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1

In Search of Inclusive Development: Introduction

Jimí O. Adésínà

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research project on *Social Policy in Late Industrializers: Sub-Saharan Africa and the Challenge of Social Policy*. Eight studies were commissioned, focusing on four regional and linguistic clusters, and organized around two sets of thematic concerns. East Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa formed the regional cluster, but this was supplemented by a study of selected francophone West and Central African countries. The thematic foci of the studies are education and labour market issues on the one hand, and health, water, and sanitation issues on the other. The concern of this chapter is not so much to summarize the findings from the studies; it is more concerned with tying together some of the themes that have emerged from the studies, *and* reconnecting these to the conceptual issues in social policy broadly, and between social policy and development concerns, specifically. The concerns are tied up in section 1.4 of this chapter with a reflection on six essential elements or *imperatives* in rethinking social policy in sub-Saharan Africa. The imperatives, as is our research project, are based on three normative concerns: inclusivity, development, and democracy – where ‘public reasoning,’ as Amartya Sen (2004) puts it, is foundational to the ordering of public and civic relationships.

For the purpose of our analysis, we define social policy as the collective public efforts at affecting and protecting the social well-being of the people within a given territory. Beyond immediate protection from social destitution, social policy might cover education and health care provision, habitat, food security, sanitation, guarantee some measure of labour market protection, and so on. The idea of a tolerable, minimum level of livelihood and decency is intuitive and socially constructed; and normative

(ideological) rather than technical. These define the links between economic and social policies; the desirable system of social relations and governance; and the specific instruments for achieving the perceived minimal level of well-being. But, unlike much of the framing of social policy issues in the global North, social policy in sub-Saharan Africa has not been defined by the guaranteeing of a minimum level of social well-being through social insurance, unemployment insurance, state guaranteed old-age pension, or pronatalist social provisioning. Rather, it has been largely defined by publicly guaranteed or mediated access to health care and education; much of the old-age pension or provident fund scheme is tied to formal sector employment, contributory or fully funded retirement pension scheme for public sector employees. While we will reflect on pension schemes, the concern of the project and this chapter is largely with the issues of healthcare and education.

In section 1.2 of this chapter, we provide the conceptual and methodological framework for the research programme. In section 1.3, we reflect at length on the research findings and core arguments; these are tied together by the author's independent survey of secondary sources and reflection on the existing body of knowledge in the field of social policy. The fourth and the final section of the chapter involves a reflection on *rethinking social policy* in the sub-Saharan African context.

1.2 Sub-Saharan Africa in retrospect: background to the project

There has perhaps been no other time in Africa's four decades of post-colonial statehood, than now, when the crisis of social development seems so pervasive. In the two decades between 1981 and 2001, 134 million people dropped below the poverty line, putting the total number of people living in poverty (US\$2.15 a day poverty line) at 516 million or 77 per cent of the population (Sachs Report 2005). While there was an 8 per cent reduction in the number of people living in poverty worldwide, sub-Saharan Africa registered an increase; the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty (less than US\$1.08 per day) in the reference period was the highest of any region in the world: 46 per cent or 313 million, up from 45 per cent a decade earlier or 227 million; an increase of 86 million people (Sachs Report 2005: 16). Of the countries listed as having the least human development index, 81 per cent are sub-Saharan African countries (UNDP 2002). Even if one were to quarrel with the estimation technique used in the report,¹ the idea of the region's association with poverty and characterisation as a development wasteland is dominant.

In specific social development outcomes, there is considerable unevenness. Between 1980 and 1994/97, Primary School enrolment fell from 81 per cent to 78 per cent (World Bank 2001c). Excluding Nigeria and South Africa, primary school enrolment declined from 73 per cent in 1980, to 67 per cent in 1994/97. Aggregate figure for secondary school enrolment rose from 15 per cent in 1980 to 27 per cent in 1994/97. Again, when one excludes Nigeria and South Africa, the improvement in secondary school enrolment over the period becomes marginal: 14 per cent in 1980 and 17 per cent in 1994/97. The probability of survival to the age of 65 years is lowest of all the regions of the world (UNDP 2002: 177). Per capita gross national income declined at an annual rate of 0.6 per cent between 1988 and 2000. Added to this is the dominant perception of SSA as a region plagued by genocidal conflicts, civil wars, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This perception is shared by both the political leaders, analysts, and the media.

Yet such characterizations of the region hide three important issues in any analysis of social policy and outcome in the development process. First is the problem of *time sensitivity*. The economic growth figures for the region have not always been this anaemic. Indeed given the perception two-and-a-half decades ago (that the 1970s was a period of stagnation and decline), the pre-1980 period has turned out to be what Adedeji (2002) referred to as 'the golden age'. Average growth rate for sub-Saharan Africa was 4.3 per cent over the period 1967 to 1980 – which was comparable to Asia and Latin America over the same period (cf. Mkandawire 2001b). By contrast Gross National Product, for the region, declined at an annual rate of 10 per cent between 1980 and 1990 (UNDP 1996). What is significant about the pre- and post-1980 disaggregation of performance data is the shift in the understanding of and nature of macroeconomic and social policy, the nature and the role of the state, and the primary source and nature of incentives. Regardless of the spin that is being put on the experience of Africa since the 1980s, the negative impact of macroeconomic and social policy instruments is evident.

Secondly, the aggregate regional statistics hide significant variations in the composition of the various economies, the macroeconomic performances, and social development outcomes. For instance, agriculture accounts for only 3 per cent of South Africa's gross domestic product, while in Zimbabwe it is around 20 per cent. Uganda's economy is heavily dependent on robusta coffee production and agriculture accounts for over 42 per cent of its GDP. Botswana, on the other hand, is dependent on diamond extraction, with agriculture accounting for less than 4 per cent of its GDP in 2000 (World Bank 2002a). There is also the question of size.

In 2000, South Africa and Nigeria account for 50 per cent of the GDP (in current US\$) of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa – with South Africa accounting for 75 per cent of that proportion. Ghana and Nigeria experience sharp fluctuations in international oil prices differently. Similarly, there are wide variations in social development outcomes. Using the 2000 data, the population living in poverty, using national poverty lines, ranged from 26 per cent in Zimbabwe to 86 per cent in Zambia.

Third is the paradox of the lack of fit between macroeconomic indicators of performance and social development outcomes. Understanding social policy outcomes requires more intimate knowledge and understanding of the nature of social forces in a territory that impact on or shape social policy making and the realisation of outcomes (cf. Kangas 1992: 27). Nigeria and South Africa have relatively strong civil society organizations – especially their labour movements – that make the terrain of social policies highly contested. But both countries, for different reasons, show remarkably divergent internal variations in social development outcomes and profiles – the one regional, the other racial.

The linkages between economic growth and social development outcomes, and the way in which we conceptualize the interaction have become increasingly central to the development debate in the last two decades (cf. Mkandawire 2001a). After several years of vilifying the state, the idea of a developmental state is back on the policy agenda. Clearly, the challenge of a developmental state, that is democratic – however defined in relation to economic growth and the nature of State/Market interaction – remains a compelling issue for sub-Saharan Africa. It is in this context that we have seen a rash of global declarations and commitments on a range of social policy outcomes: basic education, sanitation, health care, and so on. It is to this challenge of a democratic developmental state and implications for the social development/economic growth nexus that I turn.

Conceptual and methodological framework of the network

The work of the Africa Group was shaped by a specific conceptual and methodological framework. We understand social policies to be specific and deliberate policies (enacted and pursued) that positively impact on social well-being and security. Critical areas of focus therefore will be education, health and sanitation, and social security. The latter we will define more widely to include social insurance, pension schemes, and policies directed at reducing socioeconomic vulnerability. There are four critical conceptual dimensions to the research programme of the regional network. The first dimension is the understanding that social policies do

matter. The second dimension is the idea of a virtuous relationship between economic development consideration and improvements in social development outcomes. The study by Kangas and Palme (2000) shows that even in the OECD countries, social policies matter. The extent of general reduction in poverty and the dampening of the poverty cycles are important outcomes of specific social policies in the various countries. Further, studies on the linkages between social policy outcomes and economic growth show that at both microeconomic and macroeconomic levels, social development outcomes have beneficial effects on economic growth (Mkandawire 2001a); and that economic growth that is oriented towards social equity and redistribution ensures the sustainability of growth. Where macroeconomic policies fail to pay attention to social policies, they not only undermine the microeconomic basis of growth, they are likely to weaken the social and political basis of sustainable economic growth.²

It was also clear at the design phase that our studies would need to be sensitive to the gaps that may exist between macroeconomic policies, social policies and social policy outcomes. In other words, between the intended and unintended outcomes of social policies, and social forces that impact on this. The widespread collapse in industrial output, escalation in poverty prevalence, and the disintegration (at least severe shrinkage) in administrative capacity might not have been the *intended* consequences of adjustment policies but the collapse resulted nonetheless – this aspect between policy intention and outcome is most dramatic in the area of social service provisioning – that is, in health and in education. Yet the variation in social development outcomes, among the adjusting countries point to the importance of human agency in mitigating the worst impacts of a debilitating policy environment and a country's ability to manoeuvre (cf. Hutchful 2002). Even among non-adjusting countries, social development outcomes have proven to be quite varied.

This leads us to the third dimension (of the conceptual framework) of our research programme, namely paying attention to the nuanced exploration of the social and political contexts of social policies and their outcomes as a fundamental aspect of the research programme. This requires attention to the nature of 'elite' politics and those of allied social forces; the configuration and orientation of social forces within the 'civil society' that shape (initiate, contest, enact) social policies. There is, however, no *a priori* assumption of virtuous 'civil society' forces confronting vicious state forces.

The fourth dimension concerns the combined effects of time sensitivity and spatial disaggregation in making sense of social policy 'transitions'

and outcomes. Given the recurrence of Afro-pessimism in any discussion of sub-Saharan Africa, we need to pay attention to temporal disaggregation and discontinuities in social policies and social policy environments across the region. It is, broadly, possible to identify at least three distinct phases: (a) late colonialism, (b) post-colonial contexts until 1980 or early 1980s, and (c) post-1980; and the variations within each phase. The implications for Southern African countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa is that their post-colonial period coincides with the post-1980 phase for most of sub-Saharan Africa. An important dimension of the phases is the macro-political logic that drove social policy and equity concerns. In spite of what has been said about the preponderance of autocratic states in the pre-1980s post-colonial phase, and the labelling of States and State agents, there is little doubt about the widespread concerns with nation building among state agents – especially in the top echelons of the polities. An appreciation of this concern is important for making sense of very autocratic contexts such as Banda’s Malawi or Kenyatta’s Kenya. The extent to which the recent spate of violent social upheavals in countries like Côte d’Ivoire derives from the falling away of nation-building concerns should be an important consideration for researchers considering specific country situations. Julius Nyerere might be vilified for the ‘failure’ of *Ujamaa*, but it is as a nation-builder that he would probably be remembered by history (Mkandawire 1999; Mazrui 2002; Mamdani 2002). Equity considerations were therefore not only vertical, in class terms, but horizontal, in ethno-religious terms. Considerable intra-country disaggregation will be required in countries like Nigeria that have highly disaggregated national political systems with highly differentiated social policies.

From a methodological perspective, the agenda that was set for the research programme was not so much to generate new primary data as to creatively interact with and make sense of secondary data, while being conscious of the limitation and strength of each data source. Here, the understanding of social and political contexts of the data sources is important. Beyond this – and a methodological-conceptual issue – is the need to go beyond description. Researchers in the network were challenged to locate their specific sectoral works within the wider policymaking contexts as well as give explanatory and *theoretical focus to their works*.

Within this framework one study was concerned with overall conceptual issues and macroeconomic policy directions, focusing on the dominant or ruling ideas on development that shaped each phase of sub-Saharan Africa’s post-colonial history, and how these ruling ideas shaped economic and social policies. A second set of studies focused on

health, water and sanitation dimensions of social policy, while a third examined education and labour market policies. Using comparative techniques, these studies examined clusters of countries in East Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa.

1.3 Social policy in sub-Saharan African context

In this section we discuss the major findings of the studies undertaken within the framework of this project in sub-Saharan Africa. While the studies are comparative, the basis of comparison has been sub-regional – i.e., inter-country comparison within each of the three sub-regions – here we draw lessons across countries and between sub-regions, and sometimes draw illustrations from countries that were not the focus of the individual studies. Further, while the individual studies are thematic in focus, we seek here to draw lessons within each thematic area as well as across the themes, including the implications of the insights that Abdul-Ganiyu Garba's study (Chapter 2 in this volume) of ruling ideas and the politics of policy enforcement affords us. A major gap in the individual studies concerns social security and/or social insurance. Apart from the traditional employment-based contributory old-age pension schemes for those in the private 'formal sector' or non-contributory scheme for those in the public service, new health insurance schemes are being rolled out across several sub-Saharan African countries since the various studies in this collection were commissioned. The latter part of this section provides a review of some of these schemes. The insight from Garba's schematic discussion of ruling ideas and their implications for economic and social policy is important for our analysis of these new pension and health insurance schemes.

