

Revisiting Post-conflict Social Policy

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Note: The following is a draft edit, and partial re-write of the first chapter of War and Social Welfare, my 2009 book on the reconstruction of the social welfare regime in post-conflict Kosovo. The intention of the paper is to revisit some of the theoretical foundations of that work in order to begin a process of re-evaluating the original work. The primary problem with the original work was a heavy reliance on theoretical assertions of the potential political impacts of social policy reform in Kosovo. In rethinking these theoretical claims, I hope to begin the process of identifying where stronger empirical evidence for their support.

Post-conflict social policy fits into the broadening in the academic social policy literature that has occurred over approximately the past fifteen years. This broadening has primarily focused on three areas. One has been a shift in focus beyond the developed, capitalist economies to a greater attention to the developing world. Lead by such institutions as UNRISD (see the Social Policy and Development Project from 2000 to 2005, and its associated publications), as well as by key scholars (Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Gough and Woods 2004; Kapstein and Milanovic 2002) issues of social policy became less marginal to development studies. A second area, pioneered by Bob Deacon, along with his colleague, Paul Stubbs, but taken up by other scholars has been the ideal of social policy as a transnational or global process (Deacon, Hulse and Stubbs 1997; Deacon and Stubbs 2007; Orenstein 2008). Within this field of inquiry, global institutions such as the UN, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, as well as

major donor states are argued to have assumed a greater role in creating a global social policy, and international interventions in social policy formation and implementation fall under special scrutiny. Finally, special attention was drawn to the issues of economic transitions and social policy, with important volumes from Nicholas Barr (1994 and 2005), as well as others. Post-conflict social policy, which sits at the intersection of the expansion of social policy studies into development, international institutions and interventions, and political and economic transitions remains one area where the academic literature remains sparse.

Post-conflict social policy encompasses the formulation and implementation of a wide range of social welfare programs, such as pensions, social assistance, disability payments, and unemployment support, as well as programs that provide other kinds of social support such as social care institutions, and social work agencies under the particular conditions that exist after the conclusion of a violent conflict. The idea of paying special attention to social policy in the post-conflict setting is recent development, only really emerging at the end of the 1990s.¹ Although the emphasis is on the local formulation and implementation of policy, the expansion of attention to post-conflict social policy is deeply integrated into issues of international intervention. The expansion of international peace operations beyond the traditional “First Generation” model in which international actors primarily used military peacekeepers to separate belligerents to more comprehensive missions designed to assist in the broader social and political reconstruction of post-conflict states led international agencies to integrate long-term social welfare concerns into their programming. United Nations missions such as UNTAC (Cambodia 1992-1993), UNMIK (Kosovo 1999-ongoing), UNTAET (East Timor 1999-2002), UNAMA (Afghanistan 2002-ongoing), as well as

1 Notwithstanding the assertion of the recent of vintage of post-conflict social policy, the analysis of the establishment of social welfare regimes in relation to historical conflicts such as World War II, and the US Civil War have become part of the post-conflict social policy literature. (see Skocpol 1992, Mazower 1999, Judt 2005).

the non-UN multilateral reconstruction mission in Bosnia Herzegovina (1995-ongoing) were all representative of these types of missions. In each of these cases, social policy or social protection became at least a part of the reconstruction process. Actors who have been involved in the issue include the United Nations, the World Bank, and major donor states, as well as international and local humanitarian and development NGOs.

At the operational level, social policy, usually couched in the language of social protection, has become an increasingly important aspect of post-conflict peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. The World Bank, as well as some major donor states, such as the UK has supported social protection projects in a variety of post-conflict cases, including in the Balkans, as well as in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Liberia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal and others (See the World Bank webpage on Social Protection for examples of funded projects <http://goo.gl/2iyhkE>). Some of these efforts have come to the attention of social policy analysts and have generated a small, but (hopefully) growing set of literature. Some examples include studies of the Bosnian (Holiček and Rašidagić 2007) and Kosovo cases (Cocozzelli 2009) in the Balkans in the late 1990s, as well as Iraq (de Freitas and Johnson 2012), and Nepal (Köhler, Marta Calì and Stirbu 2009). Despite these examples, the literature specifically addressing post-conflict social policy remains limited, not only in volume but in levels of analysis. There remains a strong need for more varied and more detailed case studies, more sophisticated theorizing about general causes and consequences of post-conflict social policy, and more data driven analysis and evaluations of programs, policies, and emerging regime types.

