

Chapter 2



Poverty and Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the Links

Migration has always been a component of the systems of livelihood in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) but in the last decades it has burgeoned and also altered in ways which reflect specific characteristics of crises at sub-regional levels (Black et al, 2004; Francis, 2002; Ansell and van Blerk, 2004; Luckham et al 2001). In some studies changes have been observed, regarding institutional norms of mobility and livelihood, by which for some young people migration has acquired the status of a *rite de passage* to adulthood and membership in the new mobile class (Hampshire, 2002; Castle and Diarra, 2003). Analysis of the complex background to this recent transformation of migration requires an approach capable of combining socio-economic issues with both the cultural and subjective dimensions of identity construction. Overgeneralization can hide important nuances in continuity and change. We have concentrated on the links between poverty and migration, and the conditions under which the latter becomes trafficking. Issues of identity construction are covered by placing them in the context of the entitlement rules as part of everyday living.²¹ This analytical choice has been made for its potential policy-relevance and because research could not be done by interacting 'in the field'.

We first provide a conceptual discussion on poverty and the methods of its assessment. This is followed by a discussion on gender and poverty under Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), showing how the interaction of a neo-liberal policy environment with local structures of power allows for hidden transfer of onerous aspects of adjustment onto women and children. The existing body of literature on migration is utilised to

21. For example, the identity of a child migrant as a domestic servant may imply a three-dimensional deprivation of entitlements and rights: as a migrant (without citizenship rights), as a child entitled to food and basic protection (both of which can be removed) and as a worker (whose labour is not recognized).

delineate the main areas of social dynamics that can enhance women and children's vulnerability and make them more susceptible to the inherent risks of trafficking. Using UNICEF data set (State of the World's Children, 2005) and other databases we obtain a general picture of child poverty and deprivation in SSA and illustrate how the outcome of two decades of economic stagnation is reflected in social indicators. The chapter concludes with a proposal for policy debates and action.

2.1 Conceptualizing Poverty: Poverty Line, Capabilities and Voices of the Poor

Progress made in the analysis of poverty during the last two decades is a result of close monitoring of the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on the poor. SAPs consist of a complex bundle of instruments with differing goals although the main aim is to stimulate national economic growth by restoring balance between (1) government revenues and spending, (2) savings and investments, (3) export and import of goods and services, (4) the flow of foreign capital. More than 150 countries have implemented such programmes since the early 1980s. The basic overall goal has been to create a level playing field for different economic actors in the process of global economic integration. The World Bank is the main architect of SAPs. It is supported by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund whose main role is to assist with the design of adjustment policies to achieve a viable balance of payment and price stability, and to provide finance to these programmes. The main assumption behind a SAP is that a period of economic austerity is necessary for achieving long-term gains from trade, rising income levels and poverty reduction. Debates on SAPs have consistently raised many questions about the conflation of means and ends. Is growth a means to some higher social goal – such as a world free of poverty – or is it an end in itself?

One major breakthrough achieved by the critique of adjustment policies regards their quantitative approach which uses the monetary measures of income and purchasing power as criteria for drawing what are called 'poverty lines' – by which to assess the correlation between economic growth and the level of persistent poverty. Two key aspects have been brought into questions. The first point is that this approach fails to capture the multi-dimensional character of poverty as a lived reality. Chambers (1989, 1995) was among the first to stress this multi-dimensionality and how it can encompass a wide spectrum of deprivation and disadvantage – ranging from the absence of a social base for dignity and self respect, through isolation, physical weakness and seasonal vulnerability to shock, stress and lack of means to cope with damaging loss. The second is that

Box 1 Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Policy Instruments

A. *Stabilisation policy: short-term policies to restore financial balance*

- Fiscal policy
- Monetary policy
- Devaluation of currency

B. *Adjustment policies: medium-term and long-term policies to induce economic growth*

- Reallocation of public sector spending (reduction of the social sector)
- Market liberalisation (current account, goods, capital, domestic finance, factor production)
- Removal of qualitative restrictions (e.g. tariff barriers)
- Promotion of private sector operation (including foreign direct investment especially for export-oriented activities in industry, agriculture and services)
- Reduction of government activities (especially through the privatisation of stated-owned or managed enterprises)

Source: L.D. Smith and N.J. Spooner (1992) in van Dijk (1998: 17-55)

its conceptual proximity to money and markets raises doubt about its ability to take into account the significance of non-monetary resources used by the poor in response to stress. These resources may include a variety of support networks – such as clan and kinship, civic organisations, community and state – which have all helped cushion adjustment burdens (Elson, 1991; Beneria and Fieldman, 1992). A weakening or disbandment of any of these networks can trigger a downward spiral from relative to chronic poverty.

