

Article

The relationship between social welfare policy and multidimensional well-being: an analysis using the South African Child Support Grant

Adam Cooper, Zitha Mokomane and Angelina Wilson Fadiji

acooper@hsrc.ac.za; zitha.mokomane@up.ac.za;

wilson.angelina1311@gmail.com

Abstract

Socio-historical context and ideology are often overlooked in analyses of how social welfare policy is used to promote well-being. This paper uses the South African Child Support Grant (CSG) to illuminate how a policy may enhance or hinder well-being, not only for individuals but also for a society. Forged through a combination of the inherited apartheid state's architecture, the redistributive ideology of the ruling African National Congress, social development theory and the constraints of economic globalisation, the CSG has produced paradoxically positive material well-being outcomes for many poor South Africans and possibly reproduced problematic subjective and relational forms of well-being nationally. Analysing how the grant, as a social policy, is historically and ideologically situated illuminates some of the constraints imposed upon a twenty-first century democratic developmental state as it tries to find its way in a global market, redistribute wealth, satisfy different constituencies and promote individual and collective well-being. Grants are a necessary but insufficient strategy for a twenty-first century democratic developmental state like South Africa.

Tackling inequality therefore involves more than 'pro-poor' policies: it needs changing the social processes and relations that underpin it. (Colin Bundy in *The Conversation*, 2019)

Introduction

The concept of well-being could be broadly defined as ‘the balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges faced. ... In essence, stable well-being is when individuals have the ... resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge’ (Dodge et al 2012:229). However, well-being could also be thought of as a social concept, used to understand more than the condition of a particular individual. Relational well-being refers to the quality of relationships between people across a society, including relations with organs of the state and the fairness of how resources are distributed amongst people (White 2007).

In this paper we explore the relationship between multidimensional aspects of well-being, including the material, subjective and social, and one social policy, the South African Child Support Grant. Social policies can be understood as ‘collective public efforts aimed at affecting and protecting the social well-being of people within a given territory’ (Adesina 2009:38). They may have positive effects on certain aspects of well-being and not others. For example, policies may reproduce stratified class, race, and gender associated services, and/or create different ways in which specific groups engage with the state. These paradoxical effects can only be understood by viewing social policies as part of policy regimes, embedded in ideological orientations, economic and political contexts and by taking a multidimensional approach to well-being that includes material, subjective, and relational elements.

We begin by describing these different dimensions of well-being and then narrate the genesis of the South African Child Support Grant (CSG) and the key contextual conditions in which it emerged. The grant’s paradoxical outcomes as part of a policy regime with a particular logic and ideological orientation are then unpacked. The overall aim is to demonstrate the complex relationship between social policy and the multidimensional nature of well-being. In so doing we assert that well-being and policy regimes are historically contingent processes that emerge between individuals and collectives, the local and global, people and governments (White 2009). We argue that social welfare policies are urgently needed to contribute to multidimensional well-being, but that as stand-alone interventions they cannot rupture structural inequalities. Only significant changes to economic policies, supported by actions that transform dual private-public service systems in, for example, health care and education,

enhancing access to economic participation, can rupture current inequalities and create a more just society. This may in turn catalyse improved relations between people and democratic institutions.

Multidimensional well-being and its relationship to social policies

Material well-being refers to things that impact people's practical welfare and standards of living, 'the essentials that everyone should have and no one should have to go without' (Berry 2013:2). These include education and skills, assets such as physical health, income, employment and livelihood activities and access to basic services (White 2009:7). Subjective well-being, on the other hand, refers to people's aspirations and evaluations of their lives. It includes both cognitive judgements and emotional responses to hope, fear, aspirations, sense of meaning or meaninglessness, levels of (dis)satisfaction, trust; and confidence (White 2009, Diener et al 2018). Often measured in terms of 'positive and negative affect', and 'life satisfaction' scores, it is affected by private personal matters such as family, work, and health, as well as by broader political, socio-economic and institutional factors like job security and democratic processes (Duncan 2005:28). Finally, relational well-being consists of interactions and connections between individuals and groups. These include professional relationships in the workplace, intimate personal relationships of love and care offered by family and friends, as well as social networks and connections with organs of the state, such as law, politics and welfare (White 2007).

These dimensions of well-being can usefully be thought of as interdependent, as overlapping and mutually constitutive (Johnson 2009, White 2007). It is often argued, for example, that social support helps people to 'feel well' (Mahon and Yarcheski 2014) and that 'doing well' is associated with positive relations to others (Ryff 1989). Incorporating material, subjective and relational aspects of well-being into a coherent multidimensional construct is therefore a useful way of capturing the social consequences of policy-making in addition to assessing the impact that social policies have on individuals (Johnson 2009, White 2009). This approach transcends the individual-social binary that asks what a person needs in order for their life to be good, to view that person as a relational being who becomes human in connection with others and *vis-à-vis* social institutions (Johnson 2009, White 2009). Such an approach is also able to unpack how people exert agency in relation to powerful structural forces,

as they influence their own circumstances and speak back to their material conditions and social institutions (White 2009). It can also illuminate how social policies may have paradoxical effects, such as benefiting certain groups materially, but simultaneously reproducing existing social divisions. These effects can only be understood by understanding social policies as located in sets of historical circumstances and shaped by different ideological forces.

