
The Public Pursuit of Secure Welfare:

Background Paper on International Development Institutions, Social Protection & Developing Countries

Anna McCord

The Poverty and Inequality Practice

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Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda on Action
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASPIRE	Atlas of Social Protection – Indicators of Resilience and Equity
AU	African Union
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CLP	Chars Livelihoods Programme
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument
CRC	Convention on the rights of the child
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DA	Development Assistance
DEVCO	Development and Cooperation – EUROPEAID
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DGP	Draft Guiding Principles (on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights)
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik
DPO	Development Policy Operations
DPF	Drug Purchasing Facility
EC	European Commission
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education for All
EGS	Employment Guarantee System
EU	European Union
EFSA	Enhanced Facility for Structural Adjustment
FGPR	Facility for Growth and Poverty Reduction
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GAPVU	Office for the Support of Vulnerable Households
G20	Group of 20
G7	Group of 7
G8	Group of 8
GATS	Global Agreement on Tariffs and Services
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization
GDN	Global Development Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEP	Government Employment Programme
GMI	Guaranteed Minimum Income
GNP	Gross National Product
HDR	Human Development Report
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country

HIPC2	Enhanced HIPC Initiative
HLP	High Level Panel
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
HOI	Human Opportunity Index
HR	Human Rights
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights
IDA	International Development Association
IDI	International Development Institution
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IFF	International Finance Facility
IFI	International Financing Institution
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISSA	International Social Security Association
KNETS	Knowledge Networks
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean region
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LIC	Low Income Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MIC	Middle Income Country
MIS	Management Information Systems
MNA	Middle East and North Africa
NEETS	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPA	New Poverty Agenda
NSP	New Social Policy
OHCHR	Office for the High Commissioner on Human Rights
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
PFP	Policy Framework Paper
POVNET	DAC Network on Poverty Reduction
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Food Subsidy Programme
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PSN	Productive Safety Nets
PWP	Public Works Programme
RASKIN	Rice for the Poor (Beras untuk Orang Miskin)

RSR	Rapid Social Response
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAF	Social Action Fund
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPI	Shared Prosperity Indicator
SPARCS	Social Protection Analysis, Results and Country Systems
SPER	Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Review
SPIA	Social Protection Inter-Agency Assessment
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SP&L	Social Protection and Labor
SRM	Social Risk Management
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSN	Social Safety Net
TST	Technical Support Team
TB	Tuberculosis
TU	Trade Union
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Family Planning Association
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VFM	Value for Money
WAP	Working Age Poor
WBG	World Bank Group
WDR	World Development Report
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Acknowledgements

This paper was written over a short period during the fall of 2013, at a critical moment in the debate around the definition of future development goals and the role of social protection within them. It does not offer an exhaustive summary of the history of social protection nor a comprehensive analysis of the academic literature around these issues. Rather it attempts to provide an overview of the historical, institutional and political factors underlying the current debate, and their implications in terms of the extension of social protection provision in the developing world.

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Any errors remain entirely the responsibility of the author and the contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Anna McCord and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Executive Summary

Objectives and Limitations

This paper provides an overview of the development of the conceptual framework underlying social protection programming and policy among the key international development institutions active in this sector. It sets out the historical, institutional and political factors underlying the current debate, and their implications in terms of the extension of social protection provision in the developing world. It does not attempt to provide an exhaustive or in depth analysis, but rather aims to draw from the academic literature to illustrate key moments and developments, and provide a resource for practitioners interested in exploring the many and complex issues raised in more detail.

In order to limit its scope this paper assumes a narrow definition of social protection, focusing on social security, in the form of social assistance and social insurance, with a focus on the former, as the most feasible large scale option in low income, highly informalised economies. The paper does not explore the complementary interventions, (social service provision, tax policy, housing policy etc) which together determine the extent to which a social minimum is achieved.

This paper is intended to inform discussion on the post-MDG debate, and to explore the background to the processes of convergence and polarization apparent within the social protection discourse over recent decades. To this end the paper has two parts. The first addresses the broad question of where we are now and how we got here, reviewing the prominence of social protection in the post-MDG debate, the World Bank Group's new 'vision', announced earlier this year by its new president Jim Kim¹ that brings inequality into the frame alongside residual poverty, and the European welfarist vision which underlies the recently endorsed Social Protection Floor initiative as set out in ILO Recommendation 202. It also attempts to provide an overview of the key actors, and a historical view of the development of key institutional perspectives, as well as developing country perspectives. The second part then outlines key policy and programming challenges and identifies a number of opportunities for joint action in relation to future programme design and policy dialogue.

The paper is written from a perspective that takes the Social Protection Floor (SPF), and the provision of a minimum income, to be the desirable objective of social protection, in accordance with the recently adopted ILO Recommendation 202, and the guaranteed minimum income approach which characterizes the European welfare state. At the same time the practical and fiscal constraints to the realization of such provision on a large scale in many developing countries, and most low income countries are noted, together with the political challenges inherent in this approach, and the emerging critique of a rights-based development agenda.

¹ 'To eradicate extreme poverty by reducing the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day to 3 percent by 2030 and promote shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40 percent in every country.' (World Bank Group, 2014).

Contestation

Within the international donor community, while there is wide agreement on the desirability of social protection provision in general, there remains significant variation in terms of what such provision should comprise in developing countries, for whom it should be provided, and how and in what form it should be offered; the idea of a European-type entitlement-based social minimum is not central to the vision of all actors. Disagreements between participants see them supporting either, on the one hand, what may be crudely summarised as ‘the UN position’, conforming broadly with the (European) welfarist and (ILO Recommendation 202) SPF vision, or, on the other hand, the more residual World Bank-type policy, which remains concerned fundamentally with market-based solutions and challenges relating to risk, resilience and graduation. This paper does not propose that there are simple answers to this dichotomy, but seeks to illuminate the tension inherent in differing institutional perspectives.

In addition to this fundamental dichotomy, the growing focus on ‘active’ social protection, and the emphasis on labour market engagement, graduation, and transformation and orientation of provision towards the challenges of risk and resilience, has resulted in an extension of the aspirations associated with social protection, beyond the provision of a social minimum (itself a major challenge in developing country contexts), to the extent that the term ‘Social Protection’ is at risk of becoming used almost synonymously with the process and goals of development itself.

There is arguably some movement towards a middle ground currently, as indicated by the nominal endorsement of the SPF among the key agencies active in the social protection discourse. The discussion of equity in relation to the social protection agenda in the post-MDG debate may also be indicative of a convergence on universal and rights-based approaches representing a potential shift in favour of social justice. The adoption of a common language does not necessarily imply a common analysis or desired end points, however, and the extent to which Recommendation 202 will inform changes in policy and programming in key institutions at national and international levels remains unknown.

Opportunities

A series of key opportunities for engagement in the sector, informed by the historical analysis and current institutional context, are identified in the paper. These are in the areas of: i) instrument choice, design and implementation, ii) sustainability, iii) financing, iv) donor coordination, v) the relationship between social protection and economic policy, vi) expanding social protection objectives which move beyond income security, vii) social protection systems and their crisis response role, and viii) the contested vision of social protection.

Instrument Choice, Design and Implementation

In terms of programme design, there is a need to develop an evidence base to inform instrument choice, design and implementation options, which offers a greater degree of objectivity rather than reflecting institutional preferences or path dependency, rooted in historical patterns of provision rather than analysis of current needs and programming options.

Linked to this there is an opportunity, given the current degree of institutional consensus around social protection programming among the IDIs, and ongoing initiatives to harmonise activity in the sector, to promote improved evaluation, including the development of shared definitions and indicators across programmes, institutions, and regions, to enable greater comparison of performance, meta analysis and cross programme learning.

Opening debate around the significant challenge represented by the working age poor (WAP) is also a key opportunity, given the recent recognition of the scale of the WAP challenge. The limited repertoire of social protection and active labour market instruments currently in use, and the growing evidence of the shortcomings and inadequacies of such approaches, particularly in low income contexts, highlights the need to rethink social protection options in response to a shifting global economic context and fundamental changes in the nature of under- and unemployment in developing countries.

Sustainability

In order to promote sustainability, in relation to social protection provision supported by the International Development Institutions (IDIs), there is a need to stimulate significantly greater national policy autonomy and ownership, moving away from donor-led, 'one size fits all' programming choices and institutionally preferred policy 'packages' to more bespoke and contextually designed support.

To this end ongoing initiatives to engender greater coordination and harmonization within the donor community through the development of practical steps to enhance joint programming, with for example shared data gathering and analysis initiatives, joint evaluations and common situation analysis instruments should be supported.

Such approaches are required to increase IDI efficiency, while also potentially improving quality across the IDI board, by drawing on and sharing the institutional expertise of the agencies most experienced and skilled in work in each area of endeavour. Increasing joint programming and basket funding at national level would represent the next steps in such an exercise, although this would require agencies to give up a degree of institutional autonomy and influence in terms of policy choice, design and implementation and would require a deepening of trust and commitment between agencies than currently obtains, and the agreement of areas of common vision and overlap in the sector. This may be seen as the intended, although not yet fully accepted, role of the SPF. Increased cooperation along these lines would also reduce the opportunity costs of donor engagement on the part of national governments through a reduction in the multiple parallel analytical, data gathering, financing, programming and reporting processes which currently characterize donor supported social protection provision.

Sustainability could also be promoted by a greater degree of IDI support for domestically initiated programming even where it may not be consistent with institutionally preferred programme design, and also, critically, by a commitment to support rather than undermine domestic investment in the sector. This latter outcome could be achieved by promoting greater institutional consistency within and between the international financing institutions,

notably the Bretton Woods Institutions, regarding national level ring-fencing and protection of social protection expenditure even in contexts requiring macro-economic stabilization.

Finally, from a fiscal perspective, sustainability could be enhanced by the promotion of and engagement in a re-energised debate on international financing options, on the part of the IFIs, and, where appropriate, supporting national level dialogue on options for capturing future mineral dividends for the provision of social dividends linked to social protection provision.

Financing

Identifying, developing and supporting mechanisms for financing social protection, both nationally and internationally, with a focus, in the first instance, on provision for the extreme poor, and thereafter supporting the progressive expansion of systems which currently provide only marginal coverage in many developing, and most low income countries, is an opportunity which the IDIs have not taken up in recent years. This needs to be approached both from an ideological/political perspective, exploring potential sources of financing as well as the reluctance to countenance any significantly extended redistributive agenda in IDI and national discourses, as well as from an advocacy perspective, with generalized, rather than single agency, mobilization around a call for increased financing.

To facilitate this, the innovative thinking arising from Paris 2005 and the Gleneagles proposals should be reviewed, alongside an exploration of more recent proposals for a global fund and transaction tax, as well as mineral taxation, engaging with the mineral resource debate actively. This process should include consideration of lessons from recent trust fund initiatives, such as the Rapid Social Response fund and the GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization) to inform design options.

Donor Coordination

A continued focus on donor harmonization and efficiency, from both the donor and recipient government perspectives is another key opportunity, building on the embryonic work of the recently constituted Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) in promoting coordination and interagency collaboration on specific issues such as social protection data (including conceptual harmonization around definitions, interventions and impacts, data gathering and data analysis) and social protection system performance, and also the World Bank led SPIA (Social Protection Inter-Agency Assessment) initiative on mapping provision.² This work can only be taken forward with goodwill across the spectrum of IDIs, and shared financing, as it represents a public good which stands to benefit the sector as a whole, rather than any single agency alone.

The SPIAC-B also has the potential to be used as a more general forum for actively promoting the exchange of ideas, experiences and innovation throughout the IDI community, and potentially also developing country governments, as well as identifying and developing issues, such as future financing modalities, if it can create the space for a genuine dialogue

² This initiative was previously known as SPARCS (Social Protection Analysis, Results and Country Systems), and was renamed the Social Protection Inter-Agency Assessment (SPIA) in October 2013. It is referred to by its new title, SPIA, throughout this report.

and interchange between agencies, and has adequate intellectual and financial resources to take forward such initiatives, either directly or commissioning inputs, recognizing the capacity constraints faced by many in the IDI community.

In terms of policy harmonization, the SPF offers an opportunity for coordination and has the potential to provide a normative framework for social protection internationally, if it is actively supported among IDIs and national governments. The SPF also has the potential to contribute to active programming harmonization at country level. However, if the processes of harmonization anticipated in the recent series of international fora (Paris, Accra, Busan etc) are to be realized at international and country level, both formal processes and further international leadership guidance (the role played recently by the G20) are required. This would require the development and promotion of incentives for harmonization, as well as deliberate changes to institutional culture, structure and practices.

Tension with Economic Policy

Explicit debate needs to be promoted on the continuing tensions between the pursuit of social protection objectives, and the economic policy, (both micro- and macro-) promoted by the BWI. There is a need to seek principles to govern the policy dissonance between macro-economic and poverty/social justice objectives, and also to explore the relationship between the micro-economic issues (employment, taxation, trade, education etc) which also contribute to social protection performance, rather than looking at social protection in isolation from economic policy in general.

Moving Beyond Income Security

Similarly, given the current interest in the Productive Safety Net (PSN) approach and the role of social protection in promoting active social protection and labour market participation, echoing the broader European policy trend, there is an opportunity to promote objective and critical interrogation on an interagency basis of the growing evidence base relating to livelihoods development, food security, graduation and transformation, and identification of the determinants of policy success (or otherwise). Given the growth of research in this area in recent years, there is now space for the exploration of this question with reference to developing countries, taking into account the implications of recent changes in the structure of the global labour market and rooting the debate in the reality of social protection provision at country level, which remains minimal in many low income countries, and to assess policy objectives relating to graduation and transformation in this light.

Social Protection Systems and Crisis Response

In the post 2008 context, there is scope for initiating active and critical discussion around the meaning of ‘systems development’ in relation to social protection as adopted in recent IDI literature, both to identify areas of common interest and also to highlight areas where there may be an incongruence of schemata, with the objective of discussing explicitly the implications and possible avenues for resolution of any issues arising.

In a similar vein there is a need to promote open debate on the current concern to promote social protection as a crisis response instrument. This would entail an exploration of potential contradictions and tensions inherent in promoting social protection institutions as *both* the

providers of a social minimum and *also* as mechanisms for countercyclical crisis response in developing country contexts, so that challenges can be identified and addressed, conceptually and in programming.

Contested Vision

Finally, the adoption of Recommendation 202 provides an opportunity for the articulation of the contested visions underlying the social protection project. The articulation of the SPF vision and the fact that it is nominally supported across the IDIs represents both a challenge and also a key moment for the exploration of a contested agenda. There is an opportunity for the areas of agreement and dissent and the ideological impulses underlying them, which have in many cases remained implicit, to be explored and addressed in an explicit process, recognizing both the ideologies and the pragmatism informing current institutional positions and bringing into the open the programming implications of the different stances. The aim of such a process would be to identify core areas of provision (potentially informed by the SPF) for collaborative engagement, and reduce the dimensions of future contestation.

Part of this process would be to explore contested questions in the current discourse relating to inequality, the emerging ‘equality of opportunity’ ideology, the question of redistribution, and role of income inequality in the poverty debate.

Conclusion

Recommendation 202 provides a framework for the extension of provision of social protection on the basis of a social minimum in developing countries, which has the official endorsement of national governments represented at the International Labour Conference, the UN agencies, the BWI and the major bi-lateral donors. As such it represents a potentially significant development for global social protection provision, if this official support is translated into policy and programme development at national level. While the recommendation represents a very recent *de jure* requirement on the part of the bi- and multilateral donors active in the social protection sector, initial responses on the part of the IDIs show some signs of resistance to the adoption of the SPF principles (with the associated commitment to the progressive realisation of a social minimum) as the primary framework for future social protection investment. The extent to which Recommendation 202 will guide national government social protection policy is also uncertain, in a period when the global institutional context is becoming increasingly complex and the role of rights-based development agendas are coming into question, notably in non-OECD countries. The outcome of the ongoing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) debate is likely to be significant in determining the priority given to social protection in the coming decades.

The challenge now is to consolidate the achievements made in the sector internationally in terms of IDI policy and practice: maintaining the impetus to harmonise donor efforts, promoting genuine coordination between the IDIs, supporting national governments and enhancing national sovereignty in social protection policy selection, design and implementation. There is also a need to move forward with national and international innovation in social protection financing and, perhaps most fundamentally, to review the adequacy of current instruments and approaches in the light of the changing global context. Finally, and perhaps before anything else, there is a need to stimulate discussion on the

implications of a changing globalised economy for social protection in order to develop new thinking and tools to respond to the challenges this represents, and to support the development of social protection provision which is relevant for the coming century.

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Introduction

This paper provides a desk review of international development (IDIs) institutions and social protection in developing countries.³ The paper defines social protection and identifies the key issues for social protection in developing countries based on an historical, social and economic analysis of social protection provision, reviewing the actions of key donors working in the field, identifying major recent developments and outlining key challenges and options for supporting partner countries in establishing effective, inclusive, sustainable social protection systems in the future.

The paper will support the European Commission in establishing a clear overview of the evolving role of social protection in addressing the issues of poverty, vulnerability, equity and inclusion in the context of the post-MDG agenda: the challenges that face developing countries: and policy responses with regard to developing social protection systems and the role of EU and other development cooperation in supporting them. The paper focuses on the current policy emphasis on supporting partner governments in the evolution from fragmented, limited-scope and limited-duration programming, into systematic, universal, policy-based and entitlement-based approaches to social protection with a commensurate commitment to assisting them to address the fiscal policy implications of committing themselves to such approaches.

The paper presents an overview of the evolving role of social protection in addressing issues of poverty, vulnerability, equity and inclusion, with particular reference to contemporary issues in Global Social Policy, including:

- the World Bank's strategy on Social Protection and Labour
- the Social Protection Floor
- the post-MDG discourse
- conclusions of the High Level Panel report on post-2015 goals
- progress on regional social protection initiatives
- the challenges facing developing countries relating to the development of social protection systems: and
- the role of EU and other development partners

Methodology

The methodology adopted was the review of recent and seminal historical literature, both published and grey, relating to policy and the ideological orientation of key actors in social protection internationally – primarily multilateral agencies and developing country governments. This was complemented by interviews with selected key informants.

³ This study is intended to form the basis for a short Concept Note on Social Protection, to be drafted by the Commission.

Setting the Scene

Definition of Social Protection

Social protection may be more or less broadly defined. National governments, development institutions and researchers adopt differing definitions. For the purpose of this review the term social protection will be taken to comprise cash or in kind transfers provided by the state to compensate for lack of, or insufficient income.

Social protection can be contributory or non-contributory in nature, and characterised as *social insurance* or *social assistance* accordingly. Social insurance provides benefits for workers and their families linked to employment contributions, while social assistance provides non-contributory benefits designed to provide minimum levels of income security to those unable to participate in social insurance schemes. Social assistance entails the provision of support for those unable to work due to sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment or old age. The World Bank tends to use the term *safety nets* to describe *social assistance*.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the key international institution which has played a dominant role historically in defining and supporting the extension of social protection uses the term *social security*, which also includes health care provision. It defines social security thus:

The notion of social security covers all measures providing benefits, whether in cash or in kind, to secure protection, *inter alia*, from:

- lack of work-related income (or insufficient income) caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, or death of a family member:
- lack of access or unaffordable access to health care:
- insufficient family support, particularly for children and adult dependants:
- general poverty and social exclusion.⁴

For a pithy definition of the subject of this paper, it is useful to cite Gough et al. (2004), who define social policy as ‘the public pursuit of secure welfare’, a definition which can also function usefully as a summary of the vision of social protection which underlies the Social Protection Floor (SPF) concept.

Within this review, the focus will be on core assistance and insurance provision, rather than also including the broader range of health, education and housing provision which together make up the broader concept of social policy. The review will also focus on formal, rather than informal provision (that provided within communities), while acknowledging that in the

⁴ ILO GESS website:

http://www.socialsecurityextension.org/gimi/gess/ShowGlossary.do?GLOSSAIRE_LETTRE=s&GLOSSAIRE_LANG=EN

absence of formal provision, informal provision of support to the poorest plays a key role in many developing countries (see for example Maes, 2003).

The two main forms of social protection prevalent in the current discourse may be identified as ‘universal’ and ‘residual’. The two terms are used throughout the paper and are defined below.

Universal Social Protection

This term describes social protection that aims to cover the entire population with adequate benefits and is grounded in claimable entitlements. This approach has its origins in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and has been codified in various ways, including the provision of a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI), depending on the particular circumstances and histories of different countries. Universal provision has the potential to include means testing, which goes against the spirit of universalism, but has been considered necessary sometimes as pragmatic response to fiscal realities. The current embodiment of universalist provision as understood here is articulated in the Social Protection Floor.⁵

Residual Social Protection

In contrast, a ‘residual’ welfare state model was adopted in a number of key industrialised nations, in particular those commonly referred to as ‘Anglo-Saxon nations’, notably the USA and the UK. In these countries the historical process that saw the evolution of the modern economy did not entail a demand for state provision on the part of the emerging middle classes, and so the resulting welfare states cater essentially to the working class and the poor. Under this model the market, in the form of private insurance and occupational fringe benefits, caters to the middle classes, while the state makes provision for the poor, resulting in a dualism of provision. The key role played by the middle classes in democratic governance tends to result in resistance to further extensions of welfare provision in residualist systems (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Social Protection Objectives

While the primary objective of social protection provision is the provision of secure welfare to compensate for lack of, or insufficient, income to ensure that basic human needs are met, social protection is often ascribed goals which extend beyond basic welfare provision in the current donor discourse. These include livelihood promotion and graduation out of poverty at the individual/household level, and social, political and economic stabilisation, and growth at the broader societal level. To some extent these broader objectives are adopted in order to help the social protection sector compete with productive sectors for scarce domestic and donor financing.

Current Provision Levels

Despite the existence of international instruments regarding the provision of social security which have provided a legal and normative basis for provision for more than six decades, in

⁵The limitations to the SPF vision, in relation to the provision of secure welfare, are discussed below.

the form of the seminal 1952 ILO convention⁶ and the inclusion of social security provision in various forms (both implicitly and explicitly) in a range of human rights instruments, only 20% of the world's population are estimated to have adequate social security coverage, with over a half lacking any kind of social security coverage at all. Coverage is particularly low in developing countries, and varies by region, with recent World Bank analysis indicating that effective coverage may be as low as 1% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Fiszbein et al, 2013). While in developed countries, mainly in Europe, provision is broadly based on the core assumption that the social contract requires the state to ensure some form of income floor for its citizens, (a Guaranteed Minimum Income, or GMI) no such assumption guides policy in most developing countries, with the result that 80 percent of the global population has no access to any formal social security protection (Felice, 2010). The global social security gap entails 50% of children living in poverty, 60% of the elderly receiving no form of pension, and 30% of the world's population having no access to essential health care (Cichon, 2013).

The international community has been engaging with this failure both in terms of constructing the rights framework to support provision and also by actively supporting various visions of social protection interventions in recent decades, with efforts accelerating following the period of structural adjustment during the 1980s as a result of a variety of ideological and pragmatic impulses with both moral and instrumental objectives, linking social protection provision variously to the agendas of development, growth and stabilisation as well as promoting provision as a desirable end in itself in terms of the creation of a welfare state to address the worst consequences of poverty, pending broad-based economic growth.

The number of international development institutions (IDIs) involved in the debate has increased over time, with dominance in the discourse shifting between agencies in line with prevailing political and ideological developments in the global polity. These agencies have adopted a diversity of perspectives in terms of the desirable characteristics of social protection provision, design and implementation modalities. Their perspectives have been entwined with interventions of other actors at key junctures, including inputs from bilateral donors and also from a range of non-governmental actors including civil society and knowledge networks. Key historical moments, of political or economic relevance have also influenced the discourse on social protection provision, most notably the global economic crisis of the 70s, the collapse of the Eastern bloc, the emergence of the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, the 2008 financial crisis, and the economic globalisation of recent decades. This process is traced in the paper, with key ideas and challenges located in their socio-political context, and the main issues emerging for the contemporary social protection debate identified.

⁶ As of December 2008, Convention No.102 has been ratified by 44 ILO member States and most OECD countries. Regionally, European and Central Asian countries account for the highest number of ratifications (30), followed by American and Caribbean countries (7), African countries (5), and Asian and Pacific countries (2). <http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=722>

Drivers of Social Protection Provision in Europe

Before the implications of recent shifts in the nature of the global economy for social protection provision in developing countries are examined in more detail, it is useful first briefly to review the historical drivers of social protection in European countries, and to assess the extent to which these are of relevance in the developing country context. In this section the historical development of social protection thinking is set out and the evolution of the main models currently informing provision in European countries, rooting programme design in its ideological context.

The key factors driving the development of social protection in the west have been summarised: democracy, demography and economic growth. The first driving demand for provision and making it politically expedient to address the challenge, the second driving the need for provision and the third providing resources for provision (Lindert, 2004). When examined in more detail these three drivers are found to be rooted in a diversity of contextual impulses which resulted in the introduction of social protection instruments on a somewhat piecemeal basis in the west until the first World War.

