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Published paper

Whitworth, A and Wilkinson, K (2013) *Tackling child poverty in South Africa: Implications of ubuntu for the system of social grants*. *Development Southern Africa*, 30 (1), 121 - 134.

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Tackling child poverty in South Africa: implications of *ubuntu* for the effectiveness of the current policy approach

Whitworth, A¹ and Wilkinson, K²

Abstract

In the South African context both liberal and – in the form of the southern African idea of ubuntu – more communitarian and relational discourses of citizenship can be seen. The policy framework to tackle child policy, however, is dominated by the framework of liberal citizenship, most clearly through the Bill of and the various social grants. Using analyses from an original microsimulation model developed by one of the authors the paper shows however how a neglect of children's relationships and inter-connectedness with their adult parents/carers in the current liberal citizenship inspired policy approach limits the effectiveness of this child poverty strategy. The empirical analyses demonstrate how a greater recognition in policy of the relational principles of ubuntu through more fully addressing the needs of children's parents/carers via the creation of a comprehensive social security grant for working age adults is needed to effectively reduce child poverty as well as working age poverty.

Keywords: citizenship; child poverty; social grants; microsimulation

1. Introduction

Although widely used the concept of citizenship is contested across several different strands of thinking (Jones and Gaventa, 2002), each strand with its own associated implications for policy approaches. This is notable in the South African context in which both liberal (as found in the Bill of Rights) and more communitarian discourses of citizenship (in the form of the southern African idea of *ubuntu*) are seen. This paper uses original microsimulation modelling to question how effectively the social security package in South Africa combats child poverty given that it is based squarely within the framework of liberal citizenship rights at the expense, in terms of policy, of *ubuntu*.

Within liberal approaches citizens and the state can be thought of as bound together in a bilateral 'contract' in which the individual is granted rights in return for fulfilling certain obligations towards the state and their fellow citizens (e.g. obeying the law, participating in paid work) (Isin and Wood, 1999; Plant, 2010), with the terms of that contract keenly contested (White, 2000; 2003). Marshall (1964) is often considered as the analytical starting point for

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discussions of liberal citizenship yet South African discussions of liberal citizenship precede this work and continue to be central through the Bill of Rights and – in terms of social rights – the social security system of social grants.

However, this liberal view of detached rights-bearing individuals can be counterbalanced by more communitarian citizenship thinkers who see individuals are seen as inherently embedded in social relationships and networks which are key to facilitating identity, resource needs and belonging. The concept of *ubuntu*, outlined below, represents a specifically southern African communitarian philosophy and can be understood as a second historically rich strand of citizenship thinking in the South African context, emphasising that individuals are defined and understood primarily through their relationships with others rather than as discrete individuals.

These two distinct approaches to citizenship lend themselves to different policy approaches. In relation to current policy towards tackling child poverty in South Africa, liberal notions of citizenship dominate policy design (through the Bill of Right and social grants) yet this paper argues that a greater consideration of the principles and policy implications of *ubuntu* would lead to more effective strategies for reducing child poverty. This paper proceeds as follows. The context of child poverty and the current system of social assistance is set out in the next section. This is followed by a discussion of liberal citizenship as it relates to South Africa, and then of *ubuntu* and its implications for the current policy regime. Original empirical analyses from original microsimulation modelling of South African household data are then presented in order to provide new empirical evidence illustrating the relevance of *ubuntu* to the effectiveness of the current policy approach in reducing child poverty. A final section draws together the main findings and their implications for South African policies to tackle child poverty.

2.1 Child poverty and social assistance in South Africa

South Africa is classed as a middle-income country (United Nations, 2010) yet poverty rates, and especially child poverty rates, are exceptionally high. Proudlock et al. (2008) used the 2006 General Household Survey to estimate that around 68% of children live in households with an income of less than R1,200 per month. There is also extreme racial disparity in the distribution of poverty and wealth (Gelb, 2003). It is estimated that 63% of black African children lived in ultra-poor³ households whilst this is the case for only 4% of white children. By contrast, 1% of black African children lived in the most affluent households with earnings of more than R16,000 per month compared to 29% of white children (Monson *et al.*, 2006).

For most of the apartheid era little support was provided by the government to those living in poverty and the social security system was highly racialised and focussed on the elderly and disabled. Despite the high levels of child poverty at that time, the only forms of social assistance available for children were the State Maintenance Grant and the Foster Child Grant which together accounted for only 10% of the social assistance budget (Lund, 2008:14). Following the end of apartheid the new Government of National Unity recognised that the lack of support for children was a substantial gap in the existing social assistance package. The government established the Lund Committee in 1995 with the remit to undertake an appraisal of existing

³ Ultra-poor households are households earning less than R800 per month.