Despite the limitations of the literature, some strong theories have been put forward regarding the role of social policy in successful post-conflict reconstruction. In the economic realm, it has been posited that the integrative mechanisms of social welfare programs provide a functional bases for incorporating citizens into economic

life, generating positive constraints for the re-emerging labor market. Further, in times of economic crisis, social policy and redistributive programs can function as stabilizers, promoting employment, and helping to foster a return to growth. Although comparative social policy analysts have been able to provide some support for these positions as they apply to established capitalist and democratic states (see Wilensky 2002 for a broad overview), we continue to lack a significant body of work that provides empirical evidence for understanding the economic impact of social policy on post-conflict reconstruction.

Some of the work done in analyzing more general questions of post-conflict economic and fiscal reconstruction can hold lessons for social policy. In particular, the debates concerning the sequencing of international assistance during the post-conflict period offer insights that should prove applicable to social policy. Central to this debate has been the work of Collier and his collaborators (Collier and Hoeffler 2002, 2004), and Woodward (2002, 2007). Despite strong differences in terms of analytical perspective, and conclusions regarding theories of conflict, both ultimately argue for aid sequencing that prioritizes social and political stabilization prior to any potential standard macroeconomic stabilization.² This debate has bearing on the issues of social policy, in large part because social programs can provide the channels for providing material resources for such social and economic stabilization. Institutionalized and regular cash transfers in the form of pensions, social assistance, and disability insurance inject much needed financial resources into post-conflict economies, with less risk of the temporary distortions associated with high IO (International Organizations) and NGO expenses, including salaries, and discretionary income of expatriate aid workers and international bureaucrats.

On a more normative level, one can posit that social policy is one of the

2 Notably, Woodward takes position which emphasizes the international political economy of conflict and reconstruction (2007).

variables that validates or disqualifies a society's claims toward justice. This can have implications for the study of social policy not only in the post-conflict period, but also prior to the conflict. Accepting a theory of conflict that still allows for the role of grievances, the delegitimation of a society's claim of justice can become an element of contention that helps to drive the conflict. Conversely, social policy that legitimates a society's claim of justness, can potentially serve as a foundation for successful reconstruction and, even reconciliation. The mechanisms of this relationship between social policy, justice, regime legitimation, and stability or instability, however remain unclear, and this remains an area where more research is needed.

Incorporating justice claims such as demands for social inclusion, economic opportunity, and rights for social security into reconstruction programs potentially strengthen social systems by contributing to overall political stability. This stabilizing effect derives from its quality of inclusion and integration. As Rawls has argued, because included participants recognize themselves as beneficiaries of a just system of social regulation, such a system is self-reinforcing (1971, 490–491). Or more explicitly, “a society regulated by a public sense of justice is inherently stable” (1971, 498). This suggests an inclusive system that incorporates members of the polity as citizens. Anything less means the exclusion of a segment or segments of the polity as lesser or second-class citizens. This type of segmented social citizenship is especially relevant in post-conflict environments where parallel arrangements, often defined by ethnic, religious or ideological identity have repeatedly played an important role in the polarization of the local conflict. Although creating the conditions for a self-stabilizing society while avoiding the pitfalls of stratification has clear implications for post-conflict reconstruction, methodologically, it remains challenging to apply empirical analysis to the sense of justice a society emerging from conflict may feel about its institutions of social welfare.

Access to social rights marks the boundaries of citizenship itself and is often at the center of the political struggle of a violent conflict. Potentially, effective post-conflict reconstruction addresses this division and reconstructs an inclusive citizenship. In political-economy terms, social rights are the right to maintain one's existence as human person outside the commodified system of the market (Esping-Anderson 1990, 23). Exclusion from social citizenship is a denial of the social rights that protects citizens from deprivation caused by unemployment, illness, old age, or ill fortune. Rebuilding the programs of social policy—the public guarantees against these deprivations—creates the practical methods for addressing this problem of exclusion. Although it is clear that in a post-conflict context, these programs must be structured so as to provide security across the conflict cleavages, it remains less clear how this is to be done.