The political, economic and social contexts that led to the CSG

The Child Support Grant

We use this multidimensional approach to well-being in order to grapple with the impact of the South African CSG. The grant emerged in and was shaped by a particular set of changing political circumstances, which moulded the form of the grant and its relationship to multidimensional well-being. The CSG is a means-tested monthly income transfer intended to support the basic needs of South African children whose parents or primary care-givers are not able to provide sufficient support due to unemployment or poverty. Introduced by the post-apartheid government in 1998, the CSG replaced the old State Maintenance Grant (SMG), which was established in 1930 to support single mothers whose husbands were deceased, in prison, disabled or untraceable (Haarmann 1998:9). The SMG consisted of a monetary sum for (mainly) the mother and an amount for the child. Typical of apartheid-era policies, the SMG reflected racial discrimination, primarily used to protect white family life, although over time it was increasingly taken up by Indian and Coloured families (Lund 2008). The grant was unreliable as a social protection system (Triegaardt 2005). In essence, although it was available in the Republic of South Africa, as well as the former homelands (ethnic specific regions created by the apartheid state to segregate groups, maintain security and deprive African people of precious resources), much variation existed with regard to its distribution and prevalence. For instance, in 1991 the Venda homeland had only ten beneficiaries of the grant appearing in official documentation.

In 1995, one year into the democratic dispensation, a meeting of members of executive committees of various provincial welfare-related departments resulted in a motion to abolish the SMG. Those in favour argued that if large numbers of eligible parents applied for the grant, the state would have been unable to finance the then 12 billion Rand (approximately one billion USD) annual cost. Social worker, activist, and

policy development practitioner Francie Lund argued that the abolishment of the grant would have disastrous consequences for children. Lund was subsequently appointed as chair of a committee tasked with assessing various policy options that could potentially realise children's constitutional rights and to advise policymakers on equitable alternatives to the SMG (Patel and Plagerson 2016:39).

The Lund Committee first met in February 1996 and submitted its report in September 1996. Among the Committee's key recommendations was the introduction of the CSG, conceptualised as part of a basket of complementary developmental welfare services. The Committee's strategy was to remain within fiscal constraints, get a foothold in the system and then expand; it feared that an exorbitant initial proposal would have been rejected (Lund 2008). The initial proposal was for a grant of R70 per month (approximately 5.5USD) with only 0-9 year olds eligible (Lund 2008). The existing SMG and a large apartheid era defence budget meant that there was an existing budget that could be redirected to finance the new policy. The Lund Committee used these moneys as the architecture to justify a far more widespread policy that benefitted a large section of the poor. The grant's intention to 'follow the child' and identify the 'primary care-giver' created the conceptual and practical basis for indigenising cash transfers for children in complex families, as opposed to the Eurocentric underpinnings of the SMG. One year after the committee submitted its recommendations, the first applications for the CSG were processed. Ten years later in 2007, eight million South African children benefitted from the grant. As of December 2019, this figure had increased to just over 12 million (SASSA 2018). The majority (97 per cent) of these children's caregivers are women who are largely unemployed (87 per cent) and are single parents (Patel et al 2017).

The CSG story might appear simply to be a serendipitous set of events that has substantially benefitted the material well-being of many South African children. However, a deeper analysis shows how the post-apartheid South African state has attempted to use social policy to facilitate, balance and enhance industrialisation and redistribution, twin goals of any developmental state (Edigheji 2010). Post-apartheid policy documents explicitly describe the South African state as a twenty-first century democratic developmental state, something which did not occur in a 'self-conscious' manner amongst developmental states in East Asia and Scandinavia. When the African National Congress (ANC) – the current

ruling party – came to power in 1994, it needed to redress racial and socio-economic inequalities produced by apartheid rule, deal with rampant poverty, and create and maintain social cohesion; all these challenges included aspects of material, subjective and relational well-being. To address them the party had at its disposal industrial and social policies that could be reformulated within existing fiscal constraints and bureaucratic capacities of the civil service. The creation and evolution of the CSG therefore needs to be interpreted in relation to the broader challenges and contexts faced by the post-apartheid state, as its emergence and development is bound up in these structural forces. Analysing the CSG as part of a policy regime that exists in relation to ambitions for industrialisation, redistribution, and development illuminates how the grant operates as part of a broader state project.

Post-apartheid industrial policy

The globalised nature of the post-apartheid economy militated against the ANC using industrial policy to redistribute wealth systematically, meaning that redistribution was shifted to the domain of social policy. Many people thought that the ANC would nationalise mining and other sectors of the economy to catalyse redistribution and reduce inequalities. However, at the World Social Forum in 1995, socialist countries like China and Vietnam labelled South African proposals for nationalisation of industry ‘old fashioned’ (Nattrass 2014). The state has therefore been challenged to redistribute wealth and promote ‘a better life for all’, the ANC’s original election slogan, whilst appeasing the increasingly deracialised upper and middle classes with services that they find acceptable.