Mahbub ul Haq (1994), Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (1993)²² made significant contributions towards shifting the refocus on poverty and wellbeing away from the possession of commodities. Their common point of departure is the treatment of human development as an end in itself rather than a means to some other goals. Central to their framework – better known as the capabilities approach – is the proposition that the absence of entitlements and rights puts a limit on action taken to achieve a meaningful life. They bring to the fore issues of democracy and point to a causal link between a lack of openings for people's capabilities – resulting from an unjust social system – and the prevalence of poverty among particular social groups. The emphasis on capabilities provides the scope by which to analyze poverty beyond the level income and to cover

22. For the difference between Sen's and Nussbaum's approach see John Alexander, 2004.

its social and political dimensions – including the structural determinants for individual and collective functioning and achievement. By placing measures of human development in the matrix representing issues of governance, the capabilities approach allows quantification of poverty conditions of specific social groups. It also gives more credence to the rules of entitlements and rights that affect women, children, the elderly and any marginalized ethnic groups. The factors behind government accountability for widespread poverty become visible, point that has been obscured in the ascendancy of neo-liberalism.

White *et al* (2003:380) note that the current development literature on poverty emphasizes its multidimensional character and stresses the significance of access to basic services. At the macro-level the aggregate outcome of positive child development contributes to a country's present and future overall development. The growing body of literature on child poverty also emphasizes the capabilities of families and societies to nurture, guide and protect children – which is a basic thread in the social fabric and relies on 'a network of family and community relationships and support systems that underpins livelihoods and human welfare' (Harper and Marcus, 2000: 66). An adequate understanding of the mechanisms of intergenerational poverty transfer is much needed to address its long-term entrenchment in society.

Since 1990, the UNDP through its *Human Development Reports* has promoted a concept of poverty that encompasses 'security' in daily life and 'empowerment' as human agency – concepts predicated on the notion of control over one's destiny through voice and political choice. Since the *World Development Report* of 2000–2001 the World Bank has also embraced the notion of empowerment by introducing a participatory approach to poverty assessment. Because individual and community responses to crisis are mixed, the various ways in which local institutions are or are not able to support individuals and communities in handling and managing external shocks have become an important area of inquiry for comparison and learning (Christiaensen *et al* 2003).

The extension of poverty analysis beyond the monetary measures of income and purchasing power – with its focus on the factors leading to action taken by poor communities and poor individuals – reveals a cause-and-effect relationship between those policy environments which enable worthy human choice and economic performance leading to poverty reduction. Creating an enabling policy environment, in this view, implies the strengthening of local institutions and the capabilities of the poor to organize themselves, articulate their needs, and state their claims through which an upward-moving spiral out of poverty may be stimulated.

From an ethical perspective the participatory approach to poverty assessment implicitly endorses the view that the ability to speak out with dignity about individual and collective experiences of poverty is one element in a broad process of empowerment, particularly the psychological benefit of giving a voice and being heard. Booth *et al* (1998) pointed out that the round of country Poverty Assessments – undertaken at the instigation of the World Bank – did lead to the widespread adoption of the participatory principle. Poverty assessment works better when it draws on the resources of a range of stakeholders and adopts a given investigative style. The voices of the poor are helpful in broadening the awareness of decision makers, because in aggregate analyses local factors that help explain poverty are often omitted. According to information given on the IMF website, the objectives of the Fund's concessional loans were broadened in 1999 to include an explicit focus on poverty reduction in the context of a growth-oriented strategy. 'The IMF will support, along with the World Bank, strategies elaborated by the borrowing countries in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)'.²³

There are reservations about the benign political vision of this strategy and the reliability of its techniques. The emphasis on 'coping strategies' by communities, households and individuals is an analytical choice which does seek to give more prominence to the 'agency' of the poor;²⁴ but the resulting analysis is not always convincing to those who closely monitor changes among the most vulnerable groups. It is also the case that the poor mostly have no part in the action taken following the assessment of their situation.

In the context of HIV/AIDS-related poverty, Ansell and van Blerk (2004) pointed out that 'coping does not imply that such actions are invariably successful or carry no costs... and strategy does not imply the implementation of a carefully prepared plan'. The manner of coping may be another way of conveying the message of 'desperate poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation' (Whiteside, 2002). Where migration is a strategy to diversify household income and enhance personal wellbeing, it can lead to a downward spiral of destitution, particularly where there is a serious lack of options (De Haan *et al* 2002). Destitution can also be an outcome of risks – taken at the point of decision-making to migrate – which are not then assessable. The incomplete and often inaccurate information offered by facilitating networks about the migratory process and labour conditions in the recipient countries often fosters a symbiotic

23. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/prgf.htm>.