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state support to children and families and explore alternative policy options (Lund, 2008:40). Restricted by the fiscal constraints set by government, the Lund Committee recommended replacing the existing State Maintenance Grant with a new social assistance grant for children (the Child Support Grant (CSG)). After much discussion with government the final recommendations proposed a grant of R100 per month provided to all children under the age of 7 whose carer satisfied the means test.

Despite criticisms of the low value and means test in particular (Martin and Rosa, 2002), the implementation of the CSG in 1998 was an important step in embedding a social assistance transfer aimed at reducing child poverty in modern South Africa. Between 1998 and 2009 the nominal value of the grant has increased to R250 per child per month (from April 2010) and the CSG has gradually been made available to older children so that those under 18 will be eligible from January 2012. The income test has remained at the same level in nominal terms (thus declined in real terms) between 1998 and 2008 but was raised considerably in 2008 so that around 60% of all children in South Africa are now eligible. As well as a substantial increase in eligibility, there has also been a dramatic increase in take up of the grant since 1998 (Noble *et al.*, 2005) with take up rates estimated to be 86% in 2007 (Children Count, 2009).

The support for children through the CSG inevitably sits within the context of a broader social security regime. A range of other social grants besides the CSG currently exist in South Africa with the main ones in terms of claimant numbers being the Disability Grant (DG) (a means tested grant available to working-age adults who are unable to work due to disability or illness with a value up to R1010 per month in April 2009) and the Old Age Grant (OAG) (a means tested grant with a value up to R1010 per month in April 2009). In August 2009 around 9.1 million children received the CSG, compared to around 1.3 million claimants of the DG and 2.5 million claimants of the OAG (SASSA, 2009). Hence, CSG is received by several million more individuals compared to the DG or OAG but at a much lower rate.

2.2 The Taylor Committee, comprehensive social security and child poverty

Despite the introduction of the CSG in 1998, and the existence of other grants for particular social groups, a notable gap in the country's social security regime is that there remains no provision at present for those adults who are able to work but who are unable to find work. In the apartheid era the policies of job reservation (where certain jobs could only be carried out by white workers) and job guarantee (where every white South African was guaranteed a job from the state if employment could not be found elsewhere) ensured that unemployment was not a social risk that needed to be catered for (at least for the white population). Any kind of policy to protect against unemployment was therefore absent from the social protection package until the introduction of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) in 1946. Black African workers were not officially covered by the fund until the late 1970s and in 1990 the UIF was estimated to cover less than 40% of the labour force and around 70% of formal employees. For the majority of those in informal employment – the majority of Black African workers – no coverage is provided by the UIF (van der Berg, 2002).

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Given the current high rates of unemployment (not to mention underemployment) in the country, the lack of comprehensive social security is problematic for any anti-poverty programme. Unemployment was put at 24% in December 2009 (according to the more restrictive official definition) and, inevitably, there is a strong relationship between child poverty and parental/carer unemployment. Nationally 41% of children live in households where there is no adult in work but in the province of Limpopo, which has the highest child poverty rate at 83%⁴, only 28% of children live in a household where there is an employed adult (Children Count, 2008).

The weaknesses of the South African social security system were widely discussed in the years following the transition to democracy in the Reconstruction and Development Programme Base Document (African national Congress, 1994), the subsequent Reconstruction and Development Programme White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 2004) and the 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997). The Taylor Committee was set up to examine the possibilities of reform around an integrated and comprehensive social security system. Framed in the language of liberal citizenship, its final report supported moves towards a comprehensive system of income support as a means of providing people with their socio-economic rights: "comprehensive social protection, by providing universal coverage, thus embeds an important form of social citizenship – and could be seen to form a central component of the democratic State's 'contract with the people'" (Taylor Committee, 2002: 132).

