



**Centre for
Social Protection**

Socio-economic security over the life course: A global review of social protection

July 2009





**Centre for
Social Protection**

Socio-economic security over the life course: A global review of social protection

Sarah Cook and Naila Kabeer

Institute of Development Studies

Prepared as the final report of a Social Protection Scoping Study
funded by the Ford Foundation

For permission to cite this paper, please contact the author.

July 2009

Final Report

Socio-economic security over the life course: A global review of social protection

Sarah Cook and Naila Kabeer

Institute of Development Studies
at the University of Sussex

Prepared for the Ford Foundation's Social Protection Committee

July 2009

Acknowledgements: This report draws heavily on regional background papers prepared as part of this project. These were written by Armando Barrientos and Leonith Hinojosa-Valencia (Latin America), Stephen Devereux and Rachel Cipryk (Africa), Sarah Cook (East and south east Asia) and Naila Kabeer (South Asia). We are also grateful for excellent research assistance and support to this project from Peroline Ainsworth, Rachel Cipryk and Linnet Taylor.

Contact for correspondence: S.Cook@ids.ac.uk

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Defining the field: The evolution of approaches
 - What do we mean by social protection?*
 - Why has social protection emerged as a prominent policy approach?*
 - Two paths to social protection*
3. Social protection discourses within the policy and research community
 - Evolving discourses of social protection within the policy domain*
 - Alternative conceptualisations: Research-policy interactions*
4. Regional variation in social protection approaches and programmes
 - Regional variation in poverty and vulnerability*
 - Regional approaches to social protection*
5. Critical gaps and neglected issues
 - The politics of social protection*
 - Finance, resource mobilisation and equity*
 - Institutional arrangements for social protection*
 - Towards a citizen-centred approach to social protection*
6. Conclusions: Implications for the Ford Foundation

Box 1: Definitions of social protection: International Agencies

Figure 1: A generative model of social protection

1 Introduction

'The most widespread demand of people today is for security. In a world characterised by continual and increasing change, anxiety and uncertainty have grown. Globalisation has created extraordinary new opportunities, which have been a major driving force behind recent growth in the world economy. But the inequalities of opportunity have been just as extraordinary, both within and between countries' (ILO World Labour Report 2000, p. v).

'Globalisation of trade in goods, services and factors of production has the world community poised to reap the fruits of global comparative advantages.The other side of the coin, however, reveals that the exact same processes that increase the opportunity for welfare improvements also increase the variability of the outcome for society as a whole and even more so for specific groups...' (Holzmann and Jorgensen, 1999, p. 1007).

Social protection has gained prominence in the lexicon of development concepts and approaches over the past decade. Its emergence is in large measure a response to the failure of development policies in the previous two decades to reduce poverty and enhance human capabilities in a rapidly changing global context. Eliminating poverty remains a core objective of development policy makers and practitioners; but the new realities of rapid economic, social and environmental change, bringing with them intensified forms of risk and vulnerability and more entrenched inequalities and exclusions, have left millions of people worldwide exposed to livelihood insecurity.

This paper provides an overview of the current field of social protection, with the intention of highlighting innovative approaches to addressing many of these obstacles to development. We review the evolution of various approaches to social protection adopted by national governments and international development agencies, and interpret these in the light of the realities of poverty, vulnerability and insecurity across these varied regional and country contexts. We draw on a set of background studies on Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia, and selected OECD countries. These papers examine local sources of vulnerability, poverty and exclusion, the varying ways in which people meet their need for security, and the instruments developed by government, communities, NGOs and donors to reduce vulnerability and promote sustainable development outcomes. Social protection has evolved, and will continue to evolve, differently across these regions, reflecting the underlying sources of vulnerability, differences in historical experience and the contemporary political economy. At the same time, we suggest that there is the beginning of a consensus around the purpose and directions of social protection within development policy and practice, and evidence of some convergence in instruments and their implementation.

Through these studies we attempt to illuminate a set of questions that will be central to the resolution of core issues including the scale, sustainability and financing of comprehensive social protection initiatives. These questions include:

- *What has proven effective in different contexts?* Can we explain and draw lessons from what has worked – both the high profile ‘success stories’ and the local innovations?
- *How can challenges for the scaling up and sustainability of social protection programmes be met?* What forms of provisioning, delivered through what mechanisms, can ensure comprehensive, predictable and reliable coverage?
- *What are the barriers to the extension of social protection coverage?* How can institutional, financing or other obstacles to extension be overcome? What can we learn from existing programmes about governance, institutional capacity, resource mobilisation and citizen engagement for social protection in different contexts?

The paper concludes with a discussion of the scope for work by the Ford Foundation in the field of social protection. An underlying narrative of this paper is that effective social protection interventions must attempt to address the underlying structural inequalities which give rise to vulnerability, insecurity and social exclusion in a given context. This perspective contrasts with the dominant discourse and practice in the field, rooted in an analysis of risk. In this latter view, social protection

principally involves *ex ante* or *ex post* responses to specific ‘shocks’, but largely ignores the underlying sources of vulnerability, including chronic poverty and social exclusion. The work of the Ford Foundation in areas of asset-building, rights and governance more closely resonates with our broader view of social protection, one that moves beyond risk management and safety nets, that can generate a wider set of impacts that are supportive of productive or developmental trajectories out of poverty, and that can be potentially transformative in strengthening citizenship rights and claims to security.

2. Defining the field: the evolution of approaches

Social protection now features centrally in the agendas of most international agencies although it has long featured in some form in most national government development strategies. It has received increasing attention in the past decade in response to new insecurities generated by globalisation: consensus may now be growing around elements of a definition, and some convergence is found in types of programmes and instruments. Nonetheless, considerable variation remains in the approaches to achieving greater security for poor people, in how programmes are designed and implemented across different contexts, and in the philosophy underlying different approaches. As various definitions and their conceptual underpinnings become more sharply delineated, it is increasingly possible to provide critical analysis of approaches, how they are operationalised, their success in addressing existing problems, and their potential to provide sustainable and comprehensive security to vulnerable populations.

What do we mean by social protection?

The terminology of ‘social protection’ is used in a number of different ways in the development literature, which in turn differ from its origins in the early industrialised welfare states of Europe. As the report to the Ford Foundation by NASI pointed out, ‘social protection has often been used as the large umbrella under which many different socio-economic policies are placed’ including social security, social insurance, health care, child protection etc. (NASI, 2008:8). Another strand has viewed social protection more narrowly as excluding social services, while others place the emphasis on those social transfer programmes that target groups falling outside the coverage of formal labour-market based social security programmes.

The common thread linking current thinking on social protection in the development field is a focus on risk and vulnerability, and specifically the vulnerabilities of the poor, or of falling into poverty. While poverty analysis has conventionally examined the state of deprivation at a particular point in time, the problem facing the poor is also one of fluctuations in their ability to meet basic needs. As an influential World Bank report on poverty (2000) put it:

‘As traditionally defined and measured, poverty is a static concept – a snapshot in time. But insecurity and vulnerability are dynamic – they describe the response to changes over time. Insecurity is exposure to risk; vulnerability, the resulting possibility of a decline in well-being’ (p. 139).

Social protection is a response to this more dynamic understanding of poverty and the attendant problems of risk and vulnerability.

As a broad framework of analysis, it refers to the full range of interventions undertaken by public, private and voluntary organizations and informal networks to support individuals, households and communities in their efforts to prevent, manage and overcome risks and vulnerabilities (Shepherd et al., 2004). A narrower definition limits the scope to *public actions* ‘taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society’ (Conway et al., 2000). This confines social protection to public policy approaches and instruments with the objective of providing socio-economic security to people who are poor or at risk of becoming poor. The private and informal strategies that poor individuals, households and communities pursue are of course fundamental to their livelihoods. However, they may reproduce the social inequalities of the wider context and hence the dependent status of poor people; they may not be resilient to frequent shocks, and they are usually severely strained in contexts of generalised crisis. Public action may need to support these strategies in some contexts, but provide alternatives in others.

Either way, a detailed examination of these coping strategies is outside the purview of this paper which is concerned principally with the public policy dimensions of social protection.

As a set of instruments, there is not much that is necessarily new about social protection. It broadly encompasses the following sets of programmes recognisable in countries across the world for over a century:

- *social insurance programmes* usually for those in public sector or formal private employment and including pensions, unemployment benefits, possibly health care and disability. These have traditionally made up the social security agenda associated with formal employment.
- *social assistance programmes* including various cash or in-kind transfer programmes, often providing minimal assistance to targeted groups, usually those unable to work, the destitute, or those with specific disabilities. These have generally attained only limited coverage and are often viewed negatively as welfare handouts.
- *other programmes* represent efforts to expand coverage beyond formal workers, to those on low incomes but not falling into the categories targeted for social assistance. Such programmes have often been closely linked to poverty reduction initiatives: they encompass the range of public works and income-generating programs through which many poorer countries have sought to reduce poverty.

This set of instruments has been part of the development agenda for several decades, well before the concept of social protection became a generally accepted part of development terminology. Largely evolving from programmes introduced in Europe, significant variation has emerged in the specific details of their design, financing and implementation, reflecting local contextual and political-economy conditions.

As a policy *approach* in the field of development, however, social protection is relatively new. It reflects attempts to integrate concerns with social security and poverty reduction within a unified conceptual and policy framework in response to the perceived increase in the vulnerability of populations across the world (Kabeer, 2008:5). The significance of this effort, and the potential it offers for new solutions, can be seen by analysing why and how this evolution has taken place.

Why has social protection emerged as a prominent policy approach?

Viewed in the light of global economic development since the 1980s, various factors have contributed to the rise in social protection up the policy agenda of national governments and international development organisations. Debt and financial crises, economic downturn and recession, had affected most parts of the world even before the current global crisis. The consequences of neo-liberal policy prescriptions, which promoted market liberalisation and a reduced role for the state during an intensified period of global integration, have exposed poor countries and their populations to volatility in prices and markets, while reducing the mechanisms at their disposal to smooth consumption and protect basic welfare and also undermining earlier investments in human development. By the 1990s, the impacts of a 'lost decade' of development, severe slow-down or even reversals in poverty reduction, combined with the growing costs of environmental stress, conflict and the impact of HIV-AIDS, all served to emphasise the failure of existing approaches and the urgency of finding new ones that worked.

Several key factors can be highlighted as contributing to heightened risk and vulnerability while also reducing the resilience or capacity of states, communities or households to cope. The process of market liberalisation and integration into the global economy, while bringing significant benefits to many, also intensifies exposure to risk. The recent volatility of food and fuel prices is a case in point, leading to crises for many food and oil importing countries and purchasing households. More fundamentally, the changing relationship between capital and labour, with pressure on labour to become more 'flexible', competitive and mobile, represents a shift from the development trajectory anticipated in earlier decades: formal employment with social security coverage is no longer the expected outcome of 'development'. Even the most advanced economies have seen their labour markets become more flexible, a rise in informality, and a weakening of social protections.

The neo-liberal policy agenda of stabilisation and structural adjustment pursued in response to crises during the 1980s and 1990s imposed huge costs in terms of long-term lost development. The required cut backs in ‘consumption’ or social spending across Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia undid earlier human development gains from growth and social investment. Institutions needed to protect the poor or vulnerable were dismantled or weakened as the state’s role was scaled back to minimal regulatory functions. Once the human costs of these policy responses to crisis became undeniable, short-term safety nets were introduced as palliative measures in a context of weak state administrative or fiscal capacity. These inevitably proved grossly insufficient to deal with the nature and frequency of crises in a more risky global environment.