To expand on these economic circumstances, the post-apartheid state could not follow the economic path of global North countries that industrialised in the late nineteenth century, or East Asian nations that did so in the 1950s because radically different economic constraints existed in the 1990s. In the global North, for example, national capitalist firms were provided with extensive state support to drive industrial development (Chang 2002). Similar industry-state partnerships emerged amongst Asian productivist regimes in the 1950s (Furuto 2013, Holliday 2000). Authoritarian East Asian states formed partnerships with export oriented local industrialists, promoting both groups’ interests through policy that aided national, industrial and workers’ development (Furuto 2013, Holliday 2000). A form of productivist capitalism was pursued in that region, as

these states desperately attempted to industrialise, ‘modernise’, and play ‘catch up’ with the West (Furuto 2013, Holliday 2000, Williams 2014).

Conversely, state-led industrialisation through partnerships with local capital was, and continues to be, difficult in post-apartheid South Africa. Industrialisation occurred in North America, Europe and East Asia prior to economic globalisation, before global trade regulations, and coercion from international monetary bodies began to pressurise governments not to interfere with economic relations in the name of ‘free-market principles’ (Chang 2002). Furthermore, South African multinational corporations like Anglo-American, Old Mutual and Liberty Life (three firms that controlled over 50 per cent of capitalisation in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange from 1991-1995), convinced government to allow them to move their primary listings offshore (Mohamed 2010). These companies took capital elsewhere and reinvested relatively little in the country (Mohamed 2010). The South African state has therefore struggled to use its mineral wealth and other resources to accelerate redistributive objectives and to foster mutually beneficial partnerships with leading South African based firms. Redistribution of wealth and reduction of poverty and inequality have therefore fallen into the realm of social policy.

Redistribution and social policy

The CSG was largely influenced by the ANC’s 1955 Freedom Charter, which is the statement of core principles of the ANC and its various anti-apartheid allies. The Charter advocates for the redistribution of resources and the delivery of basic infrastructure. The Lund Committee included supporters of the Charter, was fairly left-leaning and many of its members were known to each other from anti-apartheid activist networks. The group was aware of the redistributive role played by state social assistance and agreed that a mixed state-market model was necessary (Lund 2008). The committee had also read the academic literature on women’s unpaid labour. The CSG was therefore consciously intended as protection for poor children and families, but also as a form of redistribution. In some ways, these intentions have been realised: it currently makes up 15 per cent of government spending and 3.4 per cent of GDP (Patel et al 2015).

The theoretical underpinnings infused in the construction of the CSG, however, illuminate some of the subtle ideological leanings that comprise the state’s redistributive agenda. Lund (2008) repeatedly insisted that the

CSG represented a shift from ‘welfare’ to ‘social development’, mirrored structurally by the South African welfare ministry being replaced in 1999 by a department called ‘social development’. The director general of Welfare at the time wanted a pilot programme to demonstrate this changing theoretical approach and championed the CSG as the flagship project. International development theory and the Lund Committee’s close relationships with leading development scholars from the UK and USA, as well as personnel from international monetary agencies, played a significant part in the grant system being based on a social development paradigm, rather than welfare ideology.

To explain differences between these approaches, social development aims to harmonise human development with economic development. It espouses ‘progress’ through investing in human potential, efficiently growing humans and the economy, leading to returns on the investment. Bound up in the notion of social development are assumptions about ‘process and progress’; intervention is used to invest in future returns, which occurs through people’s participation in their own well-being and opportunities (Midgley 1995). Conversely, welfare is often perceived as charity or ‘handouts for the poor’ (Pawar and Cox 2010), without expectations for recouping these monies. While welfare focuses on social protection to create safety nets for those most vulnerable, social development fuses social and economic policies to enhance the development of human beings. Notions like intervening early in the life course and supporting capacity development amongst children are therefore seen as helpful for human development, and an integral component of economic growth. Lund (2008) states on a number of occasions that the architects of the grant intended for the money to ‘follow the child’, meaning that the ‘legitimacy’ of the caregiver, whether it was a biological parent, guardian, or whoever else, was less important than whether the money was likely to benefit the growing child. The main goal of cash transfers such as the CSG is therefore to promote human development amongst poor people at risk of being excluded from education and health provisioning (Bastagli 2009).

Redistribution was thus pursued through an investment in the future labour force, rather than working age adults. Despite high unemployment rates and the central recommendation for a small Basic Income Grant (BIG) in 2002 by a *committee* of inquiry into a comprehensive system of social security (known as the Taylor Committee, after its chairperson

Vivienne Taylor), working age adults were not considered to be deserving of a cash grant. Responses to the Taylor Committee's recommendations illustrated these ideological underpinnings, with cautions against people becoming idle and parasitical used to reject the BIG. The post-apartheid state's redistributive aims have since been substantially directed towards the next generation of South Africans being physically and cognitively better resourced than the current work force, illustrating its ideological leanings in social development. While the Lund Committee attempted to avoid using the economic language of human capital theory, policies and their development are situated within broader logics, ideologies and contexts and need to be understood as partly produced by these contextual factors.

Bureaucratic and fiscal constraints on the CSG

Another pragmatic concern of the post-apartheid state, which further highlights why it favoured cash transfers, relates to its bureaucratic capacity to administer services. Unlike late developing Asian states that created efficient, disciplined civil services, the post-apartheid government inherited an unevenly distributed state apparatus from the apartheid era, which had established lopsided bureaucratic, security and tax collection systems. The apartheid state's institutions and practices were developed to favour the white population, without the well-being of the entire population in mind. During the democratic transition, state institutions were adapted rather than dismantled, meaning that the post-apartheid state had to work with many of the structures, practices and inequalities of the previous regime. This historical legacy meant that South Africa did not have the large-scale bureaucratic capacity to administer well-functioning social service systems, which led to the appeal of cash transfers, which are associated with low political and financial cost (Bastagli 2009). Cash transfers are cheaper to implement than training social workers, nurses and early childhood development practitioners, as well as creating healthy institutions in which these professionals conduct their work. The delivery of post-apartheid social grants were further aided by the former homelands' bureaucratic systems, which were inefficient and politically problematic, but laid the foundation for implementing the new government's policies in deep rural areas (Breckenridge 2014).

