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THE VALUE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL: EXPLORING HOW PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Although low-to middle income countries have been encouraged to attain the international benchmark of 15-20% public budget allocation to education, Ghana's education budget to GDP has hovered between 4% and 10% over the last decade. As a result, all public secondary schools are constantly compelled to negotiate for their fair share of governmental support to secure infrastructure and teaching and learning materials. However, in this context of constrained resources certain schools seem to be thriving better than most of their counterparts. Drawing on primary research findings, this study problematizes the structural inequalities and competition as a direct consequence of not only the fiscally constrained public sector, but also as the result of deep-seated historical events and political decisions that form part of colonial legacies in Ghana. It draws on the concept of social capital to highlight the crucial role of private networks and relationships (social capital) in mitigating these challenges.

Key words: social capital and education, secondary education, public education spending, educational inequalities, social capital and human development, Ghana

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ACRONYMS

BECE – Basic Education Certificate Examination

EFA– Education for All

EMIS – Education Management Information System

ERP – 1987 Education Reform Program

ERP – Economic Recovery Program

ESP – Education Strategic Plan

fCUBE – Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

IB – International Baccalaureate

IMF – International Monetary Fund

GES – Ghana Education Service

GET Fund – Ghana Education Trust Fund

GLSS – Ghana Living Standards Survey

JHS – Junior High School

JSS – Junior Secondary School

MOE – Ministry of Education

NDC – National Democratic Congress

NEC – National Education Commission

NPP – New Patriotic Party

NSCE – New Structure and Content of Education

PNDC – Provisional National Defence Council

PTA – Parent-Teacher Association

SAPs – Structural Adjustment Programs

SEIP – Secondary Education Improvement Project

SHSs – Senior High Schools

SSS – Senior Secondary Schools

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WAEC – West African Examinations Council

WASSCE – West African Secondary School Certificate Examination

WDR – World Development Report

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

With the declaration of the Sustainable Development Agenda (Agenda 2030) has re-emerged the emphasis on achieving the principles of equality, inclusivity and equity in all aspects of life across the globe. This is evidenced by the first and overarching goal of Agenda 2030 to ensure that "no one is left behind", as well as the third target of the tenth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to "ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome…" globally (United Nations, 2015). Nowhere is the application of these principles more tangible than in education where the SDG 4 aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations 2015).

In the literature, Kramer and Holla (2009), the World Bank (2009), and Schultz (1992) have argued in favor of education and human development in developing countries since it contributes to building up the requisite labor force and expertise needed for infrastructural development, service delivery and industrialization. Likewise, Capabilities theorists like Amartya Sen (1999), Martha Nussbaum (2004) and Ingrid Robeyns (2016) have highlighted the primacy of human development since it affords individuals the opportunity to discover their 'capabilities' (that is, their ability to be or do) and translate those capabilities to 'functionings' that will be beneficial to the individuals themselves, their communities and the nation. In Ghana, education has always been one of the top priorities of governments since colonial times given its crucial role in promoting economic development, poverty alleviation, and individual and community well-being (Quist 2003).

In particular, secondary education in Ghana (as everywhere) is regarded as pivotal to the life cycle of every youth in the country. Being the point at which students' selection of courses largely

determines their career trajectories and given the relative dearth of alternative socioeconomic mobility avenues besides formal education, acquiring quality secondary school education is key to attaining favorable future tertiary education and career prospects (Foster 153). Appreciating the crucial role played by formal senior secondary education in the lives of Ghana's youth, the secondary education sub-sector has undergone several major policy reforms since independence that have expanded access to an unprecedented number of students, and 'transformed' the curriculum from a primarily academic model to a more skills-oriented one (Akyeampong 2007, Quist 2003). Policies and programmes like the Educational Reform Programme (1987), Community Secondary Schools Construction Project (1991), the Community Day Senior High Schools Project (2013) and the Free Senior High School Programme (2018) have increased the number of public senior secondary schools and expanded access to many more students, thus breaking away from the colonial practice of intentionally restricting secondary and higher education access to a privileged few. However, the Ghanaian public secondary school system is far from perfect.

Coupled with the government's struggle to ensure expanded and equitable access to public secondary schooling as a means to close the north-south/rural-urban gap while improving curriculum quality and relevance, Ghanaian public Senior High Schools (public SHSs hereafter) contend with a major structural impediment to their survival and success: the limited availability of resources in the public education system. Although the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, the Incheon Declaration, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recommend that a benchmark of 15-20% of the public budget be allocated to education in low to middle-income countries, Ghana's education budget to GDP has hovered between 4% and 10% over the last decade—a percentage which falls woefully below the international benchmark (UIS 2017, EFA

Global Monitoring Report 239, Ghana Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESP) 2010-2020). It is estimated that in 2008 for instance, 74% of the total education budget was spent on personal emoluments (i.e. salaries and wages), leaving only 26% to be spent on educational facilities and inputs such as textbooks and science laboratories (Ghana ESP 2010-2020 8). Only 15-20% of this remaining amount (i.e. the 26% left for educational facilities and inputs) has been allocated to the senior high education sector over the last decade, due to the government's priority on primary education spending since the Nkrumah Years (1951-66) (Ghana ESP 2010-2020 9, IndexMundi 2018). Owing to this funding constraint, all public SHSs are compelled to constantly negotiate for their fair share of governmental support when it comes to securing inputs such as teaching and learning materials, as well as financial support for the construction of new infrastructure and the maintenance of existing ones.

However, in this context of limited governmental resources, certain public SHSs seem to be thriving better than most of their counterparts as their performance remains excellent and they remain relatively better equipped in terms of infrastructural and human resources. Interestingly, those schools that seem to be thriving relatively well are the higher-ranked elitist public institutions, who are more likely to maintain their already favorable positions in the Ministry of Education's (MOE) school ranking scheme, and are better able to guarantee the success of their students and graduates. Thus, even in a context of limited resources, it appears that some schools are better off than others. This situation leads one to wonder why certain public SHSs are faring better than their counterparts even as they contend with similar constraints. Do such schools have less challenges than their arguably struggling counterparts? What are they doing better or what do they have that makes their situation seem a lot better than their lower-performing and usually rural counterparts? Gyimah-Brempong (2017) asserts that it will be virtually impossible for the

government to increase its funding commitment to the sub-sector given its immense financial responsibilities to the overall educational system and the other equally crucial needs[1] it has to attend to as a lower middle-income country (361). Thus, he proposes that perhaps alternative sources of funding such as the Ghanaian diaspora need to be explored if the constraints above are to be dealt with (Gyimah-Brempong 361). With these questions and his assertion in mind, this study set out to answer this research question: What are the challenges and opportunities that Ghanaian public SHSs face as a result of the limited availability of resources in the public secondary school sector and how do they respond to them? The hope is that by gaining an overall understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the public SHS system, as well as how various schools are able to respond to them, we would not only understand what factors account for the differences in schools' ability to remain resilient or become vulnerable to the constraints they encounter, but we will also understand (to an extent) why certain schools maintain their elite positions while others continue to be lower performing schools.

Although the aforementioned issue pertains throughout the national context, this study focuses on the local context of the Central Region of Ghana. Located in the Southern part of Ghana and bordered by the Gulf of Guinea, the Central Region is known as the 'citadel of education' in Ghana since it is the site where formal education was first introduced into the country. The region has the second highest number of public SHSs in Ghana (68), and boasts of the oldest secondary school, as well as some of the best public SHSs in Ghana which have produced several of the country's elites, professionals and ruling class. Simultaneously, the region is home to a host of middle strata schools as well as some of the lowest performing public SHSs in Ghana, and it is one of the poorest regions in the country (after the three Northern regions) with a gross annual household income that

[1] Such as promoting employment creation and infrastructural development, ensuring a well-functioning national healthcare insurance scheme, and managing a relatively huge debt-to GDP ratio.

falls quite below the national average (GLSS[2] Round 6 154). Together, these characteristics make the region an interesting site for an exploratory study on the challenges and opportunities that pertain in the Ghanaian public SHS system.

Drawing on primary data gathered from key stakeholders and using social capital[3] as a conceptual frame, this study seeks to shed light on the challenges that Ghanaian public SHSs contend with; it hopes to highlight how the headmasters and headmistresses' of various sampled schools negotiate their vulnerabilities to such challenges, as well as the opportunities that pertain in the public SHS system to help various schools to navigate some of the constraints they encounter. The overarching aim of this study is to critically examine the relationship between social capital, secondary education and development in Ghana. To achieve this aim, three objectives are engaged with in this study.

My first objective is to critically examine head teachers' perceptions of how schools seek to manage the challenges and opportunities facing secondary schools in Ghana. This objective raises three sub-questions: What types of challenges do public SHSs face in their day-to-day management? How do schools respond to the challenges they encounter? What types of opportunities exist in the system to overcome the aforementioned challenges? My second objective is to critically examine how various schools are able to negotiate their vulnerability to the constraints imposed on them. This second objective gives rise to two sub-questions as well: What kinds of resources, experiences and/or relationships do schools draw on when navigating the Ghanaian public SHS context? Why are certain schools more vulnerable to the constraints imposed

[2] GLSS is the abbreviated form of the Ghana Living Standards Survey.
[3] In the present study, social capital is defined as the sum of embedded resources (tangible and intangible) that are inherent in social networks and on which individuals, communities and groups may draw on outside of the formal state to generate favourable outcomes and/or to remain resilient in the face of structural constraints. This definition and its implications are discussed in detail in Section 2.4 (p.46).

on them than some of their counterparts? The third and final objective of this study is to critically examine the practical and theoretical implications of my research findings on the relationship between secondary education and development in Ghana.

According to the field data, Ghanaian public SHSs constantly contend with four major challenges to their survival and success: infrastructure-related constraints, human resource-related constraints, funding constraints, and state bureaucratic practices. In response to these common challenges, public SHSs in the Central Region have often resorted to self-help strategies, strategic engagement with the private sector and/or civil society, or sometimes, simply waited for government response whether it comes in a decade or in a few months. Though the entire public SHS system is constrained, certain opportunities— such as the introduction of the World Bank's Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP) and a formalized lobbying system facilitated by the Ghana Education Service (GES)— have emerged over the last decade to enable schools to thrive better in this context of limited resources. Overall, schools that remain relatively well-resourced and produce high-achieving students note that the strong support of alumni, the Parent-Teacher Association (P.T.A) and private stakeholders (i.e. their social capital) have been key to their survival. Meanwhile, schools that seemingly struggle a bit may not have a strong and vibrant alumni support, but through improvisation, in-kind support from their communities and intermittent financial support from political aspirants, they have been able to contend with some of the challenges they encounter in their day-to-day management. These findings (as well as the theoretical and practical implications it surfaces) are discussed in much detail and with evidence in Chapters 4 to 6. Indeed, an inquiry into the challenges and opportunities encountered by Ghanaian public SHSs in the contemporary neoliberal era cannot occur without first considering the history of education in the country.

1.2. History of education in Ghana

Ghana's education system, like elsewhere, is comprised of both private and public streams at all levels from the primary to the tertiary education sector. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will present a brief overview of the development of education in Ghana from the pre-colonial times to the contemporary era, taking the time to explore secondary schooling in this context in order to set the stage for my inquiry into the challenges and opportunities that pertain in the public secondary school sector in present times. Tracing the history of education and its impact on the contemporary phenomenon is crucial given that one cannot properly understand the relationships, challenges and opportunities that have emerged in the contemporary public SHS system without first understanding how such relationships, challenges and opportunities have been constituted in the past and how they have in turn shaped/influenced the current structure we see. Following this section, I will present an outline of the entire thesis to serve as a road map of things to come.

1.2.1. Education in pre-colonial times

Whether formal or informal, "...historically the main purpose of education, has been to produce a person who will be a useful member of society" (H.O.A McWilliam and M.A Kwamena-Poh 1). In tracing the history of education in Ghana, it is apt to begin with the history of informal education in Ghana as it preceded its formal counterpart and continues to be recognized as a complement to formal education. Informal education in Ghana has its roots in the family and society. In pre-colonial Ghana, education was informal, non-literate and largely non-specialized, and it was focused on equipping individuals with the requisite skills or trades that would directly benefit the communities they came from (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1). It was geared towards meeting the needs of the "small and largely rural and self-sufficient" communities that Ghanaians lived in prior to contact with Europeans (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1). Also, education in

pre-colonial times was focused on training children to be of good character and to acquire adequate knowledge about their culture, history and beliefs, so as to take on some specialized functions in the family or community such as the chief priest or state drummer (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 3). The method of teaching at this stage was direct observation and practicing under the service and supervision of a mentor, and it was centered around apprenticeships whereby a boy learned a trade from his father, an uncle or a prominent craftsman or artisan in the community, while a girl learned specialized functions or trades like midwifery, pottery or bead making from their mother or older women in the community (Adu-Agyem and Osei-Poku 165, McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 2-3, Kwamena-Poh 1975). Girls were also taught how to do various daily activities such as cooking and cleaning by their mother, and when they got older, they would learn how to cater for children and run a whole household from the mother or older women; this shift in the seriousness of tasks for young girls was marked by puberty or transition rites such as *Dipo* which is practised by the Krobo ethnic group of Ghana (Kwamena-Poh 272). In addition, learning took place through storytelling with moral lessons at the end, the famous ones being the Ananse stories (Kwamena-Poh 272). Over time, informal education in Ghana has been predominantly replaced by the formal system of education to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly modernizing society. Nonetheless, informal education still pertains in the contemporary system and it is formally recognized as a crucial complement to formal vocational and technical education and training.

Although the formal colonial state was not established until 1884, formal education was introduced into the country years earlier in the pre-colonial period after contact with the first Europeans. The Portuguese were the first to introduce formal education into the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) when they opened the first castle school in Elmina in 1592 with the intent to primarily convert the indigenes to Catholicism and "to provide reading, writing and religious

teaching for African children" (Graham 1). In 1637, the Dutch seized the Elmina castle from the Portuguese and in 1644 they started their own castle school (Dzidza et al. 57, Graham 1). Like their Portuguese counterparts, the language of instruction was that of the European power (Dutch) and the aim was to train the indigenes to become Christians and individuals more amenable to the Dutch merchants' needs (Graham 1). In 1727, the Danes followed suit by establishing a castle school at the Christiansborg Castle in Accra and in 1751, the British also established a school at the Cape Coast Castle[4] (George 23). It is worthy to note that all of the castle schools were established along the coast (including two at my present study site) because the Europeans were hesitant to enter the hinterland due to their susceptibility to malaria and the hostile terrain; this left the hinterlands and the northern parts of the country largely untouched by Europeans for several years. Like their Portuguese and Dutch predecessors, the British introduced schools into the Gold Coast not only to Christianize the indigenes, but also to train the indigenous people to facilitate their commercial interests by serving as interpreters, clerical helpers and sometimes fort soldiers (Graham 9).

In the early years of formal education in the Gold Coast, education was a "subsidiary function of the Merchant companies" and as such, education spending was largely controlled by them before their efforts were complemented by Christian missionaries and the British colonial government from the 18th century onwards (Graham 3). These castle schools were exclusively set up to cater to mulattoes (the biracial offspring of European castle staff and African women), with the exception of the Cape Coast castle school where the children of wealthy African merchants and local chiefs were enrolled as well (Graham 3).

1.2.2. Education in colonial times

[4] Both Elmina and Cape Coast Castles are found in Central Region and they were the first sites of formal education in Ghana. This contributes to the region's status as the citadel of education in the country.

The arrival of the missionaries in the Gold Coast from 1821 onwards to create indigenous independent churches contributed to the further development of education in the country (Dzidza et al. 57, George 23). The first Basel Missionaries[5] arrived at Christiansborg castle in 1828, the Wesleyan Missionaries arrived in Cape Coast in 1835 and the Bremen Missionaries arrived in the Volta Region in 1847 (George 23). By 1874, significant advances had been made in the education sector with the Basel and Wesleyan missions establishing several schools across the country parallel to the numerous government schools that were established by the British once they gained full colonial authority over the Gold Coast following the Bond of 1844 (Dzidza et al. 57, George 23-24). By 1881, the Gold Coast had about 139 government and government-assisted[6] schools, including 3 schools under the control of the British colonial administration-- one in Cape Coast (Central Region) and two in Accra (Dzidza et al. 57, George 24). By the end of this era, the Basel Mission had established 47 schools, the Wesleyans 84 schools, the Bremen Mission 4 schools, and the Roman Catholic Church had established one school.

Unlike the Wesleyan missionaries' and the European merchants, the Basel Missionaries' education endeavors were not limited to the coast. They established boarding schools at the Christiansborg Castle in Accra and several schools in the interior on the Akwapim ridge, including a secondary school for girls at Aburi since Andreas Riis (the head of the mission in then Gold Coast) saw girls' education as equally important as boys' education (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 30). The Basel missionaries were also the first to begin training teachers in Ghana through their establishment of the Presbyterian Training College (now Presbyterian College of Education) in Akropong Akwapim in 1848 since they realized that a steady supply of indigenous trained

[5] This was an evangelistic Christian German mission headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, hence its name.
[6] Government-Assisted schools were schools established by the various missionaries but supported by grants-in-aid made by the British colonial government intermittently (George 24).

teachers was crucial to the success of the formal education system (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 30). The mission also introduced the first model of formal technical education into the country, training carpenters, locksmiths, and blacksmiths for instance (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 30-31). Contrary to its predecessors, the mission school era ushered an expansion in education to indigenous Ghanaian children (Ansah 4). Thus, it can be argued that these mission schools broke the restrictions imposed on educational attainment and socio-economic mobility by the European merchants, the colonial British administration, and the old elite ruling class. However, since the missionaries saw African culture and religion as pagan, children who attended these mission schools were trained to abandon "pagan" worship and customs, which resulted in the creation of 'two worlds': a minority literate Christian community separated from their indigenous community and a larger illiterate African community seen as backward (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 34).

Throughout this colonial period, the models and language of instruction in education were determined by the respective entities that ran the schools and there was no official centralization or harmonization in the education system (Ansah 4). Attempts by the colonial government to harmonize the system was not without its difficulty as there were ideological differences among the missionaries themselves, and between the missionaries and the colonial government. For instance, while the Wesleyan missionaries felt that it was important to educate the indigenous people in English to enlighten them and make them "fit" for the metropole, the Basel missionaries chose to employ the vernacular and placed emphasis on the translation of European texts into the vernacular (Ansah 2014). Also, while the missionaries were interested in teaching basic literacy and producing good churchmen, the British colonial government was interested in training interpreters and middle level clerical men to advance its commercial activities on the coast (Adu-Gyamfi et al. 2016). Nonetheless, both parties were able to move towards harmonization when a

General Board of Education and Local Boards were established (Dzidza et al. 57). In 1890, the government and missionaries also created a full Directorate of Education for the Gold Coast leading to the total enrollment of 5,076 students including 1,037 girls (Dzidza et al. 57).

To make education more accessible, the colonial government set up a local committee in 1920 to deliberate on education which recommended that an additional three new institutions should be added to the pre-existing ones: a secondary school, a new government training college for male teachers, and a training college for female teachers (Dzidza et al. 57). However, owing to inadequate government funds coupled with World War II[7], Sir Gordon Guggisberg (then the Governor of Gold Coast) did not establish the three additional schools and education development in the country stalled for a while. Nonetheless, these developments paved way for the appointment of the first African Deputy Director of Education, Mr. V.A Tettey. Under his leadership, access to education in Ghana was further expanded and by 1950, he had overseen the establishment of approximately 3,000 basic and secondary schools with an enrollment figure of 280,960 or 6.6 percent of the total population of 4.2 million Ghanaians at the time (Addae-Mensah et al. 1973).

1.2.3. Education in post-colonial Ghana: Policies and Reforms

Although the colonial era saw a fairly rapid expansion in education to the indigenous population, illiteracy remained high in the immediate post-independence period with only 20% of the population considered literate (Dzidza et al. 57). Moreover, the distribution of educational resources was very uneven as most of the schools established were established in the south[8], leaving the northern part of the country under-served. Consequently, in 1951 the Nkrumah

[7] The Second World War adversely impacted education development in the Gold Coast as the European school inspectors, principals and several teachers were mobilized for military service (Dzidza et al. 58)
[8] The Southern part of Ghana was referred to as the Colony and it included the Ashanti Territory which was a protectorate of the British. Although the Northern territory had been incorporated as a protectorate under the British Crown in 1902, this area still remained under-served with regards to social resources like education.

government[9] introduced the Accelerated Development Plan for Education (ADP for Education) which advocated for the further expansion of the education sector nationwide, the introduction of tuition-free primary education (Universal Primary Education) in all public and government-assisted schools, and the improvement and expansion of teacher training facilities (Dzidza et al. 59, George 36-39). Soon thereafter, the Second Development Plan and the Seven-Year Plan were introduced in 1959 and February 1962 respectively to increase access to secondary school education through the establishment of the Ghana Educational Trust Fund (George 36-39). Also, the education structure was reorganized to six years of primary schooling, four years of middle schooling, five years of secondary schooling, and two years of sixth form education (Dzidza et al. 59).

In 1961, the Education Act (Act 87) was introduced which made basic school attendance compulsory and established local authorities with the mandate to "build, maintain, and equip all public primary and middle schools in their jurisdictions" (Dzidza et al. 59, McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 11). Although the introduction of the ADP for Education and the Second and Seven-Year Development plans more than doubled enrolment in the public school sector between 1960-61 and 1966-67, retention and transition was rather very low with only about 5% of primary school and middle school leavers transitioning into secondary school education (Dzidza et al. 59, Addae-Mensah et al. 1973).[10] Moreover, this sudden expansion contributed to falling standards in education and worsened the illiteracy level (Dzidza et al. 59)

[9] Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was the first Prime Minister of the Ghana, which became independent in 1957. Prior to official independence in 1957, the British colonial government began to loosen the restrictions on indigenous representation in the Legislative Assembly and permitted the first elections with universal suffrage in 1951. These elections in 1951 saw Nkrumah to be elected to the seat of Accra Central and his CPP winning the majority of seats in the Legislative Assembly (34 out of 38) ('1951 Gold Coast legislative election' 2018)

[10] According to Dzidza et al., the tuition-free primary school policy set up a context where the majority of students from primary and middle school could not enter the few existing secondary schools as they were few and very selective in manner and fees were still charged at this level of education (59).

In 1966, a coup d'état ensued which overthrew the government of Dr. Nkrumah. One of the reasons cited by Lieutenant-General A.A. Afrifa (one of the instigators) for the coup was that, a change in government was necessary to overcome the restricted access to higher and better quality education past the basic school level, as well as the massive unemployment and lowered educational standards in the country (Dzidza et al 2018, Pedley and Taylor 2009). Thus, soon after the coup, an Education Review Committee led by Professor A.A. Kwapong was established to investigate and review the education system. The Kwapong Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That middle schooling should be shortened to two years, after which a portion of the students will be selected for the academic stream and enrolled in secondary schools while the remaining will be channeled into the pre-vocational courses for an additional two years of "continuation" classes (Dzidza et al. 60).

2. That basic schooling be reduced from nine to six years at the primary school level while secondary education and sixth form will be maintained at four years and two years respectively, thus freeing up space for university education of three or more years (Dzidza et al. 60). Ironically, the poor implementation of the Committee's report created additional problems instead of ensuring expanded access. Foremost, the introduction of "continuation" pre-vocational courses did not necessarily increase access but rather, led to the streaming of lower performing and often poor students into a track that was seen as inferior to the academic one from the start. Moreover, it contributed to the emergence of the private school system in Ghana, reinforcing socio-economic inequality at the basic school level and making it nearly impossible for public school graduates to easily enter the academic secondary school stream as they competed for places with children from private schools (Dzidza et al. 60, Addae-Mensah et al. 1973). Moreover, education statistics

collated in 1972, found that 21% of private primary school students were named as part of the first thousand best performing students in the country while only 1% of the tuition-free government school students were included in that list (Dzidza et al. 60). This led to the questioning of the quality of the government tuition-free primary schools, and the establishment of the Dzobo Committee on Education in 1973 to review the education system (Dzidza et al. 60). In 1974, the Government White Paper called the *New Structure and Content of Education* (NSCE) was also issued which proposed that a new Junior Secondary School system should be established to replace the deficient middle school system (Kuyini 163).

The 1974 government white paper and the 1973 Dzobo Committee Report proposed a harmonized and extended basic education cycle where all children (irrespective of school type) followed a common basic education curriculum for nine years: six years in primary school and three years in the newly established junior secondary schools (JSS), which will be followed by four years of senior secondary schooling (SSS) (Dzidza et al. 60-61). However, due to further political instability which resulted in the June 1979 and 1981 coups d'état headed by Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings, the 1974 NSCE and the Dzobo Committee's recommendations did not materialize. Coupled with political instability was severe economic hardship as a result of declining world commodity prices and the 1970s oil shocks.

