patrimonialism in their accumulation and reinvestment of rents into state infrastructure (Jones et al, 2013). By arguing that African regimes can, in fact, demonstrate successful *state-led* development, Jones et al position their model against literature that has sought to frame the African state as 'failed', 'fragile' or an incomplete 'façade' by contrast with the legal-rational Weberian model. With its emphasis on 'elite incentives', aspects of the 'politically smart' model reflect a translation of the illiberal state theory into development policy and practice. But shaping the illiberal theory of statebuilding into development policy is problematic on two main fronts.

Firstly, the empirical applicability of developmental patrimonialism is highly restricted on the African continent. In a context like Rwanda's, and to a lesser extent Ethiopia's, where rent-seeking is centrally controlled, this *may* be a feasible model for economic development. In

[11] In the Africa Power and Politics research, David Booth emphasises the importance of defining 'development challenges' as 'collective action problems'. Institutional change in developing countries will not result from citizens putting pressure on governments (demand side), or donors putting pressure on elites (supply side). It will result from the combined force of 'collective action', whereby donor and recipient country interests and incentives interact and align (Booth 2012a).

Uganda, however, and the majority of other African states, where rent-seeking is neither centralised nor coordinated towards state building in this way, the model is much less viable. The second problem is the theory of development proposed by the model. When used as an evidence base for shaping policy, it promotes a development paradigm in which there is a significant trade-off between growth on one hand, and economic and political rights on the other. This trade-off is termed by Kelsall as 'the vexed question of human rights' (2013a, 157). For Kelsall and other theorists of the developmental African state (Booth et al 2012; Khan, 2012), democracy 'amplifies clientelist demands' and makes the 'long-horizon rent centralization' (2013a: 157) of the kind seen in Rwanda impossible.

While second orthodoxy approaches cannot be said to promote the 'illiberal' statebuilding model, such theories of developmental leadership have had implications for the way the second orthodoxy views politics and its role in development. The politics that emerges from TWP, is one of realism, pragmatism and 'trade-offs'. It has been influenced by the success of 'developmental states', which have managed to drive economic growth and prosperity without the commitment to human rights and democratic governance proposed under the good governance agenda. A connected discourse has arisen within debates influencing new aid models that donors should be more realistic and pragmatic about their expectations. The discourse of 'best fit', 'good enough governance' (Grindle 2007; Yanguas 2017) is aligned strongly with what the second orthodoxy views as the goals of a donor governance programme. As Dasandi and Erez have noted of the 'political turn' in the development sector: 'proponents of TWP ['thinking and working politically'] tend to take a favourable view of developmental regimes, even if they exhibit authoritarian characteristics or are involved in rights abuses' (2017: 4).

By responding to critiques that traditional approaches to governance reform have been ineffective and inefficient, the 'working with the grain', 'best fit' models align with a consequentialist logic (Yanguas, 2016). Consequentialist models determine the ethics of their intervention through calculating its consequences. In this approach, the 'end justifies the means'. Pablo Yanguas (2016) views the development sector's management agenda as defined by this consequentialist logic through its highly calculated approach to maximising results whilst minimising risk. He argues that the 'discourse of low-level effectiveness' reflected in the 'best fit', 'good enough' governance models implies:

> a perverse kind of positive feedback in which seemingly high-performing elites are rewarded, whereas difficult political settlements are increasingly avoided by politically savvy aid. In the process, the allure of the 'good autocrat' risks endearing donors and their ecosystem to those less- than-democratic political settlements, which seem to behave as 'developmental states' (Yanguas, 2017: 222).

In accounting for the politics of reform in aid-receiving contexts, neither PDIA, nor TWP, models are promoting a form of political engagement that development scholars like Amartya Sen (1999) advocate, based on the politics of pro-poor enfranchisement. Rather, they are propositions for making aid work more effectively through learning how to respond and adapt to the political realities of the local context, with an apparent resistance to propose what 'effective' development might look like in normative terms.

In reviewing the literature connected to this third narrative of development failure, a central tension arises. As noted, the starting point of the second orthodoxy's approach to politics is that the 'persistence of poor policy and dysfunctional institutions' is put down, not to a lack of knowledge and finance, but to the actions of those 'who gain from existing arrangements and resist change' (Leftwich, 2011; Laws & Marquette 2018: 2). How, then, does 'politically smart' practice enable development programmes to produce different outcomes, while aligning with 'elite incentives' in the same contexts in which those incentives have

historically stood in the way of reform? Indeed, there is a fundamental tension within the second orthodoxy's approach to politics that has remained largely unexplored in its underpinning literature: on the one hand, it points towards local political conditions as having been the primary barriers to reform historically; on the other, it proposes that more effective aid involves aligning with local political conditions. The thesis examines how this apparent tension plays out in the context, particularly, of the BSI programme in Uganda. In Chapters 5 and 6, the thesis confronts this tension in the literature through assessing the effects and implications of adapting to local political conditions for reform in challenging contexts like Uganda.

Conclusion

This chapter has engaged with literature that sheds light on the intellectual landscape that has given rise to new aid methods under the 'second orthodoxy'. In doing so, it has introduced some of the central tenets of the aid models and the established aid critiques to which they respond, both directly and indirectly. The chapter has engaged with three primary narratives of development failure in order to provide a basis on which to interpret how, and the extent to which, the second orthodoxy responds to established aid critiques. This analysis will be carried forward in the following conceptual chapter, which will look more closely at the second orthodoxy's specific prescriptions for more effective aid and development assistance.

I argue that there are three central points to be taken from the different narratives of development failure with which this chapter has engaged. Firstly, the critiques that have influenced new aid methods under the second orthodoxy tend to begin with a similar assumption to the 'state failure' literature: that there has been a persistent and prevailing gap

between policy and its implementation in African aid-receiving contexts. Connectedly, the 'thinking and working politically' literature begins with the conception that reform has failed to reshape 'the fundamental drivers of politics' and has therefore produced limited results. The more policy orientated literature that has informed the second orthodoxy differs from 'neopatrimonial' readings in its identification of politics as also being an endogenous driver of developmental change. Informed by interpretations of 'developmental leadership', scholars such as Booth and Kelsall highlight the role of 'elite incentives' in more successful reform efforts on the African continent.

Secondly, and connectedly, the chapter has highlighted a significant tension in the second orthodoxy's intellectual underpinnings, which has remained largely unexplored. While applications of 'developmental patrimonialism' hold limited empirical applicability on the African continent, the theoretical logics of these readings informs a 'political turn' whereby politics is both the problem and the solution: it has been the cause of historical failures, but is also offered as the solution to those failures. This leads the thesis to address the question of how 'politically smart' practices overcome political barriers by aligning with elite incentives in contexts in which those incentives have historically stood in the way of reform. This question is addressed most directly in the two BSI Uganda chapters (5 & 6).

Finally, the literature review engages with the post-development scholarship and connected literature. The chapter recognises that the second orthodoxy only partially responds to this literature. Most fundamentally, post-development scholarship on the 'depoliticisation' of development envisions a 'development apparatus' in which discursive practices ensure that failure is both instrumental and inevitable. In promoting new modes and approaches for more effective development assistance, the second orthodoxy's interpretation of 'apolitical' aid

obviously diverges from the logics of such fatalistic metanarratives. Nonetheless, the chapter's engagement and critique of the post-development scholarship enables the thesis to develop a conceptual model for the second orthodoxy as a development discourse in its own right. Drawing on later anthropological readings of aid bureaucracies 'from within', the chapter asserts that development discourses are defined as often by their capacity to be reshaped, repurposed and, indeed, 'localised' by the contexts in which they are applied, as they are by their capacity to govern through 'disciplinary power'. This interpretation of the second orthodoxy enables this thesis to examine the interaction between its discursive forms and practical interpretation on the ground within the programmes under study. The following chapter will look more closely at the specific policy and practice prescriptions of the second orthodoxy to develop a clear conceptual framework through which it can be operationalised in this study.

Chapter Three: defining the 'second orthodoxy' and its effects

Introduction

There is widespread agreement and rhetorical convergence around the principles of being more sensitive and responsive to local political, social and cultural realities in international development practice. At the same time, as King (2020) observes, the propositions of 'locally led' and 'politically smart' approaches lack clarity and can mean different things to different people, in different contexts. To characterise the aid methods and approaches examined in this study, a phrase first proposed by Graham Teskey (2017) is used, in a policy paper that asked: 'are we seeing the emergence of a second orthodoxy?'; he noted:

> [t]he purpose of this paper is to consider the extent to which a 'second orthodoxy' is slowly emerging which can stand alongside, and in some cases may supplant, the 'first orthodoxy' of the traditional project framework. Care has to be taken in making this argument, as there is certainly no consensus within the development community on its importance, and even among advocates, there are slightly differing interpretations of what this second orthodoxy looks like. Further, it is not absolutely clear that the two orthodoxies can co-exist (Teskey, 2017: 2).

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework that will be employed in this study to assess the second orthodoxy and its effects in the two programme case studies. As outlined in the introduction, the two primary sources of conceptual framing used to clarify and operationalise the second orthodoxy are 'thinking and working politically' and 'doing development differently', the latter being informed primarily by the theory of 'problem-driven iterative adaptation'. In the context of 'differing interpretations', this chapter seeks to prescriptively define the second orthodoxy to establish its usefulness as a concept, or set of concepts, that can be used to characterise the new aid methods under study. In this regard, the chapter identifies enough commonalties across the different epistemic communities to inform a cohesive and functional definition.

Firstly, the chapter applies the literature introduced and discussed in Chapter 2 to develop a conceptual framework for interpreting the outcome variables of reform that the programmes are aiming towards. These outcomes include the effects, both positive and negative, intended and unintended, on the institutional environment in which the programmes operate. They are defined according to the goals of the programmes, including the kinds of institutional capabilities that are strengthened. They are also defined according the goals and propositions made by the second orthodoxy itself. The latter function like intermediary outcomes and allow the empirical chapters to examine the relationship between the programmes' approaches and their effects. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, the research will look more broadly at the political effects of the second orthodoxy practices implemented by the two programmes. In doing so, it will return to some of the literature discussed in the previous chapter in order to explain how and the extent to which second orthodoxy methods overcome the pathologies and problems associated with 'apolitical' aid.

Intermediary outcomes reflect the theory of change proposed by the second orthodoxy. Three main features of the second orthodoxy's causal mechanisms will be explored in this study, and, for each, a corresponding intermediary outcome can be identified (Table 6 below). In the case of its 'politically smart' dimensions, the study will seek to identify outcomes of political understanding and 'ways of working', as reflected in how the BSI Uganda programme has defined and responded to its political environment. In the case of its 'locally led' dimensions, the study will seek to understand whether and how the BSI programme has aligned with the actors and institutions in its environment to be 'led' by the realities of the local context. Finally, in the case of its 'adaptive learning' mechanisms, the thesis aims to understand if the learning model enables programmes to overcome the problems associated top-down

planning, by allowing local, tacit knowledge and contextual understanding to influence programme design and implementation. This question is pursued in analysis of the MUVA programme in Mozambique, which has embodied second orthodoxy principles through its design as an 'adaptive learning' programme.

In the previous chapter a wide range of aid critiques was examined, to which the second orthodoxy responds in varying degrees. This thesis aims to evaluate the second orthodoxy on its own terms: on the basis of the propositions it makes for more effective donor support to public sector reform. In establishing a conceptual framework, therefore, this chapter pays close attention to what these propositions are and how they are reflected in the two programmes under study. In the final chapter of this thesis, the more expansive aid critiques introduced in the previous chapter are returned to, in order to support an explanation of the outcomes identified in the three empirical chapters, each of which examines a distinct dimension of the second orthodoxy. Finally, while 'politically smart', 'locally led' and 'adaptive learning' features are examined separately, they are all fundamentally intertwined and driven towards more context-sensitive practice. This is the primary parameter on which the second orthodoxy is assessed in this thesis, as the current chapter will outline.

Defining the outcome variables – state capability, inclusive governance & intermediary outcomes

Defining a 'strong institution' and 'capable state'

The second orthodoxy's prescriptions reflect in many ways the understanding of the state and institutions more broadly outlined in the previous chapter. In supporting reform, the second orthodoxy promotes an approach that can respond to local variation and break away from

blueprint institutional templates. As the literature review outlined, second orthodoxy methods have been designed to align with endogenous drivers of state capability, often in the form of elite incentives, or 'developmental leadership'. The second orthodoxy positions this form of local alignment against the 'top-down diffusion of innovation' that occurs in universal 'best practice'. But what does this mean for the kinds of 'state capability' that the second orthodoxy is trying to support? Promoters of the 'problem driven iterative adaptation' (PDIA) model argue that capability should be 'tied to implementation'[12], which means the endogenous capacity of states to implement policy outcomes. However, in their theoretical explanation of the PDIA approach, the authors still tend to rely on international benchmarks, reflected, for instance, in the World Bank Governance Indicators and the Fragile State Index, to define the parameters of capability (Andrews et al, 2017).

Architects of the PDIA model focus predominantly on parameters that reflect 'government effectiveness' through indicators such as 'bureaucratic quality', the 'control of corruption' and 'the rule of law' (Ibid: 14-15). Most significantly, they argue that their definition of state capability does not relate to the outcomes of policy or even the shape of policy. They are not interested in defining capability according to human development outcomes, political outcomes or even growth. State capability is determined purely by the capacity of the state to enforce and implement its own rules. This implies that although the model attempts to move beyond a normative model of 'good governance', its definition of state capability is still aligned with international best practice, reflected in global governance indicators. The model, therefore, does not question the shape or character of a 'strong institution' according to the logics of the Weberian state; it simply seeks to find a more effective way to make the Weberian state realisable in aid-receiving contexts.

[12] Interview, Leading Second Orthodoxy Scholar, Oxford, November 2019.

The ‘thinking and working politically’ (TWP) model views state capability in similar terms. State capacity is bound up in the model’s arguments for ‘locally led’ aid by aligning with the local enabling environment for reform, in terms of both political and technical capacity to implement policy outcomes. However, as the literature review discussed, there is also a more apparent normative challenge to donor governance agendas in the TWP approach. Based on observations of strong, ‘illiberal’ (Jones et al, 2013), developmental leadership, the model argues for trade-offs and realism when balancing the ‘vexed question of human rights’ (Kelsall 2013b: 157) against other parameters of development like growth. In order to understand how these different conceptions of state capability might be operationalised in this study, it is necessary to look more closely at how different conceptions of ‘governance’ have been conceptualised within development discourses.

‘Good governance’, ‘inclusive governance’, or ‘good enough’ governance?

The aid interventions of focus in this study all aim to contribute towards more inclusive development via the state and public policy through applying second orthodoxy principles and practices. This means that they do not simply seek to support states to implement their own policies more capably, but attempt to shape policy towards specific political and economic outcomes. In Mozambique, the goals are bound up with women’s economic empowerment and, in Uganda, the objectives relate to deepening decentralisation and increasing government transparency. Through analysing these cases, this thesis aims to understand if models associated with the second orthodoxy enable programmes to contribute to both stronger, capable institutions and more inclusive development in African contexts. When assessing project effectiveness, there are, therefore, two types of outcome that are of

interest to this study. The first relates to the types of 'government effectiveness' that the second orthodoxy claims to support; the second are bound up in the more normative goals of the two programmes being studied.

'*Governance*' is characterised by Francis Fukuyama (2013) as the ability of a state to make and enforce rules and to deliver services, irrespective of the kind of regime that is in place, democratic or otherwise. In this formulation, governance reflects the ability of actors to perform towards certain objectives and ambitions. These objectives derive from the dynamic interaction and power struggles among actors of state and society irrespective of what those objectives might be (Fukuyama, 2013; OECD, 2020). This interpretation of governance is aligned with what the second orthodoxy views as the objective of a donor governance programme: focusing on the capacity to implement, with an apparent rejection of the more normative interpretations embodied in the earlier 'good governance' agenda.

As discussed in the preceding literature review, many of the features of the second orthodoxy aid paradigm derive from critiques that have been raised against the donor '*good governance'* agenda. Such critiques argue that the ideals promoted through the agenda – including democracy, free markets and human rights – were underwritten by an assumption that African states could simply adopt Western-style liberal governance arrangements. In response, a discourse has arisen within debates influencing new aid models that donors should be more realistic and pragmatic about their expectations. The discourse of 'best fit', 'good enough governance' (Grindle, 2007; Yanguas, 2017) is aligned strongly with what the second orthodoxy views as the goal of a donor governance programme. Merilee Grindle defines 'good enough governance' as the 'the minimal conditions of governance necessary to allow political and economic development to occur'. She states:

> Good enough governance, as a concept, suggests that not all governance deficits need

> to (or can) be tackled at once, and that institution- and capacity-building are products of time; governance achievements can also be reversed. Good enough governance means that interventions thought to contribute to the ends of economic and political development need to be questioned, prioritised, and made relevant to the conditions of individual countries (Grindle 2007: 554).

Proposals for 'good enough' governance are associated with the model's argument for trade-offs between liberal, democratic principles, on the one hand, and growth on the other. As discussed in the literature review, this is in some ways a reflection of the 'illiberal' model of 'developmental leadership' underpinning the second orthodoxy's arguments for 'locally led' aid. For instance, Pablo Yanguas has highlighted that the emphasis on 'best fit', 'good enough' governance reflects a 'teleological approach to aid', which implies programmes should be designed 'in order to maximise results given the operating environment as shaped by the *existing* political settlement' (2017: 219, italics added), rather than a normatively defined state.

'*Inclusive governance'*, by contrast, refers to 'a normative sensibility that stands in favour of inclusion as the benchmark against which institutions can be judged and also promoted' (Hickey, 2015: 1). In a recent policy position paper from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it is noted that development practitioners aiming to contribute towards more inclusive governance arrangements must focus not only on representation and participation but also on underlying power dynamics; this involves 'nudging' local socio-institutional norms and behaviours towards more inclusive outcomes (OECD, 2020). In this discourse, a distinction is drawn between inclusion as process and inclusion as outcome. The OECD posits that 'process-based inclusion refers to how decisions are made – who is included in decision-making processes and how and why, whose voices count, and how these dynamics and interactions shape both the nature and quality of decisions taken and how they are implemented' (Ibid: 15). The process of governance is

inclusive, therefore, if citizens, and particularly marginalised groups, are able to both participate in and influence decision-making processes.

The authors note that, despite some differences in emphasis over the past 15-plus years, a consensus has emerged across the international development community on the centrality of several 'core governance principles': including accountability, transparency, participation and inclusion. These, they argue, have become 'nearly universal features' in global development discourse and are reflected in central policy infrastructure and global commitments, including in the Sustainable Development Goals (OECD, 2020). Whilst these principles reflect 'intrinsic democratic values', the authors note that they are not exclusive to democracy; the focus on core governance principles is intended 'to transcend arguments about regime type and the relative effectiveness of authoritarian versus democratic systems' (Ibid: 20). The second feature of inclusive governance is 'outcome-based inclusion', which is orientated towards issues of distributional equity: 'who benefits from prosperity, why and to what effect' (Ibid: 15). Outcome based inclusion could refer, therefore, to the way in which key developmental outcomes such as growth, infrastructure, health, education, water and sanitation, social welfare, justice, or security are distributed or shared (Ibid).

The aid programmes in this study aim to contribute towards both process-based and outcome-based inclusion. In the context of Uganda's decentralisation process, the BSI programme aims to increase the transparency and accountability of government budgeting processes by making key budget data available and encouraging community level budget monitoring. It also aims to increase distributional equity, efficiency and adequacy in the allocation of state resources at the local level. In Mozambique, the main aim of the MUVA programme is to increase the capacity of young marginalised women to benefit from the country's economic

growth. This study focuses specifically on the programme's efforts to promote more gender responsive reforms in the education and social protection sectors. In this case, the focus is on distributional equity, but MUVA also plays a role, alongside Mozambican civil society, in influencing government to adopt policies that it hopes will economically empower young women and girls. On this basis, there is an 'inclusion as process' element in the programme as well.

The idea of 'inclusive governance', with its normative implications, is therefore slightly at odds with the second orthodoxy and its promotion of 'best fit', 'good enough' governance. However, as the programmes under study all include goals and objectives that fit within the inclusive governance framework, it is a useful way to group their intended outcomes. Additionally, as outlined in the introduction, this research responds to debates about the second orthodoxy's political effects. By promoting a model that aligns with, rather than shapes, existing governance arrangements, do second orthodoxy models better equip aid actors to shift 'local socio-institutional norms and behaviours towards more inclusive outcomes' (OECD, 2020: 11)? Would not this model simply reinforce the status quo, and therefore risk reinforcing the patterns of economic or political exclusion that aid programmes aim to shift?

The study therefore seeks to identify outcomes that reflect Fukuyama's (2013) definition of governance, as well as programme-specific outcomes of inclusive governance, as defined by the OECD. By way of example, in the case of the BSI programme in Uganda, the thesis seeks to explain the role of second orthodoxy methods and principles in outcomes of: 1) 'government effectiveness' (strengthening endogenous capacity to implement and control policy outcomes); 2) 'inclusive governance' (e.g. deepened decentralisation); and 3)

unintended political impacts (e.g. reinforcing political economies that centralise power and thus weaken decentralisation).

The three main empirical chapters – Chapter 4 on the MUVA Mozambique programme and Chapters 5 and 6 on the BSI Uganda programme – focus on the relationship between the projects' results (as defined by their objectives) and intermediate or process outcomes, which reflect the theory of change forwarded by the second orthodoxy. For each of the causal mechanisms proposed by the second orthodoxy, a corresponding intermediary outcome can be established (Table 6). Understanding these intermediary outcomes, and their relationship to the second orthodoxy approach, will enable this thesis to explain how the second orthodoxy works in practice and the kinds of effects that it produces in development programmes. It also enables the thesis to show how the second orthodoxy and its intermediary outcomes are connected to other political effects in each of the programme case studies. The causal mechanisms proposed by the second orthodoxy are discussed next, alongside some of the aid critiques to which they respond. As the literature review and introduction outlined, the aid critiques that correspond less directly to the second orthodoxy and its intellectual underpinnings are used in this study as alternative explanations for the outcomes identified.

Table 6. Outcomes and intermediary outcomes

Second Orthodoxy Parameter	Research question/s	Outcome of interest	Case (focus)

1. Politically smart (process/ intermediary outcome)	What is 'politically smart' practice? Does 'politically smart' practice enable programmes to uncover and address the political realities of the problems they focus on? If so, how?	Extent of political and contextual understanding, as exposed in programme analysis, design and implementation.	BSI Uganda Case 2 (Chapter 6)
2. Locally led (process/ intermediary outcome)	What is 'locally led' aid in practice? Does 'locally led' aid enable programmes to align with the institutional contexts in which they work? If so, how?	Extent of alignment with aid-recipient institutional context, as exposed through programme design and implementation, including how power is dispersed in the programme's relational dynamics.	BSI Uganda Case 1 (Chapter 5)
3. Adaptive learning (process/ intermediary outcome)	What is 'adaptive learning' in practice? Does 'adaptive learning' support the use of local knowledge and learning in programme design and decision-making? If so, how?	Extent to which the programme's design and implementation are influenced by local, contextual knowledge, needs and perspectives.	MUVA Mozambique (Chapter 4)
4. The second orthodoxy's political and institutional effects (Higher level, impact outcomes)	What are the effects and political outcomes of applying second orthodoxy models?	Programme specific outcomes of inclusive governance (both positive & negative), defined according to programme goals (e.g. decentralisation, transparency, female economic empowerment) Types of political authority, power and institutional capability that are produced or reproduced by the programmes	All cases and chapters

The 'second orthodoxy' – establishing the explanatory variables

Firstly, it is important to establish that external assistance, alone, is unlikely to explain the evolution of rules that 'shape human interactions' in any given process of institutional change. If we take the theoretical framework outlined by Mahoney and Thelen (2010), where institutions evolve endogenously, incrementally and within ambiguous spaces of rule interpretation, then the limited potential of external actors who import rigid institutional templates becomes theoretically apparent. And, as the preceding chapters outlined, this appears to have been empirically the case as well. As Francis Fukuyama concludes, 'what we know about the techniques and prospects for generating demand for institutions from the outside is both extensive and discouraging' (2004: 36). Rajesh Venugopal (2018) has gone so far as to claim that '[n]egativity forms the everyday mood music' of the development sector, and he observes that the most widely read books on aid 'present themselves as analytics of failure' (2018: 2).

The following sections set out a conceptual framework for interpreting and operationalising the explanatory variables in this study. Table 7 below summarises three primary features of the second orthodoxy aid model, alongside the aid critiques from which they derive, or to which they correspond. The subsequent sections explore each feature in further detail, in order to establish the conceptual framework that will be deployed for interpreting the role of the second orthodoxy in the outcomes outlined above.

Table 7. Three features of the Second Orthodoxy

Model element & TWP parameter	Second orthodoxy approach	Traditional approach & critiques
Politically smart: 'Strong political analysis, insight and understanding'	• Strong political analysis, insight and understanding • Political and strategic manoeuvring: External actors and interventions play a 'brokering' and 'convening' role in relationship building and establishing local 'coalitions for change' • Understanding and responding to 'elite incentives'	• A solution driven approach, whereby donors propose institutional templates for broadly defined development problems • Development problems are understood in largely technical, apolitical terms • Development problems are over simplified and corresponding change pathways towards the desired solution are linear
Locally led: 'A detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'	• Development problems are locally nominated and negotiated • Local actors lead; donors simply play a 'facilitation' role • Application of tacit contextual knowledge and understanding • Attention is paid to what is both politically and technically achievable and therefore implementable in the aid-recipient institutional context	• Lack of 'country ownership' and local leadership • Institutional supply is not aligned with institutional demand, or what is technically and politically implementable • Donors forward their own agendas and interests that do not correspond to what is realisable or needed in the local context
Adaptive learning: 'Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation'	• Design and decision-making is flexible, based on knowledge about the local context: local knowledge is valued as much as technical expertise • Learning is connected to tight feedback loops for iterative decision-making in response to implementation in the local context • Learning is both formal and experiential • Learning and knowledge production involve multiple perspectives and disciplines	• Top-down planning and 'top-down diffusion of ideas' • Valuing transferable technical expertise over local knowledge • Learning happens at the end of programmes (if it happens at all) and is not used to make decisions in real time; it is disconnected from implementation • Programmes are designed around linear causal pathways

Politically smart: 'Strong political analysis, insight and understanding'

In the TWP literature, 'thinking politically' is defined as 'understanding the formal and informal institutional contexts within which change and development occurs' (Hudson & Leftwich 2014; Laws & Marquette 2018: 3). It encourages aid actors to consider themselves as 'political agents' who are able to influence the politics of aid-receiving contexts in both positive 'developmental' ways and also in ways that can be harmful. As such, 'thinking politically' pushes donors 'to carefully consider whether to intervene at all in a given context, given the potential political consequences' (Laws & Marquette, 2018: 3). Research from the Development Leadership Programme (DLP), influential to the development of TWP principles and approaches, distinguishes 'thinking' from 'working' politically' in the following terms:

> 'Development outcomes cannot be achieved by technical solutions alone. This means that actors – politicians, bureaucrats, civil society, donors and so on – need to be able to better understand the local context ('thinking politically') in order to support the processes that enable local actors to bring about sustainable developmental change ('working politically'). Working politically is sometimes misunderstood as being about direct engagement with political actors and organisations, perhaps even interfering with a sovereign state's politics, but it is more nuanced than that. It means supporting, brokering, facilitating and aiding the emergence and practices of reform leaderships, organisations, networks and coalitions' (DLP 2018, 24-25)'

It is important to note, therefore, that second orthodoxy methods do not push practitioners to re-consider the goals or intended outcomes of development towards understanding them in more political terms. Rather, it is about recognising that the *process* of development is political. This is seen in formulation of Carothers and De Gramont, who describe 'politically smart' aid as 'less about doing *more* things – entering more political areas, working on demand-side efforts – than about doing things *differently* (2013: 159-160, emphasis in original).

As can be seen from both of these formulations, there is a preference in the second orthodoxy to see politics as process, over politics as outcome. Whilst underlying theory is able to point towards 'positive developmental change', it does not push practitioners to (re)define the parameters of what 'positive' development looks like. In fact, the language of 'best fit', 'good enough' governance appears to outwardly reject normative conceptions of 'good governance' in favour of outcomes that align with local socio-political realities. In its own discourse, DFID (now FCDO) describes political goals in broad terms as 'using development assistance to shift how power is distributed in the economy and society'. It describes this process as involving the long-term transformation of institutions, whilst 'supporting locally-led change processes more likely to be sustainable and successful: locally-owned (i.e. with local salience) and locally-negotiated' (Piron et al, 2016: 2).

What these framings indicate is that the 'politically smart' features of the second orthodoxy are primarily instrumental. It is necessary to involve and be led by local actors and their political realities because the results are more likely to be 'sustainable and successful'. At the same time, 'politics is an approach' rather than an outcome implicit in the more rights-based formulations of development scholars like Amartya Sen (1999). The theory of 'politically smart' practice is an approach that focuses on understanding the 'root causes' of a development problem and 'the formal and informal institutional contexts within which change and development occurs' is more likely to lead programmes to identify problems that are accurately understood and 'locally salient' (Booth & Unsworth, 2014). In turn, this will contribute to more effective attempts to support processes of institutional change.

Using the three 'thinking and working politically' (TWP) parameters of 'politically sensitive practice' outlined in the Introduction, the Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) embodies

'second orthodoxy' practice in the following ways. Most notably, the BSI distinguishes itself from traditional technical assistance by being 'embedded'. The BSI has strong country level leadership by Ugandans who have long professional histories of working on public financial management (PFM) in Uganda, including its current lead advisor Emmanuel Ssewankambo. In addition, key actors in the BSI programme, including its previous lead advisor Tim Williamson, began as ODI Fellows in Uganda's Ministry of Finance and were able, over a period of decades of subsequent work in the country, to accrue considerable amounts of tacit contextual knowledge and *"social capital"*[13]. On this basis, 'political analysis, insight and understanding' (the first TWP parameter) within the BSI programme is highly informal: it is based on tacit, experiential knowledge rather than the commissioning of formal political economy analyses (PEA). As leading TWP advocate Heather Marquette notes:

> Reformers in country may pursue reforms that aren't technically or politically feasible, of course, but the basic contextual knowledge is there. Anyone can need help thinking through how to unblock reforms or how to generate necessary political will, but only external actors need the sort of 'full blown' PEA that ends up in training courses for donors and INGOs.[14]

The 'embedded' position of the BSI, which is explained in further detail in Chapter 5, has implications on the way it accrues and deploys contextual knowledge. Unlike external technical assistance (TA) providers that might fly in and out once the 'right' system has been set up, the BSI is embedded within its context and can draw on tacit contextual knowledge and understanding that arises from long-term engagement and relationship-building in a specific institutional context. This embeddedness, then, is how it has been able to gain 'a detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context' (the second TWP parameter). As

[13] Interview, BSI Adviser (A), Kampala, May 2016.

[14] H. Marquette, 'What we're missing by not getting our TWP alphabet straight', From Poverty to Power Blog, 3 July 2019, at: https://oxfamapps.org/fp2p/what-were-missing-by-not-getting-our-twp-alphabet-straight/ (accessed November 9 2021)

the paper will show, its relationships and connectedness within the local context, and particularly the Uganda Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), also enabled it to gain the trust of its donors, in this case UKAid, which provided flexible funding to the programme in the form of an 'accountable grant'. This enabled the BSI to respond to the reform needs and interests of MoFPED, rather than donor funding calls. This is particularly significant in the context of a donor trust deficit in the government of Uganda, following a series of corruption scandals in 2012 that resulted in the withdrawal of budget support by the UK and several other donors. In this context, the BSI's embedded position facilitated its capacity work with 'flexibility and adaptability' (the third TWP parameter), through establishing a type of 'dual legitimacy', with both inward and outward facing characteristics.

Through an assessment of the BSI's support to budget transparency and fiscal decentralisation reforms between 2015 and 2020, this thesis aims to uncover the empirical reality of politically smart practice and what its effects are in a politically challenging context of regime survival. In addition to the fundamentally political nature of decentralisation reforms, which attempt to shift how power and resources are distributed, Uganda is a highly relevant context in which to assess second orthodoxy practice because it could be considered the quintessential example of 'isomorphic mimicry', by presenting a context in which the active pursuit of reforms over several decades has led to many 'laws, processes and structures that are 'best in class' in Africa (and beyond)' (Andrews & Bategeka, 2013: 2). Andrews and Bategeka note that: [t]he problem is that many of the reforms have been limited to these kinds of gains – producing new institutional forms that function poorly and yield limited impacts' (Andrews & Bategeka, 2013: 2). With a focus on Uganda public financial

management and decentralisation reforms, this study asks is 'politically smart, locally led' practice, as embodied by the BSI, able to produce more successful reform outcomes?

To conclude, the Uganda empirical chapters in this thesis will demonstrate how 'politically smart' practice is being interpreted and applied, and will assess the extent to which it is enabling programmes to overcome the problems associated 'apolitical' development practice discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, analysis of the two cases will aim to understand if the approach taken by these programmes to 'politically smart' practice enables them to uncover and respond to the political realities of the problems that they address. In addition to understanding the role of these approaches in levels of contextual and political understanding (intermediary outcomes), the thesis will explore whether the 'politically smart' approach taken supports the BSI's goals and promote budget transparency through aligning with 'elite incentives' (Chapter 6), and also, in the context of its corresponding 'locally led' approach, to deepen decentralisation (Chapter 5).

