

Transformation of social transfer programmes in Nigeria – a political settlement explanation

Gbenga A. Shadare^{1,2}

Introduction

Rowden (2010) argued that the meaning of development has morphed from structural issues to palliative issues. This is very evident in Conditional Cash Transfers Programmes (CCTPs) and similar social protection initiatives, which though they may relieve poverty, have been criticized for failing to be transformative in their conception. Ordinarily, conditional cash transfers (CCTs) are palliative and therefore anti-transformative in that they dislodge the conditions for promoting structural change by creating dependency. In recent years, the World Bank and social protection scholars have acknowledged this and proceeded to argue for transformational changes to be introduced into the design of programmes (World Bank, 2004; Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004; Harland, 2014). Transformative Social Protection System is now an emerging sub-field that acknowledges the need to be innovative beyond the basic safety net approach and include broader societal issues like economic growth and accountability: for example developing beneficiaries' skills and increasing employability for poor recipients of cash transfers, in order to increase their social participation, is now a condition in selected Latin America countries where human development conditionalities (co-responsibilities) that required children to attend school and health checks have yielded good results (Molyneux et. al 2016).

Another transformative issue, which is the proximate concern of this paper, is in relationship between state-citizen interactions or democratization or social accountability, which can be improved or redefined through social protection interventions. Social protection initiatives can offer an important entry point for redefining state-citizen relationships as well as getting poor and vulnerable citizens involved in the political process through feedback channels by holding the state/ruling elites to account (Hickey and King, 2016; Browne, 2014). The question is not whether

¹ Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield

² Corresponding email contact: gashadare1@sheffield.ac.uk

social protection can be transformative in terms of increasing social accountability; that is axiomatic and has been answered over and over again in copious literature. Instead, the paper will critically examine the process of designing (not so much designing in the technical sense) social protection programmes to include elements of social accountability. It contended that the transformative element of social accountability is demanded by the poor and vulnerable as the terms of their engagement with ruling coalition as opposed to ruling elite-induced. This argument is relevant because in their review of the existing literature on what shapes successful social accountability in social transfer programmes, Hickey and King posited that political will and commitment are the main factors shaping the promotion of social accountability (Hickey & King, 2016). I argue that this is not the case, at least, in developing countries. Instead, the poor have to organize and request social accountability as the terms of their inclusion in the ruling coalition.

To buttress this argument, I employ a Limited Access Orders/Political Settlement framework. The act of creating social protection is not politically neutral; it is everywhere an attempt to include the poor in a political coalition (Mosley, 2014). The poor and vulnerable will either accept the terms of their inclusion or negotiate new terms of inclusion by demanding social accountability, a redefinition of state-citizen relations and much more. I shall draw an extensive example from Nigeria, in form of a case study to show how political coalition led to social protection as a method for incorporating the poor into ruling coalition. The contribution of this paper is to redefine social protection as an invitation from political coalition to the poor and to redirect emphasis in research to how to get the poor and vulnerable to demand social accountability as opposed to resting on political commitment.

The paper is structured as follows: firstly, I will set the stage with some literature, opening a gap with our theoretical turn to limited access orders/political settlement. The second part touches on some theoretical issues. My theoretical turn shall redefine social protection aimed at the poor and vulnerable from a somewhat technical to a deeply political exercise of coalitional changes. The third part fleshes out these theoretical considerations with the case of Nigeria, showing the coalitional origin of social protection. The fourth part argues that in cases where social protection has led

to social transformation, citizens have demanded this as terms of their engagement in the coalition.

Theoretical Issues

Participation and Social Accountability

The World Bank publication titled *World Development Report 2004: Making services work for poor people* (2004) marked a shift in studies and practices of social protection. Before this publication, cash transfer initiatives merely managed poverty with no component of participation. Appropriately, therefore, as argued by Molyneux, Jones and Samuels (2016), there has been two generations of CTs programmes. The first generation were palliative top-down schemes while more recent programmes have increasingly incorporated citizen empowerment in a bid to incorporate poor people by building mechanism for promoting citizens' voice, participation from which social accountability follows (Molyneux et al., 2016). This shift can be located in a broad movement in developing epistemic community towards participatory development and empowerment (Mohan & Stokke 2000; Cornwall and Brock, 2005). Other areas of development practice, for example rural development projects, have long incorporated participation before it was taken up by social protection.