The origins of the systems developed in Europe up to this period are linked to three key developments: the influence of Bismarck's introduction of old age pensions in Germany, developments in Scandinavia, and the two-stage Lloyd George-Beveridge process in the UK. Bismarck introduced social health insurance (1883) and contributory pensions (1889) in Germany with the objective of offering improved income security to the labour force, in the context of an industrialising, although not fully formalised, labour market. In Sweden in 1913 the decision was taken to accompany industrialisation from its outset with social protection in the form of social pensions etc and to ensure that the farming sector was accommodated. The Swedish policy choice informed Scandinavian countries and set them on their specific path. Simultaneously in the UK Lloyd George introduced pensions in 1911 in his 'Budget for the poor' in response to rising social unrest and emerging class struggle. The system was fully developed after the second world war under Beveridge's 'cradle to the grave' system of provision, which aimed to address the five 'Giant Evils' in society: squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease. The motivation for Beveridge was a combination of moral commitment combined with recognition of the political imperative to provide a pay-back to an exhausted and potentially disillusioned working class for the privations of first the depression and then the second World War.

The key game changer in the west was the Russian Revolution of 1917 which fuelled class struggle in the period running up to and following the first war. This led to a recognition that unless government, labour and business worked together to resolve abusive practices and most exploitative aspects of emerging industrial economies, ongoing labour unrest was likely and ongoing revolutionary activity a risk. The institution of the ILO in 1919 was an expression of this concern and the desire to address the most egregious impacts on workers, internationally.

The depression in advanced capitalist countries in the period running up to the second war was another key factor, informing the position of those affected by depression and poor

conditions, who were to lead the design of the post war settlement. The depression ended with the onset of the second World War, which created full employment and a growing and shared consciousness that never again should global war, or the worker abuses which characterised the pre-war period and contributed to the global conflagration be allowed. To address this a series of UN charters were developed which set out the key human rights which were to be guaranteed internationally. In relation to social protection the prior provision of different countries, shaped by particular national characteristics, superimposed themselves on to the discourse of human rights resulting in a diversity of provision. As a result in each country social protection expansion developed along different lines (as stylised by Esping-Andersen, 1990⁷) with different patterns of social protection emerging and varying degrees of comprehensiveness, with for example Japan and the US being significantly less comprehensive in their provision than the European countries. In north western Europe social protection provision was more comprehensive than in the South, while in the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe provision was fully comprehensive. The specific content of provision took different forms as the result of specific political accommodation in different countries, but each was informed by the basic principle of the provision of some form of social minimum.

This period has been characterised as the ‘Golden Age’ of social provision, lasting up to the early 1980s, during which welfare capitalism represented a compromise by capital with the state, recognising that the provision of social income (in terms of diverse forms of social protection, including housing and basic services) was a requisite for stemming labour unrest and political instability.

However, the economic base on which this provision was built started to falter in the 1980s, and the social compromise began to fray with the emergence of conservative regimes, notably in the US and UK, and the collapse of the socialist project after 1989. These changes became a reference point for the reform of state social welfare provision in several OECD countries and set the context for a changing perspective on provision in LDCs.

The GMI within the European Welfare Model

The guaranteed minimum income (GMI)⁸ concept underlies most European welfare systems.⁹ The GMI concept is that the state will protect all citizens against extreme poverty by guaranteeing their citizens the minimum endowment of resources necessary to satisfy their

⁷ Esping-Andersen identified three main types of welfare regimes based on analysis of the rules that govern access to benefits, the value of the benefits, and the range of entitlements provided for. He suggested that the key determinants of the development of welfare provision are identified as economic and demographic variables with social provision following economic development and population ageing, while the structural differences between welfare regimes are determined by political power relations, with ‘conservative’ continental European forms of provision entailing a high degree of status segregation and ‘etatism’, Anglo-Saxon ‘liberal’ regimes adopted means-tested welfare benefits and high ratios of private sector provision in pensions and public health care, while Scandinavian ‘socialist’ regimes are characterised by universalism and a high degree of equality in the benefit structure (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

⁸ The term GMI describes anti-poverty policies which are ‘*universalistic*’ in that they are addressed to all the poor regardless of other conditions, and ‘*selective*’ solely in regard to the economic conditions of the individual and his/her family (Busilacchi, 2008).

⁹ These comprises the systems of 24 of the 27 European Union countries, excluding Italy, Hungary and Greece, which have either not introduced GMI (Greece and Hungary) or have discontinued provision (Italy), plus Norway, which is customarily considered by comparative studies on social policy (ibid.).

basic needs and lead a decent life as part of a social pact on ‘minimum citizenship rights’.¹⁰ Different models of GMI policies have been adopted to address poverty as part of European welfare systems, with the differences accounted for by a combination of path dependency - with the political and institutional framework of welfare systems, and the inherited ‘history of policies’ in a particular country affecting the way in which GMI schemes are structured - and the particular ‘*historical-political moment when the measures were first introduced in individual countries*’. (Busilacchi, 2008).

The design of GMI policy has passed through various stages over the past forty years in response to broad political and economic changes:

GMI schemes introduced after the Second World War adopted a typically ‘Beveridgean’ approach to combating the main social risks, [...] while the GMI policies that arose in the 1970s and 1980s were instead more influenced by increased unemployment and by the spread in Europe of political liberalism (and by the parallel crisis in what had been called the ‘Golden age’ of the welfare state). They were therefore more markedly characterized by measures designed to free the beneficiary from welfare dependency. Finally, the schemes introduced (or which have replaced previous ones) in the past fifteen years have been distinguished by a greater concern with social inclusion and active integration into the country’s social and occupational life – this being the ultimate goal of a welfare system of ‘full citizenship’. Among the aims of GMI policies, the ‘simple’ elimination of material deprivation has today been combined with the new idea of the citizen’s ‘pro-work’ and ‘pro-education’ inclusion proposed by almost all the most recent GMI systems. (ibid.)

In this way the ‘Beveridgean’ formula of ‘passive’ receipt of protection against the severest risks of material deprivation has given way to beneficiary ‘activation’ through combined income support and social and labour market integration in the European social model since the Lisbon European Council of 2000. These ideas have now permeated the social protection debate as it relates to developing countries, with the focus on ‘activation’, inclusion, graduation, and the promotion of labour market engagement (see for example the World Bank’s SP&L Strategy, and the WDR 2013, discussed below).

The Human Rights Context

One important part of the historical and current social protection discourse is informed by a rights-based approach, on the basis of a framework of rights which were established through a number of international treaties ratified during the period between the end of the second war and the end of the Cold War, on the basis of the OECD model of the obligation of the state to ensure the provision of a basic social income for all.

Social security is recognised as a universal human right in a number of international treaties. The most important international conventions and treaties addressing social security provision

¹⁰ In practice, however the generosity of such measures is not enough, except in rare cases, to satisfy the fundamental needs of their beneficiaries (ibid).

are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, and, with specific relation to economic and social rights, the International Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),¹¹ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989. Social protection is outlined in the following articles:

Articles 22 and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

Articles 26 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), articles 22 and 25 are the most widely cited basis for the call for the provision of social protection on a rights basis. Article 22 states:

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

While Article 25, which enshrines the right to an adequate standard of living, states that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is also seminal in terms of the right to social protection, with Article 9 recognising ‘the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance’. In this way states parties to the ICESCR have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right to social security while parties to the UDHR have a commitment to the broader set of provision implied by social protection in its broader form, in terms of a requirement to ensure that the right to an adequate standard of living is met. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) clarified in 2009 that the right to social security as enshrined in the ICESCR encompasses:

the right to access and maintain benefits, whether in cash or in kind, from (a) lack of work-related income caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, or death of a family member: (b) unaffordable access to health care: (c) insufficient family support, particularly children and adult dependents (CESCR, 2007)

¹¹ The ICESCR was adopted in 1966 and entered into force in 1976.

States parties to the ICESCR have the obligation to fulfill the right to social security by adopting *‘the necessary measures, including the implementation of a social security scheme’*, and are obliged to ensure that *‘the social security system will be adequate, accessible for everyone and will cover social risks and contingencies’*. States parties also have an obligation to facilitate the right to social security by sufficiently *‘recognising this right within the national political and legal systems, preferably by way of legislative implementation and adopting a national social security strategy’*.

The right to social security is also linked with other economic, social and cultural rights, in particular the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food and the right to housing, the right to work, and the right to protection of the family. According to the UN Human Rights Committee article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on discrimination applies to the right to social security, an issue which is challenged in the current partitioning of rights in the design and implementation of much social protection provision, and is explored below.

The right to social security is reinforced in a range of other treaties and conventions. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Article 5) requires that State parties must prevent all forms of racial discrimination and guarantee the right of all ‘without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of... the right to public health, medical care, social security and social services’. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women also reinforces the right to social security for women (Article 11), stating that women have ‘the right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave (de la Vega, 2007)’. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also enshrines the right of children to social security in article 26, stating that:

- (1) States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.
- (2) The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

The responsibility of governments in relation to these rights was confirmed in the Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic Social and Cultural Rights, which clarify the status of economic and social rights in international law (Felice, 1999). These guidelines hold governments accountable for the provision of basic social services in terms of health, employment and education:

a state party in which any significant number of individuals is deprived of essential foodstuffs, of essential primary health care, of basic shelter and housing or of the most basic forms of education is, *prima facie*, violating the covenant. (Felice, 1999)

More recently a further set of guiding principles have provided a reference point for a human rights oriented commitment to eliminating extreme poverty through the ‘Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights’. These were adopted by the Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2012 and focus specifically on the human rights of people living in poverty, based on international human rights norms and standards. They were intended to ensure that public policies, including poverty reduction, reach the poorest members of society. These guidelines were developed following a call by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (the predecessor to the Human Rights Council) in 2001 to develop a set of principles to govern the implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the fight against extreme poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals. The guidelines state:

All persons living in extreme poverty have the right to the enjoyment of all human rights, which are indivisible, interdependent and universal. The exercise of human rights is crucial to the elimination of extreme poverty, because the denial of one right has an adverse impact on the totality of the rights of the individual. However, the restoration of a right in isolation is not enough to ensure that individuals, their families and their communities will emerge from the situation of extreme poverty. (Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, 2012)

In as much as states put this into practice through the application of the Guiding Principles in all poverty eradication measures and other policies that affect the rights of persons living in poverty, this sets a frame for a human rights-oriented commitment to eliminating extreme poverty. Architects of the MDGs adopted this approach, reflecting a consensus that MDG1 should focus on the poorest among the poor.¹² This decision also reflected the outcome of the 1995 Copenhagen summit that such provision should represent an interim goal, rather than being perceived as the ultimate desired outcome. Inasmuch as developing countries are characterized by the lack of adequate resources to finance universal provision, targeting the extreme poor represents a pragmatic approach, consistent with Rawlsian principles, given that such an intervention maximizes the well-being of those least well off. Accordingly, MDG1 (halving extreme poverty) was intended, in a context where only limited poverty reduction progress had been achieved, to accelerate progress and halve the number of people living under PPP\$1.25, as a starting point for broader provision.

However this emphasis on poverty targeted provision has contributed to a reframing of the social protection debate in line with a more residualist, rather than welfarist vision, with the MDGs being separated from the concept of universal social protection provision. Arguably, in some instances the MD goal has become an end point, rather than starting point for provision in terms of practice in the field, reflecting a field-policy discontinuum found within several IDIs. Poverty is so severe in many LICs that the risk that the MDG starting point becomes an end point is a real one, with some institutions (or actors therein) involved in the design and implementation of anti-poverty policy and programming, developing approaches which see provision for the extreme poor as a policy goal, rather than one stage of a process with the eradication of poverty and provision of secure welfare as its ultimate goal.

¹² MDG 1 is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, with target 1 being halving between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day, and target 2 being halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger over the same period.

Notwithstanding the formal articulation of the Guiding Principles, no agency has the authority to intervene in order to ensure compliance and prevent violations under the set of instruments set out above, should they occur. Monitoring of the ICCRPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) falls under the mandate of the Human Rights Council, but there is no similar high level body for the ICESCR. Instead monitoring of compliance to the ICESCR falls under a sub-committee (the Committee on Economic, social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) of the relatively weak UN Economic and Social Council (Deacon, 2013).

What we see here is a well developed lattice of rights reinforcing the responsibilities of the state for provision of social security as set out in the seminal UDHR article 22. This is in line with the prevalent OECD norms for the provision of a basic social minimum, during the period in which the key rights instruments were developed and is consistent with the ILO Social Security Convention (no 102) of 1952 setting out the minimum standard for the level of social security benefits and the conditions under which they are granted. These various instruments also serve to provide a formal rights basis for provision in developing countries. However, the extent to which this rights framework is matched with a concomitant commitment to honouring them across developing countries and among the key IDIs working in the sector is less clear, an issue discussed further below. A combination of the principle of progressive realization of provision and limited interest in a rights-based approach to policy development among some sovereign governments and dominant international actors, linked to a generalized turning away outside the UN, from the idealism of rights-based global governance, has to some extent eroded the potency of the rights-based argument for policy selection and programming. Moreover, the articulation of rights which identify the need for social security primarily within a reference frame of a temporary employment loss, on the basis of the economic model representative of OECD states during the 1940s, 50s and 60s, are severely challenged in the context of informal or informalising labour markets, chronic poverty and mass under and unemployment and market failure, which better characterize the contemporary global economy.

The Development of International Development Institution Positions on Social Protection Provision

Having set out these basic parameters, we will next examine the development of the positions of key development actors currently shaping the social protection debate, with a focus on, but not limited to, the ILO, the UN and the World Bank. In doing this we will consider the ideological, historical and individual factors driving these positions including linkages to the Washington and post Washington consensus, and changing international concerns. In this way the evolution of social protection thinking in relation to developing countries will be traced.

While there is significant commonality between the positions of the major international development institutions (IDIs) working on the extension of social protection provision in developing countries, the division of institutional roles has been characterized as an arena of ‘fragmentation and competition’ by some commentators, with social protection presented as an area of significant contestation among agencies, with global agencies contending ‘for the

right to influence national policy and for the content of the at policy'. Deacon summarises the contested territory thus:

The review [...] of the ideas about social policy carried and argued for by the international organisations demonstrated something approaching a 'war of position' between those agencies and the actors within them, who argued for a more selective, residual role of the state together with a larger role for private actors in health, social protection and education provision, and those who took the opposite view. This division of opinion often reflected a disagreement as to whether the reduction of poverty was a matter of targeting specific resources on the most poor or whether it was a matter of major social and political – institutional change involving a shift in power relations and a significant increase in redistribution from the rich to poor. (Deacon, 2007)

A review of the positioning of the key IDIs in relation to the social protection debate confirms this analysis, in as much as it reveals the emergence of a dualistic and contested discourse over the last three decades, which intensified in terms of polarity in the wake of the World Bank's structural adjustment programme and entrance into the poverty reduction debate since the 1980s, with an emphasis on poverty focused programming. The situation may be characterised crudely as comprising two conceptions that share some common ground and language, but with different underlying ideologies and envisaged end points, which in turn reflect differing analyses of the nexus between poverty, social protection and growth, the desirability of universal or residual provision, the relative importance of rights, and whether poverty should best be conceptualised in terms of risk or certainty.

The fracture lines have been summarised thus:

At the global level there are a number of competing and overlapping institutions, all of which have some stake in shaping global social policy towards global social problems. The struggle for the right to shape policy and for the content of that policy is what passes for an effective system of international social governance. The fragmentation and competition may be analysed into five groupings of contestations. First the World Bank IMF and WTO, are in competition for influence with the rest of the UN system. (Deacon et al, 2003)

These issues will be discussed below, but first the mandates of the key institutions implicated in the debate, namely the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (BWI),¹³ will be outlined below and then the trajectory of policy in each will be set out.

Institutional Mandates

The mandate for the promotion of security and peace, human rights, humanitarian interventions and economic and social affairs was divided among various agencies within the UN. Within the UN clear institutional mandates resulted in the development of what are

¹³ The Bretton Woods Institutions are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They were established at a meeting of 43 countries in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA in July 1944.

characterized by Deacon as ‘global ministries’ for social protection, along with health and education in the form of the ILO, WHO and UNESCO respectively, which offered support to newly independent post-colonial regimes in the development of policies and programming during the 60s and 70s.

The mandate for economic, as opposed to social policy development was held by the BWI whose original brief was the management of international economic relations and the provision of loans for reconstruction and only later for development. However, over time the BWI and in particular the World Bank became increasingly engaged in the social sphere, so that by 90s there were two contesting ‘global ministries’ for social protection, as well as health and education, offering differing policy prescriptions. The World Bank, with its access to significant resources and position as a gatekeeper for loans is the stronger and more dominant of the two. These two groupings had differential capacities to influence national social policy in terms of the instruments at their disposal with the World Bank and IMF proffering conditional lending in contrast to the UN’s moral persuasion, and enjoying a greater command of resources compared to those available to the UN. The UN and BWI have been in harmony at certain junctures and have articulated opposed policy prescriptions at others. Before this counterpoint is explored in detail, each institutional position is examined in detail below.

UN Agencies

The UN position on social protection provision may generally, although not entirely, be characterized as the promotion of universal welfare provision, based on a rights discourse. The key UN agency which has had a sustained engagement with the project of the development of national social protection provision is the ILO, which for decades was the ‘global social protection ministry’, as discussed above. Besides the ILO, other agencies have engaged significantly in the Social Protection debate, the most active UN agency in this regard has been UNICEF, which has played a significant role at key junctures in the debate over the last three decades. The other UN agencies with important engagement over time, adopting approaches in line with a rights-based vision of provision are UNRISD, UNDESA and UNDP, with the latter two being actively engaged in the debate in the 2000s in relation to the production of social policy guidance notes in an attempt to reinvigorate and mainstream the universal vision (Deacon, 2007). Key aspects of the roles of the ILO, UNRISD and UNICEF are discussed in more detail below.

The ILO

The ILO was initially primarily concerned with the provision of social insurance based systems, and drew up conventions to address standard work related contingencies, accordingly, informed by the realities of the formal OECD labour markets of the 1940s and 50s. The main ILO convention relating to social protection is the 1952 Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention No. 102, referred to hereafter as Convention 102, which sets out the minimum standard for the level of social security benefits and the conditions under which they are granted, and covers the nine principal branches of social security, namely: medical care, sickness, unemployment, old age, employment injury, family, maternity, invalidity and survivors' benefits. The convention requires state ratification through

acceptance of a minimum of three of the nine branches and subsequent acceptance of obligations under other branches, allowing for progressive realisation of all the convention's objectives. The minimum level of benefit was to be nationally determined with reference to national wage levels and temporary exceptions were permitted for countries with insufficiently developed economies and social sectors, enabling the scope of the convention and the coverage of the benefits granted to be restricted.

The 1952 ILO model was largely social insurance based (contributory), reflecting the fact that it came about during a period of relatively high employment, with large scale unemployment payouts perceived as a rarity. The prevailing belief at this time was that the business cycle was conquered and it was therefore possible to retain unemployment at relatively low levels. As a result the benefits proposed were minimal, and a low income replacement rate adopted on the basis that it was assumed that the unemployed would find work relatively quickly. From this perspective, the convention was very much a product of its time.

A series of later generation of conventions expanded the scope of protection provided by Convention 102. These specified recommended benefit levels in relation to national reference wages and the nature of services to be provided and formally authorized exceptions to ensure flexibility. Critically, the ILO social security conventions allowed the goal of universal coverage to be reached progressively.

This ILO position was premised on the argument that:

A society that provides security for its citizens protects them not only from war and disease, but also from the insecurities related to making a living through work. Social security systems provide for basic income in cases of unemployment, illness and injury, old age and retirement, invalidity, family responsibilities such as pregnancy and childcare, and loss of the family breadwinner. Such benefits are important not only for individual workers and their families but also for their communities as a whole. By providing health care, income security and social services, social security enhances productivity and contributes to the dignity and full realization of the individual[...]. Finally, by providing a safety net in case of economic crisis, social security serves as a fundamental element of social cohesion, thereby helping to ensure social peace and a positive engagement with globalization and economic development. (ILO, 2013).

It has been argued that Convention 102 is grounded in an outdated vision of national and global labour markets. Core to this critique is the argument that the provision of social security through mechanisms of formal labour market engagement is:

premised on the existence of a labour market that can generate incomes sufficient for most people of working age and also create sufficient surplus to enable many people in employment to save against the contingencies of ill health, old age and unemployment. (Walker, 2013)

Such a situation no longer characterizes labour markets and economies in most if not all OECD countries, and no such labour market exists in developing countries, which are in fact characterised by extensive underemployment and unemployment, dominated by an informal labour market offering poverty level wages to the majority of workers (ibid). Globalisation in recent decades has resulted in greater inequality, a reduction in good jobs in the formal sector, and increased global competition among labour for low wage employment, simultaneously with a concentration of resources among elites able to use their power to increase profits and minimize taxation, resulting in the coincidence of increased need for social protection and reduced resource availability, fueled by the race for global competitiveness and the dominance of the interests of capital over labour.

Thus while Convention 102 lays out a full social protection menu, its relevance and adequacy in the context of a significantly changed global economy has been widely questioned within OECD countries and may no longer represent an adequate or viable response to labour market challenges in either developed or developing countries. There is a growing concern that much of the world may not be able to afford a primarily contribution based approach and that social insurance-based provision excludes the majority of workers, most notably those outside the formal sector. The provision specified is particularly challenged in terms of its feasibility in developed countries with the growing casualisation of labour and radical changes in nature of the work relationship, while in developing countries, the focus on inclusion of those within the formal sector has limited provision to a tiny percentage of the population.

The inadequacy of such provision in the context of a globalizing world, where people are increasingly exposed to global economic risks, ultimately led to a growing consciousness that broad-based national social protection policies were required to provide a buffer against many of the negative social and economic effects of the globalising world. This was recognised in the 2001 resolution of the International Labour Conference, at which the ILO was mandated to improve social security coverage and extend it to all those in need of protection (ILO, 2001). Similarly, recognition of the limitations of Convention 102, particularly in terms of its failure to address the needs of those outside formal employment, and those for whom poverty was not a risk, but a certainty, resulted a restatement of the vision of universal provision in the ILO National Social Protection Floors Recommendation No. 202, hereafter referred to as Recommendation 202, which was unanimously endorsed at the 2012 International Labour Conference.

The development of the concept of a Social Protection Floor (SPF) and the movement in support of it as a basis for social policy reflected an attempt to compensate for the weaknesses inherent in the 1952 vision by extending the norm underlying the vision of social protection provision during the second half of the 20th century in most OECD countries, to developing countries. The underlying vision of the SPF is that the state should ensure some form of guaranteed minimum income, below which no household, however constituted, should be allowed to fall, in part by extending provision beyond the formal sector. This initiative has been widely celebrated as progressive, although some critics suggest that it remains insufficiently ambitious, in terms of the realisation of a broader vision of secure welfare, being limited to the provision of cash benefits in pursuit of a social floor (Deacon, 2013b).

Recommendation 202 provides guidance and principles relating to desirable outcomes rather than being prescriptive, and calls for the provision of a basic set of social rights, services and facilities that every person should enjoy in order to provide a social protection floor. It is proposed that the SPF should comprise of two main elements, i) services - geographical and financial access to essential services such as water and sanitation, health, and education - and ii) transfers - a basic set of essential social transfers, in cash or in kind, to provide minimum income security and access to essential services, including health care. Recommendation 202 specifies that:

Members should, in accordance with national circumstances, establish as quickly as possible and maintain their social protection floors comprising basic social security guarantees. The guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level. (ILO, 2012)

Recommendation 202 specifies the required provision as:

Nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. The national social protection floors should comprise at least the following basic social security guarantees as enumerated in paragraph 5 of the Recommendation:

Access to a set of goods and services constituting essential health care including maternity care
Basic income security for children
Basic income security for persons in active age unable to earn sufficient income
Basic income security for persons in old age or disabled
(ILO, 2012).

The desired outcome of Recommendation 202 was to ‘provide higher levels of protection to as many people as possible, reflecting economic and fiscal capacities of Members, and as soon as possible’, but without being prescriptive in terms of how this should be achieved, with item 13 specifying:

Members should formulate and implement national social security extension strategies, based on national consultations through effective social dialogue and social participation. National strategies should:

- (a) prioritize the implementation of social protection floors as a starting point for countries that do not have a minimum level of social security guarantees, and as a fundamental element of their national social security systems: and
- (b) seek to provide higher levels of protection to as many people as possible, reflecting economic and fiscal capacities of Members, and as soon as possible.

(2) For this purpose, Members should progressively build and maintain comprehensive and adequate social security systems coherent with national policy objectives and seek to coordinate social security policies with other public policies. (ibid.)