Ruling ideas, policy advice, and the politics of sovereign rentier capitalism

Garba identified three ruling ideas that have shaped economic and social policy thinking and practice in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa. The first he identified as the Nationalist discourse and paradigm of social policy; the second strand is broadly associated with the works of Maynard Keynes; the third strand is associated with neoclassical economics: economic thinking and policies that privilege market-transactional mechanisms for allocating resources. Within the broad stream of development economics, the 'nationalist paradigm' can be regarded as being out of the mainstream.

Unlike the other two broad discursive approaches, the Nationalist approach was driven by three core values: an 'explicit commitment to

high moral standards', a 'people-centred' approach to development, and a pan-African orientation. The pan-African orientation was both ethically driven and pragmatic or instrumental; ethically driven in the moral commitment to ending colonial occupation of the continent. The moral commitment informed the allocation of scarce resources to the liberation project, even if 'at the expense' of national or local economic and social investment. It was pragmatic because of the concern for overcoming the debilitating impact of the fragmentary nature of state territories in the post-colonial context. The small states and small markets, and the fragmentary infrastructure and resource endowment, combined to inform the regional approach to development. The moral commitment also informed the effort to ensure 'Better Life for All', even if only rhetorically, which underscored the anti-colonial and post-colonial social pact. Garba identified Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere with this development policy strand, which differed from the mainstream modernization thinking in that it was more Afrocentric and less about following the growth path of the North-Western European and North American countries. The 1980 *Lagos Plan of Action* was the first real continental effort in the direction that Nkrumah (1961, 1964) envisaged – i.e., an immediate concern with crafting a continental development agenda. The political ferment of the immediate anti-colonial and post-independence venture resonated quite greatly with a generation of African intellectuals with a radical pan-African focus, 'in which', as Ki-Zerbo (2005: 84) puts it, 'we opted for immediate independence, the United States of Africa and a socialism that had to be premised on local realities, interests and values'. It produced some early attempts at creating regional economic communities, such as in East Africa, and attempts at dissolving the colonial boundaries such as the Ghana–Guinea union in 1958, and the Ghana–Guinea–Mali union shortly thereafter. In the wider geopolitics of the immediate post-independence context, however, this was a minority: the *Casablanca Bloc* of the integrationist pan-African states and political leaders were confronted by a more introverted and conservative *Monrovia Bloc*. The latter was defined by the Cold War politics of the West. The African unity that emerged in the form of the Organization of African Unity was one constructed around a minimalist project of ending colonial rule and interaction within existing colonial boundaries. The feasibility of the pan-Africanist 'nationalist' developmental project is one that Garba questioned, especially in light of the local and global constraints, as least as seen from the 'game-theoretical framework' within which Garba organized his discussion. As he puts it, 'the failure meant that each [sub-Saharan African country] coexisted within a global political-economic

system unilaterally even when the system was dominated by two antagonistic power blocs’.

There are, however, two distinct and dominant concerns that cut across the ideological divide – although by no means generic: these are the concerns with economic growth and national unity. The ‘eradication of the “unholy trinity of ignorance, poverty, and disease” was a central component of the nationalist agenda’ (Mkandawire 2005a: 13), and economic growth was seen as a means for doing so. The reality of having inherited very weak or non-existent human resource prerequisites for embarking on the campaign meant that there was a second imperative for the synergy between social sector expenditure and economic growth. For example, for a country whose economy depended mainly on mining, Zambia at independence did not have a single indigenous mining engineer. Chachage (Chapter 3, this volume) made a similar point about Tanzania. At independence Congo-Kinshasa, a country larger than Western Europe, had only thirty university graduates.³ Social spending on education, for instance, was clearly not only about the moral imperative of overcoming the legacy of colonialism but a *sine qua non* for the human resources needs of a modern economy. While there might have been differences in the degree of commitment to this broad project, ideological orientation (from those committed to liberal capitalism, radical socialism, to those with a social democratic commitment), and the policy mix that was considered appropriate, the links between social expenditure and economic development was largely seen as immediate. The link between the social and the economic was neither a residual for catching citizens when they experience market failure in command over entitlements nor a proactive protection against the loss of living standard to which citizens had grown accustomed. The concern with national unity and ‘nation building’ was partly in reaction to what was considered the divisive ethnic policies of the colonial regime. The murder of Patrice Lumumba, on 17 January 1961 – in the context of the Moise Tshombe-led secession of the Katanga Province – and the role played by a range of international⁴ and domestic forces, profoundly marked the psyche of a generation of African nationalists. While Mkandawire (2005a: 12) has pointed to its implications for the ‘perception of ethnicity and regional claims that “Tshombes” and “Katanga” were seen behind every movement challenging the authority of the central government’, it produced a contrary result in many countries. From Senegal to Kenya, social expenditure played an active role in the efforts to create national unity and social cohesion. The nation-building agenda was defined by efforts at developing a new generation of citizens committed to the ‘nation-state’⁵ rather than the ethnic or the regional. Public spending

on education and schooling policies were often designed to reduce huge inter-regional variations in educational accomplishments and enhance national unity. In several countries – from Malawi to Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal – the schooling strategies involved bringing young people of different ethnic or regional backgrounds together in secondary schools, and even more so at the university level. The policy involved a conscious effort to create a new ‘elite’ that grew up, within the educational system, with shared experience of young adulthood, in the hope that this would develop a trans-ethnic leadership corps. Admission into top public secondary schools and national universities involved deliberate policies of bringing together young people from different regional and ethnic backgrounds. The schooling policy went hand-in-hand with an active use of public expenditure either through ‘free education’ (or publicly-funded schooling) or use of scholarships and bursaries to provide access. In national or sub-national contexts where there was strong commitment to active social policy of this nature, the social development outcomes were quite significant and beyond what the conventional mapping of social indicators against economic indicators might suggest.

If the nationalist projects of nation building and growth provide the agenda or ends, the means were shaped by a changing pattern of ruling advice. In the period between the 1950s and the 1990s, Garba identified four distinct, often contradictory, regimes of policy advice. The diagnoses undergirding them ranged from market failure to government failure, policy failure, and more recently, institution failure. The policy advice ranged from promoting state as the primary agent of change to the vilification of the state; from getting the price right to getting institutions right. What is, however, common and constant across the policy regimes is the nature of the lead agents: visiting mission, foreign advisers, and state agents of the global North! Within the game-theoretical framework in which he analysed the relationship, Garba identified the emergence of ‘sovereign rentier capitalism’ and its politics. Garba identified ‘sovereign rentier capitalism’ as a largely post-colonial shift in the nature of global capitalism in which rent-extraction and rentier relationship is organised around sovereign lending and/or borrowing.

The history of sovereign rentier capitalism of the last half a century leads us to conclude that *orthodox development thought and development advice* wittingly or unwittingly served sovereign rentier capitalist that primarily sought their services in *creating* and *sustaining* the demand for sovereign rentier capital. Influential development theories such as the vicious cycle of poverty model deepen fatalism by its

conclusion that poor nations are trapped in a vicious cycle and cannot get out without outside help. The gap models then help to create the demand for sovereign rentier capital by encouraging a habit of dependence as the model offer sovereign borrowing as a panacea to closing savings-investment and foreign exchange gaps.

(Chapter 2, this volume, pp. 77–8)

We might add that the ‘capital’ that sovereign rentier capitalist institutions offered was not only financial (aid or investment) but intellectual – policy advice. The ‘most ingenious strategic move of (the sovereign rentier capitalist) is its successful marketing of itself as a donor’ (Garba, Chapter 2, p. 83). The overall objective is ‘control of policy making’ (Garba, Chapter 2, this volume, p. 78; Toye 1991). From Nigeria, through Zimbabwe in the early 1980s, and South Africa in the 1990s, the consistency with which the ‘donor-sovereign rentier’ establishment have sought to maintain control over policymaking is remarkable (cf. Yesufu 1969; Mhone and Bond 2001; Bond 1998, 2000; Gumede 2005). The degree of policy intrusiveness has been defined by ideological affinity of the local state-agents and the external policy merchants, and fiscal vulnerability that results from a combination of domestic policies and external shocks. Ghana and Zambia were early examples of the crisis (external shock and the resulting fiscal vulnerability) that would become endemic after the 1980s. In Ghana’s case external shock occasioned by the collapse of commodity price of cocoa created the fiscal vulnerability (Hutchful 2002: 9–10) and the ideological coup that overthrew the government in February 1966. The ‘big-push’ strategy of the Nkrumah government had been financed by the favourable international commodity price of cocoa. The ideological affinity between the new military regime and the fiscal vulnerability made Ghana the first country in the region whose policy-making process came under the direct control of the International Monetary Fund (IMF); and the consequences of the stabilization and the liberalization project were severe indeed. The deflationary bias it put at the heart of public finance policy persisted for a long time. In Zambia’s case vulnerability was without ideological affinity, but the severe trade and budgetary crises that followed the sharp fall in the price of copper and simultaneous steep rise in the price of oil in the mid-1970s created similar results.

For much of the 1960s and 1970s, however, the IMF played little part in shaping fiscal and broad economic policies in most African countries. The dominant policy advice was from the World Bank, private, multi-lateral, and national policy advisers. In the period after the 1980s, the

degree of policy autonomy by the local authorities and policy advisers – autonomous of the Washington Consensus establishment – diminished. In the pre-1980 period the more Keynesian of these policy regimes resonated with the more expansive nationalist objective in the underlining argument of the virtuous relationship between equity and efficiency, especially in the context in which much of the socialist orientation was inspired or influenced by Fabianism, and a widespread commitment to social expenditure. Even so, profound changes have occurred in the policy space available to most governments in sub-Saharan Africa. The multi-polar world of the 1960s and the 1970s offered a greater diversity of ‘learning sources’ in comparison to the highly diminished policy space of the late twentieth century.

The transitional phase had involved demands by the ‘donors’ and Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) for the replacement of personnel responsible for economic policies, and the use of ‘brute economic force . . . to push through certain idea. The unresponsiveness of African bureaucracies and their apparent unwillingness to learn has been used to justify the conditionalities that have accompanied policy making. It has also led to the hijacking of key policy-making agencies by international financial institutions’ (Mkandawire 2004: 5). The personnel change was part of a much wider agenda of reshaping not only Africa’s economies but also her politics and civil societies (Adesina 2004); an agenda that involved active efforts at developing, financing, and promoting a new cadre of economists, and the deployment of local experts that belong to the market-centric ‘epistemic’ community. Capacity building became a mechanism for proselytizing and cloning (Mkandawire 2004; Adesina 2004). Elson and Cagatay (2000: 1354–7) argued that the policy framework itself was shaped by three biases, with fundamental implications for social policy and social development outcomes: ‘deflationary bias’, ‘male-breadwinner bias’, and ‘commodification bias’. We will return to this in the next section of this chapter.

The period from 1960 to 1980 witnessed a significant improvement in a range of social development indicators (cf. Table 1.1).⁶ Figure 1.1 would suggest that, for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, much of the domestic investment from 1960 to 1980 was financed largely by domestic resources. The contrast with the next twenty years (1980 to 2000) could not be sharper: the adjusted R^2 for the strength of fit between gross capital formation and gross domestic savings for the period between 1960 and 1980 is 0.978, in contrast to 0.253 for the period between 1980 and 2000.⁷ Removing Nigeria from the dataset used for the analysis did not alter the trend or the shape of the graph, at least not

Table 1.1 Selected social development indicators of some sub-Saharan African countries

	Life expectancy at birth (years)		Child death rate (aged 1-4)		Adult literacy (%)		Primary school enrollment (% age group)		Basic needs index	
	1960	1982	1960	1982	1960	1985	1960	1981	1960	1982
Botswana	40	60	23	13	33	72	42	102	48	80
Cameroon	37	53	28	16	19	56	65	107	48	73
Chad	35	44	60	37	6	25	17	35	25	42
Congo	37	60	23	10	16	63	78	156	52	78
Côte d'Ivoire	37	47	40	23	5	43	46	76	37	61
Gabon	36	49	34	22	12	62	100	202	54	72
Ghana	40	55	27	15	30	53	38	69	45	66
Kenya	41	57	21	13	20	59	47	109	47	76
Lesotho	42	53	29	17	59	73	83	104	64	77
Madagascar	37	48	45	23	34	68	52	100	45	73
Malawi	37	44	58	29	22	41	30	62	33	55
Niger	37	45	45	27	1	14	5	23	25	39
Nigeria	39	50	50	20	15	42	36	98	35	68
Somalia	36	39	61	47	2	12	9	30	22	34
Sudan	39	47	40	23	13	20	25	42	34	49
Swaziland	38	54	33	27	29	68	58	110	48	74
Uganda	44	47	28	22	35	57	49	54	50	59
DRC (Zaire)	40	50	32	20	31	61	60	90	50	70
Zambia	40	51	38	20	47	76	42	96	48	76

Source: Ghai (1987: 4); cf. Adesina (2006).