Locally led: 'A detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'

The 'partnership agenda' first arose in the late 1990s; aid relationships were refashioned as partnerships between donor and recipient countries, with donors attesting that they no longer sought to impose their vision of development on poor countries (Abrahamsen, 2004). The partnership agenda promoted a model in which donors were partners in strategies determined and 'owned' by recipients themselves (Ibid). The move towards partnerships and ownership reflected growing recognition amongst the donor community that conditionality-based lending had failed to generate the desired results in terms of economic growth and good governance. At this point, therefore, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) ostensibly abandoned their heavily criticised structural adjustment programmes and aid conditionality in favour of partnerships (Ibid).

After a decade of disappointing results under the 'good governance' agenda, two High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness established the norm of 'ownership' in donor relations with Africa. The Paris Declaration (2005) claimed that developing countries need to 'set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption'. The Accra Agenda (2008) expanded on this by stating that countries must have 'more say over their development processes through wider participation in development policy formulation, stronger leadership on aid co-ordination and more use of country systems for aid delivery'. At the same time, a consensus was set that donors could not simply transplant Western institutional templates and expect them to be adopted by Africa's leaders. Ownership was expected to make aid more efficient and effective by responding to the challenge of 'political will'. Partnerships therefore emerged as a way of overcoming the weaknesses of previous development models. Over a decade later, however, and the extent to which the agenda has been able to expand decision-making space and authority for aid recipient governments remains in question (King, 2020).

Today, the norm of 'ownership' continues to prevail in development discourse, but the term itself is treated with growing scepticism and has fallen prey to accusations of empty rhetoric. The following quote from a central figure in the second orthodoxy's epistemic community captures the scepticism that has been directed towards the ownership agenda from within the community developing aid models under the second orthodoxy:

> *"I dislike the word "ownership" altogether as it is nearly always fake rhetoric when donors want to do what donors want to do but at the same time want the "recipients" to be enthusiastic about it, like a relative that knits you an ugly sweater vest for your birthday and then wants you to "own" it..."*[15]

[15] Email Correspondence, Leading Second Orthodoxy Scholar, November 2019.

Reflecting this scepticism, the PDIA and TWP methods tend to use alternative terminology. They propose that development assistance should be 'locally led' through aligning with an endogenous 'authorising environment'. In the PDIA model, this is framed as finding 'opportunities for change' for the causes and sub-causes that are identified through analysis at the problem development stage. Developers of the model commonly term this 'authorising environment' the 'space for change', which is defined by the contextual factors that will influence how successful or otherwise a reform will be. Such factors shape 'what and how much one can do in any policy or reform initiative at any time' (Samji et al, 2018: 21). Understanding this space is important for sequencing an intervention. Andrews et al (2012) argue that insufficient sequencing leads to 'premature loadbearing', where reforms are introduced before an institution is ready or able to implement them. If an adequate 'change space' does not already exist, then interventions can incorporate efforts to create or expand it (Samji et al, 2018).

The 'thinking and working politically' (TWP) model frames ownership in different terms, but still focuses predominantly on the enabling environment for reform. Probably the clearest articulation of 'locally led' aid in this literature is found in Booth and Unsworth's influential report, 'Politically Smart, Locally Led Development' (2014), where they distinguish between two main features. Firstly, Booth and Unsworth argue for 'a reform agenda being locally owned – and not just in the narrow, technocratic Paris Declaration sense' (Ibid: 3). A 'locally owned' reform agenda is one in which issues and problems have 'local salience, both for potential beneficiaries and for at least some individuals and groups with the power to support, influence or block change' (Ibid). This involves identifying development interventions that have 'the desirable combination of impact and tractability' through addressing 'development problems as they are posed in context' and that can be addressed with the resources available in that context (Ibid). Secondly, they propose that development assistance should be

‘[l]ocally negotiated and delivered’ (Ibid: 4), by local actors who have the ‘motivation, credibility, knowledge and networks to mobilise support, leverage relationships and seize opportunities’ (Ibid). They argue that deliberation and negotiation in local networks and organisations are essential for reaching an adequate understanding of complex development problems, and for finding ways of addressing them that are ‘practical, appropriate and sustainable’ (Ibid).

This model is reflected elsewhere in the TWP literature, where ‘working politically’ is defined as a mode of engagement that promotes ‘tailoring and adapting development assistance to national and sub-national conditions’ (Laws & Marquette, 2018: 3). TWP advocates recognise that change is an inherently political process in that ‘it involves the renegotiation of power and resources’ and therefore produces both winners and losers. On this basis, scholars argue that development programmes need to understand and respond to the interests, motivations and incentives that drive the behaviour of those who have a stake in the process. TWP emphasises local politics and leadership in this process, as well as ‘enlisting partners, building coalitions, and establishing working alliances amidst the interplay of diverse political interests’ (Ibid).

As well as understanding the opportunities and barriers for reform through political analysis, TWP involves ‘influencing and stakeholder management skills’ (Ibid: 4). In his analysis of DFID’s approach to TWP, Brendan Whitty observes that, beyond categorising countries in order to apply ‘technical models arranged within the repertoire of governance as a category of programming’, political economy analyses are ‘treated as irrelevant or marginal’ (Whitty, 2018: 0306). Rather, he observes that politics is viewed as something to be ‘practiced’. He notes that the DFID participants he observed ‘focused on the importance of practice rather

than through representations and analysis of the political environment' (Ibid). Politics is practiced through 'forging relationships' with programme stakeholders and negotiating the details and meaning of interventions within the arena of a specific programme (Whitty, 2018).

In this model, therefore, we see two principal features of locally led aid. Firstly, a recognition that reform agendas need to align with local incentives and capabilities, and secondly that this involves, in addition to political understanding, some kind of networking and 'stakeholder management' on the part of aid implementers. Here, again, we see Riker's (1962) definition of politics emerging, as strategic manoeuvring and coalition building. By expanding the definition of ownership to include modes of engagement and ways of 'working politically', there are features of the second orthodoxy that are more sophisticated than merely the use of 'country systems', as prescribed in the Paris agenda. Again, this model reflects the shape of 'developmental leadership' that the second orthodoxy leans towards, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Rather than efforts to 'shift the power' towards aid recipients, the model of locally led aid proposed by the second orthodoxy bears a distinctly instrumental and consequentialist logic. The question of 'who governs?' (Abrahamsen, 2004) relates primarily to the way power is disbursed in the local context, and how to align with existing power arrangements for more effective aid programmes. It does not appear to address the problems associated with power differentials in the relationship between donor and aid-recipient, or between Africa and the West more broadly.

The roles of 'trust' and 'cultural intimacy'

Reflecting the relational approach to politics that Whitty observes, the roles of 'trust' and 'cultural intimacy' are primary features of success in the second orthodoxy aid models and

their approach to being 'locally led'. The literature informing the approaches argues for management structures that delegate 'high levels of discretion' (Teskey & Tyrrel, 2017: 15) and implementer autonomy (Honig, 2018) to those working close to the ground. They also contend that programmes are more likely to be successful if they have '[h]igh numbers of staff with social connections and insider knowledge' (Bridges & Woolcock, 2019: 18). Teskey and Tyrel (2017) propose that trust is required to allow learning from failure, which is examined further below in relation to the MUVA programme. Whitty concludes that the value of more locally led and politically smart programming is therefore framed as creating an arena 'with enough space to negotiate and build relationships' (Whitty, 2018: 0306). Bridges and Woolcock emphasise that, for donors, this involves developing longer-term relationships with implementing partners, which necessarily takes time and active cultivation (2019: 18).

In conceding to the importance of relationships, trust and types of cultural intimacy, the second orthodoxy emphasises the value of contextually derived social capital, relationships and tacit contextual knowledge. In doing so, it elevates the role of implementers and local reformers, those directly engaged in change processes on the ground. These are exactly the types of actors that are analysed in the case of the BSI programme in Uganda, which reflects the orientation towards 'politics as practice' in its 'embedded' approach to technical assistance. In Chapter 5, the first BSI Uganda case study in this thesis will seek to understand if the second orthodoxy's approach to 'locally led' technical assistance enables it to align with the social, political and technical realities of its institutional environment in the government of Uganda. The extent of alignment will be exposed in both the design of the programme and its relational dynamics. Empirical analysis will examine the relationship between the BSI and its bureaucratic environment, including its cultivation and deployment

of relationships based on ‘trust’ and ‘cultural intimacy’. In addition to understanding the role of these features in degrees of contextual alignment, the chapter will examine whether they supported the programme to achieve its decentralisation goals.

Adaptive learning: ‘Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation’

> ‘To speak of the art of one loom, the art of one river, the art of one tractor, or the art of one automobile is not preposterous; it is to point to the size and importance of the gap between general knowledge and situated knowledge.’ – James Scott, ‘Seeing like a State’ (1998: 318)

The first empirical section, Chapter 4, of the thesis on the MUVA programme examines how knowledge is acquired and deployed in programmes that have been designed to ‘adapt’ to local contexts. Specifically, this case study will assess whether second orthodoxy approaches enable practitioners to overcome the problems associated with how technical knowledge is applied in top-down planning. Another aspect of the theory behind the second orthodoxy is that development problems are often complex and intractable. Influenced by systems thinking, a complex, or ‘wicked’, development problem is defined by Ben Ramalingham, one of the leading thinkers behind adaptive aid, as: difficult to define; many possible explanations may exist; individuals perceive the issue differently; depending on the explanation, the solution takes on a different form (Ramalingham, 2014). Perhaps most importantly as a justification for the adaptive model, complex problems are defined by a web of interacting variables whose relationship is unstable and difficult to predict. These types of problem are typical of governance challenges, where pathways towards policy or behaviour change are non-linear and highly context dependent; or, a problem like ‘female economic empowerment’, which is multifaceted and definitionally contested. The architects of adaptive practice argue that ‘there are no simple, widely replicable fixes for reducing conflict, building greater gender equality, ensuring decent work for all or improving universal education outcomes […] No country has yet, or is likely to, discover the perfect ‘solution’’

(Ramalingham et al, 2019: 2). Because of this, a simple, linear cause-and-effect implementation model used in the design of traditional aid programmes is insufficient.

According to the architects of adaptive aid, addressing complex problems successfully involves 'changing behaviours, shifting incentives, overcoming power imbalances and catalysing anticipated changes in one part of a social, economic, political or environmental system that can have unforeseen effects elsewhere' (Ibid). In the TWP literature it is argued, on this basis, that '[t]he conventional approach to development programmes – where a linear theory of change is established at the outset, based on institutional best practice, with inputs delivered in accordance – often fails in the face of contextual variations and shifting political interests' (Laws & Marquette, 2018: 2; Hogg and Leftwich, 2008). Because 'change is complex and often unpredictable', it is difficult to know with certainty how a given reform process will unfold at the outset. The TWP literature argues that many of these 'moving parts' are hidden or unclear at the design stage of programmes, and will also change as the programme progresses, meaning that the overall behaviour of the environment cannot be known in advance (Laws & Marquette, 2018: 4). On this basis, TWP, and the second orthodoxy more broadly, argues for 'iterative adaptation' based on regular re-evaluation of strategy design in response to regularly updated analysis (Andrews et al, 2012; 2017).

At the heart of the second orthodoxy is recognition, therefore, of what James Scott names 'the radical contingency of the future' (1998: 343). In Scott's critique of high modernist social engineering and top down planning, he argues that it is rare to encounter 'advice about the future which *begins* from a premise of incomplete knowledge' (Ibid – italics in original). Scott's propositions for 'muddling through' are in many ways a blueprint for adaptive practice. Indeed, as second orthodoxy scholars themselves admit, arguments for process-

based over blueprint approaches have a long history dating back to at least the 1980s (Booth, 2015). The architects of adaptive aid observe 'growing recognition' of the knowledge gaps that need to be filled to meet global development goals (Ramalingham et al, 2019). However, their argument is that 'we cannot collectively wait to establish sufficient knowledge before acting' due to the urgency of the problems facing developing nations (Ibid: 2). This justification is slightly at odds with the complexity theory from which the models draw. Because development problems are complex and dynamic, 'sufficient' *a-priori* knowledge is by its nature unattainable. The models argue that addressing such problems requires 'learning by doing'; 'waiting', therefore, is simply not an option.

On this basis, the second orthodoxy argues for the cultivation of a 'learning culture' in development agencies; a culture in which there is a focus on learning about both the context programmes are working in, the effectiveness of interventions, as well as the interaction between the two over time (Valters, 2016). As opposed to waiting for the outcomes of *ex-post* final evaluations, PDIA approaches, for instance, are built around 'tight feedback loops', which promote 'rapid experiential learning' and a greater focus on 'learning through doing'. Experiential learning strategies support intervention designs that 'rapidly iterate' through making multiple 'small bets' (Valters, 2016; Andrews et al, 2012). This necessitates management practices and decision-making structures that allow learning to shape programme activities. Craig Valters argues that this involves, not only strong feedback mechanisms, but an ability on the part of programme architects and implementers to question 'their own assumptions and worldviews' (2016: 22).

Finally, the second orthodoxy's learning prescriptions seek to cultivate an organisational culture whereby the potential of failure is normalised, and where there are obvious incentives

in place for being frank about and learning from failure (Valters, 2016). As Kate Bridges and Michael Woolcock (2019) argue:

> If there exists a commitment to adaptation, testing and experimentation, then there must of necessity exist an expectation and appreciation of the fact that failures will occur. Failures are critical to experimentation and learning and are a necessary step on the path to crafting fit-for-purpose solutions. Relationships between donors and contractors seldom foster honest discussion about failure, however, since donors are typically understood to reward only success stories and punish failures (2019: 18).

Indeed, the embracing of failure and uncertainty promoted under the second orthodoxy comes into direct conflict with a UK aid bureaucracy that seeks to minimize risk and maximise results. The MUVA case study in this thesis demonstrates how the second orthodoxy risks being interpreted within the frame of scientific management principles, which threaten to undermine all of its tacit, human and contextually responsive features. As Whitty observes, however, 'DFID is a bureaucracy, and therefore favours the application of consistent rules and precedents' (2018: 0306). This is underpinned by the continuing influence of New Public Management 'efficiency' principles in the UK aid bureaucracy's 'results agenda' (Hood 1995; Valters & Whitty 2017).

On this basis, the MUVA Mozambique case in this thesis seeks to understand whether the 'learning culture' propagated by the second orthodoxy enables it to overcome the problems associated with top-down planning. It assesses the learning and knowledge generation mechanisms used in the programmes and their relationship to programme design, decision-making and outcomes. Specifically, it seeks to understand if the 'adaptive learning' model enables programmes to adapt to local contexts through using contextually derived knowledge, perspectives and understanding, including political understanding. Like the other explanatory variables in this study, it also aims to understand the role of adaptive learning in attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, to support the uptake of gender sensitive social and economic policy within the government of Mozambique.

Conclusion

This conceptual chapter has established an analytical framework that can be used in this study to gain a clearer understanding of the 'second orthodoxy' and its effects in programmes that aim to strengthen institutions and promote inclusive development in two African contexts. In an environment of differing interpretations and conceptual ambiguity, the chapter has attempted to prescriptively define what the second orthodoxy is and how it will be operationalised in the empirical analysis. It has done so across three central parameters of practice: 'politically smart', 'locally led' and 'adaptive'. Despite their differences, all three parameters are intimately intertwined in their efforts to promote more context-sensitive donor support for reform in aid-receiving contexts. The chapter has also attempted to create boundaries around what the second orthodoxy can be said to promote in this regard. For instance, its prescriptions to be 'locally led' are more firmly oriented towards the instrumental value of aligning with endogenous incentives for reform than they are about addressing power differentials of a more structural nature within the aid relationship itself. Similarly, the emphasis on politics within the 'politically smart' approach does not necessarily aim to address the 'political-economic' questions that post-development scholars like Tania Li have said are often absent in donor efforts to support social change. Rather than uncovering the structural dynamics of inequities, or proposing that the goals or effects of aid should be understood in more political terms, politically smart practice emphasises that the process of development is political and, on this basis, proposes the instrumental value of political methods and ways of behaving.

In applying this framework, the thesis is interested in the role of the second orthodoxy in two different types of outcome. The first are process or intermediary outcomes that reflect the

propositions made by the second orthodoxy. For each mechanism of the second orthodoxy, a corresponding intermediary outcome has been identified. For instance, in the case of its 'politically smart' dimensions, the study assesses whether the approach enables aid programmes to understand and respond to the political realities of the problems that they address. The programmatic effects of the second orthodoxy are the second type of outcome of interest in this study. Here, the thesis is interested in understanding the role of the second orthodoxy mechanisms in both the intended and unintended political and institutional impacts of the programmes. Using the programmes' objectives as the parameters of success, across the empirical chapters, outcomes of reform will be identified and explained, which will include outcomes of 'inclusive governance', both positive and negative. The final concluding chapter will apply an understanding of the second orthodoxy and its intermediary effects, to a more expansive analysis of its workings and effects. In doing so, this study is able to reflect on the extent which the second orthodoxy overcomes historic problems with aid in support of reform, as documented in the literature of established aid critiques.

Part II: the ‘Second Orthodoxy’ investigated

Chapter Four: MUVA – 'what do you do when you don't know what to do?'

Introduction

The MUVA programme most clearly embodies 'second orthodoxy' practice as an 'adaptive learning' initiative. While the higher level problem of 'female economic empowerment' was defined by UKAid in its original design, it was the intention of the MUVA programme to adapt its interventions to the specific needs and opportunities arising from the Mozambican urban environments in which it worked. This process began in a 9-month inception period, when MUVA, under the management of Oxford Policy Management's Mozambique office, was able to develop a set of more specific 'sub-problems', including women's access to formal employment. It has aimed to use the mechanics of 'test, learn, adapt' to localise its interventions by adjusting them in response to experiential learning. The most prominent feature of MUVA's embodiment of second orthodoxy practice, then, is its approach to testing an idea, learning about if it worked and then adapting the intervention in response to data and analysis.

The current chapter demonstrates the practical interpretation of the 'second orthodoxy' within MUVA's approach to being an 'adaptive learning' programme. It then conducts an analysis of the outcomes in three of its interventions. The chapter observes that the adaptive learning features of the MUVA programme were originally enabled by a donor agenda to find out about 'what works' in female economic empowerment (FEE) programming. The programme

began with a question: ‘what do you do when you don’t know what to do?’, which responded to the lack of evidence on how donors like UKAid should support the economic empowerment of women and girls. In second orthodoxy terms, economic empowerment and gender equality are typical of ‘complex’ development problems, where high levels of context dependency makes top-down planning ineffective.

However, the chapter observes that the original learning orientation comes into tension with the principles of adaptive learning, and at times pulls MUVA away from the needs of the local context towards identifying transferable knowledge and good practice. The chapter shows how adaptive learning becomes interpreted within the frames of scientific management principles, characterised by the New Public Management efficiency agenda that has influenced the corresponding ‘results agenda’ in the UK’s aid bureaucracy since the 2000s (Valters & Whitty, 2017). In turn, the chapter uncovers the reproduction of a number of the problems associated with traditional, donor-led practice outlined in the previous chapters, not necessarily due to the second orthodoxy model, but how it is being interpreted and applied in practice within donor agencies that are still culturally aligned with such management principles.

Within-case comparative analysis of three different interventions demonstrates the conditions under which adaptive learning models are more likely to be successful. It shows how an intervention in the social protection sector was able to leverage tacit contextual knowledge amongst key programme staff to align an intervention aimed at the government’s Public Works Programme with the wider political economy of reform within the social protection sector. In the two education sector interventions, however, a lack of such tacit knowledge and identified knowledge gaps in the programme’s original analysis of the sector, contributed to

the design of interventions that were misaligned with local political realities, and therefore less successful at influencing policy change.

The chapter observes that the MUVA programme was caught between two different approaches to organisational learning: one geared towards context-sensitive practice, using data and existing knowledge to respond and adapt to local realities; the other more aligned with dominant scientific management principles within the UK's aid bureaucracy that seek to develop transferable knowledge about 'what works'. As a result, the second orthodoxy approach was only partially fulfilled, with a lack of sufficient engagement with reform contexts from the outset. Specifically, the programme was better at implementing 'iterative adaptations' than being 'problem driven'. In the social protection sector, staff with insider knowledge were already keenly aware of the problem that needed to be addressed within the government's Public Works Porgramme (PASP), and the best entry points to address it. In the education sector, however, the programme lacked such awareness, including of local political economy dynamics. These interventions fell back on more solutions-driven, 'politically blind' practice that aligned with donor requirements to develop transferable knowledge: methodologies to technically improve education quality in a reform context in which there was little endogenous political drive to do so. The chapter begins by outlining MUVA's approach, before examining how it manifests in three project examples. It then concludes by comparing the interventions to demonstrate the factors leading to both successes and failures in the programme's efforts to influence reform.

The MUVA programme

MUVA is a UKAid-funded female economic empowerment programme, being managed by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) in Mozambique since 2015. It supports the economic empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in urban centres across Mozambique. Its goal is to increase the capacity of disadvantaged adolescents and young women to participate in Mozambique's economy. In order to achieve a degree of comparability across and within the cases, this chapter focuses on MUVA's work with the public sector, specifically the social protection and education sectors. In these sectors, MUVA has been trying to influence the uptake of policies that it believes will contribute towards female economic empowerment in Mozambique.

MUVA's problem was first outlined by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)[16] in a terms of reference (ToR), used in a call for proposals from implementing organisations like Oxford Policy Management (OPM). OPM is a private consultancy firm based in Oxford, UK, but has offices all over the world, including in Mozambique. While aspects of the programme's design were adjusted and developed by OPM in its inception period, the main problem of urban female economic empowerment outlined by DFID in the original ToR remained intact. This is a genuine and pervasive development challenge in a country marked by high levels of interacting economic and gender inequality, including in urban areas. However, there is no evidence to point towards this being a 'locally nominated' problem in the sense that government actors, or indeed Mozambican women and girls, collaborated with DFID on the original problem identification and analysis. In fact, MUVA

[16] In September 2020, DFID was merged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to become the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

interviewees noted that they had originally highlighted to DFID that the programme should have more participation from the Mozambican government than was originally envisaged.

In the original ToR, DFID states that the problem of urban economic empowerment is aligned with their 'central gender strategy' documented in their 2011 'A New Strategic Vision for Girls and Women' (DFID, 2011). At the same time, the ToR states that it aims to 'innovate' through identifying, funding and monitoring 'locally-led projects/innovations, especially for poorer women and girls in the informal economy, building local organisation capacity in the process'[17]. In its 'learning' orientation it aimed to: 'strategically build and disseminate the evidence base on girls and women to ensure great impact of investment'[18]. It is at the intersection between MUVA's innovation and learning aspirations that the second orthodoxy principles of adaptive practice ('test, learn, adapt') were felt to most logically apply. Oxford Policy Management staff were particularly attracted to the idea of 'tight feedback loops' used in experiential learning models like 'problem driven iterative adaptation' (PDIA).[19] MUVA was designed to test out 'innovative', 'locally led' methods for supporting the economic empowerment of urban adolescent girls and young women, using the mechanics of 'test, learn, adapt' to refine its interventions in response to their implementation in the local context. At the same time, however, the learning orientation was driven towards generating evidence about 'what works' for greater 'impact of investment' for DFID. As this chapter will outline, learning about and for the context in which a project is being implemented is not the same as developing transferable knowledge about 'what works'. These two learning agendas sometimes pull the programme in different directions: one drawn towards the kind of universal knowledge that can be applied in top-down planning processes,

[17] DFID, 'Ligada: DFID's Programme for Women & Girls' – Terms of Reference (ToR), p. 2.
[18] Ibid, p. 3.
[19] Interview, MUVA MEL Lead, Maputo, July 2018.

the other more closely aligned with what Scott describes as an appreciation for 'the radical contingency of the future' (1998, 343).

In its own programme documentation, MUVA defines its problem through the discussion of 'barriers to FEE [female economic empowerment]'[20], which were identified through scoping studies in a nine-month inception period. This period, running from August 2015 to April 2016, was used to understand the specific problems MUVA would address in Mozambique's urban areas. It involved both conducting desk reviews and primary data collection, and applying the findings of these studies to the design of specific methodologies to be tested in individual projects. The outcome was a series of studies on specific areas affecting the economic empowerment of women and girls, as well as broader analysis of the Mozambican context: eight scoping studies on conditions in Mozambique and five reviews of international literature.

The studies ranged from those used to gain a more detailed understanding of 'the problem', to those needed for the development of ideas to tackle the identified problem/s. The former included a literature review addressing the question: '*What evidence exists in the international literature on the problems and contextual features that inhibit female economic empowerment for young women and girls in urban areas in Mozambique?'* Other studies were directed towards questions about how to respond to the problem, helping MUVA to establish the conceptual framework and theory behind its proposed solutions. These included literature reviews on the evidence around what works in school-based interventions, and how the programme should define 'skills'.

[20] OPM, 'Ligada DFID Mozambique's Programme for Female Economic Empowerment – Inception Report', April 2016, p. 20.

Through its initial problem analysis, MUVA identified both 'barriers' and 'opportunities' for addressing female economic empowerment (FEE) in Mozambique.[21] Barriers were found in women's employment prospects; in the social norms that affect them; and, in their access to and experience within Mozambique's education sector. In formal employment, MUVA found a preference for hiring men over women in both private and public sectors. The scoping studies also discovered that women entrepreneurs have less knowledge due to lower skill levels than their male counterparts. MUVA found that women face discrimination in access to work and, at home, they are victims of domestic violence and abuse. In terms of education, MUVA identified that secondary school and university enrolment is dominated by boys, despite heavy government investment in primary school education for boys and girls in order to meet its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) commitments.[22]

The main findings from these studies were presented to DFID in an inception report in April 2016, which also included a fully worked out theory of change, as well as a monitoring and evaluation plan for assessing the progress and impact of the programme. The results of the inception period led the programme to focus on three main thematic areas: women's access to decent labour; transition from school to work, and the informal sector. MUVA's approach to its problem is to learn how to build the capacity of young Mozambican women through pilot projects that can then be taken forward and scaled up by international donors and Mozambican institutions, including the private sector, civil society and government. Each project has three main interacting stages: develop ideas; test and generate evidence about what works; influence key stakeholders to take up MUVA methodologies at scale (see Figure

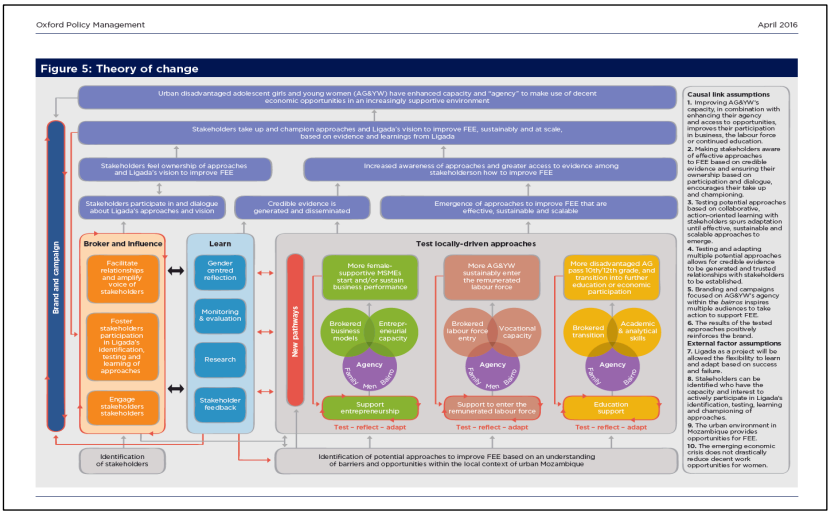
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

2). It developed a diverse range of pilot projects to address its work streams. At the peak of its testing phase, MUVA was simultaneously piloting 11 individual projects across a wide array of sectors, including social protection; education; business and entrepreneurship; urban planning; technology. It has tested 17 methodologies in total since 2015.

At the project level, the interventions that MUVA designed are all focused on building or enhancing capability, whether amongst women and girls themselves, or in the 'enabling environment' that determines the extent to which women and girls can be empowered. The three MUVA projects that form the focus of this research (MUVA Aprender; MUVA Assistentes; MUVA Horizonte) were all derived from inception study findings. They correspond with two of MUVA's workstreams: women's access to decent labour and transition from school to work. As small pilot projects, their impact on a wider scale is dependent on their uptake within institutions in Mozambique. The third component of MUVA's theory of change is the development of strategic partnerships that will enable the programme to reproduce at scale, leading to the outcome of: '[s]takeholders take up and champion approaches and Ligada's[23] [MUVA's] vision to improve FEE, sustainably and at scale, based on evidence and learning from Ligada [MUVA].'[24]

[23] MUVA's original programme name was 'Ligada' (meaning 'connected' in Portuguese), before being changed to MUVA after the inception period.
[24] OPM, 'Ligada DFID Mozambique's Programme for Female Economic Empowerment – Inception Report', April 2016, p. 5.

Figure 2. MUVA Theory of Change[25]



Its theory of change at the higher programme level is therefore to contribute towards the enhancement of FEE in Mozambique by generating evidence about the policies, methods and approaches that work for the advancement of female economic empowerment. But the programme does not just seek to influence the policies and practice of Mozambican institutions and actors. It also aims to influence UKAid and other donors globally. The MUVA programme has a dual function: to enhance UKAid's institutional learning about effective programming and to improve the lives of young women and girls in Mozambique. As will be shown in the following sections, this has led to a number of tensions for the programme's approach to learning, affecting its ability to influence female economic empowerment in Mozambique.

In its Mozambican office, the higher level programme has been managed predominantly by international staff, but included senior staff members that have been based and working from Mozambique for many years. Much like the case of the Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI)

[25] Source: OPM, 'Ligada DFID Mozambique's Programme for Female Economic Empowerment – Inception Report', April 2016, p. 69.

in Uganda that will follow, this enabled even non-Mozambican staff to draw on tacit contextual knowledge and understanding. At the project level, managers were a mix of Mozambican and international staff, all fluent in Portuguese. Of the three projects of focus in this case study, one was managed by a non-Mozambican (Aprender), the other two, Assistentes and Horizonte were manged by a Mozambican woman and man, respectively, with professional backgrounds in the focus areas of their projects. In total, over both periods of fieldwork, I spent ten weeks working from the MUVA Office in Mozambique. The environment was hardworking, but relaxed, creative and welcoming. Staff sat in the garden to have lunch together every day, which is also where many meetings and a lot of my interviews were held. On both fieldwork occasions, office parties in the garden reflected a strong sense of familiarity and warmth within the team. The Christmas party in 2019 was even attended by some of MUVA's partners within local government, demonstrating the connections that they had been able to build with them over time.

Figure 3. MUVA Office Garden, Maputo, December 2019



Figure 4. MUVA Office, Christmas Decorations, Maputo, December 2019



The long inception period sets MUVA apart from traditional donor programmes and can be considered a key feature of its attempt to function as an 'adaptive learning programme', and therefore adoption of the second orthodoxy principles. As a then DFID staff member responsible for the MUVA programme explained, it derived from a question: '*what do you do when you don't know what to do*?'[26] MUVA was instigated by DFID as a programme that would generate evidence about 'what works' in female economic empowerment interventions. In the programme's 'Business Case', required of all UKAid programmes to ensure that they fulfil strict value for money requirements, MUVA is described as having the following 'main purpose':

> *'Identify, test and ensure uptake of sustainable solutions for urban female economic empowerment (FEE); generate, disseminate evidence and build capacity on gender to drive improvements in policy, programming and budgets'*[27].

[26] Interview, DFID Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), Maputo, August 2018.
[27] DFID, Business Case (Summary Sheet) 'Ligada': DFID Mozambique Support to Adolescent Girls and Women' (2015 – 2021), p. 1.

The learning orientation of the programme responds to two features of 'female economic empowerment' programming, globally. Firstly, the concept of female or women's economic empowerment is complex, as well as theoretically contested. It is, in the language of adaptive programming, a 'wicked' problem, where a web of sociocultural, economic and political variables interact in determining the shape and extent of 'empowerment' in any given context. Definitions of empowerment have been evolving in development theory and practice since the 1970s, when 'feminist consciousness raising and collective action' began to influence development practice (Cornwall, 2016). Since this time, disputes have arisen around varying interpretations of how 'power' is conceived in development processes. As Gita Sen has argued, empowerment is, 'first and foremost, about power; changing power relations in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives' (Sen 1997). It is, however, notoriously challenging to operationalise power; its definition is often highly context dependent and subjective. In development theory, this has resulted in what Crawley (1998) named a 'virtually endless' debate over the concept of empowerment. In many ways, this is precisely the type of development challenge that adaptive programming has been designed to address, where there is a high degree of variation in how the problem and its solution are formulated. As Andrea Cornwall has argued, 'empowerment is a contextual, relational process that does not have predictable outcomes' (2014: 24).

The 'problem' and its 'solution' are therefore defined by a high degree of contextual conditionality and, as a result, not well suited to the transference of 'best practice' approaches. In theory, this makes female economic empowerment a suitable development challenge for the application of an adaptive approach that emphasises learning about, and with, the local context, rather than implementing universal policy prescriptions and pre-

designed solutions. MUVA has a strong emphasis on learning and is underpinned by an acknowledgement that there is no single strategy for addressing female economic empowerment in Mozambique, or elsewhere; that there are likely to be multiple ways to address their 'problem', and the most effective strategies are likely to emerge through implementation. Indeed, MUVA is most obviously an embodiment of adaptive practice in its approach to testing and refining ideas within cycles of action and learning. Literature on efforts to support women's empowerment in development projects and programmes provides evidence to support the adoption of an approach that recognises its inherent complexity. Cornwall and Edwards, for instance, highlight 'the folly of a one-size-fits-all approach to empowerment that pays little attention to the actual social, cultural, and political backdrop of planned intervention' (2014: 13).