When the Taylor Report was published in 2002 there was considerable support for a universal Basic Income Grant: making the grant universal would reduce administrative costs and the potential for fraud and corruption, the tax system could be used to claw back payments to the wealthy and it was expected to encourage people to invest in activities such as job-seeking and training (Standing and Samson, 2003). Nevertheless, the Basic Income Grant was never favoured by the South African government. However, the idea of comprehensive social security (implemented through other mechanisms) has been frequently discussed within government since the Taylor Committee Report, most notably within the Department of Social Development's reports (Department of Social Development, 2007, 2008). This would have the most impact on those groups currently excluded from social assistance, largely unemployed working-age adults, yet the concept of *ubuntu* – a citizenship concept removed from the dominance in policy of a liberal citizenship made concrete in the Bill of Rights and individualise social grants – highlights the importance of such a reform to children also.

The next section further draws out the distinctions between liberal citizenship and *ubuntu* in the South African context and the implications for effectively tackling child poverty. The next section briefly outlines the nature and centrality of liberal citizenship thinking to the current South African policy framework. This is followed by a discussion of the southern African philosophy of *ubuntu* which serves to illustrate the limitations of the liberal view and to emphasise the need for the social security regime to see children within inter-dependent networks and relationships and, in doing so, to highlight the importance of comprehensive social security to the alleviation of child poverty in South Africa.

⁴ Calculated using data from the GHS 2005 based on a household poverty line of R1,200 per month.

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3.1 Liberal citizenship thinking in South Africa

The work of Marshall is often taken as a starting point for discussions of liberal citizenship. Marshall's account sees citizenship rights – and obligations (White, 2000) – as a means to generate a sphere of equality between all citizens in order to compensate for the inequalities inherent in capitalism (Barbalet 1988). Focussing on the side of rights, citizenship for Marshall brings with it a triad of civil, political and social rights which developed during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries respectively in his account. Despite being critiqued for its historically Anglo-centric focus (Turner, 1993; Dwyer, 2004), Marshall's framework remains applicable and analytically useful in thinking about citizenship in South Africa and has been applied explicitly to the South African context (Whitworth and Noble, 2008; van Niekerk and Noble, 2009).

Indeed, liberal citizenship thinking in South Africa precedes the work of Marshall and has a long and distinguished history throughout the struggle movement in the twentieth century. The idea of a package of rights for all South African citizens has its origins in the African National Congress's (ANC's) historic 1943 Africans' Claims which sets out explicit claims for civil, political and social rights for all South African citizens irrespective of race or class. The response of the Smuts government to Africans' Claims was dismissive and the election of the National Party in 1948 and the beginning of apartheid created a policy environment openly hostile to progress towards equal citizenship across all racial groups – whether civil, political or social. Within this context of greater state oppression, the 1954 Women's Charter and the ANC's 1955 Freedom Charter and again set forth demands for universal civil, political and social rights for all South African citizens irrespective of race or class, demands which the ANC remained committed to throughout – and beyond – apartheid. These are remarkable documents in their vision, particularly when considering their historical context.

In many ways this historic legacy of liberal citizenship sits at the heart of current social policy reform and debate in modern South Africa. After the transition to democracy in 1994 a liberal approach to citizenship thinking became central to the vision of the post-apartheid nation through the creation of the 1996 Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution, a document that is crucial in articulating a vision for the sort of society that South Africa aims to become. As Motala argues: "[T]he constitution is the supreme policy guide, which all who live and work in South Africa abide by and hold in high esteem. Our democracy is built on this" (Motala, 2009:1).

After much political debate over the nature of social rights in particular, the final Bill of Rights stipulates that certain social rights should be provided to all people, as well as setting out specific rights for children. Section 27 of the Bill of Rights states that "Everyone has the right to have access to...social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance." However, the statement contains the final caveat that "The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, *within its available resources*, to achieve the *progressive realisation* of these rights." (authors' emphasis) (Republic of South Africa, 1996:Sec 27 1 and 2). The Bill of Rights also contains a separate section relating specifically to the rights of children. Section 28 states that "Every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services" (Republic of South Africa, 1996:Sec 28 1.c) and here the clause relating to "available resources" and "progressive

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realisation" is, interestingly, not included. This has been interpreted by some to imply that the realisation of children's rights is not subject to limitations on available means and therefore that children have a first, higher and undisputable claim on state resources in relation to the social rights contained in Section 28 of the Bill of Rights (Liebenberg, 2001; Sloth-Nielsen, 2001; van Rensburg, 2005).