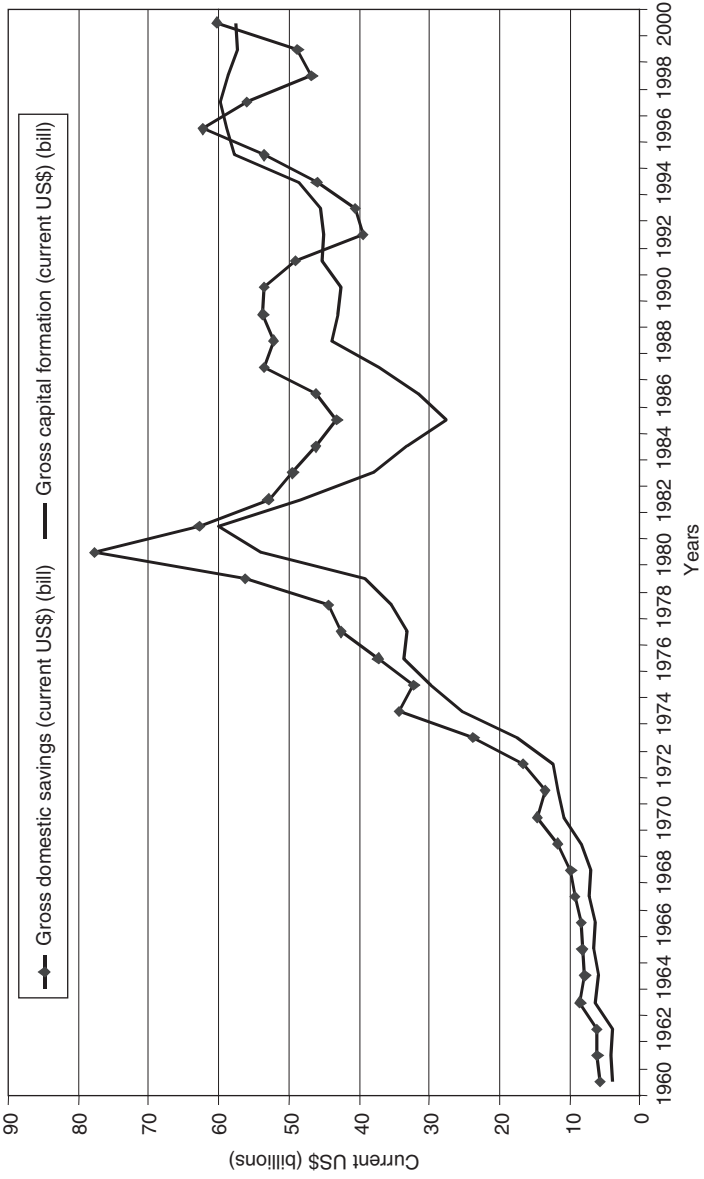


Figure 1.1 Gross domestic savings and gross capital formation in sub-Saharan Africa

for the period between 1960 and 1980. The post-1980 period showed two patterns. One is significant volatility in gross domestic savings and gross capital formation; the other is that gross capital formation outstripped gross domestic savings. The post-1980 period, we should be reminded, has been the season of ‘stabilization,’ adjustment, and donor monopoly of the policy landscape; the period of neoliberal ascendancy.

As Mkandawire (2001b: 303) pointed out, ‘despite the many distortions of import substitution, until the second “oil” crisis many African economies had performed relatively well’. The nationalist consensus was not exclusively that of politicians. Hutchful (2002) noted that the IMF-inspired ‘shoddy treatment of the state enterprises by the’ National Liberation Council (NLC) military junta and the sell-off of state (essentially national) assets sparked off public protest; the stabilization programme found little favour with the domestic business community.

Changing dynamics of education provisioning

In the survey of changing education policy environment in the three East African countries (Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda), Chachage (chapter 3, this volume, pp. 89–90) noted the influence of the wider, dominant, perception of education as ‘a means to social and economic development at national level, a way to employment opportunities at personal level and, a means to forging national cohesion and reducing inequalities left by the colonial legacy’. Education was not only about the national strategy for raising literacy levels and providing the human resources needed for the economic growth objective, it was the individual’s means of securing a better livelihood. Unemployment was not considered a major national problem in many of the countries in the immediate years of post-independence; the misalignment of skill endowment relative to the need of the economy was something that needed to be rectified by educational training. Apart from the problem of financing, the labour market structure did not make unemployment insurance a major policy objective. Universal access to primary education was a distinct objective of various governments from Ghana, south western Nigeria, to Tanzania. In the early post-colonial years, this expansive approach to education provisioning coincided with rapid expansion in the economies. Even in Tanzania, whose narratives these days might suggest that the crisis started as soon as the *Ujamaa* programme was launched, manufacturing output grew at a healthy 7.5 per cent per annum between 1965 and 1975. In this Botswana has had an inverted experience – with considerable resource constraint and poor resource base in the early years of its post-independence experience until the 1970s, when income from diamonds

generated the phenomenal rise in GDP and government revenue. In the case of south-western Nigeria, ethical commitment to universal access to primary education, and a publicly-funded education system, was financed in an environment of tight fiscal resource management; on shoe-string budget (Awolowo 1960). Zimbabwe, with a similar post-independence commitment to expansion of access to education, faced an initial few years of massive fluctuations in the monetary and fiscal policy conditions (Kadhani 1986).⁸

The crisis that was to become emblematic of the early 1980s emerged differently in the countries. In Ghana it was a function of external shock, made worse by the deflationary and aggressive liberalisation that followed the NLC regime's tie-up with the IMF. In Uganda, it was fundamentally the crisis of erratic and murderous policies of the Idi Amin's regime – with the expulsion of 70,000 Ugandans of Asian descent in 1972 and the abduction and murder of the vice chancellor of Makerere University as emblematic of a maniacal regime; the Ugandan Asians were the mainstay of Uganda's manufacturing and service sectors. In Tanzania's case, the impact of the second oil shock of the late 1970s was compounded by the war against Idi Amin's army which had invaded north-west Tanzania. While the war freed Uganda and the world of Idi Amin, it was at a cost of US\$50 million to the Tanzanian fiscus.

The impact of the policy response to the crisis on social policy differed significantly from one country to another. Early response in Ghana, in the 1960s, was aggressive in the impact on public spending on social services; a phenomenon most dramatic in the Nigerian case where public spending on education plummeted under the regime of Ibrahim Babangida. In Ghana and Zimbabwe, from the 1980s onwards, there were efforts to protect social spending, even as the government of Jerry Rawlings in Ghana sought to constantly negotiate the policy margins with the BWIs – and in several instances 'played the BWIs' game' (cf. Hutchful 2004). In this regard Botswana's example shows real growth in the economy accompanied by real growth in social spending. An affirmation of education as a social right also involved quality funding at all levels of the education system. The paradox of South Africa is quite interesting in this respect: faced with the enormous challenges of redressing the inequities of the Apartheid order and early speculative run on its currency in 1996, the government *opted* for tight monetary and fiscal regime, with negative implications for real spending on education: public spending as a percentage of the GDP declined from 6.3 per cent in 1990 to 5.7 per cent (UNDP 2004). Real per capita recurrent expenditure on education declined, annually, by 1.2 per cent between

1997 and 2002 – from R793 in 1997 to R719 in 2002; and per capita gross fixed investment (capital expenditure) declined from R73 in 1995 to R60 in 2002 (UNDP 2003: 24).⁹ The South African case is all the more significant since the economy grew between 1990 (when the country was in the throes of ending the racist sociopolitical order) and 2001; so did the resources (tax-based revenue) needed by the post-Apartheid government to address the crises of equity and poverty.

We can discern three trends in the attempts to fill the resource gap that emerged at various times (in different countries) in the late twentieth century, which reflect different levels of commitments within the state and ability of social movements to influence the state (i.e., issues of agency): utter neglect, shifting the burden to the citizens, or efforts to protect social spending, typified by Nigeria, Tanzania, and Ghana, respectively. Nigeria's case involves the neglect of social spending, resulting in a decline in education spending from 6 per cent of the GDP in 1980, when the economy was at the peak of its performance, to 0.65 per cent in 1995. In real terms, this was a decline in public spending from US\$3,719 million in 1980 to US\$181 million in 1995 (World Bank 2005). Ghana, with similar experience of adjustment, more doubled its public spending on education (Udegbe, Chapter 5). Public spending on education increased from US\$132 million in 1980 to US\$273 million in 1995 (World Bank 2005). At the other end Tanzania experienced a dramatic shifting of the burden of education financing (especially at the tertiary level) to citizens and the institutions. The aggressive 're-commodification' of access to education in Tanzania and Uganda has received complimentary attention, as examples of institutional dynamism (cf. Court 2000). Chachage's 'frog-eye' view of the experiences revealed not only the massive degradation in the teaching and research environment, but the extent to which the market logic deployed at Dar-es-Salaam University and Makerere University undermined the rationale for education – a qualitative link that was central to the Nationalist mission or the functioning of universities in the developed countries. In the effort to improve funding in the face of declining government subvention universities in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, have experienced a dramatic rise in student numbers, even with a declining staff complement. The dramatic increases in student enrolment have been 'financed' by overcrowding, decline in quality of teaching and the neglect of research activities (especially in relation to the pre-crisis period). While 'user fee' was promoted on the grounds of equity of access and the need to shift resources away from tertiary to primary education, there is little evidence that such equity of access is being achieved

when compared to the quality of education at all levels in the 1970s. On the other hand, there is ample evidence of a sharp decline in budgetary funding for social services in many countries and that user fees have been used to substitute for budgetary allocation. The fiscal concern with restraining public spending – often to service external debt – has been the primary objective rather than equity. In Makerere the percentage of privately-sponsored students, in the total student population, grew from 32 per cent in 1993 to 86 per cent in 2000 (Obong 2004: 111). Both Ghana and Zimbabwe have also seen significant rises in user charges levied on citizens who seek social services.

We will address user-fee charges as a mechanism for social services financing in greater depth later. Anecdotal evidence suggest that the attempt at meeting the basic education targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is resulting in the same crisis of overcrowding, since increased enrolment numbers is not matched by increase in number of classrooms and teachers. In Uganda, with the introduction of universal primary education,¹⁰ in 1997, enrolment increased from 3.06 million in 1996 to 7.6 million in 2003, a remarkable feat, but the number of students per classroom was an astonishing 110 in 2000, declining slightly to 94 children per classroom in 2003 (Bategeka 2005)! What is instructive about the universal basic education – not even primary education – is that fifty years after the Action Group government (Western region, Nigeria) rolled out what is universally acknowledged as a very successful universal primary education effort, and over forty years after several Nationalist governments took the same road, African countries are embarking on a journey to their own past: without a full acknowledgment, within the same community framing the agenda, of the impact of 25 years of structural adjustment in reversing the post-colonial social development outcomes. There is a second paradox – while universal primary education involved more focused and programmatic planning, and largely financed by domestic resources, the reinvention of past achievement is driven by donor-financing, fiscal conservatism, and project-focused! Again, we will return to this in a moment.

An assessment of the education aspect of social policy objectives would return us to the twin issues of gender disparity and the role of agency in the pattern of achievement. While illiteracy rates have declined significantly across sub-Saharan Africa there are wide differentials in such achievement. Across the countries that were the focus of this study, female illiteracy rates are on average twice that of men – with the exception of Botswana, where the female literacy rate is slightly higher than that for males, and South Africa, where the difference is marginal. This is even more remarkable in

Table 1.2 Gender and illiteracy rates (% of people age 15 and above) 1970–2000

<i>Countries</i>		1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Nigeria	Adult Total	79.9	74.1	67.1	59.3	51.4	43.7	36.1
	Adult Female	89.8	85.0	78.5	70.4	61.9	53.1	44.3
	Adult Male	69.4	62.7	55.2	47.6	40.4	33.8	27.6
Ghana	Adult Total	70.5	63.6	56.3	48.9	41.6	34.9	28.5
	Adult Female	83.4	77.0	69.5	61.5	53.0	45.0	37.1
	Adult Male	57.1	49.7	42.5	36.0	29.9	24.5	19.7
Kenya	Adult Total	59.3	51.7	43.8	36.2	29.2	23.0	17.6
	Adult Female	74.2	66.4	57.3	48.0	39.2	31.1	24.0
	Adult Male	44.2	36.9	30.0	24.2	19.0	14.7	11.1
Tanzania	Adult Total	64.3	57.8	50.9	43.8	37.0	30.8	24.9
	Adult Female	80.2	73.8	66.1	57.5	49.0	41.1	33.5
	Adult Male	47.3	40.8	34.9	29.4	24.4	20.0	16.1
Uganda	Adult Total	63.7	59.1	54.2	49.2	43.9	38.2	32.9
	Adult Female	78.3	73.6	68.4	62.7	56.6	49.8	43.2
	Adult Male	48.6	43.9	39.4	35.0	30.7	26.3	22.5
Botswana	Adult Total	53.9	48.1	42.5	36.7	31.9	27.4	22.8
	Adult Female	52.4	46.7	40.9	34.9	29.7	25.0	20.2
	Adult Male	55.9	49.8	44.4	38.7	34.2	30.0	25.5
South Africa	Adult Total	30.2	26.9	23.8	21.1	18.8	16.7	14.7
	Adult Female	32.0	28.5	25.2	22.3	19.7	17.5	15.4
	Adult Male	28.4	25.3	22.4	19.9	17.8	15.8	14.0
Zimbabwe	Adult Total	42.5	35.8	29.9	24.2	19.3	15.2	11.3
	Adult Female	51.0	43.8	37.5	30.9	25.0	20.1	15.3
	Adult Male	33.8	27.6	22.1	17.3	13.4	10.2	7.2

Source: World Bank World Development Indicators 2002 (CD).

the case of Zimbabwe, whose literacy achievement was significant; showing what public commitment to social objectives can produce, even in the face of adverse economic performance.