Even in wealthier states, and those less exposed to crisis, the forces of market liberalisation and global competition created pressures for dismantling welfare provisions and reducing the welfare burden on public budgets, leading to increasing privatisation of pensions and health care. Transitional economies, reeling from collapse, or faced with the need for radical restructuring of state-led systems, also saw formal provisions undermined. The need to find alternative mechanisms to smooth transition and protect people’s livelihoods in the short term, and provide longer term security, again called for new approaches to expand basic social protections.

The Asia crisis of 1998-1999 was a watershed for safety net and other residual *ex post* crisis response measures. It hit precisely those countries which had been held up by pro-market policy makers as exemplifying the success of outward-oriented market-led growth. The nature of the crisis exposed the weakness of this model. The dearth of mechanisms put in place to protect the vulnerable, despite a decade of unprecedented growth, revealed the necessity of state-sponsored institutional arrangements which could effectively address the downside of rapid growth. In 1998, as in 2008, many of those most directly affected by financial crisis and other manifestations of a volatile global economy did not start from positions of chronic poverty: their vulnerability was a product of the new and intensified nature of risks generated by globalisation and the strains placed on pre-existing institutions and social networks by the spread of market relations. Some of this group may have been perceived as the ‘winners’ of globalisation in an earlier period of growth but were rapidly transformed into losers when the crisis hit their economy. The quotations opening this paper illustrate graphically the double-edged nature of the current phase of globalisation. The new social protection discourse has thus emerged in the context of globalisation and crisis, a recognition – belatedly – of the need for alternative institutional arrangements which protect both those in poverty and those without the resources or resilience to protect themselves against frequent livelihood shocks.

Two paths to social protection

Two trajectories for the emergence of social protection in its current form can be traced: one path leads through the reduction of security in welfare states and (at least for some elite groups) in formerly planned economies, in the face of liberalisation, global competition and fiscal pressures, accompanied by efforts to provide assistance to previously excluded groups. A second is through efforts to patch up and expand limited safety net coverage in low income countries with large numbers of poor people battered by repeated crisis, and in some cases emerging from, or still beset by, conflict.

Early debates on social protection emerged as part of the social security discourse, seen both in the recognition of a ‘right to social security’ in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the early work of the ILO (D’Andrea, 2006:1). Western European economies had expanded formal social security provisions in the early 20th century in response to pressure from unions, progressive intellectuals and politicians, for both economic and political reasons. Once poverty levels started falling and basic consumption needs were met, efforts were turned to broader social policy interventions, including pensions, housing, health care and education, thus establishing the basis of the European welfare states. In some other countries including the US, less generous systems developed with a stronger focus on residual, social assistance provisions.

All these systems have to some degree reduced welfare expenditures and shifted towards less generous systems since the 1980s. Strategies have involved more stringent restrictions on access to benefits; ‘work-fare’ type programmes in the event of unemployment; the privatisation of pension funds - placing a greater burden on and shifting financial risk back to employees; and new ways to

manage burgeoning health care costs. In the context of greater labour market flexibility and consequent job insecurity for many, welfare cuts potentially expose low income workers to greater risk. These processes have also motivated the search for alternative interventions, from community-based initiatives, to innovative savings schemes (such as child savings accounts), which could fall within a new array of 'social protection' instruments crossing the borders of the developed and developing worlds.

While northern welfare states saw their more generous provisions being eroded, the formerly planned economies underwent a drastic transformation as the institutional structures of provision collapsed, ending generous benefits to their state-employed workforce. New systems were needed which could provide more limited protections to expanding numbers of newly poor and vulnerable. Countries that managed the transition gradually were faced with the dual challenge of dismantling the generous provisions to some workers, while reconstituting basic mechanisms of protection to still poor populations faced with unpredictable income fluctuations associated with market liberalisation.

The second path to social protection, taken by lower income countries, has largely focused on expanding minimal and patchy provision in situations of resource scarcity, weak institutional capacity and often limited political support. While many of these countries had imitated the social security systems of more advanced countries in the middle decades of the 20th century, the predominance and persistence of subsistence agriculture and informal employment meant that coverage remained minimal. Those countries with more extensive formal systems (as in parts of Latin America) saw provisions reduced while even in countries experiencing rapid growth (as in Asia during the 1990s) policies of social protection, investment or assistance remained marginal to market-dominated development policy debates.

The financial and economic crises in East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Russia made clear that economic liberalization in an era of intensified global competition was bringing in its wake new forms of insecurity and deepening inequalities alongside the persistence of chronic poverty. The market could clearly no longer be regarded as offering solutions, but was instead recognised as part of the problem. Safety nets could not address the scale of insecurity and the accompanying upsurges in poverty experienced in these countries. The state needed to re-engage in the social arena, playing a more active role in shaping markets, redistributing gains from growth and ensuring adequate investments in the human capital and welfare of the poor. Institutions were needed that would protect populations against contingencies. These crises brought home the need to put such mechanisms in place before a crisis rather than as an *ex post* response. Social safety nets were to be not merely the temporary measure originally envisaged but a more permanent feature of social policy. New mechanisms were explored and expanded, requiring also a new rubric that distinguished them from the failed safety net measures, as well as from generous and thus unaffordable 'social security' provisions and poverty reduction interventions. Social protection thus emerged against a background of economic crisis, structural adjustment and globalisation essentially as a new agenda for social policy in developing countries (Barrientos and Hulme, 2008:3)

3. Social protection discourses within the policy and research community

The social protection approaches and programmes that have emerged, particularly in developing countries, in recent years owe a great deal to specific international organisations which have a major influence both at the level of policy discourse and on programme design and implementation. Some of these institutional actors and their approaches to social protection are described in this section. The World Bank and the ILO have probably been the lead organisations in this field but other organisations have also included a concern with social protection among their activities. Parallel to these developments within the policy domain have been various contributions from the academic community which have been influenced by, as well as sought to influence, the evolving policy discourse.

Evolving discourses of social protection within the policy domain

Box 1: Definitions of social protection: international agencies

The World Bank

Social Protection consists of public interventions to assist individuals, households and communities in better managing income risks. The objectives of these interventions are a subset of overall development objectives of economically sustainable participatory development with poverty reduction.

Source: Holzmann and Jorgensen, 1999

International Labor Organization (ILO)

Social protection is defined by the ILO as the set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress that would be caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies; the provision of health care; and the provision of benefits for families with children.

Source: Bonilla Garcia and Gruat, 2003

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Social protection is defined as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.

Source: Ortiz, 2001

The Department for International Development (DFID)

Social protection can be broadly defined – carried out by the state or privately – that a) enable people to deal more effectively with their risk and vulnerability to crises and changes in circumstances (such as unemployment or old age); and b) help tackle extreme and chronic poverty. However, too wide a definition can make it difficult to distinguish social protection from development policy more broadly....For this reason, DFID takes a narrower definition of social protection that focuses on a sub-set of public actions that help address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty.

Source: DFID, 2006

USAID

Public interventions that seek to enable poor and vulnerable households to increase their ability to manage risk thereby allowing them to contribute to, participate in and benefit from economic growth.

Source: USAID, 2008

The initial efforts of the World Bank in the field of social protection were largely focused on the provision of 'residual' safety nets: these were seen as temporary measures to assist those adversely affected by structural adjustment measures. It was anticipated that rising rates of economic growth attendant on the freeing up of market forces would create financial markets capable of providing insurance against risk. As it became clear that the transitions involved were likely to be more extended than originally anticipated, and there was little evidence of emerging markets in private insurance in most developing countries, safety nets began to take on a more long-term character. The East Asian crisis provided a major impetus to the shift from a narrow safety net approach to a broader concern with social protection. A Social Protection Unit was set up in the World Bank and played an important role in integrating risk and vulnerability concerns in the WDR 2000/01 on Poverty as well as in developing the Social Risk Management (SRM) framework which provided the conceptual underpinning for its approach.

The SRM framework expands the concept of social protection beyond compensatory safety net programs to include interventions that focus on managing risk before shocks occur through reduction, mitigation and insurance mechanisms. The main elements of the framework were:

- Risk reduction: *ex ante* measures to increase expected incomes or reduce variation. These typically focus on reducing risks in the labour market through unemployment insurance or active labour market policies.
- Risk mitigation: *ex ante* measures to deal with anticipated shock, e.g. through diversification of assets and livelihoods or formal and informal insurance mechanisms
- Risk coping: *ex post* mechanisms such as borrowing, transfers and public works.

The SRM framework broadened the scope for public intervention beyond the crisis-coping functions envisaged in the earlier safety net approach towards a ‘springboard’ approach viz, enabling poor people to undertake activities with higher returns with less concern about risks (World Bank, 2001). It also recognised the greater effectiveness of *ex ante* measures that were in place before a crisis compared with those that were hurriedly put in place in the aftermath of crisis. This paved the way for a more institutional approach to social protection.

However, the SRM framework continued to downplay the role of the state, prioritising private solutions through markets, NGOs and informal safety nets over public ones. It was only if private solutions failed or failed to emerge that a role was envisaged for the state. Furthermore, while mention is made of the qualitative, non-income aspects of social protection, including social inclusiveness and solidarity, the SRM framework envisages that these will be achieved as ‘positive externalities’ which will result from well-designed social protection schemes rather than being an explicit feature of these schemes.

The ILO has traditionally been the UN agency responsible for setting norms and standards at work, including those relating to social security. ILO convention 102 (1952) spelt out measures relating to a number of predetermined risks, including ill health, old age, unemployment and occupational health and safety. However, its tripartite structure meant that, as far as developing countries were concerned, only formal sector workers, who generally constituted a small minority of the total work force, were represented at the table. Its efforts to propagate formal social insurance systems further excluded workers in the informal economy who were too dispersed and earned on too irregular a basis to contribute to these systems. The main challenge posed by globalisation for the ILO has been to broaden its mandate to workers in the informal economy. This change began in the mid-1990s and gave rise to more inclusive view of social security, which it frames as a basic human right, viewing it through the lens of employment and the right to ‘decent work’.¹ Currently, three sets of strategies make up the rubric of social protection at the ILO: extending formal society security to the 80 per cent of the world’s population who are not currently covered, promoting decent conditions of work, and dedicated programmes for specific groups such as migrants, workers in the informal economy and people affected by HIV-AIDS.

The early definition of social protection put forward by the Asian Development Bank was formulated in 2001 in the aftermath of the East Asian crisis and at a time when the ADB was attempting to include poverty reduction as an overarching goal. It covered a broad set of instruments including: (i) labour market policies and programmes to facilitate employment and efficient operation of markets; (ii) social insurance to cushion risks; (iii) social assistance and welfare support to the most vulnerable; (iv) micro and area-based schemes to address risk and vulnerability at the community level and (v) child protection to ensure the healthy and productive development of the future work force. However, a recent attempt to develop a social protection index, based on public expenditure estimates, led to a much narrower definition of social protection as:

¹ The ‘decent work’ agenda incorporates social protection together with rights at work, employment and social dialogue. ILO Website, <http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/decentwork/lang-en/index.htm>

The set of policies and programs that enable vulnerable groups to prevent, reduce and /or cope with risks, AND that:

- are targeted at vulnerable groups;*
- involve cash or in kind transfers; and*
- do not fall under activities usually associated with other sectors such as rural development, basic infrastructure, health and education. (ADB 2007)*

A number of bilateral development agencies also support social protection initiatives. DFID has been one of the leaders in this field. It started by commissioning the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to produce a series of papers conceptualising different aspects of social protection, including a rights-based approach. The approach it subsequently adopted, cited in Box 1, is likely to have been influenced by the discussions generated by these papers. DFID prioritises three sets of instruments: social insurance, social assistance and the setting and enforcement of minimum standards to protect citizens within the workplace. In practice, DFID's bilateral aid focuses largely on social transfers particularly in Africa, with funding and assistance to programmes that provide livelihood support and productivity-enhancing safety nets.