By fulfilling an important aspect of citizenship rights, it is argued that social policy functions as an integrative mechanism that furthers social solidarity. This integrative function of social policy is a core part of the work of many of the most established social policy scholars including Richard Titmuss (1971; 1974) Harold Wilensky (2002), Gøsta Esping-Anderson (1990), and T. H. Marshall (1964). In more contemporary scholarship Paul Pierson (1994) and Deborah Yashar (2005), among others, address similar issues on how social policy sets the parameters of the citizen-state relationship in regard to social rights. As Wilensky argues, “The essence of the welfare state is government-protected minimum standards of income, nutrition, health and safety, education and housing assured to every citizen as a social right and not as a charity (2002, 211).” Gøsta Esping-Anderson (1990, 21) attributes this “proposition that social citizenship constitutes the core idea of a welfare state” to T. H. Marshall (1964, 10), who characterized the development of citizenship as the progressive expansion of a basket of rights and obligations. In Marshall's schema these rights and obligations fall

under the consecutive development of civil, political, and social rights. Arguing for the equalizing potential of social rights, Marshall (1964, 45) concludes that the “preservation of economic inequalities has been made more difficult by the enrichment of the status of citizenship.” For Marshall, the extension of social rights erodes the practical differences of class. Despite Marshall assertion, the equalizing potential of social rights is not necessarily a given in social policy.

The potential positive role of social welfare policies have not gone unquestioned. In the developed industrial democracies, criticism of social welfare programs has been a part of conservative electoral strategy going back as far as the mid-1960s (Wilensky 2002, 363). These critiques of social welfare programs within domestic politics eventually translated into constraints on international assistance for social spending among the international financial institutions. Within the industrialized democracies critiques of social welfare spending resulted in electoral victories for conservative politicians throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s. These political leaders, such as President Ronald Reagan in the United States and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom launched sustained efforts at retrenchment. Despite this, many social welfare functions have remained politically popular and, for the most part, intact (Pierson 1994, 2, 164; Wilensky 2002, 223–224). Within this, however, there is room for more particular disaggregation as some types of programs have remained more popular than others over time. Programs that bring broad benefits to coherent and large collective actors generate constituencies of political support. Assistance programs targeted toward segments of the population that are hard to organize politically are less likely to remain popular. The most politically successful programs target middle class citizens that are well integrated into the larger political system. Social security and pensions have retained strong political support, while social assistance to poor families and individuals has had a more difficult time finding political

backers (Hacker 2004, 247; Wilensky 2002, 222).

This differentiation of support for various types of social welfare programs relates directly to the question of their post-conflict reconstruction. If the long-run goal is to build programs that will endure over time and become core features of the local political economy, then programs that generate strong, mobilized constituencies will be appealing policy options. Conversely, if policy planners aim to design programs that will be short-lived, or that can be easily transformed through relatively minor bureaucratic or administrative adjustments, the final policy outcomes will reflect those aims. In the post-conflict context much of the infrastructure of the governing institutions is open for negotiation, including the determination of the type of social welfare regime and the programs that will compose it. The outcome in terms of the social content of citizenship is determined in both the design and implementation of the social welfare policies and programs. Although it seems likely that this would have a direct impact on the likelihood of post-conflict reconciliation and stability, specific empirical studies designed to address this question are still needed.

Although not often applied to post-conflict contexts, theories of social policies identified with the welfare state are, arguably, key components of an integrated society. Titmuss (1971, 224) pointed out this relationship between social policy and integration:

Thus, in terms of policies, what unites [social policy] with ethical considerations is its focus on integrative systems: on processes, transactions and institutions which promote an individual's sense of identity, participation and community and allow him more freedom of choice for the expression of altruism and which, simultaneously, discourage a sense of individual alienation.

In post-conflict societies, where distinct communities sit in opposition to one another, the freedom to transcend these separate collective identities in order to create a

larger polity is vital for effective reconstruction. Following Titmuss, George and Wilding later argued that social policy contributed to political stability on a number of grounds, including the displacement of conflict from the central social cleavage, which, like Marshall, they had identified as class, to more manageable cleavages (1984, 215–217). Wilensky articulates how the welfare state builds solidarity through the distribution of risk across “generations, localities, classes, ethnic and racial groups, and educational levels” describing it as a “major source of social integration in modern society” (2002, 211). The distribution of risk underpins social solidarity through two methods. The first is to provide the necessary protections for full participation in market economies. With risk spread across society, citizens are better able to take advantage of entrepreneurial, educational, or professional opportunities. The second is to link the citizen to the source of this protection, be it the state or some other collective organization. The conclusion that can be drawn is that when social rights are considered a component of full citizenship and are guaranteed by the state, they draw the loyalty of citizens.