Secondly, the MUVA programme also responds to a genuine lack of evidence on 'what works' in female economic empowerment programming. Almost certainly connected to the complex and contested nature of the problem, the evidence on effective support to FEE is scarce. As the original DFID terms of reference highlights, the programme has therefore been set up *'to work in a way that generates and disseminates practical and rigorous evidence about what works, and what does not'*[28]. It is, as one local civil society partner described it, a '*research programme'*[29] driven towards innovation. But, as the programme goal quoted above indicates, MUVA does not simply aim to generate evidence, it has also been tasked with having impact on gender outcomes in Mozambique and in UKAid's practice more widely, to 'build capacity on gender to drive improvements in policy, programming and budgets'. By working in this way, the programme's theory of change in many ways reflects a

[28] DFID, 'Ligada: DFID's Programme for Women & Girls' – Terms of Reference.
[29] Interview, MUVA CSO partner, Maputo, Mozambique, August 2018.

typical UKAid 'research-into-use' (DFID, 2014) uptake pathway, where research is produced and disseminated to 'research users', eventually leading to impact via the following steps:

- Research production and publication
- Research uptake: users are made aware of and engage with research, e.g. through attending dissemination events
- Research-into-use: users apply research to improve or develop new policy and practice
- Change in awareness, attitudes or perceptions through dissemination of new ideas and knowledge
- Impact on longer-term development outcomes for poor people in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) (Murray & Izzi, 2019).

Whilst the 'research production and publication' stage in a traditional DFID learning programme might be defined by conducting studies and other types of formal analysis, the MUVA programme embodies adaptive practice by 'learning by doing'. Each project aims to test a hypothesis about female economic empowerment and to generate learning for use in programme adaptation, policy influencing and advocacy.[30] Its learning model reflects adaptive practice by testing out specific ideas in 'concrete initiatives' implemented through cycles of action, learning and refining. The learning lead for MUVA, noted that *"[l]earning has to be used as quickly as possible in order to influence change"* and MUVA was inspired by the *"tight feedback loops"* in adaptive programming approaches like PDIA, so they designed the programme around the idea of feedback loops.[31]

MUVA uses specific monitoring and evaluation tools and methodologies to conduct this iterative learning, including 6-monthly *"reflections"* where programme participants come together to discuss how well interventions are developing. These were described as a *"safe space for project staff to come"* and reflect on monitoring and evaluation data together.

[30] OPM, 'Ligada DFID Mozambique's Programme for Female Economic Empowerment – Inception Report', April 2016.
[31] Interview, MUVA MEL Staff, Maputo, July 2018.

MUVA MEL staff noted that these 6-monthly reflections were not aimed to make immediate decisions, but to promote reflection.[32] However, the outcomes of these reflection sessions then fed into decision-making processes involving programme managers in order to decide whether to continue with projects, or how to adapt them. In sum, the adaptive model was pursued as a logical approach in a programme that begins with a lack of knowledge about the types of intervention that will work.

At the impact level, the MUVA programme was intended by DFID to result in:

> A more enabling environment for urban adolescent girls and women, with improved access to decent work opportunities and enhanced capacity to respond to those opportunities. As such, related impacts are expected to be reduced vulnerability of women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence; improved access to health and education services for adolescent girls; and more equitable formal and informal institutions supporting the role of women and girls in the economy.[33]

In subsequent iterations of MUVA's theory of change, under the management of the Oxford Policy Management (OPM), these higher-level intended outcomes have remained more-or-less intact. Because such higher-level impacts are typically difficult to measure and identify in the average timeframe of a development programme, UKAid funded projects are usually held primarily accountable for what they produce in terms of concrete outputs or outcomes, which are more clearly or directly linked to actions taken by the programme. These outputs are connected to expected higher level change via a 'theory of change,' which tests assumptions about the relationship between evidence outputs and any potential change in policy, for example. MUVA is different from traditional UKAid programmes because it has a flexible results framework to enable adaptive practice. As MUVA MEL staff noted, *"DFID was interested in being an adaptive programme",* so the results framework was *"broad*

[32] Interview, MUVA MEL Staff, Maputo, July 2018.
[33] DFID, 'Ligada: DFID's Programme for Women & Girls' – Terms of Reference (ToR).

enough from the outset".[34] For instance, in its 'testing' stages, it was primarily accountable for the number of methodologies it tested rather than the results of these methodologies. This corresponds with the learning orientation of the programme and recognises that not all of the tested methodologies will be successful. The higher-level outcomes and impacts were kept relatively broad to prevent MUVA from being beholden to a pre-formulated implementation plan. In its testing phases, therefore, MUVA was held accountable for learning about what works, or does not, rather than its impact on FEE in the local context. MUVA staff commented that the logframe (results framework) was therefore *"more framing than constraining"*; it was not tied at the level of activities right from the top through, for example, standard indicators.[35]

As noted, MUVA also includes in its intended results framework the uptake of its evidence in DFID and other donors working on female economic empowerment globally. Indeed, MUVA was designed with the intention that it should be a '"go-to" programme on broader priority gender issues'[36]. DFID designed the programme to include an embedded DFID (now FCDO) staff member, who is seated part-time in the MUVA office in Mozambique, as an institutional learning mechanism. This is an innovative aspect of the programme and is becoming a more regular feature of UKAid learning programmes since the approach was adopted by MUVA.[37] The embedded FCDO learning advisor has been attempting to share lessons learned from MUVA in the design of UKAid female and youth empowerment programmes elsewhere, including Rwanda and Somalia.[38]

[34] Interview, MUVA MEL Lead, Maputo, July 2018.
[35] Ibid.
[36] OPM, 'Ligada DFID Mozambique's Programme for Female Economic Empowerment – Inception Report', April 2016, p. V.
[37] Interview, DFID Learning Advisor, Maputo, December 2019.
[38] Interview, DFID Learning Advisor, Maputo, December 2019.

These features of MUVA's starting point present a number of inconsistencies and challenges for the kind of adaptive, local level learning promoted under the second orthodoxy. First and foremost, MUVA is faced with the problem of trying to align a donor learning agenda with an attempt to influence a specific institutional context. As an approach to aid programming that recognises the inherent complexity and contextually contingent nature of development problems like gender equality and economic empowerment, it is surprising that MUVA was designed to 'act for DFID as a "go-to" programme on broader priority gender issues in Mozambique, globally and centrally.'[39] Developing transferable knowledge that will 'support existing DFID programmes to improve outcomes for women and girls' is in tension with MUVA's other aim 'to identify, fund and monitor locally-led projects'[40]. This dual functioning is not unusual for a donor funded aid programme with a research or learning agenda, but it does come into conflict with the fundamental premise of adaptive programming: that change pathways are largely contextually determined and therefore the transference of 'best practice' from one context to another is likely to be unsuccessful. In order to see how this tension plays out, the chapter will now turn to an analysis of three of MUVA's 'concrete interventions' in the public sector.

MUVA's response to the problem of 'female economic empowerment' in urban Mozambique: three project examples

MUVA's approach to addressing the barriers it identified to female economic empowerment was to learn how to build the capacity of young disadvantaged women through pilot projects

[39] OPM, 'Ligada DFID Mozambique's Programme for Female Economic Empowerment – Inception Report', April 2016, p. V.
[40] DFID, 'Ligada: DFID's Programme for Women & Girls' – Terms of Reference (ToR), p. 2.

that can then be taken forward and scaled by international donors and Mozambican institutions, including the private sector, civil society and government. The three projects of analytical focus in this research were all designed to increase the potential of women to take up non-subsistence employment through addressing their educational outcomes, ability to plan for and envisage a career, or through work experience, enabling them to be 'work ready' by developing both the 'soft' and technical skills required in the workplace. These projects were chosen because they all developed female economic empowerment strategies that were intended to be scaled by the public sector.

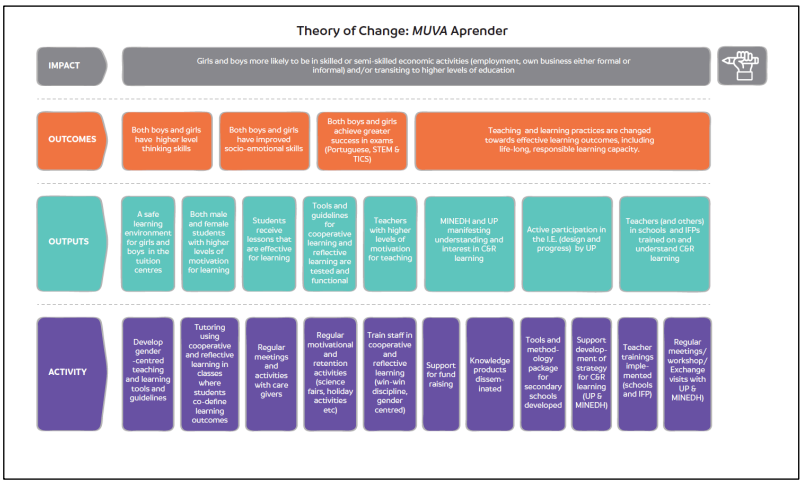
MUVA Aprender ('MUVA Learn')

The initial idea for MUVA Aprender came from the inception studies, where it was found that households were investing in children's education but the education provided was poor in quality. Findings from the studies were then shared in meetings with local NGOs, civil society organisations and the education sector. The consultation period pointed towards the common challenge of poor-quality education and MUVA came up with the idea of testing a new learning model, which it sought to establish within Mozambique's education system:

> *"The initial idea came from one of the inception studies – linked to the fact that households were investing in the children's education but the education was poor in quality and not fit for purpose. From the initial idea there were then meetings with local NGOs and civil society organizations, and with the education sector. All defined the poor quality education as a problem .. MUVA came up with the idea of testing cooperative learning."*[41]

[41] Email Correspondence, MUVA MEL Lead, March 2019.

Figure 5. MUVA Aprender Theory of Change



The model they developed was a pedagogical approach based on cooperative, participatory learning that aims to empower students to think independently and analytically. It used group work and student-led inquiry in order to break down the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students. MUVA believed that this teaching method is more likely to cultivate the 'soft skills' that it had identified, in its scoping studies, that employers are looking for in Mozambique's job market. It argued that the traditional hierarchical teaching method that is dominant in Mozambique's education system stifles independent thought and problem-solving skills. Rather than *"regurgitating"* information, the model aimed to promote *"high level thinking skills"* and *"social skills"* that would enable students to *"understand what you are doing and why you are doing it"*.[42] The problem it addressed, therefore, is that it believed Mozambique's education system is not fit-for-purpose; it does not set students up for the job market because it does not endow them with the skills that employers are looking for; its focus was on the *"transition between education and the labour market."*[43]

[42] Interview, MUVA Aprender Project Manager, Maputo, Mozambique, July 2018.
[43] Ibid.

Box 1. MUVA Aprender problem statement[44]

According to Mozambican private sector employers, young men and women are coming out of the education system without the necessary employment skills; the lack of higher level thinking skills as well as social emotional competencies are critical. The education system has not been able to respond to (catch up with) the rapidly changing needs of the labour markets. This gap is mirrored globally and education systems all over the world are seeking more effective methods to prepare their youth better for the labour market.

Although the Mozambican Ministry of Education and Human Development recognises it needs to make a shift in its pedagogical practices and has adopted a student centred approach to education and learning, it has not been able to put this policy into practice yet. The Pedagogical University, which trains secondary school teachers, has not managed to make the necessary shift from its traditional (expositive) teaching methods towards teaching methods which are more conducive to the development of higher level thinking and social emotional skills.

MUVA Aprender used a controlled experimental model to test its methodology in test centres. This included the use of a control group that was taught with the traditional approach. As with all MUVA projects, the final stage of the initiative aimed to use the evidence it had acquired through testing to further persuade the government and its partners to mainstream the teaching approach within the Mozambican education system. MUVA Aprender aimed to scale its model within Mozambique's secondary education sector through working with the government and teacher training institutions, including the national Pedagogical University (UP). It aimed to integrate its teaching method into the teacher training that is conducted at these institutions, as well as higher level government policy. The project ended in 2019 after four full cycles of testing and refining the methodology in test centres, trialling the approach in 12 public schools and working with the national Pedagogical University to integrate the approach into their refresher (ongoing education) training

[44] OPM, MUVA Aprender Programme Document – 2 pager, February 2017.

programme.[45] In terms of government policy, MUVA Aprender aimed to have its approach reflected in the National Education Strategy. In early 2019, it reported:

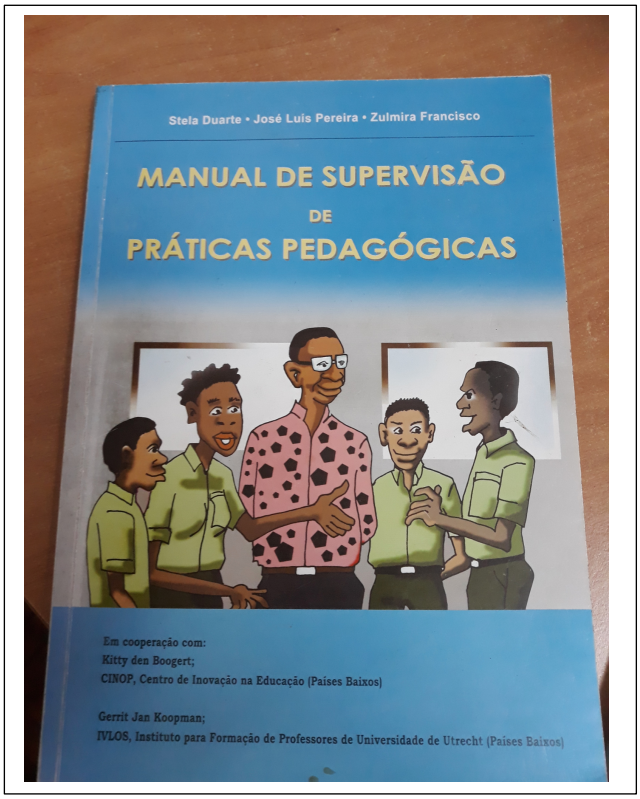
> *"In 2019, the Ministry of Education will revise the National Education Strategy... MUVA will build on the practical collaboration with Govt. to date, relationships established, and evidence generated, to ensure that learning from* [the project is] *reflected in the new strategy..."*[46]

Ultimately, however, the Aprender project *"did not get the results that they were expecting to show the evidence"*[47]. An evaluation in 2019 showed little difference in terms of learning outcomes amongst those in its treatment group.[48] Despite this, it had already gone ahead with trialling the approach in schools and was able to advance its influencing strategy by gaining a place at the table of a high-level working group for the development of the government's 2019 revision of the National Education Strategy. According to MUVA, the final revised strategy included a stronger emphasis on student-led learning than it had done previously, and the programme attributed this to the work it had done in this group to advocate on behalf of the approach.[49] Before the project ended, an education consultant was brought on to conduct meetings and interviews with stakeholders working in the education sector, with the aim of understanding how aligned the teaching model of Aprender was with the sector and its political economy. The consultant found that *"everyone is behind the principles… everyone agrees on it across the board"*[50]; it was at the point of how to implement them (for example whether the model should be integrated into service training, professional development

[45] Email Correspondence, MUVA MEL Lead, March 2019.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Interview, MUVA Education Consultant, Maputo, Mozambique, November 2019.
[48] A. Caetano and P. Jasper (unpublished) 'Assessing the Effects of MUVA Aprender's Tutoring Methodology on Participants – MUVA Aprender Impact Report'
[49] Informal conversations, MUVA Programme Manager, Maputo, Mozambique, November – December 2019.
[50]Interview, MUVA Education Consultant, Maputo, Mozambique, November 2019.

training, or pre-training) where there was disagreement. The consultancy involved speaking to NGOs with the aim of presenting the main opportunities and barriers to the government.

Figure 6. 'Supervision Manual of Pedagogical Practices'[51]



Similar to the findings of the education consultant, interviews conducted for this thesis with government showed that there was already high-level policy support for student-led, participatory learning in the education sector, well before MUVA began operating. Policy guidelines for participatory learning in schools had been developed by the National Directorate for Secondary Education and it was already integrated into the national teacher training curriculum, including its teaching manuals (Figure 6).[52] It was therefore already recognised within this Directorate by senior policy-makers as an approach that leads to better

[51] Shared with researcher during: Interview, Director of the National Directorate for Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Mozambique, August 2018.
[52] Interview, Director of the National Directorate for Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Mozambique, August 2018.

learning outcomes. In an interview with the National Directorate for Secondary Education, it was claimed that there was a strong recognition of the value of *"learning to learn"* and that teachers at the primary school level were using the reflective approach.[53] Moreover, interviews indicated they were already working with the National Pedagogical University to revise their teacher-training curriculum to include more participatory and collaborative teaching methods. A senior policy adviser in the National Directorate in fact claimed that '*independent of MUVA, we will advance with this'*[54].

Indeed, in 2019, MUVA learnt through testing the teachers that they were already fully cognisant of the approach. After ten days of training with a select group of teachers with the Aprender methodology, they found that, in the *"baseline and endline survey of the teachers, they had a similar score because they already knew the theory."*[55] The challenges lay in implementation on the ground.[56] As it 'crawled the design space' (Andrews et al, 2017), MUVA began to learn about these contextual realities and *"bumped into knowledge gaps"*[57], which stemmed from their original review of the evidence. A formative evaluation of the programme in 2016 found that 'some gaps were identified in the review of evidence, particularly in relation to the […] education system.'[58]

When asked why the government had not been able to implement its student-led learning model despite the guidelines being in place for several years, the main challenge cited was one of limited resources, not limited evidence that it works: *"It's in line with what we want and we already had that idea – but what's difficult is materialising it".* For instance, the

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Interview, MUVA MEL Lead, Maputo, Mozambique, November 2019.
[56] Interview, MUVA Education Consultant, Maputo, Mozambique, November 2019.
[57] Interview, MUVA MEL Lead, Maputo, Mozambique, November 2019.
[58] Hansford & King, 'Ligada Formative Evaluation (2016) – Final Report', November 2016, p. 18.

Directorate cited a lack of material and use of books in the classroom, *"to make the classes more dynamic"*.[59] MUVA Aprender's civil society partners who had had long-term engagement with Mozambique's education sector, also cited resources as the main challenge for integration, noting that *"it was already difficult for the Ministry [of Education] to get chalk into every classroom"*[60]. The collaborative learning approach is more resource intensive and was felt not well suited to the typical conditions of Mozambique's public school classrooms: one government interviewee noted that the *"reality is that there are too many students in the average class"*[61]. As a model that requires supervised group work, the average size of Mozambique's classes (average teacher/pupil ratio of 1:60)[62] was thought to pose a particular challenge for the scaling of the approach. Similarly, the model requires teaching materials, for instance in the form of laminated cards, that many public schools do not have the additional resources to acquire.[63]

In analysis of Mozambique's education sector nationally, further challenges are cited that are thought to relate to an investment in access over quality of education. For instance, UNICEF notes that despite abolishing school fees and the education sector receiving the highest share of the state budget (over 15 percent), improvement in quality has lagged far behind increases in enrolment. Their education strategy quotes low levels of literacy and numeracy amongst teachers and high levels of teacher, director and pupil absenteeism as major barriers.[64] Within the context of a widespread 'learning crisis' (Hossain and Hickey, eds, 2019)

[59] Interview, Director of the National Directorate for Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Mozambique, August 2018.
[60] Interview, Education Specialist, Progresso, MUVA Civil Society Partner, Maputo, August 2018.
[61] Interview, Deputy Director of Education for the City, Maputo, Mozambique, August 2018.
[62] UNICEF Mozambique Education Programme – 'For Every Child, Education', at: https://www.unicef.org/mozambique/en/education (accessed 8 November 2021)
[63] Interview, Education Specialist, Progresso, MUVA Civil Society Partner, Maputo, August 2018.
[64] UNICEF Mozambique Education Programme – 'For Every Child, Education', at: https://www.unicef.org/mozambique/en/education (accessed 8 November 2021).

following the introduction of universal primary education in low-income countries like Mozambique, political economy analysis indicates that governments may prefer reforms geared towards access (Ibid). This is due to their more immediate electoral gains, over the longer-term and more costly nature of investing in quality (Nicolai et al. 2014, in Hossain and Hickey, eds, 2019: 2). In the context of Mozambique, Mário et al (2020) bring, in addition, attention to weak administrative capacity within the education sector and argue that the costs related to increasing education quality have led the government to focus more on access than quality. This context implies that, at higher political levels, investment in education quality and learning initiatives like the student-led method has not been a priority for the government, despite policy support within technical levels of the Ministry of Education.

Ultimately, the lack of evidence that the Aprender methodology had positive learning effects on students in the testing centres meant that the initiative had to be terminated, without further effort to integrate it into schools. This thesis was not able to determine conclusively why the project did not get the results it had hoped for, but the MUVA team surmised that it needed to be implemented more effectively at primary level to change learning behaviours. Because of the focus on 'transition from education to the labour market' within the programme, they were forced to work with secondary level students, who were, by that point in their educational journeys, already engrained in more hierarchical models and dealing with various challenges outside of school.[65]

The results of MUVA Aprender challenge the wider programme's theory of change related to influence through evidence. Most notably, the fact that the programme was able to influence

[65] A. Caetano and P. Jasper (OPM, unpublished) 'Assessing the Effects of MUVA Aprender's Tutoring Methodology on Participants – MUVA Aprender Impact Report'.

policy in the government's education strategy without being able to show that the model works in practice questions the validity of a model that invests heavily in generating evidence, and ultimately points towards the inherently political nature of evidence. The learning agenda nonetheless created incentives towards developing transferable methodologies and generating evidence, over aiming to have influence on the implementation blockages facing educational reform in Mozambique. Political analysis of the sector occurred late on in the initiative, once the project had already started developing and testing its methodology. This meant that MUVA 'bumped into knowledge gaps' that could have potentially been identified and addressed much earlier on in the initiative, including in its year-long inception phase.

This set of results reflects a fundamental tension in its approach to learning. On the one hand, MUVA advanced with its approach in the absence of definitive evidence that it worked. On the other hand, the project invested heavily in generating evidence, evidence that, in the end, proved largely inconsequential to the sector's plans and existing efforts to integrate the student-led learning methodology. As a result, the project risked fulfilling the Directorate for Secondary Education's predication that *"[t]he problem with projects is that they come and they go and they need to do something structured* [to promote] *structural change"*[66]. What MUVA needed to engage in was a political and contingent process of reform, but its donor-driven 'learning' agenda, influenced by the principles of scientific management principles, pulled it towards developing and testing 'solutions', generating evidence that ultimately proved inconsequential for the political economy of the policy environment it was attempting to influence. This chapter will now turn to a closer assessment of the second MUVA project

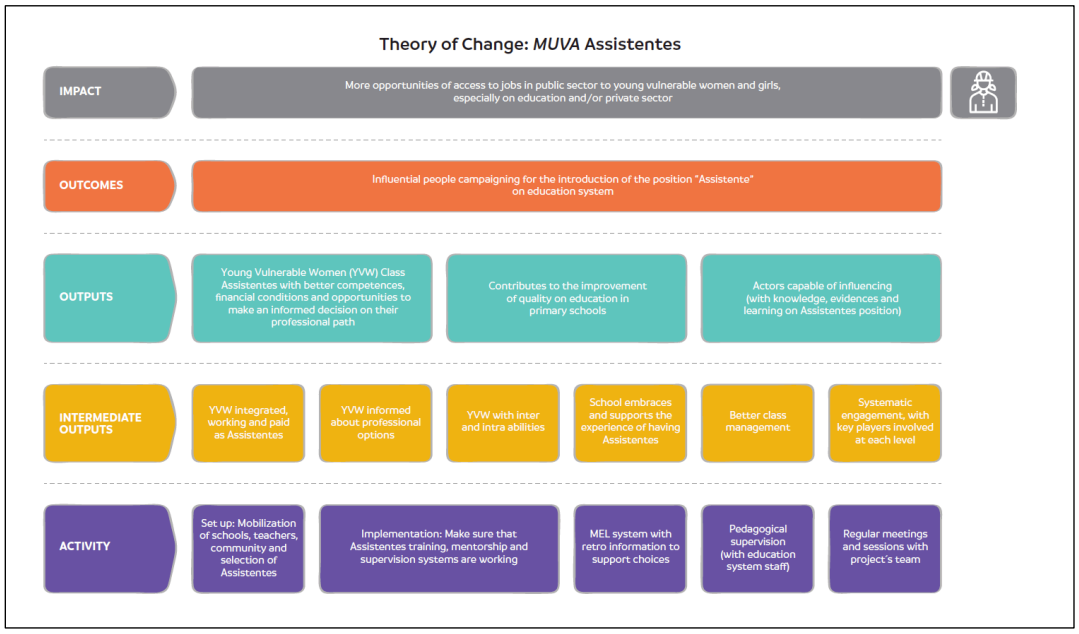
[66] Interview, Director of the National Directorate for Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Mozambique, August 2018.

of focus in this study, 'MUVA Assistentes', which had more successful outcomes, in terms of applying knowledge and influencing policy in the social protection sector.

MUVA Assistentes ('MUVA Assistants')

MUVA Assistentes also engages with the education sector, but the institutions that it hopes to influence and carry its model forward sit within Mozambique's social protection sector. Based on findings from the initial inception studies, it aimed to support young women to increase their employability in the formal sector through giving them 'on-the-job experience' as teaching assistants and life skill coaching via mentorship from other young women.[67] The problem it addresses is young women's limited access to formal employment, particularly in the public sector.

Figure 7. MUVA Assisentes Theory of Change



[67] Interview, MUVA Assistentes Project Manager, Maputo, Mozambique, July 2018.

In order to address this problem, the Assistentes pilot tested a public work option whereby the selected beneficiaries work as classroom assistants in overcrowded primary schools. Like the rest of the MUVA programme, it targeted disadvantaged young women from low-income urban neighbourhoods. It teamed the participants with 'mentors', who are young women with comparable backgrounds and age, who have managed to overcome challenges and succeeded in different ways. These mentors aim to provide moral support and skills training to the young women.[68] MUVA's monitoring data pointed towards positive outcomes for the young women involved in its programmes, including increased self-confidence, the development of concrete career plans and aspirations, including as teachers:

> '…the project contributed to slightly higher levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy of the assistants, and increased the percentage of assistants who report making autonomous decisions about important issues such as their economic activity, movements outside the household, education and household expenses.'[69]

Regarding the professional and academic trajectory of the assistants, MUVA's follow-up surveys conducted six months after completion revealed that 85% of the assistants conducted at least one economic or academic activity after participating in the programme.[70] When compared to a demographically similar group of urban youth, the programme found that Assistentes participants were more likely to be engaged in remunerated work than other disadvantaged female youth (53% vs 34% respectively).[71] Additionally, interviews conducted by the programme with 45 participants at the end of 2020 indicated that the young women had been able to draw on their growing self-confidence during the COVID-19 crisis to support their communities. The following quotes indicate that they shared messages around

[68] Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Teaching Assistants & FGD Mentors, Maputo, August 2018.
[69] OPM (unpublished) 'Findings from the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) component of the first and second phases of MUVA *Assistentes',* October 2020.
[70] Ibid.
[71] OPM, 'MUVA Assistentes Ciclo 1: Primeiro estudo de seguimento – 6 meses apos da graduação' PowerPoint (unpublished).

hygiene measures and health practices with neighbours, friends and families. They also reported that their relationship with their mentors, whose involvement in their lives continued throughout the pandemic, helped sustain their growing self-confidence.[72]

> *"Mentoring is good… I feel good in every session… Mentors also collaborate a lot, we all understand each other…."*[73]

> *"… I was a very closed person. I did not like to get involved and did not seek to know exactly about the things of the world. But then I started to open up, I got to know the world. And with… dealing with COVID, I also went deeper with what I didn't know and what I already knew* [in terms of prevention measures]…. *With that I was able to help others… I had an obligation… to teach others, my friends."*[74]

> *"I didn't used to have this strength to fight but now I do. I am a determined woman now because I want to advance* [with my business] *and I want to see new things.."*[75]

Like Aprender, MUVA Assistentes validly addresses problems within the educational and training opportunities open to young people and young women in particular. Impressive rates of primary school enrolment for both boys and girls have not been matched by progress in terms of educational outcomes. Nationally, only 14 percent of women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 27.3 percent of their male counterparts (UNDP, 2019). As a result, literacy rates are nearly 30 percentage points lower for working-age women, and women are much less likely to be able to speak Portuguese, limiting their access to more secure and lucrative jobs in the formal sector (Gradin & Tarp, 2019).

This is connected to qualitative differences in the kinds of work that women and men are engaging in urban areas. In its 2018 Urban Youth Survey, MUVA found that young women

[72] M. Buvinic & R. Pinnington, 'How to Promote Young Women's Resilience in the Face of COVID-19 Induced Economic Shocks', Center for Global Development Blog, May 28 2021, at: https://www.cgdev.org/blog/how-promote-young-womens-resilience-face-covid-19-induced-economic-shocks-lessons-urban (accessed 14 January 2022)
[73] Assistentes Teaching Assistant (A), MUVA Monitoring Data, November 2020.
[74] Assistentes Teaching Assistant (B), MUVA Monitoring Data, November 2020.
[75] Assistentes Teaching Assistant (C), MUVA Monitoring Data, November 2020.

in the cities of Maputo and Beira are less likely to be employed,[76] more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to be inactive or outside the labour force than young men. Among those who are employed, men are more likely to be wage-employed, and women are more likely to be self-employed or working without remuneration for a family business. A large proportion of employed young people in Maputo and Beira were found to work in jobs with a low skill level (60%) and most young people do not have a formal contract (87%). MUVA found that young women are significantly more likely to work in such unskilled jobs and they are significantly less likely to have a contract or even verbal agreement.[77]

As a 'public work option', MUVA has been trying to integrate the Assistentes model into the government's national social protection strategy. The problem it addresses is a lack of access to the public sector job market for young women and girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, which it sees as exacerbated by a number of problems that it has identified within Mozambique's Public Works Programme (PASP). PASP is supported by the World Bank, which contributes over 90% of the total budget via direct budget support through the Mozambican Treasury.[78] The PASP provides direct employment in public works projects, or access to employment through training and educational programmes. It is a labour-intensive public works intervention that targets extremely poor households that have one or more adult members able to work (Buur & Salimo, 2018).

[76] The Survey used the following definition of 'employed': An individual is defined as employed if they have done any type of work, even if it was just for one hour, in the last seven days. In this survey, this could be either through wage employment, self-employment, or working in a family business without remuneration. Furthermore, individuals were classified as employed if they did not do any work in the last seven days but do have work that they will definitely return to (OPM, MUVA Urban Youth Survey, 2018, unpublished)
[77] OPM, MUVA Urban Youth Survey (2018, unpublished)
[78] OPM, 'Proposal for the expansion of *MUVA* Assistentes, an initiative to promote economic empowerment and employability of vulnerable young women in partnership with the public sector' (Draft, No Date)

MUVA identified a lack of progress made by the PASP to reduce youth underemployment and poverty. Assistentes aims to offer something different in terms of an operational model for achieving the PASP's objectives. It believes that the low-skilled public works options offered by the PASP – for example sweeping roads – do not facilitate career graduation and they do not build the employability of participants through skills development.[79] MUVA Assistentes aimed for its model to be replicated at scale within the PASP programme. In order to align with this programme, MUVA has used the same objectives and selection criteria for its beneficiaries as the PASP.[80] Its secondary impacts were hoped to be on the education sector. Through introducing teaching assistants, it aimed to reduce the problems posed by overcrowded classrooms, including student learning outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Early on in the programme in 2016, MUVA conducted an internal political economy analysis (PEA) to guide its public sector work, which concluded that PASP would be a viable option for the replication of the Assistentes model. It stated that 'it would be fairly straightforward to implement, as the programme and systems are already in place'[81]. Compared to Aprender, MUVA Assistentes has been more successful at influencing its institutional environment within the social protection sector. Within the timescale of the programme, MUVA Assistentes reflects the most advanced attempt to influence its institutional context. Whilst there was support for the approach within the Mozambican government, MUVA management had to go to great lengths to influence the World Bank, which was initially reluctant to pilot MUVA's approach in the PASP because it did not feel that it would reach the 'most

[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Lucia Bernadete et al (2016, unpublished) Opportunities and Barriers: Providing Decent Work for Women through Municipal Governments. MUVA PEA Report. Oxford Policy Management, p. 15.

vulnerable'[82]. In 2019, the MUVA Programme Manager flew to Washington D.C. to lobby World Bank staff, and eventually successfully persuaded World Bank officials to pilot the Assistentes model within the government's PASP programme. The successful piloting eventually resulted in the approach being adopted in Mozambique's National Framework for Public Works which provided the groundwork for the approach to be rolled out on a larger scale, within the second stage of the PASP (PASP II). Moreover, MUVA reported that, "*the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Action (MGCAS)* […] *presented the MUVA Assistentes experience at the 63rd UN Commission on the Status of Women, as innovative best practice for gender sensitive social protection."*[83]

The literature on Mozambique's social protection programmes points towards greater levels of endogenous demand in the social protection sector. This is considered to be reflected in more than 90 per cent of the budget allocated to the implementation of social protection programmes coming from the state budget. Moreover, social protection has continued to receive special attention from the government in its budget allocations despite the effects of the financial crisis, which has negatively impacted its economy since 2013 (Buur & Salimo, 2018). The reality that this budget is largely funded by donors with their own policy agendas challenges this indictor of 'ownership'. Indeed, the fact that MUVA had to go to great lengths to influence the World Bank to have its methodology adopted within the PASP indicates the degree of decision-making authority that donors like the Bank retain over the social protection programmes that they fund, even when that funding gets channelled through the government's own budget.