The inclusion of participation in social protection discourse saw the emergence of social accountability, political inclusion and redefinition of state-society relationship (social contract). By social accountability, I mean approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement or a process by which ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations hold states to account. Since participation opens up space for communication between state and citizens, it also opens up space for feedback channel, grievance registration as well as redefining the relationship between states and citizens. Clearly, therefore, participation in cash transfers may have much more fundamental effects than other areas of development, rural development projects for example. Apart from the above transformative point, researchers have also argued that participation promotes 'best fit' programmes as opposed to 'best practice' (Bukenya et al 2012); that is, programmes that are culturally

sensitive and adjusted to the local political social and historical dynamics instead of the often-technical conception of social protection in developing countries.

Furthermore, if we follow the conception of the poor and vulnerable (at least in part) as an outcome of social exclusion, then participation and social accountability establishes an important entry-point for social and political participation. For poor and vulnerable people, who often do not have a direct stake in politics, such direct democracy is certainly more empowering than elections and institutional checks and balances. It is the case that citizens' perception of state obligation, or to put it differently, the State's conception of citizens' expectation does have an effect on political actions. For example, in James Ferguson's *Give a Man a Fish* (2015) we learnt that almost one third of the South African population are recipients of cash transfers. This was a product of the apartheid regime which structured citizens' expectation during apartheid when only the whites were *de facto* citizens and therefore qualified for the cash transfers. However, when blacks became citizens at the end of the apartheid they demanded the same terms of citizenship. This led to the expansion of social protection in South Africa. Likewise, a shift in state-citizens expectation through participation will likely alter the states conception of what citizens should reasonably expect. As ample studies have shown (Hickey and King, 2016; Browne, 2013; Camacho, 2014) there is therefore room for redefining the nature of state-citizen relationships and their respective expectation in cash transfer initiatives.

But the question of whether social protection is designed to encourage social accountability or how to do this precisely is deeply political and contentious. Simply pointing out the benefit of transformative social protection is quite different from understanding the factors that could influence policymaking decision to move towards transformative policies. Several scholars have shown that it is indeed possible and desirable to design social protections in a way to alter social contract. Some scholars pointed out, quite correctly, that in Latin America CCT programmes' efforts to redefine and reshape state-citizen relations have been explicit (see Jones et al 2016:1209). There are theoretical grounds to assume that the political realities in Latin America was in the least conducive for the ruling elites to seek an explicit redefinition of state-citizen relationship. Transplanting this to Africa might be difficult without a proper

understanding of the context. Changes in state-citizens relationship could dislodge ruling elites/coalition and empower new ones: for example, in situations where minority ethnic groups hold political power, the political elites may not be interested in giving more voice to citizens especially in places where ethnicity plays a key role.

Theoretically, I think the question is: how to understand what induces ruling elites to include the poor and vulnerable in their coalition; this is what social protection effectively amounts to. I turn to Limited Access Order/Political settlement to settle this theoretical difficulty before proceeding to understand how to build more transformative social protection.

Social Protection and Limited Access Orders

The starting point of the theoretical language of access order is to dislodge the single-actor model of the state mostly propounded by Weber's thesis of the state holding a monopoly of violence. The Weberian idea is obviously flawed when applied to developing countries where subjects view the state with some degree of hostility and loyalty is afforded to an ethnic or other sub-state organisations. Politics in such settings, as North and his co-researchers reasoned, are the outcome of bargaining between different groups (ethnic, religious, etc) represented by leaders or elites. In *Violence and Social Orders*, North et al. (2009) defined societies in which political order is achieved through bargaining as Limited Access Orders (LAO). In theoretical terms this is very similar to the Political Settlement of Mushtaq Khan. Limited Access Orders are Khan's Clientelistic Political settlement.

