

ROUTLEDGE EXPLORATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

# Social Protection in Developing Countries

Reforming systems

Edited by  
Katja Bender, Markus Kaltenborn and  
Christian Pfeiderer

With a foreword by Magdalena  
Sepúlveda Carmona



# Social Protection in Developing Countries

‘For some time, the debates about social policy in the advanced industrial states and poverty reduction in developing countries have taken place on separate tracks. Katja Bender, Markus Kaltenborn and Christian Pflaiderer remind us that the fundamental issues – providing services and reducing risk – are the same. This useful collection combines theoretical insight, a discussion of core policy issues like targeting, and case studies to reveal the richness of the debate over social policy in developing countries.’

Stephan Haggard, Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies,  
University of California, San Diego, USA

‘This book offers the most comprehensive treatment to date of the global phenomenon that social protection has become over the past decade. Leading experts in the field offer sharply drawn insights into the full range of critical issues, each of which is explored and illustrated through a wide range of cases at national and international levels. The collection is particularly commendable for the attention that it draws to the *politics* of social protection, which offers the key to whether social protection becomes an institutionalised response to pressing problems of global poverty and in what form.’

Dr Sam Hickey, Institute for Development Policy and Management,  
School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester

Providing universal access to social protection and health systems for all members of society, including the poor and vulnerable, is increasingly considered crucial to international development debates. This is the first book to explore from an interdisciplinary and global perspective the reforms of social protection systems introduced in recent years by many governments of low- and middle-income countries.

Although a growing body of literature has been concerned with the design and impact of social protection, less attention has been directed towards analysing and explaining these reform processes themselves. Through case studies of African, Asian and Latin American countries, this book examines the ‘global phenomenon’ of recent social protection reforms in low- and middle-income areas, and how it differs across countries in terms of both scope and speed of institutional change. Exploring the major domestic and international factors affecting the political feasibility of social protection reform, the book outlines the successes and failures of recent reform initiatives.

This invaluable book combines contributions from both academics and practitioner experts to give students, researchers and practitioners in the fields of social security, economics, law and political science an in-depth understanding of political reform processes in developing countries.

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Katja Bender, Markus Kaltenborn  
and Christian Pfeiderer**

First published 2013  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Social protection in developing countries : reforming systems / [edited by]  
Katja Bender, Markus Kaltenborn and Christian Pfeiderer.

p. cm. – (Routledge explorations in development studies ; 2)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Social security – Developing countries. 2. Public welfare – Developing  
countries. 3. Developing countries – Social policy. 4. Developing countries –  
Economic policy. I. Bender, Katja, 1973– II. Kaltenborn, Markus.

III. Pfeiderer, Christian.

HD7252.S598 2013

361.9172'4–dc23

2012039845

ISBN: 978-0-415-64101-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-415-64103-6 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-08229-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Times

by HWA Text and Data Management, London

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The views expressed in this book are the contributors’ own and should not be  
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# Foreword

This excellent and comprehensive publication on social protection is extremely timely given the current political momentum on social protection, demonstrated by the International Labour Organization's Recommendation on Social Protection Floors and other developments on national, regional and international stages. This momentum provides a unique and much-needed opportunity to reinvigorate the development and poverty reduction agenda, which is at a critical moment of self-reflection thanks to the upcoming expiration of the Millennium Development Goals and the ongoing discussions around the successor development paradigm. However, in order to ensure that the potential of social protection in terms of poverty reduction is realized, there is a pressing need for works such as this, examining the challenges, successes, opportunities and characteristics of social protection programmes from diverse and multidisciplinary viewpoints. Social protection is neither a magic bullet nor an unequivocal good. There remains a pressing need to further evolve the concept of social protection to ensure that its full potential and impact on poverty reduction and development is both understood and realized. Thus, this book makes an important contribution to the literature, analysis and evidence base on social protection, which can in turn make an important contribution to the development of more effective and truly transformative social protection systems.

In recent years, social protection has become an increasingly important tool for tackling poverty and improving the enjoyment of human rights. When I began my work as United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in 2008, it was clear to me that despite the growing prominence of social protection in domestic policy and international development, there was a noticeable dearth of analysis of the human rights implications of, and approach to, social protection programmes. Therefore, for the past four years, in collaboration with several human rights and development experts, I have focused my work as Special Rapporteur on developing the human rights-based approach to social protection.<sup>1</sup>

There is strong evidence that social protection systems can assist states in fulfilling their obligations under national, regional and international human rights law to ensure the enjoyment of at least minimum essential levels of economic, social and cultural rights. In particular, social protection systems have the potential

to assist in the realisation of the *right to an adequate standard of living* (including the right to adequate food and housing), the right to *social security*, the right to *education* and the right to the highest attainable standard of *health*. However, human rights standards require that states ensure compliance with human rights obligations both in the content of their social protection policies, as well as in the process by which they implement them.