It is at least partially for this political and economic expediency that cash transfers have swept across Latin America and Africa in the supposedly

neoliberal era of rampant reliance on the market. The first cash transfer programme took place in Mexico in 1995, as the laborious bureaucratic implications of administering state subsidies resulted in the Mexican government deciding instead simply to give money to the poor (Ballard 2013). Cash transfers now exist in 45 countries, including many in Africa where they were almost unheard of up until the early 1990s (Ballard 2013, Ferguson 2015). Many are unconditional, simply directly providing poor people with money. The CSG therefore offers a cost-effective, stop-gap solution to satisfy large portions of the poor and maintain the popularity of the ruling party. However, even cash transfers require some level of state capacity, efficiency and political accountability, as the 2017 contracting controversy between the Department of Social Development and the company responsible for distributing the grants, Cash Paymaster Services, illustrated. The panic induced by recipients potentially not being able to receive their benefits and the public anger displayed towards government during this debacle illuminated the extent to which large numbers of people now rely on social grants and how much is at stake politically in their ongoing existence and administration. While the World Bank was initially opposed to cash grants and commissioned research to interrogate their efficacy, once evidence demonstrated strong support for these interventions, governments across the global South have introduced and expanded these kinds of programmes, enhancing their own political support in the process (Case and Deaton 1998). This is despite the various arguments that social grants create a ‘dependency syndrome’ by facilitating passivity and dependence on state resources, discouraging recipients and members of their families and households from productive lifestyles and labour market participation (Potts 2012, Sikhulumile et al 2017). It has also been argued that the modest amounts provided by grants cannot adequately support the basic needs of large families without resources, who suffer from persistent unemployment and high indebtedness (Patel et al 2019, Xaba 2016). Despite these arguments, research has consistently shown that not only do social grants facilitate labour market participation, but recipient households are more likely to exhibit positive education, health and nutrition outcomes than those that do not receive the grants (Devereux 2011, Patel et al 2019).

Impact of the CSG on multidimensional well-being

There is little doubt that the CSG has had a positive effect on the material well-being of South Africa's most vulnerable children. This is particularly evident in nutritional, health and educational outcomes as well as in developmental domains such as physical, social care and behavioural outcomes (South Africa. Department of Social Development 2012, Hall and Sambu, 2017). For example, Coetzee (2014) showed that children whose caregivers received the grant for at least 10 per cent longer than a control group, exhibited improvements in their physical height, had less chance of repeating a school year and more money was spent in their households on food. By the same token, Patel et al (2017) found that 60 per cent of children whose caregiver received the CSG had never gone to bed hungry in the previous year and over 75 per cent were in the normal range of physical development. Research has also shown that in addition to being spent on food, CSG money was being used to access health care services and to pay for essential educational needs such as stationery, uniforms, and school transport (Khosa and Kaseke 2017, South Africa DSD 2012).

Using a composite measure of children's living conditions in terms of type of dwelling (formal/informal housing) and access to toilets, electricity, water, and sanitation, Patel et al (2017) found that only 23 per cent of children receiving a CSG lived in households with low living standards (with access to zero to two items in the measure) while 50 per cent and 28 per cent had medium (access to three to four items) and high (access to five+ items) living standards respectively. All in all, as the Department of Social Development concluded (2012:v) receipt of the CSG provides 'an investment in people that reduces multiple dimension indicators of poverty ... and reduces inequality... and vulnerability'.

The 2018 matric examination results showed that 80.1 per cent of grant recipients passed matric, in comparison to the national average, which includes learners from wealthy backgrounds, which was only 78.2 per cent (South Africa. Department of Basic Education 2019). A comparison between learners from households that receive the grant and those from similar socio-economic circumstances would therefore show far better educational outcomes for grant recipients.

It is largely against this background that the CSG is widely recognised and appreciated by both beneficiaries and the wider public as a vital source of regular income that enhances consumption, alleviates poverty and

enables recipients to exercise some level of individual agency (Patel et al 2015, Wright et al 2014). At the same time however, the adequacy of the grant amount has been raised as a concern by many beneficiaries who argue that it is too small relative to their needs. Indeed Patel et al (2017:40) found that 63 per cent of CSG-receiving households had below or much below average household incomes. According to Wright et al (2014) many caregivers report that the low CSG amount erodes their dignity through, among other things, the negative attitudes and prejudices they face within communities (Wright et al 2014). Systemic factors such as the application process for the grant were also identified as aspects of the CSG that made caregivers feel unworthy by ‘being required to queue for very lengthy periods, having to negotiate burdensome and unclear qualifying criteria, and of being treated disrespectfully by officials’ (Wright et al 2014:2).