The specific social rights for children set out in the Constitution do provide considerable support to policies targeted towards children and children's rights – alongside social rights more broadly – have been shown to be justiciable in court, notably in the *Grootboom*, *TAC*, *Khosa* and *S vs M* cases. Through these legal actions real progress in terms of the provision of social rights has been made and these should not be underestimated. However, the liberal approach also has drawbacks in that rights are separated and delivered as discrete packages to different citizens. Crucially for the present argument, the separation of children's and adults' rights within the Bill of Rights – and the social grants which flow from them for children, but not for unemployed adult parents/carers – illustrates the individualistic and somewhat atomised view of citizens held within the Constitution. This is at odds with the communitarian view expressed through *ubuntu* – and the reality of children's lives on the ground – that relational bonds between citizens are also crucial to tackling child poverty.

3.2 Ubuntu and its implications for tackling child poverty

With links to the communitarian tradition of citizenship thinking, *ubuntu* is a southern African philosophy based on the understanding of individuals as embedded, defined and understood within broader relational ties of family, community and society (Bhengu, 1996; Gyekye, 1998; Biko, 1998; Coetzee, 1998; Coertze, 2001). At the centre of the concept is the Zulu saying *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* – a person is a person through persons (Shutte, 2001: 23). According to *ubuntu* the community provides the relational context and supports through which individuals develop and live, and the philosophy places emphasis on those values which build relational bonds and networks: sharing, compassion, understanding, reciprocity, kindness, solidarity and sensitivity. At its root, therefore, *ubuntu* is distinct from liberal conceptions of citizenship in that it is based in the emotional and relational bonds within which citizens exist and on which all citizens depend in order to fulfil their own developmental potential (Khoza, 1994; Prinsloo, 1998; Gbadegesin, 1998), rather than on a notion of a detached, atomised rights-bearing individual (Blum, 1982; Held, 1990). As citizens are conceived of in relation to – and dependent on – each other, all are responsible for ensuring that others have all that they require in order to develop through their relational networks.

The differences between these two approaches to citizenship have practical policy implications. Of particular relevance to the effectiveness of social security policies to tackle child poverty is the recognition within *ubuntu* of the inter-connectedness of children and adults. This is in contrast to current liberal-based policy which lacks a broader conceptualisation of children's relationships and inter-connectedness with a wider household, network and community which, in turn, has its own needs and resources. These differences suggest a need for greater recognition of the fact that children are relational beings and that households, communities and other networks may themselves act to pool resources and risks collectively, in contrast to (and potentially as a result of) the individualism assumed within the current social security policy

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framework. It also suggests a need to more explicitly recognise the links between children's and adults' rights when seeking to tackle child poverty in South Africa. One strand of literature into child-centred notions of citizenship has argued that children's rights are enhanced by increased autonomy (Alderson, 1992; Therborn, 1993), yet the inter-dependence of children and adults cannot be ignored and adults and children cannot be so easily separated that the welfare of one group can be improved independently of the other (King, 1997). There are many instances in which the principles of *ubuntu* have been used – either implicitly or explicitly – in the courts to interpret the principles set out in the Constitution (Keep and Midgley, 2007), yet the fragmentation of relational networks into discrete individuals in the delivery through the social grants of the social rights of citizenship around social assistance is evident. Thus, it could be argued that the liberal citizenship framework which underpins the Bill of Rights simultaneously advances and – at the present – constrains the country's ability to effectively tackle child poverty: whilst providing a valuable rights-based framework through which individuals can receive key social security transfers, the Bill of Rights also represents the world through the lens of liberal citizenship thought which allows the artificial separation of social security policies for children and their adult carers.

4.1 Assessing welfare outcomes using microsimulation

Using original evidence from a purpose-built South African microsimulation model, the remainder of the paper examines the evidence behind the efficacy of the individualistic liberal versus the collective view of *ubuntu* in terms of tackling child poverty in South Africa. Using the microsimulation model the next section begins by considering the current social assistance system in South Africa and its impact on child poverty before looking at what could be achieved through a system more firmly connected within the principles of *ubuntu*.

Microsimulation is a widely used approach to analyse the impact of changes to tax and benefit policies on different groups in society (see for instance Hancock and Sutherland (1992) and Mitton (2000) for reviews) and microsimulation has been applied specifically to the study of the impact of policy on child poverty in a number of countries (Corak et al, 2005; Brewer et al, 2006; Figari et al, 2009). The South African Microsimulation Model (SAMOD)⁵ is a static microsimulation model which tailors the EUROMOD⁶ model to the tax-benefit system and demographic context of South Africa. The model draws on the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) (2000 and 2005), the Labour Force Survey (2000, 2006 and 2007) and the Community Survey (2007) to simulate the South African population in 2007 and builds in the eligibility criteria for South Africa's key social assistance and tax policies. The model then allows detailed micro-level analyses of the impact of policy changes (both real and potential) on children and other groups.

