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The International and Global Dimensions of Social Policy

This chapter

- Provides a number of ways of thinking about social policy
- Provides a number of ways of thinking about globalisation
- Reviews five ways in which globalisation influences social policy
- Reviews the ways of thinking about social policy in the light of globalisation's impact
- Offers an explanatory framework for national and global social policy change in the context of globalisation.

This book is about social policy and globalisation and the ways in which the contemporary processes of globalisation impact upon social policy. Social policy is here understood as both a scholarly activity and the actual practice of governments and other agencies that affect the social welfare of populations. An important argument of this book is that neither the scholarly activity of social policy analysis nor the actual practice of social policy-making can avoid taking account of the current globalisation of economic, social and political life. This is true in two quite distinct senses. In terms of the social policies of individual countries, global processes impact upon the content of country policies. Equally important, the globalisation of economic social and political life brings into existence something that is recognisable as supranational social policy either at the regional level or at the global level. Social policy within one country can no longer be **understood** or **made** without reference to the global context within which the country finds itself. Many social problems that social policies are called upon to address have global dimensions, such that they now require **supranational policy responses**. One of the arguments of the book is that since about 1980 we have witnessed the **globalisation of social policy** and the **socialisation of global politics**. By the last phrase is meant the idea that agendas of the G8 are increasingly filled with global poverty or health issues.

Social policy

Social policy as a field of study and analysis is often regarded as the poor relation of other social sciences such as economics, sociology and political science. It is dismissed as a practical subject concerned only with questions of social security benefits or the administration of health care systems. Some of those who profess the subject would insist to the contrary, that by combining the insights of economics, sociology and political science and other social sciences to address **the** question of how the social wellbeing of the world's people's is being met, it occupies a superior position in terms of the usefulness of its analytical frameworks and its normative concerns with issues of social justice and human needs.

Social policy as sector policy

The subject area or field of study of social policy may be defined in a number of ways that compliment each other. At one level it is about policies and practices to do with health services, social security or social protection, education and shelter or housing. While the field of study defined in this sectoral policy way was developed in the context of more advanced welfare states, it is increasingly being applied to developing countries (Hall and Midgley, 2004; Mkandawire, 2005). When applied in such contexts, the focus needs to be modified to bring utilities (water and electricity) into the frame and to embrace the wide range of informal ways in which less developed societies ensure the wellbeing of their populations (Gough and Woods, 2004). It is one of the arguments of this book that whereas social policy used to be regarded as the study of developed welfare states and development studies as the study of emerging welfare states, this separation did damage to both the **understanding** within development studies of how welfare states developed and to the **actual social policies** in the context of development that have too often had merely a pro-poor focus, to the detriment of issues of equity and universalism.

Social policy as redistribution, regulation and rights

Another approach to defining the subject area is to say that social policy within one country may be understood as those mechanisms, policies and procedures used by governments, working with other actors, to alter the distributive and social outcomes of economic activity. **Redistribution** mechanisms alter, usually in a way that makes more equal the distributive outcomes of economic activity. **Regulatory** activity frames and limits the activities of business and other private actors, normally so that they take more account of the social consequences of their activities. The articulation and legislation of **rights** leads to some more or less effective mechanisms to ensure that citizens might access their rights. Social policy within one country is made up, then, of social redistribution, social regulation and the promulgation of social rights. Social policy within the world's most advanced regional co-operation (the EU) also consists of supranational mechanisms of redistribution across borders, regulation across borders and a statement of rights that operates across borders.

Social policy as social issues

Yet another approach to defining the subject area of social policy is to list the kinds of issues social policy analysts address when examining a country's welfare arrangements. In other words, social policy as a subject area is what social policy scholars do. A standard social policy text (Alcock et al., 2003) lists among the concepts of concern to social policy analysts: 'social needs and social problems', 'equality rights and social justice', 'efficiency, equity and choice', 'altruism, reciprocity and obligation' and 'division, difference and exclusion'. These are elaborated below.

- **Social justice**: What is meant by this concept, and how have or might governments and other actors secure it for their populations? Possible trade-offs between economic efficiency and equity appear here. Mechanisms of rationing or targeting are included.
- **Social citizenship**: Whereas other social sciences are concerned with civil and political aspects of citizenship, social policy analysts focus upon the social rights of citizens. What social rights might members of a territorial space reasonably expect their governments to ensure access to?
- **Universality and diversity**: How might social justice and access to social citizenship rights be secured for all in ways that also respect diversity and difference? Issues of multicultural **forms** of service provision arise, as do policies to combat discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity and agency.
- **Autonomy and guarantees**: To what extent do social polices facilitate the autonomous articulation of social needs by individuals and groups and enable them to exercise choice and influence over provision? How can such an approach be reconciled with guaranteed provision from above?
- **Agency of provision**: Should the state, market, organisations of civil society, the family and kin provide for the welfare needs of the population, and in what proportion?
- **Who cares**: Should the activity of caring be a private matter (more often than not done by women for men, children and dependants) or a public matter within which the state plays a role and the issue of the gender division of care becomes a public policy issue? More broadly, social policy analysts are concerned with issues of altruism and obligation. For whom is one responsible?

Social policy as a welfare regime theory

Social policy analysts have, within the context of these approaches to the subject, developed two strands of literature that might usefully be briefly reviewed. One concerns the mapping and evaluation of the diverse ways in which countries do provide for the welfare of their citizens and residents, and the other offers explanations of social policy development and welfare state difference. Most attempts to classify (OECD) welfare states into typologies start with Esping-Andersen's (1990) classic three-fold typology of liberal, corporatist and social democratic regimes. These are distinguished in terms of their organising principles, the funding basis of provision, and the impacts of their policies on inequalities. Liberal welfare states such as the USA emphasise means-tested allocations to the poor and a greater role for the market.

Table 1.1   **Welfare regimes in the developed world**

Type of welfare state	Organising principle	Decommodification index	Impact upon inequality
Liberal	Market	Low	Low
Corporatist	Workplace	Semi: notional insurance	Reflects inequalities at work
Social Democratic	Citizenship	High: free at point of use	High

Note: See text about productivist welfare states of East Asia

Corporatist welfare states such as Germany and France are based much more on the Bismarckian work-based insurance model with benefits reflecting earned entitlements through length of service. In contrast, social democratic welfare states such as Sweden place the emphasis on state provision for citizens financed out of universal taxation. The differences may be captured as in Table 1.1.