[82] Interviews, MUVA Staff, Maputo, Mozambique, December 2019.
[83] Email Correspondence, MUVA MEL Lead, March 2019.

The Mozambican social protection sector has been heavily influenced by international donor interest and agendas, including those of the UK. Nonetheless, the literature provides cases, including in the social protection sector, where endogenous demand has emerged out of and alongside donor policy agendas (Buur & Salimo 2018; Hanlon 2017; de Renzio & Hanlon 2009). The literature indicates that social protection sector programmes, including the PASP, have aligned with elite incentives within the government, to the extent that what began as an external agenda has become adopted within the government's wider logics of regime survival. For instance, Buur and Salimo (2018) argue that social protection has been used as mechanism for resource mobilisation in a context of urban social unrest that threatened the political stability of the Frelimo regime. These protests were in response to the government's removal or reduction of subsidies that increased urban living costs and, in this context, social protection interventions like the PASP have provided an avenue to address discontent, and secure 'national unity' (Ibid).

In this context, the inclusion of male youth, though at a lower proportion to female youth, in the piloting of Assistentes within the PASP made it particularly attractive to the government, the political stability of which remains threatened by high levels of youth unemployment. On this basis, the relatively more successful project outcomes in MUVA Assistentes can be explained by theories of going 'with the grain' (Kelsall, 2008), where donor and recipient interests can align in 'coalitions for change', or what Burr and Salimo describe in the case of Mozambique as an 'international policy alliance' (2018: 8).

But what was the role of MUVA's 'adaptive learning' approach in the relatively more successful outcomes in the Assistentes project? Evidence that the approach 'worked' in terms of providing better career graduation skills for participants was apparently instrumental in convincing the World Bank, which eventually claimed ownership over the 'solution' it had

enabled through piloting Assistentes within the PASP. From the government's perspective, interviews with senior members of Instituto Nacional de Ação Social (National Institute for Social Action - INAS), responsible for the PASP reported that:

> *"It's not sure that they* [MUVA] *are helping us with a problem; they brought an idea to us. It's an idea we are learning from them. It's an idea that we think that we can make real in government…."*[84]

This is different from Aprender in the sense that MUVA brought a new idea to INAS, one that was not already being implemented and therefore the evidence that it worked became more consequential. But perhaps more important than the hard evidence that the approach had positive results for the women involved, was the tacit and formal political knowledge that MUVA Assistentes was able to draw on, which enabled them to align the intervention with a specific political opportunity for change. When asked why the project appeared to have been more successful at influencing its reform environment than other projects, MUVA staff noted:

> *"a number of senior team members of MUVA had worked for between 5-10 years in the social protection sector in Mozambique* […] *and were therefore keenly aware of the issues facing the Public Works Programme - MUVA gave us the space to create a pilot (with no risk to the public sector purse) that could improve the outcomes of SP* [social protection] *for young urban girls and the openings we needed to work with the public sector from the outset. I am not sure that I would say that the public-sector officers we worked with defined the 'solution' but they were part of the process of defining the problem. I would say that the social capital we had in MUVA was important to embed this process in the public sector and to a lesser extent the donor community."*[85]

Unlike in the case of Aprender, in Assistentes, the interest in developing transferable knowledge was balanced with an ability to draw on contextual knowledge and understanding: situated and locally constituted knowledge that emerged not only from formal analysis, but experience. This enabled the project to identify a viable entry point for scaling its teaching

[84] Interview, National Institute for Social Action – INAS, Maputo, December 2019.
[85] Email Correspondence, MUVA Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, March 2019.

assistant model, which also aligned with a broader political economy of reform. Before turning to a deeper discussion and comparison of these outcomes, the chapter will present its analysis of the final MUVA project of focus in this study, MUVA Horizonte.

MUVA Horizonte ('MUVA Horizon')

Like the other sub-cases in this chapter, MUVA Horizonte used research conducted in the inception phase to identify the problem that it would work on. The problem identification came from the initial studies of Mozambique's education sector, as well as 'hands-on experience' from other MUVA projects, including Assistentes and Aprender, where a lack of career guidance was evident among the participants.[86] MUVA Horizonte identified a lack of professional orientation for students in schools, resulting from a lack of access to information and guidance on professional options for students. The research also found that pedagogical institutions lacked the will to undertake professional orientation programmes.[87] MUVA Horizonte responded to this identified problem through a pilot project that would design and implement a vocational training programme in five schools in the city of Maputo. In collaboration with the Mozambique Pedagogical University (UP), MUVA Horizonte designed a curriculum for the programme and trained the teachers that would implement it in the schools it had identified. The initial 2.5-month pilot stage involved the participation of 10 classes and 500 students.[88] Despite evidence pointing towards positive impact on the students' capacity to consider and plan different vocations, the MUVA Horizonte project was not expanded to a further four schools as planned.

> *"This problem identification came* [from the] *initial studies and then hands-on experience from Atitude, Assistentes and Aprender where the lack of career guidance was evident among the participants. We worked with the local teaching university and*

[86] Email Correspondence, MUVA Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, March 2019.
[87] Skype Interview, Horizonte Project Manager, October 2018.
[88] Email Correspondence, Horizonte Project Manager, October 2018.

> *the students studying educational psychology to develop the modules. The schools were not really involved in the problem definition for this project, although when presented with the issue they recognised that it was a serious question and gap in the current educational system…"*[89]

After an internal assessment, MUVA programme management decided that the potential for the programme to be taken forward within the education sector was not there. The absence of institutional 'buy-in' was identified at the political level within the municipal government, which meant that the project would not be able to easily align with existing institutional arrangements for providing this kind of training within schools. Moreover, as one member of MUVA's programme staff pointed out, *"[i]t was not seen as a priority by the schools"*[90]. As a result, it was considered that scaling up the project would be neither a cost effective nor sustainable response to the problem of limited professional orientation in Mozambique's public schools. The project was therefore discontinued after the first pilot**.**

The divergence between the institutional context and the problem identified in this case can be partially explained by the fact that *"the schools were not really involved in the problem definition for this project."*[91] MUVA Horizonte worked with the local teaching university and the students studying educational psychology to develop the modules, but did not involve the schools themselves or the local authorities in the problem identification and development. Although, as programme staff pointed out, when presented with the issue they recognised that it was a serious gap in the current educational system.[92] Applying MUVA's theory of change, the project was concerned with developing the evidence to show that the intervention worked before it engaged too deeply with its institutional context. This was their approach to *"de-*

[89] Email Correspondence, MUVA Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, March 2019.
[90] Email Correspondence, MUVA Monitoring and Evaluation Lead, March 2019.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

risking" ideas by testing them first.[93] In this case, the project was able to show that its intervention developed professional orientation for students, in terms of increased clarity of professional aspirations and access to information about career paths. However, despite this, there was a lack of interest on the part of the schools and local authorities.[94]

The 'rapid iteration' of the kind proposed in adaptive models could have also worked against a context-sensitive approach in this case. The coordinator of MUVA Horizonte argued that building political relationships and securing political support for reforms of this kind takes time, which was felt to have been insufficiently allocated in the piloting approach. This implies that the existing relationships and tacit institutional knowledge were not already in place within the intervention, as they were in the case of Assistentes. The rapid nature of the piloting approach may not have allowed MUVA Horizonte the time to establish these relationships.[95] Again, this exposes the tensions between to the two different objectives of MUVA: 1) to learn about 'what works' in female economic empowerment programming, and 2) to positively impact upon the economic empowerment of women and girls in Mozambique. The latter involves learning *about and for* the local context, the former is largely driven towards developing transferable knowledge and expertise. To transition from an experimental model focused on evidence generation to having policy impact and influence required, as one DFID partner pointed out, *"a change of gear"*[96]. Moreover, in the context of Horizonte, as in the case of Aprender, evidence appears to have been largely inconsequential to the wider dynamics of the policy environment. Even though the project was able to demonstrate positive results, it had to be terminated due to a lack of interest from the sector. The case does, however, point towards the value of 'testing' an approach before investing too

[93] Interview, MUVA MEL Lead, Maputo, November 2019.
[94] Interview, Project Manager, MUVA Horizonte, Skype, October 2018.
[95] Interview, Project Manager, MUVA Horizonte, Skype, October 2018.
[96] Interview, DFID Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for MUVA, Mozambique, August 2018.

heavily in it, as MUVA was able to discontinue the pilot project based on experiential learning, reflecting the fundamental adaptive design logic of the programme. The chapter will now discuss what the outcomes of these three projects indicate for the ability of adaptive learning to support reform outcomes.

Does 'adaptive learning' support more context-sensitive and responsive practice?

In analysing MUVA's approach to adaptive learning, this paper has observed a tension between the programme's efforts to implement 'locally led interventions' and its learning agenda to find out 'what works' in 'female economic empowerment' programming. The programme began, fundamentally, with a donor learning agenda defined by DFID. In some ways, this enabled the programme to be more flexible and adaptive in its approach. For instance, in its testing phases, MUVA was not held accountable for pre-determined results, rather it was held, according to programme staff, accountable for learning. In other ways, this learning agenda was donor-driven, because it began with an asserted lack of technical knowledge on the part of DFID, not Mozambican institutions and actors. Despite efforts to engage with these actors and their contexts, the donor learning agenda at times pulled the programme away from the context and towards the development of transferable knowledge through testing methods and approaches that were disconnected from the realities of the local context. In the education sector in particular, problems were defined in largely technical, transferable terms, including gaps in educational provision, without situating these problems within a specific political economy of reform. In the education cases, where there was a lack of contextual knowledge to draw on, knowledge gaps became instrumental in designing interventions that were misaligned with their context.

Additionally, the programme made an assumption in its theory of change that, if it could produce evidence that its interventions worked through experimentation in the Mozambican context, then it could persuade Mozambican public sector actors to take up the approaches in their policy frameworks and programmes. As MUVA staff pointed out, this approach prevented them from engaging too deeply with the reform context at the outset – at which point the relationship was more 'consultative' than collaborative – because they had to wait until they had sufficient evidence. In reality, however, the need for evidence was more DFID determined than it was locally determined. This is illustrated through closer examination of the results of the three projects under analysis.

In the case of Aprender, the programme was able to have policy influence on the government's national education strategy via the education working group in the absence of evidence that it worked. It was able to advocate on behalf of its student-led learning methodology without having conclusive evidence that it produced better learning outcomes in its test centres. Moreover, before the programme began, the Ministry of Education was already on board with the approach, as there was already agreement on its value for learning outcomes. It was already integrated into the teacher training curriculum before MUVA began working on the methodology. When MUVA trained teachers with their approach, they discovered that they were already fully cognisant of the methodology; it was just not being implemented within schools. These outcomes indicated that it was not new policy, but the implementation of existing policy that required attention, which was affected by a lack of political interest in investing in education quality reforms, perhaps due to their more costly and long-term nature.

But rather than address the political and institutional barriers that prevented the government's existing student-led learning policy from being implemented, the programme was orientated towards investing in developing its own approach. This learning agenda meant that it did not engage deeply with the sector at the outset as part of its approach to 'de-risking' through evidence generation. This is an example of how an evidence agenda aligned with the wider logics of the aid bureaucracy influenced MUVA to invest in an intervention that was misaligned with the environment it was trying to influence. Moreover, MUVA was able to influence the policy environment via the education working group despite the fact that they did not have conclusive evidence that their methodology supported better learning outcomes. This points towards the fundamentally political nature of evidence and change more broadly, which was not always recognised within the more technical frames of the programme's learning agenda.

In the case of Horizonte, there was a lack of buy-in from government in spite of the fact that the methodology produced positive results. This lack of interest in pursuing career guidance in schools appears to be the kind of information that could have been acquired before the methodology was developed and tested. However, MUVA's approach was to wait until they had evidence before engaging too deeply, and teachers and government *"were not really involved"* in the problem development stage. Without having an appropriate control, it is difficult to argue what might have been, if teachers and government were more directly involved in the preliminary stages. However, both Horizonte and Aprender present a divergence from approaches like PDIA, where actors 'internal to the change process' are part of initial problem development and analysis. What is clear is that it was not evidence that was needed to influence the reform context, or at least not evidence alone. Despite having positive

results for the students involved in the piloting, there was still a lack of political buy-in from government and the project was discontinued.

For Assistentes a different outcome emerged. In this project, positive results in the piloting supported continuing the intervention beyond the initial three cycles, and eventually MUVA was able to implement a successful influencing strategy within the government's social protection sector. Following lobbying efforts on the part of the MUVA team, the Assistentes approach to upgrading the public works options included in the government's public works programme (PASP) was eventually adopted by the government, and approved by the World Bank for implementation at scale within PASP II. There are three distinct features of this initiative that appear to have contributed towards its more successful outcomes. Firstly, as an intervention it was designed with a very specific institutional home in mind because key programme actors, including the MUVA Programme Manager, MEL Lead and Assistentes Project Manager were already *"keenly aware"* of the issues facing the Public Works Programme. They were therefore able to draw on tacit contextual and sectoral knowledge gained through many years of working in or on the sector to identify the right entry point to influence change in the government's social protection policies. This was accompanied by a political economy analysis conducted early on in the initiative to identify the right entry point for scaling its approach.

This contextual knowledge is lacking in the other two projects, where interventions were designed that were misaligned with the institutional environments that they were hoping to influence. In Aprender, knowledge gaps resulting from incomplete analysis of the policy environment, were not compensated by tacit contextual knowledge and understanding. In the case of Horizonte, there was a lack of existing relationships and therefore the social and

political capital needed to align the intervention to the institutional context. As a result, knowledge gaps became instrumental in designing interventions that were misaligned with the political economy of the policy environment. This chapter argues that, counterintuitively, it was the donor learning agenda that contributed towards these outcomes, as programme actors were more directly orientated towards developing and testing transferable 'solutions' than they were in deeply engaging with the contextually-determined 'problem' and its political context. As a result, the application of second orthodoxy models like PDIA was only partially fulfilled, with the programming focusing more on 'iterative adaptations' in its design than being 'problem-driven' through deep contextual engagement.

Secondly, the authoritative role of the World Bank in the Assistentes intervention cannot be disregarded. The World Bank needed more persuading than the government because it felt that the intervention, through targeting young women who had completed a minimum 10th grade education, was not reaching the 'most vulnerable'. This involved MUVA programme actors actively advocating on behalf of the approach, including through flying to Washington D.C. to meet directly with the World Bank. In the end, the MUVA team reported that, after a successful piloting of the teaching assistant model within the PASP, with positive results, the World Bank was able to take 'ownership' over a successful 'solution' that it had funded. At this stage, in 2021, the World Bank agreed to have the model integrated into PASP II and therefore implemented at scale. This indicates that the same logic that drove the initial learning agenda – the identification of 'what works' – resonated also with the Bank, a different donor but with a similar aspiration to identify, scale and own technical solutions.

Finally, and thirdly, the sector's support for the approach was instrumental in swaying the Bank. Interviews indicated that the National Institute for Social Action (INAS) remained

largely on board with the approach throughout and, although it is not a particularly powerful spending agency, INAS did need to approve World Bank funding and therefore had some influence in terms of determining the nature of the PASP's second stage. From this perspective, the fact that the intervention aligned with an existing political economy for reform within the social protection sector – in a context in which the 'national unity' of the regime was threatened by urban social unrest – was key in its more successful outcomes. This conducive political economy was not present in the education sector and therefore improving education quality presented a more challenging reform environment.

The analysis conducted in this chapter points towards challenges associated with applying select aspects of the PDIA model. Iterative adaptations in the absence of locally engaged, and led, problem development, do not appear to bring aid programmes closer to more context-responsive practice. However, it is the mechanics of iterative adaptations that are the most easily packaged and replicated across different development programmes. As a result, there is a risk of conflating adaptive programming with a monitoring and evaluation model that reduces its 'locally led' dynamics to more advanced systems of data collection and analysis. Problem development, of the kind proposed by second orthodoxy models, is much harder to get right and requires genuine and sustained engagement with the reform context. This is evident in the case of Assistentes, where long-term engagement in the social protection sector meant that key programme actors were already aware of the problems facing the government's public works programme. As the concluding chapter will discuss, however, what has occurred in the evolution of adaptive practice, since the first 'doing development differently' event in 2014, is an increasingly strong alignment between 'adaptive programming' and management systems for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL),

designed to align with existing management principles that aim to minimise risk while maximising results.

As Duncan Green and Irene Guijt have observed in their own analysis of adaptation in practice, this may also reflect the result of codification, which can easily 'slide into standardization, with a blueprint created outside the context of political time and place and the loss of some of the features most likely to make the approach effective in the first place' (2019: 39). The biggest risk in the move towards standardisation, they observe, is the loss of an 'emphasis on localizing programme design', and the maintenance of top-down planning methods that reduce the potential for 'leadership in the local context' (Ibid). In the case of the MUVA programme, a genuine effort to implement 'locally led interventions' through adaptive learning, came into conflict with pre-existing institutional logics and scientific management principles that sought to learn about and package 'work works' into transferable solutions.

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the extent to which the 'adaptive learning' model applied by the MUVA programme supported the identification of, and response to, contextualised problems that are locally relevant and accurately understood, in the context of efforts to support policy change for young women's socioeconomic advancement. Within-case comparative analysis of three different interventions demonstrates the conditions (both contextual and design) under which adaptive learning models are more likely to be successful in such efforts. This is demonstrated via three primary conclusions.

Firstly, the chapter observes that the MUVA programme was caught between two different approaches to organisational learning: one geared towards context-sensitive practice, using data and existing knowledge to respond and adapt to local realities; the other more aligned with dominant scientific management principles within the UK's aid bureaucracy that seek to develop transferable knowledge about 'what works'. As a result, the adaptive model, reflected in approaches like PDIA, was only partially fulfilled. In particular, the programme was more focused on implementing 'iterative adaptations' than being 'problem driven'. In the two education projects, this resulted in iterative adaptations in the absence of deeper contextual knowledge of the problem being addressed.

Secondly, and conversely, the paper shows how an intervention in the social protection sector was able to leverage contextual knowledge amongst key programme staff to align with a specific entry point in the government's Public Works Programme. In the case of MUVA Assistentes, staff with insider knowledge were already aware of the problem that needed to be addressed within the PASP, and the best entry points to address it. In the education sector, however, the programme lacked such knowledge and functioned in a more solutions-driven way: defining problems in largely technical terms and developing methodologies to improve education quality in a context in which there was little political drive to invest in this kind of reform. As result, initial knowledge gaps in the programme's analysis of the sector became instrumental in less successful outcomes.

Finally, and thirdly, interviews indicated that the National Institute for Social Action (INAS) remained largely on board with the approach throughout and, although it is not a particularly powerful spending agency, INAS needed to approve World Bank funding and therefore had influence in determining the nature of the PASP's second stage. From this perspective, the

fact that the intervention aligned with an existing political economy for reform within the social protection sector was key in its more successful outcomes. This conducive political economy was not present in the education sector and therefore improving education quality posed a more challenging reform context. These findings emphasise the role of the political context in more or less successful applications of adaptive learning, which was not always recognised within the more technical frames of the programme's learning agenda. It also points towards the value of staff with 'insider knowledge', a key component of the second orthodoxy, which is explored further in the following two chapters on the BSI in Uganda.

Chapter Five: Working with the grain in an 'embedded' fiscal decentralisation programme: 'locally led' practice in the Budget Strengthening Initiative, Uganda

Introduction

Using the three 'thinking and working politically' (TWP) parameters of 'politically sensitive practice' outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the BSI embodies second orthodoxy principles in the following ways. Most notably, the BSI distinguishes itself from traditional technical assistance by being 'embedded'. The BSI has strong country level leadership by Ugandans who have long professional histories of working on public financial management (PFM) in Uganda, including its current lead advisor Emmanuel Ssewankambo. In addition, key actors in the BSI programme, including its previous lead advisor Tim Williamson, began as ODI Fellows in Uganda's Ministry of Finance and were able, over a period of decades of subsequent work in the country, to accrue considerable amounts of tacit contextual knowledge and 'social capital'. On this basis, 'political analysis, insight and understanding' (the first TWP parameter) within the BSI programme was highly informal: it was based on tacit, experiential knowledge rather than the commissioning of formal political economy analyses (PEA).

The 'embedded' position of the BSI, which is explained in further detail in this chapter, has implications on the way it accrues and deploys contextual knowledge. Unlike external technical assistance providers that might fly in and out once the 'right' system has been set up, the BSI is embedded within its context and can draw on contextual knowledge that arises from long-term engagement and relationship-building in a specific institutional context. This

embeddedness, then, is how it has been able to foster 'a detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context' (the second TWP parameter). As this chapter will show, its relationships and connectedness within the local context, and particularly the Uganda Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED)[97], enabled it to gain the trust of its donors, in this case UKAid, which provided flexible funding to the programme in the form of an 'accountable grant'. This enabled the BSI to respond to the reform needs and interests of the Ministry of Finance, rather than donor funding calls. This is particularly significant in the context of a donor trust deficit in the government of Uganda, following a series of corruption scandals in 2012 that resulted in the withdrawal of budget support by the UK and several other donors. Thus, the BSI's embedded position also facilitated its capacity work with 'flexibility and adaptability' (the third TWP parameter), through establishing a type of 'dual legitimacy', with both inward and outward facing characteristics.

This chapter focuses specifically on how the BSI embodies the second TWP parameter: how it used its 'embedded' position to gain 'a detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'. In short, the chapter will examine the relationship between its 'embedded' positionality and its capacity to be 'locally led', as well as the effects of its approach on its capacity to support specific reform outcomes. Through an assessment of the BSI's support to fiscal decentralisation reforms between 2015 and 2020, this chapter aims to uncover the empirical reality of 'locally led' practice in the BSI and what its effects are in a politically challenging environment.

As noted in the introduction, Uganda is a highly relevant context in which to assess second orthodoxy practice. It is often considered the quintessential example of 'isomorphic

[97] Hereafter 'the Ministry of Finance'

mimicry', by presenting the 'façade' of reform, which has been explained by scholars to be a result of these reforms failing to overcome the fundamental drivers of politics (Booth, et al 2014). The chapter examines this assessment of Uganda's reform outcomes within the specific context of its decentralisation project. In analysing the BSI's support for fiscal decentralisation reforms, it uncovers a form relational 'politics as practice' that has both intended and unintended consequences for its objectives to support pro-poor outcomes. The chapter demonstrates the challenges of aligning with local change processes in difficult contexts like Uganda, where the 'conditions for development are deteriorating' (Hickey & Bukenya, 2019: 01).

The findings of this chapter reinforce the observation made in the conceptual framing that second orthodoxy methods have not been designed to fundamentally shape the political environment, but rather to align with it. They are therefore highly dependent on a conducive political environment already being in place. This proves problematic for an intervention that sought to shift the way resources and discretionary power were distributed in a complex political context of regime survival: to go 'against the grain' of the prevailing political economy by pushing discretionary power down to the local level. The BSI's embedded approach within the government of Uganda enabled it to broker support for the reforms through adapting them to the prevailing political economy. But, in doing so, the reforms' capacity to support their original distributional and pro-poor objectives was significantly weakened. The chapter finds that the BSI's embedded approach meant that it was constrained in its capacity to support such outcomes, particularly within a financial technocracy whose autonomy has been negatively affected by the NRM's ongoing politics of regime survival. This chapter outlines the reform context, including its political dynamics, before assessing

the connection between the BSI's adoption of second orthodoxy practices and the results of the reforms.

The reforms and their context: decentralisation in Uganda

As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, in the 1990s and early 2000s, Uganda established an impressive track record for its commitment to reform across various technical fields, including macro-economic management, budget planning, policy monitoring and, indeed, decentralisation (Booth et al, 2014; Kuteesa et al, eds, 2010). In addition to economic reform, the government was praised for its zealous fight against HIV/AIDS; a far-reaching decentralisation project; a comprehensive set of anticorruption policies and institutions, as well as establishing a formally liberalised political system (Tripp, 2004). Despite its liberalised political system and impressive anticorruption frameworks, Uganda is, as Aili Mari Tripp observes, a 'semi-authoritarian' (2004), if not 'unambiguously authoritarian' (Wilkins et al, 2021), state in which political power is concentrated at the centre and sustained through informally accessing and redistributing state resources. Commenting on the divergence between its impressive track record and the results of reform, Booth et al conclude that the majority of efforts to improve governance in Uganda have passed 'without much success or with only modest achievements'. On this basis, they argue that 'even in their heyday, these reforms left the fundamental drivers of politics in Uganda untouched' (Booth et al, 2014: 67). In order to interrogate this divergence in further detail, this section focuses on the context of Uganda's decentralisation project, where an 'exemplary form of devolution' (Steiner, 2007: 178) instigated in the 1990s did not have the effects on improved local service delivery envisaged.

When Museveni came to power in 1986, he declared in his inaugural speech that:

> '…the first point in our programme is the restoration of democracy. The people of Africa – the people of Uganda – are entitled to a democratic government. It is not a favour from any government. It is the right of the people of Africa.' (Yoweri Museveni, quoted in, Ojambo, 2012: 75)

This early assertion of the government's commitment to democracy set the stage for what was described as 'one of the most far-reaching local government reform programmes in the developing world' (Francis & James, 2003: 325). Mitchinson notes that local government was chosen as the 'instrument for implementing a major part of the revolutionary change in the way in which Uganda is governed' (2003: 241). Indeed, at its core, the project was envisioned as a radical departure from the authoritarian nature of previous regimes. Before the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power, authoritarianism had greatly destabilised the country. Repressive and centralised structures of political authority under Idi Imin and Milton Obote had led to violence and reduced the legitimacy of the state at its peripheries. Introducing decentralisation was a method for the new NRM government to stabilise Uganda through extending its territorial reach throughout the country (Ojambo, 2012).

This early dynamic resulted in strong political commitment to decentralisation, which 'paved the way for an exemplary form of devolution in Uganda with transfer of far-reaching responsibilities' (Steiner, 2007: 178). Through a series of legislative reforms in the 1990s, responsibilities for the provision of government services were decentralised at two levels of local government: the district and the sub-county, with transfer of responsibilities for decision-making, planning and budgeting, finance and service provision to five tiers of local governments (Steiner, 2007: 178). The decentralisation policy was enshrined in Uganda's constitution in 1995 and was legalised by the Local Government Act of 1997, which established local councils at the district (LCV), municipal (LCIV), and subcounty/ division/ town council (LCIII) levels as corporate bodies of local governments (Bashaasha et al, 2011).

The design of decentralisation in Uganda was based on three interlinked objectives: 1) political and legislative empowerment of the people; 2) fiscal devolution, and 3) control of the administrative machinery by the local councils (Ibid). This case study focuses specifically on fiscal devolution, as this is the area of reform that the BSI provided technical assistance to.

From the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s Uganda implemented a series of fiscal decentralisation reforms that aimed to provide funding to local governments for poverty reduction and improved local public services. Despite supporting an 'unprecedented rapid expansion in the delivery of basic services' (Williamson, 2009: 1), in the years since Uganda embarked on its decentralisation project, the quality of service delivery in key sectors has deteriorated, and fiscal authority has become increasingly 're-centralized' (World Bank, 2013). A number of observers, including government members interviewed in this research, have connected the failures of decentralisation with the 2005 shift to a multi-party system in Uganda (Ojambo, 2012; Booth et al, 2014; Whitfield et al, 2015) and associated shifts in Uganda's political settlement from 'dominant developmental' to 'vulnerable populist' from the mid-2000s onwards (Bukenya & Hickey, 2019). As outlined in Chapter 1, this shift has negatively affected the institutional autonomy the Ministry of Finance once benefited from, challenging its status as a 'pocket of effectiveness' for maintaining fiscal discipline.

Whitfield et al observe that the introduction of regular elections in 1996 under the Movement System, and especially after 2006 under a new multiparty constitution, affected the structure of the ruling coalition. Initially, under the Movement System, Local Councils were used as instruments of state control and political mobilisation. Elections greatly increased the importance of lower-level factions because these were needed to mobilise votes (Whitfield et al, 2015). As a result, Local Councils became increasingly important, with districts emerging

as the ‘loci of power and resources’ (Ibid: 172). Thus, decentralisation became bound up in a process through which efforts to consolidate the power of the NRM increased the strength of lower-level factions.

As the NRM’s coalition began to fragment and its broad based support weakened, so too did the political incentives shaping the decentralisation project. Lower level factions increasingly posed a threat to the regime’s consolidation of power and were kept in-check through the use of patronage systems and decentralised rent management. After the introduction of competitive elections, these processes became ever more important and, from 2006 onward, Whitfield et al observe ‘the increasing fragmentation among NRM ruling elites, the increasing strength of lower-level factions, and the increasing strength of excluded political organizations’ (2015: 174). Under these conditions, both contestation and vulnerability grew. While once the decentralisation project had the potential to extend the regime’s authority across the country, it now presented a significant threat to it.

A number of observers have connected the perception of this threat with actions taken by regime to secure support and fragment opposition through ‘districtisation’ (Hickey & Izama, 2019; Awortwi & Helmsing, 2014; Green, 2010). Awortwi and Helmsing, for example, observe that the creation of local government jurisdictions in Uganda ‘neither conforms to the policy objective of bringing services closer to the people nor to promoting participatory democratic governance’ (2014: 766); rather, it corresponds to the political tactic of gerrymandering. Green similarly argues that the creation of new districts has been used by President Museveni to compensate for sources of patronage lost through other reforms, and has ultimately helped the NRM win elections (2010). Indeed, the number of districts in Uganda increased from only 39 in the 1980s to 134 in 2020. Between 2005, when the

multiparty system was introduced, and 2014, 42 new districts were introduced (Awortwi & Helmsing, 2014). Moreover, it is no accident that in the same year that Uganda shifted to a multiparty system, it also reclaimed responsibility for appointing Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), through amendments to the Constitution and Local Government Act (Green, 2010). District proliferation alongside the re-centralisation of power and fiscal authority has had direct impacts on the capacity of local governments to provide quality services in Uganda. Districts split by newly created jurisdictions have struggled to provide basic services, as funding has not kept pace with the increase in local government units and administrative capacity has been spread more thinly. The chapter will now turn to a closer examination of these issues, through assessing how these political dynamics have been connected to the specific fiscal decentralisation problems that the BSI addressed in its technical assistance.

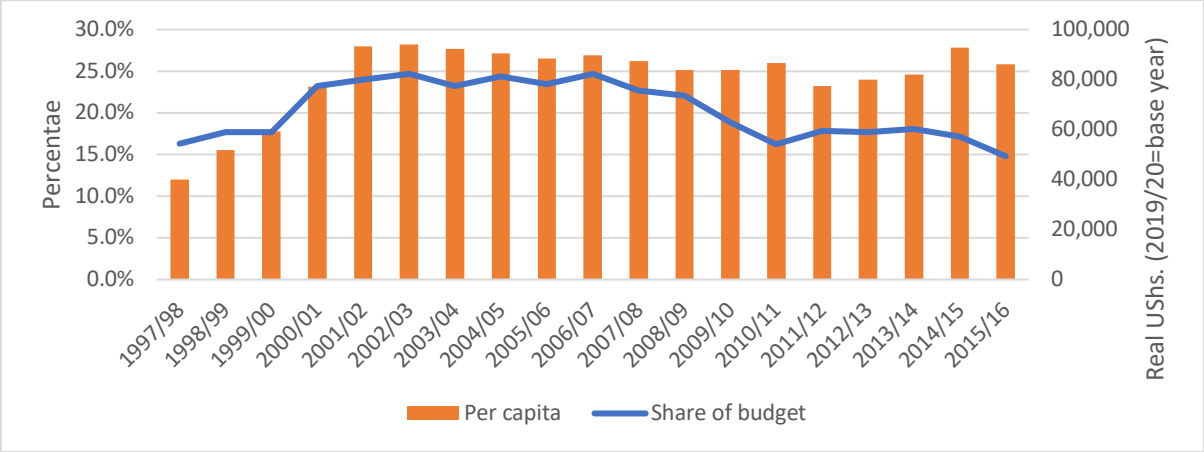
The problem: a 'time bomb' of fiscal and institutional challenges

Specifically addressing the proliferation of districts in Uganda, the fiscal decentralisation reforms that the BSI supported between 2015 and 2020 were prompted by the findings of two influential reports, one conducted by the Uganda Local Government Finance Commission (2012) and the other by the World Bank (2013). The reports drew attention to a potential 'time bomb' (World Bank 2013, xii) of fiscal and institutional challenges brought about by district proliferation, as well as highlighting the 're-centralizing policies' pursued by the government. There were concerns about the fragmentation of the intergovernmental fiscal transfer system and the proliferation of local governments. Funding for local governments had not kept pace with the increase in local government units; administrative capacity was spread more thinly, and local government structures were not revised. The fragmentation of the grant framework also reduced local government discretion to cater for the specific needs

of the local populations, and undermined the targeting of overall funding flows to local government according to need.[98] As noted in the BSI's own problem analysis, '[e]ach ministry focused on specific services and activities at the expense of considering overall equity.'[99]

Both reports raised concerns about the adequacy and equity of local government financing and linked these issues to associated declines in poverty reduction and service delivery outcomes, as well as inequities in services between local governments.[100] In the interviews conducted for this research, it was the decline in real per capita financing that was noted as particularly instrumental in creating momentum for reform within the Ministry of Finance. In the decade prior to the reform the share of local government financing from the national budget declined from approximately 25% to 15%. Although the total national budget was increasing in real terms, this share was insufficient to maintain the real per capita growth in local government financing of earlier periods (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Trends in total local government transfers prior to the reform[101]

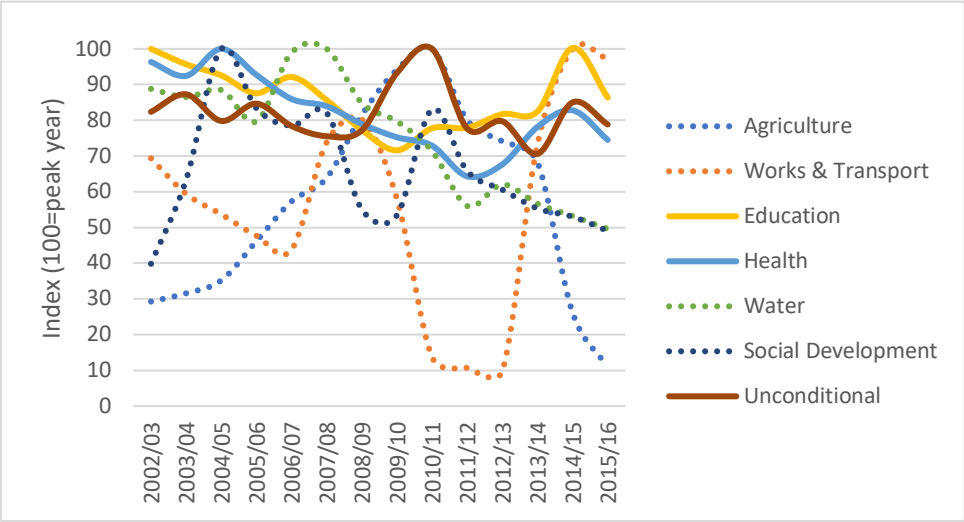


[98] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).
[99] Ibid, p. 1.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Source: ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).