⁵ Further details of the South African Microsimulation model (SAMOD) can be found in Wilkinson (2009).

⁶ The authors are thankful to Prof Holly Sutherland and colleagues at the University of Essex for sharing the EUROMOD model.

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4.2 Household composition, income pooling and child poverty

Given the way in which the availability and value of social transfers maps onto household members, household composition becomes a central consideration for any anti-poverty programme. Household compositions for poor and non-poor households within the IES 2000 are shown in Table 1. Whilst there is no official poverty line in South Africa, a threshold of R462 (in 2007 prices) has been recommended by Statistics South Africa and the National Treasury Statistics South Africa (2007) and is used here. Most children live with working age adults regardless of whether they live in poor or non-poor households: 64% of children in poor households live with working age adults and 32% live in three-generation households, leaving only around 4% of children who do not live with a working age adult. Clearly the fact that few children live in households where there is no one of working age means that in theory most children should have access to wage income. However, in the context of high unemployment, under-employment and (for those with work) low wages, many children cannot gain much, if any, benefit from wage income generated by their working-age carers.

Table 1: Household compositions for poor and non-poor households

	% living with				Total %	Number of persons
	Children	Working age	Old age	Three generations		
Poor households						
Children	1.1	64.3	2.7	31.9	100	10,891,863
Working age	56.3	11.8	4.4	27.5	100	10,862,809
Old age	8.2	14.6	12.2	65	100	2,010,070
Non-poor households						
Children	0.2	84.9	0.3	14.6	100	7,302,943
Working age	53	33.6	4.2	9.2	100	14,202,371
Old age	1.2	24.7	40.2	34	100	1,521,622

Table 1 also provides insights into how income might itself influence household formation decisions in the policy context where social assistance is only provided to certain individuals. Previous research has found evidence to suggest that household formation within poor households may, at least in part, be an active response to economic need in the context of high unemployment and a partial system of social grants (Klasen and Woolard, 2008). From this perspective, children and (particularly) old people become valuable income sources for the wider household and family. This is supported by Table 1 which shows that amongst poor households working age adults generally live with children, old age adults or both of these groups (88% of working age adults live with another age group). By contrast, amongst non-poor households only 66% of working age adults live in a household also containing another age group. Whilst not conclusive, these data support the notion that those living below the poverty line are more likely to form household configurations within which at least one person is likely to be able to access some form of social transfer.

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Previous research on income pooling within households also supports the idea that income is shared between household members and may therefore encourage particular household configurations (Ardington *et al.*, 2009; Bertrand *et al.*, 2003). Social grant income, although claimed by a specific individual, is generally not 'ring fenced' for the eligible recipient. For example, the CSG has been found to be used for wider household needs and other social grants – for example OAG (Duflo, 2000) – also benefit children. Evidence has been found linking positive impacts on child outcomes in areas such as education, health and nutrition with receipt, by the household, of an Old Age Grant (Aguero *et al.*, 2005, 2006; Duflo, 2000). Given that the value of the OAG is approximately four times that of the CSG its potential to impact on child outcomes is clearly larger than the CSG in the context of household income pooling. Household in receipt of only CSG may struggle to prioritise expenditure focussed on children (although children are likely to also benefit from general increased household expenditure).

More broadly, a household's equivalised income is influenced by many factors besides eligibility for social grants including market income, remittances and the number of individuals across which any income must be shared. This point is illustrated further in Figure 1 in which the average income derived from three main income sources (market income, social transfers and remittances) are shown for each type of household, assuming full take-up (i.e. the intended rather than the actual impact of government policy). Figure 1 shows that whilst households containing working age individuals typically have higher market incomes (as might be expected) the social transfer system creates even more significant differences between different types of household. In particular, whilst any child in receipt of the CSG will receive the same amount of transfer, only children living in households with older people have a reasonable chance of moving above the poverty line. Yet, as noted above, only around one third of children live in households with older people, meaning that the OAG is not an effective mechanism for addressing child poverty in the aggregate.

The overall impact of each social transfer in turn on different age groups is presented in Figure 2. Assuming that full income pooling occurs within every household, Figure 2 shows that the CSG has roughly the same impact on the proportion of children living in poverty as most other social transfers – despite only the CSG being explicitly directed at children – and as intra-household transfers. For other groups the impact of the OAG on poverty rates amongst the elderly is particularly striking, a combination of its relatively generous level and the fact that around 40% of non-poor elderly households do not contain any children or working age adults with whom the OAG is shared (see Table 1).