To this must be added the fouth world of 'productivist' welfare described by Holliday (2000). He and others (Goodman et al., 1998; Ramesh and Asher, 2000: Rieger and Leibfried, 2003) argued that low welfare expenditure states in East Asia ensured the meeting of welfare needs through a process of state-lead economic planning and highly regulated private provision such as compulsory savings. Here social rights to be met by the state were not a central part of the social policy discourse, rather a concern to encourage family and firm responsibility.

Other analysts have drawn attention to the degree of woman-friendliness of welfare states and asked if the diverse regimes meet differently the welfare needs of carers. One typology (Siarrof, 1994 in Sainsbury, 1994) distinguishes between:

1   Protestant social democratic welfare states (Sweden) within which the state substitutes for private care and women find employment in the public service so created.
2   Christian democratic welfare states (France) that support women in their caring functions at home but do not make it so easy for women to enter the work force on equal terms with men.
3   Protestant liberal welfare states (the USA) which offer limited support for caring work and some help towards equitable access to employment, but much of this depends on private provision of services in the marketplace.
4   Late female mobilisation welfare states (Greece, Japan) where the issues of access to work and/or support for caring functions have only just entered the policy agenda.

These diverse welfare regimes have also been commented on in terms of their ethnic minority friendliness. Particular attention is focused here on the insider–outsider aspect of the ethnic citizenship basis of the German and Japanese welfare system, compared with the formal equal opportunities policies and multi-lingual education opportunities provided for in some Scandinavian countries. (For an overview of this comparative social policy literature, see Kennet, 2001, Ch. 3.)

Goodin et al. (1999) have provided the definitive evaluation of the three worlds of welfare in a longitudinal study of three exemplar countries: The Netherlands (social

democratic), Germany (corporatist) and the USA (liberal). They examined empirically over time the performance of the three countries on several criteria including the level of poverty, the degree of social exclusion, the efficiency of the economy, and the capacity it offered citizens to make life choices. These authors concluded that on **all** criteria social democracy was superior to corporatism, which in turn was superior to liberalism. It is this empirical conclusion combined with people's perception of the success of such regimes that has led to such a heated controversy about the perceived threats to social democracy of the global neo-liberal project.

Social policy and explanations of welfare state development

Early work in social policy to account for welfare state development was not readily able to explain diversity. Neither the 'moralistic' or 'social conscience' approach of Titmuss (1974), nor the 'materialist' or 'logic of industrialisation' approach of Rimlinger (1971) and Wilensky and Lebeaux (1958) were suited to this task. Accounts that **have** offered plausible explanations of diversity among welfare states include the 'pluralist' or 'politics matters' approach of Heidenheimer et al. (1991), the 'Marxist' or 'class struggle' approach of Gough (1979) and the 'power resource' (or 'democratic class struggle') approach of Korpi (1983). From these last two approaches we have learned that social democratic welfare states are associated with a high degree of working-class mobilisation and political representation, and that liberal welfare states are associated with an absence of these factors. The fashioning of cross-class coalitions and solidarities were also an important part of the universal welfare state story. The middle class were brought into (or bought off by) the Scandinavian welfare state settlement by ensuring high-quality universal services that met their needs too. In a rather different way, the conservative regimes of Germany and France met the needs of a middle class through wage-related benefits that to some extent privileged them. These types of explanation were then developed further by Williams (1989, 2001, 2005) to account not only for the class-related dimensions of welfare states but also for the gendered and ethnic-friendly character of welfare states. With the concept of 'discourses of work, family, nation', she argued that particular welfare state settlements were an outcome not only of class but also of gender and ethnic conflicts, degrees of mobilisation around each of these, and the associated discourses around work (who should get it and how should it be rewarded?), family (who cares for whom and with what support?) and nation (who is an insider and who an outsider regarding welfare entitlements?) deployed in these conflicts.

The chapter now turns to a consideration of the globalisation process. Having done that, we shall be able to return to these several ways in which we described the subject area of social policy and ask:

- How does globalisation affect social policy understood as **sector provision of services like health and social protection?**
- How does globalisation alter the way social policy analysts address issues of **redistribution, regulation and rights?**
- How do the **issues of social justice, citizenship rights, universality and diversity, agency of provision and caring responsibilities** alter within a global context?

- Does globalisation encourage developed welfare states and developing countries to adopt and prefer one or other of the **diverse welfare state models** that we reviewed?
- How might globalisation modify the **explanations we offer for social policy development** and what does it do to class, gender and ethnic welfare struggles?

Globalisation

Here are two definitions of globalisation: 'Globalisation may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary life' (Held et al., 1999); and 'globalization [involves] tendencies to a world-wide reach, impact, or connectedness of social phenomena or to a world-encompassing awareness among social actors' (Therborn, 2000).

When social scientists talk about globalisation they are talking about a process within which there is a shrinking of time and space. Social phenomena in one part of the world are more closely connected to social phenomena in other parts of the world. This kind of definition that sees cross-border connections as the key to understanding globalisation has to be distinguished from debates for or against globalisation. Usually these debates and conflicts are about particular international polices and practices – typically economic ones which may be associated with the wider process of globalisation but are not a **necessary** feature of it. These disputes are usually about the **form** that globalisation is taking or the **politics** of globalisation, rather than the fact of time and space shrinkage. Indeed, this book engages in a debate about the neo-liberal form that globalisation is taking and the kinds of global and national social policies being argued for by global actors, but it does not dispute that there is a shrinking of time and space and that globalisation is in that sense uncontestable and irreversible.

Most commentators agree that globalisation embraces a number of dimensions including the economic, political, productive, social and cultural. Among the aspects of globalisation which reflect this range of dimensions are:

- increased flows of foreign capital based on currency trading;
- significantly increased foreign direct investment in parts of the world;
- increased world trade with associated policies to reduce barriers to trade;
- increased share of production associated with transnational corporations;
- interconnectedness of production globally due to changes in technology;
- increased movement of people for labour purposes, both legal and illegal;
- the global reach of forms of communication, including television and the Internet; and
- the globalisation or 'MacDonaldisation' of cultural life.