By April 1983, the country succumbed to the first phase of economic austerity[11] measures imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions, having failed to elicit the support of the Soviet Union (Little 12). This economic austerity further relegated the focus on the Dzobo Committee recommendations to the background, as the Economic Recovery Program (ERP)-- and later the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)-- encouraged the removal of government subsidies in the

[11] That is, the 'infamous' Structural Adjustment Programs by the World Bank and the IMF.

education sector, the increased privatization of education and the introduction of user fees; almost immediately, educational infrastructure started to further deteriorate and education quality declined as government GDP allocation to education fell from 6.4% in 1976 to 1.7% and real levels of financing fell by two-thirds (Dzidza et al. 61, National Education Forum 9, Donkor 1997). At this point, the government was no longer able to construct, complete or maintain educational facilities across the country due to severe constraints on its resources (National Education Forum 9). Also, the depletion of the foreign exchange reserve heavily impacted the government's ability to purchase textbooks and other learning materials for the schools and government arrears in teachers' salaries led to a mass exodus of teachers to Europe, North America and Nigeria (Dzidza et al. 61-62). Public education became further inaccessible for most Ghanaians (especially poor households) who could not afford to pay the user fees[12], and the gender gap in enrolment and retention begun to worsen over the next decade as the population of female students continued to rapidly decline with their transition from basic education to secondary and higher education (Akyeampong 6, Donkor 203).

The numerous problems in the educational sector prompted the government to return to the Dzobo Committee Report. Simultaneously, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC hereafter) enacted PNDC Law 4 which dissolved the Ghana Education Service Council and the National Council for Higher Education and transferred their powers interim to the PNDC Secretary for Education (Dzidza et al. 62). In 1985, the PNDC government launched the National Education Commission (NEC) to review the educational sector and advise the PNDC Secretary of Education on the Dzobo Committee report (Dzidza et al. 62). Extensive consultations were held across the

[12] The charge of user fees for social services like education and healthcare were implemented almost simultaneously as the restructuring of public sector (the major employer in the country at the time) which had led to massive layoffs and reduced per capita incomes.

country and the NEC produced recommendations which reinforced the 1973 Dzobo Committee findings and recommendations. In September 1987, these reforms were introduced through the PNDC Secretary for Education and Culture without a pilot phase and implemented nationwide to prevent a counter-lobby from vested domestic and external interests (Dzidza et al. 62). These reforms were wide in scope (encompassing the entire education system) and focused on four main areas: The *Structure of Education, Curriculum, Expected Destinations of Graduates from Basic Education, and Finance of Education* (Dzidza et al. 62).

With these reforms, on one hand, education in Ghana was transformed from a purely academic and theoretical one to an academic and skills-oriented system (Dzidza et al. 63, Quist 2003). Also, there was a reduction in pre-university education from 17 years to 12 years, and education was made compulsory for children aged 6 to 14 years. On the other hand, the 1987 Education Reform Programme--which coincided with a national decentralization strategy also encouraged under the SAPs-- resulted in the turn to market-oriented (neoliberal) education policymaking as part of the World Bank/IMF demands for cost recovery and reduced public spending in education (Kuyini 163). Thus, the reforms further reinforced the widening inequalities in educational access under the pretext of rationalizing government spending, increasing government revenue savings, and encouraging private sector participation in education. This turn to a market-oriented education system has a vital role to play in the current situation under study. In 2008, a new Education Act was enacted to replace the 1961 Education Act. Following the introduction of this new Act, education management was further devolved to the District Assemblies to complement the 1993 Local Government Act No. 462, and secondary education was briefly changed to four years, only to be reverted in 2009 back to a three year structure by a new government (UNESCO-IBE 2010).

Also, two years of Kindergarten (pre-primary) education were added to the free and compulsory education policy making education compulsory from age 4 to 14 years (UNESCO-IBE 2010).

1.2.4. Education in the contemporary context

The current education system is organized on a six-three-three-four (6-3-3-4) structure representing six years of primary education, three years of Junior High School, three years of Senior High School, and four years of tertiary education (Adu-Gyamfi et al. 159). At the end of Junior High School, students sit for the national Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), after which they transition to various secondary schools based on their school choices and their B.E.C.E grades. Students with high BECE grades (aggregate 6 to 10, with aggregate 6 being the highest) are channeled to elite schools while students with aggregate 15 to 30 are normally channeled into middle strata and lower performing public SHSs, some private SHSs, and vocational and technical institutions. This suggests a continuity between educational policies implemented now and those implemented in the 1960s following the Kwapong Committee's report. At the end of the third year of senior high school, all students take the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination[13] (WASSCE) to graduate. Successful students can then pursue tertiary education at a Polytechnic, Teachers' Training College, or any of the public and private universities and university colleges in the country. Presently, Ghana has 22,052 Kindergartens, 22,289 primary schools, 14,767 Junior High Schools, 872 Senior High Schools, and 212 tertiary institutions including teachers' training colleges, colleges of agriculture, nursing training colleges, polytechnics and private and public universities (National Accreditation Board 2018, Nyabor 2017).

[13] Formerly the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination or S.S.C.E, the West African Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) is a regional examination taken by five English-speaking West African countries namely, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Liberia.

1.2.5. Secondary Education in Context

Structure

In Ghana, there are both public and private senior secondary schools. Interestingly, through the primary data collection exercise I found that the public SHSs are regarded as superior to their private counterparts, which is a deviation from the perception at the elementary level in Ghana and secondary schooling elsewhere in the West where private institutions are upheld as the 'golden standard'. Nonetheless, international private secondary schools (i.e. those teaching an international curriculum such as IB or A-level) are in a league of their own. Not only are public schools differentiated from their private counterparts, but there is also a differentiation (both formal and informal) among the public schools themselves.

Since independence, schools have been classified into top-ranked "Government" and "Assisted" schools versus lower-ranked "Assisted Day Schools", "Encouraged Schools" and "Ghana Educational Trust Schools" (Foster 1963). Also, MOE, the GES and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) have often classified the schools based on their performance in annual WASSCE performance into "High WASSCE pass rates", "Average WASSCE pass rates", and "Low WASSCE pass rates". Simultaneously, Ghanaian public SHSs are classified according to gender— "boys", "girls" and "co-ed/mixed" schools—and according to residential status such as "Boarding", "Day" and "Day and Boarding" schools. Each classification scheme has produced its own connotations, sometimes leading to a de facto hierarchical system and the vouched prestige of certain types of schools over others. For the purposes of this study, only public SHSs were considered to control for confounding variables such as differences in funding type. Currently, there are 872 Senior High Schools in the country, 36% of which are private schools (Nyabor 2017b).

Policies

The New Structure and Content of Education (NSCE) proposed in 1974 and corroborated by the National Education Commission report in 1985, established the three-year senior secondary school system (Dzidza et al. 60-62). In 1991, the Community Secondary Schools Construction Project, a $14.7 million project with funding support from the World Bank, led to the establishment of an additional 140 secondary schools to provide secondary education to underserved rural areas (World Bank 1991). The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GET Fund) Act or Act 581 was introduced in the year 2000 to provide financing to education at all levels with regards to the provision and maintenance of infrastructure, educational facilities and learning materials, as well as scholarships and student loans at the second-cycle and tertiary levels (GET Fund Act 2000 2). The establishment of this fund saw rapid infrastructural developments in secondary schools across the country, including all the sampled schools in the present study. In 2008, the new Education Act (Act 778) was enacted by the then incumbent New Patriotic Party (NPP) government under John Agyekum Kufuor which extended the duration of secondary schooling from three years to four years in line with a series of recommendations from various committees like the De-Heer-Amissah committee of 1994 and the 1999 National Stakeholders Forum on Education (Fobih 2010). However, with a change in government following the 2008 elections, the successive government of Prof J.E Attah-Mills and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) reverted the duration of secondary schooling back to the three years, making it the third time in history that the duration of secondary school education had been altered with each successive change of government (Adu-Gyamfi et al. 159).[14]

[14] Under the leadership of the National Redemption Council of Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, second cycle education was four years but with the coup and subsequent takeover of the PNDC, the duration was changed from four to three years. The second amendment to the duration of secondary schooling was made by the New Patriotic Party in 2008

In September 2017, the incumbent NPP government under the leadership of President Akuffo-Addo launched the Free Senior High School Program with the aim to reduce cost barriers to secondary education, expand infrastructure, improve equity and quality in education, and promote the development of employable skills (Free SHS Policy 2018). In addition, the World Bank in collaboration with the Ghanaian government has introduced the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP) to increase access to senior secondary education in underserved districts and improve education quality in lower performing public SHSs in the country (World Bank 2017). The introduction of these policies in recent times signifies the acknowledgement by the government and the international donor community that the sub-sector needs much attention and support to overcome the challenges that riddle it.

1.3. Outline of subsequent chapters

Following this introductory chapter is a literature review chapter (Chapter 2) which provides: 1) the conceptual framework of the study, including a critical description of the debates surrounding the concept of social capital, 2) an analysis of the relationship between education and development in the Global North, 3) an examination of the relationship between education and development in the Global South, and 4) a review of the literature on the relationship between education and social capital. In Chapter 3, I outline the methodology of the study and provide a brief subchapter on my practice of research reflexivity. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the analysis of the data obtained in the field and the critical discussion of the various emerging themes, while Chapter 5 focuses on the application of the conceptual framework of social capital theory to the major theme of strategic engagement with external actors. In Chapter 6, I outline the conclusive

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as highlighted above and the third amendment followed suit in 2009 when the New Democratic Party came to power (Adu-Gyamfi et al. 159).

findings, the theoretical and practical implications and the limitations of the study and provide a few recommendations on points of departure for future research.

Chapter Two: A Literature Review

2.1. Education and Development

In 2018, the World Bank released its first ever World Development Report dedicated solely to education, which highlights the continuing acknowledgement of education as both an input and output of development. According to the Report, well-delivered education (i.e. where actual learning takes place and not merely the act of schooling) offers several benefits such as employment opportunities and better health outcomes for individuals, while triggering poverty reduction, innovation, and strengthened institutions at the meso and macro levels of society (3). Likewise, on its website the World Bank notes that: "Education is a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability" (worldbank.org 2018). This statement reinforces the consensus that education is a crucial variable that leads to or fosters several favorable outcomes such as individual and community empowerment and social cohesion. Also, it shows that the discussion on the relationship between education and development continues to be a vibrant and mostly positive one. In this subsection, the literature that speaks on the relationship between education and development in both the Global North and the Global South will be reviewed to highlight the continued focus on education in policy and academia, and the significance of pursuing a study of this nature.

2.1.1. Education and Development in the Global North

As Clive Harber (2014) notes, when we refer to the relationship between development and education, we are really referring to the role that education plays or contributes to development (11). In the literature on international development, the term 'development' in the post-1945 sense has often been popularly operationalized or measured in various ways: as economic growth, as

poverty alleviation, as capabilities (or human development), and/or sometimes as personal and communal well-being. Also, the reference to education in mainstream development circles has often been to formal education and not informal or indigenous education even though the latter equally plays a key role in development (Harber 16).

Post-World War II[15], mainstream development actors such as the Bretton Woods Institutions have often equated the term ‘development’ to economic growth; a connotation that has often been critiqued for its narrow purely economistic and neoliberal leaning, and its disregard of the social and political dimensions of societal progress and well-being. Although this study recognizes that ‘development’ is a multidimensional process of societal change and transformation, for the purposes of reviewing the literature the relationship between education and development (defined in this narrow way as economic growth) will be explored. Three seminal studies ought to be referred to when examining this relationship in the Global North: Barro (1991), Mankiw et al. (1992), and Levine and Renelt (1992). Barro (1991) regresses the growth rates of various variables identified in previous theoretical models (such as primary and secondary education gross enrolments in 1960) and contends that under “favorable” circumstances, initial levels of human capital[16] have a positive correlation with economic growth. In a similar study, Mankiw et al. (1992) employ an econometric analysis of the determinants of economic growth[17] such as physical and human capital and arrive at the contention that, education (in combination with labor force investments and physical capital) can account for almost 80% of the variation in

[15] By post-World War II period, I am referring to the era of development orthodoxy or policies that have been pursued by the major multilateral international organizations since the 1950s in the name of developing the ‘underdeveloped’ countries or the Global South.
[16] ‘Initial Human capital levels’ was operationalized by 1960 primary and secondary school enrollments across 98 countries globally.
[17] This is a modified version of the neoclassical Solow model where capital is distinguished into physical and human capital.

economic growth witnessed across their cross-country data sample. Barro (1991) and Mankiw et al. (1992) thus suggest a positive correlation between education and development. Conversely, Levine and Renelt (1992) do not find a statistically significant and positive correlation between education and economic growth in their study but they do not necessarily rule out its overall contribution. Since these studies were published, several follow-up studies (see also Benhabib and Spiegel 1994, Kreuger and Lindahl 2001, Bils and Klenow 2000) have attempted to test the validity of this relationship with varied insights, regression models and conclusions.

The issue with such early studies like Barro (1991) and Mankiw et al.'s (1992) is that they focused primarily on how years of schooling contributes to economic growth. However, a focus on the number of years of educational attainment as the main measurement does not necessarily take into consideration how the quality or type of education that is being provided can enhance or reduce the total factor productivity (TFP) in a country. As Akyeampong (2007) and Bils and Klenow (2000) aptly note, it appears that it is not the number of years of schooling that necessarily leads to economic growth. Akyeampong (2007) for instance posits that science, math and technical education leads to the attainment of technological know-how which is essential for the increased productivity and innovation that drives economic growth (8). Likewise, Bils and Klenow (2001) posit that, to say that education directly leads to economic growth is an overestimation of the significance of its impact considering that other confounding variables, such as government labor policies or even trade liberalization, can equally contribute to or hinder economic growth (1161). For Bils and Klenow (2001), it is evident that the contribution of education to economic growth is a rather long term event that occurs once labor supply into the market increases in a decade or two post-initial enrolment (1160-1161). Although education and economic growth are positively correlated with each other, education does not directly cause

economic growth; however, if the education provided is of a form that meets the technological needs of the labor market and is supported by the right policies, it may contribute (to an extent) to the level of technical know-how needed to drive productivity in a specific economy. One must not forget that the reverse could also hold true that economic growth rather triggers more educational attainment when people anticipate more gains from the labor market if they have more years of schooling. Indeed, it is only when the term 'development' is defined in a broader/alternative non-economic sense that this positive relationship between education and development may hold.

Besides deliberating on the correlation between education and economic growth, education has been regarded in the literature as crucial for development in the Global North (as well as the Global South) since it promotes social cohesion and fosters peace and stability. For instance, Gradstein and Justman (2006) have pointed out some of the social benefits of education (specifically public schooling) such as how it promotes social cohesion and reduces "the potential for re-distributional conflicts among distinct social groups" (1192). For such scholars, the peace that education affords fosters a conducive environment for development to thrive.

Also, education has also been treated as a potentially useful tool for poverty alleviation and for bridging the socio-economic gap between communities and between groups of individuals. We see a turn to this expanded understanding of development beyond economic growth even with mainstream actors like the World Bank and the United Nations in their World Development and Human Development Reports respectively. However, like the previous correlation, the suggested relationship between education, poverty alleviation and inequality is heavily scrutinized as well considering that the unfavorable reverse (i.e. education promotes socio-economic inequalities) can also hold true in certain circumstances. For instance, several scholars have noted how the American public school system can at times reinforces socio-economic

inequalities instead of overcoming them (Welner and Carter 2013, Ladson-Billings 2013). Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006, 2013) for example describes how the American public school system promotes "opportunity gaps" between students which in turn leads to the differences or inequalities in academic outcomes we witness; she posits that if this is not attended to, then America will be compelled to deal with an "educational debt" that will cost it more resources and crucial capital to resolve (Ladson-Billings 2013). In this way, education can advance efforts to alleviate poverty and socio-economic inequalities or it can reinforce disparities between individuals and social groups.

2.1.2. Education and Development in the Global South

There is an enormous amount of literature from various disciplines (but especially in economics) that focus on the relationship between education and development in the Global South as well. At various times, the literature has emphasized the potentially positive and significant effect of education on economic development and poverty alleviation in low-to middle-income countries. For instance, Kremer and Holla posit that in low-to middle-income countries, education forms a major part of national investment out of which a substantial share of returns such as economic growth and national development can be expected (514). Likewise, the World Bank (2009) in *Accelerating Catch-Up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* and Schultz (1992) have argued in favor of education and human development in low-to middle-income countries, asserting that it contributes to building up the requisite labour force and expertise needed for infrastructural development, service delivery and industrialization. Bloom, Canning and Chan (2006) have taken these findings further, arguing that an increase in the average years of schooling, especially to the tertiary level of education, has a significant influence on economic growth, increasing it by 0.6% for every increase in general schooling among the adult population. Although Glewwe et al. (2014) find these predictions of education as a driver for economic growth

to hold true on average across the globe, they contend that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) this is not necessarily the case. Instead, they posit that economic growth due to returns on education in SSA is low as a result of the low quality of education that students gain (388). Their findings, corroborated by Bennell and Acheampong (2007), suggests that only quality, relevant education can be said to be positively correlated with economic growth.

Simultaneously, scholars like Rashmi Arora (2012) have argued that there is a correlation between economic growth and education such that 'inclusive' economic growth would lead to improvement in the investments made into education which will in turn contribute to human development. This assertion suggests that the relationship between education and development is a 'two-way' or mutually reinforcing endeavor whereby education contributes to economic growth (development) and vice versa. Moreover, an improvement in the equality of access to education and the overall development of human capital has been recorded as being positively correlated with greater economic growth in low-to middle-income states (Mitra et al. 2014, Glewwe et al. 2014, Hanushek and Woessmann 2008).

Furthermore, in the literature a premium is placed on education as a source of direct benefits to individuals. Duflo (2001) and Psacharopoulos & Patrinos (2004) for instance, argue that not only does the state benefit from its investment in education, but individuals also accrue direct benefits from education such as an increase in earnings which directly contributes to poverty alleviation at the micro level in low-to middle-income countries. Capabilities theorists like Amartya Sen (1999), Martha Nussbaum (2004) and Ingrid Robeyns (2016) also recognize the primacy of education and human development since it affords individuals the opportunities to discover their 'capabilities' and translate those capabilities to 'functionings' that will be beneficial to themselves, their communities and their countries. Moreover, Sen (1999, p.4) and Harber (2014,

p.88) suggest that formal education is a necessary (albeit insufficient) condition for the realization of democratic political values and practices since it contributes to the emergence of “modern, bureaucratic norms and behaviours” which promote good governance and access to human rights and capabilities. Recognizing the importance of education for Ghana’s national development, governments past and present have devoted considerable (albeit at times insufficient) resources to the sector through the implementation of programs like the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) program and the Free SHS program.

All in all, although there are still debates in the literature about which exact variables or facets of education directly contribute to or foster development (defined in the aforementioned ways), in general, the potentially beneficial correlation between education and development is not ruled out. Irrespective of the supposed positive benefits of education mentioned above, Harber posits that “we need to be cautious about the assumed automatic benefits of formal education for development” (18). Indeed, it is not automatic or direct, but rather, education is a contributory factor to development. Considering the aforementioned arguments in favour of education and the perpetual debates about its benefits to development, it is apt to assert that a study of this nature is both timely and relevant for the context for several reasons. Foremost, it is timely because it engages with a topic that continues to be at the forefront of both government and donor policy, as evidenced by the WDR 2018 and especially within this age of the SDGs. Moreover, this study is relevant because it deals with issues of challenges to educational equity and quality which have been a top priority for most (if not all) Ghanaian governments to date.

2.2. Social capital: Theoretical debates

“*...social capital is social and useful. It is ingrained in social relations and facilitated or constrained by them*” (Lin 2001, p. xi)

In both quantitative and qualitative research, the concept of social capital has often been used over the years as a theoretical and explanatory concept to account for social hierarchy and inequality in class-based societies (Bourdieu 1986), the rational actions of individuals with regards to group resources (Becker 1964), and favorable levels of civic engagement (Putnam 1995), just to name a few. L.J Hanifan (1916) is perhaps the first author to loosely define the concept as "good will, fellowship, mutual sympathy, and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit" (Aldrich and Meyer 256). Likewise, Loury (1977), Ben-Porath (1980), Granovetter (1973), and Becker (1964) have also alluded to the kinds of benefits that can be accrued from social networks/ties to the individual (as well as the community) in their writings. However, the term was arguably made more articulate and popular by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his seminal writing, *Forms of Capital* (1986). The term gained yet even more currency in the contemporary era due to Robert Putnam's (1995) articulation of the concept in his article *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (and later, into a book of a similar name in 2000). Besides Putnam, Coleman (1988,1990), Flap (1988,1991), Burt (1992), Portes (1998) and Lin (2001) have equally advanced their own understandings or conceptualizations of social capital in its various dimensions and applications. This section will be dedicated to an examination of the different definitions of and theoretical debates on social capital, the alternative ways in which the concept has been measured or operationalized, the various types of social capital, and how the concept has been applied in various scenarios and contexts. Alongside, the conceptual framework for the study will be described.

Social Capital: Definitions, Critiques and Theoretical Debates

When the concept of 'social capital' is evoked, two main schools of thought emerge on what level it is produced and to whom the benefits accrue. While the first school of thought

(Burt 1992, Flap 1988 and Becker 1964) focuses on individuals' production of and access to resources that they have invested into their social networks, the second school of thought (Coleman and Putnam) conceptualizes social capital as a collective asset or "network-based resource" that can be accrued and be beneficial to the group (Song 2013, Lin 2001). The first school of thought thus assumes that social capital is embodied in the individual (like human capital or cultural capital is[18]) and it allows the individual to access both personal (tangible resources that the individual owns him/herself) and social resources (actual and potential resources that an individual gains access to through social networks or ties) when seeking certain favourable outcomes such as finding a job (Lin 21). Thus, Flap (1988) for instance defines social capital as 'mobilized social resources' that are determined by the number of people in one's social network who are willing and prepared to help when called on, the strength or depth of such relationships, and the resources that these persons bring to the table. Conversely, the second school of thought is concerned with how particular groups produce and reproduce certain collective assets which yields resources that can benefit every individual in the group (Lin 22). Thus, for this group, social capital is a collectively-accumulated and collectively-owned form of capital that drives mutually beneficial exchange in the group. This conception is advanced by Coleman (1988, 1990) and Putnam (1993, 1995) for instance. Arguably, Bourdieu's social capital may be distinguished into a school of thought of its own given the fact that though it shares a similarity with the second school of thought with its recognition that social capital is produced and reproduced by social networks or collectivities, it has distinct feature of allocating outcomes and benefits to both the individual and

[18] Originally espoused by Adam Smith and reiterated in contemporary understanding by economists like Johnson (1960), Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964/1993), the term "human capital" refers to the form of capital that rests within individual laborer or "all the acquired and useful abilities of the population in a country" (Lin 2001 p.8). Bourdieu (1986) defines cultural capital (what Lin (2001) describes as an alternative concept to human capital) as a form of capital that is institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications and can be transferred by the dominant group intergenerationally, often through "pedagogic action" (243-244).

the group. A deeper examination of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam's conceptualizations of social capital is apt at this point.

In the *Forms of Capital* (1986), Bourdieu critiques the preoccupation of classical economists with economic capital as the sole source of capital in the capitalist system; he asserts that besides economic capital, various forms of non-economic capital exist such as cultural capital, symbolic capital and social capital. According to Lin (2001), this assertion places Bourdieu in the school of neo-capital theorists[19] who are concerned with capital that rests in individuals and collectives besides economic or physical capital. Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word" (248-249). This definition implies that social capital is a form of capital that is accumulated by and within a group, which can be drawn on by either individuals or the group as a whole, as and when they need it. This is evidenced by his statement that: "The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected" (Bourdieu 249). Furthermore, his definition of social capital suggests that relationships between group members are mutually reciprocal and so members benefit so long as they also contribute to the benefit of others. Hence, these relationships or networks "are more or less enacted and so maintained and reinforced, in exchanges" which create

[19] Neo-capital theorists represent a set of academics who move beyond the classical conceptualization of capital as solely economic or the explanation of social exchange and relations as solely determined by the market, to embrace the idea of how capital rests within individuals (i.e. human capital) or collectivities or groups (cultural capital), and how the structures of society constrain or enable certain outcomes or actions (See Lin 2001, p.8-15).

a set of “obligations that are usable in the more or less long term” (Bourdieu 249-254). Moreover, his reference to the term “recognition” in this definition suggests that social capital brings with it the benefit of a sense identity and belonging for the individual (Granovetter 1973).Thus, for Bourdieu social capital is a “network-based resource” that emerges from social relations and can be subsequently accrued or accessed by individuals and the group (the dominant culture in this case) (Pinxten and Lievens 1098).

Given that his reference to various forms of capital is made with regards to an attempt to explain why social relations are the way they are in a class-based society, he posits that social capital (and cultural capital) to an extent accounts for the inequality in outcomes in education and the market, as well as the unequal power relations between the dominant class and the exploited class (Bourdieu 1986). This reference to a class-based society suggests not only Marxist inclinations, but it also shows that social capital can have both positive and negative effects depending on the nature of the group and their position in society. Therefore, for Bourdieu the education system (if not clearly institutionalized) actually serves to reproduce inequality and the entrenchment of certain cliques or social groups instead of providing equal and probability-sanctioned opportunities for all. This implication is evident when he concludes that: “As an instrument of reproduction capable of disguising its own function, the scope of the educational system tends to increase, and together with this increase is the unification of the market in social qualifications which gives rights to occupy rare positions” (254-255). Social capital is convertible into the three alternative forms of capital (cultural, economic and symbolic) and vice versa (Bourdieu 1986). However, unlike its economic counterpart, social capital is not instantly convertible into goods and services, and its benefits are accrued over a “more subtle economy of time” (252).