This decline was found to have affected some forms of funding more than others, with non-wage and development grants experiencing the biggest declines. At the sectoral level, education and health sectors were particularly negatively affected. Although some other sectors experienced sharper declines, health and education, alongside discretionary unconditional local government financing, accounted for by far the largest proportion of local government transfers (85% in 2015/16 financial year).[102] Development partners, including the World Bank and UKAID, were particularly concerned about the effects on service delivery of declining local government financing. Both education and health transfers had seen declines in their peak per capita levels of financing (see Figure 9), and spending in both sectors was below national minimum standards and low by international standards.[103] In the education sector, access to free primary education had increased substantially, but funding had not kept pace and quality was declining. Although spending on secondary education had increased, access to free secondary education remained below 30 percent.[104] Similarly, in the health sector, operating funding at the facility level and for oversight at the local government level was severely constrained and declining in real per capita terms.

[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

Figure 9. Trends in local government transfers prior to the reform by functional classification[105]



Alongside problems for the quality of service delivery and poverty alleviation, the reports drew attention to dynamics directly contravening the devolution of power and the fiscal autonomy of local governments. For instance, the World Bank pointed towards the fact that over 80 per cent of the local government's funding came from conditional transfers from central government (2013). The decline in unconditional grants was of most concern for local governments and the Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC). Steiner notes that the reasons forwarded by the government to defend conditional grants – '[l]ocal misuse and contradicting decision-making' – were 'no more than the official reasons to justify the high share of conditional grants; the real reason might be that line ministries hang on to power' (Steiner, 2007: 180). The phasing out of the graduated tax in the mid-2000s reinforced the problem by limiting local governments' source of discretionary financing even further. The government's termination of graduated income tax in 2008 dramatically reduced the capacity

[105] Source: ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).

of local governments to source local revenue, with own-sourced revenues amounting to less than 10 per cent of their budgets in 2013 (World Bank, 2013). By 2014/15, local government own source revenues were just one quarter of their value in real per capita terms compared to two decades previously.[106]

Limited financing for service delivery had been impacted by the government's broader direction of public spending since the early 2000s, away from social sectors towards infrastructure, as well as a reduction in government revenues as a share of GDP (World Bank, 2013). But the reports also noted services being affected by equity problems associated with 'ad-hoc' allocation formula used to transfer finances to local governments. Both the LGFC and World Bank reports raised concerns about the horizontal equity and transparency of allocations across local governments. The LGFC noted 'while allocation criteria for a range of grants have improved, more needs to be done to make them more responsive to poverty and population factors in addition to policy objectives' and that 'sectors should be compelled to adopt more transparent and equitable allocation formulae', in order to 'reduce regional disparities' (LGFC, 2012: 20). In its summation of the problem, reform documentation describes the problems that they address in the following terms:

> The bulk of local government service delivery is funded via conditional transfers earmarked to sectors [.] In real per capita terms, these have declined significantly from peak years in the early 2000 [.] These transfers are distributed inequitably across local governments, negatively impacting less well funded to deliver health and education services [.] The fiscal management of resources for local service delivery has been undermined by low levels of funding for local government administrations, the complexity of administering a large number of earmarked transfers, institutional capacity constraints and a dearth of positive incentives for local governments to improve performance (World Bank, 2016a: 2).

[106] Ibid.

The chapter will now turn to how the BSI and its partners responded to these interlinking problems through support to the Uganda government's Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms.

The response: the BSI's support to the Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms

The World Bank and LGFC reports developed a set of policy recommendations aimed at minimising the adverse consequences of district proliferation. In 2014, the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury formed a joint Government of Uganda/World Bank task force for implementation of the recommendations. Policy dialogue between the World Bank and the Uganda government focused on developing 'a general two-stage proposal for the reform'[107]. The first phase involved the consolidation of grants in order to reduce their number and enhance local government discretion. The second phase of the reform involved developing new formulae for consolidated grants, with the objective of establishing a 'rules-based system' that enhanced their horizontal equity and efficiency. The World Bank offered the Ministry of Finance technical support to achieve these reform objectives, and procured the Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) to assist in this process as part of its 'non-lending Technical Assistance Project'.[108]

By June 2016, the BSI had supported the reform process with successive contracts from the World Bank and DFID/UKAid. Technical assistance was provided by the BSI, originally through a series of short-term World Bank contracts covering the period from March 2015 to July 2016, and subsequently through a DFID Accountable Grant, covering the period from August 2016 to October 2020.[109] ODI also received funding from the Ministry of Finance to

[107] ODI, '2016/17 Story of Change - Improving Adequacy, Equity and Accountability in Financing of Local Government Service Delivery In Uganda' – BSI unpublished programme documentation, p. 3.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.

carry out some of its analysis.[110] Specifically, the BSI's technical assistance focused on: consolidating the 46 sector conditional grants into 13 with a maximum of one wage, one non-wage recurrent and one development grant per sector; proposing a set of objectives addressing different stakeholders' concerns to guide the broader reform of fiscal transfers; establishing the principles for the development of allocation formulae and design allocation formulae for sectoral and cross sectoral grants; consolidating the discretionary development transfers; replacing transfer conditions with sector budget requirements, which set out a more general set of rules to govern the preparation of sectoral budgets by local governments; developing an Online Transfer Information Management System (OTIMS) to allow online simulations of allocation formulae and management of planning data on a publicly accessible webpage; and, developing and supporting the implementation of an assessment system for the performance of local governments.[111]

In sum, the reforms aimed to address the challenges raised in the LGFC and World Bank reports by strengthening decentralised fiscal governance in Uganda to achieve better local service delivery and poverty reduction outcomes. To do so, the BSI had to overcome the political dynamics that had shaped the direction of public spending in Uganda and some of the reversals, or 're-centralizing' policies, that had limited the devolution of authority and negatively affected service delivery. If realised in full, the process of 'rationalising' allocation formula towards a rules-based system would necessarily reduce the discretionary power of central government to determine local government financing, restricting its political authority and role in rent management: thus go 'against the grain' of the prevailing political economy. As the context overview outlined, the political imperatives of regime survival have

[110] Ibid.
[111] ODI, '2016/17 Story of Change - Improving Adequacy, Equity and Accountability in Financing of Local Government Service Delivery In Uganda' – BSI unpublished programme documentation.

been intricately connected to the decentralisation project since its inception. Indeed, the World Bank report that was so influential in motivating the reforms itself admitted:

> Political economy realities need to be taken into account if productive and sustainable reform is to be undertaken. Indeed, it might be argued that Uganda has arrived at its present decentralization situation in part because the initial decentralization efforts did not adequately consider a number of important political economy constraints and other contextual factors that necessarily affected the ability of the envisioned decentralization to take root and prosper (World Bank, 2013: 1).

Recognising that the obstacles for deepened decentralization and improved service delivery in Uganda were not merely technical in nature, the BSI's role in the reform process was not simply to ensure their technical quality, but to act as a 'broker' between different government ministries: to ensure the uptake of the reforms and, in their own words, 'ownership' across government. In its programme outline for the fiscal transfer reforms, the World Bank describes the BSI's role as '[p]arallel, [f]lexible, [t]echnical [a]ssistance' to facilitate reform implementation (World Bank, 2017: 25). Described as an 'independent brokering and reform facilitation role', this support was to go 'beyond providing conventional technical assistance'; it was to help 'facilitate the reform process and broker agreement between line ministries and MoFPED [the Ministry of Finance] on formulae and grant design, and between OPM [Office of the Prime Minister] and MoLG [Ministry of Local Government]' (Ibid). In many ways, as the chapter will go on to explore, the BSI was to behave like bureaucrats might do in their own domestic context; it was expected to behave as if it was a part of government, even while maintaining its 'independence' from that context. Indeed, the role of the BSI in this dynamic interaction between the World Bank and various government agencies involved in the reforms can be aptly described as an 'intermediary', and was described by the programme itself as 'embedded' technical assistance.

This indicates an 'insider/ outsider' positionality that reflects the BSI's alignment with second orthodoxy principles of a 'brokering' role for programme implementers. In its conceptual underpinnings, the BSI emphasises 'the role of context' when supporting institutional reform and the importance of 'understanding the space for change'. Central BSI Uganda figures like Tim Williamson have argued that 'understanding the space for change' means appreciating the interplay between 'power, interests and the availability and use of public resources' (Williamson, 2015: 8). He states that the space for change is unlikely to be available unless those with political authority and influence over public resources 'share common interest in positive change at the political level' (Williamson, 2015: 8). Through understanding and engaging with this space, technical assistance advisers aim to achieve context-specific approaches that have political support (Williamson, 2015). The remainder of this chapter examines the 'embedded' technical assistance model used by the BSI and how it was connected to the programme's capacity to support pro-poor outcomes. Specifically, it will demonstrate how embedded technical assistance reflects a form of relational 'politics as practice' (Whitty, 2017) that enabled it to achieve a kind of dual legitimacy with both inward and outward facing sources. This positionality enabled it to take part in processes of 'doing the state', while at the same time constraining its capacity to influence the 'space for change' needed to achieve the reforms' objectives.

Politics as relational: Embedded positionality and the BSI's bureaucratic relations

The BSI's embedded position within the Uganda government, and specifically its alignment with bureaucratic features of the Ministry of Finance, enabled it to engage practically in the daily governance of public services and ultimately form part of the Ministry's own public authority. The BSI did not simply aim to influence governance in this context, but actively involved itself in the daily negotiations, contestations and collaborations that shape how

power is exercised and governance arrangements are formed. As one government interviewee noted: *"they are with us"*[112]. BSI actors themselves expressed that *"Finance's* [the Ministry of Finance] *assessment of its own capacity includes BSI"*[113], and a senior member of the Ministry of Finance claimed that the relationship is distinct in that *"you cannot distinguish between what BSI is doing and what the government is doing and what BSI is doing"*[114]. Observing the project, it was certainly possible to see the degree to which BSI advisors had become embedded in the day-to-day workings of the Ministry, albeit 'behind the scenes'. As a donor pointed out of one BSI advisor, *"[he] basically works in the Ministry of Finance"*[115] and members of the Ministry appreciated the BSI for its *"hands-on"* approach.[116] In its own 'core principles' the BSI argues that advisers 'need to be able to build trust with their counterparts'; that in some case this involves 'ensuring confidentiality'; and that advisers must work 'through the bureaucracy, rather than bypassing it' (Williamson, 2015: 46). It was in its approach to working 'through the bureaucracy' that the programme became most embedded in its context, which included both its formal and informal dimensions, as one BSI Adviser explained:

> *"First step is to ensure you are trusted. Even before formal ties, you need establish personal [ones], not made formally in offices or meetings, [but] informally is when the decisions are made. Public servants fear to make decisions, so [there is] much that needs to be negotiated before you are able to present or discuss anything in a formal meeting."*[117]

BSI technical advisors spent significant amounts of time in the same offices as their counterparts; negotiated various interests and shaped and reshaped the reforms to align with the dynamic range of incentives and ideational structures influencing the reform processes

[112] Interview, Ministry of Education, Kampala, April 2018.
[113] Participant observation, BSI team meeting, Kampala, June 2018.
[114] Ministry of Finance member, Participant observation, BSI Uganda meeting, London, February 2020.
[115] Interview, DFID Governance Adviser (A), Kampala, May 2016.
[116] Interview, Ministry of Finance (C), Kampala, May 2016.
[117] Interview, BSI Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.

that they worked on. In addition to becoming involved in day-to-day practices, actors engaged in the BSI programme were involved in negotiating political buy-in and relationships, both between external donors and internal actors, and within government. For instance, a BSI advisor gave the example of playing a mediating role between donors and government actors that donors felt were not senior enough. When negotiating donor relationships, BSI advisors would work 'behind the scenes'[118] to secure the support needed for a specific reform by communicating between donors, the Director for Budget and less senior Ministry of Finance staff.[119] Within government, this brokering role involved jointly presenting reforms to the political levels of government to support the technical arms to gain political buy-in. This kind of behavior falls very much in line with how the second orthodoxy model interprets the significance of politics. In order to 'facilitate' change, programme implementers must recognise themselves as actors within a political process. This relies on the ability to 'build and broker relationships' with a broad range of 'local' actors, as opposed to working through 'a narrow set of external experts promoting the top-down diffusion of innovation' (Andrews et al, 2012: ii). In the BSI programme, technical advisors operated almost as if they were bureaucrats within their own domestic context, enabling them to form part of what constitutes the Ministry of Finance's own public authority.

As an embedded technical assistance provider, the BSI's role was distinct from the position of its two main donors: the World Bank and the United Kingdom (UKAid). The World Bank influenced reform, and therefore exercised its power, through its non-lending role in the generation of knowledge and analysis (Knack et al, 2020), seen specifically in the part played

[118] Mugambe, Kenneth, 'Driving Change in Challenging Contexts', video recording of public event at Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, 14 September 2015, at: https://www.odi.org/events/4256-fragile-states-conflict-conflict-affected-states-service-delivery-reform-fragile-states (accessed January 14 2022)
[119] Interview, BSI Adviser (A), Kampala, May 2016.

by the 2013 report that exposed the 'time bomb' of problems associated with district proliferation. It also exercised its lending power through the material incentives created by its 'program for results' (P4R) loan, which accompanied the reforms as a way of ensuring that they were adequately financed, but also created fiscal incentives for government to implement them. These are, perhaps, the more 'traditional' mechanisms used by donors to influence governance. The incentives constructed through the lending role are reflective of the principal-agent model used during the era of conditionality, and the non-lending, analytical role retains the World Bank's ideational authority in shaping reform agendas within aid-receiving contexts.

UKAid was even more removed from the daily practices and processes of reform; it existed in this partnership primarily as a source of financing for the BSI programme. Interviews and participant observation indicated that its reform interests were largely aligned with those of the World Bank, though with a stronger drive to see more immediate impact on service delivery.[120] It would be wrong, however, to identify the decentralisation reforms as merely an external contrivance. While improving service delivery and deepening decentralisation may not have aligned with the broader political economy driving the direction of public spending in Uganda, interviews indicated that they did align with the reform interests of other government agencies, including the Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC) and the Ministry of Finance. For instance, in the LGFC, there was a sense that the BSI served something like an *"ally"* for those within government who would like to see decentralisation deepen and service delivery improve.[121] The BSI's role in this partnership framework was to

[120] Interview, DFID Governance Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.
[121] Interview, Local Government Finance Commission (LGFC), Kampala, May 2018.

ensure that these reform goals were realised through engaging itself directly in processes of 'doing the state' (Hoffman & Kirk, 2013: 12).

Another feature of the BSI's positionality and capacity to form part of the government's public authority in this context was its ability to involve itself in these practices legitimately. What preceded the BSI's ability to work in this embedded way was the shared perception of its legitimacy, both within the Uganda government and in the eyes of its donors. Indeed, its position as an intermediary enabled it hold a kind of dual legitimacy as both an 'insider' and 'outsider' in the reform processes. It was embedded enough to hold forms of social, technical and even political capital within the government, but external enough to be untainted by the risks associated with direct budget support, particularly following the 2012 corruption scandals in the Prime Minister's Office that led the UK and several other donors to withdraw budget support (Dodswoth, 2016; Bukenya & Muhumuza, 2017).

The external perception of its legitimacy supported more flexible funding from its donor, UKAid, who expressed *"massive respect"* for the close working relationship the BSI had developed with the Ministry of Finance.[122] This respect enabled the BSI to design its technical assistance to align with the context, and respond to government demand, rather than donor funding calls. Under a more flexible UKAid 'accountable grant', a BSI Adviser explained that the most *"substantive reporting"* took place in meetings – *"monthly catch-ups"* – with their UKAid Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and through qualitative reporting in 'stories of change' where the focus was on broadly understanding the direction of travel, rather than rigidly reporting against agreed outputs and activities.[123] This is where the BSI

[122] Interview, DFID Governance Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.
[123] Interview, BSI Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.

most clearly aligns with the third TWP principle of 'flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation' (Laws & Marquette, 2018). It also reflects its alignment with the idea of 'arms-length support' that is 'locally embedded and intentionally separated from direct donor control' (McCulloch & Piron, 2019: 011; Booth, 2013). McCulloch and Piron note:

> [t]his distance also puts implementing organizations in a difficult position since they must try to fulfil the requirements of their funders, while at the same time being seen to be somewhat independent of them. To make this work, significant trust is required by the funder in the implementing organization (2019: 011).

The trust placed in the BSI by its donors was central to its capacity to work with greater flexibility and responsiveness to its local context, but the programme also had sources of legitimacy and trust from with the Ugandan government. These two sources of legitimacy informed on another within a 'polycentric' political system.

The BSI's legitimacy within the Uganda government derived from a number of factors. In a description of its approach, the BSI argues that the first step in any technical assistance engagement is to *"prove your technical capability and worth"*[124]. The BSI has been able to accrue trust in its technical capacities through long-term engagement in the Ugandan context and the employment of staff who have direct professional experience within the Ministry, whether as Ugandan civil servants or ODI Fellows. The global reputation of the ODI no doubt lent technical credibility to the programme, but ultimately trust was built up through repeated engagements over time. As the first chapter outlined, unlike previous Ugandan leaders, Museveni has been open to the role of 'outsiders' in technical assistance, and ODI Fellows have been identified as key actors within the development of institutional capacity in earlier decades of economic reform (Tumusiime-Mutebile, 2009). Not only had the BSI

[124] Interview, BSI Advisor (A), Kampala, May 2016.

benefited from legitimacy derived from technical capacity, but it had also been able to accrue a certain degree of *"social capital*" in its extended time period in Uganda.[125] For instance, over nearly 20 years of working with the Ministry of Finance in Uganda, the BSI's previous lead advisor, Tim Williamson, admitted to having *"practically grown up"*[126] with the Ministry's Director for Budget, Kenneth Mugambe.

In sum, power was practiced and legitimised in the BSI through a model of 'embedded technical assistance'. It was on the basis of this relational model that the BSI was able to legitimately involve itself in the daily practices of the state. Here, power and politics were practiced relationally. The BSI gained its legitimacy, and therefore ability to form part of the the government's public authority, not simply from the extent to which it was embedded in the local context, but also through its intermediary position. It held outward facing forms of legitimacy, derived from its perceived 'independence' (World Bank, 2017: 25) from the local context. In an environment marked by a donor trust deficit, this lent the Ministry external legitimacy, enabling it to access resources that it would otherwise not have been able to. The next part of this chapter will assess how this positionality was connected to the capacity of the programme to support the decentralisation reforms' objectives, through taking a closer look at their results.

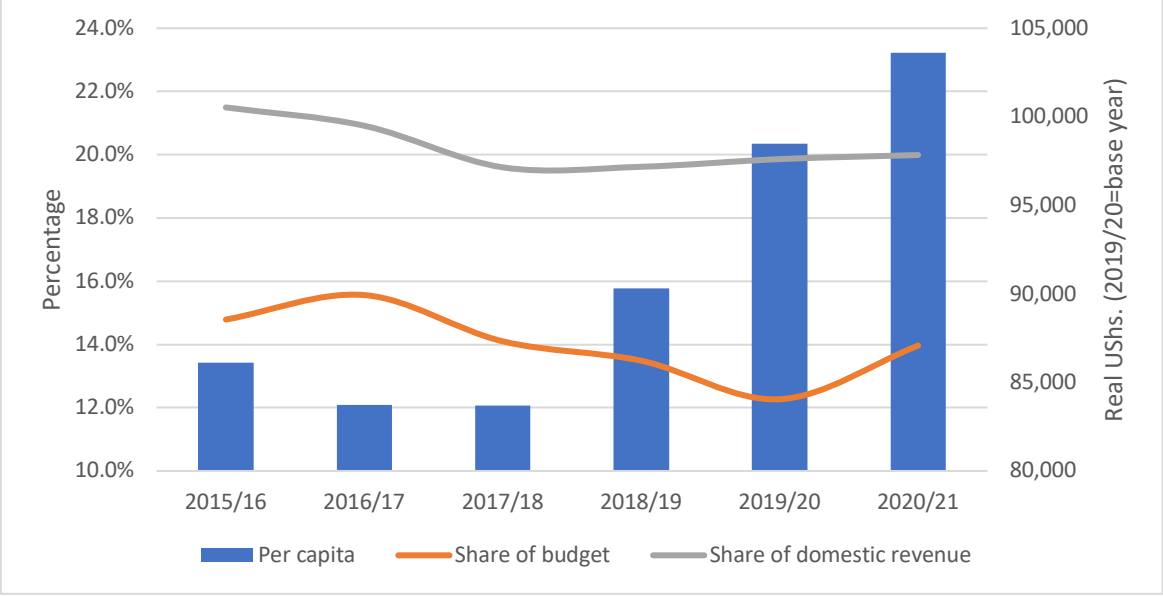
Facing the politics of regime survival: the results of the reforms

A review of the BSI's support to the Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms found that they were able to increase the adequacy of allocations to local governments; it reports that: 'By 2020/21 real per capita budget allocations had increased by 20 percent over 2015/16

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.

levels. While transfers as a share of the budget continued to decline until 2019/20, their share of domestic revenues stabilized at approximately 20 percent. This represented a 24 percent real per capita increase over 2017/18 levels'[127]. A large contributing factor in the fund increases was the program for results (P4R) World Bank loan, which targeted the health and education sectors and created incentives to increase funding within government. BSI advisers speculated that the nominal funding level would most likely remain in place beyond the loan period due to the political consequences of reducing funding; it may not, however, protect against future declines in real, per capita terms.[128] The review notes that the sectors of focus in the intergovernmental fiscal transfer reforms (UGIFT) – Education, Health, Water and Environment, and Agriculture – accounted for 39 percent of the growth, with health and education accounting for 25 percent and 13 percent respectively.[129]

Figure 10. Trends in total transfers since the start of the reforms[130]



[127] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).
[128] Meeting, BSI Advisers (B, C & D), November 2019.
[129] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020), p. 14.
[130] Source: ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).

The BSI's role in enabling these increases in adequacy involved brokering support for the reforms across government. There was political resistance within the Ugandan Cabinet and from the President himself, who had originally rejected the World Bank loan due to its intention to be used for recurrent costs.[131] The BSI's 'brokering and facilitation role' was geared towards gaining government buy-in, across spending agencies, for the reform design proposals. The BSI used 'the principle of holding revisions of recurrent allocations to service delivery harmless' to secure this buy-in.[132] Without the World Bank loan, the reforms would have been challenging to implement due to the extra financing required to operationalise the new allocation formula. In addition to brokering support for the reforms and accompanying loan, the BSI supported the Ministry of Finance to adapt the design of the fiscal decentralisation reforms in response to Cabinet advice. It also supported the Ministry to finalise the Programme Operations Manual (POM) including the Medium-Term Expenditure Plan and final allocation formulae.

In adapting the reforms in response to Cabinet advice, the BSI faced its biggest challenge in overcoming the political incentives and institutional barriers that have driven the government to control local government financing at the Centre. Specifically, the programme's less successful component was its efforts to increase the equity of local government financing across districts by applying a rules-based system to the design of allocation formulae. In addition, the intention to increase local government fiscal discretion by reducing the proportion of conditional grants also met challenges. The 2020 review of the programme reported that:

[131] Interview, BSI Team Member, London, November 2017.
[132] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).

> conditional grants increased considerably more than the […] report recommendations while the opposite occurred with discretionary grants. These trends suggest that central government remains resilient (sic) to relinquish complete control over devolved financial resources possibly as a result of a lack of local government capacity or effective oversight systems. This pattern was also driven by the government's commitment to build a large amount of new seed secondary schools and health centre IIIs which accounted for a large proportion of the increase observed in conditional development grants.[133]

This quote refers to the NRM's 2016 manifesto pledge to build Health Centre IIIs and secondary schools in each sub-county. This pledge did not align with the rationales guiding the allocation formula designed by the BSI, which used per capita rather than geographical measures for equity in order to directly address the declines identified by the World Bank and LGFC. The fulfilment of the pledge therefore affected the design of the allocation formula, and is an example of the 'ad-hoc' principles that have contributed to inequities and inadequacies in the financing of local governments historically. In relation to cabinet's required changes to the allocation formula, a BSI Adviser observed:

> *"…they have got the principle/objective of the formula (more consistency), but the way they want to propose would not enhance equity. They…* [have] *change*[d] *some indicators on the formula as originally introduced, so* [now] *it does not address the problem* [of] *equity…"*[134]

The pledge itself is reflective of the NRM regime's preference for physical infrastructure and the political capital that comes with it, over improving service quality and outcomes. With the elections on the horizon, the immediate physical display of geographic equity through facility construction was more important than the long-term, and less visible, goal of per capita equity.[135] As outlined in Chapter 1, it was, indeed, within an increasingly vulnerable political settlement, infeasible for the government not to have fulfilled this election pledge, irrespective of whether the resources were secured to adequately staff and manage the new

[133] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).
[134] Interview, BSI Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.
[135] Interview, BSI Adviser (E), Kampala, Uganda, April 2018.

facilities. Accommodating this pledge into the design of the allocation formula enabled the reforms to be adopted by government, and are an example of how they were shaped to align with the political economy of regime survival in Uganda.

The pledge directly affected the reforms' efforts to increase fiscal autonomy at the local level, as it increased the number of earmarked grants. The fulfilment of the pledge also had an impact on the capacity of the reforms to increase per capita equity across local governments. The review notes that overall inequities in per capita funding actually increased in this period: '[t]he ratio between the total allocation to the best and least funded local governments in per capita terms – indicating the disparity in local government financing - increased from 4.2 in 2015/16 to 5.6 in 2020/21.'[136] As the review outlines, '[t]he conditions required to ensure the political viability of fiscal transfers are, often times, at odds with equity goals as shown by the prevalence of fixed allocations. These trade-offs need to be recognized so that the grant structure and formulae design can appropriately balance the different reform goals'[137]. Alongside this, there were concessions related to the management of procurement, whereby central government agencies in the health and education sectors were not willing to handover procurement responsibilities to local governments. A BSI Adviser noted:

> "[The] *official excuse from the centre for not deepening decentralisation is because they say local government doesn't have capacity or would misspend funds, but in terms of procurement the centre would actually* [be] *weaker in terms of capacity for procurement than local governments.*"[138]

On this basis, in developing the sector guidelines, the BSI advisers and their counterparts in the Ministry of Finance had to come up with a *"middle line"* that enabled some responsibilities to be further devolved to local governments, while maintaining procurement

[136] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).
[137] Ibid.
[138] Interview, BSI Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.

in the hands of central government spending agencies. Finally, the review highlights that 'the relationship between per capita allocations and poverty head count has weakened since the start of the reforms. This implies that total per capita allocations have become less targeted at districts with more people living below the poverty line'[139]. The combination of these outcomes indicates that, while the reforms supported increases in adequacy, they were not able to overcome the political logics that have affected equity and pro-poor outcomes in the financing of local governments historically. The next section of this chapter examines why this was the case.

Did 'locally led' practice, as embodied in the BSI's 'embedded' technical assistance, strengthen its capacity to support reform outcomes?

The capacity of the BSI to support reform outcomes was connected to its distinct, 'embedded' positionality. Through its relational approach to 'politics as practice' (Whitty, 2017), the chapter has shown how the programme both shaped, and was shaped by, its institutional environment through 'mutual interaction' (Harrison, 2004: 13). Unlike literature on aid relations that emphasises the coercive, 'disciplinary' nature (Abrahamsen, 2000; 2004; 2013) of this interaction, analysis of the BSI's support for fiscal transfer reforms shows how power is diffused amongst various 'power poles' (Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan, 1997: 441) in a 'polycentric political system' (Ostrom 1972, in Aligica & Tarko 2012: 244); the capacity of each is necessarily constrained by its position in relation to the political and social context. Similarly, it moves beyond Ferguson's theory of the 'antipolitics machine', where he observes that project staff and planners are unable to do much about the political obstacles they encountered 'because they sincerely saw "decentralization" as an apolitical

[139] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer Reforms: Adequacy and Equity of Local Government Financing – Final', unpublished review (2020).

administrative reform' (Ferguson, 1990: 225). The BSI intervention, including its underpinning World Bank analysis (2013), was aware of, and in many cases responsive to, the political dynamics of the problems they addressed. However, the degree of their embeddedness – their inability to 'break free' from Uganda's financial technocracy – necessarily involved accommodating the constraints that they aimed to shift.

As noted, resistance arose in relation to handing over procurement responsibilities to local governments and the design of 'rules-based' allocation formula, which threatened the regime's capacity to determine the allocation of resources at the local level. In this context, both the World Bank and BSI advisors 'worked politically' to secure the support needed for the government to pass the World Bank loan through Cabinet so that the fiscal transfer reforms could be implemented, reshaping them to align with the wishes of central government spending agencies, and the political imperatives of regime survival more broadly. Thus, the BSI's embedded position within Uganda's financial technocracy enabled it to influence certain aspects of its governance environment. Alongside the Ministry of Finance, it was able to broker support for the reforms across government. This enabled the World Bank loan to be passed through Cabinet, increasing the funding available to local governments, and benefitting the health and education sectors specifically.

But, despite securing the fiscal space to implement the reforms, in the context of shifting political constraints that undermined the prospects for reform, the BSI's embedded position within the technical levels of the Ministry of Finance meant that it was only able to achieve the degree of political sway and influence of its principal counterpart. As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, the Ministry of Finance once benefitted from a degree of institutional autonomy, supporting fiscal discipline through functioning like a 'pocket of effectiveness'.

However, according to Bukenya and Hickey (2019), in more recent years its capacity to fulfil its mandate, and specifically to control the budget, have been negatively affected by the ongoing politics of regime survival in Uganda. They claim that the shift in Uganda's political settlement from 'dominant developmental' to 'vulnerable populist' from the early 2000s onwards had a direct impact on the Ministry's autonomy and power. This shift 'profoundly altered' the 'embedded autonomy' that the Ministry had previously enjoyed in its relationship with State House (Bukenya and Hickey, 2019: 38). They argue that the dilution of the Public Financial Management Act in the runup to the 2016 elections, including the compromise reached around expenditures for State House, indicate that 'the political imperatives of regime survival continue to outweigh the technical imperatives of sound economic governance' (Ibid).

The Ministry's autonomy has also been affected by ideological shifts within the NRM regime, away from the economics of neoliberalism towards a more nationalist, 'productivist' agenda, particularly in relation to the management of oil production and revenues (Hickey, 2013a; Bukenya and Hickey, 2019). The discovery of oil and the accompanying increased role of China in its economy has contributed to the reduced leverage and influence of traditional donors. As donor influence over reform has diminished in Uganda, so too has the 'embedded autonomy' of the Ministry, itself an embodiment of the global neoliberal order that its close relationship to international financial institutions has engendered. The Ministry's declining autonomy and power to control public spending in Uganda therefore coincided with an ideological and institutional challenge to its authority, including aspects of its neoliberal agenda (Bukenya and Hickey, 2019: 38).

In this context of declining autonomy, the BSI's endeavour to shift the direction of public spending in Uganda towards more equitable, pro-poor outcomes met with the constraints embodied within the country's financial technocracy. As one PFM expert close to the BSI programme commented, with reference to the passing of the World Bank P4R loan by Cabinet, *"they've secured the fiscal space, but not necessarily the political space"* to achieve the reforms' objectives. The same PFM expert noted that *'the main limitation of BSI is its inability to break free from its institution* [the Ministry of Finance]*"*[140]. Interestingly, this aspect of the programme distinguishes it from features that have been found to promote success in other second orthodoxy cases. For instance, in their analysis of the FOSTER programme in Nigeria, Lucia et al highlight the value of 'built-in flexibility that allows staff to choose and switch the partners they work with and the channels they work through' (2018: 017). Indeed, in shaping governance arrangements, the experience of the BSI programme indicates that contextual embeddedness both supported and constrained its ability to support pro-poor outcomes in Uganda.