Overall it seems subjective effects of the CSG have been low not only among recipients but also nationally. For example, since the advent of democracy when poverty reduction policies including the CSG were implemented, not only has satisfaction in domains of life such as work and housing remained low, but there has been a persistent discrepancy between where South Africans are and where they desire to be (Møller 2016). According to Møller and Radloff (2012), for example, the percentage of the general population that were satisfied with their life as a whole decreased from 53 per cent in 1998 to 52 per cent in 2010. The lowest percentage of the population who were satisfied are noted among the black African population: 43.7 per cent in 2010 and 47 per cent in 1998. The 2010 data also showed that the percentage of women (48 per cent) that were satisfied with their lives was lower than that of men at 57 per cent (Møller 2012).

Møller’s findings may seem to be in contrast to previous studies which argued that socio-economic policies such as income security and social protection programmes are related to increased subjective well-being (Attah et al 2016, Diener et al 2015). However, the explanation may lie in Devereux and McGregor’s (2014) assertion that when social protection policies target only the symptoms of a problem (such as low income and high poverty) there is minimal positive effect on human psychosocial well-being. The CSG essentially utilises means tested assistance to extend modest benefits to the poor, with entitlement to benefits strictly monitored. It therefore displays similarities to liberal policies that exist

in the global North (Leubolt 2014, Lund et al 2009, Niño-Zarazúa et al 2012, Seekings 2008). In such policy regimes, as Esping-Andersen's typology posits, the middle class generally opts to secure private services in healthcare, education and pensions, thus creating bifurcated social service systems that reinforce, rather than ameliorate, inequalities.

This is seen in, for example, South Africa's 'two education systems' – a well-functioning, resourced and high achieving one that is comparable to education systems in countries in Europe and North America and a dysfunctional one with poor achievement rates and resources (Fleisch 2008). Private security is also common for the rich, while the poor rely exclusively on the over-burdened South African Police Service in which corruption and discrimination characterise service delivery (Patel et al 2017). Wealthier South Africans have private health care while the poor spend time waiting in lines for relatively poor public health services.

A unified rather than bifurcated social service-delivery system, like those found in social-democratic regimes that include people of different socio-economic statuses, has been shown to force the provision of services at standards acceptable to middle class people, improve gender relations, and promote care for diverse groups of people (Esping-Andersen 2013, Skocpol and Amenta 1986). When wealthier people rely on the same services and institutions as the poor, they bring a range of social and material capitals and they often place demands on state provision that result in improved delivery, benefitting the entire system. Middle class parents at schools, for example, bring access to funding sources in the private sector, professional skills that may benefit the school in a range of ways and they instil parenting practices from home, like reading to children in the evenings, which are associated with better academic outcomes. Infusing the school with these resources and practices benefits all of the children.

Besides the benefits of social and material capital being infused by upper and middle class participation in public institutions, stratified interactions with different kinds of institutions is detrimental to national cohesion and eradicating the substantial class and race based boundaries that define public life. Cash transfers like the CSG therefore mean that poor South Africans' acquisition of social services is defined by relations with the state, whereas wealthy people operate almost exclusively in the private sphere for these services. This leads to extensive engagements between poor South Africans and the state, while the middle and upper

classes have little to do with its operations. While the public sector is now the largest single employer in the country, meaning that it is also an active contributor to class formation and structural changes, this does not mean that public sector officials rely on state-provided health care, schools and pensions. These institutional segregations continue in almost every sphere of life in South Africa, including health, education, social support, recreation and habitation in particular residential areas. Relational well-being is therefore hampered by segregated public systems which symbolically and materially function along race and class based lines. Cash transfers also demarcate intra-class categories, distinguishing between groups of the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor, for example mothers rather than the otherwise unemployed. All in all, while the transfers may provide relief for some families in the short term, the existence of large numbers of unemployed people, who obtain little support from the state or private sector, is likely to result in resentment and frustration.

Other indicators of the dearth of relational well-being in the country include a general sense of wariness, a lack of trust of neighbours, and a high level of isolationist behaviour all of which can be partly attributed to changing social relations due to high rates of crime, violence and drug use rates in communities (Patel et al 2017). Data from the annual South African Social Attitudes Survey have also shown that race relations have not improved significantly in South Africa in the past ten years. For example, in 2003, 72 per cent of the population agreed with the statement ‘people of different racial groups do not really trust each other’, falling to 64 per cent 2011 and then rising again to 69 per cent in 2015. In 2015, 61 per cent of the population believed that other groups were trying to get ahead at the expense of their own group and 59 per cent believed that members of their own group were being excluded from positions of power by others (Roberts 2016).

Despite these indicators of a lack of social cohesion, access to the CSG has been shown to have positive effects on gender relations, increasing the financial independence of working class, predominantly black women. Their power to make decisions over financial resources and the well-being of their children has also been enhanced (Patel et al 2015). Feminists have argued that analyses of states, social provision and policy regimes need to include how they support women to attain forms of ‘defamilialisation’ – liberating them from unpaid family/child and

housework that limits their capacity to form and maintain autonomous households. The CSG may therefore have aided working-class, black women to attain greater gender parity and independence, with improved gender equality within a particular segment of the population enhancing an aspect of relational well-being.