Recommendation 202 was endorsed at the 101st International Labour Conference (ILC) session in Geneva on 14th June 2012. Given the ILO's lead mandate in relation to social protection within the UN system and the adoption of the one UN approach, it can be seen to represent not only the position of the ILO, but also the official position of all UN agencies in relation to social protection programming objectives, as well as, in theory, if not in actuality, (as will be discussed below) the position of the national government signatories to the recommendation, including the major development partners active in the sector. In this way Resolution 202 has the potential to serve as a harmonising and focusing instrument for social protection provision, with the SPF serving as a common framework for donor coordination, as envisaged in the Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) aid harmonization processes (discussed below) and, more recently as requested by the G20.

In addition to the seminal work relating to the SPF, the ILO has carried out significant related work in a number of areas, including work on costing of social protection provision (ILO, 2008), research into extending provision outside the formal sector, gathering key data on provision, and the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda. However, notwithstanding these developments, critics argue that the ILO remains fundamentally challenged in the contemporary labour context by the restricted and arguably outdated tri-partite model of social dialogue upon which it is based.

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

UNRISD is an autonomous research institute within the UN system that undertakes multidisciplinary research and policy analysis on the social dimensions of contemporary development issues. It was established in 1963 to provide independent space within the UN system for policy-relevant, cutting-edge research on social development of relevance to the work of the United Nations.¹⁴ To this end, UNRISD has sought to keep the social protection discourse anchored in the welfare provision mandate. The institution has challenged the shift towards the reframing of social protection debate in favour of residual provision which has come to dominate in the post-Washington consensus period (see Bretton Wood Institution section below). UNRISD has offered intellectual counterpoints to the prevailing discourse over the last decades, notably in the seminal *Social Policy in a Development Context* (2001), which asked the critical question:

How can social policies be used to enhance social capacities for economic development without, in the process, eroding the intrinsic values of the social ends that policy makers purport to address? (Mkandawire, 2001).

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[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/\(httpPages\)/1889BA294D2950E08025791F005CD710?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/(httpPages)/1889BA294D2950E08025791F005CD710?OpenDocument)

In this paper Mkandawire provided a critical counterpoint to the prevailing reframing and narrowing of the social protection discourse and safety net orientation, calling for an alternative approach which entailed:

rethinking social policy away from its conception as a residual category of “safety nets” that merely counteract policy failures or developmental disasters. Social policy should be conceived as involving overall and prior concerns with social development, and as a key instrument that works in tandem with economic policy to ensure equitable and socially sustainable development. (ibid.)

The paper raised the critical issue of equity, which is discussed further below in relation to current developments in social protection policy and programming. It also highlighted that part of the reason for the revival of interest in social policy in the context of development was the role of social protection in contributing to economic development and growth, and hence, interest in the idea of social equity as an instrument for the promotion of growth as well as a desirable end in itself. The paper also identified the impact of globalization on social policy both in normative terms and also in terms of ‘setting constraints (fiscal and trade) that social policy must be attentive to’ and also the growing role of transnational actors in the form of aid donors, non-governmental organizations and transnational corporations in social policy delivery’.

As well as deepening the intellectual and analytical debate around social protection and continuing to question current donor and government practices, UNRISD has also produced seminal work on social protection financing options (UNRISD, 2009 and 2012) examining the changing domestic and international fiscal context for social provisioning.

UNICEF

UNICEF has played a key role over three decades in maintaining an alternative social protection discourse, playing a critical role at key junctures in challenging the Bank orthodoxy. Key examples of this role are the production of ‘Adjustment with Human Face’ by Cornia et al in 1987, which directly challenged the BWI approach to structural adjustment, highlighting its social cost, articulating an alternative strategy of adjustment. Similarly UNICEF’s 1994 State of the World’s Children report contributed to reform of Bank policy and lending strategies to protect the poorest. The ‘Recovery with a human face’ forum of 2010 continued this tradition of challenging BWI programming by exploring the contradiction between the macro-economic stance recommended by the BWI in the wake of the 2008 crisis, and the need to protect social sector, including social protection expenditure (Ortiz, 2010) (see further discussion below).

In this way UNICEF has played a role over three decades in maintaining a rights-based counterpoint to the BWI position, although pragmatically has joined with the dominant but contested approach of providing highly targeted support to the extreme poor in the provision of services in line with the dominant orthodoxy in its field programming.

Other UN Actors

The UNDP has over time played a similarly challenging role. In particular, the production of the Human Development Report,¹⁵ launched in 1990, had the goal of returning people to the centre of the development process in terms of economic debate, policy and advocacy in the post structural adjustment period, and more fundamentally to see freedom from poverty recognized as a basic human right, influenced by the ideas of Sen. The report argued that:

the basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This may appear to be a simple truth. But it is often forgotten in the immediate concern with the accumulation of commodities and financial wealth. (UNDP, 1990)

It is interesting to note how distant this articulation of development is from the current market- and growth-based language of development, with the near conflation of development and growth processes. While there is a recognition that growth is not development, repeated failures of conservative initiatives, such as ‘pro-poor growth’ have led to a recognition that unless growth can be harnessed to support the poor directly, development will not take place.

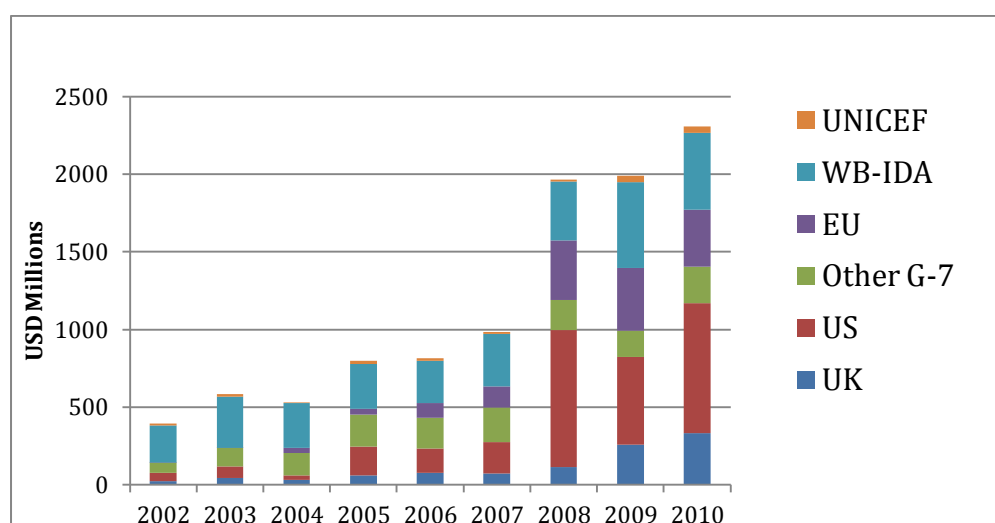
There has been a growing interest in social protection among a wider diversity of UN agencies during the late 2000s and 2010s due to the increasing association of social protection with broader development and growth processes. This has also been associated with a significant increase in the resources available from DAC sources to support interventions relating to social protection provision, rising from an estimated US\$ 0.4 billion in 2002 to over \$2.3 billion by 2010, and with, for example, DFID bilateral social protection spending in real terms (constant 2009 prices) being in 2009 ten times what it was in 2002.¹⁶

Donor allocations have shown a marked further increase since the food, fuel and financial crises which occurred between 2007 and 2009 (known collectively as the 'Triple F' crisis), both in terms of value and as a proportion of total ODA, with a spike in spending in 2008 and 2009 and sustained elevation in levels of social welfare expenditure. This is illustrated in figure 1 below.

¹⁵ The Human Development Report is an independent report, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

¹⁶ Estimates based on Greenslade 2013, acknowledging that inconsistency in sectoral definitions render this an approximate indicator of growth of spending in the sector.

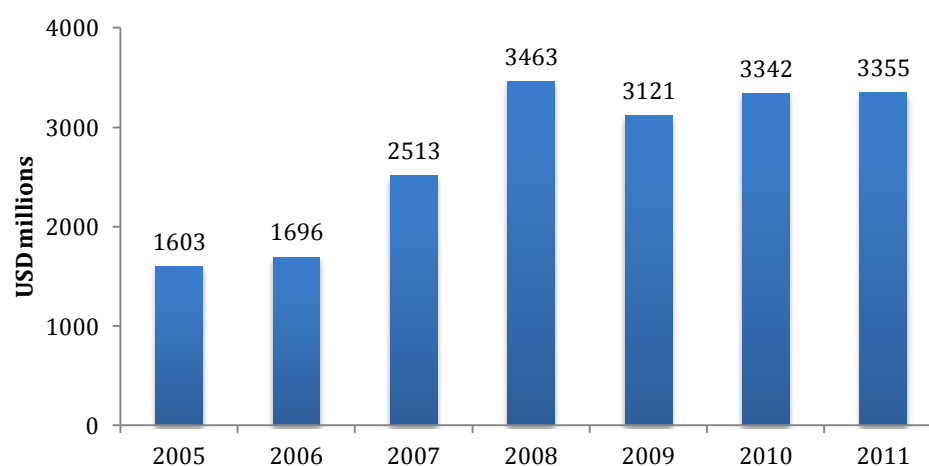
Figure 1: Spending by Major Donor Agencies on Social Protection, 2002-2010



Source: Greenslade, 2013.

This trend is further illustrated in figure 2, calculated on the basis of data from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on donor and multilateral ODA spending, as tracked by the DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS). This summarises expenditure recorded under three codes relating to social protection (basic nutrition, social welfare and multi-sector aid for basic social services).¹⁷ ODA for these three areas of expenditure increased significantly, more than doubling in nominal terms between 2006 and 2008 to reach a high of USD3.46 billion.

Figure 2: Total CRS reported ODA expenditures relating to social protection (current prices)

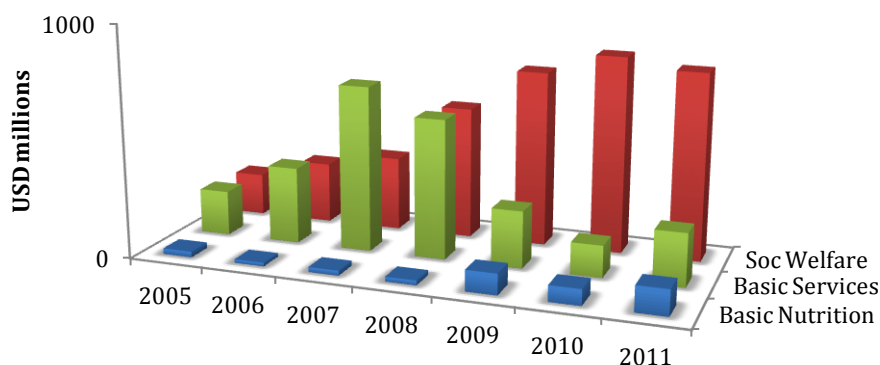


Source: OCED, n.d.

¹⁷ The objective of the OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) is to provide a set of readily available basic data that enables analysis on where aid goes, what purposes it serves and what policies it aims to implement, on a comparable basis for all DAC members. However, the CRS sector coding system does not correspond well with donor concepts or definitions of social protection and therefore cannot adequately differentiate or report on expenditures in this sector (OECD, n.d.).

Decomposition of this support by CRS category illustrates sustained increases in support for social welfare, see figure 3.

Figure 3: CRS reported ODA expenditures under codes 1240, 16010 and 16050 (current prices)



Source: OCED, n.d.

Despite budgetary pressure on overall ODA budgets since the onset of the global economic crisis, most OECD donors reported social protection expenditures that grew faster than ODA with increases in social protection expenditures outstripping significant increases in overall ODA – by factors of between 7 and 15 in Australia, Finland and the UK (OECD, n.d.).

As summarised in a report examining the UN World Food Programme (WFP)’s strategic role in social protection, these contextual shifts have had the result that ‘*interest in safety nets and social protection is growing exponentially*’ Gentilini and Omamo (2009). Examples include the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which is collaborating with UNICEF on the current Protection to Production research programme,¹⁸ exploring the relationship between social protection and productivity, and the broader Transfer Project also examining social protection provision.¹⁹ The FAO is currently recruiting a team to develop its institutional engagement with social protection. The WFP is increasingly interested in engaging in the debate as it redefines its mandate away from humanitarian and towards development interventions, as described in a recent evaluation:

WFP contributes to social protection and safety nets in ways that range from the implementation of transfer programmes to helping to design food components of national social protection systems or advising governments on related policy. WFP’s work in social protection and safety nets was seen as relevant and effective and as having the potential to go beyond life saving towards building resiliency and promoting livelihoods, especially when traditional WFP instruments are combined with new approaches – such as school feeding linked to local or national agricultural production or take-home meals, the establishment of rice banks or grain reserves, and food- and cash-for-work projects that develop capacity for disaster resilience – and when projects are well targeted, of sufficient duration and linked to government

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/economic/ptop/en/>

¹⁹ <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/transfer>

priorities. [...] To be most effective as a safety net or part of a broader social protection system, WFP transfers should be adequate to meet people's needs: provided in a timely manner – on time and when needed: predictable, so people know that the transfer will be available when needed, and can plan for it; and financially and politically sustainable. (WFP, 2011)

The above report extract is cited in full as it illustrates challenges inherent in attempting to accommodate the requirements of social protection provision, as envisaged in the UN rights statements, with the interventions of specialized agencies with specific mandates which do not encompass ongoing systems of state-based welfare provision, and the competition to identify relevant roles within the social protection discourse. The evaluation is clear on the key constraints to meaningful engagement among agencies whose primary concern is not the development of national social protection systems:

Problems that limit WFP's ability to provide effective social protection or safety nets include inadequate duration and amount of transfers; pipeline breaks due to annual funding cycles and gaps and delays in funding; and short-term or unpredictable transfers. As governments become able to implement their own safety nets and social protection systems, WFP can remain relevant by shifting from an operational role towards the provision of policy and technical support, capacity development and advocacy. (ibid)

Similarly, the global financial crisis and the recent focus on the global employment crisis, as highlighted in the WDR 2013 (World Bank, 2012) have stimulated interest in the potential of social protection in general, and public works in particular, to address global labour market challenges, bringing agencies such as UNDESA and UNCTAD to engage more closely with social protection as a potential instrument to address broader development challenges relating to under- and unemployment.

UN Contestation

Even within the UN however, there are inconsistencies and also some contestation regarding social protection, both in terms of mandate and also content. Contestation is found between the UN specialist agencies, WHO, UNESCO and ILO, also UNDP and UNDESA in terms of their policy advice and analytical approaches. This relates to a broader challenge within the UN as identified in the 2002 document, *Strengthening the UN: An Agenda for Further Change* (UN Sec Gen 2002), which required the UN to '*forge consensus on globally important social and economic issues and strengthen the principal organ concerned with those issues*'.

Inter-agency tensions are further exacerbated by special initiatives such as the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization (GAVI),²⁰ the Global Compact,²¹ Millennium Project,²²

²⁰ <http://www.gavialliance.org/>

²¹ The Global Compact provides a platform for the UN to engage with global business <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

²² The Millennium Project was commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2002 to develop a concrete action plan for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/>

(see Deacon, 2007). Such initiatives can cut across and confuse the sectoral division of responsibilities between the different agencies, sometimes representing differing visions of desirable programming – with, for example, the MDGs representing a significantly reduced and targeted vision of welfare provision.

Attempts have been made to address these issues insofar as they relate to the architecture of the UN, for example through and the UNICEF/FAO collaboration on the Transfer Project and Protection to Production initiative, and more broadly the ‘one UN initiative’. This, in relation to social protection, has resulted in agencies uniting, at least nominally, in support of realization of the SPF and ILO Resolution 202, although the effectiveness of such interventions to date is limited.

UN Conclusion

The UN agencies can be seen, therefore, to have offered a critical counterpoint to dominant developments over the last two decades which have tended towards a more residual, safety nets approach to social protection. The UN has provided this counterpoint through both their policy advisory inputs to programme design and also the intellectual critique they have offered. The UN’s rights-based vision of universal provision, initially based on formal sector mechanisms, has been extended more broadly under the auspices of Recommendation 202 and the associated advocacy initiative, which has accommodated progressive realisation and roles for the non-state sector, and recognised the contextual changes which have occurred over recent decades, in this way maintaining a dialogue and linkage points with the alternative neoliberal approach espoused by other key IDIs, including the World Bank, but at the same time presenting a direct challenge in terms of the ultimate outcome and form of provision envisioned (see discussion in Deacon, 2013b). However, notwithstanding these adaptations, framing the social protection agenda within a rights discourse has proved problematic given the changing nature of the global economy and dominant political discourse over the half century since the various covenants and conventions were framed.

The Bretton Woods Institutions and the Social Protection Discourse

During the 1970s the Bretton Woods Institutions (The World Bank and International Monetary Fund), particularly the World Bank, expanded their earlier focus on economic policy to include a greater emphasis on poverty, primarily in the form of rural development and the promotion of basic needs.

However, it was the economic crisis of the 70s that precipitated major changes in the BWI institutions perspectives on poverty and social protection. In response to the onset of the global economic crisis and growing problems of indebtedness in Developing Countries, the World Bank and IMF promoted the implementation of a set of macro-economic stabilisation policies, popularly known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). While intended to promote macro-economic stability, these programmes resulted in reversed growth trends in many economies and significant reductions in government employment, with the effect of driving processes of unemployment and impoverishment, at the same time as state investment and provision of social sector provision was contracting. The World Bank had previously argued that open unemployment could not exist to any significant degree in developing

countries and asserted that markets would clear once the period of macro-economic adjustment was completed. However, it became clear to the Bank over time that ‘safety nets’ were required to cushion what were initially anticipated to be the temporary effects of adjustment, in terms of unemployment and poverty, as outlined by Molyneux:

... by the end of the 1980s many governments and international development agencies accepted that there was an urgent need to address the “social deficit” if the neoliberal reforms were not to be violently rejected by the populations that had suffered so harshly from them. (Molyneux, 2009)

A key role in this process of policy transformation was played by UNICEF in the form of *‘Adjustment with a Human Face’*, written by Cornia et al. and published by UNICEF in 1987, which highlighted the social costs of adjustment and the need for a concerted social policy response. The report contributed to a recognition that poverty was:

not a “transitional phenomenon” as initially supposed by the World Bank and others, but was acknowledged to be a structural effect of the New Economic Model, requiring closer attention to social assistance, primarily in the form of antipoverty measures and state programmes. (ibid.)

The extensive programme of safety net interventions established and financed by the World Bank entailed a reframing of the previous social protection discourse in favour of a neo-liberal conception, with residual ‘social safety nets’ (SSN) being presented as an alternative to universal welfare provision. They were promoted to soften and make politically acceptable SAP reforms, through the provision of temporary short term support during period of transition during 80s, and removing social protection from its base in a rights agenda and universal welfarist vision. The implications of this conceptual shift in social protection provision were highly significant, and have been summarised thus:

The crisis resulted in the abandonment of the remains of the ‘nominally universal’ principles that from the 1960s were held to inform welfare. From this point social policy was required to adapt to economic policy and it was agreed that if the social sector was to be more efficient, it had to be brought into closer alignment with the market and with broader trends toward pluralizing service delivery. (ibid.)

World Bank-influenced IDIs engaged in the promotion of a series of major policy reforms across a broadly neoliberal spectrum, reflecting broader international political shifts. The ending of Keynesian economics and the fall of the eastern bloc saw the return to market liberalism, the rise of the neoliberal agenda globally, and the promotion of objectives relating to increasing efficiency, accountability and quality in relation to welfare provision (Grindle, 2000).

This new approach was presaged by initiatives from a range of actors. Foremost among these was the World Bank’s launch of the New Poverty Agenda (NPA), set out in the 1990 *World Development Report* which marked a policy reorientation away from the structural adjustment focus of the 1980s, and became core part of the overall development zeitgeist, calling for a greater poverty focus to programming. The NPA entailed a:

two-pronged strategy for sustainable poverty reduction. The first prong of this strategy consists of labour-intensive growth, designed to promote the productive use of the poor's most abundant asset – labour. The second prong aims to improve the provision of social services, in particular health and education, so that the poor can take advantage of the opportunities afforded by broad-based growth. WDR 90 also recognises the need for social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable groups in society. (Baulch, 1996)

This resulted in a new 'post adjustment' approach to poverty relief and welfare provision which was characterized in developing countries as the New Social Policy (NSP).

By the late 90s the World Bank had sharpened its theoretical stance, articulated in the form of the Social Risk Management (SRM) approach (Holzmann and Jorgensen 1999), with addressing risk being the key objective of social protection interventions, in contrast to addressing the certainty of poverty, implicit in the ILO and HR agendas. It was premised on the assumption of the primacy of growth, namely that economic growth would be the key driver of poverty reduction and that the priority was therefore the removal of obstacles to growth, and addressing the risks which hindered participation in the benefits of growth. This was underpinned by a belief in the function of the market as a cleansing agent and was empirically supported by work by economists such as Dollar and Kraay (Growth is Good for Poor, 2001) and the associated belief in 'trickle down', with the UNDP-World Bank debate of the time centred around the meaning of the slogan of 'pro-poor growth'.

The premise that poverty eradication requires growth has not been fundamentally challenged and continues to occupy the lynchpin position at the heart of policy and programming for poverty eradication and development. Yet a number of key questions of a more nuanced nature relating to policy emphasis and sequencing in relation to the growth-poverty reduction nexus have continued to form a key area of contestation between the BWI and other development actors in subsequent decades. The tension around this question within the Bank itself was revealed in relation to the production of the World Bank's millennium World Development Report (WDR) 2000 on poverty, in terms of which should come first: social protection provision or growth.

The largely ideological rejection of the European concept of the welfare state and desirability of universal social security provision by the World Bank and other actors adopting an essentially neoliberal approach, was based in part on concerns regarding the adverse impact of excessive generosity of benefit systems on incentives to work based on evidence available at the time (now being questioned) which suggested a strong correlation between the two, resulting in the Bank's rejection of generous welfare provision.

In practical terms it was also accompanied in many low income countries by down-sizing of governments resulting from the period of adjustment, with access to financial BWI resources being in many instances contingent on significant reductions in personnel budgets among other fiscal conditions, thereby reducing already limited state capacity for delivery. In this

context the promotion of market based provision by private sector and international development agencies filled a significant capacity gap.

This state of affairs has led some critics of the BWI to assert that, the World Bank played a key role in first damaging and then reshaping national social policy in development and transition contexts during the 1980s and 90s. The Bank's ideological stance on social protection and social policy more broadly was also associated with a wider cross institutional concern with aid effectiveness, and the inefficiency and inadequacy of existing provision. Within this a major target for criticism was the extent to which pre-existing social protection provision in developing countries had benefitted the non-poor. High-lighting the inadequacy of existing state provision, the Bank critiqued existing welfare and proposed a set of alternative policy prescriptions entailing targeted safety net provision, an approach antithetical to a universal welfare vision. Some critics go so far as to argue that the Bank used the argument that public spending disproportionately benefited the non poor 'to undermine embryonic welfare states of Latin America, South Asia and Africa' (Deacon, 2013a). The Bank approach was given greater credibility by the collapse of the Eastern bloc model and increasing strains evident within the social protection systems of European welfare states.

This approach is seen to have undermined the possibility of the development of welfare states by supporting systems through which Social Safety Nets (SSN) were provided for the poor, alongside privatized services for the better off, thereby undermining the likelihood of a repeat of the European experience of the formation of cross-class alliances and solidarity as a driver of shaping better public service for all (Deacon, 2013b). The biggest losers were the urban middle class, who had previously depended on state services and pensions, and it has been argued that this extinguished the likelihood of such actors playing the historic role of state builders as they had in Europe.

The emerging vision was of social protection provision that was primarily responsive to shocks rather than addressing chronic poverty, with social protection playing a role in enabling beneficiaries to enhance their market engagement, and find market based solutions to poverty (shadowing changes in the European vision of welfare provision outlined above), prioritising poverty targeting over universalism, and effectively mothballing the idea of IDI's promoting the systemic development of welfare state and with it a rights-based social security agenda, with the latter being driven in part by pragmatic responses to the fiscal constraints.

The key policy initiative which accompanied this shift was the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), introduced by the BWI in 1999, as one of the conditions for both receipt of concessional financing under the IMF's Facility for Growth and Poverty Reduction (FPGR) (the renamed Enhanced Structural Adjustment Fund (ESAF)) and also for debt relief under the HIPC and HIPC 2 agreements. This approach was adopted in part to promote national leadership in the sector, in response to criticism of external donor dominance, and to ensure that poverty alleviation strategies were in place in countries in receipt of donor support. It was however also used as an instrument to promote a particular vision of development planning and anti-poverty policy design, with a focus on targeted provision, and a mechanism to ensure that development planning was compliant with the preferred BWI approach, since BWI approval was required for national PRSPs.

These developments took place at a time of some conceptual convergence among the key IDIs, in the wake of the 80s crisis and structural adjustment debacle, and with a common recognition of the failure of many developing country states to make adequate provision in terms of basic services and overall development progress and the inadequacy of existing aid approaches and modalities. The PRSP itself was in part a product of the 1995 Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative, which had aimed to promote developing country engagement with and national ownership of national antipoverty programming.