In 2007 USAID commissioned a document on the approaches to social protection taken by major donors to act as a 'reference document' for its Poverty Analysis and Social Safety Net Team who would be working with other donors on this issue (Gross, 2007). The definition in Box 1 comes from their call for proposals in early 2008 seeking research into the linkages between social protection and economic growth but also paying attention to additional linkages with social development and good governance.

It will be evident from this discussion of approaches to social protection subscribed to by various multilateral and bilateral donors that there is considerable overlap. However, there are also important divergences which are not immediately evident from the definitions. They are summarised in Voipio's presentation of the different approaches to social protection by donor country representatives within the OECD-DAC's POVNET group (Voipio, 2007). He distinguishes between the 'Nordic risk management framework' and the 'World Bank risk management framework'. Both frameworks share a common concern with policies to support the particularly vulnerable (disabled, elderly, child labourers), with safety nets to help people cope with crisis, social insurance to help households insure against risk, and beyond these, economic policies which contribute to people's capacity to manage risk and strengthen livelihoods (e.g. small and medium enterprise development, industrial policies, productivity enhancement). What distinguishes the approaches is the inclusion in the Nordic risk management framework of a concern with basic social security for all as a human right as per Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (p. 54). This element is missing from the World Bank's approach. While Voipio initially explains this difference as reflecting 'the more econometric way of thinking' and a 'the more social approach' (p. 47), he also accepts that it represents an ideological difference (p. 54).

Alternative conceptualisations: research-policy interactions

As the range of definitions of social protection presented above suggest, significant variation in objectives and design of social protection interventions persists. These reflect underlying philosophical differences in approaches illustrated by the varied focus on risks, needs and rights (Munro, 2008). It is not surprising that the World Bank's Social Risk Management Framework dominates a great deal of the international policy discourse in this field, given the influence the Bank is able to exercise by virtue of the resources at its disposal and its position as the 'knowledge bank' of the world. As Kabeer writes: 'The framework is theoretically rooted in a neo-classical economic analysis of the behaviour of individuals and households seeking to maximize their welfare in environments which are characterized by imperfect information and diverse forms of risk ... Welfare is proxied in this framework by flows of income or consumption and includes money, in-kind and imputed income as well as social services which cannot be easily purchased on the market. The risks in question are manifested in adverse events or 'shocks' which create downward pressures or fluctuations in these flows. Within this conceptual framework, markets are seen as the first-best solution to the management of risk. In a world of perfect markets and information, most shocks could

potentially be addressed through market-based solutions. In keeping with this philosophy, the Bank has promoted a greater reliance on private solutions in countries where there are reasonably well-functioning markets' (Kabeer, 2008: p8).

However, recognition of widespread market failures in many developing countries, and the strain placed on informal safety nets by the incidence of co-variant risk provides a rationale within the Bank's framework for a limited role for 'public interventions to assist individuals, households and communities in better managing income risk', with the proviso that private solutions should not be 'crowded out' (Holzmann and Jorgensen, 1999, p. 1008). While the policy agenda emanating from the social risk management framework (described above) is far more comprehensive than the early safety net agenda, a number of criticisms have been levelled at it. Barrientos and Shepherd (2003) argue that the focus on risk and vulnerability may lead to the exclusion of those who are locked into chronic forms of poverty: 'Although risk and vulnerability are key factors in explaining the descent into poverty, it is not clear....how important they are in maintaining people in poverty, transmitting poverty from one generation to the next, and in preventing the interruption of poverty' (p.7). They point out that there are structural reasons 'relating to social, political and economic structures and relationships, and processes of exclusion and adverse incorporation' (Barrientos and Shepherd, 2003), which prevent many poor people from benefiting from market opportunities and policies. The influence of this criticism is evident in the definition put forward by DFID.

Similarly, Kabeer (2004) points out that not all forms of vulnerability can be reduced to episodic shocks or assessed in terms of fluctuations in income or consumption flows. Social relationships can give rise to forms of inequality in which some groups are positioned as subordinate to others through processes of economic exploitation, social exclusion and political marginalisation. The lives, livelihoods and life chances of these subordinate groups are characterised by pervasive uncertainty along with greater exposure to particular categories of shocks. The only option for people in such contexts is to bind themselves in patron-client relationships with those more powerful than themselves and to offer their labour and loyalty in return for a modicum of security. These are endemic forms of vulnerability not easily accommodated within the language of risk. They reflect endemic insecurity.

These kinds of critique have given rise to alternative ways of thinking about social protection within the research community which have in turn influenced thinking within the agencies. IFPRI, one of the leading groups undertaking systematic evaluations of large cash transfer and other new social assistance programmes, and which has a strong but by no means exclusive focus on Africa, views social protection in the following way:

'a newer term that incorporates safety net programs but also includes a role for renewed state involvement, emphasizes a longer-term developmental approach, includes social assistance and social insurance, and is often advocated as a right rather than a reactive form of relief. Social protection policy addresses not only programs aimed at reducing the impact of shocks and coping with their aftermath, but also interventions designed to prevent shocks and destitution in the first place.' (Adato et al., 2004).

Researchers at IDS have also sought to take a broader development-oriented approach to social protection. The early publication for the Ford Foundation by Cook, Kabeer and Suwannarat (2003) elaborated on the developmental impacts of some of the safety net programmes in existence in the Asian context and on the potential for social protection to be viewed as investment in human or other forms of capital rather than merely (as in the dominant view) as consumption or welfare. In addition, they noted the makings of a rights-based approach in the interactions between state and civil society around entitlements to social protection, in the impetus that such entitlements provided to social mobilisation and in their potential for addressing social exclusions around, for instance, caste and gender. Such concerns shift the focus from risk 'as an exogenously given factor to be managed' to vulnerability as 'emerging from and embedded in the socio-political context' (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2008).

Moving from conceptualisations about the goals and objectives of social protection to evaluations of recent programmatic innovations strengthen the case for this broader view of social protection. Such evaluations provide evidence of a wide variety of impacts that include, but go beyond, enable poor people to cope with crisis. Depending on the design of social protection interventions, they have been

found to help vulnerable groups cope with, and recover from, crisis; promoted investments in children's human capital and capabilities; increased the productivity of household livelihood efforts; contributed to a sense of inclusion and citizenship; mobilised the poor around entitlement claims; and led to economic impacts in the local economy (Kabeer, 2008; Barrientos and Scott, 2008). Together this evidence give rise to the possibilities of social protection as 'generative' of impacts that contribute to wider development goals. As Kabeer argues, in place of the language of 'springboards' with its connotations of sudden leaps out of poverty, social protection interventions can be conceptualised as 'seedbeds' of social change, designed with these broader socio-economic impacts in mind (Kabeer, 2007). These impacts may relate to the wellbeing and prosperity of individuals and households or they may be transformative in nature, with the potential to overcome structural barriers and power imbalances in a society which encourage, create and sustain longer term vulnerabilities and exclusion (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004, p. 9). Such thinking has strong overlaps with the Ford Foundation's social justice agenda.

4. Regional variation in social protection approaches and programmes²

The above discussions point to the variations in approach and emphasis found among development organisations, rooted in differing philosophical approaches. Similarly, at a regional level, we can identify both similarities and distinctive trajectories in the development of social protection programmes. As Devereux notes in the case of Africa, several countries have social protection strategies, plans or policies, or have integrated the concept explicitly into national strategies, using definitions close to those found in the literature. In other cases, as in much of Asia, social protection type programmes are identifiable but the terminology of social protection has been slower to take hold, although in some cases (such as China) it is gradually being incorporated alongside assistance, relief and welfare. One important explanation for such variation may lie in the role that international organisations and donors play in different regions, with their most significant influence being over Africa's development process. Other explanations are rooted in country specific vulnerabilities; the historical trajectory of welfare development, and the political economy of each region. Factors such as the nature of economic development and rates of poverty; exposure to or dependence on global markets, particularly for essential items such as food and fuel; state fiscal capacity or aid dependence; political systems and quality of governance, and the degree of political mobilisation and citizen action around social issues may all play a role in determining outcomes.

The starting point for analysis is the diversity in levels of economic and social development among regions, as well as variation in political regimes. These contrasts, as much as widely (though not universally) shared experiences – from rapid but unequal growth in Asia to the scourge of HIV-Aids in Africa – shape the needs, challenges and provisions of social protection within and between regions, and the range of responses that emerge in different political, social and cultural contexts. This in turn creates variation in the institutional configuration of welfare systems by country and region.

To better understand this geographic variation and its implications for social protection, the background papers explore in detail the sources and patterns of poverty and vulnerability in their respective regions, and the range of individual, community and policy responses. The papers loosely follow a life-course analysis identifying needs and responses to age- and gender-related vulnerabilities and between working and non-working populations. This approach helps to highlight the vulnerabilities associated with different population groups such as migrants or informal workers, or relating to specific problems such as HIV-AIDS. Here we summarise some of the key findings from the regional papers, focusing first on patterns of poverty and vulnerability, and second on responses and approaches to social protection.

Regional variation in poverty and vulnerability

The general trend of increasing inequality and vulnerability in the context of liberalisation and globalisation noted earlier has been widely shared. Most countries have seen some increase in poverty in the context of crisis, often exacerbated by policy responses; others have seen a persistence of

² This section is based on the regional review papers by Barrientos and Hinojosa-Valencia (Latin America), Cook (East and South East Asia), Devereux and Cipryk (Africa) and Kabeer (South Asia).

chronic poverty despite growth. Between and within countries inequalities among population groups also remain entrenched or have deepened.

Latin American countries, as described by Barrientos and Hinojosa-Valencia, witnessed a marked increase in poverty and vulnerability following crises and structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s. Headcount poverty increased from 40.5 per cent in 1980 to 48.3 per cent in 1990. By 2005 it had only just returned to below the 1980 level, highlighting the costs of the 'lost decade' and the persistence of poverty into the recovery period. Currently two fifths of Latin America's population is in poverty, and one sixth in extreme poverty. These trends highlight the costs of not having adequate social protection mechanisms in place prior to a crisis to protect those affected, a finding that was equally apparent in Asia following the crisis of 1998. Vulnerability to poverty is however a much harder concept than poverty to measure. Using the absence of social insurance as an indicator, Barrientos and Hinojosa-Valencia show that the share of dependent workers not covered by social insurance – primarily informal workers – is rising in Latin America, a trend that is widely shared globally. These are the majority of workers in most low income countries, and a rising share of the work force in many transitional and emerging economies: lack of protection for these vulnerable workers is thus a growing policy issue. Across the life-course, indications of vulnerability are suggested both by an increase in child poverty during the 1990s, possibly linked to high levels of inequality and late demographic transition; and the rise of old-age poverty as a significant issue.