Standard social policy regime typologies of the type introduced by Marshall, Titmuss, or Esping-Anderson, though limited, are useful for post-conflict policy makers in providing a framework for designing and evaluating social programs. As Lendvai and Stubbs argue, however the use of traditional social welfare regime types can be problematic because they constrain the emerging systems into paradigms that may not be applicable (2009, 3–4). Instead of the more traditional frameworks, they argue for conceptualizing emerging social welfare regimes as “assemblages,” which allows for greater flexibility and variation. This represents an innovative and incisive way to think about the configurations of social policy programs in emerging, and particularly post-conflict contexts. It also presents a challenge at the nexus where methodology of research and analysis meets practical politics. Traditional social welfare regime types

have proven useful not only for what they tell us about the characteristics of the system that is in place, but about the politics that constructed that system. Collective actors engage in political action to establish welfare regimes that reflect their interests. Liberal regimes, for example, reflect the results of political contestation that feature powerful collective actors such as large well-financed private industrial capitalists, who identify such a regime as strongly protective of their interests. Corporatist or social democratic regimes, conversely reflect outcomes of political struggle in places where collective actors such as organized labor have succeeded in defending their interests in the process of policy making. This is especially illuminating for the post-conflict context, where outcomes are shaped by radically different actors such as international NGOs or intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Regime types can help us identify who has successfully engaged in the political and social struggles that result in social policy formation, and who has been excluded.

Reactions against activist social policies have argued that they are an expensive luxury, rather than an integral component to a growing economy. Countering this is a body of well-established scholarship that strongly argues for social policy as integral to economic growth. Most fundamentally, Keynes argued for a social policy that promotes state intervention for employment and economic growth (Shaw 1988, 21–23).

Keynesianism advocated interventionist policies to increase employment, boost economic production, and promote political stability after World War II.

The lessons of post–World War II Europe for the reconstruction of other post-conflict social welfare regimes are significant. In the words of Tony Judt “the Second World War transformed both the role of the modern state and the expectations placed upon it” (2005, 73). Much of the postwar recovery of western Europe rested on its adoption of social policies that became the foundations of the modern welfare state. Coming out of the extreme insecurity of total war, Europeans sought stability and as

much guaranteed security as possible. The failures of prewar liberalism, as well as the total defeat fascism, challenged postwar policy planners. In order to revive democracy in Europe, a reordering of state responsibility to its citizens would be necessary (Mazower 1998, 186). Public commitments to full employment, national programs for health care support, and guaranteed pensions were all promoted, as both part of an economic recovery and the moral foundation for the democratic postwar states. Both Judt and Mazower attest to the high costs of these social welfare innovations, pointing out increased rates of public spending across postwar western Europe (Judt 2005, 76; Mazower 1998, 300). Judt goes further, showing the foundations of popular support for these high levels of spending and the taxation that it engendered. In the first place, “the post-war welfare systems were a guarantee of a certain minimum of justice, or fairness” (Judt 2005, 76). Secondly, postwar social policy was politically successful because they provided broad benefits across the population. Besides delivering relief to the very poor, these policies also provided access to appropriate benefits for the middle class. As Mazower (1998) put it, “It was just a further instance of the way post-war west European democracy had been stabilized by the middle classes turning radical agendas to their own ends” (301).

Although Keynesian ideas fell out of favor in the 1980s and 1990s, they have been reintroduced into the larger economic discourse, in part due to the financial crisis of 2008 (see, e.g., Leijonhufvud 2008; Buiter 2008; Bogle 2008). Even earlier, social welfare theorists were renewing their interest in Keynes’ ideas (Townsend 2002, 5). One of the strengths of Keynesianism is its attention to employment generation. Promoting growth in employment has become almost an article of faith in post-conflict reconstruction. As Susan L. Woodward points out, “The critical role of active employment in redirecting behavior and commitments toward peace is so obvious that no one disputes its importance” (2002, 201). Part of a functioning labor market—and

successful efforts at employment generation—is social policy. Wilensky shows the success of democratic corporatism in serving as a foundation Keynesian economic policy (2002, 435). Wilensky’s findings are especially important for post-conflict reconstruction because he argued that, specifically in the postwar period of reconstruction (1950–1974), countries that invested heavily in social security had correspondingly high annual growth per capita, low inflation, and—most importantly in the post-conflict context—low unemployment. Five of the top nine economic performers—Germany, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Austria —during this period spent generously on social security (Wilensky 2002, 433–434). These countries were among the most heavily damaged in World War II. Wilensky sees this relationship become increasingly less pronounced after 1974, but adds that “in no period and for no measure of economic performance is social security spending a drag” (2002, 483). Effective social policies created the conditions for better productivity, employment, and economic performance in postwar Western Europe. In a post-conflict situation, laying the institutional foundation for an effective labor market management is a key to reviving employment generation.