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Figure 1: Average equivalised household income from different sources for individuals in different household types (R per month)

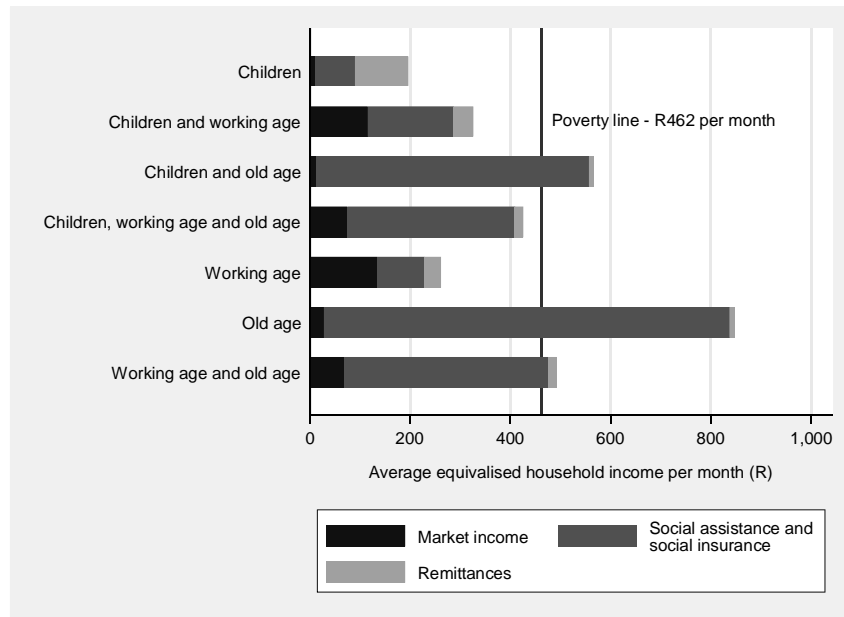
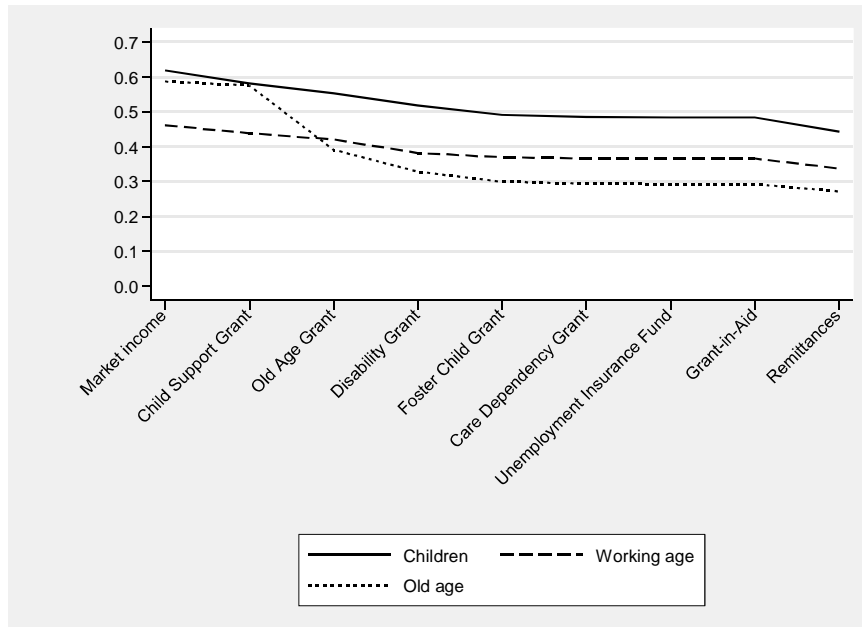


Figure 2: Impact of 2008 system of social transfers on the proportion of individuals living in households with incomes below the poverty line