Thus, the binding legal obligations that states have voluntarily assumed and the application of the central principles of the human rights framework – *equality and non-discrimination* (including *accessibility, adaptability, acceptability, adequacy* and the incorporation of the *gender perspective*), *participation, transparency* and *accountability* – must guide the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection systems.

Ultimately, a human rights-based approach to social protection not only fosters better compliance with states' obligations under international human rights law, but also ensures more effective, responsive, sustainable and fair social protection systems.

Thus, I particularly welcome the inclusion in this publication of a contribution on the human rights-based approach. A number of the other chapters also foreground concerns very relevant to the human rights-based approach, for example coordination, targeting, the role of law and legal institutions, universal transfers, national ownership, donor responsibility and social fairness. The publication should also be praised for the wide geographical spread of the studies, including the analyses of the Arab world and South-East Asia.

Overall, I warmly welcome this incisive publication, which makes an important contribution to the growing debate on social protection and its relationship to development, poverty and human rights. Implementing more comprehensive and rights-based social protection systems around the world is an urgent priority; a means to realize human rights, provide a lifeline out of poverty for many millions of people and turn our vision for fairer and more inclusive societies into a reality.

Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona  
United Nations Special Rapporteur on  
Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

## Note

- 1 See various reports to the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council on a human rights framework for cash transfer programmes (UN Doc. A/HRC/11/9); non-contributory pensions (UN Doc. A/HRC/13/31), on gender-aware social protection (A/65/259), and the role of social protection to ensure a human rights recovery from the crisis (UN Docs. A/64/279 and A/HRC/17/34).

# Abbreviations and acronyms

AFESD	Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
AFPs	Pension Fund Administrators (Bolivia)
BCP	Benefício de Prestação Continuada (Benefit of Continuing Provision of Welfare)
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme (Pakistan)
BLT	Unconditional Tax Transfers (Indonesia)
BMZ	German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation
BPJS	National Social Protection Agency (Indonesia)
BSM	Scholarship Programmes (Indonesia)
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CNS	National Trade Union Coordinating Council (Chile)
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
DPA	Supreme Advisory Council (Indonesia)
EAC	East African Community
EAP	Economically Active Population
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EGHP	Employment Generation for the Hardcore Poor (Bangladesh)
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme (South Africa)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G20	Group of Twenty
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Agency for International Development
GOI	Government of Indonesia
HIL	Health Insurance Law (Vietnam)
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IEE	Institute of Development Research and Development Policy, Ruhr-University of Bochum, Germany
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IISLP	International Institute for Social Law and Policy
ILC	International Law Commission
ILO	International Labor Organization
ILO-STEP	International Labor Organization – Strategies and Tools against Social Exclusion and Poverty
ILSSA	Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs (Vietnam)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JAMKESMAS	Social Health Assistance for the Poor (Indonesia)
KEP	Karnali Employment Programme (Nepal)
KUR	Kredit Usaha Rakyat (Indonesia)
LIC	Low Income Country
LOSSS	Ley Orgánica del Sistema de Seguridad Social (Basic Law of the Social Security System) (Venezuela)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHHDC	Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre
MIC	Middle Income Country
MoLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Vietnam)
NC	National Congress (Argentina)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (India)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the Higher Commissioner for Human Rights
PAJA	Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (South Africa)
PAYG	Pay-as-you-go
PKH	Conditional Cash Transfers (Indonesia)
PLWHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
PNPM	National Programme for Community Empowerment (Indonesia)
POSYANDU	Pos Pelayanan Terpadu (integrated service post) (Indonesia)
PSA	Political Studies Association
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)
PUSKESMAS	Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat (Primary Community health Centre)
RASKIN	Rice for the Poor (Indonesia)
RHVP	Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes (Latin America)
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy (Vietnam)
SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association (India)