These processes and other associated phenomena have in turn led to the emergence of a global civil society sharing a common political space. However, while economic activity has become more global and we have seen the birth of a global civil society, global political institutions tend to lag behind these developments. They are to a large extent stuck in an earlier historic epoch of inter-governmental agreements. Indeed, the reform of global political institutions and processes to better govern global social policy is an important theme of this book and will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Held and McGrew (2002a) elaborated a typology of political positions held with regard to globalisation:

- neoliberals (who welcome the economics of free-market globalisation);
- liberal internationalists (who still see the world as essentially made up of states collaborating with each other through the UN system);
- institutional reformers (who consider that aspects of globalisation lead to the need to strengthen and reform aspects of international governance);
- global transfomers (who see globalisation as an epoch-changing process and seek a socially responsible globalisation with strengthened global social governance);
- statists/protectionists (who regard globalisation as a threat and seek to protect through trade barriers their country's social development); and
- radicals of two kinds, Marxists and localists (who want to replace international capitalist globalisation with either a post-capitalist world order or to re-nurture local production in a sustainable way).

The political position taken in this book lies somewhat uncomfortably between the institutional reformer and global transformer position, laced with a deal of radicalism of both kinds.

Globalisation's impact upon social policy

The argument to be developed in this book is that this new globalisation impacts upon the subject area and practice of social policy in the following ways:

- **Sets welfare states in competition with each other**: This raised the spectre (Mishra, 1999), but not necessarily the reality (Swank, 2002), of a race to the welfare bottom whereby states reduced their welfare commitments for fear of losing capital investment. It raises the question as to what type of welfare state or social policy best suits international competitiveness without undermining social solidarity (Scharpf and Schimdt, 2000; Sykes et al., 2001). Evidence is now accumulating which suggests that in the Global North equitable approaches to social policy may be sustainable (Swank, 2002; Castles, 2005), whereas they may not, in conditions of neoliberal globalisation, be so easily replicable within the Global South (Chapter 8).
- **Brings new players into the making of social policy**: International organisations (IOs) such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO and UN agencies such as WHO, ILO and so on have become more involved in prescribing country policy. This has generated a global discourse about desirable national social policy. The within-country politics of welfare has taken on a global dimension with a struggle of ideas being waged within and between international organisations as to desirable national social policy. The battle for pension policy in post-communist countries between the World Bank and the ILO is a classic example (Deacon, 1997; Holzmann et al., 2003; see also Chapters 2, 3 and 4).
- **Raises the issues with which social policy is concerned, those of redistribution, regulation and rights, to a supranational level that has both a regional (EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, SADC and so on) and global dimension**: The struggle between

liberal and social democratic approaches to economic and social policy takes on a global and regional dimension. New global social movements enter the picture too and contribute from below to a **global politics of welfare** (O'Brein et al., 2000; Yeates, 2001; Scholte Schnabel, 2002; Munck, 2005; Chapter 5). Whether neo-liberal globalisation could and should give way to a social reformist globalisation within which global redistribution, regulatory and rights policies and mechanisms can be developed is addressed in Chapter 6. These changes raise a debate about the need for reformed global social governance mechanisms that is addressed in Chapter 7.

- **Creates a global private market in social provision:** Increased free trade has created the possibility of mainly American and European private health care and hospital providers, education providers, social care agencies and social insurance companies operating on a global scale and benefiting from an international middle-class market in private social provision. The implication of this development for sustaining cross-class solidarities within one country in the context of development is discussed in Chapter 3. Research on this issue will be examined there (Sexton, 2001; Mackintosh and Koivusalo, 2005; Chavez, 2006; Holden, 2006).

- **Encourages a global movement of peoples that challenges territorial-based structures and assumptions of welfare obligation and entitlement**: Recent debate about migration within an expanded EU has lead to restrictions on the welfare entitlements of recent migrants and the emergence of the idea of a two-tier welfare state despite the evidence that European welfare states may need migrant labour (Jordan and Duvell, 2003; Thomas, 2005). Here otherwise socially just social democratic welfare states have been found wanting from the point of view of the new migrant, whereas more liberal welfare states are found to be more receptive to the welfare needs of migrants (albeit within a context of 'lower' liberal welfare state entitlements). The impact of migration upon welfare provision in developing countries is equally profound, both in terms of the loss of skilled welfare state labour (doctors and nurses) and in terms of reliance on foreign remittances. International care chains have emerged within this context (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002; Yeates, 2004). Thus migration challenges territorial borders of solidarities, and it will be argued that on the one hand it presages global solidarities and global citizenship, while on the other hand it reconstitutes solidarities around family, religion and ethnicity. These issues are picked up in Chapter 5, where we discuss them in the context of global social movements.

These are the broad ways in which it is argued that globalisation impacts upon social policy as a subject area and as a practice of governments and allied actors. In terms of the five ways we defined the subject area of social policy earlier, we can therefore suggest the following.

In terms of social policy understood as **sectoral policy** (health, education, social protection), two things stand out. One is the role of international organisations (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) in influencing national social policy through loans or conditional aid or technical assistance. We shall see that at present the world has in effect two global ministries of health, two global ministries of education and two global ministries of social protection. During the period of the creation and influence of the UN agencies in the 1950s and 1960s and into the 1970s, it was clear that global advice on sector policy came from the WHO, the UNESCO and ILO. Once the World Bank, in the 1980s and 1990s,

included social sector issues in its lending policy and practice, it began to operate in effect in competition with the UN social agencies. Its policy prescriptions for developing country health, education and social protection policy were often at odds with the advice given by UN agencies. Furthermore, it became better endowed than the UN agencies and had more clout both in financial terms and in terms of the **perceived** quality of its professional staff. The other is the increased scope that the globalisation of markets offers private providers of hospitals, pension funds and aspects of education provision. The welfare mix between government provision and private provision is shifting in favour of the later in the context of globalisation.

In terms of social policy understood as polices and processes of **redistribution, regulation and rights**, a number of things stand out. The first is that because of the perceived impact of global economic competition on a country's ability to tax in order to spend, the extent to which countries are able to redistribute has been brought into question. Similarly, because of a fear of capital flight, a country's ability to impose social regulations on business has been brought into question too. Guaranteeing social rights becomes rather more difficult in this context. If it is true that to some extent capital has escaped national rules by its capacity to move abroad, then the political task becomes one of reinventing those rules at a regional and global level. What becomes necessary if the global economy is to have a social purpose are global taxes and global social regulations geared to the realisation of a set of global social rights (Chapter 6).