While Bourdieu (1986) covers a lot of ground in his work on social capital, several critiques have been raised against him. Some argue that he fails to mention how social capital should be measured or operationalized (Aldrich and Meyer 2015, Pinxten and Lievens 2014). Lin (2001) criticizes him for being a little unrealistic in his assumption that 'denseness' and 'closure' are required in social networks for social capital to emerge and thrive. For Lin (2001), this denies the proposition from social network theory that bridges (i.e. the relations between dissimilar social groups) are equally important networks which can provide access to benefits that are unavailable in one's primary social network (27). Another critique levelled against Bourdieu's social capital, which complements the previous assertion, is that it is rooted in a relatively static idea of social hierarchy which assumes that the dominant class will continue to reproduce itself perpetually by the maintenance of dense and closed networks (Field 2008, Dunedin 2014). While there is some truth to this critique, Bourdieu does acknowledge that primordial ties can decline, and he seems to be more interested in the impact of structure/institutions on inequality and social reproduction as opposed to the perpetration of inequality by specific families or groups.

Besides Bourdieu, James S. Coleman (1988, 1990) cannot be ignored when discussing social capital. Unlike Bourdieu, Coleman (1998) does not focus on a class-based social structure or inequality but rather, he is interested in the interaction between rational choice theory and social capital with regards to structural constraints and individual choices/actions. Drawing on rational choice theory (minus the "extreme individualistic premises that often accompany it" he states), Coleman (1988) defines social capital as "...a particular kind of resource available to an actor", which consists of "some aspect of social structures, and facilitate certain actions of actors-- whether persons or corporate actors--within the structure"; for him, social capital is "defined by its function" (1998 p.S98, 1990 p.302). Coleman (1990) illustrates his argument using examples such

as the negotiation that transpires in wholesale diamond markets, "clandestine 'study circles'" among South Korean students, as well as how Parent-teacher associations (P.T.As) and other social organizations allow parents and students to achieve personal goals, and how they offer resources to the school and all administrators, teachers, students, and parents affiliated with the school (302-304). His definition implies that social capital it is comprised of two things: one, social structures, and two, how these social structures constrain or enable individual actors' actions. Moreover, it shows that social capital does not rest in particular actors or the mechanisms of production but rather, it is produced by the relations between and among various individuals (S98). Furthermore, like Bourdieu, Coleman (1988) notes that social capital can be useful to one actor and at the same time, useless to another; this understanding of the ambivalence of the concept is similar and complementary to Bourdieu's (1986) description of the negative and positive sides of social capital.

Furthermore, like Bourdieu, Coleman posits that 'dense' and 'closed networks' such as family, community or religious organizations are crucial to providing the kind of "insurance that is necessary to facilitate the transactions in the market" (S99). This assertion has resulted in the critique (earlier on advanced against Bourdieu's work by Lin 2001) that he creates the impression that dense or close networks are required for social capital to be produced and reproduced. However, while certain groups rely on dense and closed networks to produce capital, it is equally possible for open or less dense networks to produce and reproduce social capital with a similar (or even varied) outcome from that contained within dense and closed networks. In addition, Coleman's (1998) assertion that social capital is "defined by its function" is critiqued by Lin (2001) for being a bit tautological because it conflates the causal explanation for an actor's action with the effect or outcome of that action, when in fact, the causal and effectual nature of

social capital should be measured or operationalized separately (28). However, I slightly disagree with his critique. Judging by Lin's (2001, p.3) own definition of capital as both an "outcome of production" and the "causal factor in a production", as well as Siisiäinen's (2000) assertion that the "forms of social capital are self-reinforcing and cumulative by nature", it is fair to say that social capital can indeed be both a causal factor and an effect/outcome because it is self-reinforcing and it involves a 'feedback loop' whereby the benefits reaped from social capital can be reinvested into the group in order to produce more social capital. Nonetheless, I agree with his rationale to avoid confusion or circular definitions by conflating the two.

Another scholar who is associated with the second school of thought and deserves mention is Robert D. Putnam (1993, 1995). Through a comparative study of social and political organizations in Northern and Southern Italy and the governmental reform of 1976-77, Putnam (in *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* 1993) arrives at the central hypothesis that a region's "successful accumulation of social capital" (in this case Northern Italy) explains why it may have "a well-functioning economic system and a high level of political integration" or 'civic community' (Siisiäinen 2000, Putnam 1993). He defines social capital as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 167). His definition suggests an implicit operationalization of social capital (moral obligations and norms, social values (especially trust) and social networks of citizens' activity)—something that is not explicitly in Bourdieu's work (Putnam 1993). According to him, while horizontal organizations in Northern Italy facilitated trust, cooperation and mutual reciprocity, in the South, the vertical nature of social organizations created hierarchies which have negatively impacted 'civic community' and by extension, future political and economic development. In *Bowling Alone* (1995), Putnam applied this hypothesis to the United

States of America, where he argues that the American society has lost the civic characteristics that Tocqueville extolled years earlier and as such, Americans are 'bowling alone' (Putnam 1995, Fine 18). His hypothesis here is that the decline in activities like voter turnout and social club membership in the US reflects a decline in civic and social engagement, which essentially signifies a decline in social capital in the American society (Putnam 1995, Carpiano 166).

Like his predecessors, Putnam's articulation of the concept of social capital has been critiqued several times. For example, Siisiäinen (2000) critiques Putnam's (1993) description of the origin of social trust as being limited to only the kind of trust that can emerge among voluntary associations (and not necessarily complex post-industrial/postmodern societies) for being unable to adequately explain the emergence of distrust and counter social movements and voluntary associations that challenge consensus, as well as the conflicts that (may) emerge between civil society and the state (4-5). Moreover, he fails to take into consideration the fact that even in horizontal voluntary associations, hierarchies may emerge, power relations will be manifested, and consensus and cooperation will not be elicited every time (Portes 1998). This suggests that, unlike Coleman (1988, 1990) and Bourdieu (1990), Putnam fails to acknowledge that social capital has an ambivalent nature of being able to confer both positive and negative externalities. While Putnam shies away from the conflicts and struggles inherent in social relations, Bourdieu by the very nature of his focus on class-based social relations and inequality, tackles this issue head on. Lastly, Carpiano (2006) has also critiqued Putnam for defining what he calls "social cohesion" (i.e. the processes or mechanisms such as trust and social ties through which social capital is created) and not social capital itself (168); in addition, Carpiano criticizes Putnam for being inconsistent in his definition of social capital since he notes that it has changed with each subsequent publication of Putnam's work between 1995, 1998, and 2000 (167). Regardless of the critiques, Putnam's (1993,

1995) work is useful because it extends the role of social capital from a focus on the micro (individuals) and meso (community) levels to the nation state setting.

Alternative definitions have been advanced by various scholars with varied disciplinary and methodological commitments. Lin (2001) for instance defines social capital as, “embedded resources” rooted in social networks and social structures that “enhance the outcomes of actions” or “which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action” (19-24). It requires “an investment in social relationships through which resources of other actors can be accessed and borrowed” (Lin 19). Aldrich (2012) has also defined social capital as “the resources available to communities that facilitate collective action” (400). Regardless of the alternative definitions, two basic tenets run across in the social capital debate: one, that social capital is produced by social networks or ties, and two, that it does have an effect (whether positive or negative) on individuals, groups and how society functions. This observation is supported by Yoshimichi Sato (2013) who also notes that while it is difficult to propose a single definition of social capital, it is evident that social networks lie at the ‘core’ of the concept (1). It is further supported by Lin’s (2001) assertion that the various schools of thought on social capital are “committed to the view that it is the interacting members who make the maintenance and reproduction of this social asset possible” (24). Therefore, irrespective of the definition it is evident that social networks give rise to and foster the reproduction of social capital, and social capital is instrumental to the success and progress of every society, albeit it can have negative impacts as well.

Types and Forms of social capital

Generally, social capital has been distinguished into three main types: bonding social capital, bridging social capital and linking social capital (Aldrich and Meyer 2015, Aldrich 2012,

Small 2010, Szreter & Woolcock 2004). *Bonding social capital* refers to the emotionally close connections between individuals (such as family or friends) which results in tight bonds and is commonly characterized by high levels of similarity (homophily) in demographics, attitudes and the availability of and access to information and resources (Mcpherson, Smith-Lovin, and Coom 2001, Adler and Kwon 2002). It is essential for providing personal support and social assistance and it is often the first point of contact for every individual when a need arises (Aldrich and Meyer 2015, 258). *Bridging social capital* refers to the loose connections between acquaintances or individuals which run across classes or races, characterized by diversity in demography, and which provides access to new information and varied resources which can help an individual to progress in society (Aldrich and Meyer 258). While this type of social capital is considered as 'weak ties' by some scholars, it equally has the capability to provide opportunities that bonding social capital may not necessarily have (Aldrich and Meyer 2015, Granovetter 1973). For example, one's family members or immediate friends may not have access to the kind of connections that you may need to find a job, but some acquaintances may be endowed with such information or ties which you would not have known about had it not been for the loose connection to the acquaintance. Quintessential examples of sources of bridging social capital are "civic and political institutions...and sports and interest clubs along with educational and religious groups" (Aldrich and Meyer 259, Small 2010). The third type of social capital is *Linking social capital*. Linking social capital refers to the kind of social capital "which connects regular citizens with those in power". This type of social capital is defined as "embodying norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal, or institutionalized power or authority gradients in society" (Aldrich and Meyer 259, Szreter and Woolcock 2004). Thus, this type of social capital is produced between groups or individual actors

with low relational proximity and a relatively weaker relationship in comparison to the networks that produce bonding and bridging social capital.

Carpiano (2006) has also distinguished between four forms of social capital that are made available by social networks: social support, social leverage, informal social control and community organization participation. *Social support* is a form of social capital that "individuals can draw upon to cope with daily problems"; it is similar to bonding social capital as it represents the individual's core support group. *Social leverage* is a form of social capital that enables community residents to gain access to information (e.g. about job opportunities) and to advance socio-economically (Carpiano 170). "The ability of residents to collectively maintain social order and keep the neighborhood safe from criminal and delinquent activity" is what he refers to as *Informal social control*, while *community organization participation* focuses on formally organized collective activities by residents to address neighborhood issues (Carpiano 170). According to Carpiano (2006), distinguishing between these four forms allows the researcher to distinguish social capital and avoid conflation of its processes, causal factors and outcomes.

In addition, Coleman (1988) posits that social capital can take three main forms: 'obligations, expectations and trustworthiness of structures', 'information channels', and 'norms and effective sanctions' (S102-S105). This articulation is in line with his idea that social capital is basically functional. Lastly, Bourdieu (1986) notes that social capital can be institutionalized in the form of "social obligations" or connections, and he emphasizes that, although social capital is not easily reducible to monetary value, it can be transformed or 'converted' into any of the other forms of capital such as cultural capital for instance and vice versa (243). Deducing from the above, it is fair to say that there is the consensus that social capital does not take on a single form, but it

can be one thing for a particular group, and a different thing for another, each form with its own benefits.

With this in mind, Bob Edwards and Michael W. Foley (1997) in *Social Capital, Civil Society and Contemporary Democracy* posit that the concept of social capital raises two key issues: one, that not all social capital is created equally, and two, that social capital is not equally available to everyone. The first key issue simply suggests that social capital is not of the same value for everyone since the various social ties or group members that collaborate to produce social capital are located in diverse socio-economic positions and as such, bring different values of resources (tangible and intangible) to the table when contributing to its production (Edwards and Foley 1997). Secondly, their assertion that social capital is not equally available to everyone simply implies that there are differences in the ability of individuals or groups to access specific types of social capital; they posit that this is caused by the limitations that are set by geographic and social isolation (Edwards and Foley 1997). This assertion introduces the dimension of inequality in value and access to social capital, in addition to the concept's positive and negative dimensions.

Measuring social capital

Just like the issues that emerge when an attempt is made to define or conceptualize social capital, an attempt at measuring social capital has its fair share of divergent views. One set of proxies that has been deployed when measuring social capital is "*attitudinal and cognitive*" measurements. This measurement is often concerned with estimating the levels of trust or social capital in society through surveys designed to track the general level of trust in the society or the levels of trust that certain social groups have in relation to other groups or actors such as national governments and government officials (Aldrich and Meyer 257). An example of this measurement model is the Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital (SC-IQ) which

focuses on generating quantitative data on six dimensions of social capital available in developing countries by drawing on larger household surveys like the Living Standards Measurement Survey; the six dimensions covered are: ‘groups and networks’, ‘trust and solidarity’, ‘collective action and cooperation’, ‘information and communication’, ‘social cohesion and inclusion’, and ‘empowerment and political action’ (Grootaert et al. 2004). Conversely, others have focused on the “*behavioral manifestations*” of social capital in everyday life. This form of measurement is interested in tracking individuals’ engagement in their communities and their sense of belonging or acceptance in their community or friendship groups (Aldrich and Meyer 257). An example of this measurement model is the National Social Capital Benchmark Community Survey from Harvard University (2000, 2006) which examined the level of civic engagement and social capital in the American society. This study draws loosely on this measurement method to illustrate some of the behavioral manifestations of social capital in the everyday life of public SHSs in Central Region as depicted by their relationships with the P.T.As, alumni associations, political aspirants, and private individuals and businesses[20].

The third means of measurement that has been recently pursued is the use of experimental methods such as lab experiments (example is Cardenas and Carpenter 2008) and field experiments (Levitt and List 2009). Lab experiments often involve either the control of certain proxies of social capital under certain conditions or classical rational choice theory games like Prisoner’s dilemma (Aldrich and Meyer 257). Conversely, field experiments involve studying the participants as close to their natural state as possible with little to no interventions; at times, the natural conditions of the field are kept, or randomized control trials are deployed (Aldrich and

[20] Although the NSCBC Survey has been applied solely to the American context, the behavioural manifestations of social capital that it seeks to measure (such as an individual’s level of engagement with his community) are behaviours that are exhibited in diverse yet similar ways in different contexts. This is why I loosely base my measurement of public SHS’ social capital on the behavioral measurement model.

Meyer 257). These varied measurements and proxies reflect the flexibility of the concept and its applicability and appropriateness for both quantitative and qualitative researchers. However, as Aldrich (2012) notes, while social capital has been applied in several qualitative studies, few quantitative studies (like his study on community resilience and recovery after the 1923 Tokyo earthquake) have been conducted perhaps because of the issue of not having standard proxies or variables to measure the concept. Nonetheless, its ambivalence and flexibility make it a very alluring and potentially useful concept for understanding and explaining various scenarios and outcomes.

Applications of social capital

The concept of social capital has been applied in various instances over the decades. For instance, Bourdieu (1986) illustrates how social (and cultural) capital contributes to inequality in class-based societies, while Burt (1992) demonstrates the benefit of social capital and the strength of weak ties to the individual entrepreneur with regards to business opportunities. Varshney (2001) also highlights the crucial role played by social capital in reducing interethnic violence in India by facilitating communication across ethnic lines, debunking false rumours and enabling the government to successfully execute its peace and security activities. In addition, Putnam (1993) and Knack (2002) underscore its relevance to improving governance, promoting civic engagement, and providing an avenue for government to receive policy feedback, while Aldrich and Meyer (2015) and Aldrich (2012) highlight the importance of social capital to disaster risk management and community disaster recovery and resilience. Also, Carpiano (2006) and Mayer and Rankin (2002) have portrayed the concept as a crucial factor for the success of certain community development projects in the Global North and Global South, while Carmichael et al.

(2015) have also argued that social capital theory serves as an excellent conceptual framework to analyze online social media interactions and digital communities.

In Ghana, the concepts of social capital and social networking have also been applied in diverse ways, but the limitations of space allow me to highlight only a few of them. For instance, Pryor (2005), in his study on rural education in Ghana, highlights the impact of structural and socio-cultural constraints (such as poverty, a gap between institutional expectations and community experiences, and the perception that schooling was not relevant or worthwhile) on community social capital mobilization and involvement in rural education. Hanson (2005) has also examined the role that social networks play when mobilized as an asset to alleviate hardships and navigate the changing urban socio-economic landscape in Koforidua, Ghana. Using the 2001 and 2003 Afrobarometer surveys, Kuenzi (2008) explored the variables which influence of the levels of social capital and political trust in Ghana (and Nigeria) and arrived at the contention that, contrary to the results of previous studies in the Global North and Putnam's assertion that civic participation indicates the level of social capital in the nation-state, in Ghana (and Nigeria) civic engagement and formal education does not determine the level of interpersonal trust but rather, the level of interpersonal/societal trust is highly determined by the level of trust in political institutions. Agyepong et al. (2017) have also highlighted the positive correlation between social capital and the innovativeness and high performance of micro and small businesses in Ghana, while Fenenga et al. (2018) have examined the role of social capital in increasing the likelihood of a person enrolling in Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme.

In the post-Washington consensus era, social capital has equally featured prominently in the World Bank's development thinking and policy-making as well with the bank moving slightly away from traditionally economistic and technical inclinations to include social

factors in its calculations when accounting for the causes or effects of certain phenomena. Fine (2001) however notes that this incorporation of the concept is "serving more to facilitate unchanged economic policies and policy analysis rather than to challenge them", and as such, it is a mere "client-friendly rhetoric" with little influence on changing the underlining orthodoxy of the bank (20). Consequently, he critiques the whole concept of social capital for being pacifist and consensual to the extent that it is unable to adequately challenge and account for the imperfections we see in today's society (Fine 19).

2.3. The Relationship between Education and Social Capital

With regards to education, social capital--in the form of parental expectations, obligations, and social networks within the family, school, and community--has been highlighted as crucial for student success, and it has also been signaled as a contributory factor to the disparities in academic outcomes that we witness in society. As Bourdieu himself states, the "typically functionalist definition of the functions of education ignores the contribution which the educational system makes to the reproduction of the social structure by sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital" (244). For Bourdieu, the differences in academic or educational achievement between children cannot solely be attributed to differences in natural aptitudes but rather, it can also be seen as evidence of the fact that family backgrounds (and the cultural capital they embody) has an immense effect on how the student fares in the educational system; in this way, inequality (to an extent) is generated and transmitted intergenerationally (243-244).

Likewise, Coleman (1988) argues that the "family background" (operationalized into three parts namely, financial capital, human capital and social capital) can influence student success because it offers not only physical resources (like study materials and study space) and a cognitive environment for academic success, but the social capital offered-- in the form of parental

time and effort invested in their children's education-- bolsters intellectual development (S109-S110). In his opinion, "…if the human capital possessed by parents is not complemented by social capital embodied in family relations, it is irrelevant to the child's education growth that the parent has a great deal, or a small amount, of human capital" (S110). Not only does social capital play a crucial role at the micro level, but Ho (2000) has also emphasized the impact of social capital at the institutional level. Through a comparative study of the educational systems of Singapore, Korea, and Hong Kong, Ho (2000) posits that the disciplinary climate and academic norms established by the school community, as well as the mutual trust between the home and school represent major forms of social capital at the institutional level which contribute to the kind of educational outcomes witnessed across these East Asian countries. This is because, social capital does not only create a learning and caring school environment, but it also improves the quality of schooling and reduces inequality of learning outcomes between social-class groups to a considerable extent (Ho 2000). In this way, the relationship between social capital and education is understood in terms of the role that social capital plays in the education sector at both the micro and macro levels.

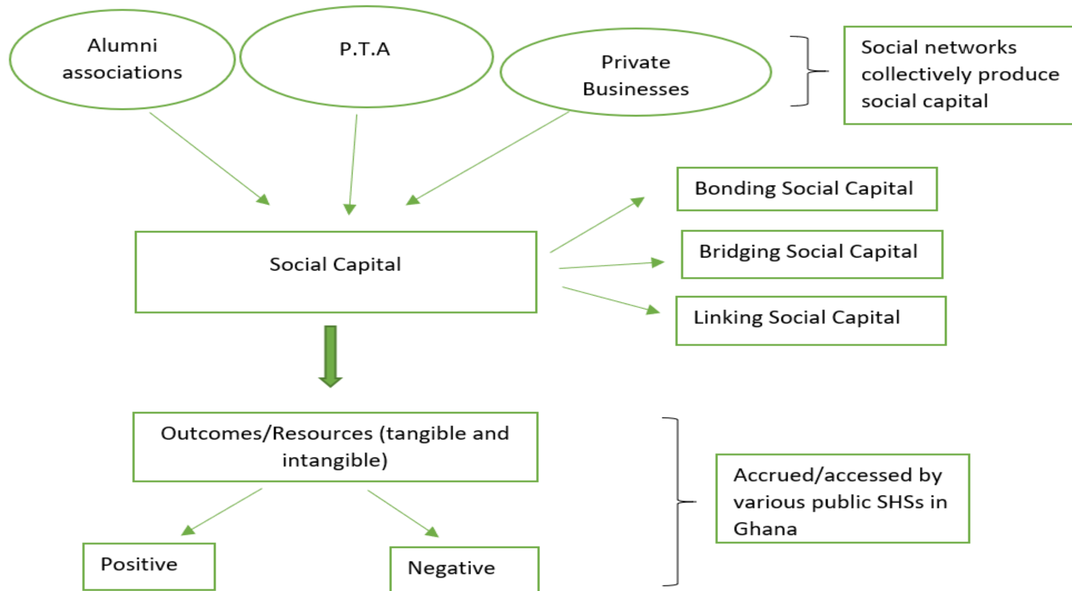
2.4. The Conceptual Framework: Social Capital and Secondary Education

Taking into consideration all that has been discussed above and for the purposes of this study, I define social capital as the sum of embedded resources (tangible and intangible) that are inherent in social networks and on which individuals, communities and groups may draw on outside of the formal state to generate favourable outcomes and/or to remain resilient in the face of structural constraints. This definition takes into consideration the structural dimensions of social capital as illustrated by Lin (2001) and Bourdieu (1986), and how these social structures constrain and enable the actions of individuals and groups and the benefits that they have access to. It also

acknowledges that social capital is not embodied in a single individual, but it is rather, a product of collective efforts and investment of time (Bourdieu 1986). In the present study, the individuals and groups who contribute to the production and reproduction of social capital are the headmasters and headmistresses, the alumni associations, and the P.T.As of the sampled public SHSs, as well as some MPs, political aspirants, private individuals and private businesses. Although it is focused on only the relationships and impacts at the micro and meso levels of society (Bourdieu 1986, Coleman 1988, 1990), and not the nation-state level (Putnam 1993, 1995), it may be applied to other local regions in Ghana and elsewhere, or a sum of the various findings may be extrapolated to test the role of social capital across the entire secondary education sub-sector.

With regards to measurement, this study will draw loosely on the *behavioural manifestations* model to illustrate how the manifestations of social capital in everyday life, such as the financial and in-kind contributions provided by alumni groups and Parent Teacher Associations to schools, indicates the existence of social capital at the micro and meso level, and how that translates into schools' ability to remain resilient (or not) in the face of structural constraints. Furthermore, my conceptual framework of social capital is anchored in Edwards and Foley's (1997) assertion that social capital is not created equally, and it is not available to everyone equally. This assertion is drawn on to help explain why the various alumni networks across Central Region's public SHSs offer different forms and values of resources to their alma mater, and why certain schools are able to mobilize resources from private businesses and organizations, while others are not easily able to do so. In addition, the three common types of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking social capital) are referred to in the analysis of the diverse types of relations that the various schools draw on as they contend with challenges and seek opportunities. Figure 2.4 below depicts the conceptual framework:

Figure 2.4. The conceptual framework



Social capital was chosen for the conceptual framework of this study for two main reasons. Firstly, due to the recurrent theme of alumni and P.T.A support (or lack thereof) that emerges in the primary data, social capital stood out as the best concept to employ to account for the differences in the resilience of the sampled public SHSs. Secondly, given the fact that social capital is a "theory-generating concept" that allows some flexibility for applications across a wide range of scenarios and in both quantitative and qualitative studies, I was convinced that the concept was the best one to employ in this present study (Lin 24). I will now proceed to discuss the research methodology and design that was employed for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As Zina O'Leary (2004) asserts, the nature of one's research question shapes the very nature of one's research methodology and philosophical approaches (90). This study was guided by the research question: What are the challenges and opportunities that Ghanaian public SHSs face as a result of the limited availability of resources in the public secondary school sector and how do they respond to them? This question naturally led me to pursue an exploratory study with the main goal to identify and understand the challenges and opportunities that schools encounter on a daily basis. Through my interpretation of the subjective experiences and perceptions of the research participants, and an understanding of this issue in the particular context of the Central Region, I hope to surface themes and insights that may be helpful to understanding how this issue plays out across the national context.