Before moving on to developments within the BWI in the next millennium, after this period of intense institutional activity and reframing of the debate in the 90s the context will be set by outlining the key developments in the sector during the 1990s.

The Oslo Consensus, the 20/20 Initiative and the DAC Targets

The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the follow up meeting in Oslo endorsed the 20/20 Initiative to promote and finance basic social services provision in developing countries, with a financing framework based on a compact between developing and industrialized countries, which called for the allocation of 20 per cent of the budget in developing countries and 20 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) to finance basic social services provision. The Oslo Consensus affirmed the goal of promoting universal access to basic social services over a defined time period, by reorienting existing and mobilising additional resources as well as increasing cost effectiveness, efficiency and quality in service delivery and included agreement on the elements of basic social services required. The key document relating to the initiative *Implementing the 20/20 Initiative: Achieving universal access to basic social services* was a joint publication of UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and also the World Bank, illustrating the moment of consensus reached by the mid 90s on the need for the extension of social service provision and improved aid effectiveness. The Oslo Consensus reiterated the need for developing countries to take the lead and set the priorities in the development of basic social programmes with the aim of achieving universal access to basic social services. The instrument proposed to achieve this was the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The Role of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

Over the last two decades the OECD DAC (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee) has become one of the dominant institutions with regards to development aid. The OECD DAC is a forum for OECD member states to discuss issues surrounding aid, development and poverty reduction in developing countries, and aims to promote common objectives and coordination among the major bilateral donors. The DAC was established in 1960 and has 28 members, including the European Union, while the World Bank, the IMF and UNDP participate as permanent observers. The DAC convenes an annual High Level Meeting (HLM) where ministers or heads of the national aid agencies meet and adopt recommendations and resolutions.

The key role the DAC has played in relation to the social protection sector in the 90s was the synthesis of the DAC development targets in 1996, which were ultimately to become the

MDGs, and its role in improving aid effectiveness which has been a major preoccupation since the 1990s. In its 1996 report *Shaping the 21st Century* synthesized the raft of goals and targets for key health and development indicators which had been agreed during the early 1990s and set 2015 as the target year for their achievement (DAC, 1996). In 1999 the OECD DAC Poverty Network (POVNET) was established, which championed the inclusion of concepts such as ownership, partnership, results orientation, and poverty focus within the donor social protection debate, and promoted the use of a multidimensional approach to poverty analysis. During the early 2000s POVNET contributed to a radical rethinking of the concept of pro-poor growth and as such played a significant role in reorienting donor analysis of the role of social protection in poverty reduction (Voipio, 2007).

The Failed Global Social Policy Code Initiative

In 1999 the UK Finance Minister Gordon Brown attempted to develop a 'Global Social Policy Code', which would be a code of global best practice in social policy, to be applicable to all countries, setting minimum standards and ensuring that IMF and World Bank interventions during periods of crisis would protect investments in key social and employment sectors. This represented an attempt at a significant reorientation of policy, and it was anticipated that the code would potentially include principles relating to security, democratic participation, civil society, minimum livelihoods, productive employment, labour standards and service provision, representing an '*attempt to shift from neoliberal globalization to project to one respected core set of social policy principles*' (Deacon, 2007).

Initial leadership by the World Bank gave way to UN responsibility for development of a code on the basis of the agreement that '*the UN takes the lead role in the development of universal principles of social policy*' (World Bank, 1999). Interestingly, the initiative was rejected by a grouping of Middle Income Countries on the grounds that the code might be used to impose a northern development agenda once again, as it was perceived as representing the imposition of set of principles requiring significant policy revisions, but without any provision of funding to enable their realization, associated with the fear that the code might represent a new form of conditionality in context of future trade or debt negotiations, used by the BWI as a further instrument of loan conditionality.

As Deacon notes, it is ironic that this potential turning point where '*progressive northern thinking about socially regulated globalization*' was momentarily a reality, was rejected by the South in the name of national sovereign rights to economic and social policy autonomy.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Initiative

The introduction of the PRSP initiative in 1999 represented a key response to the lessons of the 1990s on the part of the IDI community. The PRSP is a document setting out an analysis of poverty in a country and defining the national strategy on how the government is going to reduce it. Preparation of a PRSP was a criterion for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative (and also the subsequent HIPC2) as well as being an eligibility criterion for concessional lending from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank and the IMF Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) programme.

The PRSP initiative was shaped by the convergence of debates and controversies in the field of international development in the late 1990s and the widespread recognition that existing policy was flawed, although policy-makers did not necessarily agree on their analyses of the problem. The key strands of thinking which the PRSP attempted to address have been summarised as:

- Questioning of the mandates of the IMF and World Bank in the light of the 1997 Asia Crisis and the 1998 Reviews of the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) lending framework, deteriorating economic growth in SSA and the perceived failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to reverse this trend;
 - The fall into disuse of the Policy Framework Paper (PFP), intended as the operational mechanism for IMF-World Bank cooperation, but which had become by the late 1990s exclusively a tool of the IMF;
 - The 1999 review of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which questioned how to link debt relief to poverty reduction in the design of HIPC2 in the context of external pressure, particularly from civil society and the US administration to ensure that resources freed up by debt relief would be well spent;
 - The need to operationalise the 1999 Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) – the new World Bank conceptual framework for aid - and to combine this with an explicit focus on poverty reduction, which had become a central concern for UKDFID at this time in terms of the linkages between poverty reduction and debt relief.
- (Christiansen and Hovland, 2003)

The PRSP initiative was an attempt to respond to these various threads and as a result was widely supported by a range of different actors.

Developments to the End of the 20th Century

Overall, despite the failure of the social policy code initiative, the 90s can be seen as a decade characterised by a coming together of agencies around agreed priorities for poverty targeting and aid effectiveness. This galvanised the various actors in pursuit of key outcomes desirable in terms of efficiency and direct poverty reduction. It also legitimised the engagement of a range of Non State Actors in the provision of social protection, supporting, but also compromising already weak national institutions and capacity. In this way non state actors became (in some instances unwitting) contributors to a shift in the vision informing IDI engagement with the provision of social security in the developing world, replacing the aspiration of universal welfarist provision, as set out in the UDHR, with a safety nets and ‘risk management’ approach.

New Actors in the 21st Century

In addition to the growing interest of a range of UN agencies in social protection, outlined above, a growing range of state and Non-State Actors have become engaged in the social protection debate during the last decade, creating an increasingly complex institutional context, relating equally to social protection as it does to the broader development debate.

G8 and G20

Both the G8 and G20 have played key roles in the recent development of IDI activity in the social protection sector with a shift in centre of gravity from the G8 to the G20 since the financial crisis, reflecting broader geopolitical changes.

The G8, comprising the world's seven leading industrialized nations (Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States together with Russia) played a significant role in promoting increased aid flows and debt write offs during the first half of the decade, and in particular around the 2005 G8 'Gleneagles' summit held in Scotland. However geopolitical shifts in the axis of power occurred during this decade, accelerating after the 2008 crisis, with the key role in development passing from the G8 powers to the G20.²³

The G20 was instituted in 1999, and the first heads of state summit held in 2008 as a response both to the financial crisis and also to criticism that emerging countries were not adequately included in the core of global economic discussion and governance. The G20 promotes high-level discussion of policy issues pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability, and seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organization. With the G20 growing in stature after the 2008 Washington summit, its leaders announced on 25 September 2009, that the group would replace the G8 as the main economic council of wealthy nations. The G20 has engaged directly in the social protection discourse, with the establishment of the G20 Development Working Group on Development. Commitments made at the 2011 G20 summit in Los Cabos, Mexico resulted *inter alia* in the creation of a board to improve high-level multilateral coordination on social protection assistance, the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), discussed below.

The G20 'Leaders Declaration' resulting from the most recent G20 meeting, held in St Petersburg in September 2013 however indicates a shift in the orientation of the G20 with regard to social protection, with social protection being conceptualised instrumentally, as a means to achieve the core goals of growth and better quality and more productive jobs rather than as a desirable outcome in itself to address poverty and equity:

We agree that strong and supportive macroeconomic, trade, investment, and labour market policies, sustainable public finance, a sound and well-regulated financial system, and resilient and effective social protection systems are the foundation for sustainable job-creating economic growth. (G20, 2013)

No commitments reinforcing the agenda of development harmonisation and promotion of social protection resulted from the St Petersburg summit, and under the Australian leadership there are no indications that social protection will remain on the G20 agenda. This signals the ending of the moment in which the G20 played a key role in promoting harmonization and

²³ Collectively, the G20 economies account for approximately 86% of the gross world product (GWP), 80% of world trade (including EU intra-trade), and two-thirds of the world population.

effective delivery in the sector and a reorientation towards market based responses to poverty, and may also be linked to an emerging questioning of the relevance of a rights-based development agenda as the global balance of power shifts away from the historically dominant countries of the North (Hopgood, 2013).

SPIAC-B

The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board is a social protection-specific interagency coordination mechanism comprising representatives of bilateral donors and international organizations, and has been described as an effort to institutionalise the ‘great consensus’ (Cichon, 2013). The SPIAC-B developed out of an earlier information sharing forum (‘Show and Tell’) at the request of the G20 Development Working Group. The first meeting took place in July 2012, and it has met twice since then

The SPIAC-B has the objectives of enhancing global coordination and advocacy on social protection issues and coordinating international cooperation in country demand-driven actions, with the chair rotating between the World Bank and the ILO, in an attempt to explicitly acknowledge and accommodate the two agencies with leadership roles in the sector.

Non-State Actors

Non-State Actors, including NGOs and INGOs, business, trade unions and ‘*knowledge actors*’ have come to play an increasingly important role in the social protection debate, both as service providers and also as contributors to the policy debate. Both these aspects of engagement are outlined below.

Provision

Business has come to play an increasing role in the provision of social protection services in developing countries, particularly within the formal sector since the 90s, in line with the promotion of increasingly market based provision.

NGOs, both national and international have also come to play a growing role in the provision of social protection in developing countries, compensating for (and/or displacing) state actors in the provision of services for the poorest, often with financing from multi-or bilateral agencies. INGO engagement has been criticised as substituting for government welfare provision and undermining the process of and likelihood of national provision.

In some cases non state actors are engaged in the delivery of state interventions, as in the case of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, while in others the intervention may fall outside the policies and structures of the state entirely, as in the case of the CLP (Chars Livelihoods Programme) in Bangladesh. Particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, many NGOs are engaged in the implementation of small scale ‘pilot’ social protection programmes, often targeted at particular sub groups of the extreme poor, such as children or the elderly, intended as demonstration or advocacy initiatives to stimulate state engagement in extended social protection provision. This model frequently anticipates that such interventions will contribute to the development of a national system, and hence such programmes consume significant bi- and multilateral donor resources, but evidence on the development of welfare

states from such bottom-up projectised initiatives is weak. In many contexts, donor focus on such interventions has potentially adverse implications for the development of systems of national welfare provision, national ownership, sustainability, accountability and aid effectiveness.

The rise of non state service providers has reflected a pragmatic response to the fiscal and institutional capacity constraints faced by many developing countries in terms of the roll out of increased social protection provision, as exemplified by the NGO Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh, which has played a key role in developing and implementing national social protection programmes. However, this approach has simultaneously contributed to a consolidation of the reframing of social protection in the development discourse in favour of dualist provision, in line with the residualist vision of welfare, at the expense of the universal model.

Policy Engagement

Globalisation has resulted in an increased voice for global businesses and an opportunity to seek and obtain greater a role for private sector in service delivery (health and social care), with the World Social Forum (WSF) promoting the engagement of business programmes in fighting malaria etc, and the World Economic Forum (WEF) promoting corporate financing for development and the expansion of public private partnership (PPP) arrangements.

Civil society

Civil social and other non state actors have also come to play an increasingly influential role in the global social governance discourse, although vociferous engagement in events such as the World Social Forum process has not resulted in the creation of any form of coherent alternative to the dominant northern discourses. National civil society organisations have not found a coherent voice in terms of contributing to the global social protection debate, although in some regions at national level they have been highly influential, for example in the development of the new Latin American models of provision, and to a lesser extent in some South Asian countries, (see section below). The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) supported initiatives to promote national and regional Social Protection Platforms in Africa to coordinate and stimulate civil society engagement in policy processes in Africa during the 2000s, but these have not yet yielded significant supra-national outcomes. Rather it is international NGOs (INGOs) whose importance in global social policy making process has increased significantly as policy advocates in the promotion of national and international commitments to welfare, somewhat paradoxically, in addition to their role as agents for delivery of aid.

INGOs and other non-state actors have been highly influential internationally and within donor countries in mobilising resource flows in favour of social policy, particularly in terms of bilateral aid budgets overall, supporting the DAC 0.7% targets and mobilising behind specific campaigns, such as the Education for All through the formation of global policy advocacy coalitions. INGOs have also played a key role in shaping programming and policy, complementing and supporting national NGOs in some regions. In others, particularly where national civil society and non state actors are not engaged in the social protection debate, they have engaged directly with the state and IDIs. Domestic lobbying by the major OECD-based

INGOs has also played a role in shaping donor policy and financing choices, for example with HelpAge International or the Save the Children Alliance gaining support from donors such as the EC and DFID to finance programming oriented to supporting the elderly or children in many LICs, as well as actively participating in international policy development processes, with some organizing into explicit advocacy alliances, such as the Grow Up Free From Poverty Coalition,²⁴ which promotes the right to a social minimum. At national level within developing countries the fact that INGO positions are informed by institutional priorities can in some instances result in competition for donor and government endorsement, and can contribute to sectoral fragmentation and the proliferation of project based solutions, rather than promoting overall systems of provision as part of a coherent welfare state model.

Trade Unions

Trade unions (TU) have played a role, largely through their engagement in the ILO tripartite process, with support for the decent work for all agenda, which aims to promote and defend the needs and interests of formal sector workers. Their work has been largely in reaction to the processes inherent in the process of globalisation, such as contracting out public services and the threat to public service provision inherent in the WTO Global Agreement on Tariffs and Services (GATS), and attempting to promote international labour standards. TUs have also worked with social movements, for example supporting the Education for All (EFA) campaign of the 90s, but within the social protection discourse have prioritised the protection of support for formal sector social security provision, with a view to extending such provision more widely.

The social dialogue model, entailing tripartite engagement between workers, represented by the Trade Unions, employers and government is core to both the ILO and the European Union as the basis for social policy development. However, it is argued by some, that this approach has been one of the impediments to successful ILO advocacy regarding the SPF, due to its preoccupation with formal employment structures in contexts where trade unions have not been active or effective in advocating for the rights for those in the informal economy.

Knowledge Actors

A range of other global knowledge actors, namely global think tanks, global knowledge networks (KNETS) and global epistemic communities have come to play an increasingly important role in the discourse (see Stone, 2001, and Deacon, 2007). The key actors have organisational links to particularly international ‘epistemic communities’ and think tanks, whose analysis is in line with their organisational orientation, with the World Bank linked to the Global Development Network (GDN) and the UN to UNRISD (Deacon, op cit). While the GDN was created to be an independent think tank and was moved to Delhi in order to bring the global South into the debate, critics argue that the result of this process, and other similar endeavours has been to pull southern researchers into knowledge networks driven by priorities and paradigms of northern development economists and in this way create a global cadre of development economist schooled in neoliberal perspectives on development policy. Similarly UNRISD noted in 2004 that the discourse was dominated by neoliberal analysis,

²⁴ <http://www.grow-up-free-from-poverty.org.uk/>

whose paradigm left no space to engage with structural or institutional constraints to poverty alleviation (UNRISD, 2004).

The role of epistemic communities or knowledge actors has increased significantly in the last decade, with a proliferation in OECD based think tanks and consultancy companies offering inputs to the debate. The international influence of such agents has grown as bilateral donors reduce their own analytical and research capacities, and at the same time place increasing demands on their own country offices and partner governments for the production of set documentation as prerequisites for the release of funding and ongoing support in the sector. These range from the IFI requisite PRSPs, to Social Protection Policies and Strategies, to donor specific documentation, such as Business Cases and Value for Money analysis in the case of DFID, and the Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Review (SPER) in the case of the ILO, with new initiatives such as the SPIAC-B/World Bank Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) currently under development.

However, the legitimacy of the knowledge actors active in the production of such material and transmission of ideas and expertise in the sector tends to be awarded within a network of similarly minded actors, rather than in any objective way, in the context of a generalised failure to understand the *'implicit political content to research questions and methodologies'* (Deacon, 2006). This results sometimes in an unwittingly ideologically-oriented debate. To address this Deacon posits the value of some form of transnational body where *'research on global poverty could be revised and coordinated in analogous ways as knowledge about climate change is managed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'*. in order to promote a greater degree of transparency and *'de-ideologisation'*, but no such body is currently mooted more broadly among IDIs or developing country governments. Current initiatives to promote a greater degree of commonality and technical objectivity across the sector in terms of definitions, measurement and data gathering, (led, to a large extent by the World Bank and supported by SPIAC-B (see ODI, 2012)) do however represent a step in this direction.

Key Developments in the Social Protection Debate in the 21 Century

The convergence among the IDIs with the BWI which began in the 90s continued into the early 2000s, as outlined above, focused on the New Social Protection (NSP) agenda, with convergence around the ideas of aid effectiveness, poverty targeting and the addressing of extreme poverty. This accommodated the articulation of a critique of both previous aid processes and outcomes, and raised the issue of aid effectiveness as a challenge to the IDI community, together with the failure of existing state mechanisms to reach the poor. This itself was the consequence of a combination of factors including the constraints imposed by structural adjustment policies on national capacity, as well as the prior weaknesses of post-colonial models adopted which were essentially limited to emulation of OECD models and based on provision for formal sector elites. The limited success of the pro-poor growth agenda to deliver the anticipated benefits in terms of poverty reduction led to a rethinking within the Bank and a recognition of the need to go beyond the SRM approach, in order to accommodate a broader vision of social protection.

Developments in the early 2000s led to optimism among some commentators that the discourse was shifting in favour of the concept of universalist provision:

at least at the level of discourse, the tide has turned from the period in the 1990s when a targeted and means tested safety net future for welfare policy especially in the context of development was being constructed. Now even within the World Bank there is some evidence that the case for a universal approach to social welfare provision is again being recognized. (Deacon, 2005)

This optimism was based on the work of the UNRISD research programme on Social Policy in a Development Context, the ILO Socio-Economic Security Programme's rethinking regarding the sustainability of its traditional approach to social protection, the UN Secretary-General's 2001 paper on 'Enhancing Social Protection and Reducing Vulnerability in a Globalizing World' prepared for the Commission for Social Development, which set out a progressive UN social policy, and hints in the 2004 World Development Report (*Making Services Work for Poor People*, (World Bank, 2003)) of a more universalist approach. However, such optimism was largely misplaced; throughout this period the use of a common language around aid effectiveness has belied to some extent the fundamentally different underlying conceptions of social protection and welfare, and ongoing institutional tensions. The 2004 WDR did not in fact signal a significant shift in orientation at the World Bank, and nor did the counterpoint to the dominant discourse offered by UNRISD and the Socio-Economic Security Programme of the ILO result in a major policy shift or convergence, despite the overarching role of the MDGs.

The influential DFID White Paper (DFID, 2000) galvanized international developments in relation to both aid effectiveness and reaching the poor, but two other key aspects of the paper, the call for a rights-based approach to development based on a recognition of the universality of human rights, and the need for international financing to support the process of provision, were less successful in motivating significant shifts in the agenda over this period, such that the optimism of the mid 2000s had largely dissipated by the time the debate was overtaken by the events of the Triple F crisis. The crisis shifted the social protection agenda in terms of both IDI and national government priorities and financing, and influenced the production of a series of new institutional strategies and approaches. These developments are reviewed below in the section which discusses developments from the Millennium onwards.

The Millennial Impulse

The key themes directing social protection sector in the first decade of the Millennium represented a continuum of the convergence of the previous decade, with the key ideas being the promotion of aid effectiveness and targeting the extreme poor with service provision. The third theme which grew over the decade was that of donor coordination and harmonisation (see discussion of the Paris Agreement and Accra Agenda for Action below).

MDGs

The 2000 UN Millennium Summit and Declaration, and the ensuing MDGs have been seminal in guiding programming in the 21st century, galvanising attempts at poverty reduction, and supporting an increasing role for social protection to this end. This process has effectively set the social protection agenda for the first decade of the millennium. However, as discussed above, the pragmatic poverty targeted approach adopted in the MDGs has arguably resulted in the promotion of a residualist reframing of the social protection debate in preference to a universal or rights-based vision, with the MDGs being distanced from the concept of universal social protection provision, and, in some instances, the provision of support to the poorest being recast as the end point, rather than a necessary, but not sufficient achievement in itself.

PRSPs

As outlined above, the intention underlying the adoption of the PRSP approach in 1999 was to address the worst aspects of aid system, refocusing social policy on targeted poverty alleviation. This approach was also integrated with debt relief provision under HIPC and HIPC2, which were explicitly linked to the PRSP process in an attempt to ensure that poverty alleviation strategies were in place to facilitate improved poverty targeting, as demanded by the IDIs, as one of the pre-conditions for debt relief.

The PRSP project has succeeded in terms of its considerable symbolic importance in raising the profile of social protection and highlighting donor prioritization of the sector, placing it centre stage in the national development agenda, thereby generating a degree of national engagement. However, over the last decade PRSPs have had varying levels of success in stimulating participation and ownership by national governments, in part due to the fact that processes adopted in their production have often been externally led and executed, with extensive donor and consultant inputs, and varying levels of engagement and integration with national government. As such there is a risk that the PRSP has come to be perceived as the latest in a series of instrument of donor conditionality, representing a donor driven (and in some cases donor produced) output, with varying degrees of national ownership or commitment.

DAC, POVNET Aid Effectiveness and Donor Harmonisation

Remedies for the shortcomings in the existing ODA system as experienced in the 90s (poor coordination, tied aid, the limited focus on basic services, bypassing of governments and overly project based ODA) were promoted by the UK in the early years of the millennium having been set out in the UK White Paper *'Making Globalisation Work for the Poor'*, (DFID, 2000), and taken forward by DAC in the form of increased aid flows targeted to poorer countries and within them to poorer people (Deacon, 2007). With support from DFID, following the priorities set out in the 2000 White Paper (DFID, 2000), the DAC supported efforts to promote aid effectiveness and poverty targeting, sponsoring the creation of POVNET specifically to address OECD concerns that development assistance not sufficiently poverty focused.

In 2005 the Millennium Project report, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* and the UNDP Human Development Report reiterated concerns with ongoing shortcomings in aid effectiveness, particularly in terms of coordination and predictability. The consensus over concerns with aid effectiveness culminated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness at the DAC High Level Meeting (HLM) in 2005 and the development of the Paris and Accra principles on aid effectiveness, which served to frame future collaboration and informing the development of subsequent attempts at coordination within the sector. The ongoing focus on poverty targeting associated with the aid effectiveness debate provided further support for the dominance of this approach over the alternative welfare and universalist prescription. However a series of practical recommendations were designed to promote the effectiveness of aid spending through improved harmonization: notably agreement to align aid flows with recipient government priorities, increase the amount of aid flowing directly through government budgets to 25%, reduce the number of overlapping missions to countries, increase the use of recipient government procurement mechanisms, improve the predictability of aid flows and make aid more transparent.

The Rapid Social Response Fund (RSR)

While the 2008/9 global financial, food and fuel crisis caused significant immediate and ongoing reductions in national government expenditure on social protection, and reduced ODA flows in aggregate, it provided a somewhat unlikely opportunity for the reinvigoration of the social protection discourse in general, and promoted the role of the World Bank in social protection more broadly, with a significant growth in expenditure for social protection flowing from the major donors into the sector, particularly through the World Bank managed Rapid Social Response (RSR) Trust Fund.

The RSR was established in 2009 to finance immediate social protection responses to mitigate the impact of the food, fuel and financial crisis on affected populations in low and middle income countries, and to prepare for more effective social protection responses to future shocks by promoting the development of social protection systems in LICs and MICs. The RSR Trust Fund had the objectives of addressing poverty, promoting economic stabilisation, and limiting social and political destabilisation. The thinking underlying the RSR was that the donor resources should be used to build up systems of social protection provision, to ensure that countries could respond more effectively to future shocks (IEG, 2010). To this end, the RSR Trust Fund aimed to build and strengthen safety net provision in LICs in order to address future, as well as current crisis needs (IEG, 2012). It had three key objectives in terms of social protection:

- Meeting crisis needs in the short term
- Promoting systems for ongoing provision for the chronically poor, and
- Developing future crisis response capacity

In its sample study of RSR activities, IEG found that 80% of resources were allocated to activities that aimed to promote social protection capacity to mitigate the effects of future crises (IEG, 2010). However, while some activity may be found at the intersection of these

three different objectives, many of the objectives are likely to require different approaches and instruments and may even entail support to different populations, with much RSR crisis response being targeted to support the ‘new poor’ or potentially socially or politically destabilizing social groups (such as ex-combatants or urban youth) rather than the conventional social protection case load of the chronic extreme poor, a caseload with quite differing demographic and geographical characteristics. The dilemma and contradictions of the threefold set of objectives inherent in the RSR and the challenges in terms of trade-offs in the allocation of resources between these three objectives, and how these dilemmas might be resolved, is not however generally recognized in the literature. The literature also indicates that there is a broader, sometimes implicit, set of objectives associated with social protection, in addition to basic consumption smoothing, which relates to economic and political stabilisation, and which may result in targeting groups other than those most in need of the limited social support available (McCord, 2013).