The grant has also been lauded for strengthening practices of social reciprocity between kin and social networks (Patel et al 2017, Wright et al 2014). Patel and colleagues' study revealed a high level of extended kin co-residence that provide critical support for childcare and other domestic tasks, while Wright and colleagues reported notable incidences of CSG-receiving children being sent to live with urban-based relatives to access better educational facilities. Some children whose caregivers received the grant were left in the care of grandparents and other kin in rural areas as working-age caregivers sought jobs in urban areas.

Studies (eg Khosa and Kaseke 2017) have also shown that caregivers often use portions of the CSG to make the regular contributions to informal social security associations such as burial societies and *stokvels*. By definition, structure and operation, such associations not only prevent families from slipping into dire poverty but they also play an important role in the realisation of relational well-being (Khosa and Kaseke 2017, Matenga 2015). Burial societies, for example, are mutual assistance schemes meant to provide financial, material and non-material support to a member or their family in the event of a death (Semenya 2013). In *stokvels* the regularly pooled funds are variously used to supplement members' incomes; build up reserves against unforeseen contingencies; provide easy access to credit for members; provide moral support and mutual assistance; and create social and financial capital (Matuku and Kaseke 2014). Patel et al (2017) found that 34 per cent of caregivers of CSG-receiving children were members of such community associations. Of these, 52 per cent belonged to a burial society and 19 per cent to a *stokvel*.

Summary and discussion

The CSG fits into the post-apartheid state's broader vision for itself as a twenty-first century democratic developmental state, one that simultaneously attempts to drive industrial development, eradicate poverty and inequality and consolidate social cohesion. At the disposal of the post-apartheid government were industrial and social policies to be

utilised within the confines of fiscal and bureaucratic constraints. The state also found itself bound by the globalised economic context in which both capitalist and former socialist regimes discouraged it from over-extending itself in the economic sphere. Leading South African industrial players had become comprehensively multi-national in character, operating beyond the governmental remit where they were physically domiciled. It is in these circumstances that the post-apartheid regime leaned heavily on the use of social policy for redistribution, utilising the limited financial and human resources at its disposal. Social development theory was foregrounded as a way to combine social programmes with economic development, nurturing human development and simultaneously redistributing resources to sections of the poor.

Analysis of material, subjective, and relational well-being, within the context of the establishment and rollout of the CSG, demonstrates how social policies may have positive effects on certain aspects of well-being and for certain segments of the population, and not others. We argue that these paradoxical effects can only be understood by viewing policies as part of policy regimes, embedded in ideological orientations, economic and political contexts, and by taking a multidimensional approach to well-being. The context of economic globalisation in which socialist states embraced mixed economies and decried nationalisation of industry as antiquated, international monetary bodies rallied against state interference in the economy, and South African multinationals became powerful global institutions with little need for government support (Edigheji 2010, Mohamed 2010, Nattrass 2014) meant that redistribution of wealth could not come directly through industrial policy. Instead, it had partially to be achieved in the form of social cash grants that invested in human potential and development, creating what some have called ‘inclusive neoliberalism’ or a ‘heterodox paradox’ (Ballard 2013).

Overall the post-apartheid state’s policy regime has simultaneously provided invaluable financial support for those most in need, whilst reproducing divisions in the population that perpetuate low levels of relational well-being. Working-class black women in particular have been empowered in their domestic situations, but national divisions have been forged or exacerbated through policies that differentiate between the deserving and undeserving poor and between those who engage with the state for their well-being and those who have very little interaction with government institutions and rely instead on private services. Low levels of

relational and subjective well-being are hinted at by high income inequality and rates of violent crime, bifurcated schooling and health systems and a lack of trust between racial groups.

Other intentional mechanisms to advance the poor black majority in the economy are therefore urgently needed, as well as measures to address the dual service system. The proposed unified national health scheme is a good start. The South African Schools Act provision for school governing bodies to create school fee policies and hire extra teachers at more privileged schools needs to be rethought, as does the issue of private schooling. Furthermore, a creative grant system that involves the entire population in its operations would aid ambitions for relational well-being.

Conclusion

The CSG illuminates one intervention that a twenty-first century democratic developmental state can implement to eradicate the worst effects of poverty in a manner that is not too demanding on the civil service and is economically efficient, contributing to future 'returns on investment'. However, when viewed as part of a wider policy regime that is tasked with redistributive responsibilities and required to create relational well-being so as not to rupture the social fabric, grants alone are inadequate. Social development approaches that invest in the multidimensional well-being of those most vulnerable are important programmes. But these need to be complemented with structural changes to the economy and opportunities for social mobility.

In and of themselves, social welfare policies cannot solve material, subjective and relational well-being problems. They can only be a stop-gap measure or a catalyst that may lead to institutionalised interventions that result in economic inclusion and the transformation of segregated social systems. Grants can only go so far in promoting human development before ceilings are reached that are barricaded by class and race based divisions that militate against structural change. For example, South African children that benefit from the CSG may be physically healthier by the time they reach school, but the massive inequalities in the education system, linked to structural divisions, neighbourhood resources, the quality of teachers and the stresses of parents, will ultimately reproduce social inequalities.

Our central conclusion is, therefore, that social welfare policies are a necessary but insufficient intervention to attain multidimensional well-

being. If material well-being for those most vulnerable is to be supplemented with relational well-being, social policies need to be accompanied by structural interventions that eradicate divisions in access to basic social services and different aspects of the economy. This will contribute towards a more just social order, improve relations between citizens and foster healthy bonds between the population and its democratic institutions.