Latin America demonstrates patterns of poverty and vulnerability also evident in other regions: the most extreme poverty tends to be concentrated in remote rural areas and among indigenous peoples. On a regional level, central America and the Andes have higher shares of rural and urban poverty; within countries, highland and rainforest areas have less economic opportunity and higher concentrations of the poor. These patterns are mirrored within large countries or sub-regions, including China, India and the Mekong sub-region, where the poorest, often from minority ethnic groups, reside in remote, environmentally fragile regions, with limited infrastructure or access to markets (Cook). Given the greater mobility of people from such rural or disadvantaged regions seeking opportunities in cities, it is increasingly difficult to identify separately the rural and urban poor, or those vulnerable to poverty, further exacerbating the difficulties of reaching them efficiently through social protection interventions.

Africa is the region with the highest share of its population in poverty or vulnerable to being poor: fifty per cent of the population lives on less than \$1.25 a day. The key challenges which shape people's vulnerability, discussed by Devereux and Cipryk, are somewhat distinct from the other regions covered, although they are shared by some countries particularly within south and south east Asia. These are food insecurity, HIV-AIDS and conflict. According to Devereux and Cipryk, since 1970 the region has seen a massive increase in the absolute numbers of malnourished people: from 88 million to 200 million in 2000. The under-nutrition prevalence rate is thirty per cent – more than double the global rate. This has been further exacerbated by global food price rises: in 2007 the prevalence of under-nourishment increased following fifteen years of decline. Millions remain vulnerable to famine and several countries require on-going emergency relief. Much of the population is dependent on smallholder agriculture which offers insecure livelihoods, and is increasingly affected by environmental and climate change risks. Africa is also the region worst affected by HIV-AIDS: the continent is home to 67 per cent of the global population living with HIV, and registered 72 per cent of the world's AIDS deaths in 2007. An estimated five per cent of adults are HIV positive. Conflict affects several parts of the continent, disrupting economic activity, livelihoods and the provision of public services, as well as creating problems of displacement and the loss of livelihoods for millions of people.

These insecurities interact and affect people across stages of the life-cycle. Child mortality rates remain extremely high (160 per thousand in 2006); school age children are increasingly affected by HIV-AIDS, with growing numbers of AIDS orphans. Adolescents in conflict areas are at risk of being recruited into militias; older people are increasingly responsible for orphaned grand-children, with little if any financial or other support. These conditions both increase the need for, but complicate the provision and affordability of, long term predictable and stable social protection mechanisms.

The largest absolute numbers of poor people are found in South Asia. As Kabeer describes, despite experiencing the high growth rates seen across much of Asia, South Asia has persistently high rates of chronic poverty: an estimated 12 per cent of the population, or 400 million people, are chronically poor making up almost half of the world total. In addition to the new forms of inequality emerging in the context of rapid growth and globalisation, the region has deeply-entrenched horizontal inequalities along lines of caste, gender, ethnicity, language and religion, giving rise to extreme forms of exclusion and, in some cases, conflict. Vulnerability for the poor is exacerbated by the concentration of natural disasters which recur across the region - including earthquakes, floods and cyclones, drought and other environmental stresses. Most of the region is experiencing a late demographic transition; populations are still young, but in terms of absolute numbers there are also growing populations of elderly, particularly in India and Bangladesh. Kabeer also highlights a less well-documented aspect of vulnerability in South Asia arising from conflicts of various kinds: these include the well-publicized guerrilla warfare that has characterised the recent history of Sri Lanka and Nepal and outbreaks of hostility between India and Pakistan, as well as intermittent civil conflicts, often revolving around the horizontal inequalities of religion, language, caste and ethnicity, that provide a less visible backdrop to life in the subcontinent.

In east and south east Asia, discussed by Cook, following the severe setback of the 1998 Asian crisis, most developing and transitional economies have experienced rapid growth; however, the nature of this growth in highly exported-dependent economies has generated greater inequality and associated vulnerability, particularly for those informally employed in export-dependent sectors. As in other parts of the world, extreme poverty in the region remains concentrated among rural populations, often ethnic minority groups, in interior, mountainous or otherwise fragile environments such as western China and the Mekong region. In these areas, problems of isolation and under-development have been exacerbated by the legacy of conflict. These populations – and particularly the women and children within them – tend to be exposed to further vulnerability in the form of trafficking, drugs and HIV-AIDS.

Countries across the region are at different stages of structural and demographic transitions which creates variation in the pattern of poverty and vulnerability and appropriate social protection responses. China and Vietnam are seeing rapid mobility of labour out of agriculture; migrants have few rights or access to social protection in these countries, while rapid urbanisation creates other problems of livelihood security. The poorest countries in the region (such as Laos and Cambodia) are still in a phase of high fertility, with rapidly growing, young populations and associated child poverty and vulnerability; others already have rapidly aging populations while still struggling to address problems of providing education and employment for a growing workforce. The burden of caring for both children and the elderly in the absence of adequate social protections falls heavily on current workers in these societies, largely informal and unprotected, and particularly on women. Furthermore, most countries in the region have undeveloped health systems or systems where high costs make access prohibitive for the poor. Ill-health has thus become a major cause of poverty, whether through its direct impacts on ability to work, or through catastrophic expenditures.

Overall, the picture of vulnerability and poverty which emerges across these countries and regions suggests the complexity of developing interventions that can provide adequate protections to large numbers of people in varied states of vulnerability to different kinds of shocks. The dominant risk management approach described earlier attempts to identify the risks or external shocks to livelihoods – ill-health, loss of employment, natural disaster or economic crisis – and put in place mechanisms to reduce the risk if possible, or to insure against its impacts preferably through the market. The discussion here illustrates that vulnerability to shocks is often intertwined with the location, social identity and political powerlessness of marginalised populations; many of these groups are without the means to participate in market-based mechanisms; and in many cases the market clearly fails to provide. Informal social support networks among poor communities are themselves weak, and lack resilience to cope with repeated shocks or with the chronic effects of, for example, disability, HIV-AIDS or conflict.

Regional approaches to social protection

Out of these different contexts and analyses of needs, each region has started to develop new forms of welfare provision based on their own history and political economy. New approaches are clearly emerging out of the widely shared experiences of crisis and recovery, and the failure or collapse of earlier models. New approaches are heavily influenced by the international development community, but increasingly also innovations are emerging locally, lessons are being shared across countries and regions, and some convergence in instruments and mechanisms can be seen.

As described earlier, most systems of social protection in the world had their underpinnings in the European welfare model, whether through the legacy of colonialism or the role of organisations such as the ILO. In the case of Latin America, the system was initially modelled on Mediterranean countries and influenced by the ILO. ‘Pioneer’ countries developed systems as early as the 1920s, followed by subsequent waves of ‘intermediate’ countries (1940s) and late-comers (1950s/60s). By the 1960s most countries in the region had recognisable systems with social insurance covering workers in formal employment and residual social assistance, generally in the form of ‘maternalistic’ family and in-kind benefits. Social protection was truncated at the margins of formal employment, and did not extend to large rural populations or the growing numbers in informal employment – a pattern found to varying degrees in most regions.

Barrientos and Hinojosa-Valencia discuss how, in Latin America, the extension of minimal levels of social support beyond formal and public sector workers was a critical component of a political settlement essential to secure support for the import-substitution model of industrialisation (and later mirrored in East Asia). However, such programmes were often regressive and poorly targeted. The decades of crisis and liberalisation since the 1970s dramatically increased labour market informality and triggered a precipitous decline in social insurance coverage thus worsening already limited provisions. Subsequently, efforts at reforms have continued with the privatisation of social insurance programmes, such as pensions, alongside an expansion of social assistance programmes as the main route to extending social protection. Politically, this involved the recognition that a significant proportion of the labour force and their families had no access to traditional social security. The spread of social assistance programmes in the region, (particularly marked by large-scale cash transfer schemes, both conditional and unconditional, but also non-contributory pensions and other targeted programmes) can thus be seen as the outcome of domestic policy processes and funding modalities. Development assistance has played a role in piloting schemes in the region that can be instrumental in building learning and support for social protection among domestic policy makers, thus providing a demonstration effect. The current innovations in the development of social assistance are new design features which aim beyond the income effects of often minimal transfers to produce non-income effects through conditionalities. These may help both in targeting resources (for example to mothers with children) and to create demand for services (health, education) that can also stimulate supply. Such innovations are increasingly being tested in other regions.

Devereux and Cipryk show that African countries also started from a base of social security provisions for public sector workers and formal employees modelled on European systems. Benefits generally included unemployment insurance, disability benefits and pensions, but coverage remained extremely limited, rarely exceeding ten per cent of the population. Other social assistance programmes have also remained minimal, largely associated with donor-supported poverty reduction interventions and emergency relief. Relief efforts and humanitarian assistance remain a dominant approach across the continent in response to conditions (noted above) of chronic food insecurity, conflict and natural disasters. The long term experience of emergency relief programmes (primarily food aid) has contributed to the creation of models on which new social transfer programmes in Africa are based. The expansion of programmes of regular and predictable transfers, mainly cash³ and largely unconditional, including for example social pensions, ‘productive’ safety nets and livelihood promoting measures, is one of the main features of the recent evolution of social protection programmes at least covering some parts of Africa.

³ The sharp rise in food prices in 2008, however, is leading to some re-evaluation of the preference for cash rather than food transfers.

In South Asia, Kabeer describes how the legacy of British colonialism, the influence of ILO norms and standard setting and the strength of vested interests lie behind the dichotomy of state-subsidized social security to workers in the formal economy and social assistance to those in dire need.

However, there are variations within the South Asian context which complicate this dichotomy. Sri Lanka and Kerala have been long held up as examples of the capacity to achieve universal coverage in spite of low levels of income. In both, the complexion of the political regime and strong civil society, including an active trade union movement, were important factors. The long and largely uninterrupted record of democratic rule in India has fostered a very different state-society relationship to that seen in the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan where monarchies and military rule defined, till recently, the nature of the regime. What also marks out the Indian context, and to a lesser extent, Bangladesh from elsewhere is the long standing experience of poverty reduction programmes in the form of public works and school feeding programmes. This partly reflects the importance given to the 'promotion' of livelihoods over their 'protection' by policy makers concerned with the scale of poverty they have to address.

The countries across east and south east Asia, as described by Cook, exhibit a more diverse set of welfare institutions, in part reflecting an uneven colonial legacy, the influence of Confucian, Buddhist and Muslim heritage, and through the twentieth century hugely diverging patterns of economic development and political rule. Formal systems modelled on the European system were less firmly entrenched: even the East Asian developmental states had minimal formal systems before the second half of the twentieth century and public welfare expenditures remain low. Nonetheless, formal systems have evolved in remarkably similar ways in post-colonial, Communist and developmental states. Generous social security was provided to a minority of the urban and public sector elites, while social assistance programmes were minimal, and most reliance placed on the family. The more recent reform agenda is also highly variable, in part due to the above factors and legacies, but also perhaps in part owing to the weaker presence of the international donor community and their agendas beyond a small number of the poorest countries.