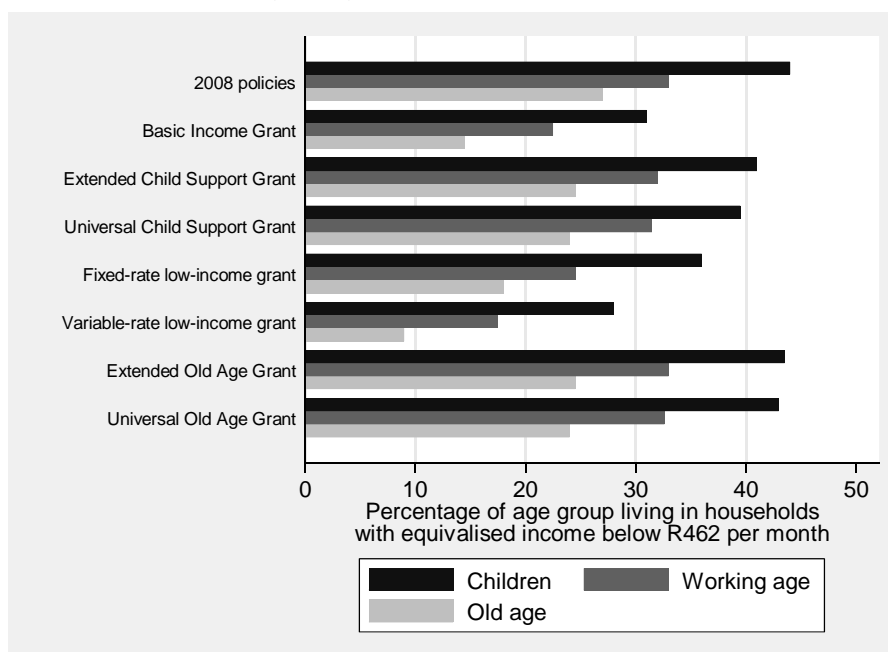


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The above analyses illustrate the importance that income pooling and household structures have on the effectiveness of policies to tackle poverty for different age groups. An individualistic view of the right to social assistance in this case creates a certain amount of inequality where a small proportion of children benefit more than others by virtue of living with elderly household members. In particular, the analyses highlight that – taking into account household formation decisions and the necessity of income pooling for most poor households – strategies to reduce working age poverty may be most effective at reducing child (and working age) poverty rates.

In thinking about broader strategies, therefore, Figure 3 evaluates seven policy options in terms of which appears the most effective in reducing child poverty: a basic income grant paid at R180 per month; an extension to CSG to children up to the age of 17; an extension to CSG to all children and removal of the means test; a means-tested grant of R180 to the low-income working age; a means-tested grant to the low-income working age of between R100 and R360 depending on existing income; an extension to the current OAG to cover men from the age of 60 (rather than 65 as at present); and an extension to the OAG and removal of the means test to make the grant universal (and taxable for those paying tax). Each of these reforms have been considered by the South African government but none has yet taken place⁷.

Figure 3: Percentage of each age group living in households with post tax and transfer equivalised incomes below the poverty line



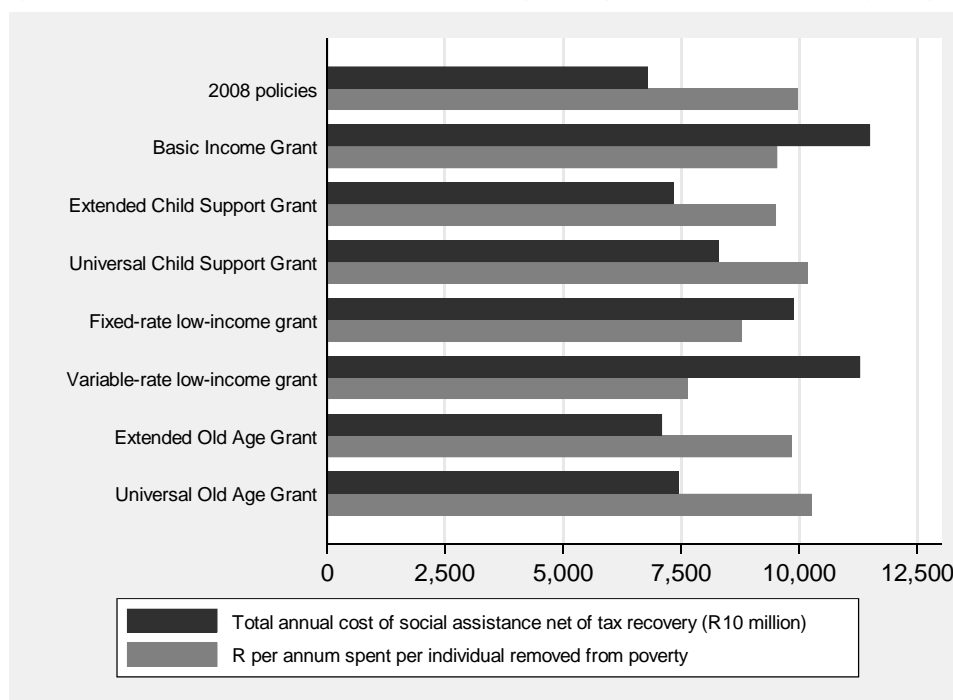
⁷ With the exception of the extension to the CSG to age 17 which is due to be implemented by 2012.