RSR-financing enabled an expansion of the number of countries in which the Bank was engaged in social protection programming to increase by 15, 9 of which were in African countries where there was no previous lending or technical assistance on safety nets (IEG, 2012), enabling the Bank to extend its own vision of social protection in countries where previously other (or no) paradigms had ruled. As recognised by the IEG:

The crisis provided an opportunity for the Bank to start to move ahead on the long-term agenda of building social protection systems. (IEG, 2012).

The Bank’s crisis response also highlighted a paradox in terms of the tension between the ongoing BWI concern with macro-economic stability and the New Poverty Agenda. Tensions emerged between social protection provision and measures to curtail public employment (which implies a reduction of access to social security provision and a simultaneous increase in the numbers requiring support from within the formal sector) the introduction of targets for fiscal deficits (which implies fiscal contraction), the reduction of ‘low priority’ expenditures (which may imply reductions in social sector expenditure) and a reduction in subsidies, which are often adopted to address price inflation in contexts where alternative and more targeted social-protection responses are not viable (see discussion in the challenges section below).

World Bank interventions during the crisis did not facilitate or support counter-cyclical investment in social protection, indicating that the Bank’s overall fiscal orientation in the wake of the crisis may not have been consistent with the proposed focus on supporting the implementation of social protection as an automatic stabiliser, as proposed by other agencies, such as UNICEF. There was also a potential tension between actors concerned with fiscal management and those concerned with shock response in the form of safety nets within the World Bank (IEG, 2012). A similar perspective is identified in Roy and Ramos’ 2012 analysis of IMF policy in the wake of the crisis, which, it claims are excessively restrictive, pro-cyclical and paying little attention to country-specific circumstances.

New Institutional Strategies

Over the last two years four major IDIs active in the sector have produced seminal outputs redefining their position in the post 2008 context, with the World Bank and UNICEF producing new sector strategies (2012), the World Bank Group completing a new overall Group Strategy (World Bank, 2013), the ILO leading the process for the endorsement of Recommendation 202 on the Social Protection Floor at the International Labour Conference (2012) and the European Commission producing its own strategy in the 2011 EU Agenda for Change, which highlighted the EU's commitment to social protection to achieve poverty reduction. While Recommendation 202 has been discussed in detail in above, key aspects of the other strategies are outlined below.

The World Bank's 2012 Social Protection and Labor (SP&L) strategy, *'Equity, Resilience and Opportunity'* signaled a shift from the explicit SRM focus to one which extended the vision of social protection to include a three-fold characterisation of policy objectives - preventive, promotional and protective, following Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004). According to this new strategy social protection should be promoted using a 'systems' approach, rather than a projectised one. It was also to include systems able to provide a future crisis response function, consistent with the vision articulated in the RSR, noted above. The strategy adopts the language of inclusion and encompasses a two pronged vision of eradicating extreme poverty by reducing the number living on less than \$1.25 a day to 3% by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40% in every country (World Bank, 2012). The terminology of the new strategy captures key emerging concepts, extending its purview, with poverty reduction presented as including issues of inequality and equality of opportunity, and the relationship between poverty and economic growth in terms of the promotion of inclusion. The World Bank has continued explicitly to reject any notion of an overtly redistributive social protection agenda²⁵ (see discussion in Meth, 2013), but at the same time recognizes that social protection provision is an inherently redistributive endeavour, exploring questions relating to the extent of redistribution which is acceptable, tolerable and even desirable.

The focus on the 'three Ps' represented an explicit attempt to link the Bank strategy to the external development discourse, and to integrate social protection into the broader development agenda through the characterisation of social protection as an instrument to promote movement out of poverty. Hence the strategy identified potential synergies with debates from the left, accommodating the language of 'transformation' but arguably not the structural or redistributive implications of achieving them, alongside a continued characterization of social protection as a 'treatment' and safety net in response to idiosyncratic or covariate crises, rather than means for the realisation of a guaranteed social minimum for the chronically poor. The Bank institutionally endorses the SPF, but there is limited explicit acknowledgement of it in the strategy or implicit reference in the strategy's content, nor is a commitment to the SPF apparent in policy or programming, indicating an

²⁵ As noted in Meth (forthcoming) in May 2013 Jaime Saavedra-Chanduvi, the Bank's Director for Poverty Reduction and Equity replied to the question of whether the shared prosperity goal implied reducing inequality by redistributing wealth thus: *No. We need to focus first on growing, as fast as possible, the welfare of the less well off. But we're not suggesting that countries redistribute an economic pie of a certain size, or to take from the rich and give to the poor.* <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/05/08/shared-prosperity-goal-for-changing-world> on 13 May 2013.

issue for ongoing negotiation. The limited engagement with the SPF as a core driving principle is also evidenced by the lack of association with it in the 2013 and draft 2014 WDRs and initial drafts of the SPIA documentation prepared by the Bank and intended to provide a cross agency social protection appraisal resource.

The SP&L strategy highlights the need for systems approaches, with the core focus of the strategy being:

to move SPL from isolated interventions to a coherent, connected portfolio of programs. This systemic approach helps countries to address the fragmentation and duplication across program, and to create financing, governance and solutions tailored to their own contexts. (World Bank, 2012)

However, the nature and content of the systems proposed is not oriented to the development of welfare systems for the provision of a social minimum to address current certainties in terms of chronic poverty, but is rather focused on social protection as a response to risk and a mechanism for future crisis response. Hence the strategy adopts the language of ‘systems’ but arguably not with the underlying vision of the progressive realisation of systems of universal provision as envisaged in the Recommendation 202.

The SP&L strategy maintains the centrality of market driven provision and a residual approach to targeting the poorest, rather than development of social security systems, and to this end retains the language of safety nets rather than adopting a social minimum discourse. This orientation is reiterated in the 2013 WDR on Jobs (World Bank, 2012), which emphasises the role of market based approaches to poverty reduction, with individual agency rather than structure as a continuing theme. Similarly the draft 2014 WDR (World Bank, 2013) indicates an ongoing preoccupation with market based solutions to poverty, emphasizing the role of social protection as a mechanism to address risk rather than chronic poverty.

In contrast, UNICEF’s 2012 Social Protection Strategic Framework makes an explicit reiteration of the rights and welfare basis its vision of social protection provision, stressing that:

Expansion of social protection coverage is critical. UNICEF supports progressive realization of universal coverage, helping countries identify and progressively expand programmes and policies most conducive to achieving universality, while also recognizing countries different capacities and contexts. (UNICEF, 2012)

The perspectives set out in these two strategies suggest that the tension identified between the vision of social protection as a means to address risk, defined primarily in terms of relationship to the market, and the vision of social protection as a means to address the certainty of chronic poverty is still pertinent.

The formal strategic rearticulation of Social Protection policy which occurred in the World Bank and UNICEF has also taken place within the European Union. In response to demands from the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, international organisations

and civil society for a more strategic engagement with social protection in EU development cooperation²⁶ and the call for social protection to be made an integral part of EU development policy in the 2010 *European Report on Development* (EC, 2010), the *Agenda for Change* was published 2011.²⁷ The *Agenda for Change* identified social protection as a key instrument for achieving its two priority areas; i) human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance, and ii) inclusive and sustainable growth for human development (EC, 2011). In 2011, the Commission launched a consultation process, which confirmed the need for a policy framework for future EU support to social protection, and resulted in production of the 2012 Communication and Council Decisions on Social Protection (EC, 2012) which set out priorities areas of intervention to promote social protection provision, with a focus on achieving equity, social inclusion and social cohesion through transformative and gender sensitive social protection, by supporting revenue reform, institutional capacity-building, and support for job creation and employment, in an approach which supports national policies and programmes, encourages participation of civil society and the private sector. The EC is now in the process of developing strategic social protection programming in line with this communication, and taking an increasingly active role in the IDI discourse.

Other agencies are also currently engaged in redefining their institutional relationship with social protection, notably the WFP, following the strategic evaluation of WFP's role in social protection and safety nets in 2011 (WFP, 2011), and the FAO, which is developing its own Social Protection Division. Together with the endorsement of Recommendation 202 these developments have created the preconditions for the emergence, at least *de jure*, if not yet *de facto*, of what one optimistic commentator has described as a 'new social protection consensus', although the extent to which a shared vision underlies any common language, remains unknown. However other commentators articulate a concern that this institutional proliferation may undermine international cooperation rather than strengthening it, with the increasing 'institutional thickness' of the global environment adding to the complexity of the supranational debate, potentially at the expense of the national (Drezner, 2010).

SP and the post-MDG agenda

In terms of the post-MDG agenda, there is a general recognition among IDIs that social protection has a key role to play in addressing extreme poverty and hence has a role in the achievement of the post-MDG development agenda, although whether provision should be an explicit goal or not remains contested.

The High Level Panel

In July 2012, a 27 member High Level Panel (HLP) was announced by the UN Secretary-General, with the task of advising on the new goals and targets required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, and to prepare a global development framework beyond 2015, the MDG target date. Co-chaired by

²⁶ Council Conclusions 11068/07 and European Parliament Resolution 2011/2047

²⁷ Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change

the Presidents of Indonesia and Liberia and the British Prime Minister, the Panel was mandated by the 2010 MDG Summit as part of the Secretary-General's post-2015 initiative.

The HLP reported in 2013. The HLP report noted that the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 would require going beyond the MDGs, which, they argued did not provide a sufficient focus on poverty targeting, reaching the very poorest and most excluded. This analysis was consistent with the message of the 90s, but again formulated on the basis of a residual and non universal vision of social protection provision, although the HLP did concede that the MDGs failed to address the structural aspects of sustainable development and were excessively focused on specific indicators in the aggregate. The HLP argued that the future agenda should be driven by five 'transformative shifts' summarised as:

1. Leave no one behind
2. Put sustainable development at the core
3. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth
4. Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all
5. Forge a new global partnership

The first is of particular relevance for social protection, as it argues that direct intervention in the form of social protection is required to promote this shift:

1. Leave no one behind. We must keep faith with the original promise of the MDGs, and now finish the job. After 2015 we should move from reducing to ending extreme poverty, in all its forms. We should ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities. We should design goals that focus on reaching excluded groups, for example by making sure we track progress at all levels of income, and by *providing social protection to help people build resilience to life's uncertainties*. We can be the first generation in human history to end hunger and ensure that every person achieves a basic standard of wellbeing. There can be no excuses. This is a universal agenda, for which everyone must accept their proper share of responsibility. (HLP, 2013, emphasis added)

Interestingly within this discourse, universal human rights are invoked, but at the same time social protection is simultaneously presented as an instrument to promote resilience against uncertainty, rather than to address the certainty of chronic poverty, reflecting the World Bank SSN risk-based vision outlined above, reflecting two competing and unreconciled visions of the role of social protection. This reflects a challenge underlying the HLP more generally as articulated by Chandy:

behind the HLP agenda are two competing visions for how extreme poverty can be eradicated [...] one focuses on unlocking the potential for rapid and broad-based development through the economic transformation of poor countries; the other advocates the establishment of a global social safety net. (Chandy, 2013)

The HLP tackles inequality, but limits its focus to inequality of opportunity of access to vital services (including health, nutrition, education and justice), rather than income inequality or redistribution, either nationally or transnationally. It argues that ‘*specific policy measures must do the rest of the job to ensure that no one is left behind*’ but not for redistributive social welfare provision or the adoption of an OECD type basic minimum financed through taxation. This analysis reflects the current neoliberal antipathy to redistributive responses to poverty and inequality, and the dominance of the growth objective in the current political discourse.

The HLP made a series of recommendations, four of which have particular relevance for social protection; the need for local ownership, aid harmonisation, a new aid architecture and improved data. These are set out in more detail in box 1 below.

Box 1: HLP Recommendations of Relevance to Social Protection

Need for Local Ownership

Unifying Global Goals with National Plans for Development and unifying on the basis of the recognition that ‘global targets are only effectively executed when they are locally-owned’ and the need for ‘each government could choose an appropriate level of ambition for each target, taking account of its starting point, its capacity and the resources it can expect to command.’

Need for Aid Harmonisation

The report acknowledges the dominant role of international partners and agencies and that ‘on average 30 official development partners, many with more than one development agency, are operating in each developing country’ and reiterates the need for the harmonisation of IDI both among agencies and with governments in order to promote accountability and efficiency, calling for the post-2015 development agenda to ‘signal a new era for multilateralism and international cooperation’ with the United Nations leading the agenda because of its ‘unique and universal legitimacy’ and its ‘ability to coordinate and monitor globally.’, while recognising the UN system has ‘yet to fully realise the vision of ‘working as one’ and deliver on a single, integrated sustainable development agenda, and to continue improving collaboration with the international financial institutions.

Need for New Aid Architecture

To this end the HLP calls for a new international architecture with a single locus of accountability for the post-2015 agenda and the UN producing a single Global Sustainable Development Outlook, jointly written every one or two years by a consortium of UN agencies and other international organisations. The HLP also calls for cross institutional theme based task groups, similar to the GEP, attempting to provide ‘aid without wasteful replication, and following local leadership by directing funds to a single local group in a country’ although such approaches have been challenged in terms of possible adverse implications for sovereign accountability and integrated programming and budgeting.

Need for Improved Data

The Panel recommended establishing a Global Partnership on Development Data that brings together diverse but interested stakeholders – government statistical offices, international organisations, CSOs, foundations and the private sector. This partnership would, as a first step, develop a global strategy to fill critical gaps, expand data accessibility, and galvanise international efforts to ensure a baseline for post-2015 targets

The inclusion of these four recommendations in the eventual post-MDG documentation would be of significant value in addressing the issues discussed above.

HLP Goals

The HLP also proposed a number of post-MDG goals which they suggest should be in the form of universal goals and national targets. Those most pertinent to the social protection debate are goals one, ending poverty, and 12, relating to financing, set out in Box 2.

Box 4: Proposed Social Protection Content of HLP Goals 1 and 12

Proposed Goal One - End Poverty

1a. Bring the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day to zero and reduce by x% the share of people living below their country's 2015 national poverty line

1c. Cover x% of people who are poor and vulnerable with social protection systems

Proposed Goal Twelve - Create a Global Enabling Environment and Catalyse Long-Term Finance


12d. Developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20% of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries; other countries should move toward voluntary targets for complementary financial assistance

12f. Promote collaboration on and access to science, technology, innovation, and development data

The proposed goals include explicit social protection coverage targets and reiterate the need for developed countries to maintain the commitment to allocate 0.7% of their gross national product (GNP) to ODA.²⁸ The coverage goal is challenged by some who argue that coverage as an undefined term is a poor indicator of provision, and the financing goal is limited in its ambition to pre-existing mechanisms and targets, rather than suggesting further development of the innovative financing options explored during the last decade. There is also some contestation within the sector as to whether the development of social protection systems and the welfare state should themselves constitute objectives, or whether they should be considered as means to the broader end of the provision of welfare and reduction of poverty. The goal relating to collaboration on development data is valuable in supporting the nascent dialogue in this area.

Discussion of the HLP

The most widely recognized and radical content of the HLP report is the '*leave no-one behind*' concept underlying their recommendations which '*provides an opportunity to ground the post-2015 framework in a wider social justice agenda.*' (Watkins, 2013), reinstating the broader rights and social justice agenda which was lost not only within the narrower MDG approach, but also in the broader development discourse more generally over the last decade.

²⁸ The commitment of rich countries to allocate 0.7% of their gross national product (GNP) to Official Development Assistance was first pledged 35 years ago in a 1970 General Assembly Resolution, and has been affirmed in many international agreements since this time, including the March 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico  and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development of the same year.

In this sense the HLP represents a significant departure from the less radical or transformative MDGs. However, Watkins notes that this ‘leave no one behind agenda’ does not have traction among many of the governments involved in the post-2015 dialogue who are antipathetic to a focus on inequality, particularly one which potentially involves reporting on progress in cutting social disparities. He notes the risk of the HLP’s focus on inequality becoming diluted during the ongoing post-MDG process. Moreover, the narrative relating to equality in the report is primarily addressing equality of access, rather than equality in a more redistributive sense, reflecting the current political prioritization of equality of access, rather than more fundamental forms of redistributive equality. In this way the HLP both reflects current development norms as well as challenging them.

SDGs

Simultaneously with the post MGD discussion and deliberations of the HLP, another process for developing global development goals is underway. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Brazil in June 2012 (Rio+20), Member States agreed to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) to guide the post 2015 development agenda. To this end a 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) on the SDGs, co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Hungary and Kenya was established in January 2013 and tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs, with support from UNDESA. At the same time an intergovernmental high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development was established to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and support the development of the SDGs.

The SDGs aim to incorporate the issues covered by the MDGs but also accommodate a broader agenda to include structural factors underlying poverty, including trade, debt, rights conflict and biodiversity, climate and environmental issues. They are intended to be limited in number, aspirational and easy to communicate, to address the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic development, social development and environmental protection) and to be consistent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

There is an expectation that the post-MDG and SDG processes will converge, resulting in the delivery of a single set of development goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire in 2015, incorporating both human development and broader sustainable development goals, (EC, 2013). If the two sets of goals prevail there will be a need to ensure consistency across the two instruments, in order to prevent the emergence of goal sets with differing IDI sponsors, and contradictory or competing objectives.

Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs are intended to apply equally to all countries, both developed and developing, and will be built on progressive negotiated agreements by UN member states. There is some scepticism from developed countries in terms of their inclusion in the SDGs and the requirement for all to contribute to addressing globalised problems, recognizing the interdependence implied by globalization. Developing the SDGs will require the reconciliation of widely differing perceptions of development among countries experiencing a range of economic and social development performance and priorities; the SDGs must be

relevant to industrialised, emerging, and low-income economies alike and also recognise the changed and increasingly complex institutional context, entailing the engagement of multiple non-state actors including business, civil society, and philanthropic foundations in global affairs (Higgins, 2013).

In terms of the broader social protection discourse, the SDG/MDG vision may have the potential to promote a greater degree of convergence between the key IDIs. The focus on inequality could be instrumental in this, as it serves to reinforce among all actors the challenge of eradicating extreme poverty, simultaneously with promoting growth, which has implications in terms of moving beyond residual safety nets based approaches. However, arriving at agreement on the SDGs will represent a significant challenge, given the fact that the world has changed significantly since the development of the MDGs a decade ago, being significantly more multi-polar and less state-centric (Higgins, 2013). As MacArthur argues:

A generation ago [global goals] mainly meant officials coordinating government policies and investments around the world. At the time, rich and poor countries were clearly delineated and multilateral institutions helped broker conversations. Today's geopolitical map is far more complicated. There has been a realignment of economic influencers and institutions, and dividing lines between developed and developing nations have blurred. (MacArthur, 2013, cited in Higgins, op cit)

Developing Country Perspectives

Diversity of Current Social Protection Provision and Historical Trajectories

In this section social protection perspectives in developing countries are considered, reviewing regional social protection initiatives, the differential trajectories of middle and low income countries, together with an exploration of the reasons for these differing trajectories including perceptions of the role of the state, ending at the southern response to the SPF and the post 2015 agenda.

Social protection provision in developing countries differs significantly from OECD models of provision, and exhibits very different regional profiles as well as considerable diversity within regions. The patterns of provision do not fit OECD welfare models or conform to the Esping-Andersen types predominantly used in the literature, which makes theoretical analysis of social policy in developing countries problematic (Mkandawire, 2001). Gough et al. (2004), who developed alternative approaches to the analysis of social policy in developing countries, breaking away from the traditional focus on European and North American models approaches, explain the reason for significant differentiation between OECD and developing country contexts in terms of governance and labour markets:

Social policy in advanced capitalist countries operates through state intervention to compensate for the inadequate welfare outcomes of the labour market. Such welfare regimes cannot easily be reproduced in poorer regions of the world where states suffer problems of governance and labour markets are imperfect and partial. Other welfare

regimes therefore prevail, involving non-state actors such as landlords, money lender and patrons (Gough et al, 2004).

In most developing countries, colonial regimes had created distorted economies, most linked to protectionist trading blocks, and the process of decolonisation left them exposed in the immediate post colonial period to a range of tides and influences depending on their prior affiliation, including the development debate conducted by 'experts' from the OECD and Soviet bloc, often linked to processes of rapid industrialisation and modernisation. The resulting social policy in developing countries was initially modelled on developed country provision, focusing on the provision of health, education and social protection systems primarily for those in formal sector and government employment with none attaining the universalism of northern European (or eastern bloc) provision. Walker explores the implications of this legacy by comparing the different drivers of policy development in the North and South. He characterises the essentially endogenous drivers of social protection provision, promoted in part by an emerging cross-class solidarity in the North thus:

welfare provision in the North was initiated and developed as part of the currency of political exchange that variously reconciled the interests of competing classes, assuaged social unrest and dissent, forged national consciousness and allegiances and/or allowed for the realisation of shared communal values. (Walker, 2013)

He contrasts this with a quite different set of stimuli in the South, being based less in shared values and more in externally imposed agendas:

In the South, provisions have more often been as response to extreme poverty or to economic, humanitarian or political crisis and have more frequently been encouraged, imported and/or delivered from outside. Alternatively social policies have been the instrumental components of a developmental strategy to support or drive forward economic growth, rather than responses to the expressed wants of citizens. Social policy in the South has therefore more often than in the North been imposed top down on people by governments, or been imposed on governments by international institutions rather than being fought for and won by the local populace (ibid.)

Top down imposition has led to some consistency in systems which have been donor driven and financed but notwithstanding this pressure for conformity, there has been a significant diversity of response to the challenge of social protection, both nationally and also regionally, with for example Fiszbein et al, 2013 arguing that effective coverage of social protection in Africa is only 1% (compared to over 40% in ECA). This significant diversity explains some of the discrepancies apparent in the discourse appraising social protection in developing countries, with for example the optimism of Hanlon Barrientos and Hulme (2010) regarding the social protection revolution led from the global south' being driven by an analysis of experiences of predominantly Middle Income Countries, and the Latin America region in particular (although not exclusively), whereas an appraisal based on SSA performance would provide a very different perspective.

Regional Patterns of Provision

Patterns of response are informed in part by income status, but broad regional patterns are also discernible which shed light on the key drivers of the current context.

Latin America

Latin America has offered particularly dynamic responses to the development of social protection in the post structural adjustment period.

As in most post colonial states, in most Latin American countries social protection provision was poor prior to the period of structural adjustment, with low coverage and entitlement limited primarily to formal sector employees and excluding rural and informal sector poor (Molyneux, 2009). However, since this period, provision has been at the heart of popular democratic politics in the region, and a reframing of social protection provision in terms of the roles of the state and civil society in delivery has taken place, resulting in the development of new models and significant policy innovations:

emerging from the developmentalist and neoliberalist experiences of the last century, the twenty-first century Latin American developmental welfare state model is based on a new public-private alliance, where state-led developmental social policy relies for its implementation mainly on proactive, emerging, regional entrepreneurs and a growing middle class. (Riesco, 2007)

Independently driven and innovative programming initiated in a influential Latin American states during the late 90s and 2000s (notably, although not exclusively Brazil and Mexico) was designed to ensure broad based social protection provision, rejecting the World Bank risk approach (see Hanlon et al, 2010) and maintaining social protection as means to address poverty on a long term and mass basis as a key plank of popular democratic policy.

Sub Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has had a very different experience in social protection provision in recent decades, with a diversity of policy responses, with preferences informed significantly by differing colonial experiences, wealth, and ideological orientation, as well as the degree of intervention by IDIs and NGOs.

There are significant differences by income status which is influential both in terms of fiscal feasibility, and also in terms of the policy autonomy that this engenders with the MICs in the region tending to favour large scale cash transfer provision for particular demographic groups, notably the elderly and to a lesser degree children, most designed with limited input from the IDIs, aside from technical support from agencies such as ISSA. However, in many LICs the agenda is in part driven by external policy design preferences (both among donors and INGOs), and the resulting pattern of provision often somewhat fragmented and built in parallel to existing provision and delivery structures. Only where IDI influence has been limited have more diverse and indigenously driven forms of provision been developed, as for example with the GAPVU and PSA cash transfer programmes in Mozambique. Extension of IDI influence in SSA has tended to replace, rather than accommodate existing programming

approaches. Similarly where other countries in the region have elected to promote household income security through the adoption of alternative approaches, such as the largely domestically financed fertilizer subsidy programme in Malawi, this has generated highly divergent responses from differing members of the IDI community (Future Agricultures, 2008), as it does not conform readily to the external vision of provision.