Nigeria’s abysmal lack of public commitment to education is made even worse by the quality of spending. At the time that spending declined to 0.6 per cent of the GDP, much of this was for personnel costs. It would seem that without the agitation by education sector unions to ensure payment of salaries, although sporadic, social spending in this sector might have been worse.

Equally important, for making sense of social policymaking, is the role of agency: the lack of fit between basic economic indicators and education achievement. Botswana, with five times Zimbabwe’s per capita income, has a lower level of literacy; its literacy rate is similar to that of Tanzania, whose per capita income is less than a tenth of Botswana’s. South Africa’s literacy rate is about the same as Kenya’s, although South Africa’s economy

and GDP are eight-and-a-half times and almost six times, respectively, that of Kenya. The comparative difference between Botswana and Zimbabwe is particularly evident in the public sector commitment, with Botswana spending 2 per cent of its GDP on education, compared with 10 per cent in Zimbabwe; Ghana, with a slightly lower per capita income than Nigeria, spends more than four times its share of GDP on education. As noted earlier, while public spending on education declined dramatically in Nigeria, it more than doubled in Ghana, at a time when both countries were under structural adjustment. In Nigeria the argument by state functionaries and their BWI handlers regarding the imperative of rebuilding the country's education infrastructure has focused on private sector provisioning and 'cost sharing' rather than significantly increased public spending on the sector. A similar crisis is evident in the health sector, which we will discuss shortly. The relationship between the level of inequality in the various countries and public spending on education speak to the dynamics of social pressure that can be brought to bear on public policy makers. Again this is an issue that we will address below, shortly.

The paradox of the last twenty years, which was supposed to correct the distortions in the economies of sub-Saharan African countries, is twofold. First is the rise of unemployment among university graduates, within the context of a general rise in unemployment. Studies from Ghana to Tanzania and South Africa record this phenomenon. The impact of a deflationary macroeconomic policy approach and aggressive liberalization on the one hand, and the 'public sector' reform with massive cutbacks in employment levels, on the other, have led to a phenomenal rise in unemployment in several countries – with Botswana as the lone exception among the countries covered in our studies. Hendricks (Chapter 4) pointed to the South African case where the rate of unemployment among Black graduates is much higher than the average level of unemployment. The growth path that South Africa pursued since 1996 has been particularly regressive in the area of employment; in March 2003, the official unemployment level was 31 per cent, up from 20 per cent in 1996. Much of this was the result of the monetary and fiscal policies that encouraged a capital-intensive production system; while output rose between 1996 and 2002, employment stagnated or declined while the number of new entrants into the labour market grew (UNDP 2003). The second paradox is the phenomenal rise in the number of expatriate 'technical assistance' personnel that have poured into sub-Saharan Africa. Chachage cited a 1990 report on Kenya, which showed that of the 324 technical assistance positions that were filled by expatriates local

Table 1.3 National wealth, public spending and social policy outcomes (2002)

	GDP (US\$Bill)	GDP per capita (US\$)	Adult literacy	Public expenditure on education as % of GDP	Infant mortality rate**	Public expenditure on health as % of GDP ⁺	Human poverty index	Gini index	Gender-related development index
Kenya	12.3	393	84.3	6.2	78	2.2	37.5	44.5	0.486
Tanzania	9.4	267	77.1	3.2*	104	2.7	36.0	38.2	0.401
Uganda	5.8	236	68.9	2.5	82	2.1	36.4	43.0	0.487
Botswana	5.3	3,080	78.9	2.1	80	3.7	43.5	63.0	0.581
South Africa	104.2	2,299	86.0	5.7	52	3.5	31.7	59.3	0.661
Zimbabwe	8.3	639	90.0	10.4	76	4.4	52.0	56.8	0.482
Nigeria	43.5	328	66.8	0.9*	110	1.2	35.1	50.6	0.458
Ghana	6.2	304	73.8	4.1	57	2.3	26.0	30.0	0.564

Sources: UNDP Human Development Report 2004, + UNDP Human Development Report 2005.

Notes: All data refer to 2002 except: * is 1990 data; **Infant mortality figures are per 1,000 live births.

Kenyans could easily have filled 204 of such positions (Chachage, chapter 3 this volume). A study in Tanzania showed that, in 1988, the salary and emolument of the expatriate staff consumed US\$200 million out of US\$300 million in technical assistance support for the year 1988; the total personnel cost of the Tanzanian public sector employees (civil servants, teachers, health workers, etc.) for the year was US\$100 million!

Apart from South Africa, none of the other seven countries covered in our study has any unemployment insurance or wage protection scheme in place. The result of unemployment is therefore likely to trigger a significant entitlement failure in these countries, which partly explains the significant increase in the number of people living in poverty in the regions. South Africa's unemployment scheme dates back to the 1966 Unemployment Insurance Act. In 2001 a new Unemployment Insurance Act was enacted – a contributory scheme funded by payroll deduction, employers' contributions, and funds appropriated by the South African parliament. The scheme, which covers non-public servants, excludes anyone working for less than 24 hours a month for an employer, non-South African citizens who are working on contract or a worker whose income derives from commission.¹¹ On 1 April 2004, the Act was amended to cover domestic workers.

Under Section 13(3) of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 2001, 'a contributor's entitlement to benefits . . . accrues at a rate of one day's benefit for every completed six days of employment as a contributor subject to a maximum accrual of 238 days' benefit in the four year period immediately preceding the date of application for benefits'. Benefits can be claimed for unemployment, maternity leave, or periods of illness not covered by the employer. Dependants of a contributor may also claim from the fund upon the death of the contributor. At the end of 2004 the Unemployment Insurance Fund had built up a reserve of R8.4 billion, and it 'expected to exceed its actuarial valuation reserves by R500 million' by the end of the 2005/06 fiscal year.¹² Net contributions to the fund was R3.63 billion in 2003/4, against benefits claim of R3.28 billion; a significant turn around from 1999 when net contribution stood at R2.7 billion against benefit payout of R2.98 billion.¹³

Changing dynamics of health care provisioning

The comparative studies on the changing dynamics of health and related services show similarities and distinct divergences when compared with the education sector. Here, as in the case of the education sector, two patterns of social provisioning emerge: the pre- and post-1980s. As Table 1:3 shows, child mortality (for children aged between 1 and 4 years) declined

across sub-Saharan Africa, even for the more errant states like Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire. Much of this was achieved through the socialisation of consumption, especially at the level of primary health care services; social spending on health was part of a wider objective of defeating the triad of 'ignorance, poverty, and disease'. In Tanzania, part of the reasoning behind the policy of 'villagization' – concentrating rural communities in distinct villages – was to benefit from the economies of scale that this brought in the provision of social services and efforts to raise production. The moral crisis of enforced concentration of the population, no matter its expected social and economic benefits, and the mistakes made in the process, are things that Mwalimu Nyerere himself readily accepted (cf. Mkandawire 1999). Similarly, as Bond (Chapter 7) noted, the first decade of post-independence in Zimbabwe witnessed significant improvements in health indicators: infant mortality declined from 86 per 1,000 live births to 49; immunization coverage rose from 25 per cent to 80 per cent, and life expectancy increased from 56 to 62 years.

As Atieno (Chapter 6) shows for East Africa, the under-five mortality rate declined in Kenya from 98 for every 1,000 live births in 1970 to 81 per 1,000 in 1980; in Tanzania it declined from 125 to 98 over the same period. Within ten years of adjustment these improvements had been reversed; even with the case of Uganda, under-five mortality rates had risen from 118 per 1,000 live births to 187 in 1990, 132 in Tanzania, and 94 in Kenya. Maternal mortality more than doubled in Tanzania between 1985 and 1990; in Uganda it rose fourfold within the same period, in spite of the fact that in 1985 Uganda was in the grip of the civil war. While maternal mortality fell back to lower levels in 1996, the number of women dying in childbirth was still higher than in 1985.

It was perhaps in the area of health care provisioning that the aggressive retrenchment of the state and cuts in social expenditure had its most damaging effects. The erroneous assumption of orthodox adjustment was threefold: one was to assume that there was a market in health care services to take care of the impact that the fiscal retrenchment of the state would create; the second was to assume, as unproblematic, resource endowment for all the citizens for procuring their health care needs in the new marketplace; the third was to assume that public resources spent subsidizing the citizens were a waste. The consequence has been particularly grim across most of sub-Saharan Africa. People did not as much fall through the net of social provisioning; they died! The impact on increased women's burden in the care economy within the homes has been pointed out by several researchers (cf. Elson and Catagay 2000). As Atieno's figures show, the impact of the retrenchment

of state provisioning was particularly damaging for women, both for their personal health care needs and also that of children because of women overwhelmingly bear the burden of nurturing and child care. The weight of health care provisioning shifted from the national fiscus to the end-users. Okuonzi (2004) showed that gynaecological and obstetrics services suffered particularly badly under this policy regime.

The shift from 'stabilization-and-liberalization' to the 'social dimensions of adjustment' (SDA) followed overwhelming evidence of the carnage that adjustment was wrecking on child and maternal health in the countries under adjustment, generally, but on Africa, specifically (cf. Cornia *et al.* 1987). The initial response was to focus on using a 'safety net' for what was considered a short-term market failure to raise the level of social welfare. The social service delivery to address vulnerability was premised on 'targeting' the 'deserving poor' rather than universal access. Retained within this period was the framework of the earlier phase in which privileged market-transactional social policy provisioning, 'cost-recovery', and 'user-fee' charges became the basis for accessing publicly financed social services. All of the countries that implemented the BWIs' adjustment programme implemented the user-fee ('cost-recovery', 'cost-sharing') policy mainly in the areas of health and education. Botswana, a country covered in our study, implemented a user-fee policy in the area of health care, even though it is not an adjusting country (Singh 2003; Hutton 2004; Pearson 2004).

Again, social policy was regarded largely as a residual aspect of public policy. The widespread evidence was that even within the SDA palliatives levels of poverty continued to rise, and social development indicators continued to regress; generally adjustment policy was not working. This prompted a search for 'explanations' (cf. Garba, Chapter 2) and 'alternative approaches' to liberalization. The attempt at establishing a comprehensive development framework (Wolfensohn 1999) and using the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as its delivery vehicle have not altered the fundamental economic ontological discourse, the focus of macroeconomic policy in restraining public spending and 'liberating' the market from *dirigisme*, or the 'no-free-lunch' logic that requires end-users to finance their social service consumption.

Studies continue to show that the claims about empowerment and consultation with civil society are at best perfunctory. Both the BWIs and the donor countries persist in pushing the same macroeconomic policy instruments that failed to address the structural impediments in most African economies which created the vulnerability to external shocks in the first instance. Not only has there been a failure to sustain the pre-1980s regional growth rates; the capacity for sustainable recovery has

been undermined even in successful adjusting economies (Adesina 2004, 2005). In many ways we are back to the same current account and balance of payment imbalances that were emblematic of the 1970s – when import bills for feeding the consumerist appetite of the middle class and urban areas escalated, even as export receipts stagnated or declined. While growth may be good for the poor and social policy broadly, there is evidence that the BWIs' policies have not been particularly good for growth, much less development (Weisbrot *et al.* 2000).

In countries already faced with declining household income and a rising level of poverty, the imposition of user fees or 'cost sharing' had the effect of mediating citizenship with capacity to engage in the market. Bond (Chapter 7) discussed at length the counterproductive impact of the 'user-charges' policy in the provision of water and sanitation services in South Africa; where people in poor neighbourhoods are forced to get water from deadly sources. The case of KwaZulu Natal Province in 2002 – where the cost of responding to the cholera outbreak far outstripped the outlay that would have been needed to provide the households with clean water – is an important reminder of the dubious cost-benefit analysis that underscores much of the aggressive neoliberal thinking. The shift in state policy, to universal provisioning of 6,000 litres per month/per household, might be less than what the anti-poverty coalition (within and outside the ANC) bargained for, but it is a key reminder of how tentative, and often tenuous, is the effort at 'dissolving the public realm' (Clarke 2004).

As Okuonzi (2004: 1629) notes:

Despite the theoretical benefits of such fees (equality, resource mobilisation, quality of care, and efficient use of services), the reality was starkly different. The envisaged fund generation through user-fees was clearly negligible, always less than 5 per cent of total health expenditure. There were no demonstrable benefits of these fees on the quality or efficiency of social services.