Both North and his co-researchers in the LAO framework, and Khan in his political settlement posit that the outcome of bargaining for political order is mirrored in clientelistic institutions (mostly informal) that distribute privileges to elites and groups, such as power sharing. The resulting privileges by their very nature limit economic and political competition. The institutions in developing countries, most of which are restrictive and not competitive, and therefore not conducive for proper economic relations, are often outcome of bargaining to attain political order. The 'limited' in Limited Access orders expresses the restrictive nature of political and economic privileges; powerful elites receive privileges that by their very nature preclude the

development of institutions promoting political and economic competition. To put it differently, systematic rent-creation where leaders are said to use state resources to secure the allegiance of certain groups is an essential game for the prevention of violence and maintaining order (North et al., 2009). Broadly speaking, and here we consult a wide range of literature transcending LAO or clientelistic political settlement (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2014; Mesquita et al., 2003; Doner et al., 2005; Leftwich, 2010; Whitfield and Therkildsen, 2011), ruling elites in developing countries allocate resources (material and otherwise) with a mind of securing their position and maintaining political order. Acemoglu and Robinson have shown through the concept of 'political replacement effect', a situation where ruling elites in developing countries resist positive societal changes if those changes threaten to dislodge them (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006).

To succeed, the adoption or expansion of social protection in developing countries must not appear to pose a threat to ruling elites. Furthermore, the change in state-society relations envisaged by scholars through social accountability initiatives does have political cost. Essentially, once poor and vulnerable citizens are empowered politically, this could affect ruling coalition. This is hardly acknowledged but ruling elites cannot be expected to design initiative that could effectively dislodge them, or restrict their power which is what social accountability does by definition, especially given that in clientelistic systems, ruling elites depend on informal channels for survival.

From a strictly clientelistic perspective, the very idea of creating social protection for the poor and vulnerable is a little paradoxical for several reasons: the poor do not form a coherent class and they fall outside of the elite-centered nature of both North and Khan's account. Nevertheless, the institution or expansion of social protection, especially cash transfers, is a political act. Paul Mosley argued that the drive towards social protection is an attempt by ruling elites to expand their coalition and therefore this falls into the LAO framework (Mosley 2014). According to Mosley, two political reasons often lead to the inclusion of the poor into political settlement.

1. *The elite may fear that, unless they incorporate the poor in their policymaking, they will be pushed out of power.* To explain: LAO and clientelistic politics are associated with poor development outcomes in part due to the restrictive institutions it promotes. On the other hand, as both the LAO framework (North et al., 2009) and the political-settlement framework (Khan,2010) stated in no uncertain terms: negotiation/bargain/settlement must be able to sustain a minimum economic level of performance on which the ruling coalition is based. In other words, there is a minimum level of economic performance that all LAOs and elite coalitions must achieve to generate sufficiency. This level of economic performance is not simply important to extract the revenue needed to support the neopatrimonial network; much more than that, it also has to meet the general expectations of the public. Sen (2015) argued that no elite coalition (political settlement or social order) that produces very poor economic outcomes or falls short of achieving minimum economic performance can survive except strictly by oppressive means. The literature in these areas argue that failure to provide the minimum required level of economic performance in LAO could lead to crisis and dislodgement of the ruling coalition. North et al. (2015), for example, argued that the collapse of the Marcos regime in the Philippines was due to a fall in commodity prices, which in turn reduced the minimum economic performance and the rent level and functioned to disintegrate the ruling coalition. Ruling elites may therefore try to include the poor in their coalition as a way to prevent crisis during economic hardship (Ghana which recently discovered oil and elected a new government on the terms of a nascent oil-producing political settlement is a perfect example).
2. *The elite may be weak, unable to gain power or govern on its own without support, and look to the poor for support.* Mosley argued that even though elites do not directly identify with the interests of the poor and vulnerable, they may still consider them as a threat (here he brought in the example of Indonesia and Russia) or an asset especially in competitive clientelist systems where ruling elites are constantly searching for new groups to join their ruling

coalition. Furthermore, in a situation where a ruling coalition has ruled for long and consolidated power, excluded elites could search for new members in the poor to join its coalition in order to win an election and govern. This is usually when social protection in form of cash transfers to the poor shows up in electoral promises and followed up after election. The following case study on Nigerian will expand this point.

Thus, the institution of cash transfers to the poor and vulnerable by the political elites in a developing country is, in itself, a fundamental change in the very nature of politics. It is an attempt to co-opt the poor and vulnerable as part of a ruling coalition – which does not necessarily mean narrow political interest. It is also relevant to note that in a competitive political settlement, once a political coalition co-opts the poor and vulnerable into its coalition, the excluded coalition often adopts the same policy: that is, once a political party employs the language of social protection others follow suit. The Nigerian example will confirm this: the moment the excluded coalition in Nigeria's political settlement started to implement conditional cash transfers (in order to co-opt the poor for electoral victory and to gain a coalition to rule) the other coalition put forward a similar proposal for social protection because they understood the political resources that are contained in the scheme.