While the region was generally less affected by 1980s crisis and adjustment, it faced other challenges including in some countries the legacy of conflict and transitions from socialism. The major shift towards a new social protection agenda (even if not generally described as such) came in the wake of the 1998 financial crisis. The 'developmental' states such as Korea and Taiwan used social policies instrumentally at this point to facilitate essential economic restructuring (Kwon, 2005); formerly planned economies introduced social protection measures to mitigate the social costs of transition and maintain political legitimacy for single party rule; while crisis hit economies recognised the urgency of putting in place more reliable, institutionalised mechanisms of protection. The tendency across the region is thus towards a reduction of the most generous formal benefits, and an expansion of basic social protections, including the introduction of social transfers (through large scale, largely unconditional, cash transfer programmes) and the broadening of social insurance and tax funded provisions, particularly in areas of pensions and healthcare.

In the current context where the poor have been affected by waves of crises (food, fuel and financial) many countries are likely experience a further increase in poverty, especially affecting those who lack social protection. Countries may no longer be required by the international financial institutions to cut back on social spending as during earlier crises; nonetheless, (as Barrientos points out for Latin America) many are likely to experience a deterioration in government revenues associated with the economic downturn, which may in turn limit the fiscal space for social protection programmes and with it the possibility that the gains of the last decade may be lost. At the same time, as fiscal stimulus packages and demand-side economic policies return to fashion in response to crisis in the north, the opportunity arises to argue for similar funding packages, if necessary supported by development assistance, to ensure that the situation of the most vulnerable is not worsened as a result of crises not of their making. Demand-side policies to stimulate an economic revival will need to be supplemented by appropriate social policies if they are to be effective in reaching the poor and contributing to sustainable development. The global response to crisis can therefore be taken as an opportunity to push for a stronger common agenda around expanding social protection for all.

In summary, improved social protection mechanisms that are more appropriate to the income levels and conditions of different countries, now appear to be emerging in all regions, although with

considerable variability in coverage and effectiveness. The notion that the developmental path would lead towards comprehensive coverage through formal employment is now widely recognised to be flawed; levels of informality of employment, and thus exclusion from protection for the majority in poor countries, has gradually created awareness that protection needs to address directly the needs of the vulnerable and excluded. Innovations in design and type of programme appear to have the potential to meet increased numbers of people, and to have impacts beyond immediate resource transfers to fostering longer term developmental outcomes, if the resources and political will are present, and if institutional arrangements – and particularly the role of the state – can be ‘got right’ to work for the poor.

5. Critical gaps and neglected issues

The regional papers highlight a number of key issues for the field of social protection thrown up by recent experiences of crisis and response. Several of these issues were reinforced at the project workshop as major concerns of researchers and practitioners from different regions. Key themes where insufficient work has been done, and which are viewed as critical gaps for the achievement of socio-economic security, are discussed in this section: they relate principally to the wider political and institutional arrangements that define the context within which social protection approaches and instruments need to be embedded. This discussion draws attention to the importance of the political-economy of redistributive policies, the challenge of financing such policies, and their implications for the social contract between state and citizens. We also consider how disadvantaged citizens under different political conditions can engage with the state, access entitlements, and demand accountability from the state and public or private service providers.

The politics and political-economy of social protection

Official policy documents about social protection are often couched in technical terms - the language of risk, costs, benefits and financial sustainability. But it is evident from some of the ground level research reported in the review papers that social protection is highly political. The relationship works in both directions. Politics, political regimes and political interests play an important role in shaping the distribution, content and indeed the boundaries of social protection. In turn, social protection has reverberations in the world of politics. This is most visibly played out in times of crisis: the capacity of a government to respond to its citizens in their hour of need can make and break governments in the eyes of the public. One of the abiding memories of the Bush administration will be its failure in the face of Hurricane Katrina. The Asia financial crisis was a turning point in the high growth east Asian economies and marked a transition for some countries from reliance on familial networks to tide the majority of their citizens through crisis towards a more universal model of social welfare. However, social protection issues are also implicated in the less dramatic politics of patronage, electoral competition and constituency building.

The dualist model of social security that was pervasive across many of the countries covered by these reviews was partly a product of their colonial past, and the precedents that this created, and partly a product of the political settlements that governed the early post colonial era. The commitment to import-substituting industrialization, the developmental role assumed by some states and the need for the support of certain groups to maintain social stability underpinned employment-based public support for a selective groups of workers and the exclusion of the majority. During the 1980s and 1990s, the politics of aid dependency, donor conditionalities and residual safety nets dominated the agenda. This led to a redrawing of the role of the state and a redefinition of social protection from instrument of development policy to one of risk management. The earlier dualism of provision was reconstituted around a new dualism based around the challenge of affordability within a restrictive macro-economic framework.

It is evident from the wider literature that there is no necessary relationship between political regime and social development (Ghai, 1997). Social programmes have been sometimes introduced or extended by authoritarian governments as a way of fending off pressures for democracy or buying social legitimacy. One of the main social safety nets in Pakistan today was introduced by an autocratic military dictator in search of support from an Islamic constituency. China has moved rapidly to

extending its social protection coverage, after a period of neglect in the early years of reform, in large part due to the recognition that growing social unrest could destabilise the political system and undermine core development strategies.

However, democratic politics opens space for a wider range of options and actors and for the evolution of strategies that accord more closely to the needs and priorities of the population. The privatisation of pensions could be undertaken without debate in the Chilean context because democratic institutions had been suspended. It was fiercely contested elsewhere in Latin America. For instance, the unpopularity of the reforms in Costa Rica led to widespread unrest and the setting up of a 'Forum of National Concertation' to work towards a consensus on the restructuring of the social benefit system (Lund, 2004). Despite the pressures to privatize exerted by the World Bank, very few countries in Latin America opted for fully private pensions (Barrientos and Hinojosa-Valencia). The strength of left wing parties and trade unions explain the early commitment to universal social provision to education, health and food in Sri Lanka, the progress on land reform in west Bengal and continued commitment to universal social provision in Kerala. Mobilisation by citizens in newly democratic states in east Asia also played a part in expanding, or resisting contraction of, social provisions (Cook and Kwon, 2008). In Korea, policy makers, experts and civil society activists formed an effective policy coalition for health care reform while efforts to privatize National Health Insurance in Taiwan were blocked by civil society groups.

Increasingly, political parties are vying for power on the basis of mandates which include social protection as a central element and which have led to a gradual expansion in the scale of provision and the sections of the population covered. In the Latin American context, the success of *Bolsa Familia* is widely credited with Lula's re-election in 2006 (Zucco, 2008). In Mexico, the widely recognised success of *Progresa* helped to ensure its survival when the ruling party that set it up lost power. In Zambia, the ruling party was successful in winning the votes of small farmers in the 2006 with its pledge to raise the fertilizer subsidy. Older people were of sufficient significance in the 2006 elections in Lesotho for both parties to vie for their votes with promises about the old age pension. In Swaziland, disruption to Old Age Grant payments led to the suspension of Parliament while angry pensioners insisted that their government sort matters out before resuming normal business. In Thailand, the Thai Rak Thai party led by Thaksin Shinawatra won a landslide election in 2001 on a populist promise of universal access to health care, appealing to the 30 per cent who were excluded from the public system. The program was retained and its inclusive element strengthened by the subsequent government. The Awami League which came into power in 2008 in Bangladesh included a 100 day employment guarantee programme in its election manifesto while one of the first actions of the newly elected civilian government in Pakistan has been to institute a cash transfer programme named after its assassinated leader.

It is also worth noting that the absence of social protection can be more costly in both political and economic terms than its presence. Sri Lanka abandoned its commitment to universal social protection due to fiscal pressures. It opted instead for targeted safety nets which were not always well implemented. However, the affordability argument overlooked the role of state welfare in 'buying' social peace. Within five years of the reforms, the protracted civil war broke out between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. Social expenditure declined after the reform, but military expenditures rose from 0.5 per cent of GDP in the 1970s to 5-6 per cent in the 1990s. Conflict has cost Sri Lanka around 2-3 per cent in growth rates. In India, initial evidence also suggests that redistributive policies reduce the likelihood of civilian conflict.

These examples illustrate the importance of the political context within which social protection policies are embedded, as well as the varied political systems that can give rise to effective social protection. They also point to the close integration between the political environment, and both social and economic policies, with social policies used both to buy political support for a regime or party, but also to enable the regime to further its economic agendas. They provide less guidance about what this means for the design and implementation of social protection policies and instruments: how can social protection instruments be adapted to different political contexts? What kind of institutional arrangements are appropriate for ensuring sustainable programmes given local conditions? The return to a focus on the state as a key actor in the provision of social protection also needs to recognise the

nature of different states as sites of political contestation and negotiation which will necessary shape policy options and outcomes.

Finance, resource mobilisation and equity

Closely linked to – indeed often indistinguishable from – the politics of social protection are issues surrounding the mobilisation and allocation of resources. Every political system needs to find a resolution to problems of how limited resources are allocated, to whom, and on what basis. As noted above, motivations for expenditures on social protection may range from buying political support and maintaining regime or Party legitimacy, to restructuring the economy or protecting the poorest citizens. Different motivations and political support dictate both the types and amounts of revenues available and the nature of the programmes on which resources are spent. Underpinning these different outcomes is a negotiated ‘social contract’ between each state and its citizens. In some cases such a settlement results in progressive redistribution from the wealthy to the poor; in others, minimal distribution may occur or the overall outcomes may be regressive.

Much of the debate about the financing of social protection is focused on the expenditure side – the level of resources needed to achieve specified objectives and how should they be allocated to achieve maximum impact. From this angle, the affordability of social protection is frequently considered the major obstacle to the extension of provision, and decisions may be taken based principally on assumptions about what is available. As Devereux points out in the case of Africa: ‘debate about social protection … is more often than not about sustainable financing strategies’ (23). Governments face hard budget constraints as well as tradeoffs between different types of expenditures. Borrowing options for interventions often regarded as consumption rather than investment are limited and may be proscribed by agreements with the international financial institutions or opposed by taxpayers. Programmes once introduced by governments imply long term commitments and thus the need for stable and sustainable sources of funding, often in environments of unpredictability or serious fiscal constraint.

But evidence on affordability suggests that the main constraint on social protection is not lack of financial resources, but the absence of political will. Based on a modelling exercise of different programmes, Behrendt (2008) argues that even in sub-Saharan Africa ‘basic social protection programmes are feasible and have a marked effect on the reduction of poverty’(282) and that ‘the costs of a basic social protection benefit package seem within reasonable and affordable limits if countries and donors make a strong commitment to basic social protection’ (292). She estimates the costs of providing a universal old age and invalidity pension as varying between 0.3 per cent of GDP in Guinea and 0.6 per cent in Kenya, an affordable level but one which would require reallocation of expenditure and increased commitment both from states and from the international community (296). In other cases in Africa where successful programmes have been established (such as social pensions and fertiliser subsidies) these would now appear to be politically irreversible, and thus financing follows (Devereux and Cipryk). If these arguments are being made in the poorest and most fiscally constrained countries, it seems reasonable to argue that they would hold in most other regions. Certainly similar examples of the difficulty of withdrawing programmes once put in place, creating pressures on the state to allocate resources accordingly, are found in several Asian countries. Likewise in Latin America it seems unimaginable that some of the current new social assistance programmes could be significantly scaled back or withdrawn without significant political backlash.