Social welfare systems, as the combined programs of social policy, intercede as mediating agents to reduce the potential impact of negative outcomes in the labor market through the redistributing resources and extending insurance to guard against risk. There are numerous methods of redistribution, from subsidized private markets for loans that provide low-cost capital to state-administered grants to the indigent; from microcredit schemes to food stamps. No type of redistribution sits exclusively at one end or the other of the private-public mix: public and private agencies both make efforts at redistribution, at times separately and at others in cooperation. In many other post-conflict areas, the most active redistribution programs have been organized by international and local relief and development NGOs. Insurance programs also take

multiple forms, such as unemployment or disability payments, and similarly are not necessarily either public or private. Private insurance markets coexist with state programs. Public social welfare programs grant access to resources (redistribution) or protection from risk (insurance) as rights commensurate with citizenship status. Private programs function through a market purchase, private charity, or as a limited right derived from membership in a mutual-aid association.

The impact of social welfare programs varies depending on implementation and program details. Social welfare institutions have variable effects at the economic as well as social levels. As policy tools, social welfare programs cannot be generalized in terms of outcomes. Redistribution programs that support the unemployed interact directly with the labor market, but the outcomes of this interaction is dependent on a wide array of design, implementation, and contextual variables. Using Esping-Anderson's terminology, unemployment programs may be highly decommodifying, giving workers greater flexibility and market power as they negotiate, explicitly or implicitly, for higher wages or improved working conditions. Alternatively, by making benefits conditional, they may undermine labor's negotiating power by prohibiting its full market engagement, or generating negative externalities such as poverty traps. Other redistribution networks engage other market sectors such as food, housing, or capital. These programs have similarly contingent effects, depending on program design and implementation (Esping-Anderson 1990, 47, 79). Stated explicitly, the specific content of the social programs reflect the policy and ultimately determine their practical effect.

Although very different in terms of program goals, humanitarian aid as a resource distribution program functions much like a social welfare program. This functional similarity can lead to unexpected linkages between humanitarian aid programs and emerging post-conflict social welfare programming. Emergency food distributions, for example, are seen to counteract post-conflict scarcity and act to prevent inflation in prices of food, especially staples such as cooking oil, wheat, or rice.

As importantly, technical assistance for aid operations in terms of such tasks as beneficiary targeting, managing beneficiary and client lists, or organizing distribution networks can be seen as a source for capacity building for nascent domestic social welfare systems. Humanitarian and relief organizations are not necessarily conscious of the longer term political implications of their role in laying the groundwork for social policy formation. Systems that NGOs or international agencies developed for short-term, crisis response programs may live on for years as part of a larger national social welfare regime.

Despite their importance, social policy and the social welfare institutions are not often addressed in a comprehensive manner in post-conflict reconstruction. Social policy is either seen as an issue better addressed once other policy considerations have been made, or is relegated to small-scale interventions. Rather than being central to the debates surrounding reconstruction, social policy often drifts from public discourse, leaving decision making to devolve to interested elites or expatriate experts. This locks out local participation and reduces public discussion of policy options. The postsocialist transitions of Eastern and Central Europe are analogous examples. In the region “international organizations paid little attention to social policy in the first years of transition, instead focusing on macroeconomics and privatization” (Orenstein and Haas 2002, 13). According to Orenstein and Haas, lack of attention led to social policy formation being left to “small groups of politically connected social policy experts” rather than being part of a more transparent, public process. Macroeconomic adjustment was the dominant paradigm for transition assistance. International loans were offered with conditions that required cuts in social spending, many of which resulted in increases in poverty across the region (Townsend 2002, 5). Social policy was subsumed into and overwhelmed by macroeconomic policy.