The question of how to design citizens' participation and social contract alteration is therefore a question for the poor: that is how to negotiate their inclusion into a coalition. I will come back to this point: for now, I shall use Nigeria to prove Paul Mosley's thesis.

The Nigerian Example

How did Nigeria come to create a cash transfer initiative for the poor and vulnerable? Was it due to actual concern for the poor and vulnerable or an attempt to expand ruling coalition?

The political system in Nigeria has been described as competitive clientelism (Hickey et al 2015); that is a political settlement whereby there are two powerful coalitions

(one occupying the government at a given time). Short-termism is likely to dominate in a competitive settlement, because, faced with a credible threat of losing power to excluded factions in competitive elections, resource allocation tend to be driven largely by the logic of the maintenance of ruling governments. There is, however, spectrum of 'competitive clientelism' in some countries (for example Ghana) where the two competitive political coalitions (the two dominant political parties) are equally powerful and have alternated political power every eight years since 1992, with increasingly narrow winning margin. Though Nigeria is a competitive clientelistic system, the excluded elite (before 2015) was not as powerful as the ruling coalition - the People's Democratic Party (PDP). One political party has dominated the federal government since 1999; though they were threatened by the excluded coalition but not to the level of Ghana.

Since 2003, the excluded elites in Nigeria have converged in the person of Muhammadu Buhari, a retired major general in the Nigerian Army who previously served as the Head of State from 31 December 1983 to 27 August 1985, after taking over power in a military coup d'état. In subsequent elections, the excluded elites formed a political movement, sometimes adopting a new party name or creating a new political party (but consisting of the same coalition) to wrestle power from the PDP. In most cases the excluded elites could not form a unified coalition, such that fragmentation was one of their main problems. In 2011 election for example, the excluded elites could not form a unified front and ran a different candidate. In 2015 election, however, they agreed on a pact and also proceeded to expand their coalition by co-opting disgruntled members of the ruling coalition.

This is the context of the electoral promise to introduce a welfare system to the poor in form of cash transfers. The pact of the 2015 election started in 2012 and led to the All Progressives Congress (APC). This party was the result of an alliance of Nigeria's three biggest opposition parties – the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) – and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). Solving the problem of fragmentation was the first way to wrestle the presidency from the PDP that has had it since 1999. In the *The Roadmap to a New Nigeria*, the 31-page manifesto that was launched a year to

the election, they promised to create a cash transfer scheme to the “poorest and most vulnerable citizens”. The response from both the ruling coalition (PDP) and the media was to deride them as fools (Ossai 2014). As Tony Osborg argued at the time “APC’s plan on page four of the manifesto which reads ‘direct conditional monthly cash transfer of N5,000 to (Naira) 25 million poorest citizens’ , I believe all these promises are unsustainable and suspicious and also show that the APC will continue to mistake welfare for job creation. Paying people to sit at home and do nothing is not job creation but welfare.” (2015)

The welfare scheme was at the core of the APC campaign and also central to why the poor and vulnerable people voted for APC in the 2015 election. Appropriately, following Paul Mosley, the poor and vulnerable are part of the APC ruling coalition. Usually members of the coalition have to negotiate their own position, the poor are not different in any sense; I will return to this point. After the APC won the election, dislodging PDP for the first time since 1999, the new administration became enthusiastic in implementing the cash transfer, even against the advice of many economists given the dire situation in the country. The APC started with a series of consultations process and proceeded to create the institutional infrastructure for the implementation of the programme: National Social Safety Net Coordination Office (NASSCO) for example, placed under the department of the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo. NASSCO is said to have the responsibility of coordinating all social assistance programmes. The governments sought for technical advice and loan from the World Bank for the full implementation of the cash transfer. Although the complete infrastructure was not in place to commence with the initiative, for example the social registers to determine who should qualify for the initiative, the administration insisted, only one year in office, to start giving out the promised amount to the poorest and vulnerable on the basis of the existing register in few states (and other pilot programmes) and at the same time imploring more states to prepare social registries for the full implementation of the programme.