The African Union (AU) Conference of Social Development Ministers in Namibia in 2008, was a significant development in the region, with Ministers from 53 states agreeing a common social policy framework for Africa. The policy framework sets out:

a vision for African societies based on social solidarity, equity of choice, and freedom from discrimination and poverty. In doing this, it moves away from treating social policy as subordinate to economic policy, and recognises the importance of social development both as a goal in its own right, and as a means of creating the conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth. (AU, 2008)

Also during the 2000s, SADC has been developing common policy positions on social protection provision, in an ongoing process of policy development and harmonization, with support from the ILO, focusing in part on the challenge and implications of regional provision, but these initiatives have had limited impact in terms of provision, in part due to the changing context following the global financial crisis in 2008/9. DFID further supported the process through the creation of a series of national and regional Social Protection Platforms but these initiative has had limited impact in terms of the development of effective and active domestic engagement in social protection policy debate within the region.

The development of indigenous policy has to some extent been hampered by ongoing IDI policy imposition. The recent growth in World Bank supported programming in LICs, which is informed by a combination of Latin American design practices and Bank design preferences, has resulted in the development of somewhat idiosyncratic policy components in many countries in the region, with an emphasis on targeting, conditionalities and the promotion a public works/cash transfer ‘package’ of provision.

Europe and Central Asia

Provision in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region has been characterized since 1990 by the dismantling of the universal socialist models of provision following the collapse of the eastern bloc and break-up of the Soviet Union, with its system of centralized welfare subsidies. The previous formal systems offering universal coverage have been restructured, as have the institutions implementing them, with the replacement system characterized by privatization, and reduced eligibility and transfer values in order to promote affordability in line with changing economic performance (EU, 2007). The restructuring of welfare provision has taken place with significant external support, notably technical inputs from the World Bank, particularly in relation to pension reform, and from the EU in relation to the development of targeted social assistance. The reform of existing welfare systems and the social minimum guarantees they provided was in part a pragmatic response to reduced fiscal capacity of states in ECA, but the process has also been informed by ideological preferences and entailed a shift away from the vision of social provision which previously characterized

provision in the region. Central Asian countries are falling significantly behind other states in the region in terms of the poverty incidence, and while there has been an increase in social spending overall in the region, there are still significant inefficiencies in terms of coverage and delivery.

South and South East Asia

Within South and South Eastern Asia there has been a great heterogeneity of provision with mass provision in MICs in the region, notably China and India, discussed below, and Indonesia with its mass rice subsidy programme (RASKIN) introduced in the late 1990s. A range of actors have driven the expansion of provision, with active engagement by states and civil society, as well as IDIs, influencing innovations, with significant rights-based programming, particularly in South Asia, and diffusion effects from the Indian EGS. There have also been major social protection innovations in Bangladesh in part as a result of civil society drivers such as BRAC (the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) and external donors (eg the Chars Livelihood Programme (CLP)), and also in Pakistan, while even low income countries such as Nepal have experienced significant autonomous policy development, in part using social protection as a stabilisation tool during and as part of the post conflict settlement. Other recent developments of significance are the roll out of Thailand's universal healthcare system and Vietnam's progress towards offering similar provision.

Special Cases

Among developing countries, there are a number of 'special cases' in terms of social protection provision, which offer key policy and programme development insights and are highly influential in the broader regional and international discourse, namely: India, Brazil, China, Ethiopia and South Africa, each of which is briefly described below.

India

India offers a particular special case, having adopted an extensive rights-based approach to the provision of services, subsidies and transfers based on poverty status, with those classified as 'below the poverty line' (BPL) being eligible for a full range of provision. In addition India has included within its legislation a national rural employment guarantee programme, the MGNREGS, which provides employment of up to 100 days a year for all those seeking it, with approximately 55 million participants each year, the only scheme of its kind in existence which serves to ensure a social minimum for all those seeking it. The EGS does not explicitly aim to promote graduation out of poverty, but to provide a minimum income to reduce the depth of poverty among the poor, to meet basic welfare needs. The imperfections in the implementation of this set of interventions, and their limited impact on inequality has been well documented (see for example Sen and Dreze, 2012), but nonetheless India represents a unique case of a nation state attempting to provide a minimum income floor for its citizens.

The Indian case is of particular interest due to the emphasis on rights (the right to food and the right to work), both being enshrined in law, reflecting both the primacy of the judiciary and the strength of civil society and political interests in driving the process of policy design.

Brazil

Brazil is the other special case, having constructed elements of a rights-based welfare state over recent decades alongside an explicit commitment to the progressive realization of the provision of a social minimum through the rationalization and extension of the system of grants currently in place. The provision of support through the welfare system is a key plank of popular democratic policy and of the state-citizen compact.

China

While Brazil and India based their provision on the basis of rights and political commitments, China has in recent years also created a welfare system to replace the 'iron rice bowl' system dismantled in the 90s, but without the explicit rights-based approach. Major recent developments have included the creation a rural medical insurance scheme which has almost universal coverage (compared with 13% a decade ago) the implementation of minimum income guarantees and a massive expansion of the pension system. Despite these developments coverage remains inequitable between rural and urban areas, and is geographically and socially fragmented. However, further expanding the system is a key aspect of China's current five-year plan for reasons of social stability, and domestic demand stimulus, as well as to reduce poverty.

Ethiopia

While Ethiopia has not attempted to create a form of welfare state of provision of a guaranteed social minimum, it has constructed a significant social protection support base for seven million of its most vulnerable citizens, but as with China, outside the formal 'rights' discourse, and not driven by populism or state-citizen compact. Here the key impulse was a donor driven shift from responding to cyclical food insecurity on the basis of repeated short term humanitarian responses to predictable crises, to social protection provision on an ongoing basis, in association with complementary inputs in an attempt to both address immediate consumption needs, and also attempt to promote livelihoods development and graduation out of poverty and dependence on external support. This approach is unique in SSA, driven by two specific and linked stimuli, the availability of significant external ODA resources in the medium term on a largely predictable basis and the moral imperative of large scale provision given the significant cost, in terms of mass mortality, of programme failure.

South Africa

South Africa represents another special case, offering the most extensive welfare provision in the region. More than 50% of the population are in receipt of some form of social assistance, with provision for all of the major lifecycle risks, (with the notable exception of the working age poor). Again, there are specific factors which have led to this position, linked primarily to the country's historical legacy, in the form of the existence of an embryonic colonial welfare state with provision, which, in the case of South Africa was gradually extended beyond the elites in the post colonial period, which was accelerated with a mass extension of provision following the change of dispensation in 1994, supported by a political and constitutional commitment as part of the new settlement. Hence the embryonic welfare state was not dismantled, as in many other post colonial regimes, but rather maintained and adapted as the basis for future provision, as in many other states, but with a greater commitment to extension

of provision beyond the elite to both, the extension of resource availability and political commitment to deracialisation, started under previous regime and accelerated

These countries outlined above stand out among the majority of developing countries in terms of the scale and reach of their provision social protection provision share certain common characteristics. All are relatively strong states with available resources and political incentives, either in terms of electorates or social and political stabilisation, to create provision for the poor on a mass scale. It is notable that all, excepting Ethiopia, where donor resources are the key financing instrument, are Middle Income Countries, with access to domestic resources, and each designed programmes which do not conform to the limitations of current donor driven models - highly targeted, rationed, short term and safety net oriented, but rather are concerned with addressing poverty more broadly. In countries where provision of a social minimum is the aspiration, notably India, Brazil and South Africa the influence of (less progressive) donor thinking on the design of provision is muted.

It is important to note that in these, and many other developing countries, the social assistance programmes outlined above coexist with long established social security systems for formal sector workers, and that such programmes continue, in many instances, to take up a much larger proportion of government expenditure than the higher profile, more recent social assistance programmes developed for the poor.

Reduction in Policy Autonomy

Despite the evolution of indigenous approaches to social protection in a limited number of countries in the global South and in Latin America in particular, with the accompanying evolution of a strong political and ideological vision alongside the provision of services, it has been argued that there has been a reduction in policy autonomy in developing countries overall over recent decades, which has extended to social protection provision.

While a 'southern voice' was able to influence the outcome of recent WTO processes (for example in Singapore, Seattle, Doha and Cancun), and also to stop the adoption of the proposed 'Social Protection Code' (as discussed above) there is no organised southern response to the northern social protection discourse, and from the 80s there has been increasing policy imposition with increased direct engagement by the World Bank in policy formation, initially through IMF loans and SAP conditionalities relating to macro-economic policies and then increasingly in the conceptualisation and design of social policy provision and social protection design (through the NSP). This has had adverse implications for national determination and ownership of policy development. Overall, the result has been an increasingly externally driven policy process which critics have argued represents a form of '*supra national policy making*' (Deacon, 2007) linked to a range of implicit and explicit conditionalities. Donors have promoted social protection in the context of both rights-based as well as neoliberal agendas, but of the two the neoliberal agenda would appear to have been the more successful, backed, as it has been, with more resources. As such, it has largely been able to define terms and reframe the social protection concept, distancing it from a welfare state or universalist vision in favour of more targeted residualist provision.

The lack of a southern consensus, or series of southern alternatives (outside Latin America and some parts of South Asia) is the result of the erosion of independent scholarly activity

relating to social policy in many parts of Africa and South Asia as a result of a number of factors including the erosion of public universities in aftermath of SAPs and the technical training received by key policy players in many developing countries, with support from the major IDIs, which provides a neoliberal framing of the development discourse, such that some commentators argue that they and the agencies they serve become '*agents of global neo-liberal agenda*' (Bello, 2005). Outside Latin America, in general, there is a dominance of private, rather than state provision and narrowly targeted residual assistance restricted to those in subsistence poverty, with limited state autonomy to build and finance welfare systems. The situation is exacerbated by the growing emergence of ethnic and religious based claims to welfare, and identity movements which, while celebrating difference, damage human solidarity, and challenge national social protection strategies designed to cement a social contract. In the 30-50 states currently characterised as fragile, the provision of large scale social protection on any systematic or centralised basis is not feasible.

A range of conflicting forces, both endogenous and exogenous, can be seen, therefore, to continue to drive policy development in the sector. In this context the implications of the SPF for developing country governments are not yet clear. The SPF has been endorsed by the International Labour Conference, but the extent to which this endorsement is active or passive, representing a political and instrumental choice to endorse rather than a genuine commitment to the SPF vision is not yet clear. Possibly, given the negotiated flexibility for nationally developed definitions and conceptions of the instruments and policies required to achieve SPF guarantees (following the principle of global principles and national goals) attachment to Recommendation 202 may be strong, in which case it could provide a normative basis for the promotion of a universal alternatives to the prevailing risk and resilience model, putting aside the major fiscal barriers to provision to scale and failure of alternative international financing initiatives.

Notwithstanding the possible positive effect of the SPF on future sectoral developments, the current state of social protection provision in the developing world has been characterised as:

remedial, individualistic, rather than collective, targeted more often than universal and frequently imposed top down or from outside. Walker (2013)

More radical nationally driven experimentation is taking place either where major multilateral donors are not present or active in the sector, or where strong governments have access to domestic resources. Where donors have subsequently intervened, they have often attempted to reorient or redesign programming in conformity with their own preferred models, or simply introduce parallel or competing programmes in line with their own preferences, and sometimes in competition with other donors. This influence is drawn from a reluctance on the part of donors to allow their resources to be used to finance instruments whose design is not in conformity with prevailing donor preferences. In other contexts where developed social protection provision is not already in place, IDIs tend to promote their own vision directly. The overall outcome is the promotion of particular approaches, frequently redefining social protection not as welfare, but as risk management, and a contributor to graduation, economic growth and even transformation. Welfare provision is no longer advocated as a necessary or sufficient objective of social protection interventions. These are instead linked intimately

with the growth agenda, far from the vision of articulated in the 1990 UNDP Human Development Report, noted above.

It has thus been argued that social policy is no longer a sphere of autonomously determined national policy but has become essentially a supra- or transnational policy largely defined by external IDIs, (Deacon 2007), characterized by a push for policy adherence to a narrow set of instruments in many developing countries, with set design characteristics, and little sovereign influence on design or responsiveness to national contexts, in terms of social or economic factors in many donor funded, and donor designed programmes.

The Changing Global Context

Having reviewed key developments in IDI policy on social protection provision, the key actors engaged in the debate, and having also presented an overview of developing country positions, aspects of five recent developments in the changing global context are now briefly outlined: the 2008/9 financial crisis, structural changes in the global labour market, the Social Protection Floor, SPIAC-B and donor coordination, the post-2015 development agenda, and the changing view of the growth poverty nexus.

The 2008/9 Financial Crisis

The 2008/9 global financial crisis has had a profound fourfold effect on social protection relating to ODA flows, developing country expenditure on social protection, the influence of the World Bank and the reframing of social protection objectives.

The crisis resulted in a reduction in overall ODA flows, due to fiscal contraction and reduction in aid expenditure among many OECD donors. This resulted in donor withdrawal from some countries and sectors, including social protection, as domestic resources and public support for development expenditure reduced in the aftermath of the crisis. At the same time, many developing countries reduced domestic expenditure on social protection in response to slowing or falling GDP growth rates and budget shortfalls, and pressure from the BWI to preserve macro-economic stability, resulting in spending reductions in soft sectors, with only limited if any ring fencing of social sector expenditure. This has been in direct contravention of calls from other actors within the World Bank and other IDIs for the need for countercyclical expenditure in the sector to mitigate the effects of the crisis. The fiscal repercussions of the crisis are not yet over and are still evident in the medium term, with ongoing contraction of public expenditure and reduced growth rates prevalent in both developed and developing countries in a new 'age of austerity' (Ortiz and Cummins, 2013), as illustrated in table 1 below. This has resulted in reductions in pensions, health care and social assistance expenditure in 47 developing countries.

Table 1: Change in Government Expenditure as % of GDP (number of countries)

Income group	2008-09 compared to 2005-07		2010-12 compared to 2008-09		2013-15 compared to 2010-12	
	Contracted	Expanded	Contracted	Expanded	Contracted	Expanded
Developing	31	101	56	76	68	64
High Income	6	43	17	32	26	23
Total	37	144	73	108	94	87

Source: Ortiz and Cummins, 2013

At the same time however, the creation of the Rapid Social Response (RSR) Trust Fund by the World Bank provided a coordinating mechanism to channel donor funds directly to crisis responses in the social sector. This provided a spike in resource availability for the sector and stimulated a growing interest in the need for, and role of social protection. This in turn enabled the extension of existing programmes, and also the development of new ones, although the relative ingress of new funds from the RSR may have been significantly less than the egress of prior funding from the sector.

The RSR and social protection response to the crisis stimulated a re-visioning of social protection as a tool for responsiveness to future crises, as an instrument to promote social, political and economic stability, and, it has been argued, away from social protection as a means for the public provision of secure welfare, responding to the certainty of poverty, rather than the risk of future impoverishment. This re-framing occurred largely unremarked in the years immediately after the crisis and has now become a key component of some IDIs' social protection vision, a development which risks distorting the current and future objectives and institutions of the social protection project, and which sits in some tension with the SPF concept and Recommendation 202.

Changes in the Global Labour Market

Major changes in the global labour market have occurred over the last decades, which have been formally identified in recent years, as outlined in the 2013 WDR. These changes are the consequence of the globalisation of the world economy in association with population growth and the decline in agricultural employment and associated urbanisation. These changes have resulted in a significant growth of unemployment and underemployment in developing countries, as previous patterns of production have shifted radically and economies have undergone transformation, resulting in unemployment which does not fit with conventional categories of frictional or structural unemployment, but which is linked to the processes of ongoing economic transformation occurring in developing countries with a resulting significant surplus labour supply, and no means to export or otherwise occupy this labour. The number of youth finding themselves not in employment, education or training (NEETS) as a result of this change, combined with the demographic 'youth bulge' is particularly challenging, both from a social justice and also a social/political stability perspective.

Along with unemployment there is a growing problem of underemployment, wherein workers either are not able to find full time employment, or are fully employed but not able to gain

remuneration sufficient to meet their basic needs. This represents a kind of ‘adverse employment’ (Wood, 1999), characterised by poor conditions and low remuneration, often below that required for social minimum – hence the challenge is not exclusively one of economic exclusion among the poor, but rather the terms of inclusion.

The employment which is available tends to be predominantly informal in developing countries, with informal employment in India estimated to take account of more than 90% of the labour market. In such a context the relevance and adequacy of formal sector contributory social protection is highly limited in terms of the majority of the poor.

This situation is likely to be further exacerbated by demographic developments in the coming decades in terms of population growth, the current ‘youth bulge’ and demographic aging, the latter representing a significant challenge in the absence of pension provision. The HLP estimate that between 2013 and 2030 the global population will reach 8 billion, with the global labour force growing by 470 million, and an increasingly aging population (HLP, 2013). The HLP present this scenario optimistically as a ‘*demographic dividend in waiting [...] if the extra people are given the right opportunities, services and skills*’ but it also represents a significant challenge on top of the one billion working age people currently either unemployed or employed and living under the poverty line - 1/3 of the global workforce (ILO, 2012).

The growth of the poor unemployed and underemployed has created a new group for whom social protection is currently largely unavailable on any significant scale (with the exception of India) who remain outside the current visioning of social protection provision; the working age poor (WAP).

Current provision, particularly where focussed on residual provision for particular vulnerable grouping rather than the provision of a social minimum, tends to focus exclusively on groups other than the working age poor, with households with working age members often explicitly excluded from provision, irrespective of their poverty, on basis of assumption that their labour can be used to secure income, without reference to the prevailing surplus labour problem and lack of demand. Addressing the needs of the WAP represents a major challenge which has not, to date been met through public works or other market or state sponsored employment opportunities which for the most part have been extremely limited in scale (see McCord 2012). This represents a major challenge in terms of the prevailing social protection paradigm and instruments currently in use.

The Social Protection Floor

Moving to international policy developments of direct relevance to social protection, the ratification of the Social Protection Floor (SPF) in the ILO Recommendation 202 represents a significant new development, placing the concept of the social minimum and universal provision back at centre stage, creating a counter position to the neoliberal reframing, and more recent crisis response orientation given to social protection, and providing a potential basis for a shared vision among the IDIs of agreed parameters for desired social protection. The SPF has the potential to reinvigorate debate and create an obligation on donors and

sovereign governments to provide some form of social minimum. Recommendation 202 was adopted by a vote of 452 to 0, with 1 abstention,²⁹ and although it does not have any form of legal sanction, it does have the potential to create a new normative context, addressing the inadequacy of formal sector, contributory based systems of provision which previously characterised the ILO's own primary orientation, and has the potential to enable other UN agencies as well as the ILO (and potentially also other IDIs) to take a refreshed and redefined role in the supporting the provision of social protection, inasmuch as they chose to actively support this approach. In this way the Social Protection Floor initiative has created space for the re-emergence of an alternative to the neoliberal framing of the social protection sector which has been dominant in recent years. The extent to which this will or will not occur is largely dependent on the institutional responses to the SPF, and the extent to which 'the great ambivalence' identified by some commentators regarding agency commitments to the realisation of the SPF, can be overcome.

SPIAC-B and Donor Coordination

Within the IDI community working in the social protection sector, the creation of the SPIAC-B as a forum explicitly for donor coordination in relation to social protection programming in developing countries is a major development, creating a formal space for information sharing, and for the development of shared programming and policy initiatives. The rotating ILO-World Bank chair is also designed to promote improved coordination and reduce the institutional space between the ILO and World Bank (as highlighted in Deacon, 2013). The SPIAC-B endorsement and support for the work relating to the development of shared social protection data definitions, data gathering and analytical approaches across agencies has the potential to contribute significantly to the aid effectiveness and harmonization agenda, addressing challenges which have been identified as key constraints to programming in the past (ODI, 2011). The associated SPIA initiative may have a role to play in furthering harmonization and reducing duplication in social protection appraisal among the IDIs, although this will depend on the extent to which the tools developed are adequate to meet the needs of the different agencies currently active in gathering and analyzing social protection data.

The Post-2015 Agenda

Also within the IDI community, but with significant broader relevance, the process for the development of the post-2015 agenda has confirmed the role of social protection as a mechanism for addressing extreme poverty, and held the space for ongoing social protection investment and programming in the coming decade and a half (to 2030) to meet the proposed eradication of extreme poverty target, thereby making it likely that social protection will remain central to future IDI and national government activity in relation to poverty reduction.

However, inasmuch as it remains unclear how the post-MDG agenda will link to the broader SDG process and the relative weight each will have in determining future development priorities, it is not clear to what extent the recommendations of the HLP, and the ongoing

²⁹ http://www.ilo.org/brussels/WCMS_183640/lang--en/index.htm

articulation of development focuses on the MDGs, will shape, or remain relevant in the longer term.

Linked to this is the current rethinking of the growth and poverty nexus, and a growing recognition that it the assumption that growth will deliver poverty reduction or increased equity is no longer tenable, and a questioning of the ‘growth is good for the poor’ argument. Emerging data is showing that growing inequality has accompanied economic growth in many developing countries and that despite reductions in the percentage of the poor in line with the MDGs, absolute numbers have increased in many instances, highlighting the need for active redistributive interventions if these trends are to be addressed.

Key Challenges in the Current Social Protection Policy Debate

The main issues characterizing the social protection policy debate in the 2010s are set out in this section. These challenges are presented in the context of the global economic restructuring of the late 20th and early 21st century, and the emergence of mass under- and unemployment, as recognized in the most recent WDR, with the challenges this implies for social protection, and the beliefs underlying the dominant policy responses. This section examines both ideological issues, and also the associated design challenges, including conditionalities, targeting and graduation. The main challenges identified are summarised as: i) instrument choice, design and implementation, ii) sustainability, iii) financing, iv) donor coordination, v) the relationship between social protection and economic policy, vi) expanding social protection objectives which move beyond income security, vii) social protection systems and their crisis response role, and viii) the contested vision of social protection. Each is discussed in turn below.

Instrument Choice, Design and Implementation

There are many issues relating to the selection and design of instruments that are currently contested within the discourse. Here the main issues which represent current challenges are outlined. These are linked to the framing of the social protection debate by different institutions and interest groups, nationally and internationally and also relate to the extent to which programming is domestically or supra-nationally informed. These issues may be grouped into five main areas;

- Instrument selection
- Conditionality
- Transfer values
- Implementation and going to scale
- Targeting and Universality

Instrument Choice; Public Works and Cash Transfers

The first challenge relates to the selection of instruments which comprise social protection. In the IDI lexicon cash transfers and public works programmes are the preferred instruments of social assistance, sometimes extended to include school feeding, alongside various forms of social insurance. However, within developing countries a broader range of instruments tend

to be adopted in support of direct poverty reduction, including a range of subsidies, including food, fuel and agricultural inputs. Such instruments tend not to be highly progressive, particularly fuel subsidies, and as such as not efficient at targeting the poorest, but as easily implementable (technically and administratively), highly visible and popular instruments which are universally provided and hence supported. They represent in many instances a preferred approach from a political economy perspective, for developing country policy makers. Donors are not keen however to support social protection delivered using such approaches and tend to promote alternative approaches.

In terms of donor-preferred instruments, cash transfers are the dominant form of social protection provision in developing countries with public works programmes also a popular choice, often as part of a package of programmes. Households with working age members are usually ineligible for cash transfer receipt, particularly in LICs, in order to prevent labour market distortion or 'dependence' on social welfare. Hence transfer based approaches in the form of an individual or household grant to ensure a social minimum are not popular (outside Brazil), as they would entail provision of cash without a work requirement to the working age population.

In some instances there is a preference among IDIs, also prevalent among many developing country governments particularly in SSA and South Asia but less so in Latin America, for a package approach, combining cash transfers for households lacking working age members, and public works programme employment for those with. This is a popular donor package, often presented as comprising a 'set' of complementary interventions, and is frequently funded by the Bank, with the provision of public works employment on a short term, often once off basis, for households with labour, and ongoing cash transfer provision for households without members able to work.

This approach is justified on the basis of the assumption that available labour can be used to generate income, since labour markets are assumed to function adequately with most unemployment being voluntary. This assumption of clearing labour markets does not hold in many developing country contexts characterised by significant under and unemployment, and so the exclusion of the working age from cash transfer based social protection provision can be problematic.