The focus of debate on the expenditure side – how much is spent, on what – leads to an emphasis on increasing the ‘efficiency’ of resource use, achieving the maximum ‘bang for the buck’. One way to achieve this is to target more narrowly. This shifts the debate from politics towards technical (non-political) issues, creating increasingly technocratic approaches to resolving issues of basic needs and livelihoods targeted to the most vulnerable. The administrative costs of targeting are widely discussed but rarely explicitly calculated. At the ‘street-level’, bureaucratic interpretations in resource constrained environments tend often towards an emphasis on excluding those considered undeserving or even fraudulent rather than on meeting the needs of the vulnerable.

This focus deflects attention from the revenue side and the issue of resource mobilisation (where resources come from and how they can be increased) as well as from the possible link between revenue source and equity outcomes. In most countries, the fiscal system provides the institutional

mechanism through which resources are collected from citizens or enterprises by the state and then redistributed. In the range of countries examined here, the capacity of the state to raise and allocate funding varies, as does the total amount spent on, and the share of public expenditures allocated to, social protection. In the poorest countries, with low revenues and limited overall welfare expenditures, a large share of financing is generated externally – from international donors, NGOs and civil society. By extension, expenditures may also be heavily influenced by these external actors, who can play a large role in the design of projects and their implementation. In such cases, the close link between state and citizen through fiscal mechanisms is weakened. The potential for aid-projectised social protection reduces the potential for developing a social contract between citizens and the states. Benefits come from the largesse of the international community, rather than as a right of citizenship.

The revenue side may also be important for redistribution. Analysis of tax systems suggests that outcomes are not neutral to the revenue source: where the money comes from and how it is raised may matter for equity. A major study on health care in Asia⁴, for example, shows that less regressive outcomes are achieved as states move from out-of-pocket towards general tax-funded systems, and that tax-funded universal provision is more effective for reaching the poor than combining non-universal systems with means-testing and targeted ‘projects’ (Rannan-Eliya, 2008). Public subsidies for health care do not benefit the poor in many countries: in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam subsidies are pro-rich, biased towards inpatient hospital care. The best targeted systems in Asia are tax-funded with integrated provision, a universalistic approach, and minimal access barriers to the poor. Social insurance systems only reach the poor if they are universal in nature, but these are generally unattainable in the poorest countries; equity requires substantial tax financing to pay premiums for the unemployed or informal sector workers. Equity schemes (e.g. those designed to target specific groups, such as migrants) do not generally work unless they are integrated into mainstream programs. Importantly, the Equitap studies demonstrate that health protection is feasible even in low-income economies, and that high taxation and social protection are not inconsistent with public opinion or globalisation.

Sources of revenues for formal social protection systems have generally come from forms of social insurance paid through employer and employee contributions. Most low income economies are increasingly dominated by informal employment, and enterprises or firms – a key partner in the expansion of social protection in the west – are less likely to be key actors in the new social protection agenda. The possibilities for raising sufficient revenues, or gaining political buy-in, for redistributive social policies in such economies may still be limited, and alternatives need to be explored. Another potential source in many resource-rich, low income economies is from royalties or rents from extractive industries. Under certain political conditions, using such resources for social expenditures may be regarded as an equitable distribution of the resource wealth of a country: in Mongolia, for example, political and public support was gained for programmes using windfall taxes on mineral exploitation. In other contexts however, states that are able to rely on mineral royalties have proven less responsive to the needs of their citizens. Moore (2000) makes a distinction between tax revenue as income ‘earned’ by the state from its citizens to whom it must as a result be accountable and ‘unearned’ incomes which allow states to sidestep the need to tax their populations and the ‘social contract’ that this sets up. One study found that countries that could rely on ‘unearned income’ as a result of a large mineral sector or high rates of aid dependence were less likely to translate their per capita GDP into human development outcomes for their citizens (Moore et al. 2000).

Clearly, raising taxation and other government revenues and expanding social protection, remain major challenges for low income countries, particularly with expanding shares of informal employment where workers remain unprotected, and where resources available to the state through payroll taxes are limited. Finding an appropriate and sustainable financing ‘mix’ needs to draw on different sources (including aid, government revenues, private, community and household resources) while recognising the constraints and incentives within each system (Barrientos, 2007: 301). As Barrientos suggests ‘An optimal financing mix is essential to (i) generating the resources needed to establish and strengthen appropriate social protection systems; (ii) ensuring the incentives generated

⁴ The Equitap study

by the financing modalities reinforce poverty and vulnerability reduction; and (iii) securing legitimacy for social protection institutions and policies.' (301)

Institutional arrangements for social protection

Just as the political context shapes possibilities for social protection, so too does the variation in specific institutional arrangements at a national level have implications for the design and implementation of social protection systems and instruments. How social protection interventions can be designed, delivered and scaled up into comprehensive and sustainable institutional arrangements is one of the critical questions facing experts and policy makers. Innovations in programme design and implementation are evident across all regions. The variation that emerges in different contexts illustrates the need for local adaptation and argues against the 'one size fits all' tendency found among some international organisations. The array of arrangements and institutional mechanisms that emerge from the studies are closely linked to features such as the nature of the economy and associated forms of vulnerability, the level of economic development, formal employment and related social protection systems, the capacity of the state and the nature of the political system. A range of systems or forms of provision are evident, moving from minimal, highly fragmented to more integrated and comprehensive. Examining trajectories over time helps in assessing the likely success of alternative paths.

A key feature underpinning a range of outcomes relates to the 'welfare mix' of providers and funders. The concept of welfare pluralism gained traction during the 1990s in close association with the neo-liberal agenda of rolling back the state. This emphasised the complementary roles of different providers and funders – state, market, community and household – with the market taking the lead, individuals relying on their own private efforts or informal safety nets where possible, and the state stepping in only in the case of overt market failure. The shrinking back from this agenda with the recognition that markets do not deliver adequate protection particularly for the poor, has generated a new awareness of the critical role of the state. Throughout the regional papers, an argument emerges that the state needs to play a key *coordinating* role in social protection even when it cannot fully fund or directly provide.

Lautier (2006) describes two main trajectories towards state-led, comprehensive institutionalised provision: bottom up and top down. In reality, these are gradual (not 'big bang') processes of institutional development and take time to evolve. One 'bottom-up' route involves a plurality of local, community-based initiatives and mechanisms becoming more 'coordinated and incorporated into two processes of homogenization: of the risks covered (such as the type of medical care) and of the conditions of access to that coverage' (88). The conditions for success in these efforts, which require both a horizontal expansion of coverage and vertical integration, with adequate financing mechanisms, limit its effectiveness in the absence of complementary top-down policies. An example of this trajectory of linking together diverse and fragmented initiatives, and integrating them with formal programmes is illustrated by the Philippines. It has however proved difficult to join up the range of community-based schemes to protect specific groups, particularly workers in the informal economy, and to link these to the formal social protection system. Initiatives elsewhere to integrate specific excluded groups (such as migrants) into existing systems face similar obstacles.

The 'top-down' route towards more comprehensive or universal systems involves expanding coverage, mechanisms of access and the rationale for protection (88); the conditions of success are essentially political, involving increased costs and the formation of solidarity. The expansion of social protection in Brazil is provided as a key example of this model, while experiences elsewhere in Latin America and East Asia provide further evidence of the potential for its success. These new and expanding social protection programmes found in most regions seem to demonstrate a mixed model which have clear central government leadership and political support, are often partially donor funded or involve other international institutions, but also build on local innovations with projects being rolled out from smaller pilots, and incorporating local variation on a larger scale. We now have an increasing number of examples of single programmes being expanded to form the basis of more comprehensive systems, such as large-scale cash transfer programmes, with increasing integration with other forms of protection.

Even with strong state-led and funded programmes, other obstacles to integrated institutional provision arise. Bureaucratic interests, fragmentation of programmes among agencies and competition between them for resources are evident in different countries. Welfare agencies and spending ministries, or lower levels of government in decentralised systems, depend for resources on finance ministries or planning departments, are generally unable to raise revenues themselves and are usually under-resourced for their mandates. This creates incentives to compete for funded programmes and other resources. Barrientos describes how Argentina's non-contributory pension programme developed in the context of a social policy characterised by a high degree of fragmentation not only between national institutions but also between levels of government, and 'was founded on a legal framework that developed in a disjointed and uncoordinated fashion' (17). China's push towards expanded provision involves an estimated 17 different government agencies with funding flowing through four levels of government; as yet a comprehensive legal framework has not been agreed. Overall, it is increasingly clear that sustainability and improved coverage requires combining fragmented programmes into a coordinated and comprehensive system. However 'a tendency towards integration has not been widely adopted by policy makers', and both the plurality of providers and the creation of parallel administrative structures may constitute an obstacle to institutional strengthening needed for developing comprehensive systems (Barrientos and Cipyrk).

Where states are weak or have fewer resources, the challenges are still more complex but similar messages emerge. As Kabeer highlights in south Asia, there have been growing demands and efforts to expand coverage beyond formal workers; but programmes and projects are often introduced in a piecemeal manner, driven by political expediency or in response to an emergency. There is a need to rationalise, unify and systematise to achieve goals of cost-effectiveness and equity. In India recommendations have been made for a national system of social security within the existing framework of programmes. Bangladesh illustrates the lack of integration and coordination among multiple programmes and providers, with *ad hoc* or block allocations of funding from donors or budgetary provisions. Here the need is for expanding existing programmes and adding to them where necessary to incorporate the excluded, rather than adding new programmes. The appropriate role of the state becomes apparent, as Kabeer notes: 'while governments often fail in their efforts to deliver, and problems of poor governance, mismanagement and corruption abound, it is equally clear that non-governmental organisations are not exempt from these problems, but also lack the 'national outreach [...] or] the mandate to take responsibility for ensuring social protection coverage for all'. NGOs, community groups play an important role in piloting programmes, experimenting with new models and approaches, and mobilising people to claim rights, but comprehensive coverage will demand a strong role for the state.

In the case of Africa, as described by Devereux, these arrangements take different forms given the stronger role of the donor community and the reluctance of national governments to commit to large government run and funded programmes. Approaches currently focus on improving projects rather than expanding universal provisions. Where political will exists, examples of the institutionalisation of programmes do exist, as in various social pension programmes in southern Africa. Moving from donor driven projects with the inevitable fragmentation this offers, towards greater partnership and national ownership, reveals again the important role of the state in moving towards more comprehensive institutional provisions.

Towards a citizen-centred approach to social protection

Regardless of whether a top-down or bottom-up approach is taken, the motivation for expanding coverage is likely to be strengthened if it is anchored to the question of citizenship. The public provision of social goods and services is another strand, alongside taxation, in the relationship between citizens and their state. For the more vulnerable citizens this may be the main point of contact. Consequently, inclusion within the public provision of social protection – and the terms of that inclusion – has important implications for the identity and practice of citizenship.

The regional reviews make an important distinction between provision by the state and provision by other actors, including donors and national and international NGOs. State provision, particularly when it is backed by the constitution and legislation, has the status of an entitlement, something that can be claimed and contested. Only the state has the capacity and outreach to use the redistributive potential

of social protection to create equality among citizens at a very basic level. Social provision by donors and NGOs cannot give citizens the same stake in claiming and contesting entitlements because neither have a mandate to provide, and hence cannot be held accountable in the same way. Moreover, the political sustainability of programmes requires genuine national ownership: policies which are conceived, implemented and financed by national politicians and policy-makers rather than introduced, managed and paid for by international donors and NGOs – tend to be more successful at mobilising domestic political constituencies.