Contrary to the argument that a researcher's choice of a particular research method or technique carries with it a "cluster of epistemological and ontological commitments" which are absolute and determined, social researchers' choice of methods is often based on practical considerations as opposed to a strict adherence to certain theoretical/methodological stances (Bryman 443). This assertion about practicality is reinforced by Hammersley's (1996) contention that the purpose and context of the research should determine a researchers' selection of methods and not prior methodological and philosophical commitments. Practical considerations of the funding and time constraints on my fieldwork, the context in which I was working in, and the purpose of this study influenced my choice of semi-structured interviews, inventory sheets, and direct observation as my data collection tools. For instance, I opted for semi-structured interviews as my primary data collection tool as opposed to questionnaires because I was interested in generating several useful in-depth insights from the sampled schools within a very limited amount

of time--a need that questionnaires could not have necessarily satisfied within that short period. Although questionnaires have the benefit of offering a wider scope or catchment area, I felt that they may fail to provide the in-depth information I sought, especially if respondents chose to skip questions or provided simple yes/no answers to open-ended questions.

In the subsequent paragraphs, I discuss my rationale for and experience with using the aforementioned tools and my sampling and data analysis techniques; simultaneously, I illustrate how I ensured rigor during my data collection and data analysis processes. Also, I discuss the practice of reflexivity in my research study.

3.1. Research Design

3.1.1. Population of the study

As highlighted in Chapter 1, this study focused on the Central Region of Ghana as the research site for the inquiry into the challenges and opportunities encountered by Ghanaian public SHSs. The Central Region is one of the ten administrative regions of Ghana created in 1970. It is bordered by the Western Region to the west, Greater Accra Region (where Ghana's capital Accra is located) to the east, Ashanti and Eastern regions to the north, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south (Government of Ghana). Covering an area of 9,826 km2 (or 3,794 sq. mi, third smallest region in Ghana), the region is divided into 20 districts including 1 metropolitan, 6 municipal and 13 ordinary districts (see Fig. 3.1.1.). Cape Coast, its capital, was also the capital of the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) until 1877, when the capital was moved to Accra (Government of Ghana). It runs on an economy based on the mining of industrial minerals, fishing and tourism. Tourism is a major revenue producer for the region which contains various tourist sites including the Kakum National Park and the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles which are prominent UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The region is predominantly rural with a few urbanized centers in Cape Coast,

Awutu-Effutu-Senya and Agona (Government of Ghana). Below is a map of the Central Region of Ghana including an illustration of its 20 administrative districts.

Figure 3.1.1. A Map of the Central Region of Ghana and its 20 districts[21]

Known as the ‘citadel of education’, the Central Region is renowned for its numerous elite second cycle and higher education institutions. In total, there are 68 public second-cycle institutions (65 of which are public SHSs and 3 public technical schools) and 12 private second-cycle institutions (Ghana Senior High Schools Annual Digest 2017/2018). In Ghana, both private and public SHSs are categorized into the MOE/GES classification scheme of Category A to Category E schools, with Category A and B being the elite public SHSs, Category C and D schools being lower performing and less endowed[22] public and private SHSs, and Category E schools being the specialized technical schools.

[21] “Central Region (Ghana)”, *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Nov., 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Region_(Ghana).

[22] The classification of such schools as less endowed schools is in terms of the lack of or inadequate number of infrastructure and human resources.

This study focused on the public education system and not the private one because all public secondary schools are theoretically supported and regulated solely by the government, and as such, are all impacted by the issue of the limited availability of government resources. The 65 public SHSs in the Central region were treated as the sampling frame, out of which a sample size of 12 public SHSs (representing approximately 18.5% of the total number of public SHSs) was drawn. My sampling technique adhered to the MOE/GES classification scheme and my sample size was fairly representative of schools in the region having covered at least, six different districts of the Central Region (as shown in Table 3.1.2 below). Category E schools (purely technical secondary schools) were not included in this study since they may have a unique set of challenges and opportunities that may not be experienced by their public SHSs counterparts owing to their requirements of certain infrastructural facilities and equipment for their specialized courses.

My unit of analysis is the secondary schools and my key informants were the headmasters and headmistresses (and at times, assistant headmasters) of the various sampled schools. The information provided by my key informants was complemented by two additional interviews with the Secondary School Coordinator and a Public Relations Officer from the Regional GES office. Besides the aforementioned key stakeholders, other actors who will be referred to intermittently in this study (but who were not contacted directly) include state actors like the Ministry of Education (MOE), the District Assemblies, GET Fund and the Members of Parliament (MPs). In terms of civil society actors, this study will refer to actors like Alumni Associations, Parent-Teacher Associations, Private Businesses/Organizations, Private Individuals and Religious Organizations intermittently. In this inquiry, the relationships between these actors and their contributions to schools' ability to remain resilient or become vulnerable are examined using a conceptual framework underpinned by social capital theory.

3.1.2. Sample size and sampling techniques

To generate a fairly representative sample size, I employed a two-step sampling technique that encompassed both probability and non-probability sampling tools. In the first step of sampling, I employed the '*stratified random sampling method'*. The stratified random sampling method is a version of probability sampling which is used to ensure that all groups or categories of a population are adequately represented in a sample (Laws et al. 360). It requires the researcher to divide the target population into identifiable strata before selecting potential participants from each strata or category using simple random or systematic techniques; once selection is completed, these participants are merged into a group to form the study sample (Laws et al. 360). In my study, I drew on the categories created by the pre-existing GES/MOE classification of public SHSs into Category A to C schools based on their performance, infrastructural resource endowment and human resource endowment. In each category, I selected 5 schools, arriving at a total of 15 potential sample schools after my first stage of sampling. The major strength of this sampling technique was that it would potentially help me to avoid bias since it was based largely on a random selection of schools from predetermined categories that I had no influence on (Laws et al. 362). However, I realized that my stratified random sampling technique had introduced the challenge of not having a representative or diverse enough sample with regards to geographic location-- a disadvantage that Bhattacharjee warns of (68). Moreover, there was the potential issue of falling into the trap of over-representing a smaller sub-group of elite schools (Category A) schools in this initial sample.

Going by O'Leary's (2014) advice to employ non-random sampling techniques when pursuing a research study of this nature (i.e. research that aims to 'delve deeper'), I moved on to the second stage of sampling where I employed the purposive sampling technique of judgement

(theoretical) sampling in an attempt to forestall some of these potential biases or shortcomings of the initial sampling technique. *Judgement (theoretical/purposive) sampling* is a version of non-probability sampling whereby a researcher chooses research participants in a way that ensures “as wide a representation as possible, taking into account of likely sources of difference” between participants or individual units in the sample (Laws et al. 367). At this stage, I ensured that the schools selected for the study were as widely dispersed as possible along varied geographical locations in terms of rural, peri-urban and urban locations and across different districts. Moreover, I was able to reduce the over-representation of Category A schools in my data (which are actually a smaller sub-group in the population) by ensuring that during the pilot phase of my research, I studied one Category B and one Category C school in addition to the previously sampled nine schools (3 schools each from Category A, B and C). By so doing, I was able to narrow down my research sample to 11 schools, two of which were engaged in a pilot study (details on page 58) at the onset of the data collection process.

At the later stages of my research, I chanced upon a Category D school which eventually became the 12th school in my interview sample. Prior to finding this school, I had only been able to delineate Category A to C schools through the literature, only for me to realize once in the field that the actual classification of public SHSs went beyond the three-tier classification scheme that I had previously seen. When I initially contacted the headmaster of the Category D school, I assumed that he was still the headmaster of a Category B (i.e. Interview 12(B)) school that I had already included in my research sample. However, when I showed up for the interview at the set appointment time, I realized that I was in the wrong school after I repeatedly called him to let him know that we had been waiting for almost two hours in the aforementioned Category B school to meet with him. Apparently, he used to be the assistant headmaster of the Category B

school but had been promoted and transferred to another school (a Category D school) as the headmaster. This confusion over who the headmaster of the Category B school arose because the name and contact number provided on the Ghana Schools Mapping Portal[23] was wrong. This was one of the major challenges that I had during my research design and data collection phase: the dearth in updated and publicly available information on the public SHS system from reliable government sources. Nonetheless, I did not allow this issue to faze me and instead, I decided to use this as an opportunity to understand the public SHS system better. As a result, I ended up using the *convenience sampling* technique (another non-probability method) to include this particular interview in my data sample.

Overall, I was able to engage with 12 schools from the various categories in the GES/MOE public SHS classification scheme for this research study. For the purposes of privacy, the schools that were selected in these three different categories were anonymized during the data analysis phase using numbers and alphabets to represent participant codes. The participant codes were developed based on the order in which interviews were conducted and the category (alphabet grade) previously assigned to the schools. For instance, the first school interviewed during the pilot phase was a Category B school and was accordingly ascribed the participant code of Interview 1(B). Table 3.1.2. below illustrates the sample size based on school type, location type and district.

Table 3.1.2. Overview of Sampled schools

School type	School	Location Type	District
Category A	Interview 3(A)	Urban	Cape Coast Metro
	Interview 5 (A)	Urban	Cape Coast Metro

[23] A GES website that was recently created to ensure transparent reporting on schools and provide information to prospective SHS applicants and researchers.

	Interview 7 (A)	Urban	Cape Coast Metro
Category B	Interview 1(B)*	Urban	Cape Coast Metro
	Interview 6(B)	Urban	Abura/Asebu/Kwamankese
	Interview 10(B)	Peri-urban	Gomoa West
	Interview 12 (B)	Urban	Agona West
Category C	Interview 2(C)*[24]	Rural	Gomoa West
	Interview 4(C)	Peri-Urban	Agona East
	Interview 8 (C)	Rural	Agona East
	Interview 11 (C)	Rural	Ekumfi
Category D	Interview 9 (D)	Rural	Agona West

3.2. The Data Collection Phase

3.2.1. Interviews

For this study, I employed semi-structured interviews with both specific and open-ended questions to seek answers to my overarching research question. As McDowell (2010) aptly posits, interviews are very effective in an exploratory study because they "typically aim for depth and detailed understanding rather than breadth and coverage" (158). My interviews were conducted over a four-week period from the 13th of June to the 4th of July 2018 while I interned at the Center for Educational Research, Evaluation and Development (CERED) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) in the Central Region of Ghana. CERED is the main research center of the College of Education Studies at UCC which specializes in research, monitoring and evaluation to inform educational policy and practice. At CERED, I assisted in the organization of grant application review meetings and provided research and administrative support intermittently to the research

[24] Interviews marked by the asterix (*) sign were those I engaged in when I piloted my interview and inventory sheets.

fellows. In exchange, I received support and mentorship from my internship supervisor with regards to my study, as well as the benefit of securing interviewees' trust due to my affiliation with the center.

Prior to receiving ethics approval, I secured an internship with CERED by applying via their website when I realized that my research topic fell under the purview of their mandate and that they had previously conducted a research project focused on setting a Research Agenda for secondary schools under SEIP on behalf of the World Bank and GES. Moreover, the CERED internship was the ideal choice for me because the research center is located in the Central Region, which was the location for my intended study. Owing to another upcoming internship commitment in Accra with the USAID's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Center-West Africa from mid-July to August 2018, my interviews had to be primarily conducted within the six-week CERED internship period to take advantage of the benefit of proximity to most of the schools and the Regional GES office.

Although I received ethics approval from York University in May 2018, I could not begin my interviews immediately since I realized (once I arrived at CERED) that I was required to secure permission from the Regional GES Director as well. As I waited to receive the signed permission letter, my internship supervisor reviewed my research methodology and provided guidance on how to create an effective interview guide. This 'peer' review introduced considerable rigor to my research methodology. Through this review, we realized that the interview questions I had developed prior to the field could potentially be ineffective at helping me to answer my central research question, and so, we re-formulated the research and interview questions and created a new interview guide altogether. Prior to fieldwork, I had gained basic familiarity with creating interview questions and administering them through a mini research project on the experiences and

perceptions of belonging for Roma people in Toronto, Canada with a team of five other classmates in March 2018 while taking the Research Methods for Development Studies course at York University. The CERED internship helped me to further my understanding of research methods and to improve on my research design skills, which proved very useful throughout the data collection and data analysis processes.

In addition to the aforementioned tasks, my internship supervisor provided feedback on my sampling techniques and rationale, as well as the final sample that I drew for this study. All of this review and feedback from my internship supervisor was provided in collaboration with the support and approval of my academic supervisor at York University. It was a collaborative effort throughout my fieldwork and I regularly updated my academic supervisor on my progress. During this time, my internship supervisor also suggested that I should add a second data collection tool to my repertoire: the use of inventory sheets.[25] Shortly after I finished generating my interview guide and research sample, I received approval and a letter of support from the Regional GES Director, Madam Sabina Obeng, to proceed with research study.

Pilot Study

After creating the aforementioned tools and generating a comprehensive sample size, I commenced my data collection phase with a pilot study. The purpose of this pilot study was to test the validity and reliability of my interview and inventory sheet guide[26] and enable me to further familiarize myself with the use of these tools. As previously indicated in Section 3.1.2., I opted for one school each from Category B and Category C (Interview 1(B) and Interview 2(C)) for the pilot study. This pilot study (and the research study in its entirety) would not have been as easy to conduct had it not been for the help of various ‘gatekeepers’ along the way who helped me to gain

[25] The rationale and experience of using this tool is described in the subsequent section.
[26] See Subsection 3.3 for an exposition on the inventory sheet guide.

access to my researched community. As Alan Bryman posits, gaining access in research is a political process that is premised on negotiation and is often determined/mediated by certain 'gatekeepers' (518). The main gatekeepers in my data collection phase were my internship supervisor, my research assistant, and the headmaster of the second school involved in the pilot study.

The first pilot interview was initiated by my internship supervisor who had previously worked on another research project with the assistant headmaster of the sampled Category B school. Due to the professional rapport between my internship supervisor and him, the interview went very well as he readily provided me with information and provided suggestions on the correct wording of some of my interview questions and how to make the questions in my inventory sheet clearer. Immediately after this interview, I returned to the research center to edit my interview and inventory sheet guide, and I also transcribed this first interview to ensure that I was receiving the in-depth insights that I was seeking.

After modifying parts of my interview and inventory sheet guides, I contacted the headmaster of the second school in my pilot study sample (Interview 2(C)) for an interview. He asked to meet with me at his office first so that he could get a sense of the purpose of my study and the information that was required of him. The next day, I travelled to his school which was located in a rural setting, a little far away from the main highway. Since I was unfamiliar with the rural terrain and had to rely on public transportation to access my sample schools, I decided (in consultation with my internship and academic supervisors) to employ the informal services of a friend and former colleague as my research assistant/guide. This decision was a very useful one (especially for this particular interview) because, not only did my research assistant enable me to

get to this school on time, but being a graduate of the school herself, she helped me to gain the trust of the headmaster as well; this made her a key gatekeeper in this research project.

Due to the time of day at which we met (3pm in the afternoon) and the short amount of time available in his schedule, we could not hold the interview during our first meeting and so, we had to reschedule the interview to the next day. Although his interview was very insightful, it was the longest (1 hour); the previous interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. Thus, judging by the large gap in the time used up for both interviews, I edited my consent forms and interview appointment request script[27] accordingly, and indicated to all subsequent participants that the interviews would require approximately 30 minutes to an hour to complete.

Not only were the pilot interviews insightful, but establishing contact with this second headmaster was pivotal for the entire data collection process as he provided me with all the contacts of the various headmasters in my sample[28], thus acting as a very useful gatekeeper for this study. He was highly connected because he had worked for a long time in various schools in the region and he was a highly affable person. Throughout this phase of my research and my engagement with the aforementioned gatekeepers, I strived to be reflexive by paying attention to the biases, motivations and power differentials that were introduced into my research by myself, the various gatekeepers, and my respondents as I sought their help. For as Caesar Apentiik and Jane Parpart (2006) rightly point out, “Even [in] relatively egalitarian communities”, there will be individuals/families “who act as gatekeepers”, but the rule of thumb is to negotiate those

[27] This is a short script that I created to enable me to know how to consistently convey adequate information to the headmasters and headmistresses of my sampled schools without overburdening them with information about my research study.

[28] To ensure that I adhered to my ethical commitments to ensure the privacy of my respondents, when I requested for these contacts I added five additional schools to the research sample (an element of deception to an extent) to ensure that he could not easily identify all the schools in my sample.

relationships tactfully to avoid reinforcing power differentials while reflecting on one's own positionality (3). I discuss issues like these in detail in my reflexivity section (refer to section 3.4).

Interviews Post-Pilot study

During the data collection phase, I grouped my interviews into two categories: primary interviews with headmasters and headmistresses, and secondary interviews with the two Regional GES officials. The secondary interviews were designed to produce data to reinforce and/or challenge the information generated from the primary interviews. In hindsight, I wish I had interviewed representatives from the various district assemblies as well considering that the government's educational decentralization policy places them in the pool of key stakeholders (Ghana Education Strategic Plan 2010-2020, p. 32). Nonetheless, the information raised from these two sources were very insightful and not at all short-handed.

Per the interviews and inventory sheets, participants in the primary interview group had worked in the public SHS system between 12 and 33 years. On average, the headmasters and headmistresses (as well as assistants) in my sample had experience of working in the public SHS sector for 27.5 years[29] with only 16.67%[30] of the research participants having work experience below these number of years. This suggests that the participants in the primary interviews had ample experience of the public SHS system and therefore, their perceptions of the challenges and opportunities in the system would be informative and well-seasoned. Likewise, the participants in the secondary interview group were equally seasoned informants who indicated at least two years' experience working in their present capacities, having worked in other positions that deal with the public education system in general and public SHSs in particular in previous years. As previously indicated, my unit of analysis in this study are the Central Region public SHSs, represented by

[29] This number is rounded off to the nearest decimal point from 27.4583333333 to 27.5 years.
[30] This percentage is rounded off to the nearest decimal point from 16.6666666667 to 16.67%.

their respective headmasters, headmistresses and/or assistant headmasters. Below is a table (Table 3.2.1.) that illustrates the characteristics of the respondents in my primary interview group.

Table 3.2.1. Characteristics of Participants in the Primary Group

Description	Sub-category	Number of participants
Gender	Male	10
	Female	12
SHS Teaching/Work Experience	Less than 20 years	2
	20-29 years	5
	30-33 years	5
No. of years as Head/Assistant	Less than 2 years	3
	3-5 years	7
	More than 10 years	2
Affiliation to school	Alumni	3
	Not alumni/ Not indicated	11
No. of SHSs previously taught at	Same School	2
	Less than 3 schools	5
	More than 3 schools	5

Although, I had little difficulty in securing interviews for my pilot study, once the pilot was completed, I encountered a few challenges with securing interview appointments for the main research study. The first challenge I encountered had to do with having the right interview appointment request script when I made the first set of calls to the sampled schools.[31] I had an

[31] Although phone calls and emails from strangers are generally not preferred in the Ghanaian context, I had little option but to rely on this method to initiate my first point of contact with potential participants given the fact that I did not have the financial resources to travel back and forth more than once or twice to my sampled schools, and especially since a considerable number of them were located quite far away from the research center I was working at. Moreover, I thought that initiating appointments through calls before going to the schools would make the process more efficient

unpleasant experience when I tried to schedule my first interview after the pilot study. After describing my research and making my request, the headmistress I called abruptly ended the call, saying that she does not discuss such "things" over the phone. When I called back a second time to apologize and to ask for an appropriate time to meet with her, she angrily hung up the second time. After this experience, I was visibly shaken and could not make any calls that day. Another research fellow at the center, having witnessed what had happened when I made the call pointed out that the issue could be my interview request script, which he felt was rather long and over-burdened with information.[32] After this lesson, he helped me to re-formulate my interview request script to fit the audience I was seeking, and this partly contributed to the ease with which I was able to obtain subsequent interviews.

The second challenge with initiating interviews was posed by the fact that the contact information of most schools was either absent on the Ghana school mapping portal or was outdated and/or not working. As a result, I could not easily contact the schools until I received help from one of my gatekeepers (the headmaster from the second pilot interview) after the pilot phase. Thereafter, I secured interviews using the snowball technique.

For each interview, I employed an interview script that was created after I had generated an interview guide in the first week of my internship (see Appendix A). My interview script comprised of an introduction to the purpose of my study, a short set of background questions posed to the participants to help me understand their work experience or potential insights they brought to the table, and to establish rapport between myself and them. After the introduction and

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as I did not want to show up and be turned away due to the absence or unavailability of the head teachers. In future research, I will factor in these considerations when formulating my research design.

[32] He explained that the headmistress may have reacted that way because headmasters and headmistresses are overburdened with requests from various quarters and with the day-to-day management of schools with little resources; he also said that some are quite weary of the exploitative nature of some researchers. Due to the hostile behaviour of this headmistress, I was advised to remove her from my sample and incorporate a different school with the same characteristics in to avoid wasting time and effort.

background questions, ten substantive interview questions were administered where I asked the participants about how their respective schools had acquired their infrastructural and human resources to date, how they had maintained their infrastructure and retained/motivated their teachers, and what infrastructural and human resource needs/challenges their respective schools had. I also asked them about the school's current and future plans for infrastructural and human resource development and the strategies they have employed or will be employing to ensure that those needs are met. In the last three questions, I asked them about their expectations and fears regarding future population growth and their desired infrastructural and human resource endowment levels. All of these questions were asked for the purposes of gauging the common (as well as school- and category-specific) challenges and opportunities which schools face and how they respond to them.

The ten interview questions were often administered in a particular order, but I sometimes altered them as the interview progressed and as certain answers to subsequent questions were already given prior to my arrival at those particular questions. For instance, I realized that when I sometimes asked the participants about their infrastructural and human resource needs in question 4, they often included the strategies they were using or planning to use to ensure that their needs were met, which were answers to questions 5 and 7 on my interview script. Thus, whenever this occurred, I either spent time probing further about what they had discussed when I arrived at these questions, or I sometimes skipped them altogether to avoid asking redundant questions. My overall goal in this exercise was to ensure that my interviews were as conversational as possible to avoid mechanistic responses and the emergence of unfavorable power relations between myself and my respondents.[33]

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[33] I achieved this familiarizing myself with the questions and memorizing the description of my research project so that I could maintain contact with my participants throughout the interview.

Approximately, each interview took 20 to 45 minutes to complete with the exception of the second pilot interview which was an hour long. Furthermore, with the exception of the two interviews with officials from the GES, I was able to obtain signed consent forms from all the headmasters and headmistresses I interviewed especially when I presented the letter from the Regional GES Director and indicated my affiliation with CERED at UCC. However, some of my interviewees were hesitant at the beginning of their interviews because coincidentally, my data collection phase began right after a particularly scandalous documentary had been released by the investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas that exposed the corrupt actions of several popular Ghana Football Association officials in an undercover investigation funded by the BBC. Thus, I had to reassure some of the participants that I was not an undercover investigative journalist by presenting my letter from the Regional GES Director, and at times, my York University Student ID card. In interviews where participants declined to sign the consent forms, they indicated that the approval letter from the regional director was enough to suggest that they were onboard with my study. In total, seven interviews were conducted with the support of my research assistant while I conducted the remaining seven interviews by myself. In 11 out of 14 interviews, a recorder was employed and complemented by note-taking. In 3 out of 14 interviews, participants did not allow for audio recordings to be taken and so, I resorted to only note-taking for these interviews.

All my interviews were conducted in a location selected by my participants. This was mainly their offices in the respective sampled schools and the Regional GES office, with the exception of the participant in my second pilot study interview who was unable to speak with me at his school at our scheduled interview time; he chose to come to CERED (after attending to his own business at the University) for the interview the following week. I allowed the participants to choose the location of their interviews as courtesy to them (since reverence is given to adults or

the elder in Ghanaian culture) and to ensure that I did not overburden them as I was (by now) well aware of the severe constraints on their time and attention as headmasters and headmistresses.

3.2.2. Inventory sheets

The second tool employed in this research study was the Inventory sheet. Although I referred to this tool as an "inventory sheet" throughout my research design, it is in essence a questionnaire, borrowed from the quantitative methodology repertoire. The 'inventory sheet' is a type of questionnaire and a survey research tool which falls under the branch of quantitative non-experimental research design known as "Descriptive research/studies". In Descriptive research/studies, researchers aim to "describe, and interpret the current status of individuals, settings, conditions, or events" (Mertler 111). The label "inventory sheet" was given to this research tool because it was designed to collect information on the various infrastructural and human resources available to or absent in the various sampled schools, as well as some background information, making it essentially an "inventory" of what schools had or did not have. The second tool was primarily developed to complement the data collected through the semi-structured interviews by reinforcing and/or challenging it. Furthermore, this tool was employed to introduce some quantification to my predominantly qualitative research design.

A researcher who employs this survey research tool is required to use random/probability sampling techniques to select the respondents who will be contacted to fill the inventory sheets (Mertler 112). For my part, I had already employed a random sampling technique (stratified random sampling) in the first stage of my sampling process, thus meeting this requirement. Of course, the fact that I used a non-random sampling technique as a second step in my sampling process can result in the critique that I deviated from this requirement. However, I beg to differ. This is because, the second step--the judgement/purposive sampling technique--was introduced in

this study to ensure that the data was as diversified and representative of the general population (i.e. in terms of geographic location and school types) to a considerable extent--which in essence, meets the second and overall requirement of any survey research design (Mertler 112).