The challenge here is that much public works provision is strictly rationed and available only to a subset of the eligible population, and offered on a one off rather than ongoing basis, as creating significant amounts of public works employment on an ongoing basis is a major challenge to technically and administratively resource constrained governments. There is also a significant capital input requirement for public works based social protection provision, which can comprises between 30 and 70% of the programme cost typically. Hence large scale public works programming represents a considerable resource challenge, with most programmes remaining small scale, offering limited opportunities for participation by the working age poor. The consequence is that public works and cash transfers do not generally form a coherent package for the labour constrained and working age poor respectively, as cash transfer provision is conceptualized as ongoing, while public works employment is only available for a limited period. The notable exceptions to this approach are the domestically

designed Argentinian *Jefes y Jefas* programme and MGNREGS in India, (which provides the world's only universal employment guarantee scheme), both employing approximately 15% of the labour force, and the large scale PSNP in Ethiopia, supporting 7 million households each year, which was designed by donors in collaboration with the Ethiopian government, who insisted that it was implemented to scale from the outset, to the consternation of the donor community, and which was funded with assured donor funds over a multi-year period, to replace annual emergency responses, a guarantee not available in most donor supported programmes. Donor funded programmes do not tend to follow this trajectory and tend to be small scale and hence rather partial responses to the challenge of the working age poor, who comprise 1 billion of the world's poor (ILO, 2011).

There are also moral and practical challenges associated with offering social protection to the working age poor only on condition that they carry out labour in return, particularly where remuneration fall below the social minimum, reflecting the lowest wage in a highly segmented labour market (following World Bank guidance, see Subbarao et al, 2012). Workers may also be labour constrained with a high social and economic opportunity cost to their participation (McCord, 2012).

The focus on the current public works/cash transfer combination package prevalent in LICs is also problematic, in that it is designed on the premise that the working age poor are unemployed, whereas there are many hundreds of millions of working poor, who are adversely incorporated in the global economy, rather than excluded from it. This group is likely to be excluded from cash transfer programming due to their physical capacity, and may not be able to accommodate public works employment given their existing work commitments, so may not be able to access the social minimum support through this package of interventions. There is a need to rethink support options for this group.

The other major challenge relating to both cash transfer and public works interventions is that they tend, particularly where donor-, rather than domestically designed and financed, to be supply rather than demand driven. Provision is limited compared to demand, and so such interventions are rarely able in low income settings, to offer a GMI or social minimum to all those eligible.

Recognising the challenges associated with the conventional package of instruments typically adopted, and the limitations these imply is key for the development of meaningful systems of provision in the future.

The Working Age Poor

The exclusion of the growing body of working age poor (WAP), numbering more than one billion globally (ILO, 2012) from mainstream social protection provision remains a key challenge which has not yet been readily addressed either in the discourse or in terms of practical instrument design or the development of programming responses. Only India has grappled directly with the challenge, through its EGS, while other public works programmes remain supply driven and small scale. Rather than directly addressing the WAP challenge, programming in Latin America has typically done so indirectly, by allowing participation in transfer programmes irrespective of labour market status. While this is potentially a response

in other developing countries, the exclusion of the WAP has become an accepted component of programming, functioning as to limit demand (or at least eligibility) for social protection support and hence serves a rationing function where provision is severely constrained relative to need. Admitting the eligibility of the WAP for social protection support and their right to support as eligible members of the extreme poor cohort is in line with the SPF recommendations, but not the thinking underlying much current donor and government work in the sector. The challenge of the WAP is an age old problem, to which there are many and various possible solutions, each of which requires administrative apparatus and fiscal resources on a significant scale. The implication of making such provision available more broadly to the WAP would be to increase the caseload within the sector significantly, and would require a rethinking of provisioning, in terms of both the instruments adopted, and also cost, entailing significant policy design and practical implementational difficulties.

Conditionality

The World Bank in particular has promoted the adoption of conditionalities in its social protection programming, reflecting its heavy reliance on middle income Latin American models in its roll out of programme design in low income developing countries internationally. Many cash transfer programmes now have social conditionalities attached. The challenge is that the pro- conditionality stance has become reified, rather than the choice being made in light of the particular context in terms of analysis of the key factors driving service utilisation patterns, and the cost and implications of compliance monitoring. Transfer programming is sometimes re-framed as a means to stimulate particular service utilisation rather than provide a social minimum for the poor to use at their own discretion. This has become an area of contestation between the Bank and other actors, which is not yet resolved, in which the Bank is sometimes accused of paternalism in try to govern the behaviour of the poor (Dornan and Porter, 2013). The evidence on the impact of conditionalities in comparison to the IEC and awareness raising associated with conditionalities is not yet clear, and the desirability of linking transfer receipt to service utilisation in contexts where provision may be limited or of poor quality is also an issue of current debate and has become highly institutionalised (DFID, 2011).

Implementation and Going to Scale

Transfer and public works provision in many developing countries is riven with implementation challenges which are particularly acute when the attempt is made to expand small or pilot programmes to provide regional or national coverage. In such instances programme realities sometimes fail to conform to design in key areas such as registration, targeting, and payment regularity, with programmes often experiencing bottlenecks relating to financial flows, management information systems (MIS), delivery mechanisms and staffing capacity, which can undermine the quality of performance. The challenges in providing social protection on a regular and predictable basis are significant where state capacity is constrained, or non-state actors are insufficiently resourced or experienced at local level point of service

This is particularly the case where pilots are implemented by NGOs or PIUs operating in parallel with, rather than as part of government structures. In such contexts the implementation modality can inhibit the development of state capacity and undermine

linkages to line ministries, in this way limiting strategic integration with infrastructure or basic service provision, or the complementary programming now recognised as a significant factor in facilitating broader livelihood impacts. In many developing countries programme implementation is part of a wider political decentralisation agenda, which can entail further challenges depending on how well the decentralisation process is resourced, in both financial and personnel terms, with capacity constraints at the point of delivery representing a significant issue in many low income countries.

Weak management information and monitoring and evaluation systems, together with an absence of registration systems can also represent challenges when going to scale, and many programmes remain reliant on the knowledge and commitment of key individuals within implementing agencies rather than institutionalised information and systems. These challenges confirm the relevance of the current focus on systems development within the social protection sector.

Extreme Poverty

The other key debate associated with programme design is the question of targeting, which links in to the broader conceptual debate about the nature of social protection and the desirable end game in terms of provision. The challenge is whether provision should be targeted only to the poorest or be universally available using more generous definitions of poverty, so as not to exclude any of the poor, with progressive realisation on the basis of resource availability - although in many low income countries such extension may not be fiscally feasible in the short or medium term. In the initial stages of programme development these two approaches may look similar, particularly in terms of the recent OCHR lobby for ensuring the priority inclusion of the extreme poor, in contexts where resources are constrained.

The focus on the extreme poor is consistent with the poverty targeting debate of the last decade, and the recommendations of the OCHR, and represents a highly demanding objective in the context of developing countries (with over a billion people under the extreme poor PPP\$1.25 per day poverty line). Such are the difficulties merely to raise the 1.2 billion extreme poor above the PPP\$1.25 line that for many countries it is likely to be many years before it is possible to start formulating anti-poverty policies which extend much beyond the extreme poor. There is thus a tension between the aspiration articulated in Recommendation 202 and the reality of social policy formation in many developing countries.

In terms of their policy statements the IDIs are in agreement that limiting programming objectives in this way to a sub-section of the poor represents only an initial step in terms of pursuing broader provision, with the UN agencies in particular locating provision within a broader rights agenda and the objective of the progressive creation of a welfare system which can ensure the provision of a social minimum. However, in recent years institutional policy and country level programming have diverged in some contexts, with some IDI supported programming in SSA promoting extreme poverty targeting to the possible detriment of provision more broadly for all of the poor, and to the detriment of a broader universal vision.

Targeting as a principle has been widely criticised over recent decades by those supporting the concept of social protection as a welfare guarantee for all. This argument is in part rooted in the assertion by Tizard (1975) that services for the poor are poor quality services, and that provision of social protection exclusively for the poor will undermine the social solidarity function of universal provision and also alienate the middle classes from the project of the development of domestically funded welfare state type provision and associated state building functions. Some commentators suggest that *‘more for the poor can mean less for the poor’* since support for social protection is dependent on the provision of a share of benefits to the middle class, and that targeted approaches can have adverse implications for sustainability (see for example Gelback and Pritchett, 2000). This is one of the key arguments, beside the moral one, for the provision of universal rather than targeted provision, although such concerns have to be considered alongside considerations of fiscal feasibility and pragmatism, particularly in low income contexts.

In terms of pragmatic considerations Ortiz and Yablonski identified two key challenges relating to targeting in high poverty contexts:

- Targeting can be effective if the poor are a small percentage of the population. When poverty is widespread, the administrative cost and problems associated with identification, monitoring, and delivery of programs tend to outweigh benefits.
- Targeting may be socially divisive particularly in contexts of high poverty, where people perceive themselves to be just as poor as their neighbor and that even low levels of benefits can lead to escaping poverty. (Ortiz and Yablonski, 2010)

When targeting is restricted further still, and reframed as only for the ‘extreme poor’ the challenges multiply, both from pragmatic and moral or social justice perspectives. Ellis (2012) appraised the implications of the distribution of poverty in many low income countries for extreme poverty targeting, and found that in many LICs in SSA the income differences between bottom five deciles were marginal, rendering any targeting of the poorest 10% or 20%, or the ‘extreme’ poor problematic in terms of feasible targeting approaches, social justice and also social divisiveness, since it is not possible to differentiate with any certainty between the extreme poor and the poor more generally. The implication of this analysis is that the extreme poverty targeting approach can provide challenges in terms of its adverse implications for equity and programme legitimacy.

The goal of ‘eradicating poverty by 2030’ articulated in the HLP report, is gaining momentum in the post 2015 debate, but some critics argue that the focus on extreme poverty on the basis of the crude ‘dollar a day’ poverty line which has become normalized as a target, through its incorporation in to the MDGs, represents a significant scaling-down in international ambition:

the “eradicate poverty” campaign is actually only focused on “extreme” poverty which is an absurdly low and completely arbitrary definition of the poverty. (Pritchett, 2013)

Pritchett suggests that the focus on eradicating extreme poverty defined in terms of the ‘dollar a day’, estimated to number some 1.2 billion (World Bank, 2013),³⁰ is inadequate, and that meeting the needs of this group is a necessary, but not a sufficient goal for social protection provision globally. He argues that the focus on the ‘dollar a day’ poor reduces attention to the legitimate and pressing need to improve the lives of some five billion living in poverty, but above the arbitrary dollar cut off, and that a goal for “eradicating extreme poverty” that excludes the needs of this group from the development agenda *‘in favor of the elitist agenda of dollar a day is not progress’*. Although the validity of this critique is dependent on whether the extreme poverty target is identified by governments and IDIs as a start or end point of provision, as discussed above. Pritchett also criticizes the redefinition of ‘development as poverty reduction’³¹ as part of the broader process of downgrading the development project which has occurred over the last decade.

In some senses, it could be argued that the challenge is even greater than articulated by Pritchett, as in some low income countries the poverty targeting debate has been reframed in favour of the ‘ultra poor’, downsizing the ambition of the social protection project still further, with provision for only some fraction of the ‘dollar a day’ poor, estimated to comprise some 20% of the total, (approximately 234 million, most in SSA³² (Ahmed et al, op cit)), as a sufficient aspiration for social protection coverage.

Clearly, the post 2015 agenda must adopt a pragmatic approach, given resource and capacity constraints. However, the risk of the legitimization of a focus on addressing the needs of just a proportion of the poor, those whose resources are inadequate to meet even basic subsistence needs, at the expense of the more ambitious goal of the provision of a social minimum needs to be recognised.

Sustainability

In some countries (predominantly although not exclusively) large scale nationally owned programmes and systems are domestically financed, and are a key plank of national policy, often representing a popular policy at the heart of the state citizen compact, with the most celebrated examples being the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in India, the *Oportunidades* programme in Mexico and the Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia. Other examples are found in Brazil, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan, or as part of a policy to promote national stability and ensure a social minimum (Ethiopia, China), or in many instances a combination of the two. However, in other developing countries provision is less well rooted in the core domestic

³⁰ Ahmed et al, estimate that 44% of the dollar a day poor were in S Asia, 22% in East Asia and the Pacific, and 30% in SSA (in von Braun, J and Gatzweller, F.W. (eds) 2013).

³¹ With the rich countries feeling burdened by their own economic problems and fiscally strapped, re-defining development down to a lower, less ambitious, standard will certainly find powerful allies. But the one-two punch of redefining “development” as “poverty reduction” and then redefining “poverty” as “dollar a day” completely changes the historical nature of development as goals for the creation of prosperous, democratic, capable and equal nation-states into the limited and penurious concept of development as just cost-effective charity work (Pritchett, 2013)

³² 70% of the 234 million ‘ultra poor’ identified by Akhter Ahmed et al were estimated to live in SSA and 15% in South Asia. (Akhter Ahmed et al, 2013)

policy priorities and the sustainability of some donor supported social protection initiatives, particularly in low income countries remains open to question. Hence the ‘quiet social protection revolution’ evidenced in Latin America, of endogenously developed programmes, identified by Hanlon et al (2012), does not reflect the situation universally. In sub-Saharan Africa some countries have created, and finance, on an ongoing basis, large scale programmes. In many others however social protection provision is characterized by a combination of low coverage, primarily government or private sector administered social insurance schemes for those in formal sector employment, a range of small scale NGO-led initiatives and a number of donor supported PWP and cash transfer ‘pilots’ targeting the poorest. These latter are often designed and implemented with significant external inputs and created in an attempt to demonstrate the benefits of provision to government and implemented alongside advocacy interventions with the aspiration of promoting national scale up once the concept is proved. Such programmes are often incentivized by grant or concessional loan funding, and tend to use externally developed models (many inspired by a combination of Latin American design modalities and other donor developed transfer programmes in the region), and are often implemented outside government structures by Project Implementation Units (PIUs). This can have negative implications for both financial and administrative ownership and sustainability.

While some pilot programmes have been successful in terms of being adopted as national policy, and funded with increasing national budgetary allocations accordingly, for example donor supported cash transfer programmes in Kenya and Zambia, many others have not been adopted as the basis for extension nationally or allocated domestic funding. This may be in part due to the fact that some donor supported programmes are externally driven in terms of objectives and design, as well as implementation, and that the social protection policies and strategies in which they are embedded are in some cases, similarly to their predecessor PRSPs, largely donor led and often donor penned processes.

There is some correlation between the wealth of developing countries and the extent to which programmes are government based and financed; a recent World Bank review has indicated that in lower MICs 77% of cash transfer programmes are ‘government based’, compared to 100% in upper MICS and 62% in fragile countries. In SSA 50% of cash transfer programmes are funded exclusively by non-government sources, 18% by government plus others, and only 33% by government alone, with the dominant donors being the World Bank, DFID and UNICEF (Garcia, 2013).

Nationally developed and implemented social protection programming tends to be inherently more sustainable and often significantly different in design from the more generic forms of provision supported by donors. Where programmes have a greater state ownership, design choices are sometimes contrary to conventional donor preferences in terms of both the form of provision (such as the fertilizer subsidy in Malawi) and eligibility criteria, with the universal provision of some state developed programmes (cash transfers in Nepal and public works provision in India) running contrary to donor preferences for poverty targeted approaches. Interestingly, while the Indian MGNREGS is much celebrated in the social protection literature, there are no similar donor supported programmes, which tend to be restricted to a more limited and homogenous package of options.

Financing

Financing remains a key challenge in the social protection sector. The domestic resource base of most developing countries, particularly low income countries, is inadequate to support the implementation of any kind of universal welfare state or provision as set out in the SPF, without significant budgetary reallocations or increases in the tax base which are not feasible in the short term, or external financing. Hence the rationale for the adoption of a Rawlsian approach, as discussed above. The relationship between social expenditure and tax regimes, in terms of the amount of tax which can be feasibly gathered is major determinant of the size of any domestically financed social protection system. While significant progress is being made in terms of revenue collection in developing countries, actual and anticipated increases in mineral revenue in a number of low and middle income countries may form a potential basis for a more redistributive agenda and social protection financing, but this would be dependent on a major shift in government financing priorities in most if not all developing countries, in favour of the poor (UNRISD, 2009).

Recognising the need for external financing in the short to medium term to finance an extension of provision, the ILO carried out a series of modeling exercises during the 2000s to estimate the level of external financing required to support given levels of provision in developing countries under a range of different scenarios, with targeted provision requiring up to 3-5% of GDP (ILO, 2008).³³ A similar exercise based on five different SSA countries suggesting a range of cost between 1 and 10% of GDP (Hanley, 2009). Three to four per cent of GDP is the upper bound of provision allocated by low and middle income countries (DFID, 2013) – but extensive coverage in line with the SPF would require significantly greater allocations.

While reallocation in favour of social protection is often presented as an option, this approach is constrained by challenges in the form of fiscal commitments in other sectors. Intersectoral competition for fiscal space represents a challenge, exacerbated by the ‘silo’ effect of sectoral development goals, with the range of sector spending targets to which developing country governments are required to endorse, together representing more than 100% of total government expenditure. This has negative implications for sustainable sector financing and a good public financial management (PFM) (see Hagen-Zanker and McCord, 2013).

Recognising the inadequacy of domestic financing options for development in the short to medium term, a number of innovations were mooted around the 2005 G8 summit and the 2006 international conference on innovative sources of financing for development, the result of a joint UN-French working group mandated to ‘pursue further work on innovative financing mechanisms’ reporting to the 2006 IMF/WB annual meeting. Outcomes included the proposed frontloading of development aid through the International Financing Facility (IFF), launched in 2005, to be based on the sale of development bonds to bring forward future ODA payments, and the French airline ticket solidarity tax of 2006. However these initiatives

³³ The package costed includes universal old age and disability pension, basic child grants (limited to two children per mother) and provision of support for the unemployed (100 day public works), as well as basic health access. The cost of the basic social protection package, excluding health provision, was modelled for seven SSA countries and the results were found to range from 2.9-5.2 per cent of GDP (ILO, 2008)

for international financing have not been taken forward by the international community, and there is an ongoing debate regarding options such as the creation of a Global Fund for Social Protection (as proposed by the UN rapporteurs for the Right to Food and Human Rights) and the development of an International Financial Transaction Tax as a source of funds for investments in social protection (Deacon, 2013; Cichon, 2013).

To date there have however been no significant international responses to the redistributive implications of extending social protection provision in developing countries, with the HLP focusing explicitly on equality of opportunity rather than directly addressing income inequality and the World Bank explicitly warning against the danger of basing extended provision on any notion of further redistribution which could jeopardize investment and growth (World Bank, 2013).

The current financial crisis affected social protection financing in three main ways – reducing national government expenditure on provision in developing countries, reducing development assistance financing overall, including provision to social protection among many bilateral donors, and concentrating resources into the World Bank managed multi-donor Rapid Social Response (RSR) trust fund, with the net result of a sustained fall in developing country expenditure and a spike in overall external social protection financing in 2009/10. In this way the crisis resulted in increased external spending for the sector, but the content of the expenditure has been coloured by World Bank priorities, since the fund was contingent on requests endorsed by World Bank country personnel, which do not necessarily correspond to nationally developed priorities. The World Bank used the RSR as an opportunity to expand engagement in the sector, promoting new social protection activity and systems building:

The [RSR] funds led to Bank engagement in 15 new countries, 9 of them in Africa, where there was no previous [World Bank] lending or technical assistance on safety nets. (IEG, 2012)

As mentioned above, one longstanding proposal has been for the formation of a global fund for social protection provision, along the lines of the 2002 Global Fund (to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria), the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization (GAVI) 2000 or the Education for All (EFA) Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund 2003. Such a fund has not been developed to date for social protection and international donor financing remains piecemeal. Were such a fund to be developed, an innovative institutional framework would need to be developed. As Ollila (2003) has noted, multi-donor trust funds can lack democratic accountability, and being based on a process of competing bids between countries can undermine more systematic processes of global sector financing funding and national planning processes (Shakow, 2006). This reflection is also of relevance to the RSR.

The absence of an international financing mechanism to gather funds and administer accountable support to fund the expansion of social protection provision to low income developing countries in the short to medium term remains a major challenge.

Donor Competition and Coordination

The ‘failure’ of some donor supported programmes to ‘go national’, noted above may be an inevitable or inescapable consequence of the recent phenomenon of the donor community supporting a multiplicity of alternative, rather than complementary social protection programming interventions in any particular country, reflecting competing donor (and INGO) social protection agendas, each seeking influence in terms of their own institutional priorities in terms of target groups and design preferences. This has resulted in some countries, in a palimpsest of programming with the development of several different donor supported social protection interventions for particular groups or regions, competing for national adoption, sometimes at the expense of coherent, rational and cost effective programming, at the same time undermining prospects of the development of systematic provision.

Poor coordination has been a continually identified theme within the aid sector and in social protection provision. Calls for donor harmonisation were formally articulated at the series of High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness held over the last decade (Rome 2003, Paris 2005, Accra 2008 and Busan 2011), with the Paris declaration outlining five fundamental principles for increased aid effectiveness:

Ownership: Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.

Alignment: Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.

Harmonisation: Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

Results: Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured, and

Mutual accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results.

(Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005))³⁴

This was followed by the 2008 Accra Agenda on Action (AAA), designed to strengthen implementation of the Paris Declaration, setting the agenda for accelerated advancement towards the Paris targets on the basis of three main areas for improvement:

Ownership: Countries have more say over their development processes through wider participation in development policy formulation, stronger leadership on aid co-ordination and more use of country systems for aid delivery.

Inclusive partnerships: All partners - including donors in the OECD Development Assistance Committee and developing countries, as well as other donors, foundations and civil society - participate fully.

Delivering results: Aid is focused on real and measurable impact on development.

The declaration and agenda on action included clear statements of resolve and indicators of progress, and the agenda was given a further boost by the G20 focus on enhancing effectiveness which stimulated the formation and agenda of the SPIAC-B to promote practical

³⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>

IDI dialogue and information sharing as well as the development of shared programming and analytical instruments. Simultaneously the adoption of the ‘one UN’ approach and endorsement of the SPF Recommendation 202 in 2012 gave an internationally agreed articulation of social protection objectives as a potential focus for IDI harmonization. While there are some excellent examples of IDI collaboration, notably the multiagency basket funded PSNP in Ethiopia, practical IDI and INGO coordination at both programme and headquarters level remains limited, the set of institutional advances, outlined above and existence of the updated ILO recommendation creates the space for increased future harmonization. The institutional architecture for policy coordination and harmonisation is in place, but to date the goal remains largely aspirational, a major ongoing challenge.

Data

Some practical advances have been made relating to the associated challenge of cross-institutional data harmonisation. Currently multiple agencies are active in the gathering and analysis of data on social protection programming, using a range of different norms, practices and definitions relating to programming and budgeting. This duplication represents a major challenge in the sector. It is to the detriment of IDI efficiency and resource use and of scarce developing country technical capacity (see ODI, 2012). It undermines prospects for comparative analysis of performance and cost (a key aspect of the current value for money (VFM) agenda within the IDIs). Current initiatives developed by the IDIs are under discussion at SPIAC-B to develop common data definitions within the sector, shared data gathering and analysis tools, and to promote in country capacity relating to data. This initiative represents a potential response to this key challenge. It could potentially support significant development in the sector, although i) the need for cross agency financing to support the development of this kind of public good and ii) the challenge of adopting cross agency norms and practices relating to definitions and budgeting practices and need to development may hinder progress. There is also potential to link in with the OECD supported Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).³⁵ The Social Protection Inter Agency Assessment (SPIA) initiative to promote a common cross-agency national social protection appraisal instrument, (the Core Diagnostic Instrument, or CODI) may offer an opportunity to initiate rationalization in the sector following recent inter-agency negotiation, with the World Bank drafted instrument rebranded as a multi-IDI initiative, and reframed in line with the pillars of the SPF.³⁶

Tension with Macro-economic Policy

Associated with the sectoral financing challenge outlined above is the challenge of the ongoing and under-acknowledged impact of macro-economic policy constraints imposed by the IFIs on social protection expenditure in developing countries. Such policy imposition did not cease with the formal ending of the SAP era, and during the recent financial crisis the IMF

³⁵ The founding members of PARIS21 in 1999 were the United Nations, World Bank, European Commission, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund. Their goal was to promote a vision of global partnership operating at national, regional and global level and bringing together users and producers of statistics in developing and developed countries in order to strengthen statistical capacities in low income countries.

³⁶ The SPARCS initiative, now renamed SPIA, was reviewed at the SPIAC-B meeting, in Brussels, October 2013.

prioritisation of macro-economic stabilisation in the absence of ring-fencing for core social-sector spending (health, education and social protection) prevented the mobilisation of counter-cyclical expenditure in the sector, despite the increased need, and even reduced existing financing in many counties.