The introduction of entitlements can, in and of itself, provide the catalyst to greater awareness on the part of citizens of their claims on the state. This is often particularly the case for those who have not had previous dealings with the state. Examples are found in the extension of Bolsa Familia to some of the most marginalised members of Brazilian society (Suarez et al., 2006) and the designation of women as the recipients of the Dowa Emergency Cash Transfer. Evaluations revealed that the women felt empowered by the legal recognition that programme documents represented (Devereux et al. 2007). However, the design of the programme also matters. For all the rhetoric of ‘social inclusion through paid work’ built into the *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Desocupados* in Argentina 63 per cent of participants viewed it as social assistance while 16 per cent saw it as a manoeuvre to gain support for the ruling party (Tabbush, 2009).

The extent to which states are willing to acknowledge the relationship between social protection, citizenship and rights varies considerably. In the Asian context, the language of ‘guarantees’ is sometimes used as an alternative to that of rights as a way of signalling state commitment. The Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme and more recently the NREGA are examples of the use of the concept of the guarantee to signal state commitment. In China, a significant shift in attitude towards social assistance – from largesse to entitlement – has been fostered through programmes such as the Minimum Living Standard Guarantee programme. The review by Kabeer notes that the SAARC Social Charter, signed by leaders of SAARC countries in 2004, commits governments to ensuring that every member of their society is able to satisfy their basic human needs and to realise their personal dignity, safety and creativity: The Charter includes: ‘State parties agree that access to basic education, adequate housing, safe drinking water and sanitation and health care should be guaranteed in legislation, executive and administrative provisions in addition to ensuring of adequate standard of living, including adequate shelter, food and clothing.’ Similarly Devereux and Cipryk cite the 2006 ‘Livingstone Call for Action’ signed by 13 African leaders which recognised the multiple benefits of social protection encompassing both a rights and an empowerment agenda, with the guarantee of basic social protection strengthening the social contract between the state and citizens. In this respect, it is worth noting the power of ideas, even those which are not immediately implementable.

The critical importance of the state as the guarantor of basic levels of socio-economic security has again been highlighted by the decisiveness of government actions in response to crisis in the heartlands of pro-market belief systems. As the state resumes a role in this sphere, it is equally important to defend and strengthen processes of democracy and participation in holding the state accountable. Civil society has played a critical role in building citizenship ‘from the grassroots’, enabling citizens to make demands on the state and to hold states accountable. In examining the mechanisms of this engagement, Gaunt and Kabeer (2009) propose three models of the role of civil society which are relevant to the delivery of social protection:

- Developing grassroots capacity to collaborate with the state in the design of basic services for low income households,
- Developing grassroots capacity to contest power relations within society and claim rights vis-à-vis the state, and
- Holding states accountable through legal processes.

These are all approaches that can be linked to the design and delivery of social protection interventions, to increase their effectiveness and inclusiveness, and ultimately to move them towards more transformative outcomes.

6. Social protection and the work of the Ford Foundation

In this section we consider areas in which Ford Foundation work overlaps with existing initiatives and approaches to social protection, and present some ideas on potential ways in which the Foundation might engage further in the field. The section draws on the regional review papers as well as discussions at a workshop organised with Foundation staff and experts from around the world. These suggestions are presented as inputs into the on-going assessment within the Ford Foundation of the field of social protection and its emerging line of work.

Elaborating on some of the themes raised in the review papers, a workshop held in May 2009 provided an opportunity for discussion among a wider range of stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners and activists. Several recurring issues raised at the workshop are worth summarising here to feed into the Foundation's internal deliberations.

Existing Ford Foundation work relevant to social protection

The Ford Foundation works in a range of areas that could come under the rubric of, or are closely linked to, social protection. Among the objectives of the Foundation relating to social protection, and articulated at the project workshop, were⁵:

- enhancing economic fairness and opportunity, through the achievement of economic security over the life course, and
- promoting social inclusion and effective citizenship.

These objectives are embedded within overarching goals of reducing poverty and enhancing social justice. More specifically, the strategic agenda of the Foundation's recently formed Social Protection Committee views social protection as a lens for looking at initiatives that move people from economic vulnerability to life-long security.

The two core aspects highlighted here – of economic development and security, with a focus on income transfers and asset-building, on the one hand, and issues related to governance, rights and citizenship on the other – resonate strongly with the key findings and messages from the regional review papers. Together these areas define a broad agenda, but we suggest that their intersection is the critical point at which innovative opportunities arise to take social protection work beyond transfers and to make it transformative. This intersection is precisely the point at which the Foundation can appropriately utilise its own expertise.

As social protection has not been a defining category for programming within the Ford Foundation, grants are not generally labelled as 'social protection'. However, as the regional papers illustrate, a large number of funded activities can be identified as directly relevant to the field of social protection. In addition, across a wider range of activities, we can identify defining aspects of the Ford Foundation's approach and processes – including its focus on vulnerable and marginalised groups, a concern for engaging civil society, and its work on providing access to justice – which we argue are crucial elements in making social protection interventions effective beyond the immediate impact of transfers and assistance.

Examples of Ford Foundation programming with potentially strong synergies with a social protection agenda include:

- Asset-building and livelihood support: this varies across regions, but includes extensive work on development finance, as well as community-based livelihood strategies with a strong focus on sustainable use of natural resources, particularly among marginalised rural communities
- Health, with a particular focus on reproductive health and rights, and on HIV-AIDS
- Education, particularly access for girls and minority children or other excluded groups

⁵ These points are drawn from comments made in particular by Pablo Farias, Frank deGiovanni and Kilolo Kijakazi.

- Rights, access to justice, and overcoming discrimination for excluded groups
- Mechanisms for improving local governance, service delivery and accountability of government to citizens, through mobilisation of civil society.

In defining an agenda for action moving forward, consideration also needs to be given to the type of activities that the Ford Foundation has traditionally supported, and that build on its existing expertise, organisational strengths, and the scale of funding available. Such activities typically include support for:

- research and evidence gathering to support innovation and promote new ideas
- education, training and capacity building
- mobilisation and organising among different actors, particularly civil society organisations
- networking, convening and coalition-building around new ideas and policy agendas
- small scale pilots and their evaluation

A further consideration is the space in which an independent organisation can operate, along side other kinds of actors, organisations and donors. Given its size and nature, what role can the Foundation appropriately play? This space varies in different countries, affected by the historical presence and relationship with the country; the kinds of expertise and reputation gained within a specific context, and the nature of relevant institutions (government, civil society, researchers etc.) in each environment. The strong role of government in this field in many countries (especially in Latin America, China and Indonesia) limits the scope for significant direct engagement or policy influence. As an external organisation, the Foundation needs either to have a clear strategy for engaging and collaborating with government agencies, or to identify other (possibly indirect) entry points, for example through mobilisation of civil society on the demand side.

The activities and approach of other actors in the field also define the space for intervention. In many contexts the Foundation will lack the policy access or leverage, or the scale of funding, of some multi- and bi-lateral donors who engage directly at a government level in the design and financing of large scale social protection programmes. Other organisations are often better placed to provide certain types of financial and technical support. In most countries, the Ford Foundation has not yet built a strong, well-established reputation for work explicitly defined as 'social protection'. In some countries (particularly in Asia) it has however gone some way to creating a shared language and set of research and policy questions among a set of actors around social protection⁶. In all countries in which it works it has a strong base of related expertise and relationships on which to build, creating the potential to complement the activities of other organisations building on its own specialisation and expertise.

A defining feature of the Ford Foundation's work is a capacity for analysis of local context, working with organisations from the grassroots to higher levels of government, with links to policy processes and channels for impact, and working across or pushing conventional boundaries. This reach creates the capacity for contributing to innovative ideas around social protection.

Research and analysis

As a rapidly expanding field, social protection has largely been driven by practice. The need for more conceptual and analytic work is recognised but is currently limited. This is one area where the Foundation could contribute.

First, building on its long-standing work in the assets field, it has already started contributing to debates on the role of income transfers and asset accumulation in creating socio-economic security.

⁶ This has been achieved in particular through the regional Social Protection in Asia programme, within an environment in which multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors have relatively less influence.

Analytic work on the relationship and complementarities between income and asset transfer for poverty reduction and to secure long term welfare is a relatively under-developed area and one where the Foundation is well-placed to contribute. The range of country activities, including in the U.S., gives it an exceptionally wide range of experience on which to draw in supporting research and analytic work, rooted in programme experience. Second, as noted in all the review papers, the breadth of work within the Foundation around governance, rights and mobilisation of civil society can help in understanding relatively neglected areas in social protection. The Foundation is thus uniquely placed to contribute ideas and empirical experience to debate at the intersection of the ‘assets’ and ‘rights’ agendas in achieving social protection.

In the US, work within the assets framework has focused on strengthening economic security over the life course, for low income, vulnerable or marginalised groups, and has included research, pilots and interventions related to income maintenance policies, the extension of social insurance, and life-time savings – which in turn may provide access to education, housing and related key assets for groups who might otherwise be excluded from such human or physical asset accumulation. In other parts of the world, particularly south Asia and Latin America, a strong development finance programme has been a key mechanism for income and asset-building among poor communities. Again there is variability in the range of actors, with more successful development finance and other asset-building programmes working largely with civil society and community based organisations. These areas are less directly linked to the types of interventions increasingly seen as ‘mainstream’ social protection programmes. However, a strong case can be made for building on this expertise in defining a social protection strategy.

Similar examples exist of the intersection between social transfers and rights, such as the growing number of programmes based on ‘social guarantees’ which provide an interesting potential route to the realisation of economic and social rights. For countries with limited capacity for civil society organising or other channels for representation of interests, these programmes also provide a basis for building up a notion of rights or entitlements among citizens. Work in the law and rights field provides a strong basis for pushing the boundaries of a transformative approach to social protection through the inclusion of access to justice as a core element underpinning other entitlements.

- In addition to work at the intersection of work on transfers, asset accumulation and rights, a number of key areas for research have emerged. These include:
- Migration and social protection, including problems of exclusion, access and portability of benefits;
- Informality and social protection, both in terms of access and coverage, as well as the implications for financing systems;
- Analysis that provides a stronger comparative understanding of the political context and variability of institutions which shape social protection programmes and outcomes, including the transferability and replicability or success of programmes in different countries and contexts;
- A stronger analysis of the respective roles and contributions of different actors in the field, and their relationships;
- Clarification of concepts underpinning different approaches to social protection, for example universalism.

Social protection programmes: Design, delivery, evaluation

The features of the new social protection agenda and programmes highlighted in the papers have implications for the kind of activities in which an organisation such as the Ford Foundation can engage. Relevant issues, which vary by region include:

- programme scale;
- multi-dimensionality in terms of the range of elements or interventions integrated within the programmes (for example through conditionalities);
- the role of government in coordinating and directing delivery among a wider range of providers;
- the role of donors, civil society and other actors in financing, design and delivery.

The variation of features raise issues about their transferability: for example, is there a trade-off between scale and multi-dimensionality or complexity of programmes? Under what conditions can complex programmes be taken to scale? As various models are expanded, scope exists for evaluations that help in sharing lessons and adapting the design to other contexts.