References

- Adesina, JO (2009) 'Social policy in sub-Saharan Africa: a glance in the rear view mirror', *International Journal of Social Welfare* 18(1).
- Attah, R, V Barca, A Kardan, I MacAuslan, F Merttens and L Pellerano (2016) 'Can social protection affect psychosocial wellbeing and why does this matter? Lessons from cash transfers in sub-Saharan Africa', *Journal of Development Studies* 52(8).
- Ballard, R (2013) 'Geographies of development II: cash transfers and the reinvention of development for the poor', *Progress in Human Geography* 37(6).
- Bastagli, F (2009) 'From social safety net to social policy? The role of conditional cash transfers in welfare state development in Latin America'. Available at: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/ipc/wpaper/60.html> [accessed February 4, 2019]
- Berry, B (2013) 'The material well-being of older New Zealanders: background paper for the Retirement Commissioner's 2013 review'. Available at: <https://www.cffc.org.nz/assets/Documents/RI-Review-2013-Material-well-being-of-older-NZers.pdf> [accessed February 4, 2019]
- Breckenridge, K (2014) *Biometric State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bundy, C (2019) *The Conversation*. Available at http://theconversation.com/why-pro-poor-policies-on-their-own-wont-shift-inequality-in-south-africa-117430?fbclid=IwAR3ZkcvJKSaqh3cilpf6PIPt9eIjcRUaIMY-4_IYvEnz1Eu371_Ist0p3iA [accessed July 2, 2019]
- Case, A and A Deaton (1998) 'Large cash transfers to the elderly in South Africa', *Economic Journal* 108.
- Chang, H (2002) *Kicking Away the Ladder: development strategy in historical perspective*, London: Anthem.
- Coetzee, M (2014) 'Do poor children really benefit from the child support grant?' <http://www.econ3x3.org/sites/default/files/articles/Coetzee-2014-Child-grant-Final.pdf> [accessed April 24, 2018]
- Devereux, S (2011) 'Social protection in South Africa: exceptional or exceptionalism?', *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 32(4).

- Devereux, S and J McGregor (2014) 'Transforming social protection: human wellbeing and social justice', *European Journal of Development Research* 26.
- Diener, E, S Oishi and L Tay (2018) 'Advances in subjective well-being research', *Nature Human Behaviour* 2.
- Dodge, R, AP Daly, J Huyton and LD Sanders (2012) 'The challenge of defining well-being', *International Journal of Well-being* 2(3).
- Duncan, G (2005) 'What do we mean by "happiness"? The relevance of subjective well-being to social policy', *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 25.
- Edigheji, O (2010) 'Constructing a democratic developmental state in South Africa: potentials and challenges', in O Edigheji (ed), *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Esping-Andersen, G (2013) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ferguson, J (2015) *Give a Man a Fish: reflections on the new politics of distribution*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Fleisch, B (2008) *Primary Education in Crisis: why South African schoolchildren underachieve in reading and mathematics*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Furuto, SB (2013) *Social Welfare in East Asia and the Pacific*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gough, I and G Wood (2004) 'Introduction' in I Gough and G Wood (eds) *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America: social policy in development contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haarmann, D (1998) 'From state maintenance grants to a new child support system: building a policy for poverty alleviation with special reference to the financial, social, and developmental impacts'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape.
- Hall, K and W Sambu (2017) 'Income poverty, unemployment and social grants', in L Jamieson, L Berry and L Lake (eds), *South Africa Child Gauge 2017*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
- Holliday, I (2000) 'Productivist welfare capitalism: social policy in East Asia', *Political Studies* 48.
- Johnson, S (2009) 'Polanyi and the instituted processes of markets: Introducing a well-being perspective'. Available at: http://www.bath.ac.uk/soc-pol/welldev/wed-new/workingpapers/workingpapers/WeDWP_09_51.pdf [accessed February 4, 2019]

- Khosa, P and E Kaseke (2017) 'The utilisation of the child support grant by caregivers: the case of Ba-Phalaborwa municipality in Limpopo Province', *Social Work (Stellenbosch)* 53(3). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/52-2-575>
- Leubolt, B (2014) *Social policies and redistribution in South Africa*. Available at: https://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/GLU_Working_Papers/GLU_WP.25.pdf [accessed February 4, 2019]
- Lewis, J (1992) 'Gender and the development of welfare regimes', *Journal of European Social Policy* 2(3).
- Lund, F (2008) *Changing Social Policy: the child support grant in South Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.
- Lund, F, M Noble, H Barnes and G Wright (2009) 'Is there a rationale for conditional cash transfers for children in South Africa?', *Transformation* 70.
- Mahon, NE and A Yarcheski (2017) 'Parent and friend social support and adolescent hope', *Clinical Nursing Research* 26(2).
- Matenga, L (2015) 'The use and effects of the child support grant on households in Kagiso, Mogalae Municipality'. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Johannesburg.
- Matuku, S and E Kaseke (2014) 'The role of stokvels in improving people's lives: The case in Orange Farm, Johannesburg, South Africa', *Social Work* 50(4).
- McCubbin LD, HI McCubbin, W Zhang W, L Kehl and I Strom (2013) 'Relational well-being: an indigenous perspective and measure', *Family Relations* 62(2).
- Midgley, J (1995) *Social Development: the developmental perspective in social welfare*. London: Sage.
- Mohamed, S (2010) 'The effect of a mainstream approach to economic and corporate governance on development in South Africa', in O Edigheji (ed), *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Møller, V (2016) 'South African perceptions of the good life twenty years into democracy', in F Maggino (eds) *A Life Devoted to Quality of Life*. Social Indicators Research Series 60.
- Møller, V and S Radloff (2013) 'Perceptions of fortune and misfortune in older South African households: Social assistance and the "good life"', *Social Indicators Research* 111(3).
- Nattrass, N (2014) Macro-economic visions and the labour market question, in T Meyiwa, M Nkondo, M Chitiga-Mabugu, M Sithole and F Nyamjoh (eds), *State of the Nation, South Africa 1994-2014: a twenty-year review*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