SIL	Social Insurance Law (Vietnam)
SJSN	National Social Security System (Indonesia)
SP+L	Social Protection and Labour
SPF	Social Protection Floors
TNP2K	National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction (Indonesia)
UIA	Unemployment Insurance Act (South Africa)
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund (South Africa)
UN CEB	United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-GA	General Assembly of the United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNZA	University of Zambia
VAT	Value Added Tax
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development (Bangladesh)
VSS	Vietnam Social Security
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (Rwanda)
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WVS	World Values Survey

# Introduction<sup>1</sup>

*Katja Bender, Markus Kaltenborn and  
Christian Pfleiderer*

Over the past two decades many governments of low- and middle-income countries have started to introduce social protection measures or to extend the coverage and improve the functioning of public social protection systems. Ensuring financial access to health systems and establishing systems of old age protection as well as providing support to the poor and near-poor are among the core areas of political interest. Instruments cover a broad scope of approaches such as mandatory and voluntary contributory social insurance (the latter targeted in particular at informal sector workers), or tax-financed non-contributory universal and targeted social transfers.

These on-going reform processes reflect a substantial change of perspective. Social protection was long regarded as being unaffordable within a development context or being detrimental to economic growth. Nowadays, many policy-makers consider social protection as a relevant instrument for poverty reduction, fostering social cohesion or even for promoting economic growth. This change of perspective is also reflected within the agenda of various development bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. Furthermore, documents like the adoption of the Recommendation on National Floors of Social Protection by the International Labour Conference 2012, the current World Bank Social Protection and Labor Strategy 2012–2022, or the recent Communication on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation by the European Commission all mark social protection as a central pillar in international cooperation and as an important means to make economic development sustainable, reduce poverty, and implement the Human Right on Social Security.

These reforms are a ‘global phenomenon’ and are observed in many African, Asian and Latin American countries. Within the area of social health protection, low-, lower-middle and upper-middle income countries all over the world are reforming existing health financing mechanisms towards extending coverage. Country examples include Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Mexico in Latin America; China, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam in Asia, or Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, or Zambia in Sub-Saharan Africa. Social transfers, in particular cash transfers, are spreading round the globe as well. In 2010, cash transfer programmes were operating in 52 countries (including 16 low-income countries), covering 191.4 million households including a total

of 863.3 million beneficiaries worldwide (Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa 2011; Barrientos *et al.* 2010). As of 2012, cash transfer programmes were discussed, planned or implemented in 35 out of a total of 47 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa reviewed by a recent study. Eighty per cent of these countries are low-income countries, where the emergence of new initiatives has been accelerating during the past decade (Garcia and Moore 2012).

Even if these reforms are a global phenomenon, they are not uniform across countries. Social protection systems in place and reform strategies applied differ in terms of scope and characteristics (see for example Garcia and Moore 2012; Haggard and Kaufmann 2008; Mesa-Lago 2002; Nelson 2004; Niño-Zarazúa *et al.* 2012; Rudra 2007). The characteristics of the reform processes themselves differ as well across countries both in terms of scope and speed of institutional change. Whereas in some countries reforms are directed at one particular pillar of social protection only (for instance social health protection), other countries have initiated comprehensive reform processes encompassing multiple pillars of social protection such as health, old age, and social assistance either simultaneously or gradually. In terms of speed some countries are continuously progressing on their reform paths, whereas in other countries reforms get stuck or even reversed.

Further, although the attention devoted to social protection reforms in developing countries seems to be a rather recent phenomenon, the occurrence of policy changes within this broad area is not of recent origin. In their seminal contribution analysing the long-term development of the welfare state in Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe, Haggard and Kaufman argue ‘that these current processes of reform are but the most recent phase in much longer social-policy histories’ (Haggard and Kaufman 2008: 346). In addition, the fundamental conditions in developing countries within which these reform processes are embedded differ compared to those in high-income countries. Formal labour markets are often limited in size whereas a substantial share of the working population belongs to the informal sector. Well-functioning tax systems and private insurance markets are either non-existing or incomplete. The same holds for registration authorities, statistical offices or other organisations which collect, process, and disseminate information about households. In addition, capacities of executive bodies and judicial authorities to regulate systems and to monitor compliance with the law are frequently constrained. These characteristics do not only influence the functionality of public measures. It is important to note that often reform processes simultaneously occur in these areas mentioned above (for example administrative and labour market reforms). Thus, social protection reforms often are embedded within a dynamic and interdependent context of large-scale institutional change.