24. By 'agency of the poor' is meant their ability to take action.

relationship between the facilitator and the migrant – particularly in instances of trafficking. For the migrant such a relationship often means a choice between street destitution and captivity (Truong, 2003). The analytical treatment of ‘coping strategies’ must therefore not sidestep structural impediments; on the contrary it must locate these strategies precisely in their specific context and (re) assess their success or failure in the light of broader matrices of accountabilities.

The progress in poverty analysis has provided three different ways to apprehend poverty and deprivation: income and purchasing power; capabilities and entitlements; and assessment of the agency of the poor. Each applies to different dimensions and serves a different purpose. These approaches do have shortcomings.²⁵ When used in combination, and with sensitivity to methodological flaws which mask power embedded in the claims of knowledge,²⁶ they could be the means to create adjunct – rather than alternative – perspectives that can be woven together to provide full comprehension of poverty, migration and human agency.

2.2 Gender and Poverty in SSA: Hidden Burdens

In the history of development it is striking to note that thirty years ago the average income in SSA was twice that of both East Asia and South Asia where 60 percent of the population in the developing world live (The Commission for Africa, 2005: 96). Despite twenty years of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) aiming at the revitalisation of SSA economies to prepare them for global integration, the region is experiencing a serious crisis of poverty where the number of people living in chronic poverty is growing and life expectancy is diminishing. The region’s relationship with the world economy – trade and exchange – remains marginal at a time of rapid global integration.²⁷

25. See Chant (2003) for a useful and comprehensive critique of Poverty Assessment methodology.

26. Truong (1997) points out that the conceptual proximity of the capability approach to theories of production tend to consign reproduction and care back into the natural domain and avoid addressing sexuality as being a domain of power which shapes gender identities with implications for rights and entitlements. Critique of participatory methods also notes the power-laden context and remains sceptical about the validity of the opinions expressed (Christoplos, 1997).

27. Most countries in the region— with the exception of Botswana, South Africa, Mauritius, Equatorial Guinea and Guinea-Bissau – have experienced a consistent decline of gross national income due to falling primary commodity prices. According to the African Development Bank (2002:2), of the world’s 44 primary commodities only 13 slightly increased in value through 2001. Prices of agricultural raw materials such as tropical hardwood, cotton and natural rubber were 40 per cent down on

The participatory poverty assessment process in SSA has led to some consensus on poverty trends and the character of deprivation – particularly its severity in rural areas and pockets of urban centres (African Development Bank, 2002; Oduro and Aryee 2003). Issues of contention mainly concern the role of markets and structures of accountability, and shortcomings in the management of a process of social change which hinges on a complex interaction between external and internal environments. In some sub-regions this interaction has produced new phenomena that cannot be contained in the framework of the nation-state – such as the ‘conflict diamonds’ in the West and Central-Southern regions (Luckham *et al* 2001), the oil conflict in the Niger Delta and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Box 2 Africa and Economic Globalization

- Africa’s share of world exports declined from over 3.5% in 1970 to about 1.5% by the end of the 1990s.
- Imports over the same period declined from 4.5% to 1.5% of world imports.
- The decline in Africa’s exports over the last three decades represents an income loss of US\$ 68 billion annually, equivalent to 21% of regional GDP.
- G7 agricultural subsidies of US\$ 350 million per year are 25 times Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows to Africa.
- Debt Service accounted for an average of 18% of export earnings per year between 1997-2002
- Flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are not spread across a broad range of industries but concentrated on high value resource-based industries like oil and diamonds. In the period 1983-2002 59% of total FDI flowing into SSA went just to three countries: Angola (13%), Nigeria (23%) and South Africa (23%), the greater part into extractive activities.
- ODA flows into SSA measured in US\$ have gradually declined from 17.8 in 1995 to 12.7 billion in 2001.
- Remittances by migrant workers during 2002 represent 1.3 % GDP in Sub-Saharan African compared with 2.2 % in the Middle East and North Africa, and 2.5% in South Asia. US dollar values for the 3 regions are 4 billion, 14 billion and 16 billion respectively.