In many ways, the BSI's familiarity with its context reflects the 'politically smart, locally led' model of cultivating 'awareness of history and country' and 'associated political economy dynamics' (Booth & Unsworth, 2014: 3). However, despite its awareness of such dynamics, the programme remained largely powerless in the face of the them. Donor funded programmes must be realistic about their capacity to shape the politics of development in any given context. However, in contexts like Uganda, where it has become increasingly difficult to identify agencies or actors that are insulated from the more predatory politics of regime survival, second orthodoxy practices that involve adapting reforms to local political conditions carry the risk of further entrenching a self-serving elite. Indeed, other cases have

[140] Interview, Uganda public financial management (PFM) expert, Kampala, June 2018.

raised the risks of second orthodoxy practices in authoritarian (Sims, 2021) or clientelist contexts like Uganda. Hickey and Bukenya (2019), for instance, find in their analysis of UKAid's support for government social cash transfer systems that the agenda 'carries significant risks when applied in contexts such as Uganda, where the political conditions for development are deteriorating' (2019: 01). They argue that, 'by adopting a TWP approach, donors may have undermined the pro-poor potential of cash transfers in Uganda' (2019: 15). In the following chapter on the BSI's support to transparency reforms in a context of large-scale government corruption scandals, these risks and tensions are examined in further detail through assessing the intervention's interaction with elite incentives.

Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on both fundamental capabilities and constraints embodied within the BSI's relational approach to 'politics as practice'. The chapter makes two primary observations in this regard. *Firstly,* it shows how the embedded approach taken by the BSI enabled it to legitimately take part in processes of 'doing the state', ultimately forming part of the Ministry's own public authority. In its analysis, the chapter uncovers a 'polycentric political system' in which the BSI's ability take part in the governance of the state was enabled by its capacity to act as both 'insider' and 'outsider': an intermediary not simply between different government spending agencies, but also between the government and its donors. Central to its capacity to work in this way were various second orthodoxy practices, including tacit contextual knowledge and social capital, which it was able to draw on through long-term and intimate engagement with its reform context. This enabled the programme to support increases in the adequacy of local government fiscal transfers that had direct benefits for the education and health sectors.

Secondly, the chapter demonstrates, as was observed in the conceptual framing of this thesis, that second orthodoxy methods have not been designed to fundamentally shape the political environment, but rather to align with it. They are therefore highly dependent on a conducive political environment – or 'space for change' – already being in place. This proved problematic for a set of reforms that aimed to shift the way resources and discretionary power were distributed within a complex political context of regime survival, with equity and pro-poor objectives that went 'against the grain' of this prevailing political economy. Politics was understood as the 'problem' in the World Bank analysis that informed the fiscal transfer reforms, but responded to as if it were the 'solution' through a relational model of 'brokering' and 'strategic maneuvering' that involved aligning with the political environment. This enabled the BSI to support the adoption of the reforms within government, but in the process it distorted them so that they functioned within preexisting political logics that hindered pro-poor outcomes. Even with the World Bank's backing, as a technical assistance programme embedded within the technical levels of the Ministry of Finance, it is not surprising that its capacity to shape the political environment was constrained. But the analysis does point towards tensions within the underlying assumptions of the second orthodoxy. Adapting reforms to align with the 'prevailing political economy' in environments in which that political economy has historically been a barrier to reform is unlikely to produce different outcomes to the 'politically blind' donor support that second orthodoxy scholars critique. And, even more critically, it carries the risk of further entrenching these politics. The analysis of this tension is continued in the following chapter, which examines how the 'locally led' and 'politically smart' features of the BSI converge in its interpretation and response to 'elite incentives' within the context of budget transparency reforms.

Chapter Six: "Why are all of the eyes on us?" Examining 'politically smart' practice through the Budget Transparency Initiative's response to 'elite incentives'

Introduction

This chapter looks at the second Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) case study in this research: its support for budget transparency reforms under the 'Budget Transparency Initiative' (BTI). It evaluates this case as an example of 'politically smart' practice, where technical assistance is aligned with what second orthodoxy proponents have commonly termed the 'space for change', 'authorising environment' or 'change space'. The BSI argues that 'understanding the space for change' means appreciating the interplay between 'power, interests and the availability and use of public resources' (Williamson, 2015: 8). In the 'problem driven iterative adaptation' (PDIA) model, the 'change space' is defined by the contextual factors that will influence how successful or otherwise a reform will be. The PDIA model states that such factors shape 'what and how much one can do in any policy or reform initiative at any time' (Samji et al, 2018: 21). Advocates of 'politically smart' practice like Booth describe more effective engagement with this space as opening up 'the black box of elite incentives' (Booth, 2012: 13), which is where politically smart and locally led practice could be said to converge, as Booth is describing the incentives of political actors within aid-receiving institutions.

In this chapter, the BSI's use of 'politically smart' approaches that align with 'elite incentives' is explored. It builds on the previous chapter's analysis of its 'embedded' technical assistance approach to show how it used this proximity with the reform environment to seize an 'opportunity' for reform in the aftermath of two large-scale

government corruption scandals in 2012. Rather than formal political economy analysis, the BSI used tacit contextual knowledge to identify and respond to a set of elite incentives that arose in this period, in a reform process that is was already engaged in. The chapter assesses the interdependent and interrelated nature of political incentives and social realities on both sides of the donor-recipient relationship in this case. Like the previous chapter, it views the BSI as an 'intermediary' between the local reform context and the donor governance agendas being promoted through the BTI project.

The chapter highlights the centrality of this interaction in determining the character of reform and uncovers tensions between the goals being pursued by the government and the BTI project. While the government was interested in cleaning up its image after its legitimacy was threatened by the scandals, the BTI project's stated goal aligned with the norms of the good governance agenda and donor priorities in the area of anti-corruption: to 'ensure that government funds are spent in line with public interest, leading, ultimately, to improved service delivery in Uganda'[141]. Externally, the transparency agenda resonated strongly with the anti-corruption agenda and was therefore politically useful for the government. But, internally, the motivations were primarily driven towards reshaping narratives that threatened the regime's legitimacy in the aftermath of the corruption scandals and were therefore more geared towards externalising reform than changing political behaviour.

Like the previous chapter, this chapter points towards the challenges of aligning with 'elite incentives' in contexts like Uganda. The analysis indicates the problems associated with this alignment in the absence of the 'developmental leadership' that second orthodoxy scholars

[141] ODI, Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) '2016 Scaling Proposal for the Budget Transparency Initiative in Uganda' Unpublished Revised Draft 31 March 2016.

identify in cases of successful reform, where 'strong and visionary' leaders reinvest rents towards long-term development goals. When elite incentives are fleeting, and driven more firmly towards regime survival than reform, then the success of interventions is dependent on their capacity to shape the political environment. In this case, aligning with the political environment in the form of 'elite incentives' meant necessarily aligning with the politics of regime survival, which relies on the kind of decentralised rent management that the BTI was aiming to prevent. In this context, success was dependent on the capacity of the reform to lock-in political behaviour through reshaping incentive structures towards greater public accountability. Aligning with the 'prevailing political economy' in this environment emerges as problematic for the BTI intervention, the success of which was dependent on being able to shift the incentives that define this political economy.

While 'swimming against the tide' of the prevailing political economy may have been the pitfall of previous reform efforts in Uganda, 'swimming with the tide' produces remarkably similar outcomes. Ultimately, and perhaps unsurprising, aligning with 'elite incentives' also left the 'fundamental drivers of politics' untouched in the BTI intervention. Much like the previous chapter, the current one uncovers the risks and challenges of aligning with the political economy of reform in contexts like Uganda, where an earlier developmentalist agenda has been overridden by the more predatory politics of regime survival.

The Budget Transparency Initiative (BTI) and its results

A central aspect of the BSI's work in Uganda has been in the area of budget transparency and accountability. Momentum on the part of both donors and government towards improving budget transparency has been influenced by the prevalence of government corruption in Uganda. In particular, this chapter focuses of the significance of a 2012 corruption scandal,

which involved the diversion of large amounts of foreign aid from a post-war rehabilitation programme for northern Uganda – the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) – and prompted several donors to withdraw direct budget support from the government. A central actor in this fraud, which amounted to the loss of US$12.7 million in donor funds (Human Rights Watch, 2013), was the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED)[142], BSI's main country partner, alongside the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Less than a year after the PRDP corruption scandal took place, the BSI established the Budget Transparency Initiative (BTI). The main aim of the project was to make government budget information available for public scrutiny.

Working in a partnership with the Ministry of Finance, the BTI project established the Budget Website[143], which went live in 2013. The website publishes disaggregated data from central and local government budgets, including funding releases from central to local governments and public service facilities such as schools and hospitals. By including a "comment" function, it is expected that the public, including community-level civil society structures, will be able to monitor government spending by comparing what has been released with what is actually seen on the ground. For instance, the website could publish that 15.9 million Uganda Shillings was spent by Buhara sub-county for the running costs of a primary school. In this case, the public can use the comment function to verify whether or not the money was well spent by reporting on the quality of the school's upkeep. Once a comment has been posted, an alert is sent to the relevant government office, which in this case should be local government – Buhara sub-county and Kabale district officials – as well as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education at central government. Taking into

[142] Hereafter 'Ministry of Finance'
[143] See online at: https://www.budget.go.ug/ (accessed 9 January 2022)

account the low level of internet access in rural areas of Uganda, the website has been complemented by a "toll-free hotline", where the same information can be accessed and shared through an intermediary telephone operator.

The BSI defines its role in the BTI partnership as providing 'advice to MoFPED in budget transparency and the coordination and the implementation of the BTI, to develop the technology tools, and also coordinate lesson learning across BTI partners'[144]. Other partners include civil society, including media, and other 'intermediaries' such as local councillors and 'opinion leaders' who were trained to use the budget tools and disseminate budget information to solicit the feedback and engagement of the wider public. The project supported what they named 'budget monitoring clubs' based in local civil society organisations. These groups were trained to use the Budget Website and hotline with the aim of them going on to use the tools to monitor local government spending and service delivery. In sum, the project was designed on the basis of an assumption that publishing local government transfer allocations and service delivery indicators online helps to ensure that government funds are spent in line with public interest, leading, ultimately, to improved service delivery in Uganda.[145] In this sense, it aligns with social accountability initiatives, including 'community scorecards' (Wild et al, 2015), for instance, to assess the performance of local leaders. They are based on the assumption that greater access to information supports the capacity of community members to hold their leaders to account.

The BTI project has, since its inception, been branded as a Ministry of Finance initiative. But it was not until July 2016 that the Ministry took over official management of the project,

[144] ODI, Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) '2016 Scaling Proposal for the Budget Transparency Initiative in Uganda' Unpublished Revised Draft 31 March 2016.
[145] Ibid.

while the BSI continued to play a substantive role in its technical management and scaling up across the country.[146] During the second round of data collection in 2018, the BSI was still playing a considerable role in the management of the website and its development, despite it having been officially handed over to the Ministry. BSI advisers working on the technical side of the website claimed that this was because there had been a number of technical glitches that necessitated the continued role of the BSI in the website's maintenance. One BSI advisor argued that there had been *"no upfront system design"* of the website, resulting in a seemingly *"never ending"* process of system development.[147]

The results of the BTI project present a mixed picture. In early external reviews of the Budget Strengthening Initiative, its work on budget transparency in Uganda was 'verified' as a 'significant' 'success'. Evaluators commented that the website 'represents a major step forward not only in publicising budget data but also in terms of increasing accountability through the feedback mechanism that is built into the design of the system' (Cox and Robson, 2013: 7). Elsewhere, the ODI publicly celebrated having successfully supported greater budget transparency in Uganda (Gill, 2015) – drawing attention to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) report claiming that the country keeps better records of its public expenditure than Norway (IMF, 2015). Uganda is indeed a leader in terms of budget transparency, consistently scoring amongst the highest in Africa in the Open Budget Index.[148] Where Uganda has faced challenges is translating budget transparency into advances in terms of accountability. While it scores highly on budget transparency, it remains one of the most

[146] Participant Observation, BSI planning meeting, Kampala, Uganda, May 2016.
[147] Interview, BSI Advisor (F), Kampala, June 2018.
[148] International Budget Partnership data at: https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/rankings (accessed 12 November 2021)

corrupt countries in sub-Saharan Africa according to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.[149]

For the BTI project, the challenge, therefore, was always to *"breath life"* into the feedback function of the Budget Website, so that information was not simply shared but also acted upon.[150] The final internal review of the programme in 2020 found that: 'it was evident that appreciation of the BTI platforms as tools to access budget information was high but not as key ones in providing feedback on service delivery'[151]. It found that the tools were not widely known by the wider public, contributing to their limited use. This finding was mirrored in analysis conducted by the Ugandan think tank the Economic Policy and Research Centre (EPRC), which observed a major challenge in improving access to the website in rural areas with lower levels of internet service. Based on a survey conducted in 2015, the EPRC found that the majority of stakeholders interviewed expressed ignorance of the budget website, and questions were raised about its usability by those who had managed to access it (Munyambonera & Lwanga, 2015). The 2020 internal BSI review concludes that 'by and large, despite the presence of the tools, they did not significantly enhance bottom-up accountability'[152]. While the BTI was able to increase the amount if budget data available to the public, the ability of the public to use the data to hold government to account remained limited.

The remainder of this chapter seeks to explain the role of the BSI's 'politically smart' approach in these outcomes through examining the reform context that the BSI worked

[149] Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2020 score of 27 (below average of 32 for the sub-Saharan Africa region), at: https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2020-sub-saharan-africa (accessed 12 November 2021)
[150] Participant Observation, BSI planning meeting, Kampala, Uganda, May 2016.
[151] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Budget Transparency Initiative – Final', unpublished review (2020).
[152] Ibid.

within and how the BSI responded to this context. The chapter shows how the BSI's support for budget transparency reforms under the Budget Transparency Initiative aligned with a specific set of bureaucratic and political incentives. The BSI used its embedded position to respond to an 'opportunity' to advance transparency that had emerged out of a preexisting 'performance agenda' within government public financial management, which had resulted in a proliferation of detailed budget data. Plans to make more strategic use of newly available budget information by making it publicly available converged with a political crisis of legitimacy following a series of government corruption scandals that were uncovered in 2012.

The chapter examines how the BSI's use of 'politically smart' practice enabled it to align with this environment for reform, or 'space for change'. It looks particularly at the political dimensions of this space and shows how alignment with a specific set of 'elite incentives' in the aftermath of the 2012 corruption scandals was conducive for externalizing the adoption of the transparency reforms, but not necessarily for achieving their goals by changing political behaviour. In fact, there were two very different sets of goals driving the reform process. Interviews indicated that the government was interested in cleaning up its image and regaining the trust of donors and public alike: displays of ownership helped it reshape a narrative of government corruption that threatened its legitimacy. The BTI project's goal, by contrast, aligned with the norms of the good governance agenda: to 'ensure that government funds are spent in line with public interest, leading, ultimately, to improved service delivery in Uganda' (BSI, 2016). Externally, the transparency agenda resonated strongly with the anti-corruption agenda and was therefore politically useful for the government. But, internally, the motivations were primarily driven towards regime survival through maintaining legitimacy.

The chapter uncovers these tensions and what they might indicate about the response to elite incentives in 'politically smart' practice within the second orthodoxy.

Aligning with political incentives: 'the space for change'

The Budget Transparency Initiative acts as a good example of how the BSI's embedded position enabled it to respond to political opportunities for reform in its environment. When it was first launched in 2013, the Budget Transparency Initiative (BTI) achieved a great deal of *"political support"*[153]. In BSI funding proposals, 'leadership and ownership demonstrated by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development'[154] for the BTI is put forward as one of its biggest successes. Government ownership was evidenced through the fact that the President himself had publicly launched the website in 2013.[155] The Minister of Finance had also 'regularly mentioned both the website and budget hotline at public events from September 2015' and the website was given a 'high profile' in the President's Budget Speech for the financial year 2014/15 (BSI, 2016). This presentation of 'ownership' was also apparent in interviews with members of the Ministry of Finance. Interviewees claimed proudly that there is *"a high drive for transparency"* and *"real ownership"* [156] of the website within the Ministry.

Indeed, the BTI has been wholly branded as a government-led initiative, despite the primary 'behind the scenes'[157] role played by the BSI in its management and development. Other

[153] Interview, BSI Adviser (A), Kampala, May 2016.
[154] ODI, Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) '2016 Scaling Proposal for the Budget Transparency Initiative in Uganda' Unpublished Revised Draft 31 March 2016.
[155] Interview, Ministry of Finance (A) Kampala, May 2016.
[156] Interview, Ministry of Finance (B) Kampala, May 2016.
[157] Mugambe, Kenneth, 'Driving Change in Challenging Contexts', video recording of public event at Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, 14 September 2015, at: https://www.odi.org/events/4256-fragile-states-conflict-conflict-affected-states-service-delivery-reform-fragile-states (accessed January 14 2022)

government interviewees noted that there was not simply a *"drive"* towards transparency but also a *"need"* for it within the Uganda government.[158] This need can be understood as a consequence of the PRDP corruption scandal that took place within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which had previously been one of the more respected and trusted branches of government. Aid managers defined the scandals as the "final straw" and a clear breach of the principles on which budget support is built (Dodsworth, 2016: 6). Indeed, most donors withdrew their support at this stage, and agencies such as UKAid were still waiting for enough trust to be regained so that they could reinstall their budget support when this fieldwork was conducted.[159] Donors withdrew budget support not because their money had been stolen, but because they had lost faith in the government. At this stage in Uganda's reform trajectory, PFM became geared towards the reestablishment of budget support (Dodsworth, 2016). This chapter will go on to explore the political incentives that arose in the aftermath of the 2012 corruption scandals in further detail, by looking more closely at the reform context that led up to the scandals.

The BTI reform context: increases in budget transparency following concerns over service delivery and a new 'performance agenda'

An important influence on public financial management reform in the mid-to-late 2000s was increasing concern over the quality of service delivery. The government was making slow progress on human development indicators, despite the growth Uganda had experienced in the preceding decade. The provision of health care was particularly weak (Moon, 2011). In 2005, Uganda's maternal mortality rate was 510 deaths per 100,000 births, and its life expectancy was around 52 years.[160] In 2006, 74.5 percent of the population lived in poverty.

[158] Interview, Ministry of Finance (C) Kampala, May 2016.
[159] Interview, DFID Governance Adviser (A), Kampala, April 2016.
[160] UNDP Human Development Indicators, available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UGA (accessed 12 November 2021)

At the same time, reports and surveys, such as the 2008 Public Expenditure Financial Accountability assessment and the 2010 Financial Management and Accountability Programme (FINMAP) midterm review, indicated that improvements in PFM systems were not translating into improvements in service delivery (Moon, 2011). These concerns were accompanied by a number of studies that exposed problems with funding leakages at various levels of service delivery implementation (Reinikka & Suensson, 2004; Hubbard, 2007). The government's PFM reform strategy (2011/12 – 2016/17) responded to concerns made in the FINMAP midterm review, stating that 'users are not being empowered to effectively use the resources to improve service delivery' (Government of Uganda, 2010; Pinnington, 2017).

The reforms of this period benefited from the support of the largest donor-funded programme supporting the strengthening of PFM in this period: the Ugandan Financial Management and Accountability Programme (FINMAP) 2007-2014, but there were also endogenous political and bureaucratic incentives. Within the Ministry of Finance, there was concern that the budget was not providing enough information on what it planned to deliver. At this time, then-Finance Minister Dr. Ezra Suruma openly challenged higher-ranking civil servants in the ministry to "show me what this budget is doing in terms of outputs" (Aziz et al, 2015: 55). These internal demands were reinforced by those of Parliament, particularly the opposition party, for more transparency and accountability in the management of public funds. Influential civil society actors like Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) also became more active in demanding improved fiscal transparency and budget accountability in this period, particularly in the lead up to the passing of key oil policy and legislation in the 2016 Public Financial Management Act.[161]

[161] Interview with CSBAG, Kampala, 14 December 2016.

The combined force of these demands led to several reforms between 2008 and 2012, which involved linking the budget to performance. A new Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) was established within the Ministry of Finance, and performance contracts for accounting officers across government were issued. The new budget performance reports and BMAU reports were discussed at semiannual cabinet-level meetings. The information is fed into the Government Annual Performance Report, prepared by the Office of the Prime Minister (Aziz et al, 2015). The BMAU was created to undertake monitoring of signed performance contracts. It was a high-profile effort, but audits revealed weak follow up in terms of prosecution (Moon, 2011).[162]

With a new performance orientation in PFM reform, systems to improve reporting and tighten up accountability were put in place. These reforms have perhaps been most influential in raising Uganda's Open Budget Index scores, because they increased the timeliness and production of budget execution reports. In 2008, output-based budgeting reforms were introduced. The Output Budgeting Tool (OBT) was developed to produce quarterly budget performance reports to show both output and spending performance for 2009-2010, and it was rolled out to local governments in 2010-2011 (Munyambonera & Lwanga, 2015). This is a budgeting tool used by the Ministry of Finance to coordinate budget implementation in terms of work plans, outputs, and expenditures. At the beginning of every fiscal year, line ministries and other spending agencies, including local governments, generate work plans that are matched to anticipated outputs and expenditure estimates. On a quarterly basis, the ministry generates progress reports to monitor budget implementation (Munyambonera & Lwanga, 2015). The new orientation to output based budgeting has both helped to

[162] Toward the end of this period, the new Public Finance Bill was drafted and presented to parliament in 2012; it later became the 2015 Public Finance Management Act.

systematise budget preparation across local governments and has enabled improved budget reporting, at both national and local government levels (Ibid; Pinnington, 2017).

Alongside the development of the Output Budgeting Tool, work continued on the rollout of the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS) to remaining central government agencies. Before the introduction of IFMIS, the government faced a number of challenges in producing timely and accurate reports. This had negative effects for other critical areas of the budget process, including planning, management, procurement, and asset management. Government processes were predominantly manual, and systems were fragmented, with variations in how information was processed and presented (Munyambonera & Lwanga, 2015). This complicated the process of reporting and so slowed it considerably. Since its introduction in 2004, IFMIS has been extended across all 22 ministries and 25 central government agencies. By 2015 it had also been implemented in eight local governments, with plans to extend to six more (Ibid).

OBT and IFMIS have contributed to an improvement in the speed with which documents can be produced. In 2014-2015 this led to the budget and ministerial policy statements being discussed in parliament three months ahead of the normal period (Pinnington, 2017). Local governments were in a better position to enter and consolidate their budget submissions and, importantly for budget transparency, budget execution reports were produced and received in a timelier manner. However, while the comprehensiveness and accountability of budget documentation improved through the introduction of OBT and IFMIS, there was a sense that its strategic focus had diminished.[163] Between 2008-2009 and 2012-2013, the Budget Framework Paper grew from 200 to 800 pages, but the information was not being made

[163] Interview, BSI Adviser (A), Kampala, May 2016.

automatically available, nor was it being used by stakeholders at the national level (Pinnington, 2017).

By creating a wealth of new information and documents, even if they were not being used to their full potential, the performance-oriented reforms of this period pushed the transparency agenda forward. According to BSI advisors, these reforms created the impetus to publish and disseminate the newly available, detailed information.[164] While the comprehensiveness and accountability of budget documentation improved through the introduction of automated systems, there was a perception within government that its strategic focus had lessened. Because the BSI had been embedded in the preceding PFM reforms as technical advisors, they were in a position to respond to an endogenous *"opportunity"* to drive the transparency agenda forward. They approached the Ministry with an idea to create a new budget website that would increase the strategic impact of this budget documentation through establishing a place to link the documents to an online platform. [165] In 2012, this interest in doing something strategic with new budget data converged with the uncovering of the PRDP and other government corruption scandals, to which this chapter will now turn.

The 2012 Corruption Scandals

In 2012, when the Budget Transparency Initiative was established, foreign aid accounted for around 58 percent of central government expenditure in Uganda.[166] In the same year, US$12.7 million in donor funds was embezzled via the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), while approximately one-third of the population lived on less than US$1.90 a day (Human

[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] World Bank Development Indicators, available at: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.XP.ZS.

Rights Watch, 2013).[167] As noted, the stolen money was intended for the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP). In the same year, corruption in the pension system was also uncovered, with large amounts of public funds being diverted in the Ministry of Public Service, through the payment of ghost pensioners. Both of these cases revealed weaknesses in the management of government accounts at the Central Bank, as well as problems with the implementation of the integrated financial management system (IFMIS) (Bukenya & Muhumuza, 2017). As Bukenya and Muhumuza have observed, the upgrading of PFM systems in the preceding years had coincided with the rise of a 'powerful anti-reform coalition', and 'motivated crafty operatives in government to craft innovative ways of undermining them' (2017: 18).

For instance, the success of IFMIS is dependent on making transactions visible across government through several layers of approval. In the case of the PRDP corruption scandal, this prompted 'a sophisticated corruption syndicate' to bypass the controls through collaboration across several government spending agencies (Bukenya & Muhumuza, 2017: 18). Moreover, the Auditor General's report identified systematic bypassing of controls within the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), including forgery of signatures, and payments to companies and organisations of dubious status (OAG, 2012, as quoted in Bukenya & Muhumuza, 2017). Bukenya and Muhumuza argue that in the case of the PRDP corruption scandal, top officials were able to steal because they were 'sanctioned by some inner core members of the regime' (2017: 18). In the case of the pension scam, evidence from investigative journalists emerged, claiming that stolen funds, from another corruption syndicate, were used to facilitate NRM activities during the 2011 elections. Bukenya and

[167] World Bank Development Indicators, available at: http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/UGA.

Muhumuza conclude that PFM reforms like IFMIS are able to 'weed out' localised cases of theft by 'rogue officers' working for their own ends, 'but are unable to prevent or, one can argue, are used to orchestrate large-scale syphoning of public resources in favour of the ruling elite' (Ibid: 18). This finding is unsurprising from the perspective of the political economy outlined in the first chapter of the thesis, where external and internal threats have contributed towards a more vulnerable political settlement amongst the ruling coalition in Uganda, which has been connected to an increasingly clientelist logic in the management of public spending.

After donors learnt of the PRDP scandal they withdrew funds and, at this stage, Dodsworth notes that PFM reform became almost synonymous with getting budget support 'back on track' (2016: 6). This resulted in the establishment of High-Level Government Financial Reform Action Plan Matrix (HLAM), which sought to make amendments to the Public Finance Bill, including provisions regarding oil revenue management, a strengthened system of sanctions for breach of PFM regulations, and the creation of an independent directorate of internal audit. The most notable result of the HLAM, however, was more centralised financial controls, principally through the establishment of a Treasury Single Account (TSA). And, in response to the ghost pensioner scheme, the payroll was decentralised, thereby shifting responsibilities to ministries, departments, and local governments (Aziz et al, 2015; Pinnington, 2017). These scandals also had an effect on more specific transparency-oriented reforms. These included increasing public participation in the budget through publishing quarterly releases in local newspapers (since 2010); holding quarterly media briefings after the release of funds, in which both the Permanent Secretary and civil society participate; and, of course, the establishment of a new budget website (Pinnington, 2017). This chapter will now turn to a closer inspection of how the corruption scandals uncovered in that year

interacted with the transparency agenda being promoted through the BSI's Budget Transparency Initiative (BTI).

"Why is Uganda more transparent than Norway?"

In 2015, Kenneth Mugambe, Director for Budget at the Uganda Ministry of Finance was invited to speak at the ODI offices in London. He was asked to present the financial reform experiences of Uganda at an event organised by the Budget Strengthening Initiative called 'Driving Change in Challenging Environments'. In his presentation, Mugambe addressed a specific question: 'why is Uganda more transparent than Norway?', which was a reference to the claim made by the International Monetary Fund (2015). He began his presentation by setting the context for reform:

> "… we had some challenges, or you could call them "scandals" in 2012. So essentially my presentation is trying to address how you turn challenges or a "crisis" into an opportunity"[168]

Mugambe outlined a long history of Ministry-led financial reform in Uganda, as well as longstanding commitment to budget transparency. As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, both claims are grounded in the reality of a country that was seen as a world leader for its public financial management reforms, alongside a favourable position in the donor community for adherence to neoliberal governance reforms, including structural adjustment packages, as well as an impressive history of budget transparency scores in the Open Budget Index (OBI). In his presentation, Mugambe claimed that, "…for the last 20 years we have been leading reforms […] to ensure that we improve on service delivery… and tighten our accountability systems." The problem, however, as Mugambe points out, is that "…in spite of

[168] Mugambe, Kenneth, 'Driving Change in Challenging Contexts', video recording of public event at Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, 14 September 2015, at: https://www.odi.org/events/4256-fragile-states-conflict-conflict-affected-states-service-delivery-reform-fragile-states (accessed January 14 2022)

all these reforms and systems that we had put in place… [we] were not able to stop the scandals from happening"[169].

The BSI project makes a similar contention in its programme documentation. It argues that public sector reforms 'often promise far more than they can deliver'[170]. It notes that in donor-supported reform there is often a 'gap between the content of legal and policy frameworks and the actual practices carried out'[171]. It recognises that incentives, on the part of governments and international donors, are more often geared towards 'demonstrating' reform through changes in policy and legal structures, than substantive change in behaviour and practice (Andrews & Bategeka, 2013). As discussed in the preceding chapters, the second orthodoxy attempts to distinguish itself from previous models of donor-supported reform through its ability to overcome this 'gap' by aligning with local socio-political and administrative realities.

BSI project documentation claims that the Ministry of Finance was 'quick to respond to the corruption scandals'[172]. In his presentation at the ODI offices in London, Mugambe states that President Museveni saw change in the aftermath of the corruptions scandals "as an opportunity to be seen as the one who is spearheading the reform process"[173]. In other words, it was a political opportunity for the President and agencies that were found to be at the centre of the scandal – including the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance

[169] Ibid.
[170] ODI, Budget Strengthening Initiative (BSI) '2016 Scaling Proposal for the Budget Transparency Initiative in Uganda' Unpublished Revised Draft 31 March 2016, p. 9.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid, p. 5.
[173] Mugambe, Kenneth, 'Driving Change in Challenging Contexts', video recording of public event at Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, 14 September 2015, at: https://www.odi.org/events/4256-fragile-states-conflict-conflict-affected-states-service-delivery-reform-fragile-states (accessed January 14 2022)

– to be seen as taking a firm stand against corruption. As Mugambe himself points out "transparency was a strategic instrument"[174] for the Ministry. From his perspective, this is why ownership, or at least the *appearance* of ownership, was so important:

> *"*…to ensure that we had ownership …the partners [international donors and advisors, including BSI] were working a little bit behind the scenes, which I think it extremely important because, because in terms of reform, leadership matters as much as international support, or actually more. You need to ensure that there is leadership and you need to ensure that there is ownership"[175]

Interviews with members of the Ministry of Finance presented a similar impression of the strategic value of the Budget Transparency Initiative. When asked why support for the Budget Website had been so strong within government, interviewees argued that *"we were getting a lot of complaints"*[176] – that there had been a *"general outcry"*[177] – about the quality of government services and corruption from the public and in the media. It seemed that the 2012 PRDP corruption scandal had put the Ministry and broader central government's image in jeopardy, both among the Ugandan public and in the eyes of its donors. Interviewees explained the incentives of the Ministry in terms of the public getting the *"wrong info"* and therefore *"blaming everything on Finance [the Ministry of Finance]"*:

> *"…they were writing in the newspaper that people had not received the release; people were getting the wrong info and it was leading to complaints."*[178]

> *"…we used not to do a lot of publicity, but then you would hear* [in] *most of the workshops people were blaming everything on Finance…so in order for Finance to exonerate itself from all those blames*…[we] *are out there to tell people that we have done our part*."[179]

In this context, the Budget Website became a useful tool to demonstrate the government's commitment to popular initiatives like improving public service delivery through reducing

[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Interview, Ministry of Finance (D) Kampala, May 2016.
[177] Interview, Ministry of Finance (A) Kampala, May 2016.
[178] Interview, Ministry of Finance (D) Kampala, May 2016.
[179] Interview, Ministry of Finance (E) Kampala, May 2016.

corruption. As one interviewee pointed out, the initiative is *"out there to clean up its image and more broadly the image of the government."*[180] This was important because, in the words of another interviewee, public perceptions of corruption *"affects them* [the government] *politically"*[181]. A number of the interviewees argued that the website was useful because it enabled the Ministry to show the public that: *"whatever we're doing here we're doing it for the public interest…the public has to get to know what we are doing here…"*[182]

The political incentives that arose in the aftermath of PRDP corruption scandal, therefore, drove the need for externalised political ownership over the transparency agenda, but the institutional need for it was already recognised within government and BSI team as the reform context at the beginning of this chapter demonstrated. Why, then, have budget transparency gains not led to shifts in accountability as the BSI had hoped? BSI staff members, and Ugandan PFM experts like Florence Kuteesa[183], have noted that productive engagement with the budget by external stakeholders is limited by insufficient allocation of resources for these activities within the Ministry of Finance. This has affected the consistency with which popular versions of budget documents are published, including the Citizens Budget in 2015.[184]

Indeed, as the political drive and strategic value of the transparency agenda diminished in the years following the website's official launch in 2013, so too did the momentum for ownership within government. In the 2020 review of the BTI, diminishing momentum for the agenda is reflected in the increasing irregularity of Steering Committee meetings. The

[180] Interview, Ministry of Finance (E) Kampala, May 2016.
[181] Interview, Ministry of Finance (A) Kampala, May 2016.
[182] Interview, Ministry of Finance (E) Kampala, May 2016.
[183] Previous MoFPED Budget Director.
[184] Telephone interview with Florence Kuteesa, January 2016, as quoted in, Pinnington 2017.