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Comparing each reform with the existing system, the variable-rate low-income grant paid to the working-age poor has the greatest impact on poverty rates for all age groups. It is important to note that eligibility for this grant is based on income and not employment status. Whilst unemployment is an additional issue and many of those with low incomes will also be unemployed, amongst the employed and the economically inactive there are a large number of individuals who could be classified as discouraged workseekers or under-employed (Bhorat and Oosthuizen, 2006). Figure 3 suggests that greater recognition of children's broader relationships – and a grant based on the income of working age members of those relationships – provides a significantly more effective mechanism to reduce child poverty than either the current social grants regime or a range of alternative policy options.

It is also necessary to consider the cost as well as the impact of any potential policy reform. Figure 4 shows the overall cost of each of these potential reforms and the cost per individual to remove them from poverty. The variable-rate grant to the working age is the most expensive scheme but, interestingly, is also the most cost effective in terms of the average cost of removing an individual from poverty. Indeed, it is also more cost effective (although overall more expensive) in terms of poverty reduction than the existing 2008 system.

Figure 4: Total annual cost of reform and average cost per individual removed from poverty



The analyses in Figure 3 and Figure 4 present a simplified view of the costs and benefits of policy reforms. Further factors would need to be taken into account in assessing the true cost of the reform as there will be certain administrative costs associated with implementing any means-

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tested scheme. However, the use of microsimulation modelling to explore the impact of social transfers on South African households does demonstrate that an individualistic rights-based yet child-focussed approach to policy making demonstrates that the present policy approach does not necessarily generate the most efficient policies in terms of reducing child poverty. Further consideration of the nature of household composition and income distribution within households highlights the importance of the relationships between individuals in terms of the effectiveness of any social assistance policy. The philosophy of *ubuntu* suggests an alternative and potentially more effective means of addressing child poverty, one in which children's relationships and inter-connectedness with adults are more fully recognised in policy through the provision of comprehensive social assistance covering unemployed adults.

5. Conclusions

The paper has argued that in the South African context the dominance – yet partial implementation – of the liberal citizenship perspective and the relative neglect of the communitarian principles of *ubuntu* has serious implications for the effectiveness of current government policy to tackle child poverty. Whilst the enshrinement of the social rights of citizenship into the Bill of Rights has significant advantages in a South African context, paper highlights the need for the system of social grants to take a broader, more collective and more grounded perspective than the liberal model of citizenship as operationalised within the social rights of the Constitution and the concomitant existing package of social grants. In particular, in terms of seeking to tackle child poverty through the CSG, the current policy formulation is limited in that children are granted individualised rights as autonomous beings abstracted from familial and social relations as well as from patterns of household behaviour – both in terms of resource pooling and household formation – on the ground, whilst unemployed parents/carers receive no support through the social grants.

Using original microsimulation modelling, the analyses highlight ways in which grants not directed at children nevertheless have important implications for tackling child poverty. The extensions to the age eligibility within the CSG are welcome, as would be increases to its real value towards the higher levels of the DG and OAG inherited from the apartheid regime. At the same time, however, the CSG requires additional policy supports in order to have its intended impact on child poverty. Where income poverty remains prevalent, the CSG will in reality frequently be used for needs within the broader household and the delivery of social rights via social grants to other household members (or members of broader communities and networks) are also key to effectively tackling child poverty, alongside the eligibility and value of the CSG itself. Given that 64% of poor children live only with working age adults yet these households remain poor (indeed, remain the poorest household type) after the effects of the 2008 tax-transfer system highlights that child poverty and working age poverty cannot be so easily separated as the current liberal citizenship framework of individualised (and partial) social grants would suggest. Rather, as highlighted through the philosophy of *ubuntu*, there is a need for children's relationships and inter-connectedness with their adult parents and carers to be recognized through the creation of a social grant for unemployed working age adults if child poverty – as well as working age poverty – are to be tackled effectively in the new South Africa.

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