In terms of social policy understood as a concern with **issues of social justice, citizenship rights, universality and diversity, agency of provision and caring responsibilities**, a number of assertions can be made here which will be followed up in subsequent chapters. Social justice questions in a global era take on an international dimension. How can a continued concern with addressing issues of social justice within one country (the traditional preoccupation of social policy analyst) be reconciled with a new concern to ensure social justice across borders? This has both philosophical and political dimensions. The Rawlsian conception of justice often used in social policy literature applies to within-border issues of justice in a capitalist society. Here a degree of inequity is justified so long as the resulting impact upon economic growth raises the level of income of the poorest. Attempts have been made to reformulate this principle between states (O'Neill, 1991; Pogge, 2002). A hugely contested area in globalisation studies is whether the existing form of neoliberal globalisation, while permitting inequity within and between countries, actually does raise the standard of living of the world's poor (Dollar and Kray, 2001; Milanovic, 2003). In political terms, the question becomes one of whether an alliance between the poor of the Global South can be forged with the better-off poor of the Global North that improves the lot of the former without unacceptably undermining the lot of the later. This becomes expressed concretely in the conflicts around global labour standards and other policy questions (Chapters 3, 4 and 5).

Thinking about the concept of **citizenship rights** in a globalising world only serves to highlight the double-sidedness of the concept. On the one hand citizenship within the context of democratic developed capitalist societies is about securing rights and entitlements for all within a defined territorial space. On the other hand it is about excluding from the benefits of citizenship those outside this entity. In the last years of the last century we have seen a simultaneous deepening and strengthening of citizenship rights and entitlements within some countries and a tightening of restrictions

Table 1.2   **The global welfare mix**

	Domestic	**Supranational**
State	Domestic government	International organisations
Market	Domestic market	Global market, TNCs
Community	Domestic NGOs	International NGOs
Household	Households	International household strategies

Source: Gough and Woods, (2004: 30).

on migrants seeking access to those very same citizenship rights. Overlaying this development has been the emergence of supranational citizenship rights within the most advance world region, Europe, and at the same time within Europe a strengthening of polices of exclusion towards the outsiders. These developments serve to call into question a conception of citizenship based upon territory. Conceptualisations of dual citizenship rights for migrant workers and even global citizenship entitlements for all enter the discourse of social policy analysis and even the practice of international governance. These issues are explored fully in Chapter 6.

Within one country the question of **universalism and diversity** for social policy analysts and social policy-makers is often posed as how to facilitate the universal meeting of human needs in ways that respect cultural diversity. In so far as globalisation has increased the pressures for and practices of cross-border migration, this only serves to make this policy question more urgent within any one country. Questions of belonging and identity arise. Calls on the part of host countries for a more assertive commitment to their country of adoption by new migrants vie with the increased possibilities for retaining an identity of origin in a world of easy communication. At the same time, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 8, similar debates and policy choices arise at a global level. The UN did declare a set of universal human rights and evolved a convention of economic, social and cultural rights. However, these rights have been questioned by countries influenced by fundamentalist religious values. Is it possible to sustain a universal set of rights, including social rights that have purchase world-wide, in a global order where it is perceived by some in the Global South that such 'universal rights' are promulgated by very self-interested and hypocritical northern governments?

Which **agency** should provide for the welfare needs of a population (state, market, civil society organisation, family) takes on an extra dimension of complexity in an interconnected world, particularly in those countries now attempting to develop their welfare states in the context of a global economy. Gough and Woods (2004) capture this particularly well in their exposition (summarised in the Table 1.2) of the ways in which all of these possible agencies now take on an international dimension. Not only might national governments be a welfare provider, but so might international organisations. Not only might national private companies provide private schools, but so might global education providers. Not only might local NGOs contribute to the welfare mix, but so might international NGOs such as Oxfam. Not only might care be provided by a close relative, but so might substitute care be made possible by the remittances sent back to families from abroad.

This links to the final set of issues with which social policy scholars and makers are concerned, that of **caring obligations and responsibilities**. Social policy analysts have demonstrated the gender and racial divisions of caring (Williams, 1989; Sainsbury, 1996; Daly and Rake, 2003). Women care for men and children. Black people serve

whites. In general, women do more of the care for men and dependents when this care is provided in the home. Even in those countries where some aspects of care are institutionalised, women occupy the majority of the caring roles. Class and ethnic differences become important in these cases, though. Black and minority migrant workers undertake a greater share of the lower-skilled caring jobs in public institutions. It is one of the arguments of this book that globalisation widens in quite complex ways the gender, class and ethnic divisions of care while it at the same time may have facilitated a release from family-based caring responsibilities for some women both in the richest countries and the poorest. In the USA, for example, white middle-class women and men have their caring duties undertaken by black or Hispanic migrant workers. But at the same time, the World Bank has accepted the idea that investing in the education of women is a good way of speeding the demographic transition to smaller families and hence a reduced burden of care. However, economic globalisation has at the same time pulled women into sweatshops and into the international sex trade.

In terms of social policy's identification of a number of **diverse worlds of welfare**, globalisation poses the question as to whether it is likely to impel countries towards any one of these models. Sykes et al. (2001) noted that while some scholars (Mishra, 1999) had argued that neoliberal globalisation would drive countries to adopt liberal or residual social polices, others suggested that developed countries were immune from such global economic pressures. Sykes concluded that for Europe, global economic pressures did have some impact on a country's social policy, but the nature of this impact was dependent upon the type of institutional welfare state already in existence. Liberal welfare states became more liberal. Social democratic welfares states were, given the political will, largely sustainable. Conservative corporatist welfare states were most challenged but also most resistant to change. I (Deacon, 1997, 2000a) have argued that, focusing on East European post-communist societies, the **politics** of globalisation rather than the **economics** of globalisation have shaped country thinking about social policy, especially as these countries are open to the influence of the World Bank and other international actors. Kwon (2001) has demonstrated that in at least one East Asian productivist welfare state the impact of globalisation has been to compel it in the direction of more universal state provision. Taylor (2000) has also shown how some middle-income countries have increased public welfare spending in the context of globalisation. However, it remains true that certainly for most middle- and lower-income countries the period of the Washington Consensus saw the destruction of the embryonic state welfare services of much of Latin America, Africa and South Asia in favour of targeted and residual policies.

The final question that we suggested should be addressed was how might globalisation modify the **explanations we offer for social policy development** and what it does to class, gender and ethnic welfare struggles? The answers to this question are deferred until we consider a prior question addressed below.

Studying and understanding social policy in a global context

Social policy as scholarly activity has drawn on political economy, the sociology of class, gender and ethnicity, and institutional political science to develop fairly robust

theories for explaining welfare state development and welfare state diversity. Do these theories need to be modified to account for (a) national social policy change in the context of globalisation, and (b) can these theories can be adapted to offer plausible accounts of the emergence and character of a supranational or global social policy? We need to take an excursion into other fields of scholarly endeavour to determine which is of use to us.