Committee formed part of a Secretariat, which was hosted by the Ministry of Finance to manage BTI implementation. It was made up of government, ODI-BSI and civil society partners. The review reports that: 'Steering Committee meetings were held regularly until 2017 and then became quite irregular, largely due to competing priorities within MoFPED. Technical Committee meetings were introduced to mitigate for this in 2018 but, again, were rarely held.'[185] In the second round of data collection in 2018, both BSI and government interviewees reported the website's official handover to the Ministry was continually delayed by technical glitches, design and data problems. What the 2020 review refers to as an 'increasingly complex technical situation'[186], resulted in the BSI continuing to play a central role in its management and execution well beyond its intended handover in 2016 (officially up to 2019). Even when the website functioned adequately from a technical perspective, government interviewees commented that the *"feedback loop"* was not being closed so that comments from the public were sufficiently responded to by government spending agencies.[187] As noted, the feedback function of the website was reliant on the Ministry of Finance as well as the relevant spending agency collaborating to respond to queries and data requests from the public. Similarly, the 2020 review finds that:

> Although the volume of comments are not high, this shouldn't be considered the primary challenge. A more significant issue is that there is no formalized process within MoFPED for responding to the comments or feeding them into decision making processes. Subsequently, the impact of these comments on decision making is not at all clear, and increasing the number of comments received has no obvious purpose.[188]

[185] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Budget Transparency Initiative – Final', unpublished review (2020), p. 3. The review emphasises data quality and integration as one key technical challenge: 'MoFPED budgeting system (PBS) represents an ongoing challenge to the transparency project, with budget and expenditure data extracted from the system not reliably consistent with published numbers, and frequently very late', p. 5.
[186] Ibid, p. 4.
[187] Interview, Ministry of Finance (G), Kampala, May 2018.
[188] ODI, 'Stock-Take of Budget Transparency Initiative – Final', unpublished review (2020), p. 5.

Ultimately, while senior Finance technocrats like the Director for Budget, Kenneth Mugambe, might remain committed to the agenda, without more broad based support, spanning both political and technical arms of government, transparency is unlikely to emerge as anything other than a 'strategic instrument' for the current regime. The 2020 review comments similarly that '[d]emand for accountability does not always translate into tangible results'. It notes, for instance, that in Sheema and Soroti districts:

> efforts by CSOs and the media to demand for accountability, targeting improvement in service delivery, often did not yield tangible results as responsiveness of the government officials did not necessarily translate into changes in allocations because of the nature of the budgeting process and competing priorities at the district and central government levels. It is also worth mentioning that budget priorities at both levels are not necessarily a function of community demands; but rather an interplay of socio-political factors.[189]

Indeed, as Bukenya and Muhumuza's (2017) analysis indicates, translating transparency into accountability poses more of a threat than an opportunity for the NRM regime, which uses decentralised rent management to sustain itself. Florence Kuteesa, for instance, argues that the perception that technocrats working with parliament would constitute a *"conflict of interest"* has returned since her time as the budget director.[190] This has restricted productive engagement with the budget by parliament. Under the current regime, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) is limited in its ability to use budget documentation to challenge the executive branch. *"If you challenge government*," said one interviewee, *"then you are automatically considered to be supporting the opposition, which puts you in a dangerous position."*[191]

[189] Ibid, 11.
[190] Telephone interview with Florence Kuteesa, January 2016, in (Pinnington, 2017)
[191] Interview with Ugandan PFM researcher, Kampala, 19 December 2016, in (Pinnington, 2017).

This set of outcomes implies that the BSI's embedded position enabled it to respond to institutional opportunities for reform to increase the strategic value of new budget information, as well as align with political incentives following the 2012 government corruption scandals. But ultimately the incentives that the project aligned with were fleeting and, in the absence of 'developmental leadership', not strong enough to sustain the resources and investment required to fulfil the intervention's accountability objectives. Interventions that promote greater accountability and transparency actually work in contradiction to the prevailing political economy of the regime, which relies on clientelism and decentralised rent management to sustain its hold on power. An intervention that was designed to align with this prevailing political economy was therefore fundamentally restricted in its capacity to achieve its accountability objectives. But, if 'ownership' over the transparency agenda did not serve accountability in this case, then what purpose did it serve? And what were the wider political implications of the BSI's alignment with this reform context? The chapter will now address these questions, in assessing the implications of the BTI intervention's alignment with elite incentives.

The construction of political narratives that displace responsibility

As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, Uganda's relationship with its donors is reflected in the degree to which development projects, agendas and language have become embedded in the country's institutions and politics. In this context, development discourse is an important mechanism through which political power is defined and wielded in Uganda. As seen in the case of the BTI project – where Mugambe admits that 'transparency was a strategic instrument' for the government after the 2012 corruption scandals – development discourse is a valuable tool for constructing and reconstructing political narratives. 'Ownership' over it, therefore, is essential within a wider process through which the regime

sustains and legitimises itself.

In his discussion of 'governance states' Harrison comments that '[o]ne can read Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni's political speeches as one of the most eloquent invocations of sovereignty in contemporary Africa' (Harrison, 2004: 25). Harrison argues that the concept of sovereignty is frequently evoked by governance states, 'as a discourse to support their own actions against the [World] Bank, with the Bank, or perhaps against classes and social groups within their own national spaces' (Ibid). As a political strategy, Uganda's 'much vaunted ownership' over the development agenda could be understood in similar terms. In the particular case of the BTI project, it is possible to see how the central government deploys the transparency agenda 'against' groups within its own 'national space' by deflecting responsibility for corruption away from the Centre towards local governments.

The preceding chapter demonstrated how the government's decentralisation project has been deployed within the politics of regime survival in Uganda. At first, decentralisation was used to territorially consolidate the NRM's power at the local level, through embedding itself in local politics and governance. With the constitutional shift towards a multiparty system in 2005, however, local factions began to pose a threat to the regime and were increasingly kept in-check through clientelism, the proliferation of districts and, ultimately, efforts to 're-centralise' authority. In this context, the preceding chapter outlined that the health and education ministries were not willing to hand over procurement responsibilities to local governments. The *"official reason"* for this was that local governments do not have the capacity to manage complex procurement processes, and pose a corruption risk for the diversion of funds.[192] This assertion reiterates a commonly cited reason for central

[192] Interview, BSI Adviser (B), Kampala, June 2018.

government to retain control over local government service provision: capacity deficiencies and corruption at the local level. The irony, of course, is that the system of rent management used to maintain the regime's hold on power has sanctioned corruption at the local level; at the same time, the centrally-driven policy of district proliferation extends the capacity problem, as new administrative units have been left severely understaffed and under resourced (World Bank, 2013). This chapter will now go on to show how the BTI project functioned within this wider process of blame deflection, involving the recurring invocation of local government corruption to legitimise greater scrutiny over local service delivery.

"Why are all of the eyes on us?"

As a project that has gained 'political support' from the Centre in its aim to improve local government service delivery, how does the BTI interact with the wider dynamics of the decentralisation project? This chapter has argued that the Budget Transparency Initiative was 'politically smart' by aligning with a specific set of 'elite interests' that became prominent in the aftermath of the 2012 corruption scandals. Analysis of the government's motivations indicated that, through its support for 'transparency', the central government was able to reshape a narrative of corruption that threatened its legitimacy. Publicly displaying 'ownership' over the BTI project enabled central government to shift the locus of corruption away from the Centre towards more peripheral and less powerful actors and agencies. With its focus on improving local government accountability, it is possible to see how this reconstitution of the corruption narrative works within the wider politics of decentralisation discussed in the previous chapter.

As seen in the case of reclaiming responsibility over the Chief Administrative Officers in 2005, it would not be the first time that the government has used the perception of corruption

to legitimise greater scrutiny and control over local governments. The BTI project also enables the central government to validate greater oversight over local governments. As one local government member expressed to BSI staff, *"I wonder why all of this is directed at us, and all the eyes are on us? What about all that money that goes missing at the Centre?"*[193] Another local government interviewee argued that, while the initiative was an *"admirable"* one, it does not do much to address where the *"real"* corruption takes places at the Centre.[194] Although the Website does publish central government budgets and spending, even Ministry of Finance staff admitted that *"it is not really being used for the Centre"*[195].

As an accountability mechanism the BTI relies on the public, with the assistance of local civil society organisations, to expose corruption where they are most likely to "see" it: at the local government level. It does not have the teeth to expose government corruption in more powerful, hidden and centralised authorities that were responsible for the 2012 corruption scandals. The BTI project enables central government to monitor local governments more closely, and, at the same time, it recruits the public to be involved in the process as well. But, as the analysis of the BTI's results demonstrates, it does so without actually empowering them to shift political behavior and decision-making. All of this is formulated under the name of 'improving service delivery'. However, as Ferguson points out in his theorisation of the 'anti-politics machine':

> "Government services" are never simply "services"; instead of conceiving this phrase as a reference simply to a "government" whose purpose is to serve, it may at least be appropriate to think of services *which serve to govern*' (1990: 253 – emphasis added).

Indeed, the BTI project has one further function for the NRM regime. By reinforcing the narrative of 'local government corruption', the project helps displace responsibility for the

[193] Participant Observation, BSI meeting with Local Govt., Kabale District, April 2016.
[194] Interview, Local Govt., Anonymous, April 2016.
[195] Interview, Ministry of Finance (D) Kampala, May 2016.

poor quality of service delivery in Uganda down to the local level. It enables the regime to displace responsibility for its own role in the deterioration of local services, connected to a lack of investment in social sectors and the practice of creating new jurisdictions for political survival (World Bank, 2013). Taken together, these 'unspoken rationales' (Awortwi and Helmsing, 2014) for the government's political support for the BTI project offer an example of how the regime deploys donor agendas like 'transparency' for its own ends. The project is also interesting in terms of its design. In the context of an authoritarian, or semi-authoritarian, state, are public and civil society actors really empowered, or even capable of being empowered, enough to fight government corruption? Not only does the project reconstitute the perpetrators of corruption, it also places responsibility for detecting and fighting it within the hands of those who appear least empowered to do so.

In sum, the project functions within a broader political economy of governance in Uganda. Within this context, its serves a specific set of 'elite' interests. It provided an opportunity for the regime to reshape the corruption narrative in the aftermath of PRDP and ghost pensioner scandals. It created a mechanism for those most implicated in the scandals to deflect responsibility towards less powerful and more peripheral actors, including local government and the public themselves. At the same time, with its focus on local government accountability, it enabled the regime to legitimise its centralising policies through reinforcing the politically useful narrative of 'local government corruption'. This narrative was useful in two ways. Firstly, it enabled the regime to more closely scrutinise local government activities. And, secondly, it created a scapegoat for the declining quality of local government service delivery. This process was made all the more possible by the nature of the aid relationship in Uganda, in which development discourse, projects and agendas are embedded within the fundamental politics of the state. Here, 'ownership' over the transparency agenda

allowed the government to extend its power; the project aligns itself within a wider process through which the regime is sustaining itself. Due to its embedded position within the Ministry of Finance, BSI advisors alongside the Ministry were able to take 'quickly' take command of the transparency agenda after the 2012 corruption scandals. By doing so, central government was able to deflect responsibility away from itself towards – or in Mugambe's own words, "against" – less powerful and more peripheral spending agencies.

The findings of this chapter align with those of scholars that have emphasised the impact of recipient country political interests in shaping the character and uptake of neoliberal reform in Uganda. Michael Keating, for instance, has argued that the 2005 shift to a multiparty system was driven as much by the interests of its executive, as it was by the donor community's interests in pursuing neoliberal reforms. A multiparty system served the needs of Uganda's executive branch by limiting the oversight power of parliament. For Keating, democratisation in Uganda can be seen as a 'case of policy transfer where the meaning of the policy, the multiparty system, is significantly altered as a reaction to [..] the domestic political context' (2011: 416). Similarly, this chapter demonstrates that the so-called 'space for change' can be favourable, both politically and bureaucratically, for the uptake of transparency reforms, while being misaligned with the meaning of those reforms, resulting in them having no real capacity to shift political behaviour.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Uganda is an authoritarian state, lacking in the kind of 'developmental' politics that second orthodoxy scholars identify in other authoritarian contexts like Rwanda. In Uganda, aligning with the political environment in the form of 'elite incentives' necessarily means aligning with the politics of regime survival, which relies on the kind of decentralised rent management that the BTI was aiming to prevent. In this

context, success was dependent on the capacity of the reform to lock-in political behaviour through reshaping incentive structures.

Second orthodoxy scholars might argue that the BTI's goals themselves were not very 'politically smart', underwritten as they were by donor norms of 'good governance'. As outlined in the methodology, it is beyond the frames of this thesis to argue whether or not the goals of greater public accountability were 'wrong' or 'right'; ultimately this decision should lie in the hands of Ugandans themselves. What the thesis can demonstrate is how suitable or realistic the design of the intervention and its application of second orthodoxy principles were for achieving these goals. From this specific perspective, the chapter finds that the model employed by the BSI enabled the BTI to support increases in the amount of budget information available to the public. They were already embedded within a reform process and could therefore easily identify an entry point for doing something 'strategic' with a proliferation of budget data that had resulted from a performance orientation in preceding reforms. But, much like in the preceding chapter, alignment with existing governance logics also posed challenges and was connected to unintended outcomes that point towards the risks associated with second orthodoxy practices in challenging contexts like Uganda. The chapter will now conclude.

Conclusion

Through recognising the need to work 'politically', the BTI project goes some way towards overcoming the challenges associated with 'apolitical' technical assistance in previous donor models. The project appreciated the instrumentality of political power in determining whether or not reforms will be adopted or 'owned' by recipient governments. The project recognised the need to align with 'elite incentives' in order to get the 'political support' required to push

through the transparency reforms. Political alignment is seen in two aspects of the intervention. *Firstly*, its alignment with the elite incentives that arose in the aftermath of the PRDP and 'ghost pensioner' corruption scandals of 2012. *Secondly*, in its design, which did not threaten the regime or its ability to orchestrate decentralised rent management. This resulted in more budget information being available to the public, but no real capacity to shift the kind of political behaviour that leads to corruption.

In fact, the chapter shows how the intervention did not simply align with but risked reinforcing these politics. The BTI created a mechanism through which new political narratives could be constructed, and responsibility for corruption and its monitoring could be pushed down to the local level. The chapter points towards the challenges of aligning with 'elite incentives' in contexts like Uganda, in which there is an absence of the 'developmental leadership' that second orthodoxy scholars identify in cases of successful reform. When elite incentives are driven more firmly towards regime survival than reform, then the success of interventions is dependent on their capacity to shape the political environment in order to 'lock-in' behaviour that might run contrary to shifting incentives. In the context of the BTI, the realisation of accountability reforms would actually work in contradiction to the prevailing political economy of the NRM regime, which relies on decentralised rent management to sustain its hold on power. An intervention that aligned with this prevailing political economy was therefore fundamentally constrained in its capacity to achieve goals that would threaten existing systems of rent management.

Because of the absence of formal political economy analysis in the BSI, it could be argued that the project lacked a 'big picture' assessment of how it was interacting with the political economy of its reform environment. This finding has been identified in other second

orthodoxy cases where a more informal, tacit approach to political insight and understanding has been taken. In their assessment of the FOSTER programme in Nigeria, for instance, Lucia et al find that there is sometimes a 'trade-off' to be struck between 'flexibility and informality on the one side, and good management procedures on the other side' (2018: 029). In the case of the FOSTER programme, they note that the reliance on more informal context analyses 'led to design and implementation decisions being undertaken that were not sufficiently linked to a clear logic model on how change would materialize or why reform may be resisted.' They note that while the informality of FOSTER was one of its main strengths, it also 'hindered its capacity to be strategic and reflect on the "big picture"' (2018: 028). The same could be said of the BSI's engagement with its political environment. A more formal analytical approach to its context may well have enabled it to avoid the challenges outlined in this and the preceding chapter by demonstrating the political barriers and risks. But, like Whitty has reported of 'politically smart' practice elsewhere, politics in the BSI was predominantly viewed as something to be 'practiced', 'rather than through representations and analysis of the political environment' (Whitty, 2018: 306). This thesis will now conclude.

Part III: Conclusion

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I address the two primary areas of inquiry in this study. Firstly, the chapter summarises the findings from the three empirical chapters and, in doing so, addresses the first area of inquiry: how the second orthodoxy is being interpreted and applied in practice. These summaries are organised by the three main parameters of second orthodoxy practice examined in this research: 'adaptive', 'locally led' and 'politically smart'. The findings enable the thesis to present a deeper understanding of what the second orthodoxy is and how it operates in practice. The summaries also address the second area of inquiry in this study by demonstrating the effects of second orthodoxy practices on the governance environments in which the programmes operated, both intended and unintended.

Finally, the third, more general, motivation for the thesis is addressed by reflecting on what the findings indicate about the extent to which the second orthodoxy overcomes the problems associated with top-down and apolitical donor support for reform. Here, the findings of the empirical chapters are contextualised and brought into conversation with the findings of other research on second orthodoxy practices, as well as the broader aid critiques engaged with in the literature review and conceptual framing chapters. In doing so, the chapter explores the generalisability of the findings and their capacity to be applied in other programme or country contexts.

The cases in this thesis demonstrate the potential of second orthodoxy practices that are more sensitive to the realities of local contexts. In the case of the MUVA programme, the thesis also demonstrates that the pull towards standardisation within the aid bureaucracy can come into tension with the requirement to be context-sensitive and responsive. Ultimately,

however, it is local political realities themselves that stand as the main barrier to, or enabler of, reform. The thesis demonstrates, conceptually and empirically, that the successful application of second orthodoxy practices is dependent on a conducive political environment already being in place. When such conditions are not favourable, the thesis points towards the risks and challenges associated with practices that involve aligning with contextual realities. In an evolving field of practice, the findings indicate that both the contextual risks and conditions for success would benefit from further attention in future practice development and research on the second orthodoxy.

Adaptive learning: 'Flexibility & adaptability in programme design and implementation'

The second orthodoxy's commitment to adaptive learning is underwritten by systems thinking, which asserts that development problems are often complex and dynamic and interrelated. This means that sufficient *a-priori* knowledge to shape policy and implementation is often unattainable and, on this basis, adaptive models promote experiential learning. As opposed to waiting for the outcomes of *ex-post* final evaluations, PDIA approaches, for instance, are built around 'tight feedback loops', which promote 'rapid experiential learning' and a greater focus on 'learning through doing'. Experiential learning strategies support intervention designs that 'rapidly iterate' through making multiple 'small bets' (Valters, 2016; Andrews et al, 2012). This necessitates management practices and decision-making structures that allow learning to shape programme activities. The second orthodoxy's learning prescriptions seek to cultivate an organisational culture whereby the potential of failure is normalised, and where there are obvious incentives in place for being frank about and learning from failure (Valters, 2016; Bridges & Woolcock, 2019).

In the literature review and conceptual framing chapters I observed that these principles contrast with 'linear' approaches, whereby a programme is expected to be implemented according to its original design; this is what Andrews et al refer to as the 'top down diffusion of innovation' (Andrews et al, 2012). In these more 'traditional' approaches, assumptions are made about the predictability of the intervention, the implementation context and the results that will emerge through linear 'cause-and-effect' relationships. Adaptive approaches, by contrast, make the case for a form of 'navigation by judgement' (Honig, 2018), where those closest to the implementation environment draw on both formal and tacit knowledge to make decisions. This decision-making is facilitated by a 'learning culture' in which there is a focus on learning about both the context in which programmes operate, the effectiveness of interventions, as well as the interaction between the two over time (Valters, 2016).

There is some recognition of the politics of knowledge within second orthodoxy scholarship (Aston et al, 2021), as well as assertions that cultivating a learning culture within development agencies would involve an ability on the part of programme architects and implementers to question 'their own assumptions and world-views' (Valters, 2016: 22). But despite the potential for democratising knowledge and learning within such assertions, 'adaptive learning' does not intend to break down knowledge hierarchies in its conceptual underpinnings. Much like the other features of the second orthodoxy analysed in this thesis, recognition of the relationship between knowledge and power – apparent for instance in the post-development critiques – is largely absent. This thesis evaluated 'adaptive learning' to examine whether it achieved more context-sensitive and responsive practice, but also exposed how a lack of engagement with local political realities was connected to certain limitations in the MUVA programme's approach to 'adaptive learning'.

The MUVA chapter in this thesis demonstrated how the programme reflects features of the second orthodoxy's emphasis on learning and adaptation. It is an 'adaptive learning' programme that has aimed to generate and respond to evidence, in order to support the economic empowerment of young urban women in Mozambique. The programme was designed to 'learn' in the absence of sufficient knowledge about the types of intervention that support 'female economic empowerment'. As one UKAid interviewee noted, DFID's original design of the programme began with the question of *"what do you do when you don't know what to do?"* This lack of knowledge was no doubt connected to the complex and contingent nature of 'female economic empowerment', which made it an ideal development problem for the application of adaptive approaches. This thesis focused on MUVA's efforts to promote the uptake of new methods and approaches within two policy environments in Mozambique: the secondary education sector and the government's public works programme within the social protection sector. The interventions of focus therefore combined the complexity of addressing both 'female economic empowerment' and influencing reform.

Operationally, MUVA interpreted the adaptive approach primarily within its monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) mechanisms and models. To begin with, MUVA involved a year-long inception phase, where it designed the programme, including its thematic focus areas, results frameworks and theories of change. The inception phase was used to root the DFID-designed programme in its local context and involved collaboration with civil society, as well as consultation with government agencies and the private sector. During this stage of the programme, MUVA MEL staff became attracted to the ideas of iterative learning and adaption, using 'tight feedback loops'. The programme was designed to 'test' various interventions within cycles of implementation, learning and adaption. If the interventions failed to produce results after three testing cycles, then they would be discontinued. At the

peak of its testing phase it was piloting 11 different methods for enhancing the capacity of young urban women to take part in and benefit from Mozambique's economy.

In analysing MUVA's approach to adaptive learning, this study observed a tension between the programme's efforts to implement 'locally led interventions' and its learning agenda to find out 'what works' in 'female economic empowerment' programming. The programme began, fundamentally, with a donor learning agenda defined by DFID. In some ways, this enabled the programme to be more flexible and adaptive in its approach. For instance, in its testing phases, MUVA was not held accountable for pre-determined results, rather it was held, according to programme staff, accountable for learning. In other ways, this learning agenda was donor-driven, because it began with an asserted lack of technical knowledge on the part of DFID, not Mozambican institutions and actors. Despite efforts to engage with these actors and their contexts, the donor learning agenda at times pulled the programme away from the context and towards the development of transferable knowledge through testing methods and approaches, and developing rigorous evidence about 'what works'. Thus, the chapter observes and reports that MUVA's learning agenda was interpreted primarily within the frames of scientific management principles, which at times pulled the programme away from the needs and realities, including political realities, of the local context towards designing 'solutions' that could be owned and repackaged by donors.

Additionally, the programme made an assumption in its theory of change that, if it could produce evidence that its interventions worked through experimentation in the Mozambican context, then it could persuade Mozambican public sector actors to take up the approaches in their policy frameworks and programmes. As MUVA staff pointed out, this approach prevented them from engaging too deeply with the reform context at the outset – at which

point the relationship was more ‘consultative’ than collaborative – because they had to wait until they had sufficient evidence. In reality, however, the need for ‘evidence’ was DFID determined, not locally determined. The chapter concludes that the success of their influencing efforts was more directly determined by the political economies of their reform contexts, than the sectors’ need for evidence. This is illustrated through closer examination of the results of the three projects.

In the case of Aprender, the programme was able to have policy influence on the government’s national education strategy via the education working group in the absence of evidence that it worked. It was able to advocate on behalf of its student-led learning methodology without having conclusive evidence that it produced better learning outcomes in its test centres. Moreover, before the programme began, the Ministry of Education was already on board with the approach and there was already agreement on its value for learning outcomes. It was already integrated into the teacher training curriculum before MUVA began working on the methodology. When MUVA trained teachers with their approach, they discovered that they were already fully cognisant of the methodology; it was just not being implemented within schools. These outcomes indicated that it was not new policy, but implementation of existing policy that required attention. Interviews and analysis indicated that existing policy had not been implemented due to the wider lack of investment in education quality from the government, reflected in overcrowded, poorly resourced classrooms, as well as poorly qualified teachers. In the context of a widespread ‘learning crisis’ following the rapid expansion of access in universal primary education (Hickey & Hossain, eds, 2019), political economy analysis of education sector reforms in comparable states with weak administrative capacity indicates a preference for investing in access, which is more visible and immediate, and less technically demanding than investing in quality.

Taken together with the lack of institutional buy-in from the sector in the Horizonte project, these findings indicated that the education sector policies were lacking endogenous demand at the political level.

But rather than address the political and institutional barriers that prevented the government's existing student-led learning policy from being implemented, the programme was orientated towards investing in developing its own approach. This learning agenda meant that it did not engage deeply with the sector at the outset as part of its approach to 'de-risking' through evidence generation. This is an example of how a learning agenda to produce evidence-based methodologies (for supporting young women to transition from school to work) contributed towards MUVA investing in an intervention that was misaligned with the environment it was trying to influence. When compared to the Assistentes project, it also showed how the lack of knowledge about, and existing relationships with, the sector in the education projects – in terms of both tacit knowledge and gaps in the programme's initial analysis of the sector – was instrumental in their less successful outcomes. Finally, MUVA was able to influence the policy environment via the education working group despite the fact that they did not have conclusive evidence that their methodology supported better learning outcomes. This points towards the fundamentally political nature of evidence and change more broadly, which was not always recognised within the technical frames of the programme's approach to adaptive learning.

In the case of Horizonte, there was a lack of buy-in from the local authorities and teachers in spite of the fact that the methodology produced positive results. The sector's lack of interest in pursuing career guidance in schools appears to be the kind of information that could have been acquired before the methodology was developed and tested. However, driven by the

'managerial logics' of the results agenda (Gutheil & Koch, 2022), MUVA's approach was to wait until they had evidence before engaging too deeply, and teachers and government *"were not really involved"* in the problem development stage. Without having an appropriate control, it is difficult to argue what might have been, if teachers and government were more directly involved in the preliminary stages. However, it does present a divergence from second orthodoxy approaches like PDIA, where actors 'internal to the change process' should be a part of initial problem development and analysis. Across all three projects, this finding indicates that second orthodoxy approaches like PDIA were only partially fulfilled and MUVA was generally better at implementing 'adaptive iterations' than it was at being 'problem-driven'. What is clear is that it was not evidence that was needed to influence the reform context, or at least not evidence alone. Despite having positive results for the students involved in the piloting, there was still a lack of political buy-in from government and the project was discontinued. Horizonte is an example of how a solution-orientated approach driven by a donor agenda was connected to partial fulfilment of second orthodoxy practice, which limited deeper political engagement and influence. It does, however, point towards the value of 'testing' an approach before investing too heavily in it. MUVA was able to discontinue the pilot project based on experiential learning, reflecting the fundamental adaptive design logic of the programme.

For Assistentes a different outcome emerged. In this project, positive results in the piloting supported continuing the intervention beyond the initial three cycles, and eventually MUVA was able to implement a successful influencing strategy within the government's social protection sector. Following lobbying efforts on the part of the MUVA team, the Assistentes approach to upgrading the public works options included in the government's public works programme (PASP) was eventually adopted by the government, and approved by the World

Bank for implementation at scale within PASP II. There are three distinct features of this initiative that appear to have contributed towards its more successful outcomes. Firstly, as an intervention it was designed with a very specific institutional home in mind because key programme actors, including the MUVA Programme Manager, MEL Lead and Assistentes Project Manager were already *"keenly aware"* of the issues facing the Public Works Programme. They were therefore able to draw on tacit contextual and sectoral knowledge, alongside social capital gained through many years of working in or on the sector. This was complemented by an internal political economy analysis conducted by these programme actors early on in the intervention to demonstrate the viability of the PASP for scaling its teaching assistant model.

This contextual knowledge is lacking in the other two projects, where interventions were designed that were misaligned with the institutional environments that they were hoping to influence. In Aprender and Horizonte, knowledge gaps resulting from incomplete analysis of the education sector (identified in a 2016 formative evaluation), were not compensated by tacit contextual knowledge and understanding. As a result, these knowledge gaps became instrumental in designing interventions that were misaligned with the policy environment and its political economy. I argue that, counterintuitively, the donor learning agenda contributed towards these knowledge gaps, as programme actors were more directly orientated towards developing and testing transferable 'solutions' than they were in deeply engaging with the contextually-determined 'problem'. As a result, models like PDIA were only partially fulfilled and the MUVA programme was generally better at 'iterative adaptations' than it was at being 'problem-driven'.

Secondly, the authoritative role of the World Bank in the Assistentes intervention cannot be disregarded. The World Bank needed more persuading than the government because it felt that the intervention, through targeting young women who had completed a minimum 10th grade education, was not reaching the 'most vulnerable'. This involved MUVA programme actors actively advocating on behalf of the approach, including through flying to Washington D.C. to meet directly with the World Bank. In the end, the MUVA team reported that, after a successful piloting of the teaching assistant model within the PASP, with positive results, the World Bank was able to take 'ownership' over a successful 'solution' that it had funded. At this stage, in 2021, the World Bank agreed to have the model integrated into PASP II and therefore implemented at scale. This indicates that the same logic that drove the initial learning agenda – the identification of 'what works' – resonated also with the Bank, a different donor but with a similar aspiration to identify, scale and 'own' technical solutions.

Thirdly, and finally, the sector's support for the approach was instrumental in swaying the Bank. Interviews indicated that the National Institute for Social Action (INAS) remained largely on board with the approach throughout and, although it is not a particularly powerful spending agency, INAS did need to approve World Bank funding and therefore had some influence in terms of determining the nature of the PASP's second stage. The chapter finds that the most successful case of policy influence in the three MUVA interventions studied was in a sector in which a degree of endogenous demand had been identified. In the context of stagnating poverty reduction, an international policy coalition amongst donor agencies and the government around social protection interventions like the PASP emerged. Buur and Salimo (2018) argue that the PASP has been of strategic value for the government's political survival, particularly in the aftermath of urban social protests in 2008 and 2010. These protests were in response to the government's removal or reduction of subsidies that

increased urban living costs. In this context, the inclusion of young men into Assistentes's model within PASP II, though at a lower proportion than young women, made it particularly attractive to the government due to the perceived risk that large numbers of unemployed male youth pose to the political stability of the regime. A similar degree of political demand was not identified in the secondary education sector. While the Assistentes model has yet to be thoroughly evaluated, promising socioeconomic outcomes for young women involved in its piloting point towards its potential to support pro-poor outcomes that address gender inequities. This finding implies that alignment with the politics of regime survival may not always run contrary to developmental outcomes, but may well consistently involve the risk of reinforcing these politics.

More broadly, MUVA offers an empirical example of the interaction between the scientific management principles typical of aid bureaucracies like the UK's, which favour 'the application of consistent rules and precedents' (Whitty, 2018: 306), with the more tacit and adaptive learning approaches promoted under the second orthodoxy. In the case of Assistentes, these two worlds meet successfully to produce positive results, due to a combination of a conducive political environment and staff with strong contextual knowledge and social capital. In the other two projects, however, they come into tension. This tension can be seen on a broader scale within the conceptual direction that adaptive programming has taken as it has interacted more with the needs and requirements of aid bureaucracies. For instance, the more recent emphasis on 'adaptive rigour' (Ramalingham et al, 2019) within the second orthodoxy's epistemic community calls for greater transparency and the application of scientific principles in order to limit bias and subjectivity in adaptive programme decision-making. Here it is possible to see the institutional home of adaptive practice being identified within a series of 'transparent' and 'systemic' management tools and approaches that

'identify and attempt to minimise potential biases and acknowledge how bias may influence findings or actions' (Ibid, 2):

> By articulating and operationalising adaptive rigour we aim to make adaptive decisions and practices more evidence-based, improving openness and accountability. We argue that adaptive rigour means having a documented, transparent trail of intentions, decisions and actions. Therefore, if programmes need to change, it is on the basis of MEL mechanisms that support rigorous evaluative thinking and collective decision-making (Ramalingham et al, 2019: 2).

As noted, in order to support context-sensitive and responsive practice, learning through doing is a central feature of an adaptive approach. This learning is supported by more advanced feedback loops and mechanisms which, as the MUVA programme demonstrates, have found their natural home in an aid programme's results monitoring systems. It is understandable that in an aid bureaucracy beholden to 'the results agenda' (Valters & Whitty, 2017), relaxing the results frameworks required by more adaptive practice might have raised concerns about 'making it up as you go along' (Ramalingham et al, 2019). However, the idea of adaptive programming being bereft of subjectivity and turned into some kind of 'science' is equally problematic. As the developers of the 'adaptive rigour' concept themselves concede:

> Mainstream approaches to MEL and accountability in development organisations work on the basis of minimising risk and maximising predictability. Work on operational learning has shown that, despite good intentions, efforts to integrate these with formal MEL systems have focused on tools, methods and products, which have proved to be mismatched to the social, human and tacit dimensions of adaptive learning (Ibid: 4).