Again, this desperation to get on with the cash transfer can also be explained in terms of the dire economic situation in the country and the fear of backlash. The economic state inherited by the APC was abysmal, to say the least. In July 2014, during the

campaign for the 2015 election, the price of crude oil began to fall precipitously (New Krauss, 2016). As proceeds from the sale of crude oil account for about 95 percent of Nigeria's total export revenue and roughly 75 percent of its budgetary revenue (World Bank, 2015), the PDP administration used foreign reserve to shore the local currency given that it was the election year. At the time APC took office on May 29th 2015, a quarter of the 36 states needed bailouts and the currency was slated for a free fall. Since the APC administration took office the price of goods and services has at least increased by 100 percentage (due to the unavoidable devaluation of the Naira currency). This economic hardship meant that the administration needed to expand its coalition and it may explain why it has been desperate to start with the cash transfers to the poor and vulnerable. By December 2016, the government had begun payment, initially in nine states with existing registries identifying the most vulnerable citizens. The Office of the Vice President announced, in January 2017, that other states had begun to develop their own registries and would be included in subsequent phases of the CCT implementation.

The newly excluded elites, PDP, have already produced literature promising to expand the cash transfer programme if allowed into power in 2020. The point is that the poor and vulnerable have already been included in the politics of the day: they are now in the ruling coalition. In essence, the inclusion of the poor and vulnerable is in itself a redefinition of the state-citizen relationship, the real question is how to get the poor and vulnerable citizens to negotiate their position within the coalition and in turn demand accountability.

Citizens' imposed and led social transformation

This view of social protection as an expansion of ruling coalition is important because it raises the question of terms of inclusion. In standard LAO or political settlement theory an included group in the ruling coalition negotiates their position. The question is how to organize the poor and vulnerable, the recipient of the cash transfer, to negotiate the terms of their engagement within the coalition. My approach here is fundamentally different from other researchers. Sam Hickey and Sophie King for example reviewed copious literature on how to achieve social accountability within

social protection intervention and they came to the conclusion that 'the commitment of key actors to promoting social accountability, both in terms of bureaucrats and elected officials has emerged central ' (Hickey & King, 2016). The implication is that successful cases of social accountability rely on political elites' commitment or political will as well as capacity (in form of bureaucrats). I divert from this and argue that the real question is what drives or instigates political will. Ordinarily political elites in developing countries will not willfully submit to commitments that effectively scrutinize them. We therefore have to go beyond political will and speak of political incentive; that is, what compels ruling elites to incorporate social accountability into social protection programmes?

In cases where social protection has led to social accountability (Philippines, East Africa and Latin America) the programmes usually started as a bid to expand coalition or co-opt the poor. The new coalition member (the poor and vulnerable) takes up the initiatives to impose social accountability as the terms of their engagement often against the initial agreement of political representatives. My argument is that once the poor or vulnerable have been invited into the coalition, it is their responsibility to negotiate their position. Social accountability in the Ghanaian oil sector is a good example of what I have in mind.

When oil was discovered in Ghana in commercial quantity (during an election year) the ruling elites extended an invitation to citizens groups and civil society to take part in the development of oil in the country. The government sponsored town hall meetings, and seminars in a bid to include citizens group. However, the citizens group, through civil society, took the initiative and negotiated their terms of engagement. In order to develop their capacity to engage 120 organised groups, individuals and professional bodies (including community-based organisations, faith-based groups, research institutions, gender-based groups, trade unions, etc.) converged in 2009 to form Ghana Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas. The organisation focuses on every aspect of oil in Ghana using the ruling elites' rhetoric of inclusion and transparency (Gyimah-Boadi & Prempeh, 2012). This group attracted support from media, academia and international NGOs to negotiate their position within the oil sector (having been invited by the ruling elites). They vetoed every single bill relating to oil and published

their advice to the government; they skillfully used the media and opposition members in parliaments to instill several accountability schemes in the petroleum bill. Among a list of distinguished contributions to the development of oil in Ghana, is their contribution to the Petroleum Revenue Management Act Bill which included the inclusion of an independent (independent from politics) body with the task of monitoring and reporting on the government's management of petroleum funds in accordance with the law. The ruling elites in Ghana rejected this suggestion outrightly; but the civil society skillfully manipulated media and opposition politicians to have its way. In essence, the civil society in Ghana is one of the most powerful stakeholders in the oil sector.