As noted earlier, the Foundation is unlikely to play a major role directly in the design and implementation of government led programmes. It can however contribute to the design, piloting and evaluation of complementary elements relating to its own expertise. Examples might include interventions (similar to those being explored in Latin America and Indonesia) to enhance employment and investment in physical or financial productive assets among beneficiary households; and links with micro-saving or insurance programmes. These build on existing Ford Foundation expertise to inform the design and monitoring of innovative ‘add-ons’ to complement existing programmes.

Some of the larger social protection programmes are expanding from urban populations to rural populations, but within a common design which rarely considers the variability in livelihood strategies, opportunities and forms of accumulation in these varied communities. Exploring the implications of such variation for the design and implementation of large scale programmes, and piloting innovative variations, may be another way to build on existing Foundation work.

The Foundation’s experience may also be relevant to support the institutions, and the capacity of people, to help with institutional design and participatory mechanisms for social protection systems. This could include support for the formation of skilled professionals on issues like tax structure and burden, fiscal and social services delivery decentralization, expansion and selectivity of social expenditure, and monitoring and impact assessment of social protection programs. Such programmes could also address issues on the supply side and quality of services.

Building on its local, context specific engagement, the Foundation is also well placed to support and identify home-grown pilots in the field. Increasingly the field is driven by models and approaches coming from the international financial institutions. More appropriate adaptation, mechanisms for scaling up, etc. may be identified through local pilots and policy processes. This also needs to involve systematic mechanisms for design and implementation, and the evaluation of programmes and how they can be replicated.

Finally, the Foundation could extend its experience in monitoring and evaluation to make a major contribution to evaluating the impact and success of interventions, particularly beyond the immediate effect of transfers. This would involve understanding not only what works, but also why certain things have failed.

Policy influence and lesson sharing

The kind of research and advocacy, organisational support and capacity building, and exposure to debates and experiences from other countries, that the Ford Foundation has supported over the years can play an important role in informing policy discussions and representing the views of marginalised groups as new issues such as social protection rise on the agenda. The Foundation’s long standing relations with key actors in different policy environments creates possibilities for influence, including

through dialogue and collaboration with government agencies, related think-tanks and policy researchers.

Beyond specific countries, the Foundation is well-placed to facilitate discussions and the sharing of lessons around policies and practice in this area. At a regional level, for example through the existing Social Protection in Asia research and networking programme there is a significant amount of capacity and a basis for exchange and dialogue. The Foundation has laid a strong basis for research, networking and advocacy on relevant issues over at least the past ten years. It is thus well positioned to scale up this work, to identify key issues of focus and to take it in innovative new directions.

Overall our analysis suggests the potential for the Ford Foundation to make a strategic contribution to the evolving debates and practice around the growing field of social protection, crossing geographic boundaries and regions at different stages of development – from the US to Africa; challenging with empirical evidence some of the more narrow boundaries, definitions and practices within the field; and supporting the interface between civil society and the state. At the level of discourse and debate, this means pushing beyond welfare, risk management and transfers to productivity-enhancing and transformative forms of social protection that build on experiences around asset-building on the one hand, and governance, rights and access to justice on the other.

Concrete activities

In moving towards this agenda, we suggest some concrete activities many of which arose from the workshop discussions. These aim to go beyond country specific actions to create a platform for dialogue and exchange of ideas and experiences across regions and among different stakeholders. These are listed below.

Convening activities

A wide range of types of convening activities (both real and virtual) were suggested to bring together different groups of stakeholders including

- seminars to discuss policy changes, empirical evidence and theoretical breakthroughs in greater depth;
- regional and global meetings to share experiences among groups of countries, and to engage different actors or stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, civil society etc.);
- a regular *annual meeting* of social protection groups;
- an on-line network.

Mobilization and networking

Exchange visits: These could include exchanges for both *South-South* and *North-South* learning; including exchanges among civil society organisations. The Africa civil society platform was offered as an example.

New alliances: Efforts should be made to engage where appropriate with the private sector, for example, financing institutions, as well as with groups who do not share the approach to social protection laid out above as a strategy for influence.

Currently several platforms for networking and organising around social protection exist and could be built on (including IDS Centre for Social Protection and the Ford Foundation supported ‘Social Protection in Asia’ programme).

Training and capacity building

Training platforms for technical issues such as design, and capacity building of those engaged in design and implementation of programmes: the suggestion of creating a social protection design institute for example was raised.

Capacity building aimed at the sustainability of programmes and organisations engaged in social protection programmes and delivery, and in mobilising communities to access or demand entitlements.

Other

Internally the Ford Foundation could assist in tracking and understanding its work in this field by coding projects with a ‘social protection’ tag;

There is still variation in terminology and a glossary of terms and definitions was requested.

An international advisory panel to provide inputs into a programme on an on-going basis was suggested.

References

- Asian Development Bank (2008) *Social Protection Index for Committed Poverty Reduction Volume 2* Manila: Asian Development Bank
- Barrientos, A. and Shepherd, A. 2003, *Chronic Poverty and Social Protection*, paper presented at the Chronic Poverty Research Centre Conference on Chronic Poverty, University of Manchester.
- Barrientos, A. and R. Sabates-Wheeler (2007) 'Local economy effects of social transfers' IDS Brighton
- Barrientos, A. 2008, 'Financing social protection' in Barrientos and Hulme (Eds.) *Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concept, Policies, Politics* Palgrave MacMillan
- Barrientos, A. and Hulme, D. 2008, (Eds.) *Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concept, Policies, Politics*, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Barrientos, A. and J. Scott (2008) 'Social transfers and growth. A review' BWPI Working Paper No. 54 BrookingsWorld Poverty Institute, University of Manchester
- Behrendt, C. 2008, 'Can low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa afford basic social protection?' in Barrientos and Hulme (Eds.) *Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concept, Policies, Politics*, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Bonilla Garcia, A. and Gruat, J., 2003, *Social Protection: A Life Cycle Continuum Investment for Social Justice, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva.
- Conway, T., de Haan, A. and Norton, A. 2000, *Social protection: New directions of donor agencies*, Department for International Development, London.
- Cook, S., Kabeer, N. and Suwannarat, G., 2003, *Social Protection in Asia*, Har-Anand Press, New Delhi.
- Cook, S. and Kwon H., 2008, Revisiting welfare developmentalism: economic reforms and trajectories of social policy in East Asia, *Italian Journal of Social Policy*, N.1 (January-March 2008): 511-529.
- D'Andrea, L. 2006, 'Introduction' in *Social protection and inclusion: Experiences and policy issues* Geneva: ILO-Steps
- Devereux, S. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. 2007, 'Debating Social Protection' *IDS Bulletin* Vol 38 (3)
- Devereux, S. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. 2004, 'Transformative social protection' IDS, Brighton
- DFID, 2006, 'Social Protection in Poor Countries', Social Protection Briefing Note Series no.1, UK Department for International Development, UK.

Ghai, D., 1997, *Social Development and Public Policy: Some Lessons from Successful Experiences*, DP 89, UNRISD, Geneva.

Gross, R. 2007, 'Definitions of key social protection terms from other donors' USAID, December 28.

Holzmann, R. & Jørgensen, S., 1999. Social risk management: Conceptual underpinnings for the social protection sector strategy paper. *Social Protection Discussion Paper Series*, Washington DC: World Bank.

ILO website <http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/decentwork/lang-en/index.htm>

ILO World Labour Report, 2000, Geneva: ILO

Kabeer, N. (2008) *Mainstreaming gender and social protection in the informal economy*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London

Kabeer, N., 2004, Re-visioning "the social": towards citizen-centred social policy for the poor in poor countries' *IDS working paper 191*. Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

Kabeer, N. (2007) 'A "Vision" thing? Debates and difference within the OECD-DAC Poverty Network approaches to social protection' *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 38 (3): 51-54

Kwon, Huck-Ju, Ed, 2005, *Transforming the developmental welfare state in East Asia*. Unrisd/Palgrave, London.

Lautier, B. 2006, 'Towards universal social security and protection of the 'most vulnerable'' in ILO (Ed.) *Social protection and inclusion: Experiences and policy issues* Geneva: ILO-Steps

Lund, F. (2004) 'Informal workers' access to social security and social protection' Background paper for UNRISD Beijing Plus 5 Report. UNRISD: Geneva

Lund, F. '(2008) The informal economy, social protection and empowerment: linkages and good practices for poverty reduction' Presented at OCED DAC Network on Poverty Reduction, March Paris

Moore, M. 2000 'States, social policies and globalisation: arguing on the right terrain' *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 31 (4): pp. 21-31

Moore, M., J. Leavy, P. Houtzager, and H. White (2000) 'Polity qualities: how governance affects poverty', *IDS Working Paper 99*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

Munro, L. 2008, 'Risks, needs and rights: Compatible or contradictory bases for social protection' in Barrientos and Hulme (Eds.) *Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concept, Policies, Politics*, Palgrave MacMillan.

NASI, 2008:8 - REPORT: Social Security: An Essential Asset and Insurance Protection for All, (Report to Ford Foundation)

National Academy of Social Insurance, 2008, 'Charting a future for social protection at the Ford Foundation: A Feasibility Study' A report for the Social Protection Committee, March 2008.

Ortiz, I., 2001., *Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific*, Asian Development Bank, Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=991887>

Ortiz, Isabel, 2009, 'Social Policy' in National Development Strategies: Policy Notes UNDESA

Rannan-Eliya, R., 2008. Extending social health provision in the Asia-Pacific region: Progress challenges. In ILO, Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Meeting on Socially-Inclusive Strategies to Extend Social Security Coverage. New Delhi, India, 19 -20 May, 2008. Bangkok: ILO. Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/events/sis/papers/index.htm> [Accessed 4 March 2009].

Sabates-Wheeler, R. and S. Devereux, 2008, 'Transformative social protection: The currency of justice' in Barrientos and Hulme (Eds.) *Social Protection for the Poor and the Poorest: Concept, Policies, Politics* Palgrave MacMillan

Shepherd, Andrew et al. 2004. *Policy Paper on Social Protection*. Overseas Development Institute for DFID.

Suarez, M., M. Libardoni, M. Texeira Rodriguez, A.J.T. Cleaver, S. Ribeiro Garcia and W. da Silva Chaves (2006) *The Bolsa Familia Programme and the tackling of gender inequalities. The challenge of promoting the re-ordering of the domestic space and women's access to the public space* Prepared for the Ministry of Social Development, Brazil and Department for International Development, UK-Brazil

Tabbush, C. (2009) 'Gender, citizenship and new approaches to poverty relief: conditional cash transfer programmes in Argentina' in S. Razavi (ed.) *The gendered impacts of liberalisation. Towards "embedded liberalism"?* London: Routledge

USAID, 2008 'Analysing the relationship between social protection and economic growth' Request for Applications. Office of Poverty Reduction. Poverty Analysis and Social Safety Nets Team., USAID, Washington

Voipio, T. 2007, Social protection for poverty reduction: The OECD-DAC/POVNET view' in Devereux, S. and R. Sabates-Wheeler (Eds). *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 38, No. 3, May.

World Bank 2001 *Social Protection Sector Strategy: From Safety net to spring board.* Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

World Bank 2000 *World Development Report 2000/1: Attacking Poverty* Washington DC: The World Bank

Zucco, C. (2008) 'The President's 'new' constituency: Lula and the pragmatic vote in Brazil's 2006 presidential election' *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 40: pp. 29-49