The creation of the inventory sheet guide was informed by the parameters covered by the government's annual Education Management Information System (EMIS)[34] exercise which is designed to collect primary data from schools on various parameters including the total enrollment, total number of teaching staff, availability and ratio of learning materials such as textbooks, and an inventory of physical infrastructure or facilities in the schools. For the purposes of my research study, an adapted version of the EMIS data form was created. The benefit of using the EMIS as a guide for the creation of the inventory sheets was that the headmasters and headmistresses were already familiar with these questions and had information readily available to offer. My inventory sheets comprised of three main sections: 1) background characteristics (including data on human resources), 2) social amenities, and 3) infrastructural resources. Each section had different questions assigned to them in line with selected parameters from the EMIS. Although information on the three aforementioned sections were collated, data analysis was focused primarily on the 'Background characteristics' and 'Infrastructural Resource' sections, while the 'Social Amenities' section was included in the analysis as needed. The inventory sheets were administered to only the 12 schools in my research sample.

As the second data collection tool, the "inventory sheets" were often given to the participants at the end of the interview and a deadline of a week was collaboratively set to ensure that they returned the completed sheets on time. Most of the participants opted to complete it and

[34] The Education Management Information System (EMIS) project was introduced in February 1997 as a component of the Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) programme. After piloting in February 1997 and August 1999 at the basic level, it became a fully-fledged annual census from April 2002 (Otoo and Dogbey 2016)

return the inventory sheets to me via email, WhatsApp or pick up. Two of the headmasters also dropped them off once they had completed their inventory sheets since there was a 1-day Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) that they were attending at the university. In total, 91.7% (or 11) of my participants returned their completed inventory sheets by the end of the data collection phase, signaling a high response rate for this tool. However, one of the participants did not return her completed inventory sheet despite several follow up calls. To make up for the absence of her inventory sheet, I obtained half of the data that I was requesting for in the inventory sheets from the Ghana School Mapping Portal and the Ghana Senior High Schools Annual Digest 2017/2018 and extracted the other half of the data from her interview transcript. Thus, in this incident I employed the technique of triangulating my data sources to ensure that I had adequate and authentic information about the sampled school.

3.2.3. Direct Observation

The third tool employed in my research study was direct observation. 'Direct observation' is an "unobtrusive" social research method of observation whereby the researcher studies a phenomenon or empirical context from a detached point of view without directly immersing him/herself in the context or phenomenon under study (Trochim 2006). This is different from 'participant observation' whereby the researcher immerses him/herself into the study context for often lengthy periods of time as a participant (Trochim 2006). This tool was chosen because it offered the opportunity to observe the school environment and collate data on the physical needs of the schools without spending a lengthy amount of time to do so or be intrusive. Moreover, it offered me the opportunity to take a walk around the schools to validate most of the information presented in the inventory sheet, while taking field notes. The data from this tool was consulted during the data analysis phase to verify the data from the two other research tools, and the field

notes taken were also drawn on to create a better picture of the phenomenon under study.

3.3. The Data Analysis Process

Considering that English is the official language of Ghana, all my interviews were conducted in English and this made my transcription fairly easy. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim and their form was left in the unaltered Ghanaian version of the English language. While in the field, I began to transcribe my interviews verbatim, pausing and replaying my audio recordings every time I lost a word or sentence, and then listening to and re-transcribing each interview for a second time after they had all been transcribed for the first time. The pilot interviews were the first interviews to be transcribed. These were transcribed immediately after the pilot phase for the purposes of gauging the adequacy, usefulness and reliability of my interview questions. Also, these were used as an opportunity for me to practice the task of transcription to ensure that I was more adept at the task once I had finished conducting the remaining 12 additional interviews. All but three of my interviews were transcribed between June and August 2018. In addition, I transcribed and organized all the data collected through the inventory sheets into a spreadsheet format to enable me to compare and contrast the infrastructural and human resource endowment levels of the various schools, and to easily examine (at face value) if other factors such as religious affiliation, time of establishment and residential status can be attributed to schools' ability (or not) to negotiate their vulnerabilities to the constraints imposed by the system. As highlighted above, at this stage all the research participants were assigned participant codes based on the order of the acquisition of interviews and the category of school interviewed (refer to Table 3.1.2 above for a description).

After transcribing all my interviews and inventory sheet data, I proceeded to conduct data analysis using the techniques of open and axial coding. I began the first stage of open coding by

breaking down the text from my interview transcripts into smaller segments (line-by-line) to allow me to generate meaningful codes or fragments from the text itself; the codes generated from this exercise are normally referred to as *in vivo* codes. According to Creswell, the benefit of generating *in vivo* codes in qualitative data analysis is that it allows the researcher to “reflect the views of the participants” (185). Thus, considering that this study is focused on the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders, it was apt to allow the first set of codes to emerge *in vivo*. After the first stage of open line-by-line coding, I proceeded to the second stage of open coding where I began to merge some of the codes generated in the previous exercise into broader and more abstract codes which adequately represented and encompassed the various fragmented codes I had previously generated. This step enabled me to produce a more ‘sanitized’ version of my coding scheme. After arriving at these abstract codes and sub-codes, I read and coded my interview data again to ensure that I had not missed any crucial codes and that my data had been sufficiently analyzed. Thereafter, I proceeded to the third stage of my open coding technique where I integrated the abstract codes into broader themes based on noted patterns and similarity. Once my main themes were created, I moved on to the axial coding stage where I integrated and grouped the various themes into three broad categories namely: challenges, responses, and opportunities, in line with my research question and objectives.

The same techniques were meticulously conducted on the transcribed inventory sheet data as well, but this time, with the main focus on generating data on the differences in infrastructural and human resource endowment levels and needs of the various schools. Pre-existing codes (as well as new codes) were derived from this data and equally congregated under the aforementioned three categories. Once these codes, themes and categories were established, I moved on to examine the points of corroboration and discord between my two data collection

tools, supplemented by my notes from direct observation. Also, I delineated my preliminary findings by noting the relationships between and among the various themes and categories, and applying them to the conceptual framework. This was done in the interpretation stage of my data analysis process to make sense of the data and to highlight the "lessons learned" from the exercise (Creswell 187).

Overall, my use of the aforementioned tools generated several themes and insights which have immensely contributed to this written piece and will contribute to an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the Ghanaian public SHS system.

3.4. Research Reflexivity

The "… production of knowledge can work to challenge or maintain forms of 'social difference'" because all knowledge is "…politically informed" (Seale 22). These words prompted me to practice reflexivity in my study. After an intense time of reflection and questioning post-fieldwork, I realize that personal indicators such as my gender, age, 'indigenous-outsider' status, as well as different power structures and relationships have impacted every aspect of the research process, resulting in my production of what Donna Haraway (1988) calls: 'situated knowledge'. To portray how I arrived at this situated knowledge, I trace the impact(s) of my various positionalities on my research.

Navigating the "Insider-Outsider" status

Having experienced the public SHS system, being a Ghanaian citizen and hailing from Cape Coast (Central Region), I assumed that I would be regarded as an "insider", a privileged position that some of my classmates did not have. Like Kobayashi (1994), I thought that I had the legitimacy to speak on behalf of the less-endowed public SHSs. Foremost, my claim to an "insider" status could be questioned considering that I attended one of the elite schools and not a lower-

performing school for my secondary education in Ghana. This means that my understanding of the situation under study could be flawed, and my interpretations could be based largely on assumptions instead of correctly reflecting the lived experience of attending/graduating from a lower-performing school. In that sense, my "researched community" could have been skeptical about my understanding of their problem, as well as where my allegiance lay and why I had the zeal to help them change their circumstances (Apentiik and Parpart 2011). This could have potentially led some of my study participants to question my prior training and why I was interested in this particular topic as I indicated above (refer to section 3.2.2). Luckily, through meticulous data analysis, I was able to overcome these potential flaws by ensuring that the voices of my research participants came through in my analysis and interpretations instead of my own assumptions.

Furthermore, my "insider" status could also be questioned because even though I attended an elite institution, the secondary school I attended was in Western region, a region with a slightly different demographic than the current site (Central Region) I was studying. This meant that I could be oblivious to some of the peculiarities of the public SHS system in the Central Region even if I could see (from an academic lens) the evidence of concepts like "urban bias" and the "north-south gap" (Krauss 2013, Lipton 1977). Therefore, I was not the "insider" I assumed I would be, but rather, I was an "indigenous-outsider" who was connected to the region (as my hometown) and had experienced the Ghanaian public SHS context but had a lot of foreign ideas influencing my understanding of the issue (Merriam et al. 412). Recognizing these internal contradictions in my "insider" status and accepting that my "subject position is [always] constituted in spaces of betweenness...a position that is neither inside nor outside" was key to how I negotiated my identity within each semi-structured interview (Katz 72).

Gender and Positionality

Also, I realize that my gender may have influenced my purposive sampling technique to a considerable extent resulting in a rather male-skewed sample size. Admittedly, my sample size was skewed towards male respondents with 14 out of the 16 respondents being male. I partly attribute this issue to the fact that in Ghana, most male-only schools have male headteachers and the co-ed schools in my sample coincidentally often had male headteachers or assistant headmasters instead of females. Thus, the gender-skewed sample size was not necessarily intentional but rather, a consequence of how the public SHS leadership is structured. Irrespective of this, I found that subconsciously, I tried to avoid contacting a lot of female headteachers for interviews since I found them a lot sterner and more critical of me than their male counterparts. My assumption about the character of female headteachers stemmed from my past public SHS experience, as well as the unpleasant experience with one of the female headteachers mentioned above (see Section 3.2.1, p.62). While this assumption and consequent action did not influence the quality of the interviews or the representativeness of my sample, it definitely influenced the script I presented when I requested for interviews (especially from female headteachers), as well as how I presented myself (in appearance, speech and mannerisms) for those appointments.

Age and Positionality

Although I anticipated that my gender would be a major barrier to my research, once in Ghana I found that my gender did not necessarily contribute to the power differentials between myself and the participants as much as my age did. The male headteachers I met often referred to me as “small girl”—some with eyes full of admiration about my academic accomplishments and others with looks of skepticism. On one hand, those who called me “small girl” with a sense of admiration reacted to me in a ‘fatherly’ way and offered me help; often, I found that the label of

"small girl" was not used to intimidate me as a woman, but rather, it was used to differentiate me from themselves as a young person who did not know much but wanted to learn. On the other hand, there was an interview where I was called "small girl" with skepticism. The headmaster in this particular interview (Interview 10(B)) proceeded to tell me of how tertiary education in Ghana was too lenient nowadays to allow people to do Masters' at a rather very young age when he had completed his Masters' degree after gaining ample work experience. He also critiqued my entire research from my choice of data collection tools to my preliminary research study title before proceeding to do the interview proper. Thus, as illustrated above, age was both an opportunity and a barrier in that in some cases it helped me to conduct interviews easily while in others, it made me feel demoralized and humiliated even before the interview began.

Power and Positionality

Power is fluid and negotiated; it is never a strict dichotomy between the powerful researcher and the weak/exploited researched community (Apentiik and Parpart 2006, Merriam et al. 2001). In hindsight, I realize that the composition of my research team could have had an influence on the seven interviews I conducted with my Research Assistant. Since she never asked questions in the interviews, I assumed that she would have no impact on my data collection exercise. However, post-fieldwork I realize that her own identities as a young-single-Ghanaian woman and an educational NGO staff could have influenced the interviews to an extent. For one, knowing that she was a Camfed Ghana[35] staff could have triggered most of the headteachers from the rural schools to provide answers, especially with regards to their needs, in the hopes that she would convey it to Camfed. For example, in an interview with a lower-ranked school (interview 4(C)), the headmaster remarked: "….so you see we have a lot of needs here and Camfed has been

[35] An educational NGO that supports girls and schools in deprived communities in the Central and the three Northern Regions of Ghana.

helpful with the teacher-mentors thing and giving us educational materials. So, madam [referring to the R.A] you can let Camfed know about our plight as well…". This excerpt suggests that some of the respondents may have seen these interviews as an opportunity to table their needs. In this way, we were inadvertently put into a powerful position in this particular interview.

Secondly, the composition of my research team could have led to a subconscious negotiation for power balance during some of our interviews. For example, during Interview 3(A) (one of the elite schools) the headmaster asked his assistant headmaster to join us for the interview so that we could achieve a gender balance of two men and two women, he said. Although at the time I saw it as a harmless remark, on my return from the field I realize that it could have been a clever way (on his part) to ensure that power was balanced between us (as the research team) and himself. Conversely, in Interview 10(B), I felt that my research team was at the losing end of the power battle as our identities as females and 'small girls' (compared to his identity as male, Masters' degree holder, headteacher of elite school and paramount chief in his village) were used against us to make us feel insignificant. Consequently, in these different situations (as well as others not mentioned here), power was constantly negotiated—at times in our favor and at times not.

At the data analysis phase, I realized that the power was now in my hands to represent the various interviews and the phenomenon as I saw fit. I nearly allowed my skepticism and assumptions about the situation of elite schools to cloud my fair judgement as I initially coded my data. It was difficult to ignore my presumptions that elite public SHSs did not have any 'real' needs but they were just greedy for more resources or they had 'graduated' from seeking basic needs to more advanced needs like wi-fi/internet connection as indicated in Interview 5(A). This struggle for open-mindedness seemed to arise because of my socialization into a specific cultural,

disciplinary and political worldview, as well as my internal bias (Funder 4). However, questioning my own assumptions and interpretations during data analysis proved useful as I now realize that elite schools equally face the challenge of limited availability of resources, but they only differ from their counterparts in terms of their responses and some of the resources they have access to. And this has given me a more balanced understanding of the public SHS system. Nonetheless, my interpretation of the situation is not the only objective reality about public SHSs in Central Region but rather, my situated knowledge of the issue in this specific time and space.

Chapter 4: Challenges, Responses and Opportunities

My engagement with the headmasters and headmistresses during my fieldwork yielded several valuable insights. The first objective for this study was to critically examine head teachers' perceptions of how schools seek to manage the challenges and opportunities facing senior secondary schools in Ghana. This objective raised three sub-questions: 1) What types of challenges do public SHSs face in their day-to-day management? 2) How do schools respond to the challenges they encounter? and 3) What types of opportunities exist in the system to overcome the aforementioned challenges? According to the research participants, Ghanaian public SHSs contend with four main challenges: infrastructure-related constraints, human resource-related constraints, alternative funding constraints, and state bureaucratic practices. They note that schools respond to the aforementioned challenges by employing self-help strategies, engaging strategically with external actors, or simply, wait for government intervention (or support).[36] The findings suggest that two broad categories of opportunities exist that schools can benefit from: international donor engagement in secondary education and formal avenues for lobbying.

4.1. Challenges

4.1.1. Infrastructure-related constraints

In the interviews, participants described the lack of or insufficient accommodation for both staff and students, stalled infrastructure projects, and an unconducive living and learning environment in their schools as some of the challenges they grappled with. Their account of these needs suggests that on a daily basis, one of the major challenges that public SHSs in the Central Region of Ghana have to contend with is the issue of infrastructure-related constraints.

[36] These responses are conditioned by the neoliberal and decentralized educational context in which the headteachers find themselves.

Accommodation

With regards to accommodation, 8 out of 12 headteachers indicated that they either had insufficient on-campus teacher accommodation or they had none. In Interview 5(A) for instance, the headmistress described this issue:

> "One major and very pathetic situation is staff accommodation. Vanessa, you will not believe that, we will have an apartment, 2-bedrooms, 3-bedrooms being for one family, but you will have 2 families or 3 families, teachers, graduates living in the same place. And you can imagine they will definitely not have the peace of mind, to work...to give off their best. Not just individuals...families...so some may have three children, another four….it's terrible. We need staff accommodation badly...badly; and that is another of...one of, one of our major ermmm needs."

Likewise, in Interview 2(C), the headmaster indicated that there were no accommodation facilities for teachers (except the headmaster's residence), and as a result, he had to take on the extra role of supervising night studies in the boarding school he oversees:

> "Mmm, majority of our staff members come from Swedru and even some from Winneba. If you look at the distance ah…but they still come, even though it is a challenge...we've been coping (...)...In fact, the major one is the bungalows for teachers...flats for teachers. Because, ermm...as a headmaster, I am not supposed to ermm...supervise prep. Eh...but, you will come and see me at night with my car parked and then, I have to sit there till 9 o'clock and ensure that students be quiet because am only there with my assistant."......"Ermm, in actual fact the desire of…the desire is to have ermm, you know…enough teaching accommodation…not even teaching accommodation, accommodation for [all] staff."

Also, the headmaster in Interview 6(B) recounted the same challenge with teacher accommodation issue and how this has compelled him to take on the additional task of supervising night studies:

> "...we are in dire need of staff accommodation. Because, most of the staff live outside campus...and, when it comes to disciplinary issues in the evening, all those things…you need the staff around...the numbers are a little low in numbers. So, the staff accommodation, we need that."

As suggested by the excerpts, teacher accommodation seems to be a cross-cutting issue for both elite urban (5(A) and 6(B)) and lower-performing rural schools (2(C)). This issue arises partly because most of the schools in the sample were either exclusively boarding schools or they had a considerable amount of the student population housed as boarders since some of them came from

afar. Due to this structure, these schools need several teachers to live on campus as house masters and house mistresses. However, as stated in Interview 2(C), most teachers had to commute very long distances to come to work, especially in a rural area like his school. Not only does this issue impede on the teachers' comfort and financial resources, but it can also significantly affect how effective they will be at teaching since they may be tired on arrival. Yeboah and Adom (2016) are of the similar view that long travelling times for teachers who do not live near their schools can be detrimental to the work they are able to put out. Teachers who have to commute longer distances are not paid any higher than those who do not commute from afar, and this means that they are compelled to use more resources or make more sacrifices than some of their counterparts. In the long run, the lack of accommodation in close proximity to their workplace may negatively impact the teachers' morale to continue in the profession or in certain schools.

Besides teacher accommodation issues, it was evident from the data that schools had to contend with student accommodation issues as well. Student accommodation issues spanned from not having enough dormitory and classroom spaces, to not having enough dining hall spaces and/or sufficient furniture. For example, the headmaster in Interview 1(B) gave a long list of all the things his school did not have:

"...You see...so we lack, ermm some infrastructure in terms of classroom accommodation, in terms of dormitories for the students, both boys and girls. Ermmm… as at yet, we do not have a fully-complemented dining hall. We don't also have an assembly hall. We have only one ICT lab to accommodate all the students during ICT...And we have a very small library....".

Likewise, the participant in Interview 7(A) also noted that the school struggled with insufficient student accommodation:

"Dormitories... [Dormitories because of the large population?] yes. That's the thing...Dining hall facility that the school actually needs. We desire that we could have a bit, a dining hall that can, if it could be made into a story building so that we could have some at the upper floor, some at the lower floor…yea. We have all our morning assemblies, church services

in the assembly hall. But those who left last year, 1500, they cannot even, the assembly hall cannot even contain the...1050, 1050..."

In the same vein, student accommodation issues were mentioned when I conducted Interview 2(C):

"In fact, there are some things that are basic which our school actually do not have, ...We don't have an assembly hall... we have converted some 3-unit classroom into an assembly hall and even that one cannot accommodate only Form 1's. So, when we always have our assembly, we gather in the open... If you say a school is grade A, then they have all the facilities...We don't have an assembly hall, we don't have a dining hall, yea, there is a 3-unit we have converted for that purpose. We don't have a kitchen, real kitchen, well-designed kitchen...yea........And then we didn't have an administration block."

Like teacher accommodation issues, these excerpts suggest that the issue of inadequate accommodation for students is a cross-cutting one which affects both elite and lower-performing schools. This issue seems to have partly emerged as an unintended consequence of the new Free SHS policy which has broadened access to secondary education and by extension, increased the population immensely across all public SHSs. Prior to the introduction of the program, elite schools were likely to have little to no issues with student accommodation due to their highly selective admissions. However, the new Free SHS policy has compelled them to open up admissions which by extension, has introduced student accommodation issues to all schools irrespective of rank. Currently, the government has introduced a new program called the Double Track system whereby two tracks of secondary school students (regular 'green' track and 'sandwich' or 'gold' track) attend school for two semesters (formerly three terms) each, alternating with each other every other semester (Graphic Online, 2018).[37] The intent of the Double track system is to ensure that all qualified students are able to secure places in and attend senior

[37] This new Double Track system mimics the 'sandwich' programs offered at the country's universities to enable students who are unable to enroll in the regular school year, to take courses during the summer months and in-between vacations of regular track students. The response to the new Double Track system has been ambivalent. While parents and teachers are happy that all qualified secondary schools students now have a chance to access public secondary education, they have also expressed concerns about how this system could negatively affect the quality of education in the country in the short term, as well as in the long run.

secondary school. According to the GES official in Interview 13: "...It is the hope of the government that all schools are brought [to par] hence the double track system that the NPP government is introducing so that all students can access quality senior high education." It is also my hope that this alternating Double track system will enable schools to mitigate (to an extent) some of the accommodation issues mentioned above.

One should take note of a difference from the excerpts: while the administrators of elite schools indicated that they had infrastructural resources which were insufficient for the student population (i.e. in need of some expansion), administrators in the lower-performing rural schools (like Interview 2(C)) indicated that they did not have the facilities at all and so they had to create temporary places for the purposes indicated above. This suggests that for lower-performing schools, most of their facilities are 'improvised', and not necessarily 'insufficient' as their elite counterparts indicate. The use of these two terms to describe their individual situation suggests that there is an imbalance between the facilities that elite and lower-performing schools have been given even though in theory all public SHSs are supposed to have a "parity of esteem" and similar levels of infrastructural resources (Foster 1963). As the research participants indicated, the government is responsible for providing infrastructure to all of the schools since they are all public institutions. However, it appears that lower-performing schools have been at the losing end of this infrastructural distribution trend, and they still have a long way to go to attain the level of facilities endowment that their elite counterparts currently have. Meanwhile, ironically, one of the parameters for grading (classifying) schools into A-E classification by MOE/GES is the availability and quality of the facilities that a school has (Interview 14 with GES official). This irony led me to ask my research participants from the Regional GES about why they maintained the current system for classifying schools. According to the participant in Interview 13:

"...The league table is intended to help the SHS to know their status with regards to academic excellence and motivate them to put in their best. It will also assist the directorate to prescribe the appropriate interventions to assist the low performing schools to meet the educational trends. So, I will say it is rather encouraging the schools to put in their maximum best".

At a face value, these intentions/aspirations are somewhat laudable; however, in this interview it was hard to ascertain if these intentions remain only as aspirations/lip-service, or if the current opportunities and projects in the secondary education sub-sector have actually been adequately oriented to directly tackle these issues head on. Hopefully, the introduction of programs like the Double Track system, will enable lower-performing schools (as well as their elite counterparts) to overcome some of the challenges they encounter with regards to accommodation issues in the short run. In the long run though, the government needs to find a means to raise sustainable funds that it can invest into providing infrastructure for these schools.

Stalled Infrastructure Projects

Besides teacher and student accommodation issues, another challenge that research participants indicated was that several infrastructural projects were stalled (often for several years) in their schools. This study found that some of the projects (initiated by the government and others by the P.T.A and Alumni) had either been abandoned after initial building stages or their progress had slowed down significantly. For instance, the headmaster in Interview 3(A) discussed the stalling of a number of government projects in his school stating that:

"...And then ermmm, government has a lot of GetFund projects, Ghana Education Trust Fund Projects…currently we have about 4 of them. We have a 400-capacity dormitory under construction it is about 85% completed down here, then we have eh…eh…eh an auditorium complex 2,000 capacity also stalled. Then we have eh…8-unit flat down here, also about 85% completed down here, yea...and a twelve-unit classroom also stalled [pause] stalled for about 6-years now or so. Yea…the only one that saw some little development was the centenary...the auditorium complex...they did the roofing until last year January. Since then, everything has stalled."

Similarly, in Interview 1(B) the assistant headmaster iterated:

"Well currently, one of the girls' dormitories under construction, which was abandoned since 2012, we, we are pleading with government to come and then complete the girls' dormitory so that we can accommodate all the girls on campus."

The headmaster in Interview 3(A) also pointed out a few stalled P.T.A projects,

"There's an ICT plus classroom and then I think...staffroom block under construction at the gate...It's still under construction but then stalled."

While the headmaster in Interview 7(A) pointed out a stalled alumni project:

"Ermm...what I know again is they…they took up the biogas project but that did not… [that stalled?] ...yea that stalled...it has stalled"

While some P.T.A and Alumni Association projects were described as stalled, government projects represented the bulk of stalled projects that were described or pointed out to me when I visited these schools. Deducing from the transcripts, it was evident that these government projects were often the ones that had stalled for several years -- one government project for instance had stalled for over six years! This situation seems to suggest that compared to the government, perhaps other actors who initiate infrastructure projects in the various schools are more likely to complete it on time than the government does. Conversely, as was later deduced from the transcripts of Interviews 6(B) and 4(C) for instance, we can interpret the relatively small number of stalled P.TA and Alumni projects as resulting from the fact that these external actors often hesitate to undertake huge infrastructural projects.[38]

The inadequacy of funds was immediately given as the reason for the numerous stalled government projects in public SHSs. However, apart from this reason, some headmasters and headmistresses implied in their interviews that government projects were sometimes abandoned as a result of the frequent transitions between governments with different development objectives over the years. For example, during the interview, the headmistress of school 8(C) said:

[38] Although these external actors still contribute immensely to the maintenance of existing ones and to refurbishing and furnishing such infrastructural projects.