The Ghana example started with an invitation by the ruling elites to include civil society and citizens groups in its oil policy; it was for the citizens group (like all members within a coalition) to negotiate their position against ruling elites (see Kosiński, Polus, and Tychołiz 2013). Likewise, in cases where social protection has led to social accountability, the question is not necessarily political will but how the poor and vulnerable organize to construct their position within the coalition and possibly alter state-society relations. The key implication here is that the included groups (in this case the poor and vulnerable people) have to take the initiative and define their terms of engagement. The idea that social protection should be designed by elites in developing countries in a way that would enhance their accountability is somewhat unlikely.

In every case in Latin America, for example, or Africa (see ACPF 2014) where social protection has led to social accountability, there is the strong presence of civil society negotiating for the poor. There is also a penetration of what Peter M. Haas called the epistemic community; a strong network of knowledge-based experts who help decision-makers to define the problems they face, identify various policy solutions and assess the policy outcomes. Once ruling elites decide to create a cash transfer scheme they normally go through a process of consultation; for example, Nigeria consulted with the World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and African Development Bank all of which are stocked with experts. These institutions assisted in one way or another (especially the World

Bank) in designing the programme. The same thing occurred in Ghana after the discovery of oil, when the government sought counsel from the World Bank and other institutions. It is the way that the epistemic community dialogued with the civil societies in Ghana that led to the successful social accountability explained earlier. The Ghana Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas, for example, receives technical support from foreign experts through a facility named Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness (STAR) in Ghana. STAR Ghana is a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism (funded by DFID, USAID and Denmark's development cooperation).

Conclusion

How can the Poor and Vulnerable(citizens) negotiate their position?

This article has done two things: The first is to argue, in light of the coalitional nature of politics in the developing world, that conditional cash transfers (CCTs) to the poor and vulnerable can be viewed as “coalitional changes” in itself. What are the political conditions that give rise to the attempt to introduce CCTs? The question is answered with Mosley’s thesis that ruling elites often include the poor in their coalition when there is a need to expand their coalition for survival or for gaining power or legitimacy. The case of conditional cash transfers in Nigeria clearly buttresses this point. The introduction of the conditional cash transfers in the election manifesto of the All-Party Congress (APC) was an attempt to expand the coalition needed to defeat the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Certainly, as the theoretical language of LAO and political settlement has it, the inclusion of a new party in a coalition does affect the distributional implication of the group. Because the terms of negotiation for coalition are mirrored in the distributional implication of institutions, the inclusion of the poor and vulnerable in a coalition ought to reflect their position. However, in political settlement each group has to negotiate their interest in the overall institutional logic.

The question of social accountability and building a new social contract is one of how to get the poor and vulnerable (the new members of a coalition) to negotiate their position. This is the second contribution of the article. The political will argument is

deflated here because it places the emphasis not on political incentive but on personalities or the goodness of elected officials. There are very little reason why ruling elites would willfully design social protection schemes that would see them losing power or having to open new channels of accountability. The poor and vulnerable have to negotiate their position by promoting accountability as part of the terms of their engagement within the coalition. This is where civil society clearly plays a role, but due to the non-universal nature of conditional cash transfers, the poor and vulnerable could be cautious in organizing into a group calling for accountability. In Ghana, it was easy for civil society to converge on a single position on how to hold the government to account mainly due to the “universal” nature of oil. In the case of conditional cash transfers, which is selective in its very nature and therefore likely to attract selected beneficiaries, who may be too poor to participate and also scared of losing the privilege, building a citizens’ group from recipients could be a difficult task. How to do this ought to be the subject of research. Clearly, citizens’ participation in calling for social accountability (negotiating their position in the coalition) would be much easier in universal social protection because there is no fear of losing one’s slot to another person.

Nevertheless, civil society groups could be innovative and use the opportunity to promote the call for accountability. Usually civil society groups in developing countries are always calling for social accountability but they do not have the political influence to see it through. However, when they represent a coalitional member, that political influence is immediately given. In Ghana, for example, the civil society tried without luck to influence the government. However, when the ruling elite, in an election year, given the highly competitive nature of elections in Ghana, opened a space for citizens groups to participate in the development of oil, an opening was created for civil society groups to submit all their demands for accountability. They achieved this not only in oil but also in other sectors. Likewise, the inclusion of the poor and vulnerable in a ruling coalition offers the civil society an opportunity to pursue accountability. How to get civil societies together and to adopt a single stance (as was the case in Ghana) is the problem.

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