The account used in this book to offer explanations of the ways national social policy changes in the context of globalisation and the way in which a supranational global social policy has emerged draws upon insights from development studies, international relations and international organisation theory, policy transfer and diffusion literature, global social movement studies, concepts of hegemonic struggle as well as some new work around the ethnography of global policy. Within this complex intellectual framework certain conceptualisations will emerge as being of particular use. Among these are the concepts of **welfare regime theory** (as distinct from welfare state regime theory) (Gough and Woods, 2004), **complex multi-lateralism** (O'Brien et al., 2000), global **policy advocacy coalitions** (Orenstein, 2004, 2005) **global knowledge networks** (Stone and Maxwell, 2005) and the **politics of scale** (Clarke, 2004b, 2005; Gould, 2005; Stubbs, 2005).

Development studies literature has not until recently used the language of social policy (Hall and Midgely, 2004; Dani, 2005). It has been concerned either with the broader concept of development that includes and necessarily privileges the economic underpinnings of development or, especially in an African context, with overseas aid policy and interventions in particular sectors like poverty alleviation, reproductive health care and basic education. Gough and Woods (2004: 32) have, however, provided an admirable basis upon which to sustain a dialogue between the concerns of social policy analysts and those of the development studies specialist. They argue and demonstrate that the **welfare regime theory** of Esping-Andersen (1990) and those who followed him should be renamed 'welfare-state regime theory', applying as it does at best to developed OECD countries. The countries of the world as a whole fall, according to Gough and Woods (2004), into three meta-welfare regimes. These are the welfare state regimes of the OECD world, informal security regimes within which peasant economies co-exist with peripheral capitalism and within which there is a less distinct policy mode, and insecurity regimes within which predatory capitalism operates in the context of more or less collapsed states.

Crucial from the point of view of an argument in this book is the way in which the social policy regimes of some particular countries are described in the Gough and Woods (2004) volume as hybrid-sharing characteristics of welfare state regimes and informal security regimes. Thus Barrientos (2004) suggests that Latin America as a whole might have been best characterised before the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s as **conservative-informal** regimes because the small formal sectors of the economy operated with work-based, wage-related welfare entitlements imported from Europe. After the reforms, many countries gave way to market-based private provision with a residual safety net for the poor. This regime is then characterised as a **liberal-informal** regime. It will be argued in the next chapter that the World Bank and other global actors were able to push for these reforms and undermine the partial conservative welfare states of much of Latin America. They could do this because, whereas in the context of Europe a conservative welfare state represented a form of more or less universal welfare state entitlement serving the cause of equity and social justice, in the context of Latin America, where only a small sector of the economy and population

were served by this kind of social policy, it served precisely the opposite ends, privileging some and excluding the majority. A similar account could be given of the 'premature' or 'partial' state welfare policies of much of post-colonial Africa and South Asia. Here new elites attempted to conserve and develop, often in impoverished circumstances, the urban hospital and the urban university as well as the civil service pension fund bequeathed by colonialists. To attack these 'bastions of privilege' in the name of the rural poor was an easy populist thing for the World Bank and other external actors to do. As we shall see, the problem was that in the name of criticising these enclave welfare regimes, the very idea of universal state welfare provision was rubbished and lost for two decades in development studies discourse and practice.

Political scientists writing about international relations in the context of globalisation are divided in their analysis between the two extremes of realists and cosmopolitan democrats. For realists still live in a world of sovereign states; they use the principal–agent theory to show how international organisation policies are nothing but the products of inter-state bargaining. For cosmopolitan democrats, the management of the world is transforming in the direction of a system of global governance, with an emerging system of global regulations that are influenced by other global process and actors (Held et al., 1999). Between the extremes of the state-centric realists and the cosmopolitan dreamers, most international relations theorists give much attention to the ways in which a large number of non-state and often private actors have entered the space we shall call the **contested terrain of emerging global governance**. Josselin and Wallace (2001) include transnational corporations, global knowledge elites or networks, organised criminal syndicates, the Catholic Church and global Islamic movements, international trade unions and private armies in their review. To these should be added International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). It is not just that these actors enter the global political space and argue, but they also take on in a private capacity international regulatory activity not yet undertaken by the underdeveloped system of formal global governance. Thus firms evolve private international regimes of self-regulation in many spheres (Hall and Biersteker, 2002). Global or at least transnational social movements from below have become a major force in the global politics of globalisation (Porta et al., 1999; Kaldor, 2003; Scholte, 2005). Issues like world poverty, global taxation, international labour standards, and access to pharmaceuticals in poorer countries can no longer be discussed at meetings of the G8 or the WTO without there being a major presence on the streets of international campaigning groups on all of these issues. The World Social Forum (WSF) attempts to provide a global organising space for these activities to match the organising space provided to international business by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

One study that focused upon the ways in which global social movements interacted with and influenced the policies of multilateral economic institutions (O'Brein et al., 2000) is particularly instructive. Its examination of the relations between the World Bank and the women's movement, the WTO and labour, the World Bank, WTO and the environmental social movement drew important conclusions:

> Our study has stressed the link between forms of international institution and social movements in which the state is just one area of contact and struggle (albeit an important one). The MEI–GSM relationship can be direct and need not be mediated by the state. Social forces with and across state borders are a factor in determining the nature of international order and organisation. (P. 234)

These authors coin the term **'complex multi-lateralism'** to capture this reality within which the realist's concern with state–state interaction sits side by side with a new set of trans-national power dynamics within which international organisations and the social movements they are confronted by have a degree of policy autonomy at a global level. It is this framework that we will find particularly useful in explaining some aspects of the ways international organisations influence state social policy, but also GSMs influence international organisation social policy.