The conflation of adaptive practice with scientific management tools threatens to reduce the second orthodoxy – and all of its 'social, human and tacit dimensions' – to more advanced and rigorous forms of data collection and analysis. By doing so, it risks reproducing all of the sector's past problematics, including a focus on technical models, tools and methods over social and political processes. It promotes the development of transferable models and

knowledge that sees 'ownership' over the practice of 'development' remaining in the hands of international experts who are able to transcend the constraints of time and place. Moreover, if we apply Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) framework, then the drive to eradicate subjectivity and ambiguity may actually swim against the tide of how institutions evolve and, ultimately, how new rules, procedures and norms become institutionalised in the local context. Finally, it invokes a move towards (or maintenance of) 'accountability as control', at the cost of accountability as a relational process of contestation and collaboration (Eyben, 2008). In doing so, this formulation of 'adaptive learning' threatens to bring the second orthodoxy into line with all of problems associated with donor-driven practice discussed in the opening chapters, including the 'necessarily thin' schematic models of top-down planning that lead to their inevitable failure (Scott, 1998).

The conflation of second orthodoxy with scientific management principles demonstrates the distortions that occur when such an approach becomes adopted by an aid bureaucracy that seeks to eliminate risk while maximising results. It has also been identified in other cases of second orthodoxy practices. For instance, Gutheil and Koch (2022) identify 'competing logics' in the application of adaptive programming by donors, which threaten their transformative potential:

> [w]e argue that the broad principles proposed in the adaptive management agenda are policy ideas that can be read and interpreted both as an agenda for shifting the power (political reform of aid) and as an agenda for changing aid administration (managerial reform of aid). We find that these competing logics result in the adaptive management agenda running the risk of being depoliticized, thereby losing its transformational potential (2022: 2).

What the sector may be seeing in its attempts to move towards more adaptive practice is the collision of the old with the new: the partial uptake of the approach; the packaging and repackaging of newer models so that they more easily align with the 'institutional plumbing'

of donor agencies (Eyben, 2008). As Duncan Green and Irene Guijt have observed in their own analysis of adaptation in practice, this may also reflect the result of codification, which can easily 'slide into standardization, with a blueprint created outside the context of political time and place and the loss of some of the features most likely to make the approach effective in the first place' (2019: 39). The biggest risk in the move towards standardisation, then, may be the loss of an 'emphasis on localizing programme design', and the maintenance of top-down planning methods that reduce the potential for 'leadership in the local context' (Ibid). The MUVA chapter demonstrated the relationship between the 'adaptive' and 'locally led' features of the second orthodoxy, and how these might at times come into tension with the existing logics of the aid bureaucracy. But it focused primarily on 'adaptive' features in the context of the programme's approach to learning and evidence generation. The next chapter (5) focused more fully on locally led practice to gain a more detailed picture of how a second orthodoxy approach might enable a 'detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'; the findings of this chapter will now be summarised.

Locally led practice: 'A detailed appreciation of, and response to, the local context'

The framing chapters of this thesis identified two principal features of 'locally led' aid within the second orthodoxy literature, which are closely aligned with its 'politically smart' characteristics. Firstly, there is recognition that reform agendas need to be 'locally negotiated and delivered' (Booth & Unsworth, 2014: 4), aligning with local incentives and capabilities. Secondly, that this involves, in addition to political understanding, some kind of networking and 'stakeholder management' on the part of programme implementers. Here it was possible to observe Riker's (1962) definition of politics, as strategic manoeuvring and coalition building. Similarly, in his analysis of DFID's approach to 'thinking and working politically', Whitty observes that, politics is understood primarily as something to be 'practiced' and that

this is done chiefly through ‘forging relationships’ with programme stakeholders (Whitty, 2018). He notes that beyond categorising countries in order to apply ‘technical models arranged within the repertoire of governance as a category of programming’, political economy analyses were ‘treated as irrelevant or marginal’ (Whitty, 2018: 306) by DFID. Rather, he notes that politics is viewed as something to be ‘practiced’; the DFID participants he observed ‘focused on the importance of practice rather than through representations and analysis of the political environment’ (Ibid).

In the conceptual framing chapter, I showed that, in its underpinning theory, the roles of ‘trust’ and ‘cultural intimacy’ are primary features of success in the second orthodoxy models. The literature informing the approaches argues for management structures that delegate ‘high levels of discretion’ (Teskey & Tyrrel, 2017: 15) and implementer autonomy (Honig, 2018) for those working close to the ground. They also contend that programmes are more likely to be successful if they have ‘[h]igh numbers of staff with social connections and insider knowledge’ (Bridges & Woolcock 2019: 18). Bridges and Woolcock emphasise that, for donors, this involves developing longer-term relationships with implementing partners, which necessarily takes time and active cultivation (2019: 18). Similarly, Whitty concludes that the value of more locally led and politically smart programming within DFID is framed as creating an arena ‘with enough space to negotiate and build relationships’ (Whitty, 2018: 306). In its approach to being ‘locally led’, therefore, the second orthodoxy emphasises a form of ‘politics as practice’, which values contextually derived social capital, relationships and tacit contextual knowledge. In doing so, it elevates the role of implementers and local reformers, those directly engaged in change processes ‘on the ground’.

The BSI programme presented many features of these second orthodoxy principles in its approach to supporting public financial management reform in Uganda. For instance, its approach to being locally led very much aligned with the interpretation of 'politics as practice', over politics as an analytical approach to understanding reform contexts. Rather than pursuing formal political economy analyses, the programme tended to rely on its tacit knowledge, gained through staff with histories of long-term engagement with public financial management in Uganda. The BSI distinguishes itself from more traditional technical assistance by being 'embedded'. On this basis, 'political analysis, insight and understanding' within the BSI programme were highly informal: they were based on tacit, experiential knowledge rather than the commissioning of formal political economy analyses. In the case of the BSI Uganda programme, it used its 'embedded' positionality to establish relationships based on trust, through which it fostered social capital, both with its government counterparts in the Ministry of Finance and its donors.

Chapter 5 demonstrated both capabilities and constraints associated with this mode of working. It showed how the embedded approach taken by the BSI enabled it to legitimately take part in processes of 'doing the state'. The chapter uncovered a 'polycentric political system' in which the BSI's ability take part in the governance of the state was enabled by its capacity to act as both 'insider' and 'outsider': an intermediary not simply between different government spending agencies, but also between the Ugandan government and its donors. Central to its capacity to work in this way were various second orthodoxy principles of relationship-building and 'insider knowledge', which it was able to acquire through long-term and intimate engagement with its reform context.

But the chapter also observed problems associated with this approach to the politics of reform. As indicated in its framing, as an approach to supporting reform, being 'locally led' involves aligning with the political environment, rather than shaping it towards specific, or predefined political outcomes. This was problematic for a set of decentralisation reforms that aimed to shift the way resources and discretionary power were distributed within a complex political context of regime survival: objectives that went 'against the grain' of the prevailing political economy. Political economy dynamics were identified as one of the major barriers for deepened decentralisation and improved service delivery in the World Bank analysis that informed the fiscal transfer reforms, but they were responded to as if they were the 'solution' for achieving reform in the BSI's relational approach to 'politics as practice'. This involved shaping the reforms to align with existing governance logics, including the politics of regime survival. This enabled the BSI to support the adoption of the reforms within government, but, in the process, it also distorted them so that they functioned within preexisting political logics. The reforms were able to increase the adequacy of local government financing, and broker political buy-in for the World Bank loan that supported this increase. But when it came to more politically challenging pro-poor and equity goals, the intervention came up against the same politics of regime survival that has stood in the way of deepened decentralisation historically.

Even with the World Bank's backing, as a technical assistance programme embedded within the technical levels of the Ministry of Finance, it is not surprising that the BSI's capacity to shape the political environment was constrained. But the analysis does point towards fundamental tensions within the underlying assumptions of the second orthodoxy. Adapting reforms to the 'prevailing political economy' in environments in which that political economy has historically been a barrier to reform is unlikely to produce different outcomes to

the ‘politically blind’ donor support that second orthodoxy scholars critique. In the TWP literature, ‘working politically’ is defined as a mode of engagement that promotes ‘tailoring and adapting development assistance to national and sub-national conditions’ (Laws & Marquette’ 2018: 3). This study has demonstrated the value of this approach for achieving political buy-in. But it has also demonstrated the challenges of this approach in contexts like Uganda, where it has become increasingly difficult to identify agencies or actors that are insulated from the more predatory politics of regime survival. In the BSI programme, as in the second orthodoxy’s conceptual underpinnings, ‘locally led’ features cannot be disentangled from ‘politically smart’ ones. Before broadening the analysis out, this concluding chapter will now turn to a closer inspection of the ‘politically smart’ features of the second orthodoxy.

Politically smart: ‘Strong political analysis, insight and understanding’

As the framing chapters outlined, the second orthodoxy is associated with proposals for ‘good enough’ governance, which point towards the pragmatic value of trade-offs between the different parameters of ‘successful’ development. In the intellectual environment that has given rise to ‘politically smart’ models, for instance, comparative studies have identified African governance typologies that promote economic growth and development, while rejecting the tenets of liberal statebuilding embodied in the good governance agenda. For example, using the authoritarian state of Rwanda as a primary example, Kelsall proposes a form of ‘developmental patrimonialism’, whereby rents become centralised and reinvested in the long-term development goals of strong and visionary leaders. This work formed part of the Africa Power and Politics consortium, which argued for ‘getting seriously engaged with country realities’ by opening up the ‘black box’ of ‘elite incentives’ (Booth, 2012a: 13-14).

Whilst they avoid directly promoting normative development paradigms, including 'illiberal' ones, 'thinking and working politically' advocates recognise that change is an inherently political process in that 'it involves the renegotiation of power and resources' (Laws & Marquette, 2018: 4) and therefore produces both winners and losers. Thus, second orthodoxy scholars argue that development programmes need to understand and respond to the 'interests, motivations and incentives' that drive the behaviour of those who have a stake in the process (Ibid). In terms of donor practice and programming within the governance sector, this is connected to arguments for working 'with the grain' (Kelsall, 2008; Levy, 2014) of the local context. In the second BSI chapter of this study (Chapter 6), this approach to identifying and aligning with the 'interests, motivations and incentives' of those who have a stake in the process was examined via the programme's work in the area of budget transparency, under the Budget Transparency Initiative. The chapter sought to understand whether the approach taken supported reform objectives.

The chapter observed that the BSI appreciated the instrumentality of political incentives in determining whether or not reforms will be adopted and implemented by governments. It expressed this recognition through identifying and aligning with 'elite incentives' in order to gain the 'political support' required to push through the transparency reforms. It aligned with a specific set of incentives that arose in the aftermath large-scale government corruption scandals that occurred in 2012. At a time when central government's legitimacy was under threat, the budget transparency reforms created a mechanism through which new political narratives could be constructed, and responsibility for corruption and its monitoring pushed down to the local level.

However, the chapter also points towards the challenges of aligning with 'elite incentives' in contexts like Uganda, in which the 'conditions for development are deteriorating' (Hickey & Bukenya, 2019: 02) and there is an absence of the 'developmental leadership' that second orthodoxy scholars identify in cases of successful reform. When elite incentives are driven more firmly towards regime survival than reform, then the success of interventions is dependent on their capacity to shape the political environment by 'locking-in' behaviour that might run contrary to shifting incentives. In the context of the BTI, the realisation of accountability reforms would actually work in contradiction to the prevailing political economy of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime, which relies on decentralised rent management to sustain its hold on power. Ultimately, 'elite incentives' were driven towards externalising ownership, not reform.

Chapters 5 and 6 show that the BSI achieved as much as it could, given binding political constraints: the kind of 'best fit', 'good enough' outcome that second orthodoxy scholarship might promote. They also demonstrated that despite the BSI's awareness of local political conditions, the programme remained largely powerless in the face of the them. But perhaps even more fundamentally, the findings indicated the approach risked further entrenching these politics. Donor funded programmes must always be realistic about their capacity to shape the politics of development in any given context. But in contexts like Uganda, where it has become increasingly difficult to identify agencies or actors that are insulated from the politics of regime survival, second orthodoxy practices that involve aligning with the political environment carry the risk of further entrenching a self-serving elite.

This finding, carried across both Uganda cases, aligns with other cases that have raised the risks of second orthodoxy practices in authoritarian (Sims, 2021) or clientelist contexts like

Uganda. Hickey and Bukenya (2019), for instance, find in their analysis of 'thinking and working politically' in UKAid's support for Uganda government social cash transfer systems that '[a]ligning policy agendas with dominant interests and ideas may render interventions politically acceptable in contexts such as Uganda, but at the cost of further embedding clientelist logics and doing little to address distributional problems' (2019: 017). From this perspective, the chapters expose a fundamental 'dilemma' at the heart of second orthodoxy practices. As Craney and Hudson find in their own analysis of donor efforts to be 'locally led, politically smart' in the Pacific:

> **'…**outsiders seeking to deliver locally led, politically smart programmes need to either accept that competing priorities, results and values will work to limit the extent of true local ownership, or be sufficiently committed to true local leadership to accept that this may well cut against organisational imperatives. That is the dilemma.' (2020: 1665)

Like in the MUVA chapter, in addition to contextual political economy factors, the Uganda chapters also identified potential problems with the way that the second orthodoxy was being practiced in the BSI. A reliance on informal relationships and tacit knowledge, encapsulated in the approach to 'politics as practice', may well have worked against a fuller and more analytical perspective on how the interventions were interacting with their local political economies. Such findings resonated with those of Lucia et al (2018) on DFID's approach to TWP in Nigeria, who note that there are 'trade-offs' to be struck between informality and more structured management procedures. The findings of the BSI chapters also align with Whitty's ethnographic analysis of DFID's approach to being politically smart, who finds that the DFID participants he observed focused on the importance of politics as practice rather than an analytical approach to understanding the political context (Whitty, 2018).

Like in the MUVA chapter, such findings points towards incomplete application of the second orthodoxy approach in the BSI, where the first parameter of 'political insight and

understanding' would promote the conducting of political economy analyses. As leading second orthodoxy scholar Heather Marquette notes, even when the 'basic contextual knowledge is there', '[r]eformers in country may pursue reforms that aren't technically or politically feasible'[196]. In the case of the MUVA programme, tacit knowledge was combined with a more formal political economy analysis conducted early in the Assistentes intervention for positive results. This enabled the project to be problem-driven in a way that the education sector projects were not. The next section of this concluding chapter aims to use the findings of these three empirical chapters to reflect on the extent to which second orthodoxy practices overcome the deficiencies of apolitical aid outlined in the literature review and conceptual framing for this thesis. Recognising that the thesis did not conduct controlled comparisons with non-second orthodoxy cases, this question is pursued at a higher level by bringing the findings into conversation with established aid critiques, as a reflective concluding discussion.

What do the cases indicate about the capacity of the 'second orthodoxy' to overcome the problems of 'politically blind' donor support for public sector reform?

This study began with a series of propositions about why aid in support of reform has failed historically, with an orientation towards literature that has assessed African case studies and the 'good governance' agenda. Such aid critiques tend to begin with a similar observation to the 'state failure' literature, in which a persistent and prevailing 'gap' is observed between policy and its implementation. Where some scholars identify the 'façade' (Booth, 2015; Chabal & Daloz, 1999) of reform others define this gap as 'isomorphic mimicry', whereby the adoption of the forms of functional states and institutions 'camouflages a persistent lack

[196] H. Marquette, 'What we're missing by not getting our TWP alphabet straight', From Poverty to Power Blog, 3 July 2019, at: https://oxfamapps.org/fp2p/what-were-missing-by-not-getting-our-twp-alphabet-straight/ (accessed November 9 2021)

of function' (Andrews et al, 2013: 2). From anti-corruption programmes to democracy assistance, the literature observes that donors have tended to focus on the 'solution' or end point, rather than the underlying causes and processes that affect political and economic reform. This has led them to provide templates and models, predominantly based on Western institutions, rather than trying to align their assistance to the local socio-political realities of aid-receiving African states. In second orthodoxy scholarship that promotes more 'politically sensitive' practice, a central element of the critiques raised against the 'good governance' agenda has therefore been its failure to account for the role of politics in processes of institutional change and development more broadly.

Such concessions have been accompanied by assertions that the 'persistence of poor policy and dysfunctional institutions' can be put down, not to a lack of knowledge and finance, but to the actions of those 'who gain from existing arrangements and resist change' (Leftwich 2011; Laws & Marquette 2018: 2). A central critique raised against the development sector's engagement with aid-recipient institutions has therefore been its tendency to frame development as a technocratic administrative process, rather than a context-dependent, political one. Such interpretations of aid-supported development failures have led to what has been termed the 'political turn' (Dasandi & Erez, 2019: 3) in development practice, which this thesis examined via three empirical case studies, reflecting all three parameters for 'politically sensitive' practice promoted under the second orthodoxy.

In the conceptual framing and two Uganda case studies, the study has observed that, by orientating towards political methods and ways of behaving, the essence of 'politics' in the second orthodoxy appears to lie in the art of relationship-building and strategic manoeuvring. Despite the indication of potentially politically transformative capabilities in the language of

'coalition building', however, the use of second orthodoxy methods by 'outsiders' is dependent, fundamentally, on enabling political conditions in the local context *already* existing. Success in the second orthodoxy is dependent on the ability of external actors to attach development assistance to those conditions, including local leadership. Models like TWP argue for 'tailoring and adapting development assistance to national and sub-national conditions', rather than reshaping those conditions. On this basis, the 'politically smart' models appear to reject the pursuit of political goals that are normatively aligned with donor governance agendas, in favour of 'best fit' outcomes that align with local social and political realities. As Pablo Yanguas has highlighted, the emphasis on 'best fit', 'good enough' governance reflects an instrumental approach to local conditions, which implies programmes should be designed 'in order to maximise results given the operating environment as shaped by the *existing* political settlement' (2017: 219, emphasis added).

The centrality of the local context and aligning development assistance to local conditions produced a series of questions: in which contexts are politically smart approaches likely to be more or less effective at supporting reform outcomes? What happens when the dominant local politics are not conducive to reform or 'developmental'? How do 'politically smart' approaches manage politically challenging environments in which aligning with local conditions could reinforce forms of political or socioeconomic marginalisation? And, finally, if previous approaches failed due to those 'who gain from existing arrangements and resist change', how, then, does 'politically smart' practice enable development programmes to produce different outcomes, while aligning with 'elite incentives' in the same contexts in which those incentives have historically stood in the way of reform?

In addressing these questions, the thesis has uncovered a fundamental tension within the second orthodoxy's approach to politics that has remained largely unexplored in its underpinning literature. On the one hand, it points towards local political conditions as having been the primary barriers to reform historically; on the other, it proposes that more effective aid involves adapting to and aligning with local political conditions. This dichotomy has been noted in the closely connected 'local turn' within peacebuilding and development. For instance, Mac Ginty observes that 'the local' is viewed as both 'the problem and the solution' for more effective peacebuilding:

> the local has been depicted as the problem and the solution. It has been the problem by being backward and willing to harbour particularistic and exclusive identities. It has been the site of conflict and underdevelopment, and so required peacebuilding and development intervention to help modernise it, connect it, and pacify it. But, at the same time, the local has also been presented as a solution. It has been cast as a reservoir of wisdom and resourcefulness. The language of resilience has been deployed to reconstruct the local as capable and even prescient (2015: 847-848).

A similar observation can be made of the 'political' in the second orthodoxy, both in its intellectual underpinnings and in its empirical form within the cases studies. As the cases in this thesis demonstrate, politics is both the problem and the solution *at once.* As the second orthodoxy scholarship itself recognises, development problems like the ones addressed in the programmes examined are inherently complex, unstable and highly contingent. As Mac Ginty's theory of 'critical localism' emphasises, much like 'the local', the political is also fundamentally mutable. It is not a fixed category that can be responded to as if it is either the 'problem' or the 'solution'. This points towards a fundamental 'dilemma' at the heart of efforts to align with local political realities, particularly in challenging contexts like Uganda. The conceptual and empirical analysis in this thesis demonstrates that the second orthodoxy is only really set up to leverage political conditions that are favourable to reform and, when these conditions are not there, they risk reinforcing the problems they aim to address.

Similar findings have been made in other studies of aid and its effects. For instance, in the context of political governance reforms, scholars have observed that donors who are 'immersed in close working relationships with their counterparts' begin to replicate their viewpoints (Hagmann and Reyntjens, 2016: 7). Brown (2011) finds, in interviews, common mechanisms used by donors to defend poor implementation of democracy reforms by aid recipients. These include focusing on election day, rather than broader political conditions; setting the standard very low ('don't expect too much'); and setting a long time-horizon ('don't expect it too soon') (Brown, 2011; Hagmann and Reyntjens, 2016). Similarly, based on statistical analysis, Dutta et al argue that, rather than reconstituting governance, aid simply amplifies existing political-institutional orientations in recipient contexts, making 'dictatorships more dictatorial and democracies more democratic' (2013: 208).

Such observations resonate with the discursive strategies identified in ethnographic studies, including those of the post-development scholars. Both Ferguson (1990) and Li (2007), for instance, have drawn attention to the way the depoliticization of aid serves to reinforce and reproduce existing power arrangements. But to what extent is this mechanism of depoliticization being reproduced in the case of the second orthodoxy? Ferguson notes that the programme implementers were unable to do much about the political obstacles they encountered 'because they sincerely saw "decentralization" as an apolitical administrative reform' (Ferguson, 1990: 225). The same cannot be said of the second orthodoxy, which explicitly recognises the politics of reform. At the same time, even when politics is recognised, and even 'practiced', existing power arrangements appear to remain intact. Moreover, by aligning with the politics of regime survival is hard to avoid concluding that the interventions also reinforced these politics.

In addition to the constraints posed by the local political contexts, were challenges connected to incomplete implementations of the second orthodoxy. In the case of MUVA, a more 'problem-driven', politically informed approach may well have exposed the political and institutional barriers for scaling education quality reforms. In the BSI programme, a less informal and tacit approach may have exposed the risks of aligning with local political economies, as well as the feasibility of achieving their pro-poor and distributional objectives. Without a clear counterfactual it is not possible to make a firm conclusion in this respect. But, as noted, analysis has indicated that there may well be a 'trade-off' (Lucia et al, 2018) to be struck between informal and more structured approaches in programmes aiming to 'think and work politically'. To further assess the generalisability of the thesis's findings, the next section of this chapter looks more closely at findings from another African context, Nigeria.

Applying the findings to other country and programme contexts

The unit of analysis in this thesis has been at the project or programme level, but the context in which the interventions operate has been an integral variable in explaining their results and effects. Understanding the role of context is particularly relevant to the second orthodoxy, but also helps to identify the extent to which this analysis could be applicable in other programme and country settings. While there remain relatively few studies of second orthodoxy practices within the academic literature, the thesis has attempted to show comparable findings with those that do exist. In the case of DFID's engagement with Uganda's social protection sector, for instance, Hickey and Bukenya highlight the risks for further embedding the elite when rendering interventions 'politically acceptable' (2019: 017). A similar observation is made in the case of the BSI's support to decentralisation reforms, where an apparently necessary alignment with the politics of regime survival impacted negatively on the capacity of the reforms to support equity and pro-poor outcomes. In

contexts like Uganda, in which the 'shifting nature of the political settlement' has resulted in the dominance of clientelist over a more developmental form of politics, the application of second orthodoxy approaches necessarily involves trade-offs, which I have argued, at best, leave the fundamental drivers of such politics intact and, at worst, reinforce them.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the presence of authoritarian governance alongside a lack of more 'developmental' leadership, seen for example in countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia, mean that both Mozambique and Uganda reflect highly challenging environments in which to pursue working 'with the grain' strategies. This places something of a boundary around the extent to which the analysis can travel to other country contexts, but does point towards their relevance for similarly challenging environments. In order to explore whether the findings of this thesis could be applied elsewhere, this section of the chapter looks at what other second orthodoxy cases have found in Nigeria. Due to the challenges of supporting reform in Nigeria, and a longstanding interest in innovative approaches amongst key actors within the DFID (now FCDO) Nigeria office, cases of 'thinking and working politically' as well as adaptive programming have been more widely studied in Nigeria.

The country presents an extremely diverse context internally and, at the national level, contrasts significantly from Mozambique and Uganda. Most notably, Nigeria is a much larger, resource-rich economy, where donor influence is weaker due to lower levels of aid dependency. Nigeria's federated governance structure is a very different political landscape to the dominant party politics of Uganda and Mozambique. Moreover, it does not reflect the same authoritarian forms of governance seen in these countries and has experienced more successful transitions of leadership through elections. Nonetheless, its politics and governance are marked by similarly high levels of corruption and clientelism that have been

identified as a barrier to reform. Nigeria's reliance on oil and gas revenues has led to observations of 'resource-curse' type characteristics, including incentives being distorted away from the provision of public goods towards rent-seeking; wasteful and corrupt use of public resources; high degrees of patronage and clientelism in the awarding and management of public contracts, all of which have had damaging effects on poverty reduction, reform, competitiveness and growth (Williams et al, 2019).

In this context, studies have pointed towards the value of second orthodoxy practices like 'thinking and working politically' (Lucia et al, 2018; Williams et al, 2019) for governance programming. In their analysis of the FOSTER programme, Lucia et al compare programme successes and failures, enabling them to highlight many of the successful conditions identified in the cases of this thesis, including 'the need for local ownership rooted in staff with a combination of technical expertise, a deep knowledge of the local political context and excellent networking abilities' (2018: 017). In the cases of this thesis, more locally embedded forms of knowledge and relationships were key in the successful results identified in MUVA Assistentes, as well as the BSI's more successful outcomes. But when trying to achieve more politically challenging objectives, the interventions still came up against seemingly insurmountable barriers in the political context. Like the MUVA case study in this research, in addressing such contextual constraints, Williams et al have highlighted the challenges associated with the internal political economy of donors. For instance, Williams et al find that 'TWP has been essential to make aid effective in the challenging context of a large, sovereign, resource-rich development partner, but […] a key limiting factor will always be the political economy of aid bureaucracies and donor governments themselves' (2019: 035). In this respect, they find that efforts to adopt second orthodoxy practices in Nigeria have been negatively affected by: 'DFID's increasing focus on narrowly defined results, the drive to

save on administrative costs by pushing more money using fewer civil servants, the rapid turnover of staff positions in-country, and the commercialization of aid delivery that has shifted donor activity from technical engagement towards contract and performance management' (Ibid: 047).

Connected to these barriers are observations that successful results have been limited in scale. Reviewing evaluations of DFID Nigeria's governance programming, Williams et al note that the successful outcomes of politically sensitive practices are more accurately characterised as 'islands of success' than examples of deep transformational change. Comparable to the findings of this thesis, they observe that politically sensitive governance interventions have more often '"nudged" policy "with the grain" of existing governance logics' than risked outright confrontation with the dominant political economy (Ibid: 045). Such findings show that, even in the significantly different political and economic context of Nigeria, comparable outcomes have been identified in other studies of second orthodoxy practices.

However, in the two BSI cases, a conducive donor environment, where flexibility and adaptability are encouraged, is still not enough to overcome the challenges of 'existing governance logics' in the local context. This points towards other, potentially even more fundamental, issues with efforts to support reform by external actors. Indeed, the 'insurmountable social reality' (Venugopal, 2018: 16) of politics identified in Ferguson's 'anti-politics machine' is evident in all of the cases studied. But the cases also show how recognition of contextual knowledge and relationship-building within the second orthodoxy can be instrumental in more successful efforts, particularly in less politically challenging reform efforts. These include the Assistentes project in the MUVA programme and the BSI's efforts to increase the adequacy of local government financing. This variation challenges the

universalising assumptions of the post-development scholarship, where failure is both instrumental and inevitable.

If this research had a second stage, beyond the thesis, it is feasible to imagine that some of the theory generated by this project could be tested on a wider scale, including through integrating quantitative methods. As Creswell and Clark point out, quantitative and qualitative methods do not have to be used concurrently in mixed methods designs, but can be applied in multiple research stages, sequentially (2017: 11). Similarly, George and Bennet note that statistical studies can be used to explore whether the new variables or concepts produced by case studies are relevant to larger populations of cases (2005: 34). Further work could be pursued on the political effects of second orthodoxy practices in a wider range of contexts. Are the same challenges and effects observed in less challenging political environments like Ghana or Zambia for instance? From a policy perspective, growing interest in the 'localisation' of aid (Baguios et al, 2021) means that identifying approaches that not only support development outcomes but also respond to power imbalances in the relationships between Northern donors and their Southern counterparts is another central consideration in moving this research agenda forward. Indeed, as the conceptual framing demonstrated, the politics of the aid relationship itself has been largely overlooked in the development of second orthodoxy methods. Because this study aimed to assess the second orthodoxy based on its own premises, this aspect of the cases was also not fully examined in the thesis.

At the very least, the findings of this thesis reflect the 'absorptive capacity' of development discourse (Argawal, 1996: 472). As Venugopal observes 'the development enterprise is constantly under attack, but it has been extraordinarily successful in absorbing and coopting

critique, leading to the constant re-invention and accretive growth of both theory and practice' (2018: 18). The cases in this thesis demonstrate the potential of this process to produce new practices that are more sensitive to the realities of local contexts. In the case of the MUVA programme, the thesis also demonstrates that the pull towards standardisation within the aid bureaucracy can come into tension with the requirement to be context-sensitive and responsive. Ultimately, however, it is local political realities themselves that stand as the main enabler of, or barrier to, reform. The thesis demonstrates, conceptually and empirically, that the successful application of second orthodoxy practices is dependent on a conducive political environment already being in place. When such conditions are not favourable, the thesis points towards the risks and challenges associated with practices that involve aligning with contextual realities. In an evolving field of practice, the findings indicate that both the contextual risks and conditions for success would benefit from further attention in future practice development and research on the second orthodoxy.

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Appendix: Interview Tables

1. **International/ Global perspectives**

Participant type	Number of interviews/ participants
Academic	5
Donor/ practitioner	8
Policy researcher	3
Total	**16**

2. **BSI Uganda Case Study, Kampala, March – July 2018**

Interviewee type	Number of interviews	Number of participants
BSI Team & Consultants	15	12
Members of Uganda Government	21	21
Development partners/ donors	4	4
Independent experts (Ugandan & International)	4	4
Total	**46**	**41**

3. BSI Uganda Case Study, 2016 (MSc Dissertation)

Type of Participant	Name/ title	Date/s	Location	Number of formal interviews
BSI Staff	Simon Gill, Project Director.	December 2015/ March 2016	ODI, London	2
BSI Staff	Tim Williamson, Technical Advisor.	Multiple interviews/ conversations in April 2016	Kampala, Uganda	2
BSI Staff	Sierd Hadley, Research Officer.	March 2016	ODI, London	3
BSI Staff	Sheila Kigozi, Project Officer, BSI Uganda.	Multiple interviews/ conversations in April/ May 2016	Various, Uganda	2
BSI Staff	Gerald Twigjukye, Project Officer/advisor, BSI Uganda.	Multiple interviews/ conversations in April 2016	Various, Uganda	2
Ministry of Finance Planning & Economic Development (MoFPED)	Anon, A.	April 2016	Kampala	1
MoFPED	Anon, B.	April 2016	Kampala	1
MoFPED	Anon, C.	April 2016	Kampala	1
MoFPED	Anon, D.	April 2016	Kampala	1
MoFPED	Anon, E.	April 2016	Kampala	1
MoFPED	Anon, F.	April 2016	Kampala	1
Civil society	Researcher, Advocates Coalition for Development & Environment (ACODE)	April 2016	Kampala	1
Civil society	Journalist, Daily Monitor.	April 2016	Kampala	1
Local Gov.	District Planner	April 2016	Sheema District, Uganda.	1

Local Gov.	Asst. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	April 2016	Sheema District	1
Local Gov.	District Education Officer	April 2016	Sheema District	1
Local Gov.	District Planner	April 2016	Kabale District, Uganda.	1
Local Gov.	District Education Officer	April 2016	Kabale District	1
Local Gov.	Asst. District Health Officer	April 2016	Kabale District	1
Local Gov.	District Planner	April 2016	Soroti District, Uganda.	1
Local Gov.	Assistant CAO	April 2016	Soroti District	1
Local Gov.	Water Officer/ Engineer	April 2016	Soroti District	1
International donor agency	Anon, UK Department for International Development.	April 2016	Kampala	1
International donor agency	Anon, Adam Smith International.	April 2016	Kampala	1
International donor agency	Anon, Democratic Governance Facility.	April 2016	Kampala	1
Total	**25**			**31**

4. Focus Group Discussions with Community Budget Monitoring Groups, 2016

Date	District	Sub-county/ town council	Participants (Total)	F	M
12/04/16	Sheema	Kasaana	10	6	4
12/04/16	Sheema	Sheema Town Council	10	4	6
12/04/16	Sheema	Kagongo	10	5	5
14/04/16	Kabale	Buhara	10	7	3
19/04/16	Soroti	Asuret S/C	5	1	4
Total			**45**	23	17

5. MUVA Mozambique Interviews & FGDs (totals)

Interviewee type	Number of interviews	Number interview of participants	Number of focus group discussions (FDG)/ meetings	Number of FGD participants	**Total participants**
MUVA Team & Consultants	**27**	**15**	**0**	**0**	**15**
MUVA programme participants (tutors & youth involved in their projects)	**7**	**7**	**3**	**26**	**33**
Mozambican civil society partners	**3**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**6**
Members of Mozambique Government	**5**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**7**
External/ Individual experts & practitioners	**3**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**
Development partners (DFID)	**2**	**2**	**1** (presentation & discussion)	**10**	**11**
Total	**47**	**38**	**5**	**39**	**76**

6. Totals across Cases & Categories

Case/ category	No. of Interviews	No. of interview participants	No. FGDs	No. FDG participants	Total participants
Uganda BSI	71	72	5	45	117
Mozambique MUVA	47	38	5	39	77
Global perspectives	16	16	0	0	16
Total	**134**	**126**	**10**	**84**	**210**