Although a growing body of literature has been concerned with the design and impact of social protection, less attention has been directed towards analysing and explaining these reform processes themselves. What is the impact of political institutions or socio-economic factors on institutional change? How far do prevailing attitudes or values influence the feasibility of reforms? What is the relation between specific contextual features relevant in a developmental context

and the political feasibility of social protection reforms? Which international and constitutional legal requirements have to be taken into consideration? Are there, for example, any specific legal determinants which are relevant within the context of regional economic integration? Which factors at the level of constitutional law impact social protection reforms? Which legal rules and principles govern the legislative procedure and the administrative implementation processes?

The contributions in this book seek to provide some answers to these questions by exploring determinants impacting on the political feasibility of social protection reforms and explaining reform successes and reform failures. The book addresses the outlined agenda from a multidisciplinary perspective including conceptual and empirical contributions, in particular from economics, law, and political science. Further, although the majority of contributors stems from academia, contributions by experts from public sector bodies or international organisations are included as well and complement the scholarly perspective. In its five main parts outlined below, this book covers theoretical as well as empirical concerns and reaches from specific case studies to international contexts.

## Overview

### *Objectives and political economy of social protection reforms*

The first part provides general perspectives on the objectives of social protection reforms, the role of social protection in poverty reduction as well as the political economy of these reforms. Opening this part, Sarah Cook focuses on contemporary social protection initiatives. Cook draws findings from historical and comparative analyses of social policies in development context and reflects on new instruments and policies largely coming from the South. She argues that while particular programmes are being widely adapted and replicated, key lessons may lie less in the specific design of instruments and more in the broader political-economy context underpinning them. This suggests a shift towards more inclusive and redistributive social policies.

The second chapter explores different approaches of social protection as a means of poverty reduction. Armando Barrientos provides an assessment of the recent expansion of social protection in developing countries. He begins by discussing the scope of social protection in developed and developing countries and reviews the contribution of poverty research to the design and orientation of emerging social assistance programmes in the South as well as the contribution of these programmes to the reduction of poverty. The chapter ends by sketching the challenges ahead for the institutionalisation of social assistance in developing countries.

Continuing with a focus on the political economy of social protection reforms, Katja Bender at first examines the ambiguous meaning of the term ‘social protection reforms’, before she turns to two mainstays related to the political economy of social protection: first, the development of social protection is dependent on economic development, and second, democracies are more likely to

extend social protection than non-democracies. Anecdotal country examples and a review of empirical studies, however, suggest that neither economic development nor regime type is a necessary or sufficient condition for explaining the extension of coverage.

Social protection as a form of institutionalised solidarity is a key element of social cohesion. In the fourth chapter Johannes Jütting and Annalisa Prizzon review and analyse the main transmission channels through which social cohesion fosters growth and development. They argue that social cohesion is helpful in reducing transaction costs and contributes to risk mitigation, human capital development, and institutional strengthening. Moreover, social cohesion has a positive effect on economic and development outcomes by reinforcing policy effectiveness and accountability. Jütting and Prizzon conclude that economic growth and development have the potential to strengthen social cohesion in a society, for example as larger government revenues could be allocated to develop pro-poor social services.

### ***The legal framework of social protection reforms***

Part II focuses on the legal framework and legal issues of social protection reforms. Consistent legal frameworks are crucial in order to establish and implement social reforms. At first, Markus Kaltenborn introduces the rights-based approach to social protection. Kaltenborn opens his chapter by claiming that the implementation of the right to social security is still deficient in many parts of the world, although it is recognised as a human right around the world. As the design of new and the reform of existing social protection systems have to be in conformity with the applicable law, Kaltenborn shows which substantive requirements result from the right to social security as guaranteed by international and constitutional law. Moreover, he analyses how this human right impacts the debate on rights-based approaches in development cooperation and which consequences have to be drawn from this approach for the legal implementation of new social security programmes at the national level.

Subsequently, Ockert Dupper shares experiences from South Africa regarding the role of law and legal institutions in the reform of social protection systems. In his chapter Dupper gives an evaluative overview of the South African social security system which involves both a social assistance programme and a number of social insurance programmes. He argues that the social assistance system has an extensive reach but in fact has to meet numerous challenges. Dupper analyses the role that law and legal institutions have played in the reform of the country's social protection system. He finds that – by interpreting the Bill of Rights of the constitution – particularly the courts have developed detailed jurisprudence on the obligations imposed by the socio-economic rights provisions.