 This conclusion that there might be a terrain of contestation about global social policy and that not only states but also international organisations and GSMs are actors in it will be returned to time and time again. For now it is useful to note how this view leads us to challenge an otherwise important recent contribution to the literature at the interface of development studies and international relations. Boas and McNeill's study of the policies of several international organisations including the World Bank, the WTO and the OECD, concludes rather pessimistically that:

> Powerful states (notably the USA), powerful organisations (such as the IMF) and even
> powerful disciplines (economics) exercise their power largely by 'framing': which serves
> to limit the power of potentially radical ideas to achieve change. (2004: 1)

While there is truth in this, it will be suggested in the course of this text that a more nuanced and more accurate conclusion might be that powerful states (notably the USA), powerful organisations (such as the IMF) and even powerful disciplines (economics) contend with other powerful states (notably the EU, China, Brazil), other powerful organisations (such as the ILO) and other disciplines (such as social and political science) to engage in a war of position regarding the content of global policy. This alternative conclusion echoes John Clarke's recent attempt to capture the sense in which we live in and against a neoliberal global order:

> … the work of constructing a neo-liberal hegemony is intensive, deploys different
> strategies, and encounters blockages and refusals. It has to engage other political-
> cultural projects – attempting to subordinate, accommodate, incorporate or displace
> them. To obscure such intense political-cultural work confirms the neo-liberal illusion
> of inevitability. If, on the contrary, we draw attention to the grinding and uneven strug-
> gle to make the world conform – and recognize the limitations and failures of this
> project – questions of conflict, contestation, and the 'unfinished' become rather more
> significant. Living in a neo-liberal world is not necessarily the same as being neo-
> liberal. Attention to the different sorts of *living with, in and against* neo-liberal domina-
> tion is a necessary antidote to 'big picture' projections of its universalism. (2004b: 102)

This bridges nicely to the concept of **global policy advocacy coalitions** used by Orenstein (2004, 2005) to analyse the development and world-wide selling of the global pension policy preferred by the World Bank since 1990. The details of this story will be told in the next chapter. What is important here is the identification of private and formal international actors (such as those we listed earlier) and an account of the ways in which global policy is first put on the agenda and then campaigned for. Earlier work on the role of epistemic communities noted that:

> How decision makers define state interests and formulate policies to deal with complex
> and technical issues can be a function of the manner in which the issues are represented
> by specialists to whom they turn for advice in the face of uncertainty … epistemic

communities (networks of knowledge based experts) play a part in … helping states identify their interests, forming the issues for collective debate, proposing specific polices, and identifying salient points for negotiation. (Haas, 1992: 3)

The same can be said of the ways in which international networks of knowledge-based experts play a part in helping international organisations shape the issues for collective debate. Indeed, since 1992 the world has witnessed a proliferation of kinds of international knowledge-based experts or knowledge networks (KNETS) (Stone and Maxwell, 2005). Whether understood as 'epistemic communities' who share a codified form of 'scientific' knowledege about an issue (such as pensions), or as 'discourse coalitions and communities' who use symbols language and narrative as a source of power, or as 'embedded knowledge networks' who possess authority because of their track record for problem solving, KNETS are now an integral part of the emerging forms of global governance. As Stone, modifying Held, puts it, 'KNETS do not simply "crystallize around different sites and forms of power"(Held, 2000: 19), the network is a site and form of power' (2005: 100). In a globalised world devoid of any effective global democratic processes, these KNETS substitute for other forms of policy making. Stone notes that:

Global or regional networks are … not subject to the usual reporting and account-ability requirements of public bodies in liberal democracies. The public – even the well informed and politically literate of OECD countries – are still largely unaware of the roles, reach and influence of global networks … Combined with the technocratic character of many such networks, the public is excluded and political responsibility is undermined. (2005: 103)

In the case of the global pension policy story told by Orenstein (2005) the agenda setting was very much in the hands of a global knowlege network based upon economists schooled in the Chicago school of neo-liberal economics. This network had a global reach in terms of its links to Milton Friedman, Friedrich von Hayek and others (Valdes, 1995). It then became centred upon work in the World Bank initiated by Larry Summers, the then chief economist, which was eventually published in 1994 as *Averting the Old Age Crisis*. A transnational advocacy coalition was then developed to further the adoption of these reforms. This coalition included the World Bank, USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other actors (Orenstein, 2005: 193).

 This work in international relations on how global policy becomes shaped by knowledge networks and then argued for by global advocacy coalitions is somewhat different in emphasis from other scholarly work based upon world society theory. Adopting a more sociological approach to the subject, Meyer et al. (1997) argue that global society rests on and reinforces universalistic definitions with which science gains more authority. They argues that many features of the nation state derive from world-wide models constructed and propogated through global cultural and associational processes. The approach within world society theory is to start not from the nation state as a basis for sociological analysis, but rather from an already existing global society that transcends borders. Cross-border professional associations act to spead policy ideas and practices wherever there are members. Education policy and practice, health care procedures and practices become the same everywhere in conformity with professional standards. While clearly this has some explanantory value

with regard to how policies in one country become transposed to another country, it lacks a sense of contest and conflict about policy options. It has echoes of functionalist sociology of the Talcott Parsons' theory, whereby every social phenomenon is understood as serving a higher societal function. Conflicts of interest and conflicts of policies are missing. A glance at the policy transfer and policy diffussion literature (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996) reveals accounts of policy transfers across borders where it is clear that '**choices**' are being made by some countries to borrow the policy of another, either because it is being coerced into doing so by powerful global actors or because it is in conformity with its particular ideological goals, or better fits to sets of national cultural assumptions. In other words, national social policy choices reflect globalised policy options and contestations about these.

Finally, in this review of aspects of the literature which might inform our understanding of how global social policy is made and implemented, we turn to the **politics of scale**. This is referring to the idea that it is not adequate to attempt to capture the complexity of policy-making in a globalised world by thinking in terms only of layers of government or governance. An account of policy-making which talked only in terms of the taken-for-granted levels of sub-national, national, regional and global is seen as lacking an important aspect of policy-making in a globalised world. What is important here is that policy-making is not only taking place at different taken-for-granted levels of governance, but that **key policy players are transcending each level at any one moment**. The policy-making process is multi-sited and multi-layered as well as multi-actored, all at one time. Within this context also, individuals as change agents and policy translators can act in the spaces between levels and organisations (Stubbs, 2006). The World Bank is **in** Tanzania. Care international, a mega-INGO, is **in** Tanzania. The consultation process between the Bank and the Tanzanian civil society about social policy involves local NGOs informed by international consultants. To understand something of the complexity of social policy-making **for** Tanzania, one needs to examine actors and activities at the Bank, in the government, in INGOs, in international consulting companies and in donor government international development sections. The 'global' is in the local, and the 'local' in the global captures a little of this politics of scale. Within this context the national policy-making process can become distorted, so that those who are better able to travel between these scales are better able to influence policy. Indeed, Gould has argued that 'transnational private agencies [find] themselves brokering and, to some extent, supplanting local civil society representation in policy consultation' (2005: 142).