"They started the dining and assembly complex. I came here three years ago there has not…they started something, and they have stopped. They stopped about two years ago [is it the GetFund block] the GetFund Block"...."But the school has been given a new bungalow. A new err …no no no how do you call it? a new girls' dormitory instead of completing the old one. They are saying they are coming to build another one. The old one just there…you see it? they have almost finished. They have a lot of sand, blocks, iron rods, so many things has been abandoned."

While it was not explicitly stated in the excerpt above, upon asking for clarification[39] after the formal interview the headmistress indicated that what she meant in this statement was that, although the school had been promised a girls' dormitory a few years back by the previous government and work had begun on it, the project stalled for a while until new contractors were brought in by the subsequent government; but instead of completing the old project, these new contractors abandoned the old project site and began work on a new project altogether, only to stall once again when there was another successive change in government. This led me to deduce that perhaps, the second contributory factor to the stalling in government projects across public SHSs in Ghana is politically-influenced.

This observation is supported by Ofori 2017, Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2016), ESID 2016 and Little (2010) who have all noted the negative impact(s) of political factors or motivations on development in Ghana's education sector with regards to planning, policy-making, resource allocation, and education quality. Although none of the other participants alluded to this (perhaps because I did not broach the subject as much as I did with this particular interviewee), it is still one possibility that we cannot totally ignore when looking for factors that could account for the challenges that schools face. For as Harriss (2009) implies, the influence of the political cannot be overlooked when trying to account for the causes of social phenomenon in as much as the economic factors may explain a lot of things. Potentially, if these stalled projects are completed

[39] Please note that this study did not use Member Checking (which is the act of returning interview transcripts to participants for validation) as a research method due to time and financial constraints. In this particular case, what may seem as member checking was simply an act of asking for clarification right after the interview.

they could lessen the population burden on schools, especially with regards to teacher and student accommodation, and contribute to a more conducive living and learning environment that will generate more favorable academic outcomes.

Unconducive Living and Learning Environment

The third aspect of the infrastructure-related constraints that plague Ghanaian public SHSs is the unconducive environment for teaching and learning. What I coded as an unconducive environment encompasses sanitation issues (such as the insufficient number of toilets at the school block and/or dormitories), deterioration in the quality of facilities (especially for older schools), and congestion in the dormitories due to rising population growth without parallel infrastructural expansion. For example, the assistant headmaster in Interview 1(B) iterated:

> "...Cause as at now, you see the girls' dormitories...I am told, the capacity was 260 on completion. As we speak, we have more than 400 girls using one facility. So...so, if we are given, then we can probably decongest ermm so that to avert any health hazard that may occur. Because as I speak to you, I know there are some challenges, some extreme challenges they are facing…the ladies especially, in terms of communicable diseases...in terms of, the toilet facilities are very few...."

Likewise, the headmistress in Interview 5(A) described the challenges of an ageing school and the sanitation challenges when she stated that:

> "...you know our school is very old. It moved to this current site in the year 1952. And, we have very big septic tanks…very very big. And many of them are expired if I may use that word...it looks like the soakaways, virtually all of them are expired. And we need a lot of money to fix them.......I forgot to mention another need, ermmm toilets...for classes time. We have toilets in their various dormitories but when they come to class, there's no toilet around so, if anyone needs to use the washroom, they just have to walk to the [dormitory] and that is not convenient because at times we have visitors..."

Each year, the kind of needs that are mentioned in these excerpts are captured in the EMIS forms that schools submit to the MOE through GES. Although the annual EMIS data collection exercise collates information on these needs (i.e. social amenities), it appears that little action is taken after the exercise to supply some of this needed infrastructure. The frustration with

government inaction or the lack of ability to provide funds for sorely needed social amenities was implied in the headmasters in Interview 3(A)'s statement:

> "We have a program called EMIS, Education Management Information System. Yes, every year they take data. But from what we say, what we hear…it appears that the data is just shelved."

Although the issue of an unconducive environment was not registered by all of the research participants as a challenge, a considerable number of schools found it to be an issue that affects student life to an extent and impedes the boarding schools from achieving their desired level of conduciveness. This issue is also tied to the previously discussed accommodation problem.

4.1.2. Human resource-related constraints

Through the interviews, many of the research participants described various challenges they encountered with regards to both their student and teacher populations which I grouped under the broad category of human resource-related constraints.[40] Two types of challenges were repeatedly indicated: population pressure and staffing issues.

Population pressure

In the era of the Free SHS program, access to secondary education has been expanded to all students who qualify after the Basic Education Certificate Exam (B.E.C.E). While this has triggered increased enrolment, there has been little to no change in the size and number of facilities that various public SHSs possess even though infrastructure development is needed now more than ever. Truth be told, this rapid increase in enrolment did not only begin with the Free SHS program but rather, it began with the increase in the duration of senior secondary education from 3 to 4 years in 2008.[41] As a public SHS student at the time, I witnessed firsthand how our dormitories

[40] Here, human resource will be used loosely in reference to both the teachers and students in the school, and not necessarily in its definition as a corporate/business concept.
[41] Please refer to Section 1.2. in the Introductory Chapter for details on this policy.

became cramped and how our ironing room, house meeting room and indoor Physical Education room were converted into dormitories and classrooms for the incoming first year students in the 2009 and 2010 cohorts. Irrespective of when this population boom began though, all of the sampled schools (regardless of ranking) stated that they had to grapple with immense population pressure. Population pressure, as per my interviewees, was manifested in the form of congestion (especially in the dormitories and dining halls), constraints on future population expansion, and disciplinary issues. In Interview 3(A) for instance, the headmaster signaled this as an issue when he mentioned that:

"...you know, the kind of pressure that is on the facilities...the student population rising and whatever, the way, they mishandle some of them… (...)....you see…as at now, we are restricted by way of admissions. We can't admit because where will they sleep? Where do they class? These are all accommodation issues......stakeholders sat together, and they realized no! the trajectory is such that, it will get to a time you know the human resource or the students especially, will get too high, intake...that we can't you know maintain facilities as it were. Anything, an epidemic can break out in dormitories because there will be so much congestion, packed…"

Likewise, in Interview 11(C), the assistant headmaster indicated this as an issue:

"You know...what what…made the situation a bit critical is the...this new SHS where, you declare a vacancy of about…about...300, 400 and then you are given about 600. Ahuh...you can imagine the...the, the struggle there...the struggle it causes...the challenge...let me put it that way. Ahuh...so there is that situation, where you are compelled to, to cry out to no other person but to government to bring help immediately. So, as for that it has been regular…even before the Free...we were challenged; plus, the Free...you keep us shouting on top of our voices".

As suggested by the excerpt from Interview 3(A), the headmasters and headmistresses were worried that the current population pressure could potentially lead to a disease outbreak, and some of them reported an ongoing massive bed bug infestation not only in their schools but also in other schools across the region. The headmaster in Interview 7(A) was one of them:

"...when I was here, we were just about 12 in a dormitory, 12, 17 in a dormitory. Now they are about twenty to about thirty in that same dormitory. So, if you take one floor where we were just...in fact those days...eh...way back in the... early '80s, the total population of the school was about 1050. The same infrastructure being used by now 3000, or 2700...Every school is

complaining about bed bugs…why? it's the same structures we used to sleep in…there were no bed bugs…but now it's because of the congestion...that is bringing the bed bugs".

Not only are these teachers worried about the health implications of the increased population pressure, but they also noted a peak in disciplinary issues due to the difficulty in controlling order among a very high student population (Interview 6(B) and 2(C) for instance). Owing to this pressure and the potential problems it presents, most of the headmasters and headmistresses--with the exception of 3 schools who expressed willingness to accept more students on condition that more facilities were provided by the government-- expressed a desire to maintain, if not cut down, on the number of students being admitted. One can plausibly argue that the introduction of the new Double Track system, indicates the government's recognition that the schools cannot cater for all the students they are compelled to admit if all of them are channeled into a single track.

Staffing Issues

According to the research participants, formerly they were allowed to directly recruit teachers on their own in addition to those teachers who were recruited by the regional GES. However, over the last few years, the government has progressively introduced regulations that prohibit the schools from recruiting teachers directly. Right now, if there is a vacancy or need, headmasters and headmistresses are expected to write to their respective district assemblies who then forward to the regional GES on the school's behalf. This streamlined process appears to have begun shortly after the Education Act 2008 (see Chapter 1) was introduced.

In the interviews, research participants approached the question of human resource acquisition (or staffing), in an ambivalent way. On one hand, 9 out of 12 headteachers stated that they had little to no challenge with teaching staff numbers since the government's introduction of the streamlined teacher recruitment process. For those who had staffing issues, they indicated that

their needs were related to only specific subjects like Mathematics (Interview 4(C)), Science (Interview 6(B), and Visual Arts (Interview 12(B)). On the other hand, some of them stated that due to the government's takeover of the teacher recruitment process, they could not vet applicants and contribute to the decision-making process; as a result, some expressed their partial disappointment that they could not conduct 'quality control' when teachers were being recruited to their schools. For instance, while the headmaster in Interview 2(C) iterated that his school had enough teachers and that he approved of the government's new recruitment rules,

> "I think this is the best in the sense that, ermm…previously when we were recruiting, if my school has let's say a population of about 200, I can recruit as many as 50 teachers, which ehh…if you look at the ratio it's not the right thing. So now, it's like they want to control…yea because you just don't declare. You declare the number of classrooms you have, the number of students you have and then, how many more you need. And so, they can also look at it and do their calculations, verify that ermm…really what you want, we can provide…Ermm for now, erm…I can say that we have more than enough. There is even an ongoing exercise which if we don't take time, a few of our people will be taken out...when it comes to the teachers, I don't foresee our school, trying to probably increase enrolment."

The headmaster in Interview 4(C) implicitly registered his partial disappointment with this new government-regulated teacher recruitment process when he said:

> "...So, you will just send your request and then they will post them to you...you don't have any say. You just have to accept them…they bring the teacher, you accept the teacher".

Of course, his concern is not unwarranted since as the headmaster he would want to know the kind of teachers that are being recruited to work with him. However, considering that teacher recruitment in the past has sometimes been done in nepotistic ways, resulting in overconcentration of teachers in urban schools while rural schools are left underserved, the new government rule has its own benefits of ensuring rationalization. Irrespective of how they felt about this new regulation, in the transcripts it was evident that they all acknowledged that the streamlined teacher recruitment process was more beneficial to all schools as it ensured fairness and effectiveness in the distribution of teaching staff.

Other issues related to staffing that were mentioned by some of the research participants were the need for pedagogical skills upgrade for some teachers[42] (Interviews 2(C) and 4(C)), and the need for more staff members in the non-teaching department such as cooks and security men (Interviews 2(C), 5(A) and 7(A)). Overall, it is evident that in the area of teaching staff supply, the government is doing well to ensure that schools' needs are adequately catered to, although it would be good if the headteachers' input is also taken before an official posting is done.

4.1.3. Alternative Funding constraints

Another sub-theme that emerged during data analysis was the constraints on Ghanaian public SHSs ability to raise alternative funds. Until recently, public SHSs had the mandate to raise alternative funds outside of the formal state through the Parent-Teacher Associations (P.T.A), Alumni associations, and from school-specific levies[43] intermittently charged on the students' bills with the approval of the P.T.A and GES. Also, some schools mentioned that they controlled Internally Generated Funds (IGF) which were sourced from the intermittent surpluses and savings they make such as the occasional savings on foodstuff (or produce) purchases for the dining hall. Although the contributions from alumni associations have remained the same or increased marginally, over time schools indicate that their other alternative funding sources (i.e. P.T.A and school-specific levies) have been constrained or eliminated altogether.

[42] Interestingly, this need was expressed by only 2 lower performing schools out of the 12 sample schools that I engaged with. As a result, in this study it was a bit difficult to gauge the extent to which the need for pedagogical skills upgrade is a widespread issue for public secondary schools. However, other scholarly works (such as Stephen Kwabena Ntim's (2017) *Transforming Teaching and Learning for Quality Teacher Education in Ghana: Perspectives from Selected Teacher Trainees and Stakeholders in Teacher Education*) have attempted to explore this issue at the general secondary school level and especially with regards to the teaching of ICT in schools.

[43] Prior to the introduction of the Free SHS policy (which has made secondary education relatively free and standardized fee schedules), public SHSs had the opportunity to request for levies from parents in their fee schedules. Levies were sometimes requested for projects like the refurbishing of libraries, painting of the school, or construction of school walls and gates. Since each school had the mandate to request for specific levies as and when it was needed, the fee schedules of schools could differ widely since additional fees could be heaped on the basic tuition and boarding fees.

The research participants indicated that the mandate to request for levies (besides the government-approved tuition fees) has become constrained especially with the implementation of some of the new directives and regulations under the Free SHS program. As a social intervention, this program seeks to reduce, if not eliminate, the costs parents incur for their children's secondary education. Inadvertently, the regulations introduced to achieve this vision seem to have curtailed schools' ability to raise alternative (and much needed) funds for their internal projects. One of these new regulations is that P.T.A dues/levies are no longer compulsory. Several schools (8 out of 12) stated that there has since been a decline in the financial contributions of parents through the P.T.A after this regulation was introduced. This was pointed out for example in Interview 2(C):

"...until last year with the Free Senior High School thing, ...parents are now not paying...But before, students were paying directly to us, we were managing the money so that at the end of the term, whatever amount that is left, you can't send it to the following term because when they come to the following term, new fees would be paid...But there will be a challenge now, since the government now will begin to remove the P.T.A from the bill."

As well as in Interview 3(A):

"Ehhh some years back, there was a policy whereby PTA levies members about 50 GHS every year, in support of Speech days and all that. But it was...you know...as it were deleted and is no more in operation. So, there is nothing like for raising funds...unless the PTA now, the strategy is that they are looking for alternative ways of funding their projects and other activities and…God willing this Saturday, I will be holding a Speech day ermm PTA Parent-Teacher Association this Saturday. [And how has the Free SHS impacted PTA contributions or?] Yes, yes...the concept, the idea of Free SHS is an excellent one, everybody knows, it's one of the greatest social interventions...So, ehh...Free SHS is good, is good...it has come to stay...You see...the PTA, they will wish to levy themselves, alternative ways of funding...yes but it appears, some policies are coming, "don't levy you see, students" don't levy. Cause, you see when you levy there is the tendency for authorities to maybe sack a student for non-payment of PTA."

As can be deduced from the excerpt from Interview 3(A), the government's rationale for making P.T.A levies no longer compulsory is its desire to prevent school administrators from sending students away to collect P.T.A levies even when they may have already paid their tuition and boarding fees. Undoubtedly, the intention for this new directive is good. It signals the

government's acknowledgement that it should be providing most (if not all) of the financial resources that public SHSs need instead of compelling them to seek help from private non-state sources. However, this new regulation may lead to the loss of a key source of alternative funding for public SHSs that they have relied on for several years, in light of the fact that government funding (at least in the short run) has not increased much to make up for the deficit that the new directive has triggered. To this end, concerned stakeholders such as the National Union of Ghanaian Students have called on the GES and the National Council of P.T.As to resolve this issue (Ghanaweb.com 2019). If this situation persists, then schools will have little to no option than to rely solely on the currently insufficient government financial support as and when it comes.

Nonetheless, elite schools like 7(A), 3(A) and 5(A) indicated that the parents of their students were still willing to pay levies or seek out alternative sources of funding to continue supporting the school because they were keen on ensuring that their children's education is not negatively impacted. However, this is not the case for lower-performing schools like 2(C) above, where the headmasters and headmistresses indicated that the parents have stopped paying the levies since the introduction of free SHS.[44] One may interpret this inaction by parents with children in lower-performing SHSs as a 'collective action' problem whereby the parents seem to prefer to 'free ride' on the free SHS program rather than actually to incur out-of-pocket costs (Olson 1965). After all, they are rational human beings and so, they will prefer to have free schooling over paid schooling. However, we should not confuse the inability to pay with an unwillingness to pay. For such parents, they also genuinely care about their children's education and wish to help but they

[44] Considering that highly supported elite schools continue to produce high performing students while poorly supported schools produce lower performing students, the scenario above illustrates Coleman's (1998)—and to an extent Bourdieu's (1986)—assertion that parental investment in education (time and effort, as well as their own human capital) contributes to the differences we see in the academic achievement of students beyond the natural differences in aptitude

may not have as much resources to pool together to trigger the kind of developments and outcomes witnessed in elite schools. Indeed, why shouldn't they enjoy the public good of free SHS? Their actions should not be portrayed as 'free riding' but rather, it may be evidence of poorer parents' implicit resistance to the levies and their recognition that free education should be wholly free, and not paralleled by hidden fees in the guise of P.T.A levies.

Indeed, the state should be fully responsible for funding a public good like education because leaving schools to their own devices to fill in the funding gap only gives the elite schools more of an upper hand over their lower performing counterparts since they remain 'blessed' with willing parents (as the headmistress in Interview 3(A) interestingly put it). The neoliberal education system, based on its market-oriented model, however absolves the state of some of this primary responsibility, and rather excuses the state's shortcomings under the facade of encouraging private sector engagement in education. If this situation persists, then perhaps, secondary education is not meeting its potential of becoming a tool to address the problems of inequality and stratification that exists in the wider Ghanaian society.

4.1.4. State bureaucratic Practices

Per the participants, state bureaucratic practices also present a challenge to public SHSs inasmuch as they are intended to streamline reporting and lobbying processes. By state bureaucratic practices I mean the slow rate of response from the government, the somewhat poor collaboration among government agencies, and the inconsistent government distributive practices that the research participants spoke of. While poor collaboration among government agencies and the inconsistency of government distributive practices were noted by Interviews 4(C), 3(A) and 7(A) as institutional issues that occasionally have trickle down effects at the local level by delaying

request processing times, the slow rate of response from government was cited by schools as an issue that they had to contend with almost on a daily basis.

With regards to the slow response rate of the government, most of the research participants mentioned that at times, they would have to write several letters to the District Assembly and GES and wait for a long while before their requests for assistance will be attended to. Some noted that they even had to go to the extent of visiting their MPs and the District Assemblies' almost every week to show that they were in dire need of support. For instance, the headmistress in Interview 5(A) stated:

> "Well, I have written a lot of letters, and I even have ermmm...I'm paying a visit to the headquarters this week. That's what we do...you write and then you follow up...especially with the GetFund and the Government of Ghana projects that are stalled. Yes, I write asking about when the work will be done, how soon work will be done, we…we move actually. With the street lights I have visited the Metro Chief executive, in the past two weeks I have been there four times...Yes you have to move to show them [that you are serious about it] yes, yes. Writing letters, moving, appealing to old girls[45], writing, talking to them, talking to parents, anyone you think could be of help. Writing, talking, lobby here and there...we talk to parents anyone at all. So, we are writing letters and we are following up."

Likewise, the assistant headmaster in Interview 11(C) noted:

> "[What about the government?] That one...eh not to exaggerate…I would say on weekly basis...hehehe...It comes every academic term. Ahuh...so there is that situation, where you are compelled to, to cry out to no other person but to government to bring help immediately."

Responses like these suggest that government is often slow to respond to the needs of the various public SHSs. Of course, the fact that the government has few financial resources to distribute to a multitude of public SHSs cannot be ignored as a potential cause of the slow bureaucratic response. But at the same time, these interviews suggest that the challenges that schools encounter are caused not just by financial constraints, but also by bureaucratic inefficiencies within the system.

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[45] "Old girls" is a colloquial term often used in Ghana to refer to female alumni. Male alumni are also usually referred to as "old boys".

4.2. Headteachers' Responses

In view of the aforementioned challenges, this study identified three broad types of responses employed by headmasters and headmistresses in dealing with constraints, namely: self-help strategies, strategic engagement with external actors, and waiting for government intervention. The second type of response--strategic engagement with external actors-- will be discussed in detail and in line with the conceptual framework in Chapter 5. For now, this section will analyze the other types of responses mentioned above.

4.2.1. Self-help strategies

The first response of the research participants to the challenges they face has been to look inward for resources and support. The self-help strategies that research participants indicated include teacher motivation practices, leadership ingenuity/improvisation, and the internal generation of funds.

Teacher Motivation practices

Glewwe et al. (2003) posit that teachers in developing countries, as everywhere, do better and are more satisfied (at least in the short run) when they are presented with incentives in their job. Incentives and job satisfaction not only keep teachers motivated to do better, but they also contribute to the students' learning and development (Perie and Baker 1997). In view of the many challenges that teachers face, especially with regards to accommodation and overcrowded classrooms, public SHSs have sought to motivate and retain their teachers in various ways.

The first and major source of motivation for teachers is the annual Speech and Prize Giving Day ceremony held by most (if not all) senior secondary schools. All 12 sampled schools indicated that this ceremony enables them to award the best teachers (as well as non-teaching staff) for their hard work and dedication, and to motivate and challenge all teachers to strive to do even

better. According to the participants, some of the usual prizes they awarded to teachers during the ceremony includes fridges, televisions (TVs), deep freezers, and standing fans. Even one of the elite schools (Interview 3(A)) stated that they awarded an all-expenses trip to either the UK or North America to their annual best teacher! According to participants, these trips and prizes are usually given as gifts to the schools for this purpose by the P.T.A, Alumni associations, private individuals and businesses. At times, the school has also purchased these items using Internally Generated Funds.

The second incentive or motivation package that was mentioned in the interviews was the end of term disbursements or welfare funds. In some schools, the research participants noted that they (or their predecessors) had set up a welfare fund that teachers and the P.T.A contribute to as a form of insurance and cooperative funding for teachers in times of need. Besides these welfare funds, participants also mentioned an incentive called 'P.T.A motivational fee', a set amount that students pay at the beginning of each term. When the term ends, this amount will be shared between the teaching and non-teaching staff on a 60-40 or 70-30 scale (in favour of teachers) as an incentive to encourage them to work harder. At times, as Interview 2(C) notes, that money will be used to purchase items such as oil and rice (which are sometimes costly to the household budget) and shared among the teachers at the end of year party or get-together. The research participants, as well as Yeboah and Adom (2016) in their study of teacher motivation and retention in rural secondary schools, note that these financial incentives are very well liked by the teachers (89). For instance, the headmaster in Interview 3(A) notes:

"...Eheh…and at the end of the year we get-together, and then there was a time there was something called motivation by government, some monies on the students' bill that we set aside and then P.T.A will also mobilize something at their meetings, then we add it up. Every term we disburse to the staff per some percentage. You know, the teachers take a bigger quota amount and then, the non-teaching staff take their share as well. So, we have been able to manage everything to keep them. So, you'll realize that, when it comes to teaching practice, everyone wants to come

and practice in X[46] because the person thinks there is the opportunity to maybe get recruited, get employed...you know at least some incentive packages you get."

According to the research participants, the P.T.A was formerly responsible for contributing ten Ghana cedis per term per student to the school through the students' bill. However, with the introduction of the Free SHS program, they said, this function has been taken over by the government, and a lower amount (6.33 Ghana cedis instead of 10.00 Ghana Cedis) is now paid to the schools. This cut-back was highlighted by the headmistress in Interview 8(C):

" staff motivation yes. Yes, we have that too but that one the free SHS also captures that but it...though it is not captured not up to the amount that is meant but they have also done something [so they pay that component that meets] staff motivation, ten cedis for every student per term but free SHS made it six cedis and some thirty-three pesewas..."

Besides the above, some schools have tried to turn the challenge of insufficient or lack of teacher accommodation into an opportunity to reward or motivate teachers. How? you may ask. Two of the research participants' (Interviews 1(B) and 2(C)) for instance stated that they have sometimes helped their teachers to find off-campus housing or invited teachers who lived very far away to move to on-campus housing immediately when they are able to construct a staff bungalow or two, as a sign to the teachers that they care about their welfare and wish for all of them to live on or near campus. As Yeboah and Adom (2016) note, accommodation for teachers – especially to those in schools located in rural areas like Interview 2(C)'s – is a crucial incentive to keep the teachers motivated and retained for longer periods of time. Of course, it would have been good for all teachers to equally access this benefit of on-campus housing but due to its scarcity, teacher accommodation has to be distributed based on whether a teacher deserves it or not. How the extent of 'deserving-ness' is measured was however unclear in the interviews.

[46] The school name is omitted in this part of the transcript in line with the anonymization and privacy promises spelled out in my ethics approval and consent forms.