As Pearson (2004) shows, even as a proportion of the recurrent budget in the public health care sector (that the fees were supposed to cover), the contribution of user fees was as little as 2 per cent; Guinea and Burkina Faso that recorded 20 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, were outliers by a very wide margin. As Hutton (2004) shows, many of the arguments advanced in favour of the introduction of user-fee charges do not hold in sub-Saharan Africa. The argument that user fees will reduce the frivolous use of services is a case in point, started off with an invalid premise: you first have to assume an 'important level of frivolous use' (Hutton 2004: 67) for the argument to hold. Yet evidence would suggest

that there was an initial condition of 'serious underuse of services' (Hutton 2004: 67) created by several barriers to health care access such as geography. User-fee charges added to the list of barriers to the 'poor' that the policy claimed it would help. While fiscal constraints are often cited for the charging of user fees, and these constraints treated as exogenous (Mkandawire 2005b), it is useful to remember that the fiscal contraction of the state was itself the consequence of macroeconomic policies pursued within the wider adjustment programme. Massive reduction in tariff-based revenue, reduction in taxes and tax rates were two such cases that undermined the fiscal base of the state.

In several cases, as Okuonzi (2004) noted in respect of health care services, the state was discouraged from invest in health care services; the same applies in the area of education. Stephen Lewis's (2005) recollection of his experience in this area during his 2005 Massey Lectures *Race Against Time* is worth quoting at length:

I remember being in Malawi in 2002 at a roundtable discussion with the vice-president and a number of civil servants from the Ministry of Finance. They were complaining bitterly about the limits imposed by the International Monetary Fund on Malawi's public sector pay levels and hiring intentions. It was surreal: here you had a country with huge human capacity problems that wanted desperately to retain its professionals in health and education, and increase their numbers, but the IMF wouldn't allow them to do so. We're talking about a sovereign government, fighting the worst plague in history, with but a handful of professionals: according to the minister of health, Malawi has one-third of the nurses it needs (4,000 instead of the 12,000) and perhaps 10 per cent of the doctors (300 rather than 3,000) for a population of 12 million. And they weren't being allowed – I repeat, this sovereign government wasn't being allowed – to hire more staff and pay better salaries, because it would breach the macroeconomic straitjacket . . .

What makes me nearly apoplectic – and I very much want to say this – is that the Bank and the Fund were fully told about their mistakes even as the mistakes were being made. They were so smug, so all knowing, so incredibly arrogant, so wrong. They simply didn't respond to arguments which begged them to review the human consequences of their policies.

The fact that poverty became increasingly entrenched, or that economies were not responding to the dogma as the dogma predicted, made no difference. It was a form of capitalist Stalinism. The credo was everything; the people were a laboratory.

The purpose of this extended citation is not that the account in Lewis's lecture is new to most African scholars and administrators or that Africans and others have not written extensively about this; the relevance is that Lewis cannot be accused of being ignorant of the detailed inner workings of the international donor environment or the havoc that two decades of what the 'social vivisection' (Adesina 1994), called structural adjustment and the politics of sovereign rentier capitalism, have done to Africa and continue to do.

As the macro-level data show none of the countries covered in our research programme had a share of public expenditure on health (as a percentage of GDP) that approached 5 per cent in 2002. In Nigeria, with a huge population, spending on health was an abysmal 1.2 per cent of GDP (up from 0.8 per cent the previous year).

Botswana's spending on health is particularly instructive in deciphering the extremely low pattern of health spending and commitment in most of the other countries; Zimbabwe's ability to increase per capita spending on health – part of a wider commitment to social spending, married often with user-fee charges, reflects the 'off-and-on', 'flip-flop' relationship that it has with the BWIs. The crisis in the health sector is emblematic of the horrors of neoliberal fundamentalism and the politics of the resurgent new imperialism (Adesina *et al.* 2006). The HIV/AIDS pandemic and the phenomenal way in which it has spread across much of sub-Saharan Africa is emblematic of the massive entitlement failure of how the retrenchment of health provisioning capacity undermined the capacity of many of the countries to cope with the pandemic. The response of policy makers (local and international) has been slow in most countries and the interventions of the international donor institutions seem to have become another mechanism for deepening the stranglehold on the policy terrain of many African countries. The 45 per cent increase in public health spending in Botswana is largely in its attempt to cope with the human tragedy that the disease is unleashing on much of East and Southern Africa. The 2005 report on HIV/AIDS prevalence and the decline registered in Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe would suggest that the quantum of spending is only one aspect of the response to the crisis; leadership and civil society response are two other aspects.

In instances where user charges have been abolished, the impact has been phenomenal. Okuonzi (2004: 1629) noted the instance of Swaziland:

Under political pressure, and with nothing tangible to show from user-fees, the policy was abolished by the government in 2001. The surge of more than 100 per cent in the use of public services soon

Table 1.4 Per capita government expenditure on health at average exchange rate (US\$)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Kenya	9	7	8	8	8
Tanzania	6	6	6	8	7
Uganda	4	5	4	5	5
Botswana	73	76	78	85	106
South Africa ¹	117	109	103	92	84
Zimbabwe	33	17	24	26	61
Nigeria	4	5	6	6	5
Ghana	9	9	6	6	7

Source: WHO World Health Report 2005 (Current prices).

Note: When converted to international purchasing power US dollar, South Africa's health sector spending shows a small increase. I have opted for prevailing exchange rate for two reasons: PPP estimation is a function of the items in the basket; more importantly, the health sector is heavily dependent on import for both recurrent and capital spending – once we discount for wages and salaries.

after the abolition of the fees shows the extent to which poor people were excluded from social services by an inappropriate policy.

As noted earlier, the introduction of universal primary education in 1997, in Uganda, led to a 73 per cent rise in total enrolment in the first year, and a 148 per cent rise by 2003 (Bategeka 2005).¹⁴ Budgetary restraint and a project approach – ad hoc responses to international goal setting, and the whimsical shift in moods of the sovereign rentier forces – means that the increase in demand has not been met by commensurate resources or investment in personnel and infrastructure.

As the impact of the efforts to retrench the public realm in social provisioning has become clear, and the user charges have turned out to be more ideological than financially sound, new efforts are being made to find new mechanisms for funding national healthcare needs. In February 2005 the Nigerian government launched the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). According to the announcement on the official website of Nigeria's Office of Public Communications¹⁶, the scheme has six components:

Contributors can access healthcare needs from approved public and private health service providers. Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs) which are limited liability companies will be licensed by the

NHIS to facilitate the provision of healthcare benefits to contributors under the Formal Sector Social Health Insurance Programme to interface between eligible contributors, including voluntary contributors and the healthcare providers.¹⁵

Formal sector employees will have 5 per cent of their basic salary deducted as contribution while the employers will contribute 10 per cent. Benefits will cover the member, his/her spouse and up to four children. Other components of the scheme are the Urban Self-employed Social Health Insurance Programme for the self-employed – which has to be occupation-based and involve more than 500 members. A monthly contribution by each member of between N120 and N150 (about US\$1 or US\$1.25 per annum), would cover treatment for ‘the most common ailments like malaria, typhoid fever, diarrhoea etc.’. The Rural Community Social Health Insurance Programme has the same framework; the only exception is the occupational category. The programmes for children under five years of age and those with permanent disability similarly require contributions for entitlement to benefits.

The scheme in Ghana follows the same broad principle as the Nigerian case.¹⁶ However, the scheme in Ghana makes it compulsory for all the citizens to join the scheme, and the scheme is to be funded by a combination of a ‘2.5 per cent Health Insurance Levy on selected goods and services’ and member contributions. Annual contribution is scaled up from zero-contribution for those defined as ‘core poor’, 72,000 *cedis* (about US\$8) for the ‘very poor’ and the ‘poor’, rising to 480,000 *cedis* (US\$52.7) for the ‘very rich’. Even at its best the scheme would face defaulting by the ‘very poor’ and ‘poor’ in meeting their contributions. There is also the stigma for those defined as ‘core poor’ who try to access health care services, but have made no contributions to the scheme. There is no evidence of an appreciation of the need to commit funds from the fiscus to the scheme, which would prevent those defined as poor from falling through the cracks. As with similar cases, where quasi-market logic is inserted into social provisioning, the denial of health care service for those who default on their contributions will happen at the level of service providers. In the meantime, state functionaries and those backing the scheme would use the scheme to justify less public spending on health care – the same crisis that beset user fees.

For formal sector workers, 2.5 per cent of their social security contributions will be paid into the scheme. There will be a waiting period of six months, between the commencement of contribution and accessing health care services (similar in coverage to the Nigerian scheme).

However, the benefits will not include the supply of AIDS drugs, the treatment of chronic renal failure, heart or brain surgery, or 'cosmetic' services such as hearing aids, dentures, or beauty surgery. At district levels, the collection of contributions is to be managed by Health Insurance Communities with Health Insurance Committees. Those seeking exemptions will have to get them through the committees. This raises the question of who defines one person as very poor, another as core poor, and the other as very rich. The scheme is another example of the abuse of the concept of 'community' within the neoliberal policy discourse – pecuniary advantages replace relations of mutual support and obligation. 'Community-based' interventions and resource management are primarily to mobilize the people in policing and enforcing compliance to a system of social relations which ontologically renders individuals as atomised economic agents. In the World Bank's more comprehensive manual (Aiyar 2001) 'community empowerment' and 'community-driven development' are so closely tied to the local collection of user charges, fees, and taxes that the very idea of 'community' as a network of mutual support, protection, and obligations disappears. Foregrounding the idea of community 'empowerment' is the 'taken-for-granted' idea of limiting public financing through the fiscus. The perception that public welfare provisioning will crowd-out community-based or informal social support system is often used to justify not extending public support to the vulnerable. As the study by Heemskerk, Norton, and Dehn (2004) shows this claim is largely without basis. If anything, 'public welfare systems and informal insurance systems are mutually supportive . . . Receipt of public transfers not only enhances the capacity to self-insure, but a more central position in social exchange networks also facilitates access to public welfare' (2004: 951). The impact is particularly positive for women (Heemskerk *et al.* 2004: 952). As they concluded, 'informal reciprocity networks are social glue of poor communities and help their members cope with a great number and variety of shocks . . . where they do work, these systems generate feelings of pride and empowerment' (2001: 953). What is instructive about the schemes in Ghana and Nigeria is that there is no defined contribution from the fiscus to fund the scheme. Indeed, in the case of Ghana, the government is using 'funds from HIPC'¹⁷ to facilitate setting up the scheme (Ghana 2005).

While we have discussed the new insurance schemes in relation to health care provisioning in Nigeria and Ghana, we intend these as illustrations of a much wider programme. Across several African countries, new insurance schemes have been designed and implemented to cover

pension schemes – largely involving a shift from non-contributory to contributory schemes.

Social policy regime and access: the inequality and poverty nexus

The current pursuit of the claimed objectives of reducing poverty and inequality through a raft of targeted mechanisms is paradoxical in the light of the existing body of knowledge, about the relationship between institutional frameworks or models of social policy on the one hand, and poverty and inequality on the other hand. Korpi and Palme's (1998) analysis of the data from 11 OECD countries shows that 'the lowest income inequality is found in the three encompassing countries – Finland, Norway, and Sweden' (1998: 674).¹⁸ By contrast 'the highest income inequality figures occur in the basic security and targeted model, especially in the United States, Switzerland, Australia and United Kingdom' (Korpi and Palme 1998: 674). The poverty rate for 1985 in the United States was 17.8 per cent among those between the ages of 25 and 59 years, compared with 1.6 per cent for Finland and 2.6 per cent for Sweden. The Gini coefficient of inequality was 0.18 in Sweden, for those 65 years or older compared with 0.35 in the United States. Indeed, a targeted model of social policy was found, on the whole, to be much smaller for countries pursuing targeted policies than those pursuing 'encompassing' policies. The paradox of targeted models, as Korpi and Palme (1998: 672) noted, is that in 'discriminating in favour of the poor . . . it creates a zero-sum conflict of interest between the poor and the better-off workers and the middle classes who must pay for the benefits of the poor without receiving any benefits.' The 'paradox of redistribution' is that:

by providing high-income earners with earnings-related benefits, encompassing social insurance institutions can reduce inequality and poverty more efficiently than can flat-rate or targeted benefits . . . the more we target benefits at the poor only and the more concerned we are with creating equality via equal public transfers to all, the less likely we are to reduce poverty and inequality.

(Korpi and Palme 1998: 681–2)

The social cohesion effect of 'encompassing' models – and something close to the nation-building incentive for 'encompassing' access during the early nationalist phase – was also found to be more robust:

The targeted model . . . tends to drive a wedge between the short-term material interest of the poor and those of the rest of the population,

which must rely on private insurance. It gives the better off categories no rational basis for including the poor, and *leaves the poor to trust in the altruism of the more fortunate.*

(Korpi and Palme 1998: 672, emphasis mine)

In the face of mounting poverty induced by the neoliberal policies of the sovereign rentier regime, the response has been to address poverty by 'targeting' the 'deserving poor'; a mantra that serves to obscure the primary concern which maintains harsh spending restrictions on the fiscus. The claim that preference for 'targeting' was motivated by equity and efficiency consideration rests on a dubious logic: the assumption was that through a more efficient and focused use of resources it was possible to do more with less (Mkandawire 2005b). This was not just the BWIs but the 'donor' countries generally, on whose aid flow and approval many of the adjusting countries have come to depend – as the fiscal basis of the state had been progressively undermined. Mkandawire (2005: 21–2) drew attention to the paradox of the contradictory logic deployed by the World Bank against universalism in social policy and in favour of it in economic policies:

... the preference for targeting [in social policy] by the Bretton Woods institutions is rather paradoxical, especially in light of their aversion to targeting in many economic activities, such as selective industrial policies or credit rationing in the financial sector ... The World Bank's dislike for such selectivity and targeting was partly based on the arguments that they would not be market conforming ... The more serious arguments deployed against targeting revolved around possibilities of information distortion, incentive distortions, moral hazard and administrative costs, invasive loss, and corruption. It was asserted that governments did not have the knowledge to pick winners or to monitor the performance of selected institutions. In situations of asymmetric information, beneficiaries of such policies would conceal the information necessary for correct interventions.