This process opens up the possibilities for individuals and individual companies to operate wearing shifting identities. In this sense, the insights provided by Janine Wedel, based on her case study of American aid to Russia in the early 1990s, offers a number of highly pertinent middle-range concepts in order to study these processes. While she prefers the metaphor of aid as a 'transmission belt', her focus is on 'the interface between donors and the recipients' in terms of 'what happens when differing systems interact' (Wedel, 2004: 154–5). She addresses the importance, in these encounters, of multiplex networks (2004: 165), where players know each other, and interact, in a variety of capacities, with multiple identities (which she terms 'trans-identities'), and in a variety of roles. Her tale is one of shifting and multiple agency, promoted in part by what she terms 'flex organisations', which have a 'chameleon-like, multipurpose character', with actors within them 'able to play the boundaries' between national and international; public and private; formal and informal; market

and bureaucratic; state and non-state; even legal and illegal (2004: 167).[*] At the extreme, this leads to the possibility of individuals playing a large role in global policy-making. Jeffrey Sachs, a villain of the piece in the Wedel story of Russian privatisation, becomes reincarnated as the author of the report of the WHO's Commission on Macro-Economics and Health, and subsequently head of the UN task force on the MDGs project (see Chapter 4).

This review of the wider development studies and international relations literature has argued that certain concepts and approaches from them are of value in trying to make sense of global social policy. These include **welfare regime theory, complex multi-lateralism, global policy advocacy coalitions, global knowledge networks and the politics of scale**. The later approach in particular enables us to understand global social policy-making as multi-sited and multi-actored. However, this emphasis on individual actors as change agents and policy advocacy coalitions has led us a long way from the political economy or class-struggle basis of explanations of welfare state development within one country which we examined earlier. In the light of the foregoing, can we find any way of scaling up the explanations we offered earlier of welfare state change within one country using notions of class, gender and ethnic struggles, mobilisations and discourse to account for elements of the making of global social policy?

Returning then to the final question that we left unanswered in the section on globalisation's impact upon social policy, how might globalisation modify the **explanations we offer for social policy development?** Obviously we have to factor in the new international actors and hence the new multi-actored and multi-located policy-making processes that we have already identified. But what of the broad analytical frameworks bequeathed to us by comparative social policy analysis? First, in terms of the moral reform approach to social policy change, a case could be mounted that in so far as there has been a shift within the last decades from a fundamentalist neo-liberalism to something which is concerned to attend to the worst social consequences of economic globalisation, this might be explained in part by a growth in a moral concern for the poor of the developing world. It is certainly true that religious organisations have been at the forefront of global campaigns for debt relief and poverty alleviation. Equally, the logic of industrialisation thesis might be invoked to explain some aspects of social policy shifts in the context of an industrialising developing world. Certainly politics still matter, as reflected in the contest of ideas about welfare between and within international organisations such as the World Bank and the ILO.

However, as we argued in the section on theories of welfare state development, this contest of ideas about global and national social policy needs to be understood in part as a product of material stuggles between social classes and gender and ethnic groups. Class struggles can and do take on cross-border dimensions; the social movements of women have become globalised; within-ethnicity forms of organisation have taken on an international dimension too. It is one of the contentions of this book that the analytical framework provided by Williams (1989) of a racially structured, patriachal capitalism, which was used by Ginsburg (1992, 2004) to understand why the social policies of Germany, Sweden, the USA and the UK were so different, can be adapted to contribute to our understanding both of national social policy within a global context and of emerging global social policy.

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[*] I am indebted to Paul Stubbs for this summary; it is to be found in Stubbs (2005).
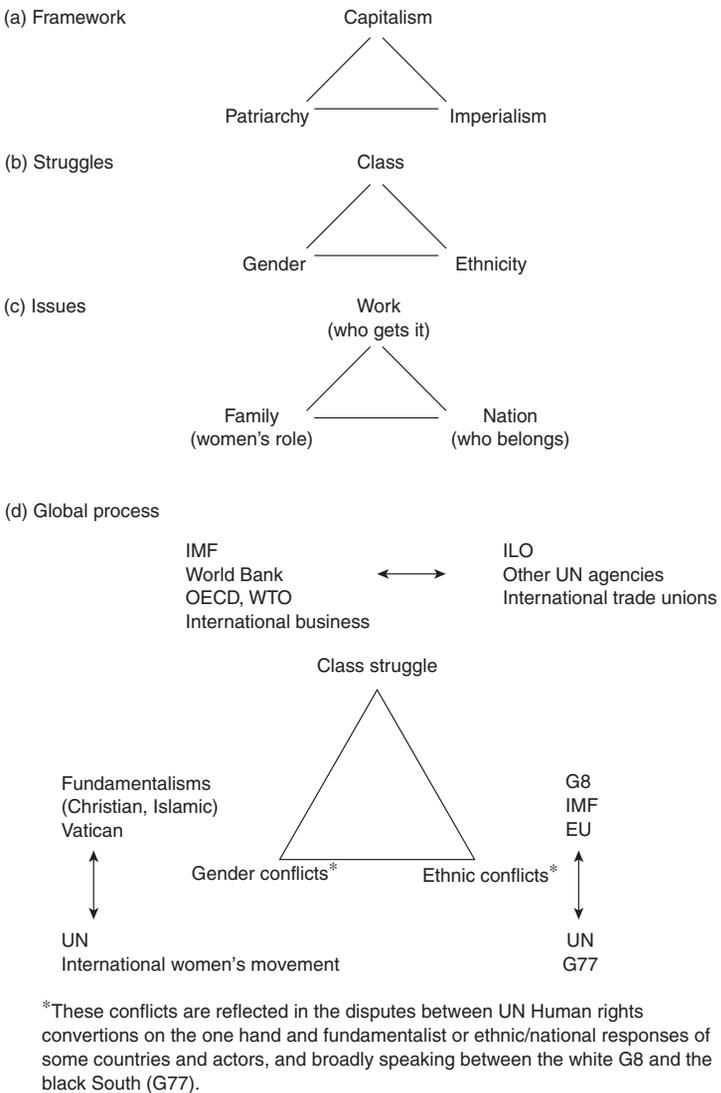
In terms of national social policy in a global context, it is generally agreed that one consequence of the neo-liberal globalisation project has been to strengthen the power of capital over that of labour. Capital is free to move across borders, labour is more restricted. Constructing cross-border trade union solidarities in defence of national welfare provision is not easy. As a consequence, the share of income going to profits rather than wages has increased (Wade, 2004). This is not to say that there has been a full-blown undermining of national welfare state provision in developed countries as a consequence of trade union weakening. This has happened, but only in some places (for example, Germany) in small measure. In other middle-income countries, in contrast, an increased presence of trade unionism has led to universal welfare gains (for example, South Korea).