Tulia Ackson then focuses on the role which regional organisations play in reform processes. Ackson looks at the influence of the East African Community law on the member states' laws related to social protection. In particular, the issues discussed include how social security legislation in the member states of the East

African Community takes into account the obligations of the respective countries emanating from the regional legal instruments. Lessons are also drawn from other regional organisations such as the Caribbean Community. Ackson concludes that member states of the East African Community have the responsibility to ensure that their populace is protected against the social risks which may befall them. Additionally, each of the member states has to extend such protection to citizens of other East African Community member states.

Following these two chapters on social protection legislation in Africa, Lorena Ossio Bustillos finally draws attention to the legal aspects of reform processes in Latin America. By means of an analysis of case studies Ossio seeks to identify the possible inconsistencies in the implementation of social security after two decades of pension reforms. She argues that the urgency of implementing economic reforms has led to serious contradictions in the system of normative hierarchies regarding the use of decrees from the executive and not of the formal legislation from the parliament. Ossio draws the general conclusion that – apart from national specifics – solidarity and participation in the management of pension administration according to the international standards are crucial in order to establish and implement social reforms.

### ***Political feasibility of basic social protection***

The chapters in Part III deal with the political feasibility of non-contributory redistributive measures in developing countries. Anil Duman's chapter on 'Attitudes towards Hard Work and Redistributive Preferences in Developing Countries' opens this section with the assumption that there is significant variation in public support for the social protection programmes in developing countries. She argues that the attitudes towards redistribution are partly shaped by the fairness concerns and that in societies where success is attributed to hard work, people are less inclined to favour such policies. Her findings confirm that individuals who state that hard work brings success in life are much less supportive of redistribution and income equality. Duman also finds that there are significant regional differences indicating that the attitudes towards work and economic success might be context dependent.

Katrin Astrid Siegmann's chapter aims to understand the paradoxical role of the state as a source of insecurity as well as of protection for agricultural workers in South Asia. Siegmann chooses Polanyi's theorisation of a 'double movement' towards both commodification and protection that characterises the situation of labour in market societies as an analytical starting point. She argues that while his work sheds light on agricultural workers' contradictory experiences, yet his notion of society is problematic. Siegmann concludes that the social relations that Polanyi idealises have a role to play in the reproduction of workers' insecurities, and hence hinder the effective implementation of interventions for social security.

Political economy models of targeting suggest that with regard to political feasibility a universal transfer is the optimal solution. Esther Schüring and Franziska Gassmann test whether a universal mechanism is bound to politically

excel in a low-income country context. On the basis of attitudinal surveys in Zambia, Schüring and Gassmann do not find any support for the predictions of the political economy models. They critically discuss the assumptions of the political economy models in the light of these findings and consider potentially decisive parameters that the models currently do not incorporate.

Christian Pfeiderer adds to these critical reflections some general considerations regarding different targeting models in social protection. Many social protection programmes use targeting in order to direct benefits to a defined group of beneficiaries. However, this objective is not easily reached, and regularly implies relevant efforts. There exists a broad range of targeting methods, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. The chapter gives an overview on different types of targeting mechanisms and highlights not only their accurateness and related implementation costs, but also possible impacts on the political and social levels.

### ***Social protection systems – between fragmentation and integration***

Questions which arise with regard to the integration of social protection systems are dealt with in Part IV. In many developing countries social protection measures are fragmented instead of forming coherent and comprehensive protection systems which are coordinated on a national-wide level. In the first chapter of this part, David A. Robalino, Laura Rawlings and Ian Walker present a framework for designing and implementing coherent social protection and labour systems in middle- and low-income countries. They argue that enhancing coordination across such programmes has the potential to enhance both individual programme performance as well as the overall provision of social protection across programmes. The authors discuss the functions of social protection and the characteristics of well-designed social protection systems. They also point to the gains – and some of the risks – of moving toward systems. In the second part of the chapter Robalino, Rawlings, and Walker discuss different levels of engagement – the policy level, the programme level, and the administrative level – to support the design of social protection and labour systems.

The empirical studies in Part IV illustrate different country-specific dynamic patterns within the context of fragmentation and integration. Bambang Widiyanto analyses the different stages involved in the transformation of Indonesia's social protection system towards more integration and coordination and the political dynamics behind. Widiyanto argues that a change from a focus on broad economic development and general subsidies to targeted programmes has taken place since 1998. Furthermore, a law on a formal social protection system was enacted in 2004, but its implementation is characterised by intense and protracted political debate. He closes his examination with the new Law on the National Social Security Administering Bodies that was finally enacted in 2011 and is supposed to be the beginning of a new era in formal social protection in Indonesia.