Yet the same governments that are bedevilled with weak administrative capacity were supposed to implement a scheme of targeted social policy. The information asymmetry and incentive distortions that were used to justify universalism in economic policy did not feature in the discussion of social policy. That anyone would consider targeting an appropriate policy option given a context in which 77 per cent of the population lives below US\$2.15 a day beggars reason – especially where the macro policies

of the policy vendors are largely responsible for the massive entitlement failure in the first instance.

Extensive studies on targeted social policies have demonstrated that even in the most administratively robust state, with extensive surveillance systems, targeting suffers from Type I error (under-coverage, where those deserving are left out) and Type II error (leakages to those outside the targeted group). In the case of South Africa, Type I error for Child Support Grant was 90.7 per cent nationally; and it was in those provinces with the highest levels of poverty that under-coverage was most acute: 93 per cent in KwaZulu Natal Province, 91.9 per cent in the Eastern Cape Province, and 91.7 per cent in Limpopo Province (Samson *et al.* 2005: 8). The onerous procedure for accessing the grant (documentation, forms to fill, and means-test) in mostly rural provinces, and for people who are less able to navigate the bureaucracy is, without doubt, the primary factor behind of the low take-up rate. Extending the reach of CSG was inspired by social forces within and outside the state – and involved active campaigns to go out and register people in the rural communities and poor urban and peri-urban neighbourhoods – leading to a significant decline in Type I error (Samson *et al.* 2005); even so 42.5 per cent of those eligible in 2004 did not receive the grant. Similarly the Type I error for disability grant was 83.9 per cent in 2000, down to 55.4 per cent in 2004. By contrast, in the case of the old age pension scheme, which has a more ‘encompassing’ approach¹⁹ Type I error was 17.7 per cent in 2000 and 10.2 per cent in 2004. Further, Samson *et al.* (2005) estimated that old-age pension alone accounts for 47 per cent of the closure of the poverty gap in South Africa.

The argument that Europe moved from limited to encompassing coverage as a justification for the targeting in sub-Saharan Africa suffers from a simple problem. In sub-Saharan Africa, the limited coverage, often based on labour market location as in Europe, was the subject of immense attacks in the ascendance of neoliberal discourse: urban bias, urban coalition, etc. Rather than move from the limited coverage model to the encompassing model, the policy choice was to dismantle the limited coverage that existed; through severe retrenchment of state/public spending and market-based entitlements. Current efforts to address the enormous negative impact of the retrenchment of the state remain patchy (basic education, for instance), involve continuing preference for market-based access, or self-financed insurance schemes such those discussed earlier.

There is overwhelming evidence that user fees mediated access to social service and means-testing as vehicles for targeting involve considerable administrative costs (Jones *et al.* 1983; Korpi and Palme

1998; Vandemoortele 2000; Pratt 2001; Mkandawire 2005b). But the onerous procedure for eligibility or access is often designed precisely to exclude (Pratt 2001). In an effort to discourage the 'non-poor' from benefiting, the mechanisms adopted in most targeted programmes tend to stigmatize and adopt mechanisms that are 'disempowering and even humiliating' (Mkandawire 2005b). As Amartya Sen (1999: 13) noted:

Any system of subsidy that requires people to be identified as poor ant that is seen as a special benefaction for those who cannot fend for themselves would tend to have some effects on their self-respect as well on the respect accorded them by others.²⁰

Yet, in the design of the mechanism for social service provisioning stigma avoidance is a crucial concern (Titmuss 1968; Jones *et al.* 1983). The humiliation that comes with queuing and being identified as welfare recipients or to secure exemption from user charges has often meant that the take-up rate is often low. Even for countries with the capacity, the 'process of mean-testing or identifying the "deserving poor" is often invasive and stigmatizing'. The attempt within the World Bank projects to shift the mediation of targeting mechanism to community level does not avoid the crisis of stigma and humiliation. As Mkandawire (2005: 26) noted, neither community-based targeting nor geographical targeting (meant to improve on earlier forms of targeting) diminishes the inherent problem of targeted social policy or how 'abuse and humiliation [become] common features of citizens' interaction with the state' (Mkandawire 2005b: 26). Recipients identified on the basis of such means-test are further exposed to the powers of what Sen called 'minor potentates': the petty authoritarianism of minor bureaucrats, community power brokers, and local chieftains. Again, the perversion of power relations is not only about the vulnerability of the poor generally, but it is often profoundly gendered. The power brokers and chieftains are more likely than not to be men and the victims women – the widow in the community; women who are more likely than not to be less literate.

Many issues suggest the imperative of the shift to a more 'encompassing' social provisioning framework. In the context in which between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of people in many sub-Saharan African countries are living in extreme poverty (less than US\$1/day) selectivity or a targeting variant makes little administrative or financial sense. Secondly, in most of the mineral-based sub-Saharan African economies, the distinction between taxpayers and beneficiaries of social services makes very little sense – the overwhelming proportion of state revenue

is from collectively-owned resources. The experience of countries like Nigeria is that as the neoliberals rolled back the state and championed the mantra of ‘there is no free lunch’ – as if petroleum-based revenue is a particular individual’s property – the quantum of national financial resources available for discretionary (mis-)use increased, which in many ways fuelled corrupt appropriation of national resources. A more encompassing entitlement to social services and protection will reduce the margin of resources available for such discretionary (mis-)allocation; it would also reinforce the capacity of the citizens to demand services from their governments. Third, locking those with voice into such provisioning, especially with funding from the fiscus, ensures protection for the budgetary allocation and the quality of service delivery as well. Across sub-Saharan Africa, what has developed over the last 25 years in the education and health care sector is a dual-system: an under-resourced and neglected public sector, and a private sector.

The paradox of this the dual system of social service delivery is that as the neglect and underfunding take hold, the people with the voice and resources in society relocate to the private sector for their health care and education need; the quality of service in the public sector declines further as does the commitment to invest in them – the senior public servants and politicians source their health care needs and education for their children in the private sector or outside their countries, and the further the public service institutions declined. The public sector for social services is weakened because of the decline in investment and commitment; it is then condemned for its inability to match the private sector in the quality of service delivery – a classical case of a ‘self-fulfilling’ prophecy! Anecdotal evidence in several countries show that those employed in the public sector – especially when tied to teaching hospital and medical school posts, moonlight in the private sector to augment their incomes. The effect is that the private sector may provide the service faster with steep charges but lack experienced medical experts or academics and is on the whole rarely able to undertake the investment needed for a decent medical establishment. The result is a downward spiral in the quality of service – not anywhere near what the public institution offered in the 1970s, nor what their private sector counterparts would offer in other parts of the world. The Gini index of inequality reveals the persistence of sharp disparity in command over resources and poverty in many of the countries we studied. In Figure 1.2 I present a radar chart of literacy, life expectancy, poverty and inequality. While the collapse in life expectancy is a result of factoring the HIV/AIDS pandemic into the calculation, the others are direct results of how

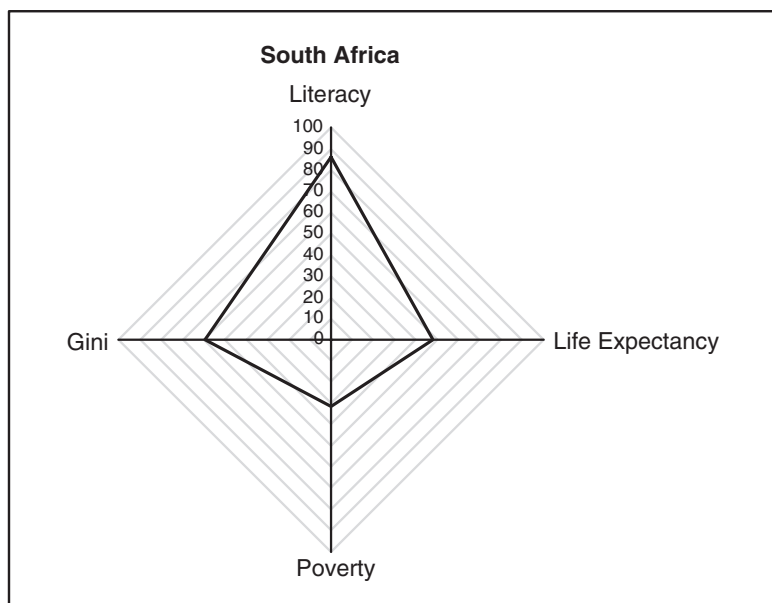
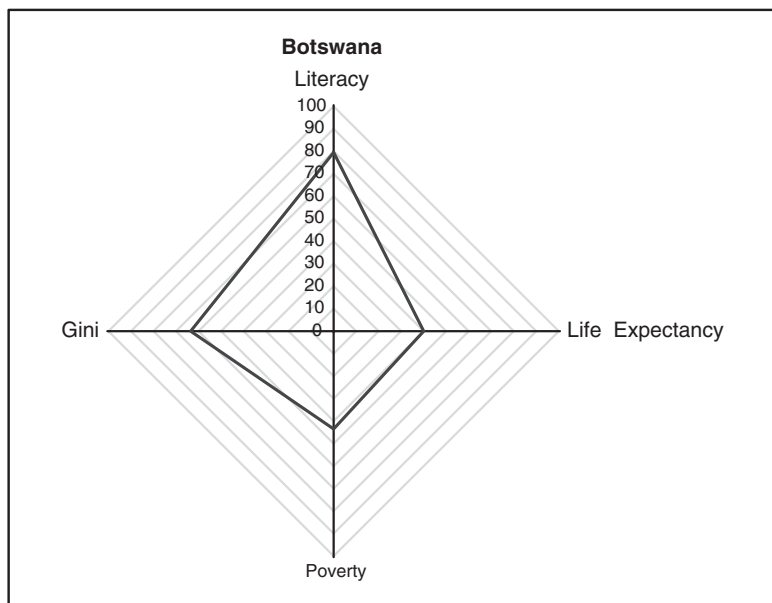


Figure 1.2 Social development radar charts

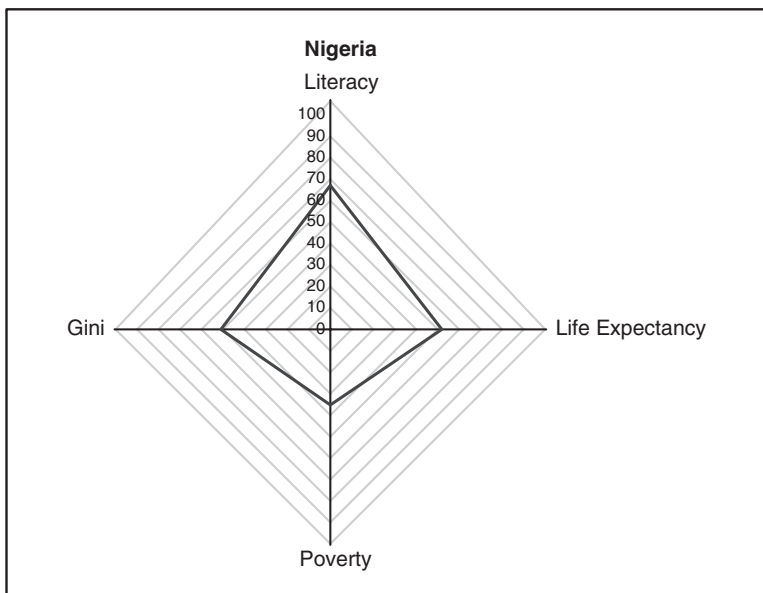
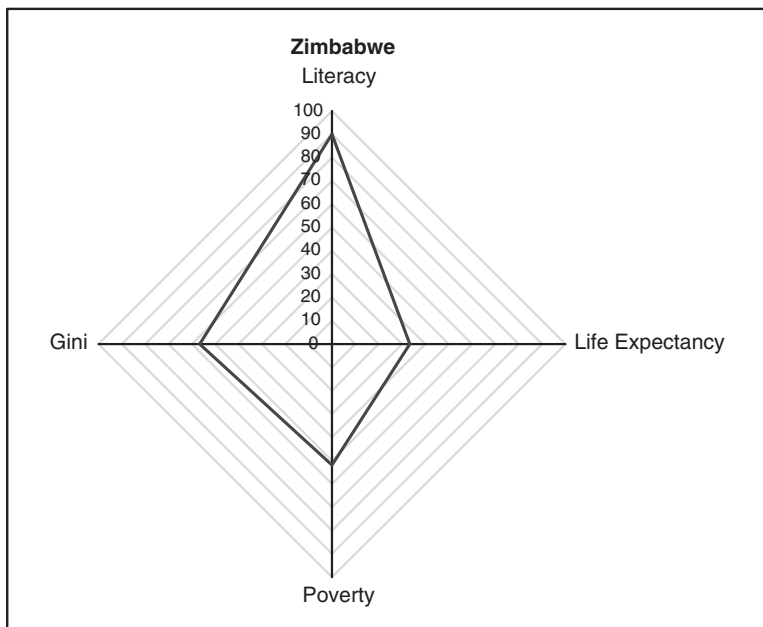