Apart from the Speech and Prize Giving Day, end of term disbursements, and teacher accommodation, participants mentioned that public SHSs have also motivated their teachers by providing lunch (and sometimes breakfast) at least three times in a week (or daily for some schools) as an incentive. This was noted by the participants in Interviews 10(B), 9(D), 8(C), 3(A) and 2(C). Yet still, others have motivated their teachers by allowing them to gain additional income from after-school tutoring (or 'extra time' as they liked to call it), as well as occasionally gain some additional income from being on the school's National Science and Math Quiz team. This form of motivation was described by participants in Interviews 7(A), 2(C) and 6(B). The headmaster in Interview 6(B) also noted that the location of his school (urban setting) was another motivating factor for teachers. While in-service teacher training is a must for every organization's human resources department, it was also listed as one of the incentives that headmasters and headmistresses provided to their teachers. According to participants in Interviews 4(C), 5(A), 7(A), 8(C) and 10(B), they motivated and retained their teachers by bringing in resources persons and lecturers to provide refresher courses on pedagogical skills and to train teachers on specific difficult topics in the syllabus. The public schools' provision of in-service training complements the government's own in-service training for teachers.

Leadership Ingenuity/Improvisation

With regards to the infrastructure-related constraints as well as population pressures, the participants indicated that public schools' response has been to improvise; that is, to convert certain structures into new temporary purposes other than what they were initially created or built for. In some schools, headmasters and headmistresses noted that they had converted classroom blocks into dining halls and assembly halls and vice versa as they either did not have specific buildings designated for this purpose, or the ones they had were too small to accommodate the large number

of students. Yet still, others stated that although they had not converted the buildings into a new temporary use, they used the present structures they had for multiple purposes other than the ones they were initially built for. For example, the headmaster in Interview 1(B) stated:

> "Then you see, some subjects, ermm alternate and some of them, we don't have a space, so we have to use canopies, or we have to use erhh...summer huts. We have to go to the summer hut to use because it is not, we don't have enough classrooms. Erhh…and currently, we have also turned the small assembly hall into five classrooms, we've divided it into 5 classrooms. That is why we want to construct a proper assembly hall."

When I tallied the number of times the word "improvised" was used or implied in the inventory sheets and interviews, I found that at least 50% of the sample schools had to rely on the improvisation of facilities to run smoothly, and there was at least two improvised buildings or structures in every school. Often, the improvised facilities were para-educational structures like assembly halls, dining halls and science laboratories, and not classrooms per se. Thus, while all the sampled schools, with the exception of schools (4(C), 3(A) and 1(B), agreed that the government had done well to provide them with adequate classroom units, they indicated that they still needed para-educational structures such as the ones described above to function properly. This shows that, though emphasis is often placed on the provision of classrooms to schools, we must not lose sight of the equally crucial need for these para-educational facilities (especially for boarding and semi-boarding schools) considering that these facilities are key to providing the holistic educational experience desired by Ghanaian secondary school students and their parents.

While having to improvise may connote a negative thing, one can look at it positively as also reflecting headteachers' leadership ingenuity in the face of challenges. Instead of waiting for government to cater for their needs, we can see that these participants exercise agency by thinking creatively about how they use space and how they can mitigate the challenge posed by an ever-increasing student population that is not accompanied by parallel infrastructural expansion. Some

(like the headmaster in Interview 2(C) for example) have even gone as far as finding innovative ways, such as creating a convenience store for the school, to increase the revenue accrued to the school's Internally Generated Funds so that they can build or renovate the facilities needed by the school. However, the onus should not be on these headteachers to raise additional funds to support their schools, provide infrastructure or motivate their teachers; rather, it should be placed on the government.

Internal Generation of Funds

All of the sampled schools described one of the alternative sources of funding they intermittently relied on as Internally Generated Funds (or IGF). As the name implies, IGF are those funds that are accrued to the school through the efforts or operations of the institution themselves and not through external means. As indicated above, the headmaster in Interview 2(C) for instance pointed out that his school generated such funds through the convenience store he was operating in collaboration with his teachers. The headmasters in Interviews 9(D) and 4(C) also indicated that IGF was sometimes sourced through the surpluses or savings made on certain costs such as dining hall foodstuff costs. As pointed out in Interviews 10(B) and 11(C), IGF enables administrators to engage in routine repairs and maintenance of the school's facilities. Also, as indicated by Interview 2(C), IGF can also be used towards the construction of infrastructure:

"Ahuh…so, I was talking about the fact that, erhh I didn't come to meet much infrastructure but in my own way, I have been able to use ermm… Few monies that were generated internally, to do something for the school...So with this money, ermm the internally generated funds we've been able to ermm...put up, a 6-unit laboratory, so now…and, it was designed as a laboratory..eheh..we have the prep room, and the lab itself… My office, where you came, in fact I…I actually built it when I came with the same internally generated funds. My office used to be a place very small, like, we were a third of this room, but I realized that we weren't, there wasn't enough space for me to keep some other things. And then, ermm, I have also built girls' dormitory which is about 100-capacity of beds which also came...(from IGF), eheh…and then I have used part of this money to also build boys' dormitory annex. And eh…the school gate you met, I built it. So, it is not money from government, it is not money from P.T.A, not even from alumni…internally generated...eheh"

This excerpt (among many others) highlights the crucial role that IGF plays in schools' ability to respond to the challenges that beset them. What is highlighted in all these self-help strategies is that school administrators have agency and they employ their agency in diverse and innovative ways to solve the problems that their schools encounter. Judging by these actions, it is fair to characterize Ghanaian public SHS headmasters and headmistresses as capable managers and master improvisors.

4.2.2. Wait for Government Intervention

Although most of the headmasters and headmistresses seem to employ ingenuity when dealing with the infrastructure-related and human resource-related constraints, it seemed that they could not easily overcome the challenge posed by constraints on seeking alternative funding and state bureaucratic practices. Of course, they could rely on IGF as an alternative source of funding for a while if parents do not P.T.A levies; but that money from IGF is just intermittent and mostly too small to replace the support that a strong and vibrant P.T.A brings or the kind of help that a wealthier and more invested government can offer. Since they are public institutions and lack the autonomy that universities enjoy, they cannot necessarily partake in external investments with the school's money either. That leaves them little to do than to wait for government intervention as and when it comes.

This is the case especially for lower-performing schools since unlike their elite counterparts, parents are increasingly showing a reluctance to continue paying levies since the government introduced new rules. This inability to act does not mean that these schools lack agency, but rather, it suggests that new layers of structural constraints have been imposed on schools after the introduction these new regulations (i.e. Free SHS and streamlined teacher recruitment). Thus, these new regulations are a two-edged sword: good on one hand because it ensures rationalization of

teacher recruitment processes and prevents arbitrary dismissal of students for non-payment of fees, but bad on the other hand because it means that schools can do little but wait for the government's response to their requests no matter how long it takes.

4.3. Opportunities

Through the interviews, two main kinds of 'opportunities' in the public SHS system were described: 1) international donor engagement in education, and 2) the existence of a formalized lobby system. Of course, there may be other opportunities in the public SHS system besides these two, but the ones mentioned here are what the research participants talked about in their interviews.

4.3.1. International Donor Engagement in Education

Individual countries and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are engaged in various bilateral and multilateral partnerships with the Ghanaian government that yields several benefits to the education sector as a whole and to individual student and school beneficiaries. For the 2009 fiscal year for instance, the ESP 2010-2020 estimated that Ghana would receive about 6.5% of the funds it needed for education from external sources[47], while the Government, GetFund and IGF will absorb the remaining 93.5%. In the interviews, two programs were repeatedly referred to: Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP), and the Science and French Resource Center Projects.

SEIP is a World Bank funded project with the development objective to expand access to secondary education and improve the quality of lower-performing SHSs in Ghana[48] (World Bank 2017) The program was approved in May 2014 and is expected to run until November 2021 (ibid.). Four out of the 12 sampled schools (Interviews 2(C), 4(C), 8(C) and 11(C)) indicated in their

[47] Here is a breakdown of 6.5%: 4.3% from donors, 0.6% from EFA-FTI CF, and 1.6% from HIPC (ESP 2010-2020, Vol. 1, p.39)
[48] Also, the project is intended to provide capacity building and technical support to MOE and GES with regards to monitoring and evaluation, financial management, and coordination and planning.

inventory sheets that they were beneficiaries of this program. These schools represent some of the fourteen low-performing public SHSs in the Central Region who have been selected to benefit from this program. According to the participants, through SEIP they have received technical and financial support for in-service teacher training, capacity building and school management support, and financial support for the acquisition and/or maintenance of facilities. This new opportunity for lower-performing SHSs is good because it offers them the alternative sources of funds that they lack as a result of receding P.T.A and at times, the weak support from their alumni. Moreover, it indicates the Ghanaian government and the World Bank's acknowledgement that such schools are in dire need of help to provide the same kind of quality education and educational experiences that their elite counterparts offer. However, as the headmaster in Interview 2(C) notes, the emphasis of SEIP is on Math, Science and English teacher training and learning, and this neglects the training needs of other departments like the geography and economics department. Likewise, the headmaster in Interview 4(C) noted that though they had been promised 12000 Ghana Cedis for infrastructural maintenance and general administrative costs for the fiscal year, they had not received their disbursement as at the third school term (June 2018) when this interview took place. Thus, although it can be highly beneficial to these schools, SEIP has its own limitations and inefficiencies that need to be tackled if the kind of development it envisions is to be achieved.

Besides the SEIP, some of the participants also mentioned (with pride) that their schools had been designated as either one of the district Science Resource Centers or French Resource Centers in the country. While participants in Interview 4(C) and 7(A) indicated their schools were French Resource centers, the headmaster in Interview 6(B) also indicated that his school was a Science Resource Center. French Resource centers are selected schools in the various regions which are designated as centers for the teaching of French by the MOE and supported by the

French Embassy and Institut Français as a result of their good performance in French examinations organized by WAEC (Embassy of France in Ghana 2016).The Science Resource Center Project was introduced into the senior high schools by the Ministry of Education in 1995 with the support of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to facilitate the meaningful study of science and technology at the senior secondary school level; selected schools serve a cluster of schools in their localities as a satellite of the National Science Resource Center[49] that was established in 2004 (Ghana News Agency 2004). While the headmaster in Interview 6(B) seemed grateful (and proud) that his school was a district science center, the reality on the ground is that the resource center at his school now has obsolete equipment and the inputs for experiments are rather infrequently replenished, making the center more of a white elephant that is infrequently patronized by other schools in his district. Nonetheless, due to the population pressure on existing laboratories, the headmaster in Interview 6(B) was grateful that at least, unlike other schools, they had the infrastructure to accommodate their students during lab experiments.

4.3.2. Formal Avenues to Lobby

Another crucial opportunity for public SHSs that was signaled through the interviews is the existence of formal avenues for lobbying. It was evident through the interviews that all the headteachers are able to lobby for their needs irrespective of their rank as an elite or lower-performing school. All the participants mentioned that they write letters to the district assembly, regional GES office and sometimes as far as the Ministry of Education to table their needs (infrastructure and human resources-related) and lobby for their requests to be met. Their reference to this formal avenue of lobbying was reinforced by the GES official in Interview 13 when he indicated that GES facilitates the schools' lobby:

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[49] Under this project, schools are equipped with science laboratories, and science and ICT teachers are to be given regular training to upgrade their skills (Ghana News Agency 2004).

"The Directorate pushes letters from the SHS to the various quarters to improve upon their infrastructure and also organize programmes to build the capacity of teachers and students with the help of MOE and the Regional Coordinating Council."

This opportunity is crucial because it provides (to an extent) a level playing field for all schools to seek the help of the government and other agencies in the education sector.

Therefore, as highlighted above, opportunities like a formalized lobbying system and international donor programs like the SEIP and the Science and French Resource Center Projects are crucial to schools' success and survival. Opportunities like these (and others not mentioned here) are enabling schools to overcome some of the bureaucratic, infrastructure-related, human resource-related and alternative funding constraints they encounter. However, with regards to state bureaucratic practices, it is evident that headmasters and headmistresses can do little to force the government to be timelier and more efficient in its distributive practices besides adhering to their own formal deadlines and requesting mechanisms. Regardless of what type of opportunity that a school benefits from or how it responds to the challenges it encounters, it is worthy to note that these administrators display their own agency by improvising and persistently lobbying (through letters and visits) to get their needs met. This study will now delve into an analysis of how schools strategically engage with external actors as a response to the challenges they encounter in the public SHS system.

Chapter 5: Social Capital and Resilience -Schools' Strategic engagement with external actors

Besides exploring the challenges and opportunities that Ghanaian public SHSs face in their day-to-day management, this study was also motivated to critically examine how various schools are able to negotiate their vulnerability to the constraints imposed on them. This second objective gives rise to two sub-questions: What kinds of resources, experiences and/or relationships do schools draw on when navigating the Ghanaian public SHS context? Why are certain schools more vulnerable to the constraints imposed on them than some of their counterparts? In this chapter, I answer these sub-questions while employing a conceptual framework anchored in social capital theory. I define social capital as the sum of embedded resources (tangible and intangible) that are inherent in social networks and on which individuals, communities and groups may draw on outside of the formal state to generate favourable outcomes and/or to remain resilient in the face of structural constraints. I argue that while elite schools note the strong support of external actors and the social capital they offer as key to their survival, lower-performing schools that seemingly struggle a bit may not have a strong and vibrant alumni or PTA support, but through improvisation, and intermittent in-kind and financial support from private individuals, businesses, and political actors, they have also been able to contend with some of the daily challenges that they encounter. However, if schools are compelled to seek out these strategic relationships with external actors, then it is fair to say that perhaps Ghanaian public secondary education is not public at all but rather, a fundamentally market-oriented endeavor. If it is indeed public, then the primary responsibility of providing infrastructure and educational materials should lie with the government and not the schools themselves.

When the participants were asked about how they respond to some of the challenges that they encounter, their answers suggested that besides self-help strategies or waiting for government

intervention, they also relied on strategic engagement with external actors to yield much needed financial and physical support. The strategic actors that were often mentioned in the interviews were the Alumni Associations, MP/political aspirants, Private Businesses and Private (unaffiliated) individuals. While the P.T.A was often mentioned as an internal actor, for the purposes of this conceptual framework, it will be included with these external actors as one of the groups that produce and reproduce social capital in the public SHS sector. By strategic engagement with external actors, participants seemed to refer to the mutually beneficial relationships that they had formed with these actors and groups, and how they used these groups as conduits to access resources and advance their lobbies. These mutually beneficial relationships that have been constituted overtime are the direct consequences of the neoliberal form that secondary education in Ghana has taken on since the SAPs whereby the state's traditional funding, provision and regulatory role is relegated to the background and replaced with market-oriented principles that support educational privatization and cost-sharing with parents, just to name a few.

According to most of the participants, these external actors (especially the alumni and P.T.A) contribute immensely to the school in diverse ways ranging from infrastructure provision and maintenance, to human resource provision (i.e. non-teaching staff) and teacher motivation. The subsequent paragraphs will focus on examining (in detail) the contribution of these social networks or organizations to various schools' ability to remain resilient in a fiscally constrained neoliberal secondary education setting.

5.1. Parent-Teacher Associations (P.T.A)

As the core support group of the school and the first point of contact for support and social assistance, the P.T.A in essence represents *bonding social capital* for public SHSs (Aldrich and Meyer 258). As the parents and legal guardians of the students in the school, the P.T.A is an

embodiment of a dense social network (à la Bourdieu) which produces and reproduces social capital that is tied to specific financial and physical resources accessible by the school. Per the interviews, it was clear that the P.T.A supports schools with infrastructural maintenance, the employment of part-time teaching staff and full-time non-teaching staff like security men, and at times, the construction of certain facilities such as additional dormitories and teachers' housing. These can be seen as the *behavioural manifestations* of the existence of social capital in the micro level relationships between the P.T.As and the public SHSs in the Central Region.

However, as was previously noted, the new GES directive that has made P.T.A not compulsory has inadvertently led to a contraction in most schools' financial support from this quarters. Although all schools expressed worry about the potential and actual recession in P.T.A support, elite schools iterated that their parents were still keen on providing support to the schools. For instance, in Interview 7A the headmaster stated:

"P.T.A is still very strong that they can manage themselves...they meet as a group…they...especially when they have their children in the different houses, sometimes they try to form groups as P.T.A of that house. Yes...and they see to maintenance of the house. Some, parents who are well-endowed, come up with very big projects. Presently we have one parent who wants to come and tile a whole dormitory. I think "Anchorkey" if you know the name, ermmm big contractors in Cape Coast, I mean, hardware dealers in Cape Coast. He wants to come tile the entire house. Some buy PolyTanks...some nettings and other things are...inaugurated."

Likewise, in Interview 5(A) the headmistress said:

"We don't ask for a levy…because we are not permitted to ask for a levy, but parents are willing to donate. So, we never call it a levy and we never impose it… on them. We just mention. On Saturday for instance I talked about erm…our need for, to reconnect our internet, you know... it's broken down, we need the fiber...I just mentioned that these are some of our needs. I also talked about our CCTV camera that has broken down and we need support to help have it fixed. I mentioned a few things...and at the end of the meeting some people just walked up. Oh, I am interested in helping you do this, I'm interested in helping you do that. So, its free donation...so we are not levying, we are not going against the rules. But we just mention and those who are willing can come up to support it"

Conversely, the headmasters in Interview 2(C), 4(C) and 11(C) mentioned that the parents had now taken on a back seat with regards to their contributions to the school since the new directive was implemented. Here, the divide between elite and lower-performing schools is clearly manifested in that while elite schools will continue to receive P.T.A contributions due to the majority of the parents' ability to afford to do so, lower-performing schools may not. Drawing on Aldrich and Meyer's (2015) assertion that bonding social capital is commonly characterized by high levels of similarity (homophily) in demographics, attitudes and the availability of and access to information and resources, we can deduce from the excerpts' description of the continued strength of P.T.A support that elite schools normally have more endowed parents or parents interested in investing highly into their children's education. Of course, this is not to homogenize all parents of students in elite schools as wealthy and ever-ready to contribute, but rather, what the differences in responses suggest that they are more likely to maintain their contributions to the school, regulation or no regulation. Contrariwise, in often rural and lower-performing schools, we can infer that parents are more likely to withdraw their contributions to schools since they may be relatively less-endowed. This inference is plausible considering that the headmaster in Interview 2(C) pointed out that schools like his were established previously as community day schools to ensure that rural and deprived communities could have access to secondary education. This implies that they may not be as well-endowed to contribute voluntarily to fund public education--a public good that is (and should be) the responsibility of the government of Ghana and not the parents.

My analysis of P.T.A contributions in the various types of public SHSs is not to say that lower-performing schools do not have bonding social capital, but rather, it is intended to enable me to highlight Foley and Edwards' (1997) assertion that there are differences in the value of social capital that diverse groups have, and by extension how vulnerable or resilient that group will be.

Deducing from the interviews, it was clear that the P.T.A in elite schools produce a form of social capital that is tied to a lot more resources or a higher volume of resources than the P.T.A in lower-performing schools can offer or afford. And that is why we see that these lower-performing schools may be in a more precarious situation of losing this alternative source of funding unlike their counterparts depicted above. The differences in what the P.T.A in these two categories of schools can offer suggests that without any government intervention, lower-performing public SHSs would continue to be in a worse off situation, while their higher-performing elite counterparts will continue to maintain their already favorable position in the MOE/GES school classification scheme.

This situation further suggests that perhaps, a form of inequality exists between these two categories of schools that is self-reinforcing. Thus, what we see as low performance may not necessarily be a function of the differences in students' cognitive skills, but rather the partial result of differences in the kinds of social networks and resources that parents offer to their children's schools. The differences in what parents are able to offer to their children's schools may translate into the differences in the kind of experiences and educational opportunities that students in lower-performing schools gain vis-a-vis their counterparts in higher performing schools; this situation leads to what Ladson-Billings' (2006) labels as 'opportunity gaps'.[50] However, this should not be the case. If we attach the label 'public' to secondary education, then all schools should be funded to a specific high standard set by the government, and all Ghanaian students should get similar opportunities and experiences that are not dependent on the vagaries of P.T.A donations or levies. Therefore, although bonding social capital drawn from P.T.As can be useful to schools, it can also

[50] This term refers to the systemic inequalities in educational opportunities among students. Ladson-Billings (2006, 2013) sees this as the root cause of the symptomatic achievement gaps we often witness among lower-performing students and their higher performing counterparts.

create the negative externality of reinforcing educational inequality and social difference as Bourdieu (1986) points out, thus absolving the state of some of its primary responsibilities towards public secondary education.

5.2. Alumni Associations

Like the P.T.A, alumni associations also act as *bonding social capital* for their alma mater. They are equally dense networks comprised of individuals with similar demographics[51], similar values (such as trust and mutual reciprocity), and the similar goal to ensure that their alma mater thrives well. The dense or tight bonds are created due to the fact that most secondary school students in Ghana spend about three to four years of their formative years in the school's boarding houses thus forming very close relationships based on trust, loyalty, camaraderie and mutual reciprocity that often transcends even ethnic and socioeconomic cleavages (Hanson 1302). Even years after graduating, alumni (as well as the schools themselves) find ways to organize reunions or year group meetings to keep alumni interacting with each other and to collaborate on projects that will benefit their alma mater (Hanson 2005). In this way, alumni associations offer bonding social capital which is tied to specific financial resources and forms of social assistance that can be accessed by their former schools if need be. These alumni associations are what Putnam (1993) will classify as 'horizontal' social networks. Most of the schools in my sample noted that their alumni associations had contributed over the years to infrastructure acquisition and/or maintenance, in-service teacher training, and teacher motivation initiatives; also, these alumni groups had helped them to advance their lobbies to the MOE and GES since some of them are very well-positioned in government and other areas of the economy.

[51] Albeit there are variations in the social positions and family background of alumni.

Although all the sampled schools had alumni associations, elite grade A and B schools often referred to their alumni associations as strong and vibrant while lower-performing schools usually indicated that they received little to no support from their alumni groups. Of course, the presence of strong and relatively well-endowed alumni support groups in these elite schools is not surprising considering the fact that they produce most of the outstanding students who easily transition into tertiary education and lucrative careers after graduation. The elite schools (7(A), 3(A) and 5(A) especially) indicated that their alumni associations are well-organized to the extent that they had established national and international chapters of their associations to ensure that they can stay connected and collaborate on projects for the benefit of their alma mater. The school in Interview 3(A) for instance, boasts of one of the largest dining halls in West Africa, a 2500+ capacity double-deck hall, donated by its alumni. Likewise, the school in Interview 7(A) has one of (if not) the biggest public SHS library complexes in Ghana, also donated by the national chapter of its alumni association in conjunction with a private voluntary association known as the Lion's club of which their alumni are key members. Through these examples, it is evident that alumni associations do not only offer bonding social capital, but they also offer the schools an avenue to access both *bridging* and *linking social capital* in the sense that they connect their schools to their own personal acquaintances and networks (in politics and business) who are endowed with new information and resources that are beneficial to the school, while intermittently mediating the relationship between schools and the political and administrative authorities in the region.

Conversely, the lower performing schools in my sample mentioned that their alumni associations could not contribute much to the development of their schools unlike their elite counterparts. Three reasons were commonly given for this issue. Firstly, some of them mentioned that their schools were relatively younger (25 years old or less) than their elite counterparts since

they were established through the 1987 Rawlings' educational reform program as part of the new crop of 1991 community secondary schools built to serve rural and deprived communities.[52] As a result, they said, their alumni were still struggling to make a living or to climb into the higher echelons of political and economic society (unlike their elite counterparts) and so, they could not offer much in terms of financial resources or connections to the school. The second reason given by these schools for weak alumni involvement was that, since most of them had been initially established to provide only technical and vocational education to students in rural and deprived communities, most of their alumni were oriented towards the artisanal and informal sectors of the economy which yields little income to the alumni themselves, and by extension restricts their ability to give-back to their schools. The third reason given for weak alumni involvement in lower-performing schools was that, their alumni associations were poorly organized and as a result, they could seldom come together to decide on and contribute to the execution of projects for their schools.

Apart from the reasons given above, a review of the answers to the background questions asked at the beginning of the interviews revealed that all the headteachers in the elite schools had attended the schools that they currently manage. This suggests that they have personal (not just formal) ties to the alumni associations and as a result, they are placed in a better position to elicit resources from the group as group members themselves. For the lower-performing schools, most of the administrators either did not indicate which schools they graduated from and those who did indicate their secondary schools were not alumni of the present schools that they manage. Consequently, it is unclear if the lack of personal affiliation to these alumni groups also affects their ability to elicit support or access financial contributions from these associations.

[52] Interviews 2(C) and 8(C) for instance mentioned this as a reason for the weak alumni support.

Hence, with regards to alumni associations' support to public SHSs, it was also evident that elite schools have an upper hand in terms of the value of social capital and the volume resources that they are able to secure in response to their needs. This implies that the various alumni groups' contributions to their alma mater, like the P.T.As, also feeds into or reinforces the inequalities we see between elite and non-elite schools. In addition, the fact that alumni networks offer elite schools access to other social networks or resources outside of their core support groups (something that their lower-performing counterparts may not have) reinforces Edwards and Foley's (1997) assertion that there are differences in groups' access to social capital. In view of this weak alumni support, the headmasters and headmistresses of lower-performing schools were responding to this challenge by finding innovative ways to generate IGF or branching out to seek alternative support from private businesses and sometimes, political aspirants. While the agency of these administrators is commendable, as has been previously iterated, soliciting for funds for infrastructure projects is not the responsibility of the teachers, but rather, that of the state. However, given the situation at hand whereby there are insufficient funds and 'queuing' for government support, the headmasters and headmistresses are compelled to create such strategic relationship with external actors in order to address the challenges that they encounter.