Ortiz has argued repeatedly³⁷ for the need for significant counter-cyclical expenditure on social protection provision, citing evidence from countries where this approach has been followed (see for example Mesa-Lago, 2010, drawing on evidence from 25 Latin American and Caribbean countries). She argues that promoting counter-cyclical expenditure in the social sectors has both attenuated the adverse effects of crises and shortened their duration, (see also Prasad and Gerecke (2010)). However, the desirability of significant counter-cyclical expenditure to stimulate economic growth remains contested among the IDIs. A review of the literature on macro-economic policy recommendations from both the IMF (Roy and Ramos, 2012) and the World Bank (IEG, 2012) (a review of World Bank crisis response Development Policy Operations (DPOs)), in the wake of the crisis indicates a prioritisation of macro-economic stability through deficit reduction, and the promotion of contractionary fiscal policies, without a commensurate focus on protecting expenditure in the social sectors. The IFIs' concern for the attainment of 'healthy macro-economic conditions' (reduced fiscal deficits) is in direct tension with the requirement to ring-fence social-sector spending and engage in counter-cyclical expenditure in the sector, and risks undermining, rather than supporting, an expansion of provision (McCord, 2013). While the sector is supported piecemeal on the one hand through *ad hoc* support from the RSR, on the other it is systematically being challenged by broader fiscal cuts which are directly affecting core domestic funding to the sector. A recent ISSA study highlights the tension inherent in the response by development partners to the crisis:

The crisis has created an uncertain context for social security. Calls for austerity and fiscal consolidation threaten to reduce the resources devoted to social security, undermining its mandate of reducing inequality and poverty. In this context, many crisis-ridden countries are responding by radically circumscribing their social spending, generating heightened uncertainty surrounding the prospects for future social investment. (ISSA, 2012)

The 'radical circumscriptions' highlighted above is one of the major contextual factors that determines current social protection provision, medium-term crisis response and future shock-response potential. It was widely anticipated and then documented in one branch of the literature (see for example Ortiz, 2010; 2009; ISSA, 2012), but not broadly integrated into the social protection and shock-response discourse, which can be characterised as missing a fundamental contextual constraint. The result has been a discussion of the social protection and shock-response debate that is somewhat isolated from the broader fiscal discussion that provides the binding constraint to provision. The ongoing prioritisation of macro-economic considerations, and inadequate protection for the social sectors is an ongoing challenge not sufficiently widely recognised in the current discourse which fails to place analysis of the social protection sector within the context of broader IFI fiscal policy. The macro-economic preoccupations with deficit reduction and a contractionary fiscal stance have significant

³⁷ See for example Ortiz, 2010; Ortiz, Chai and Cummins, 2011; and Ortiz and Cummins, 2013.

adverse implications for the sustainability and on-going provision of social services and social protection and the development of provision that is systemic, given the limited emphasis on financing additional or ring-fencing the budgets for existing provision. Hence RSR supported interventions to promote marginal increases in already limited social protection provision in many LICs, may be dwarfed by the implications of reduced funding for the social sectors overall, as a result of IMF policy prescriptions.

This is indicative of the continuation of a significant tension between IFI objectives relating to the fiscal deficit and developmental objectives relating to social provision, which has been part of the debate since the 1980s, but is today subject to less international scrutiny or critique (with the notable exceptions stated above). This represents an area of ongoing intra and inter-agency policy coordination failure - it highlights the need for the development of mechanisms to ensure the protection of social expenditure in future crises.

Beyond Income Security

While the prevailing vision of social protection may be less ambitious than the construction of a welfare state or universal provision of a social minimum, it is significantly more ambitious in another dimension, the growing 'Productive Safety Nets' agenda which is particularly prevalent in low income SSA countries. This PSN agenda is promoting the potential function of social protection as a means to promote graduation out of poverty at individual level, and growth at local and national levels.

PSN arguments are promoted largely on the grounds that they make the provision of social protection more attractive to governments and also non-beneficiary populations. It is argued that non-beneficiaries are more likely to support transfer programs if the programmes promote the prospect of graduation, (Alderman and Yemtsov, 2013), thus reducing concerns regarding 'dependency'. This is a concern frequently articulated by politicians and civil servants in many developing countries in Africa and Asia, and among some of those working within the IDI. There is little if any evidence in support of the 'dependency' concern, but it nonetheless serves to (mis)inform the social protection debate and shape programming expectations.

The association between social protection and growth is also critical as it enables social protection to be promoted as investment, rather than consumption expenditure, and for the argument to be made that investment in social protection should be made for economic reasons, rather than purely on a rights or social justice basis, thereby strengthening the case for social protection:

It is the combination of their direct effect on poverty reduction along with their contribution to growth that jointly justifies investments in safety nets. (Alderman and Yemtsov, 2013)

Concern has been raised within the discourse that this approach has led to the 'overselling' of social protection in relation to both individual graduation and economy wide growth effects. While positive individual impacts on human and social capital have been widely observed as a result of social protection provision (see DFID, 2012), there is little evidence of systematic graduation from poverty resulting from social transfer receipt. The small scale of

programming and low transfer levels that characterise most social protection programmes is not likely in most low income contexts to have discernible effects on growth, although localised economic development effects are possible depending on a range of external factors. It is salutary to note that World Bank estimates (based on its ASPIRE³⁸ data base, which has data for only seven SSA countries, including those with the most generous social protection provision in the region) indicate that ‘only 1 percent of the population [of SSA] moves out of poverty thanks to social protection transfers’ (Fiszbein et al, 2013). While social protection provision reduces the Gini by more than 30% in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), with its historical legacy of generous redistributively financed universal provision, this figure is less than 5% in other regions for which they have data (ibid.). These figures illustrate the challenge associated with the more radical claims associated with levels of provision in many low income developing countries.

Hence the graduation and growth debates largely reflect aspirations rather than being grounded in a strong evidence base. There is a risk of distorting both programme design and expectations as well as displacing the normative, rights-based case for social protection provision.

Social Protection Systems and Crisis Response

The social protection discourse emerging from the IDIs in the wake of the financial crisis has been dominated by calls for social protection ‘systems’ in general (see for example the *World Bank Social Protection and Labour Strategy*, 2012) and for the development of systems in particular which have the potential to respond to future crises. This represents two major challenges, one relating to the conception of ‘systems’ and one, more fundamentally, to the role of social protection as a form of crisis response.

Systems Building

As noted above, the donor community responded to the financial crisis with a degree of opportunism, using it as a mechanism to mobilise funding for, and to promote engagement with, the social protection agenda, supporting the development of social protection systems. As noted by the IEG ‘*the crisis provided an opportunity for the Bank to start to move ahead on the long-term agenda of building social protection systems*’ (IEG, 2012), albeit with a focus on programming in its preferred mold.

This focus on the development of systems is consistent with the new *World Bank Social Protection & Labor Strategy*, and the objectives of Recommendation 202. However, the extent to which there is a common understanding of the implications of such a focus on ‘systems’ between the various IDIs, beyond the core administrative initiatives such as developing single registries and MIS. Within the SPF it refers to the various components of provision which together ensure the social minimum at different points in the lifecycle and during different phases of engagement with the labour market, on the basis of the principle of universal provision, needs and rights. However, the World Bank uses the term without any such set of associated expectation of systematic guarantee of a social minimum. Hence the

³⁸ The World Bank Atlas of Social Protection – Indicators of Resilience and Equity

meaning of systems remains fuzzy. On the one hand this fuzziness may be deliberate as it allows a space in the discourse for interagency collaboration and dialogue, where more precise specification may not, but on the other, it leaves the discourse somewhat opaque and reduces the likelihood of effective collaboration.

Crisis Response

The second challenge relates to the framing of social protection as an instrument for crisis response (see World Bank, 2012). Such a conceptualisation is common in OECD countries, where welfare states were built on the premise of full employment and the provision of temporary support on a universal basis for formal sector workers to meet a wide range of contingencies. This form of income insurance provision in most developing countries is however typically limited to formal sector coverage (in many cases 5% or less of the workforce). Social assistance provision is limited to selected subgroups of the poor, primarily those in households *without* working age members. The presence of working age members tends to be a criterion for exclusion in the highly rationed programmes implemented in most developing countries, particularly those with donor support which tend to focus exclusively on households without working age members.

Most developing country social protection explicitly excludes the working age poor, and includes only a small sub set of the poor, limited geographically and in terms of income decile, with provision being inherently supply rather than demand driven. Financing and administrative constraints combine with (often donor led) ideological preferences to exclude the majority of the poor, and particularly the working poor from social protection provision, and there is little donor support for formal sector provision. Most provision is thus piecemeal rather than systematic, with few countries having a formal and rationalised system of provision. Given this, the call for social protection ‘systems’ to be able to respond to crises, by meeting the needs of the new poor and those affected by economic shocks represents an excessively optimistic analysis of the potential of existing systems, particularly in low income countries. In most LICs, attempting to make adequate and regular provision for even the small subset of the poor targeted is problematic, with provision marked by administrative and technical delays in payments, registration and targeting weaknesses, low coverage and low value transfers, and often unpredictable financing pipelines in the absence of any form of central registry. This is exacerbated by the absence of IFI agreement on external financing or sectoral ring-fencing in the face of requirements for fiscal contraction. Anticipating that such collections of interventions (which are not coordinated systems) could or should aim to be able to extend provision to additional groups (the ‘new poor’) at a time of crisis is not necessarily consistent with the aim of building basic systems for effective provision for those groups already targeted. In contexts of limited institutional, administrative and technical capacity, questions regarding the appropriate prioritisation of social protection provision, in terms of whether it should be focused on provision for the chronic poor, who face poverty as a certainty, or those for whom it is a risk at a time of crisis, have been raised by some commentators (McCord, 2013). Developing a ‘system’ which requires programme extension as a form of crisis response, risks altering and distorting systems development oriented to the provision of a social protection floor to address chronic poverty. Engaging with and resolving the implications of this framing of social protection is a key current challenge.

Vision

The vision within the international community remains divided in relation to social protection in terms of whether it is an instrument for providing broad based income security for all on the one hand, in line with the traditional European welfare state model and the SPF, providing support on the basis of needs arising over the course of the individual life cycle, or a targeted response to address risk and promote resilience for specific populations. Despite the fact that the UN has reiterated the role of rights in the social protection discourse through Resolution 202, and notwithstanding the fact that social protection provision is clearly articulated in a number of key human rights instruments, the debate is not broadly perceived within the IDI community or within many developing countries as a rights-based issue. Some key IDIs are not committed to realising the implications of the SPF or adopting it as a shared basis for future coordination (a situation described by one commentator as ‘the great ambivalence’, Cichon, 2013). Hence while resolution 202 provides a context and a lever for negotiation, it is not yet an effective instrument for mobilising coordinated donor technical assistance and resources for provision.

Similarly, the vision of social justice, redistribution and equity which underlie the concept of the welfare state and provision of a social minimum, are not shared by all participants within the discourse. Programmes in many developing countries, many with donor support, have far more modest objectives in terms of the breadth of provision. This links to an ongoing, often implicit difference of opinion between development agencies regarding whether social protection provision is about addressing risks, or the certainty of ongoing chronic poverty. There is little evidence of a current appetite for the domestic or international redistributive processes, (in terms of increased aid or domestic taxation) that a universal vision relating to chronic poverty implies.

While there is a very recent *de jure* requirement on the part of the bi- and multilateral donors active in the social protection sector to address social protection in line with the SPF vision, initial responses on the part of the IDIs show some signs of resistance to the implementation of the SPF principles as the primary framework for future social protection, with the associated commitment to the progressive realisation of a social minimum.

Opportunities

The challenges facing social protection provision in terms of ongoing institutional hegemonies and conceptual contestation, financing, developing country perspectives and the growing conflation between social protection and the very process of ‘development’ have been outlined above. For each challenge outlined above a series of key opportunities for engagement in the sector may be identified, and each is discussed below.

Instrument Choice, Design and Implementation

In terms of programme design, there is a need to develop an evidence base to inform instrument choice, design and implementation options, which offers a greater degree of

objectivity rather than reflecting institutional preferences or path dependency, rooted in historical patterns of provision rather than analysis of current needs and programming options.

Linked to this there is an opportunity, given the current degree of institutional consensus around social protection programming among the IDIs, and ongoing initiatives to harmonise activity in the sector, to promote improved evaluation, including the development of shared definitions and indicators across programmes, institutions, and regions, to enable greater comparison of performance, meta analysis and cross programme learning.

Opening debate around the significant challenge represented by the working age poor (WAP) is also a key opportunity, given the recent recognition of the scale of the WAP challenge. The limited repertoire of social protection and active labour market instruments currently in use, and the growing evidence of the shortcomings and inadequacies of existing approaches, particularly in low income contexts, highlights the need to rethink social protection options in response to a shifting global economic context and fundamental changes in the nature of under- and unemployment in developing countries.

Sustainability

In order to promote sustainability, in relation to social protection provision supported by the IDIs, there is a need to stimulate significantly greater national policy autonomy and ownership, moving away from donor led ‘one size fits all’ programming choices to more bespoke and contextually designed support, rather than institutionally preferred policy ‘packages’.³⁹

To this end there is also an opportunity to support ongoing initiatives to engender greater coordination and harmonization within the donor community through the development of practical steps to enhance joint programming, with for example shared data gathering and analysis initiatives, joint evaluations and common situation analysis instruments.

Such approaches have the potential to significantly reduce the opportunity costs of donor engagement on the part of national governments through a reduction in the multiple parallel analytical, data gathering, financing, programming and reporting processes which currently characterize donor supported social protection provision.

Sustainability could also be promoted by a greater degree of IDI support for domestically initiated programming even where it may not be consistent with institutionally preferred programme design, and also, critically, by a commitment to support rather than undermine domestic investment in the sector. This latter outcome could be achieved by promoting greater institutional consistency within and between the IFIs, notably the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) regarding national level ring-fencing and protection of social protection expenditure even in contexts requiring macro-economic stabilization.

³⁹ See discussion in Devereux et al, 2010, in relation to provision in sub-Saharan Africa.

Finally, from a fiscal perspective, sustainability could be enhanced by the promotion of and engagement in a re-energised debate on international financing options, on the part of the IFIs, and, where appropriate, supporting national level dialogue on options for improved national revenue collection, including the capture of mineral dividends for the provision of social dividends linked to social protection provision.

Financing

Identifying, developing and supporting mechanisms for social protection financing, both nationally and internationally, to fund provision, in the first instance for the extreme poor, and thence for the progressive expansion of systems, which currently provide only marginal coverage in many developing, and most low income countries, is an opportunity which the IDIs have not taken up in recent years. This needs to be approached both from an ideological/political perspective, exploring potential sources of financing as well as the reluctance to countenance any significantly extended redistributive agenda in IDI and national discourses, as well as from an advocacy perspective, with generalized, rather than single agency, mobilization around a call for increased financing.

To facilitate this, the innovative thinking arising from Paris 2005 and the Gleneagles proposals should be reviewed, alongside an exploration of more recent proposals for a global fund and transaction tax, as well as mineral taxation, engaging with the mineral resource debate actively. This process should include consideration of lessons from recent trust fund initiatives, such as the Rapid Social Response fund and the GAVI to inform design options.

Donor Competition and Coordination

A continued focus on donor harmonization and efficiency, from both the donor and recipient government perspectives is another key opportunity, building on the embryonic work of the recently constituted SPIAC-B in promoting coordination and interagency collaboration on specific issues such as social protection data (including conceptual harmonization around definitions, interventions and impacts, data gathering and data analysis) and social protection system performance, and also the World Bank supported SPIA (Social Protection Inter-Agency Assessment) initiative on mapping provision. This work can only be taken forward with goodwill across the IDIs, and shared financing, as it represents a public good which stands to benefit the sector as a whole, rather than any single agency alone.

Such approaches are required to increase IDI efficiency, while also potentially improving quality across the IDI board, by drawing on and sharing the institutional expertise of the agencies most experienced and skilled in work in each area of endeavour. Increasing joint programming and basket funding at national level would represent the next steps in such an exercise, although this would require agencies to give up a degree of institutional autonomy and influence in terms of policy choice, design and implementation and would require a deepening of trust and commitment between agencies than currently obtains, and the agreement of areas of common vision and overlap in the sector - the intended, although not yet fully accepted role of the SPF.

The SPIAC-B also has the potential to be used as a more general forum for actively promoting the exchange of ideas, experiences and innovation throughout the IDI community, and potentially also developing country governments, as well as identifying and developing issues, such as future financing modalities, if it can create the space for a genuine dialogue and interchange between agencies, and has adequate intellectual and financial resources to take forward such initiatives, either directly or commissioning inputs, recognizing the capacity constraints faced by many in the IDI community.

In terms of policy harmonization the SPF offers an opportunity for coordination and has the potential to provide a normative framework for social protection internationally, if it is actively supported among IDIs and national governments. The SPF also has the potential to contribute to active programming harmonization at country level. However, if the processes of harmonization anticipated in the recent series of international fora (Paris, Accra, Busan etc) are to be realized at international and country level, both formal processes and further international leadership guidance (the role played recently by the G20 Development Group) will be needed. This would require the development and promotion of incentives for harmonization, as well as deliberate changes to institutional culture, structure and practices.

Tension with Economic Policy

Explicit debate needs to be promoted on the continuing tensions between the pursuit of social protection objectives, and the economic policy, (both micro- and macro-) promoted by the BWI. There is a need to seek principles to govern the policy dissonance between macro-economic and poverty/social justice objectives, and also to explore the relationship between the micro-economic issues (employment, taxation, trade, education etc) which also contribute to social protection performance, rather than looking at social protection in isolation from economic policy in general.

Moving Beyond Income Security

Similarly, given the current interest in the Productive Safety Net (PSN) approach and the role of social protection in promoting active social protection and labour market participation, echoing the broader European policy trend, there is an opportunity to promote objective and critical interrogation on an interagency basis of the growing evidence base relating to livelihoods development, food security, graduation and transformation, and identification of the determinants of policy success (or otherwise). Given the growth of research in this area in recent years, there is now space for the exploration of this question with reference to developing countries, taking into account the implications of recent changes in the structure of the global labour market and rooting the debate in the reality of social protection provision at country level, which remains minimal in many low income countries, and to re-assess policy objectives relating to graduation and transformation in this light.

Social Protection Systems and Crisis Response

In the post 2008 context, there is scope for initiating active and critical discussion around the meaning of 'systems development' in relation to social protection as adopted in recent IDI literature, both to identify areas of common interest and also to highlight areas where there

may be an incongruence of schemata, with the objective of discussing explicitly the implications and possible avenues for resolution of any issues arising.

In a similar vein there is a need to promote open debate on the current concern to promote social protection as a crisis response instrument. This would entail an exploration of potential contradictions and tensions inherent in promoting social protection institutions as *both* the providers of a social minimum and *also* as mechanisms for countercyclical crisis response in developing country contexts, so that challenges can be identified and addressed, conceptually and in programming.

Contested Vision

Finally the adoption of Recommendation 202 provides an opportunity for the articulation of the contested visions underlying the social protection project. The articulation of the SPF vision and the fact that it is nominally supported across the IDIs represents both a challenge and also a key moment for the exploration of a contested agenda. There is an opportunity for the areas of agreement and dissent and the ideological impulses underlying them, which have in many cases remained implicit, to be explored and addressed in an explicit process, recognizing both the ideologies and the pragmatism informing current institutional positions and bringing into the open the programming implications of the different stances. The aim of such a process would be to identify core areas of provision (potentially informed by the SPF) for collaborative engagement, and reduce the dimensions of future contestation.

Part of this process would be to explore contested questions in the current discourse relating to inequality, the emerging 'equality of opportunity' ideology, the question of redistribution, and role of income inequality in the poverty debate.

Conclusion

This paper has set out to explore the political, institutional and ideological context in which the social protection discourse has taken place in recent decades, and the associated division of opinion between the various IDIs active in the sector, which reflect a fundamental difference, described by Deacon as:

a disagreement as to whether the reduction of poverty was a matter of targeting specific resources on the most poor, or whether it was a matter of major social and political-institutional change involving a shift in power relations and a significant increase in redistribution from rich to poor. (Deacon, 2007)

In European countries the prevailing and broadly accepted conception of social protection are that it represents a rights-based entitlement to a minimum level of provision by or on behalf of the state in order to guarantee a minimum income to citizens and to provide a wide range of essential services. This vision of social protection is far from the vision, and even further from the reality, of provision in most developing countries.

Within the international donor community, it has been argued that while there is wide agreement on the desirability of social protection provision, there remains significant variation in terms of what such provision should comprise in developing countries, for whom it should be provided, and how and in what form it should be offered; the idea of an European-type entitlement based social minimum is not central to the vision of all actors. Disagreements between participants see them either supporting what may be crudely summarised as ‘the UN position’, conforming broadly with the European welfarist and SPF vision on the one hand, or the more residual World Bank-type policy, which remains concerned fundamentally with market based solutions and challenges relating to risk, resilience and graduation on the other. This paper does not propose that there are simple answers to this dichotomy, but has sought to illuminate the tension inherent in differing institutional perspectives.

As such, this is a story of synergies and contestation, of agencies coming together at key moments, with the PRSP in 1999, the MDGs in 2000, the Paris Declaration in 2005, the SPF in 2012 and potentially also the SPIA in 2013, but yet also competing to define good policy and practice. It is a story of the adoption of shared terminology and discourse, but with subtly differing meanings and nuances, and differing underlying ideologies, with sometimes quite divergent programming implications, a story of incongruence of schemata.

The tension, and sometimes the policy differences between the World Bank and the UN agencies on matters of national and global social policy are a dominant thread throughout the document. This tension is characterised by some commentators as a ‘*titanic struggle between the dominant neoliberal tendency in the World Bank and the more social-solidarity tendency around the ILO and other UN agencies*’ with the contest presented as a somewhat uneven one, with the World Bank having significantly more resources to propagate its own vision, while the UN is left to ‘*argue for more public and universalistic approaches on the sidelines*’, (Deacon, 2007). However, there is also space for a more positive analysis given the current degree of consensus. Endorsement of Recommendation 202 and the current discussion around the SDG vision may promote a greater degree of convergence in the future, and also strengthen the case for more universal and nationally driven programming.

In this context, while developing country governments perspectives on social protection provision are highly diverse, as discussed above, with significant regional and income level variations, they may be characterised overall, (with notable exceptions), as taking a conservative social policy stance, with a resistance to universal grants or support for the working age poor (other than through public works). This occurs in the context of a policy discourse and policy options which are largely supra-nationally determined, particularly in low income contexts, where access to concessional finance is still linked to, often implicit, policy conditionalities.

More broadly this paper has shown that recent years have witnessed a conceptual re-packaging of social protection within the IDIs, with social protection increasingly presented as a means to promote productivity and livelihoods improvements, facilitate graduation, transformation and economic growth (in a development consistent with the increasingly ‘active’ social protection regimes resulting from recent European policy developments), and

since the financial crisis of 2008/9, also to provide a mechanism for countercyclical social political and economic stabilization. This approach has been adopted, in part to promote buy-in from donors and governments and recast social protection as a tool for ‘development’ more generally, and in this way to locate social protection within the dominant growth agenda. The adoption of language of promotion and transformation has also enabled alliances to be made between differing development actors, and at the same time the language of ‘welfare’ has been minimized, as politically unfavourable. However, there is a risk inherent in attempting to square the circle such that social protection becomes all things to all people, a risk that the term loses its meaning within the IDI discourse and becomes divorced from the simple objective of promoting secure welfare and providing a form of social minimum, itself an extremely ambitious goal, given current levels of provision.

As was argued above, even attaining this outcome on any meaningful scale is highly challenging and currently beyond the fiscal and administrative reach of many low income developing countries. Achieving this would be enormously significant - with massive welfare implications for the poor globally. Loading the project with additional objectives extending well beyond welfare, risks overburdening and potentially destroying the significant but fragile achievements that have been made in this sector to date in terms of the provision of welfare for the poorest.

So, Recommendation 202 provides a framework for the extension of provision of social protection on the basis of a social minimum in developing countries, which has the official endorsement of national governments represented at the International Labour Conference, the UN agencies, the BWI and the major bi-lateral donors. As such it represents a potentially significant development for global social protection provision, if this official support is translated into policy and programme development at national level. While the recommendation represents a very recent *de jure* requirement on the part of the bi- and multilateral donors active in the social protection sector, initial responses on the part of the IDIs show some signs of resistance to the adoption of the SPF principles (with the associated commitment to the progressive realisation of a social minimum) as the primary framework for future social protection investment. The extent to which Recommendation 202 will guide national government social protection policy is also uncertain, in a period when the global institutional context is becoming increasingly complex and the role of rights-based development agendas are coming into question, notably in non-OECD countries. The outcome of the ongoing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) debate is likely to be significant in determining the priority given to social protection in the coming decades.

The challenge now is to consolidate the achievements made in the sector internationally in terms of IDI policy and practice: maintaining the impetus to harmonise donor efforts, promoting genuine coordination between the IDIs, supporting national governments and enhancing national sovereignty in social protection policy selection, design and implementation. There is also a need to move forward with national and international innovation in social protection financing and, perhaps most fundamentally, to review the adequacy of current instruments and approaches in the light of the changing global context. Finally, and perhaps before anything else, there is a need to stimulate discussion on the implications of a changing globalised economy for social protection in order to develop new

thinking and tools to respond to the challenges this represents, and to support the development of social protection provision which is relevant for the coming century.

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