Figure 1.2 (Continued)

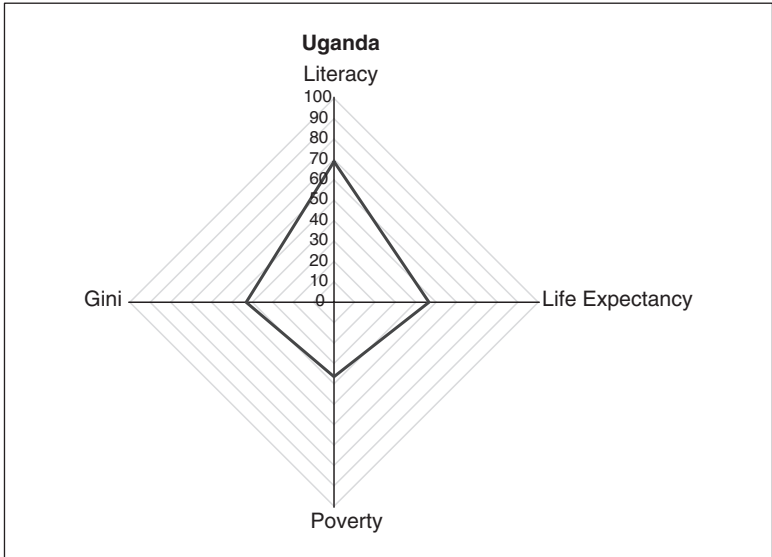
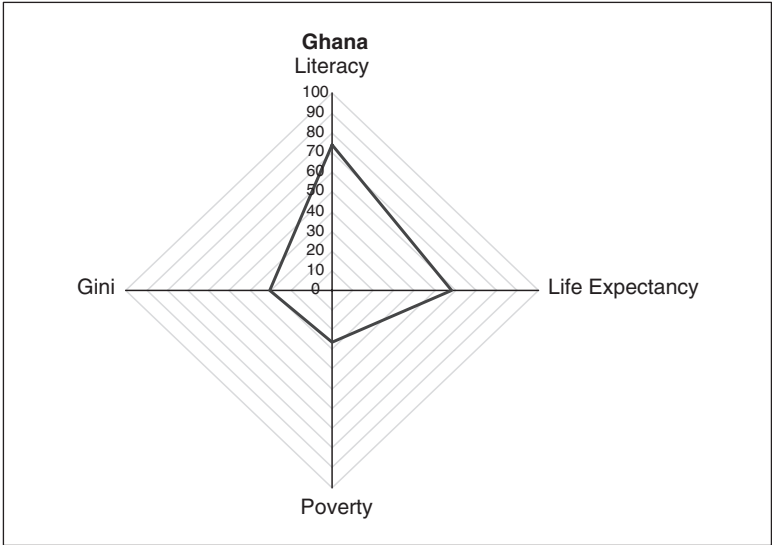


Figure 1.2 (Continued)

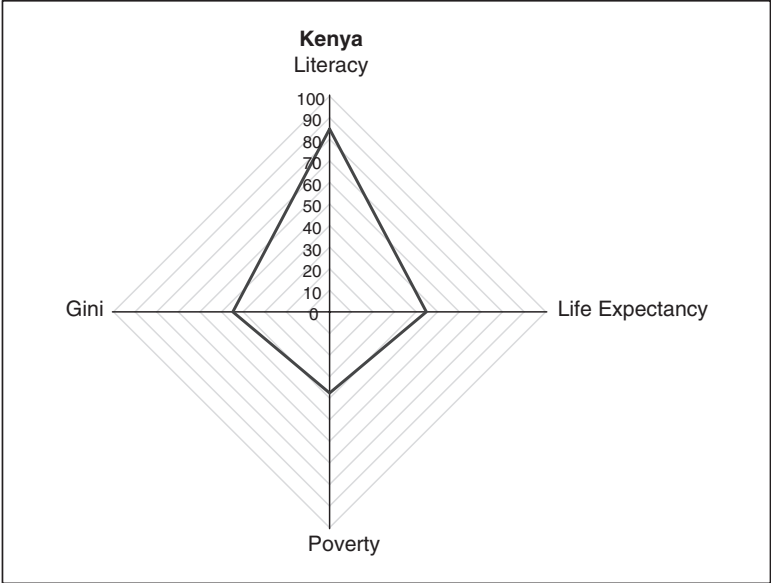
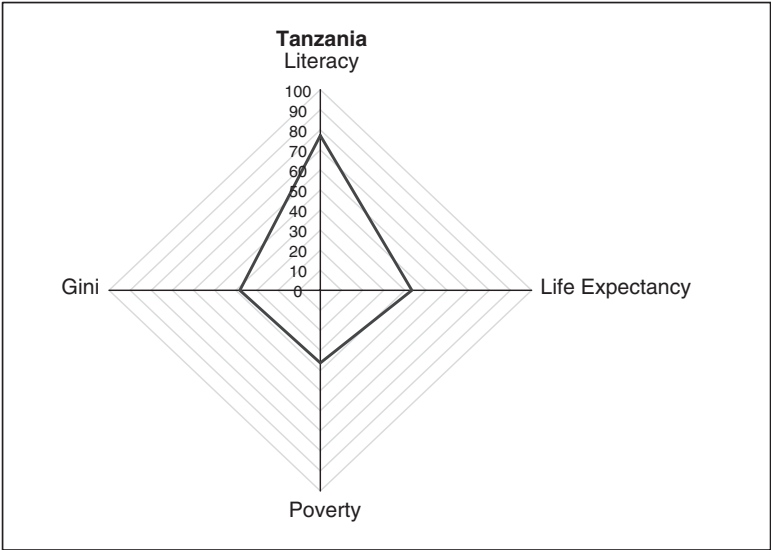


Figure 1.2 (Continued)

sub-Saharan African societies have been reshaped in the last thirty years. Indeed, poverty and inequality rose sharply in these countries over the last twenty-five years; South Africa and Zimbabwe are the exception to this pattern due to the colonial racist order during the period.

Social policy, entitlement failure and social cohesion

In many ways, the last 20 years have highlighted the crisis of citizenship and statehood in most African countries. The implications of the widespread deprivation and social development crisis, highlighted in section 1.2 above, are evident in the rising number of state implosions and genocidal conflicts. I do not wish to suggest that the adjustment policies created these horrendous events – the pogrom in Nigeria in 1966 and the following civil war, and the earlier horrors in Rwanda in 1959 are two cases in point. However, I would suggest a link between the retrenchment of state capacity for social provisioning and the crisis of statehood. The relationship between a state and its citizens is a web of obligations and privileges; citizens' stake in a polity is affected by the extent to which the state is seen to be responsive to the needs of the citizens. The retreat of state from social delivery (health care, education, human security, etc) undermined the relevance and the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of its citizens. In the absence of social policy-based engagement with the citizens, the coercive face of the state becomes the dominant (if not the only) area of interaction with citizens. The rising inequality during the period did little to enhance the legitimacy or social links between the dominant classes ('elites') and ordinary people. The first wave of adjustment, typified as the 'decade of greed', provided avenues for the massive enrichment of individuals in a widening sea of human vulnerability and deprivation. From Sierra Leone to Rwanda, the fundamental questioning of the legitimacy of the state and the spilling over of difference into conflict, and conflict into genocide, occurred within this context of declining legitimacy of the state. While not the 'root cause' of these conflicts and while domestic policy and leadership issues are strong contenders, the retrenchment of the state at least served as the trigger mechanism.

1.4 Rethinking social policy, beyond adjustment: the challenge of inclusive development

I wish to conclude this chapter by highlighting six imperatives of rethinking social policy in sub-Saharan Africa, beyond adjustment. This is within the central normative framework for our research programme – that

of a state–society nexus that is *developmental*, *democratic* and *socially inclusive* (UNRISD 2001) and raises several possibilities. A socially inclusive state–society relationship is more likely than not to privilege equity considerations and strive for universal entitlements in social policy making and implementation. A democratic state–society nexus is likely to privilege popular engagement, transparency and accountability in policy making and execution. However, we conceptualize social inclusion and democratic ethos as a dimension of the ‘developmental’ rather than separate from it. These are important dimensions of what Amartya Sen refers to as the ‘ends of development’ (Sen 1999). As he further notes: ‘Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states’ (Sen 1999: 3).

While we have said a lot about the value of the Nationalist model of the symbiosis between economic and social policy, and the value of social policy as a mechanism for securing social cohesion and nation building, it was developmentalism that became increasingly authoritarian. It is often argued that it is the excessive developmentalism of the state and obsession with nation building that was the source of authoritarianism, single-party rule, and the shrinking democratic space. Hanging on the door of the state, as Joseph Ki-Zerbo (2005: 82) puts it, was the notice: ‘Silence, We are developing!’ The democratic objective and a civic public realm are foundational for the reconstitution of the state–society nexus.

A second aspect is the developmental context itself, and there are three compelling issues: the regressive economic policy driven by a neoliberal ontology; the debt crisis – in spite of what *Gleneagles* was supposed to have delivered; and the global trade regime, both within the WTO framework and in terms of the increasing scale and number of bilateral ‘economic partnership agreements’ that are foundationally damaging to Africa’s development prospects. As Ohiorhenuan (2000: 22) notes: ‘Developing countries today face the additional burden of building capacities to project and protect national interests and to be more effective negotiators; to develop the capacity to comply creatively with agreed obligations and exercise their rights; and to put in place a whole panoply of new institutional arrangements in order to be competitive.’

A third aspect, crucial for transcending the current crisis of state–society relations, is to transcend the false dichotomy that neoliberal discourse created regarding the experience of many of sub-Saharan Africa’s peoples. The state versus market discourse confused all that was not ‘private sector’

with the state, missing the significant role that collective community efforts in social provisioning played in the early post-colonial efforts of many countries, and some even under colonial rule, when communities pooled resources to fund education of young men and women, provide health care services, and so on. In several cases social provisioning in health and education involved the government and communities in a partnership (Cornia 1987b: 170–2). Reinventing this partnership, outside the transactional logic of the neoliberal discourse, is important for the ownership of institutions and programmes, but it must be one that fundamentally addresses gender content of community relations and interaction.

Rethinking social policy

I would like to suggest that a return to a broader vision of social policy is important for its long-term efficacy, development, and inclusive social citizenship. Reconnecting social policy to the wider development objectives and the nation-building project is essential for sustainable social policy outcomes, as it is for sustainable economic development.

First, it is difficult to see one's way through the objective of poverty reduction, for instance, without improving the productive capacity of the economies. In 14 of the 16 sub-Saharan African countries classified as having low human development and for whom data exists, more than two-thirds of the population live in poverty (UNDP 2002). While a lot more can be done at lower levels of economic growth, as noted earlier, social policy objectives become sustainable when undergirded by sustained improvements in economic development; in much the same way that sustained economic development requires sustained social policy outcomes. The synergy between the two is enhanced with significantly reduced levels of inequality in society – to which both economic and social policy must contribute actively. There is a need to rethink social policy expenditure not as a gratuitous favour done to citizens but as investments in development and nation building or social cohesion.

The prevailing discourse (from NEPAD to the *Blair Commission Report*) mistakes 'trade discourse' for 'development discourse'. When President Youweri Museveni asserted that what Africans want is not aid but to 'trade our ways out of poverty', I agree with him intuitively; the question, however, is 'With what? Coffee?' (Adesina 2002; Adesina *et al.* 2006). Successful economic development involves not only quantitative growth in the economy but structural changes – and that requires a shift towards industrial output, however much we may speak of the 'knowledge economy'. Maligned as 'industrial policy' is in the neoliberal discourse,

the examples of China and India most recently, and the early industrializers (who now discourage SSA countries from engaging in industrial policies), are evident enough of the centrality of dynamic industrialism for trading our ways out of poverty; these countries came to dominate the world trade not on the basis of primary commodities but through manufactured output. Moving in that direction requires African countries to mount a challenge against the current global trade regimes – both multilateral and bilateral. The shrinking of the trade and industrial policy space (Ohiorhenuan 2002; Chang 2005) is not a natural aspect of ‘globalization’, but conscious and deliberate steps taken by the powerful countries to advance their own interests and those of their transnational corporations. The proposition of the late 1970s of a regional development approach, where African countries seek to internalise the engine of their development remains valid; it compels us to return to the *Lagos Plan of Action* as our starting point.