- Ndunda, T (2016) *A Review of Esping-Andersen's Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Available at: file:///C:/Users/u04837127/Downloads/Research_Paper_Innovation_Publication_2016_1%20(1).pdf [accessed April 6, 2019]
- Niño-Zarazúa, M, A Barrientos, S Hickey and D Hulme (2012) 'Social protection in Sub-Saharan Africa: getting the politics right', *World Development* 40(1).
- Patel, L, T Hochfeld and J Chiba (2019) 'Perspectives of South African caregivers in receipt of Child Support Grants: implications for family strengthening interventions', *International Journal of Social Welfare* 28(3).
- Patel, L and S Plagerson (2016) 'The Evolution of the Child Support Grant', in A Delanoy, S Jehoma and L Lake (eds), *South African Child Gauge 2016*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
- Patel, L, GC Knijn, D Gorman-Smith, T Hochfeld, M Isserow, R Garthe and IK Kgaphola (2017) *Family Contexts, Child Support Grants and Child Well-Being in South Africa*. Available at: <https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/humanities/csda/Documents/PSPPD-Family-contexts-full-report-Patel-single-web-pages.pdf> [accessed November 14, 2018]
- Patel, L, T Knijn and F van Wel (2015) 'Child support grants in South Africa: a pathway to women's empowerment and child well-being?', *Journal of Social Policy* 44(2).
- Pawar, M and D Cox (2010) *Social Development: critical themes and perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Potts, R (2012) 'Social welfare in South Africa: curing or causing poverty?', *Penn State Journal of International Affairs* 2(1).
- Roberts, B (2016) *Race Relations: HSRC surprise surveys*. Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/opinion/race-relations-hsrc-survey-surprises-2020551> [accessed April 24, 2018]
- Ryff, CD (1989) 'Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57(6).
- Seekings, J (2008) 'Welfare regimes and redistribution in the South', in I Shapiro and P Swenson (eds) *Divide and Deal: the politics of distribution in democracies*. New York: NYU Press.
- Semenya, DK (2013) 'Burial society versus the Church in the black society of South Africa: a pastoral response', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v34i1.698> [accessed April 10, 2018]
- Sikhulumile, S, M Mudhara and E Wale (2017) 'The impact of social grant-dependency on agricultural entrepreneurship among rural households in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', *Journal of Developing Areas* 51(3).

- Skocpol, T and E Amenta (1986) 'States and social policies', *Annual Review of Sociology* 12(1).
- South Africa. Department of Basic Education (2019) Available at: <https://www.education.gov.za/Newsroom/Speeches/tabid/950/ctl/Details/mid/8127/ItemID/5972/Default.aspx> [accessed November 22, 2019].
- South Africa. Department of Social Development (DSD) (2012) *The South African Child Support Grant Impact Assessment*. Pretoria: UNICEF South Africa.
- South Africa. National Treasury (2013). Budget review. Available at: <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/national-budget/2013/review/FullReview.pdf> [accessed September 11, 2017]
- South Africa. Social Security Agency (SASSA) (2019) Factsheet 21 December 2018: A statistical summary of social grants in South Africa. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/u04837127/Downloads/fact-sheet-for-december-2018.pdf> [accessed April 6, 2019]
- Statistics South Africa (2017) Poverty trends in South Africa: an examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015. Available at: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10341> [accessed April 24, 2018]
- Swartz, S and H van Rooyen (2018) *Multidimensional Well-Being: what it is, and how it relates to reducing poverty and inequality*. Available at: <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/review/hsrc-review-jan-march-2018/multidimensional-well-being> [accessed February 4, 2019]
- Triegaardt, JD (2005) 'The Child Support Grant in South Africa: a social policy for poverty alleviation?', *International Journal of Social Welfare* 14(4).
- White, S (2009) Bringing well-being into development practice. Available at: https://purehost.bath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/334487/WeDWP_09_50.pdf [accessed February 4, 2019]
- Williams, M (2014) 'Rethinking the developmental state in the 21st century', in M Williams (ed) *The End of the Developmental State?* London: Routledge.
- Wright, G, M Noble, P Ntshongwana, D Neves and H Barnes (2014) 'South Africa's Child Support Grant and the dignity of female caregivers'. Available at: http://saspri.org/wp-content/uploads/Docs/Policy_Brief_2.pdf [accessed 4 February 2019].
- Xaba, MB (2016) 'A qualitative application of Amartya Sen's "development as freedom" theory to an understanding of social grants in South Africa', *African Sociological Review* 20(2).