5.3. Political Aspirants, Members of Parliament, Private Businesses and Private Individuals

Besides the PTA and the alumni associations, the sampled public SHSs also mentioned that they occasionally benefited from their ties or 'friendships' with political aspirants, MPs, private businesses, and private (unaffiliated) individuals. On one hand, the relationship between schools and MPs or political aspirants is a manifestation of *linking social capital*, whereby regular citizens (headmasters and headmistresses) interact and connect with those in explicitly formal or institutionalized places of power or authority through formal channels to secure resources or

support; on the other hand, it is also a form of *bridging social capital* since some of these relationships are based on informal, loose connections often borne out of the close dense relationships characteristic of bonding social capital, and the said political actors are acting for their own benefit and not in the name of the state (Aldrich and Meyer 259). Likewise, the relationship between the schools and private individuals and businesses can be seen primarily as *bridging social capital* since these are looser connections/relationships between the administrators and individuals or businesses who they may be acquainted with (Aldrich and Meyer 258). Both kinds of relationships yield resources, information and connections that the schools may not have had if it did not engage outside its core support group of P.T.A and alumni associations.

According to the participants, the behavioural manifestations of this form of social capital is that external actors support schools by providing the items (prizes) to be awarded to teachers and students during Speech and Prize-Giving day, offering scholarships to needy students, contributing raw materials and cash towards infrastructure construction and maintenance, and even providing school buses to some schools. For example, the headmaster in Interview 3(A) stated:

"Transportation as well, it's been there but that is one area government has not been fair over the years with us...Some schools are given pick-up, Nissans, [X][53] no! You see, there is that perception that the school already has, or stakeholders will be able to give. But it's still the same public schools? If you are giving to one school, you should...you will see some yellow, yellow buses...never...never. There is a white bus there you saw it, it was donated by Unibank. When you are going read on it. When I took office 2015, they came and then, we discussed issues about working together, parents paying fees through their accounts. I agreed and then they...they asked, what do you want. I said, we have a problem with bus students must go out for co-curricular and other activities and lo and behold, 100,000-dollar bus there. Yes…yes...60-seater capacity...it's good".

Likewise, when the headmaster in Interview 6(B) was asked if his school received support from MPs, political aspirants and other external actors, he replied in the affirmative stating that:

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[53] School name omitted to ensure privacy and in line with the promise of anonymity as highlighted in my Ethics Review application.

"Oh yea, when they come. Political figures...at times MPs…I think the past MP gave us some computers and all those...and at times they lobby… [on your behalf?] yea…"

On one hand, these excerpts suggest that the relationship between the schools and the private businesses and individuals is regarded by the school administrators as mutually beneficial and reciprocal, since the schools receive what they need in return for granting favors or creating business arrangements with these institutions. In this way, social capital according to Putnam's (1995) conceptualization as trust, norms and "social networks of citizens' activity" is manifested at the meso level between schools and the community of business and political actors they engage with(167). However, on the other (negative) hand, the relationship between the schools and the public officials can be seen as a manifestation of a patron-client relationship whereby the MPs' contribution is an avenue for them to attract the support and admiration of their constituents and not necessarily because they are motivated by altruism; likewise, the relationship between the schools and private businesses (in some instances like Interview 3(A) stated) can be seen as essentially a marketing gimmick to gain more customers (i.e. the parents of the students), a brief business exchange or an execution of their corporate social responsibility. Overall though, what this relationship suggests is the broader picture that Ghanaian public secondary education is perhaps not public at all; instead, it has fundamentally become a market-directed endeavor whereby schools are compelled to engage with private interests in business-like transactions. Unlike the P.T.A and Alumni associations however, it was evident from the interviews that sometimes the access and benefits gained from this form of social capital are not restricted to only elite schools since all schools (grade A to D) mentioned that they received some level of support from either their MPs or private individuals and businesses at various points in time.

Considering all the above, it is evident in this chapter that schools draw on the various embedded resources (tangible and intangible) that are inherent in their social networks and outside

of the formal state to generate favourable outcomes, and/or to remain resilient in the face of the structural constraints they contend with on a daily basis. While lower-performing schools may seemingly struggle a bit because they do not have a strong and vibrant alumni or PTA support, this does not mean that they do not have social capital at all. They do have social capital like their elite counterparts even though the value of the social capital that they command or have access to may differ widely from the latter's own form of social capital. Luckily, through improvisation and intermittent in-kind support from private individuals, businesses, MPs and political aspirants, as well as opportunities like SEIP, they too have been able to contend with some of the daily challenges that they encounter.

However, although social capital has been key to schools' ability to tackle the challenges they encounter, we are still left with the issue of the structural constraints present in the Ghanaian secondary education sub-sector. In essence, the contributions of the P.T.A, Alumni associations, MPs and Private individuals and businesses are gifts that are offered intermittently to schools, and as a result, they are at best unreliable and at worst unsustainable. Due to this situation, not only are schools unable to engage in long term planning[54], but it also absolves the government (to a certain extent) of its responsibility to create an equitable and quality educational environment for all Ghanaian senior secondary students as private associations and individuals take over that role. Of course, there could be the counterargument from the government that such alternative funding resources are not factored into the fiscal component of the various educational sector plans that it draws, and as such, is neither relied on as a crucial component of education funding nor does it signal that the government does not want to do its duties. Indeed, on paper, the government and its development partners[55] absorb all the cost of public education; but in reality, there are funding

[54] This is especially the case for lower-performing schools who have less of this resource

[55] This is a term that the Government of Ghana seems to prefer to use when referring to its international donors.

gaps that are sometimes taken on through the schools' own internally generated funds or by the external actors described above. If the government is indeed interested in making quality education equitable and accessible for all as it has signaled with its Free SHS program mantra and the Double Track system, then it is high time that the government starts to find additional funding sources to support the sub-sector, instead of leaving the schools to their own devices. Because, as has been portrayed above, without increasing state funding to the sub-sector, educational opportunity gaps may persist among Ghana's senior secondary schools which will translate into the differences in academic achievement that we witness between elite schools and their lower performing counterparts, as well as the broader issue of socio-economic inequalities that we witness in the Ghanaian society. If these structural constraints are not tackled, then secondary education may end up being a tool for reinforcing socio-economic inequalities in the Ghanaian society instead of being a tool for national development and unity as earlier envisioned by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and other founding fathers.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Areas for Future Research

This study began with the premise that all public SHSs are compelled to constantly negotiate for their fair share of governmental support when it comes to securing inputs such as teaching and learning materials, as well as financial support for the construction of new infrastructure and the maintenance of existing ones. It asked the research question: What are the challenges and opportunities that Ghanaian public SHSs face as a result of the limited availability of resources in the public secondary school sector and how do they respond to them?

Drawing on primary data gathered from key stakeholders and using social capital as a conceptual frame, it has attempted to shed light on the challenges that Ghanaian public SHSs contend with, how the headmasters and headmistresses' of various sampled schools negotiate their vulnerabilities to such challenges, and what kinds of opportunities pertain in the public SHS system to help schools to navigate some of the constraints they encounter. The overarching aim of the study was to critically examine the relationship between social capital, secondary education and development in Ghana. To achieve this aim, three objectives are engaged with: 1) to critically examine head teachers' perceptions of how schools seek to manage the challenges and opportunities facing secondary schools in Ghana; 2) to critically examine how various schools are able to negotiate their vulnerability to the constraints imposed on them; and 3) to critically examine the practical and theoretical implications of my research findings on the relationship between secondary education and development in Ghana. Even though the situation pertains across the country, the study focused on the local context of the Central Region, gathering primary data through semi-structured interviews, inventory sheets and direct observation.

It found that public SHSs in the Central Region constantly contend with four major challenges to their survival and success: infrastructure-related constraints, human resource-related

constraints, funding constraints, and state bureaucratic practices. In response to these common challenges, they have often pursued self-help strategies like internal generation of funds, or strategically engaged with external actors, or sometimes, simply waited for government response whether it comes in a decade or in a few months. Though the entire public SHS system is constrained, certain opportunities — such as the SEIP, the Science and French Resource Center projects, and a formalized lobbying system facilitated by GES — have been useful at helping schools to deal with the challenges that they encounter. Particularly, schools' engagement with key external actors like the P.T.A, Alumni associations, private businesses and individuals, and political aspirants and MPs has been crucial to their survival since it has led to the production of various types of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking social capital), each offering its own unique set of resources and support to schools.

Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the fact that these challenges, the head teachers' responses, and the opportunities present in the system are all conditioned by the existing market-oriented education structure inherited from the SAP era. Although social capital has been key to the survival of Ghanaian public senior secondary schools, it is evident that relying on the discretionary funds or gifts from these external actors is an unsustainable way to fund high quality public education which will be accessible to all--especially if Ghana intends to meet the targets set under the SDG 4 and other regional and international agreements on education. What the government needs to do is to increase the tax base for education and find additional means of raising funds beyond traditional sources such as international donor funding.

Having recounted these empirical research findings in light of the conceptual framework anchored in social capital theory, several theoretical and practical implications emerge from the exploration of public secondary education in Ghana.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

The examination of elite schools and lower-performing schools' strategic engagement with external actors yield several insights that contribute to and reinforce certain aspects of the literature on education and social capital. Foremost, the empirical findings reinforce Edwards and Foley's (1997) assertion that the value of and access to social capital is not the same for everyone (or in this case, every school). It was evident from the data that, elite schools had an upper hand with regards to the value of their social capital as they received all-round support from the P.T.A, Alumni associations, private businesses/individuals and MPs and political aspirants even with the new constraints on their mandate to seek alternative sources of funding. Therefore, it is not the presence or absence of social capital that makes schools unequal in their ability to overcome the challenges they encounter, but rather, it is the differences in the value of, and access to social capital that distinguishes elite schools from their lower performing and often rural counterparts.

Secondly, the findings suggest that social capital can have both negative and positive impacts on different groups as suggested by Coleman (1988,1990). Not only does this finding reinforce Edwards and Foley's assertion, put it also fits into Bourdieu's (1986) critique of the role played by social capital in promoting inequality in education and reinforcing the favorable positions of specific groups in society. Thirdly, the empirical findings support Lin's (2001) assertion that dense and closed networks are not a prerequisite for the production of social capital. As was seen in Chapter 5, schools accessed all the three types of social capital as needed, even though *bridging* and *linking* social capital were based on looser connections between the actors. The value in these 'weak ties' as Granovetter (1973) calls it, has also been noted by Aldrich and Meyer (2015) as well. Hence, the findings suggest that social capital is a crucial element that can

foster favorable (and at times, unfavorable) outcomes when the theoretical relationship between secondary education and development in Ghana is considered.

Furthermore, the findings from this study challenge the popular classification of social capital into three separate categories namely, bonding, bridging and linking social capital. As was previously indicated in Section 5.3, the relationship between schools and MPs or political aspirants is both a manifestation of *linking social capital*, whereby regular citizens interact and connect with those in explicitly formal or institutionalized places of power or authority to secure resources or support, and *bridging social capital* which is characterized by informal and semi-formal relationships between headteachers and political aspirants or MPs often borne out of the close, dense networks of bonding social capital. Taking the dual characteristic of this relationship between schools and political aspirants/MPs into consideration, it is evident that perhaps the neat categories of bridging, bonding and linking social capital do not exactly hold all the time in real world relationships. Rather, the various types of social capital seem to convert or feed into each other as in a continuum (depending on the situation at hand), instead of falling into three neat and discrete categories as academics like Szreter & Woolcock (2004) have suggested.

Also, the findings from this study are relevant and important because they add to the contributions of previous scholars (like Pryor (2005) and Ssewamala et al. (2010) to name just a few) who emphasize the salience of social capital in the ability of communities and individuals to navigate institutional and socio-cultural challenges that they encounter in the Ghanaian and wider Sub-Saharan African context. However, it charts a path of its own by applying the concept to schools (i.e. institutions instead of people), and by illustrating both the positive and negative impact of social capital at work in Ghana's neoliberal secondary education sub-sector. By so doing, it calls attention to the value of micro and meso level social networks and the resources they offer,

without losing sight of the fact that the onus ultimately rests with the government to make quality public secondary education substantively equitable and accessible to all Ghanaian citizens.

6.2. Practical Implications

Policy-wise, the research findings suggest that although the Free SHS program is an excellent social intervention in the secondary education sub-sector, the rules that have been introduced parallel to this program (such as the directive prohibiting on schools from intermittently requesting for school-specific levies and compulsory P.T.A contributions) could pose a threat to schools' ability to secure crucial alternative sources of funding from external actors or civil society. On one hand, there is merit to this directive since it reduces the opportunities for elite schools to maintain an upper hand over their lower performing counterparts as it strips away that additional funding that such schools actively seek out; thus, in the long run this directive may actually reduce some of the inequalities that we witness among public SHSs. On the other hand, judging by the appreciation of the head teachers for these contributions, it is evident that if the government is cutting off the P.T.A, it needs to simultaneously find ways to secure additional funds to complete its stalled projects and offer more funding support to its schools. Thus, contrary to Gyimah-Brempong's (2017) acceptance that the government needs private sector to support to fund education since its resources are over-stretched, this study finds that though current resources are constrained, perhaps the government needs to embark on both traditional and new ways of raising funds such as increasing the tax base or investing the profits from natural resource exports back into education. The need for increasing the tax base of middle income countries and making those tax systems efficient are recommendations also advanced by UNESCO in the Global Monitoring Report (GEM Report 2017). Of course, the government may well take advantage of

these informal networks and the resources that the schools' social networks offer, but that should not absolve it of its primary responsibility to fund public secondary education.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

All in all, a study of this nature is not without its own limitations. Firstly, this study was unable to speak conclusively on the challenges and opportunities encountered by recently established schools[56] such as the newly-built Community Day Senior High Schools (Category D), who with the exception of one school (Interview 9 (D)), were exempted from this study. For one, Community Day Senior High Schools were not included in the study sample based on the initial assumption (erroneous in hindsight) that since such schools were built quite recently, they would not have as much challenges as their older counterparts. Nonetheless, the inclusion of one of these Community Day SHSs in the last phase of the research challenged this assumption since there was evidence that such schools equally had to contend with specific infrastructure, human resource and funding constraints, and they had few (if any) alumni to support them unlike their older counterparts. Though this study is limited in its ability to generalize the findings to newly built public SHSs, it is still useful since the parameters and precedents it sets here may be drawn on in future research to examine the experiences of this new group of secondary schools.

In addition, the study was unable to speak conclusively on how social/personal markers such as gender, age, ethnicity and class intersect to enhance or impede head teachers' ability to access social capital on behalf of their schools. This limitation arises due to two main reasons. Foremost, the background information collected at the beginning of each interview was intended to set a rapport between the researcher and the participant, and as a result, questions about the respondents' ages, ethnicities or even their alumni association membership were not probed as

[56] Most of these schools are barely 2 decades old, and some were recently established in 2016.

much as they could have been. Secondly, since the unit of analysis was the public secondary schools and not the teachers, the background information collected from the head teachers was mainly geared towards assessing their years' of experience in the position and their corresponding ability to speak authoritatively on the challenges that beset various schools instead of seeking to know if any personal/social markers influence (whether positively or negatively) their ability to access social capital at the various levels of the Ghanaian society. Since this study did not actively collect such information, it is difficult for it to make conclusive statements regarding how head teachers' personal/social markers interact and influence their access to social capital.

Lastly, by its very nature as a cross-sectional study, this research project is limited in its inability to speak authoritatively on how the findings may vary or hold across different time periods. The implementation of the Four-year Senior High School program and the Free Senior High School Project in recent years have (arguably) compelled several traditionally selective schools to increase enrolment in the last decade or so, leading to congestion and other strains on infrastructural and human resource endowment that were hitherto absent or lesser in such schools in comparison to their lower-performing counterparts. Since this study focused on a particular year (2018), it implies that it will only be able to speak conclusively on the extent of vulnerability or resilience among senior secondary schools in the period up to 2018, and not necessarily foretell what challenges or opportunities may emerge in future in the ever changing public SHS system. At most, what this study has attempted to do is to speculate or make inferences as to what may occur if the necessary policy actions or best practices are not employed in the coming years.

6.4. Areas for Future Research

In spite of the limitations listed above, it is clear that the study has several implications for administrators, policymakers and international donors alike. Moreover, it offers several

opportunities for further research and scaling. Foremost, it will be beneficial for researchers to expand this study to encompass all 65 public SHSs in the Central Region of Ghana. This scaled-up study can include other key stakeholders that were not contacted in this exploratory study such as representatives from the District Assemblies, Members of Parliament (for the districts that the schools are located in), and the Ministry of Education. It may also draw on the same conceptual framework from social capital theory to test if the arguments advanced here holds for a larger data set. Alternatively, other explanatory concepts or variables may be employed to explain why schools remain resilient while others do not. At the same time, new challenges and opportunities that were not mentioned here can be added through this expanded data set, especially if this new study takes into consideration the importance of timing and the experiences of the newly established Community Day SHSs.

Secondly, future researchers can pursue a comparative regional study of the phenomenon. A comparative regional study will involve the collection of data on the challenges and opportunities available to public SHSs in two or more different regions to determine if the insights and conclusions advanced here apply across regions or if they hold for specific administrative regions only. If they indeed hold for specific regions only, then such a study may explain what other variables (like geographic and historical peculiarities) account for the differences in the challenges and opportunities that public SHSs located in different regions experience. This comparative regional study may draw on the rigorous sampling methods and parameters used in this present study, while adding alternative research methods to ensure the robustness of the data set.

Also, future research can expand our knowledge on how the access to social capital (and the resources it offers) may vary among the head teachers in public SHSs in the Ghanaian context,

and how this may in turn affect their school's ability to negotiate the structural constraints present within the public education system. In this follow-up study, attention could be given to seeking more information on the gender, ethnicity, age or class of the head teachers, and the analysis may be centered solely on how the head teachers themselves play a crucial role in the survival and success of their schools.

Furthermore, a potential future research venture may be to conduct an impact assessment of the Free SHS policy and/or SEIP on the public SHS system to surface information on how these projects have ameliorated or worsened the situation of schools. Alternatively, the weaknesses and strengths of these programs can be explored as a means to foster more favorable outcomes and the uptake of best practices. If such a research venture is pursued in the future, it could be designed as a cross-sectional, panel, or time series study so that it can account for different impacts on different subjects, or different impacts on similar subjects across different time periods.

Lastly, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative case study on other lower-middle income countries in Sub-Saharan African (and elsewhere) that have been able to achieve the 15-20% international benchmark to illustrate how these countries have been able to achieve this target. Such a project will also be able to surface information on sustainable ways of funding public education that takes into consideration the specific context of Sub-Saharan Africa and the constraints and opportunities on offer in this setting. A case study dedicated to exploring these topics would be interesting and informative.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions I (Headmasters, Headmistresses and/or Assistants)

Background Information on the Interviewee:

a) What is the gender of the respondent? Male Female (Tick one)
b) How long have you been teaching at the secondary school level in general? Where were you teaching before you assumed this position?
c) How long have you been (assistant) headmaster/headmistress in this school?

Interview:

1. How has your school acquired its infrastructural resources to date? (Where have the school's source(s) of funding, support come from? What strategies have been used to make this kind of funding and support possible?)
2. How has your school acquired the appropriate human resources (teaching staff) to date? (How have they recruited teachers?)
3. How has the school maintained:

   a) the infrastructural resources you have listed above?
   b) the human resources you have listed above? (With human resource ask about teacher retention and motivation)

4. What infrastructural and/or human resource needs remain in your school?
5. What plans does your school currently have underway to equip itself with the needed infrastructural resources? (Interrogate the verb 'equip' by using words like 'acquire', 'expand' and 'improve on')
6. What future institutional plans are envisioned in the area of:

   a) infrastructural projects for your school?
   b) human resources development?

7. What strategies do you (and the school) plan to use to:
   a) complete these infrastructural projects?
   b) equip the school with the appropriate human resources, if need be?

8. In the next five to ten years, what is the population of this school expected to look like? (How do they plan to manage potential changes in the population?)
9. How are the planned infrastructural projects expected to cater to the school's future population and infrastructural needs?
10. Overall, what is the school's desired level of infrastructural and human resourcefulness?

Appendix B

Interview Questions II (GES Officials)

Background Information on the Interviewee:

a) How long have you worked as the SHS Coordinator for the Regional Directorate of the Ghana Education Service? What was your occupation or position before assuming this position?
b) Have you ever worked directly with senior secondary schools only in this position or in prior positions too?

Interview:

A. Categorization of Schools

1. Senior secondary schools have often been categorized into “A”, “B” or “C” schools according to their performance and sometimes according to the differences in their infrastructural and human resource endowment levels. Drawing on these categorizations, how would you generally describe public senior secondary schools in the Central Region? How diverse are they from each other?
2. What kinds of support do schools assigned to the various categories have access to? What kinds of privilege do schools assigned to each category enjoy?
3. In this categorization system, have there been instances where schools have moved from one category into another? (how often does this movement (if any) occur?)
4. From the regional directorate perspective, what has been done to help public senior secondary schools in the region to move between the various categories?
5. Literature and the media suggest that, the unintended consequence of these categorization systems is that public senior secondary schools are ranked in what has popularly been referred to as a “league table”. From your vantage point as the regional PRO, how true is this assertion? What is the reality on the ground?

B. Infrastructural and Human Resource Endowment

6. What does the Ghana Education Service consider as the basic or minimum level of infrastructural endowment that a public senior secondary school should have?
7. What does the Ghana Education Service consider as the standard level of human resources (teaching staff) that a public senior secondary school should have? (What are the required qualifications for teachers at the secondary school level? What is the mandated teacher-student ratio in public senior secondary schools?)
8. From a management perspective, how do public senior secondary schools in the Central Region acquire:

    a) Their infrastructural resources (i.e. library, assembly hall, classrooms etc.)?
    b) Their human resources (teaching staff)?

9. Currently, what are the major interventions in the secondary school system at the regional level? How have they brought about gains to the various public secondary schools with regards to infrastructural and human resource endowment?
10. One of the factors that has featured prominently in my data collection exercise is the important contribution made by old students and the P.T.A to the acquisition and maintenance of infrastructural and human resources in public senior secondary schools. In what ways can these factors be considered as accountable for the differences in the infrastructural and human resource endowment levels of public senior high schools?

Appendix C

Inventory Sheet (Questionnaire format)

A. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

1. Name of school
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
2. Year of establishment ……………………………………
3. Year of incorporation from private to public institution (if applicable)
……………………………………
4. Religious Affiliation (if applicable)
……………………………………………………………………………………….
5. Residential status (i.e. boarding, day, hostel facilities, list as many as apply)
……………………………………..................
6. Type of school/Specialization (please circle):

   a) General b) Secondary/Technical c) Agricultural d) Business/Commercial
7. Vision statement
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
8. Mission statement
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………..……………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
9. Total number of teachers: …………………………………….
   a. Males ……………………………
   b. Females ……………………………
   c. Number of Trained Teachers ……………………………………….
   d. Number of Untrained Teachers ……………………………………………………
10. Total number of students …………………………………

STUDENT NUMBERS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
1ST YEAR			
2ND YEAR			
3RD YEAR			
BOARDERS			
HOSTELERS			
DAY STUDENTS			

11. Is the school a beneficiary of the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP)? (please circle) Yes No

B. SOCIAL AMENITIES

1. Electricity
   i. Does the school have electricity (please circle)? Yes No

   ii. What proportion of classrooms are lit? (please tick)
   - ☐ 100%
   - ☐ 75%
   - ☐ 50%
   - ☐ 25%
   - ☐ 0%

   iii. What proportion of streets are lit? (please tick)
   - ☐ 100%
   - ☐ 75%
   - ☐ 50%
   - ☐ 25%
   - ☐ 0%

   iv. Which facilities/areas in the school are unlit? (Please list)
   …………………………………………………………………………................................
   ....……………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………..………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………..

   v. How do students study when there is a power outage? (please circle)
   a) Generator

b) Rechargeable Lamps
c) Bobo
d) Other (please explain)

……………………………………………………………………

2. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities (please circle)
   i. To what extent are the water facilities on campus accessible?
   100% 75% 50% 25% 0%

   ii. To what extent is the water supply reliable?
   100% 75% 50% 25% 0%

Social Amenities	Type	Availability (please tick all that applies)	Description (including the quantity, state/quality of the material, capacity, student-to-resource ratio etc. Please provide as much information as possible)
Water source	i. Pipe borne		
	ii. Borehole		
	iii. Well		
	iv. Other		
Toilets	i. Water closets		
	ii. Ceramic pit latrine		
	iii. KVIP		

C. INFRASTRUCTURAL RESOURCES

Resources	Quantity	Description (including the state/quality of the material, size/capacity, student-to-resource ratio, no. of books/desks etc. Please provide as much information as possible)
Library		
Science Laboratory		
Computer Laboratory		

Classrooms		
Lab(s) for Home Economics Students		
Kitchen(s) for Home Economics Students		
Workshop for Technical students		
Experimental Farm (s) for Agriculture students		
Dining Hall		
Assembly Hall		