Secondly, it is important to rethink social policy in its social cohesion and nation-building dimensions. The last two decades, have brought the imperative of nation building back on the agenda. From Sierra Leone to Somalia, from Nigeria to Sudan, the crisis of social cohesion threatens the foundations of many African states. Enhancing citizens’ stake in their polities is not only about the exercise of civic rights but also about social citizenship. The Afrobarometer studies conducted by IDASA (Cape Town) show that across Africa citizens make a direct link between their livelihood and democracy. The retrenchment of state capacity not only affects its capacity to deliver on social policy but the basic task of the physical security of its citizens.

Thirdly, a move away from targeting and means-testing in social policy is important not only because of the debilitation and humiliation associated with targeting, but because we know that: (i) where social policy has been developmental, improved social well-being, and social cohesion, more encompassing, universal access have been important; it secures wider commitment to sustaining it – especially where it is financed from income tax. (ii) A state–citizen nexus based on mutual exchange of obligations and privileges has a greater chance of securing social stability, which itself is valuable for sustained economic development. The urban bias and narrow coverage that were the focus of the criticism against universalism of the nationalist phase were not atypical among the late industrialisers (Korpi and Palme 1998; Esping-Andersen 2001; Kuhnle and Hort 2004; Mkandawire 2005b). Social protection grew outwards from the social groups that were considered to be central to the industrialization project. But moving up such, social policy ‘value chain’

requires leadership and a state bureaucracy capable of sustained policy making.

This brings us to the fourth point: the imperative of reconstituting the state in its policy making capacity, and its ability to run the state, administer society, and define the parameters of economic activities. There is an urgent need to overcome the creeping policy atrophy of the last 20 years. As Peter Evans (1995: 3) noted: 'Without the state, markets, the other master institution of modern society, cannot function.' The 'embedded autonomy' of a competent civil service has always been integral to a successful developmental agenda (Evans 1995). The reconstitution of the state has to be part of a *wider reconstitution of the public realm* in which the horizontal and vertical relationships are driven by a democratic ethos of participatory, rather than the perfunctory and technocratic ideas of governance. Horizontal in the relationship within the civil society; vertical in the relationship between state and society. Simply framing the issue in terms of leadership alone will not do or capture the crisis of the militarisation of social consciousness within the civil society or the casual disregard for civic order.

Fifth, leadership matters; so does policy. Constructing social consensus around a developmental project is fundamental: it calls for visionary leadership that is locally grounded in Africa's realities; it calls for putting at the heart of our collective social contract social justice, equity, and the vicarious indignity that we should experience when others in our societies contend with poverty and destitution. Social mobilization around these values can only proceed on the basis of justice rather than charity, and it requires leadership in and outside the state. This takes me back to the issue of agency raised earlier. Rather than a state versus 'civil society' or state versus market, much of the expansive use of social policy in the pre-1980s period involved active agency of state functionaries in understanding the links between social expenditure and economic growth (producing doctors, engineers, teachers, etc.) and promoting national unity illustrated by the schooling policy discussed earlier. While there are significant variations across countries in terms of depth and size of such use of social policy, there is sufficient evidence of shared use across sub-Saharan Africa. In many cases the commitment flowed from the social pact that developed during the anti-colonial struggles. The differences in attempts to protect social expenditure (most glaring in the contrast between Nigeria and Ghana, discussed earlier) also reveal the differences in the commitments of state functionaries and political leaders; again an issue of agency. Equally important for the nature of leadership – in this instance, leadership outside the state – has been the agency of the 'civil

society' in protecting social spending. In countries from Nigeria to Zambia and South Africa, labour movements have played significant roles in 'persuading' state functionaries to maintain or expand social expenditure. From Senegal to Tanzania, student movements were equally important. The important thing is that structural variations alone do not explain variations in social policy outcomes in the region; agency remains an important factor. It requires leadership and policy commitment within and outside the state.

Similarly, the challenge to rethinking social policy is not only external, but also domestic. Over the last 25 years, the structural adjustment of Africa's economies has gone hand-in-hand with the structural adjustment of politics and civil society (Adesina 2004). Interest groups with instrumental, ideological and material commitment to the neoliberal project are prevalent not only within the economy and the state, but within the civil society (not the least within the NGO sector). It takes the construction of new social coalition to highlight the need for a fundamental rethinking of social policy, specifically, and development policy broadly. It would require a shift from a civil society dominated by NGOs to one led by social movements.

Finally, in rethinking social policy making we need to come to terms with the profoundly gendered nature of the labour market, the interactions between the formal and care economies, and broad social relations. Elson and Cagatay (2000) point to the 'male-breadwinner bias' at the heart of neoliberal macroeconomics; a similar bias is inherent in many traditional social provisioning and social security programmes. The gendered dimensions of labour market participation and sustained employment record – and therefore retirement annuity or provident fund contributions – distinctly disadvantage women whose labour market participation is often interrupted by marriage, childrearing, or who bear the burden of the unpaid care economy. As public provisioning collapsed the burden of a gender-ordered economy mounted; essentially increasing the burden for the women who are its essence (UNRISD 2005: 129). Rethinking social policy requires a strongly pro-natal approach, but it also requires social provisioning that treats women as people in their own right rather than in their procreation and nurturing roles. Often, attempts at targeting women reinforce the gendered rendering of women as wives and mothers. The *Progresas/Oportunidades* programme in Mexico, which started in 1997 is a clear case in point: 'it provides cash transfers and food handouts to approximately five million poor rural households, but on the condition that they send their children to school and visit local health centres on a regular basis' (UNRISD 2005: 138), which would have seemed a major social

investment all round. However, the programme was focused on women: in addition to ensuring that the children attend school and visit the clinics, the women have 'to perform community work such as cleaning schools and health centres, unlike those not in the scheme' (UNRISD 2005: 139). The end result was that the scheme reinforced the traditional idea of the women as mothers and hindered autonomous labour market participation.

Notes

- 1 Vandermoortele (2000) has queried the validity of the \$1/day 'international norm' for estimating core poverty. The studies of ten low-income countries, 'found that the cost of a minimum basket of goods and services was equivalent to \$1 per day per person, when expressed in purchasing power parity of 1985' (Vandermoortele 2000: 4). His concerns were that, first, this produces a static idea of poverty (a 1985 benchmark), when in fact the circumstances were changing – which speaks to how one constructs the PPP basket. Second, the norm 'violates the standard definition of income-poverty' where someone is considered poor if s/he fails to 'reach a minimum level of economic well-being *set by society*' (p. 5, emphasis in original). Wealthier societies tend to have a higher level of society acceptable standard of living, which a measure taken in some of the poorest countries in the world might yield. The norm is not a measure of poverty but of 'how many people are struggling to survive every day on less than \$1' (ibid.). While accepting the validity of Vandermoortele's critique of this norm, the implications of the second leg of his argument, for 'poorer' countries is not necessarily valid. To illustrate, if there were to be a massive collapse in standard of living or wealth in a society such that everyone in the country became poorer, and this were to persist for two generations or more – such that people start getting 'used to living at a severely diminished level of livelihood', poverty would not *ipso facto* reduce. There is a minimum level of human existence that must serve as a floor, regardless of how many people in society fall below that floor or the normative orientation to such level of livelihood.
- 2 While there is increasing concession from the side of Walrasian neoclassical economists and policymakers on the possible virtuous interplay of equity and efficiency (Mkandawire 2001a), there has been no fundamental shift – concessions are made only to the extent that equity considerations and policies are limited in their coverage (basic education, for instance), and targeted social safety net in the design of social security policies, and strong antipathy to redistribution as a core principle of macroeconomic policy. Cf. Bhagwati (1988) and design of policies rooted in PRSP approach. Wolfensohn's 1999 internal memo on the CDF is driven by the same logic (cf. Adesina 2002/2006).
- 3 BBC, *The Story of Africa*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/14chapter7.shtml>. (Accessed 23 December 2005).
- 4 Patrice Lumumba's murder was authorized by Dwight Eisenhower, the US president, and with direct involvement of the Belgian political and intelligence elite (cf. de Witte 2001).

- 5 Categories such as the 'nation' and 'nation-state', even 'nationalism' or 'nationalist', are of dubious value in making sense of post-colonial Africa or Africa of late colonialism. Strictly speaking, the 'nationalist movements' were anti-colonial rather than 'nationalist' in what inspired them; they were hardly concerned with the political or territorial redemption of people with shared linguistic and cultural heritage or consanguinity. The aspiration for unity was not about 'national unity' – i.e., based on consanguinity – as much as overcoming ethnic and religious divisiveness on the basis of which colonialism had flourished, and which was a principal weapon of colonial-demagoguery. The new commitment is more to the post-colonial 'country-territory' (country-state, perhaps) than to the nation-state. The unity sought was one forged out of the crucible of shared victimhood arising from the racist-colonial enterprise. It is in this sense that pan-Africanism represents the ideal of such aspiration.
- 6 The data for the years in Table 1.1 are meant to capture the medium to long-term shift in the social indicators.
- 7 Gross capital formation is the dependent variable, and gross domestic savings the predictor (Data source: World Bank's 2002 *World Development Indicators* CD).
- 8 Net factor payments and remittances abroad grew from \$14 million in 1979 to \$206 million in 1982 – the removal of the exchange control was a legal requirement of the Lancaster House agreement; balance of payment crisis – the deficit grew from \$74m in 1979 to \$533 million in 1982; the World Bank policy advisers were not short of loan offers and arrangements for various segments of the country – 94,000 such loans by 1987 (Mhone and Bond 2001; Bond 2000). Both the finance minister and the World Bank were confident that while indebtedness might rise in the early years of post-independence, it would rapidly fall as the economy picks up and the loans are paid off (Kadhani 1986; Mhone and Bond 2001). It did not; the fiscal crisis that this created became the basis for the stranglehold that the BWIs would, by 1985, impose on the country. In other words, a combination of iniquitous 'peace agreement' for the country's independence; exogenous factors like drought; South African geopolitics and destabilization; sovereign rentier politics, and errors on the side of domestic policy makers undermined the economy. Like South Africa, Zimbabwe emerged from racist, settler colonial rule 'out of sync' with the Nationalist phase and a more policy-plural context into one in which the neoliberal geopolitics came to determine donor/BWIs relationship with countries around the world.
- 9 The figure that the government often quotes – R31.1 billion in 1995 to R59.6 billion in 2002 – refers to nominal spending: i.e. before accounting for the impact of inflation.
- 10 Four children per family could go to school without paying fees, which begs the question of what happens in the case of a family with more than four children for families in acute poverty. To blunt the gender impact, policy makers decreed that where the household has female children, at least 2 of the four children must be female – which still begs the question of families having to decide which child should go to school, and which one should stay on the farm or learn a trade. The contrast with Nationalist phase universal access is stark, indeed. In 2003, enrolment of girls in primary school was 49 per cent of total enrolment (cf. Bategeka 2005).

- 11 Cf. Department of Labour (www.labour.gov.za); Republic of South Africa, *Unemployment Insurance Act 2001*.
- 12 Labour Department Spokesperson, Page Boikanyo, 10 March 2005 (www.southafrica.info).
- 13 Department of Labour. 2004. *Unemployment Insurance Fund Annual Report for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004* (Pretoria: Department of Labour).
- 14 The problem with data and arguments such as those by Singh (2003) – of increased utilisation following the introduction of user fees – is that they suffer from the tendency to compare this with the period immediately preceding the introduction – which fails to account for the ‘noise’ created by the collapse in health care spending due to the budgetary and balance of payments crises. A more useful comparison would be between the pre-crisis and the post-introduction periods.
- 15 Cf. www.nigeriafirst.org. (Accessed 25 November 2005).
- 16 *National Health Insurance Scheme*, Government of Ghana: www.ghana.gov.gh (Accessed 25 November 2005).
- 17 HIPC refers to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative which provides debt relief or cancellation in exchange for deep liberalization and ‘reform’ of the economy and public services. The funds released under this initiative is what the Ghanaian government is using to set up *the structures* of the health insurance scheme – the community and district structures – but not for funding the scheme itself.
- 18 The ‘Encompassing’ Model of Social Insurance Institution is one of the five ‘ideal-typical’ models of social welfare regimes that Korpi and Palme (1998) identified. This comes closest to the idea of ‘universal entitlement’. Entitlement is based on ‘citizenship *and* labour force participation’; the principle guiding benefit level is flat-rate and earnings-related, and non employer/employee cooperation is required in administering the programme (p. 666). At the other extreme is the ‘Targeted’ model, for which entitlement is based on ‘proven need’ and benefit level is kept to the minimum. In between are three other models: the ‘Voluntary state-subsidized’ model that relies on membership and contributions, with flat rate or earning-related benefits; the ‘Corporatist’ model, in which entitlement derives from ‘occupational category *and* labour force participation’, and benefits are earnings-related; and the ‘Basic Security’ model, for which entitlements are based on citizenship *or* contributions, and benefit paid out on a flat-rate principle. It is only the ‘corporatist’ model that involves the participation of employers and employees in the administration of the scheme. Korpi and Palme classifications (regimes of social policy, one would say) is, for me, far more useful than Esping-Andersen’s (1990) three regimes of welfare.
- 19 The “trigger mechanism” (Jones *et al* 1983) here are old age and (65 years for men and 60 years for women), and individual income below R1 226 a month for single persons, and R2 226 for married persons (Samson *et al* 2005).
- 20 Cited by Mkandawire (2005).

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