Another country analysis is provided by Nguyen Thi Lan Huong and Matthias Meissner, who concentrate on the process of poverty reduction in Vietnam. Huong and Meissner stipulate that Vietnam achieved broad poverty reduction in



the whole country in line with its transition from a centrally-planned economy into a ‘socialist-oriented market economy’. The authors also announce upcoming challenges: the implementation of an overall rights-based social protection system and the challenges in line with new socio-economic risks, demographic risks, informal economy, inflation, and climate change. For this reason Huong and Meissner conclude that the Vietnamese case is a good example of successful poverty reduction policies in the initial stages of development. Furthermore, they highlight the challenges associated with further reforms at subsequent stages along the path towards becoming an industrialised country.

The two remaining chapters of this section go on to explore the questions regarding fragmentation and integration of social protection systems in two regions of the world from a comparative perspective. At first Gabriele Koehler focuses on political reforms and policy innovations in South Asia. Koehler describes recent innovations in the areas of food-related support, income transfers, employment creation, affirmative action, and rights-based policies. According to Koehler these innovations build on independence-era policy commitments to welfare and wellbeing, and recent shifts in domestic policies. She finds that they represent a positive development, but there is a need to deepen and universalise the reforms, link them to income redistribution, land reform, and rural development, and expand them to include the decent work agenda, and a new generation of industrial policies, so that they tackle structural reform.

Markus Loewe completes Part IV with a deeper insight into the situation of social reforms in Arab countries and illustrates a situation where due to strategic political interests fragmentation is endemic and persistent. Loewe claims that social protection schemes in Arab countries show deficits regarding efficiency and social fairness. He substantiates his thesis with the fact that some Arab countries spend a fifth of their GDP on social protection but the bulk of funds goes to a relatively small group of urban middle-income earners or is lost half way for administrative and other purposes. Loewe concludes that this phenomenon is not due to financial or managerial constraints but to the fact that Arab governments have tended to use social policies at least until recently to legitimise their rule.

### ***Social protection reforms – international contexts***

The fifth and last part of this volume highlights aspects related to the international political and economic context of social protection reforms. Christina Behrendt opens with the recently adopted ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, which completes the normative basis for the ILO’s two-dimensional social security strategy and reflects a global paradigm shift in social protection policy. Affirming that social security is a human right and a social and economic necessity, governments, employers’ and workers’ organisations of the ILO’s 185 member states agree that national social protection floors should be established and maintained, as part of progressively comprehensive national social security systems. Behrendt concludes that, representing a major paradigm shift in development policies, the emphasis on the importance of social protection



policies in a development context has a number of implications for national policies, including for ensuring coordination and coherence in the building of national social security systems, strengthening institutional capacities, financing social protection policies, and linkages with employment policies.

Yanchun Zhang and Nina Thelen seek to examine the developing countries' reaction to the global economic and financial crisis. Zhang and Thelen claim that, in the light of the global economic and financial crisis, many developing countries stepped up means for social protection as part of their fiscal stimulus plans in 2008 and 2009. The authors take a closer look at the size and composition of social protection components in developing countries' fiscal stimulus plans as well as anecdotal evidence of their impact. Furthermore, Zhang and Thelen compare developing countries' social protection response to the crisis with that of developed countries.

Nicholas Freeland closes the chapter with some essayist reflections on the role and behaviour of donors in social protection issues. What Freeland vividly calls the 'Donor Apocalypse' refers to a situation in which donors are pursuing their own agendas to the detriment of nationally-owned social protection systems. He identifies four distinct groupings among development partners: 'Productivists', 'Ten-Percenter', 'Instrumentalists', and 'Universalists', and discusses each group's characteristics, gives examples, and sets out concerns. Freeland seeks to allocate how social protection has thrived where governments or civil societies are strong, but has failed where donors are strong, citing the cases of Lesotho and Malawi. He closes with an appeal for development partners to respect national visions of social protection, to minimise policy intrusion, and genuinely to align behind government programmes and preferences.

## Notes

- 1 This book has grown out of a conference in 2011 organised by the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy (IEE) at the Ruhr-University of Bochum, Germany, in cooperation with the German Agency for International Development (GIZ) acting on behalf of the Germany Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

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