Any summary assessment of the impact of globalisation upon the capacity of women to organise within countries to defend their gendered welfare interests must be more nuanced. While women **as workers** may have suffered some of the same effects of globalisation upon their capacity to defend and improve pay and working conditions, organisations of women **as women** have been strengthened by globalisation's easing of transnational networking. As we shall see in Chapter 5, UN conferences such as the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing facilitated the growth of a global women's movement that empowered women in many developing countries in particular to confront issues of patriachry and women-unfriendly development policies for the first time. Since then there has been 'much to celebrate' in progress towards gender equality (UNRISD, 2005).

In terms of within-ethnicity forms of organisation, the story is less well documented. There is some suggestion that while neoliberal globalisation is spreading a global western culture, at the same time local and ethnic identities have become more important. Cross-border movements of people may have led in part, paradoxically, to an increased identification with and networking with one's country of origin. Postwar diasporas have become an important factor in the policy-making of some countries. Reaction in some developed welfare states has been to restrict welfare benefit access to new migrants. On the other hand, it has been suggested (Chau, 2004) that globalisation's push towards markets and democracy everywhere has has the effect of stimulating oppressed ethnic majorities to wrest power and resources from hitherto market-dominating ethnic minorities (for example, Indonesians against Chinese). Globalisation has therefore increased the importance of inter-ethnic stuggles in shaping national social policy.

How can the framework of capitalism, patriarchy and a racially structured imperialism with its concomitant global social divisions of class, gender and ethnicity and associated struggles over work, family and nation be applied to the shaping of a supranational global social policy? How are the new global actors that have been identified as playing a role in shaping global social policy influenced by these global conflicts of interest? Who is winning at the global level? Capital or labour? Patriarchy or women? Whites or people of colour? In what ways do global social policies embody these clashes of interest? Figure 1.1 attempts to capture schematically how the analytical framework might be transposed onto the global playing field.

First, in terms of class struggle this has a global dimension. At one level the entire range of international organisations, the policies they formulate and the intellectuals working within and around them might be understood, according to Sklair (2002: 99) or Soederberg (2006), as the fraction of the global capitalist class, the 'globalised

(a) Framework   Capitalism

                          Patriarchy ———————— Imperialism

(b) Struggles   Class

                            Gender ———————— Ethnicity

(c) Issues   Work
                              (who gets it)

                          Family ———————— Nation
                      (women's role)   (who belongs)

(d) Global process

IMF   ILO
World Bank   ←——————→   Other UN agencies
OECD, WTO   International trade unions
International business

                          Class struggle

Fundamentalisms   G8
(Christian, Islamic)   IMF
Vatican   EU

              Gender conflicts*   Ethnic conflicts*

UN   UN
International women's movement   G77

*These conflicts are reflected in the disputes between UN Human rights
convertions on the one hand and fundamentalist or ethnic/national responses of
some countries and actors, and broadly speaking between the white G8 and the
black South (G77).

Figure 1.1   Global conflicts of interest and global social policy

professional' seeking to legitimate and shore up a globalised *capitalism* to prevent it
becoming a globalised *socialism*. For me, on the other hand, what is important is
whether the 'globalised professionals' are formulating a global neoliberal social
policy or something which we might recognise as a global social-democratic social
policy, so that the global economy serves a global social purpose. In this context, then,
I interpret the contest between the more neoliberal ideas and policies of the World
Bank and the more social democratic policies of the ILO as one reflection of a global
class struggle. As we will see in Chapter 5, global business is well positioned to influ-
ence global policy, and global trade unionism rather less so (Farnsworth, 2005).
Moves to bring global business into partnership with the UN through such devices as
the Global Compact (Chapter 4) are variously interpeted as the UN selling out to

global business or as a means of imposing a global social responsibility upon business. Equally important in terms of the impact of globalisation upon the relative balance of class forces at the transnational level, is the ways in which global interconnectedness appears to be detaching the middle class of developing countries from a focus upon the national state-building or developmental project into a searching after their own interests within a global marketplace (Cohen, 2004; Gould, 2005).

In terms of the global gender struggle, we have already referred to the ways in which some parts of the UN system have enabled a global women's movement to organise and influence across borders. The UN declarations of human rights does give space to gender equity and rights issues. The contest here is not so much between the women-friendly policies of many of the UN social agencies and the patriarchial senti-ments and policies of the World Bank or WTO, but rather that there is still contesta-tion about these policies within the UN debating and policy-making chambers. A number of governments, notably the USA and some Islamic countries, and also the Vatican (which has state status at the UN), are now questioning some of the previ-ously taken-for-granted assumptions about the desirability of these women-friendly policies. Within the World Bank, however, as Sen (2004, 2006) has shown, the argu-ments about the positive developmental effects of putting women at the centre of development by, for example, ensuring equal opportunity for girl education and by micro-credit for women, are now accepted as mainstream.

The question of ethnicity and struggles on the part of the largely non-white Global South to undo the huge global inequities left over from the imperial epoch within which the whites were the beneficiaries lies at the heart of the battle for global economic and social policies. Whether and how the global division of labour laid down in the period of empires can be altered, whether and how there can be restitution for past (and indeed continuing) exploitation of the South by the North, whether and how the debts incurred by the South to the North can be written off, whether and how a systematic policy of global transfers of resources from the Global North to the Global South to fund education health and social protection might be made to work, are *the* crunch issues. Here the World Bank and the IMF are clearly owned by and still acting for the Global North. The UN and WTO (which does have a majority membership from the South) are forums for the continuing playing out of these issues. In the past two decades the Global South has found a new voice and strength in these meeting places. Almost every global social policy issue becomes one of heated controversy between the EU block, the USA and the G77 or some alliance of the developing countries such as the new G20(s) led by Brazil, China and South Africa. At issue are such matters as the price of essential drugs and the funding of primary education.

Class, gender and ethnic conflicts cut across each other within one country. So it is in the global arena. Indeed, it will be argued in this book that there is now a major fault line in the global discourse about desirable national and global economic and social policies between, on the one hand, a northern-centred debate between a USA-influenced desire for global neoliberal policies and a European-influenced desire for global social democratic policies, and on the other hand a southern-centred debate about getting out from under *any* northern-imposed agenda for global economic and social policy. The intellectual struggle engaged in by northern social reformists in the global arena is cut across by the intellectual struggle engaged in by southern de-globalisers. Finding a way out of this impasse is one of the key challenges for those of us who are keen to work for a more socially just world with more socially just global

social policies. This is the subject of this book, but in particular the issue which will be returned to in the last chapter.

Further Reading

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