Missing from the policy-making arena were the social, political, and economic

organizations, such as political parties, state agencies, social movements, and organized labor and capital, which historically, have been the moving forces behind social policy. In short, the political agency of local actors to design and implement their own social policy was constrained. Incorporating these more traditional political actors into the process represents a move beyond even what are known in the aid literature as participatory approaches to post-conflict policy making. Instead, it is a return of the political dimension to the formation of policy. For the international actors involved, allowing the revival of political debate over policy choices is an obvious risk; these are after all contentious issues to be faced by former combatants. On the practical level this may require the identification of new and unorthodox partners for the international relief and development community. Social policy innovations are historically linked to “working class parties and trade unions” (Flora and Alber 1981, 43), and international interventionists may need look to these groups, or parallel groups as potential collaborators. International relief and development organizations have been reluctant to become directly associated with such overtly politicized groups due to the risk of becoming embroiled in local conflicts. Despite the risks, the potential rewards are very high. Social policy formulation provides an excellent opportunity for a post-conflict policy-formation exercise that holds the prospect of concrete results. Effective social policy formulated by local political actors can demonstrate the workability of emerging post-conflict political institutions. Additionally, institutions and policies formulated through local politics benefit from greater legitimacy and are more sustainable. Given the immediate history of conflict, external mediation is a necessary and potentially challenging component to such policy making, but the difficulty of the process does not negate its value.

If social policy is not addressed at a high policy level in a comprehensive fashion, it is often instead relegated to a “micro” approach that rests on small, localized

projects designed to address the welfare needs of a limited population, for example a town, village, or neighborhood. Discrete amounts of money are directed toward solving discrete problems, and less attention is directed toward broad policy initiatives. Even with large-scale international funding, the focus is often on supporting particular projects, or providing the resources for beneficiary governments to establish their own project funding mechanisms (Tendler 2002, 2).

Building social welfare systems is rarely at the top of the agenda in post-conflict policy. Responses to violent conflict are often perceived as a continuum that runs from the provision of humanitarian assistance to full-scale reconstruction (Ferris 2001, 324; Woodward 2002, 189). An idealized version of the relief-to-reconstruction continuum starts with humanitarian relief to war-affected populations, such as the construction of refugee camps and the provision of food, shelter, health care, and other essential items to both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The continuum progresses to stabilization programs that alleviate immediate security risks, such as mine clearance and the deployment of outside human rights monitors. This stage also includes “quick impact projects” that are targeted toward the recovery and rehabilitation of resources that have been damaged during the course of the war, such as school or hospital repair. The reconstruction end of the continuum involves projects for long-term economic and social development.

Despite the usefulness of this continuum as a bureaucratic tool for ordering post-conflict priorities, its linearity belies the complicated nature of conflict dynamics and the need to appreciate the political contestations so often at the heart of the conflicts. Disagreements about social policy are often part of these core political contestations because they are so important for the nature and quality of the governing regime and its interaction with the citizenry. These political debates make up the ongoing global, regional, or local history in which the conflict and post-conflict situation is so deeply

embedded and from which it cannot be disengaged. Conflicts appear to have beginnings and ends—the day the first shots were fired, the week the old regime was overthrown, or the signing of the peace accords, for example. These markers signify moments of dramatic political change, but they do not happen in a historical vacuum. The first shots may signify not only the “beginning” of the conflict, but also the maturation of long-present violent opposition, or a radicalization of nonviolent opposition. The week the old regime falls marks the turning point of the regime’s ability to enforce its will, not the destruction of all of the social, economic, and political forces, which had kept it in place. Peace accords are the beginning of a long and contentious implementation period rather than the definitive end of the conflict. In any post-conflict environment it is necessary to recognize the historical context and the medium- and long-term impact of any policy choice.

The historical embeddedness of conflicts highlights the importance of social policy formulation. In an historical context the post-conflict transition from humanitarian assistance to social policy is inseparable from the conflict itself. The communities and groups supported through assistance may not have been the primary participants in the conflict, but nor are they bystanders. In the post-conflict political environment, agents of reconstruction such as the international NGOs, the UN, and the local post-conflict government do not start from scratch. They build on earlier struggles, including political struggles over social rights.

Social welfare is a powerful tool for creating a foundation for social solidarity on both normative and economic grounds. Universalistic, decommodifying and just social policy can create a broad sense of solidarity that can cut across the cleavages that led to conflict. Social policies identified as just by the larger population support political stability and a sense of positive identification with the larger society. Social welfare institutions can provide an economic basis for broad social incorporation by providing

the minimum level of human security needed for legitimate labor market engagement. Social policy, however, also carries risks. Social programs that strongly differentiate on the basis of an arbitrary social marker such as ethnicity or religion, or on factors that correlate with such markers may reinforce the divisions. To ignore the potential positive role of effective social policy is to ignore one of the most powerful integrative tools available in the post-conflict context. Similarly, to ignore the divisive potential of badly designed or poorly implemented social policy can lay the foundation for failed interventions and recurring violence.

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