Sources: C. Mark Blackden and R. Sudarshan Canagarajah, World Bank, 2003; ADB 2002; Ratha, 2003: 16.

the 1977 level. Relatively promising signs have been noted since 2004. Africa’s real GDP grew by 4.6 per cent – up from 4.3 per cent in 2003 and the highest rate for almost a decade. The growth performance of the best and worst performers has been fairly stable over the last half decade. 14 African countries have been able to sustain their growth at or above 5 per cent since 1999, a rate that puts them closer to meeting the estimated 7 per cent required to achieve the poverty-reduction goal. Obstacles to further growth included falling world cotton prices and the removal of textile quotas by WTO; and the export of African textiles –which recently grew – is expected to be badly hit. <http://www.uneca.org/conferenceofministers/2005/documents.htm>.

Our concern lies primarily with how national financial burdens – irrespective of their origins which may include debt traps, conflict and war, capital flight – translate into an erosion of entitlements to social goods (health, education, physical infrastructure) and supportive relations at the community and household levels. Different types of intra-household trade-offs can undermine the wellbeing of vulnerable members (women, children, the elderly and the sick) and thereby strain the individual and collective carrying capacity. The advocates of SAPs see adjustment burdens as being short-term. But hidden long-term costs become revealed through the livelihood options for the new generation. We consider these a crucial parameter for bringing the size and character of adjustment burdens into due consideration.²⁸ Issues of accountability should be best considered as multi-layered, stretching from the design of policy to choice of means for implementation, and through national and local machineries of governance and their relationships with households and individuals as actors.

2.2.1 Gender and Adjustment

One of the key premises of structural adjustment policies is the fundamental role of trade for economic growth, irrespective of the location of a country in the global arena or of the social location of specific economic actors (firms, farms, individuals). The architects of this policy package have consistently emphasized its neutrality; their critique stresses the need to query the extent to which policy proposals take full account of local realities. Robinson (2003: 26) points out that the formulation of poverty reduction strategies in Southern Africa tended to follow a set of policy templates that were constructed by mostly external technical inputs; local expertise was rarely called upon. She notes how the pro-poor growth

28. Fitzgerald (2001) constructed a simple model of labour markets to illustrate the linkages between corporate sector contraction under financial crisis and the income of the urban and rural poor in the informal sector in the aftermath of the financial crisis (1997-2000) experienced by what he calls 'emerging markets' in Asia and Latin America. He traces the connection between financial crisis associated with foreign capital flows and the wellbeing of children in the countries affected. He demonstrates that income derived from employment is the main determinant of poor families' welfare since it determines not only the level of nutrition and housing but also, where public services do not adequately extend to the poor, access to health and education. He argues that 'the longer term consequences of lost growth and fiscal debt on child welfare over a life time have practical implications for the ongoing discussion on the new 'international financial architecture'. If Fitzgerald's insights are applied to SSA and note taken of debt services in as a proportion of aggregate GDPs during the last decade; the consequences on wellbeing in SSA will clearly show.

approach advocated by the International Financial Institutions continues to emphasize trade expansion without sufficient sensitivity to the plans devised by the administrations at national, regional and sector levels.

Christiaensen *et al* (2003) reviewed the trends in poverty in Africa through the 1990s by drawing on the better data on households available from the participatory poverty assessment process. They bring to the fore differences of growth performance between countries and the systematic distribution effects that are hidden beneath regional aggregates. Just as there is variation to be seen in patterns of income differentials and patterns of poverty reduction, there is no uniformity in the redistributive impact of growth. They indicate key determinants of this heterogeneity which can be grouped according to types of individual and societal endowments. Access to land and education are noted as significant individual endowments which help households benefit from liberalization. On the other hand an absence of key societal endowments contributes to the shortfalls in poverty reduction. These include: (a) lack of infrastructure causing fragmentation of markets; (b) absence of macroeconomic balance which, combined with institutional shortcomings, causing volatility of policy, and (c) lack of risk management – in respect of environmental and health – exacerbating social instability.

Conclusions drawn from the above diagnosis might be queried given its treatment of the household as a unit of analysis and its omission of the gender and poverty nexus. Gender analysis of adjustment policy began by tracing the diverse ways in which a household-unit responds to economic shocks, and how intra-household allocation – according to local norms of entitlements based on gender, generation and age – can affect its members in different ways. Gender analysis has challenged the concept of the economy embodied in the policy package, for it limits the arena to measurable activities and the circulation of monetized goods and services. It queries the tendency to disregard the non-monetized domain, where the contributions of women and children to household wellbeing are most substantial, particularly in low-income countries.

Most scholars who have adopted the methods of gender analysis of poverty see the necessity for institutional reforms, but they challenge the inbuilt assumption of neutrality. Elson (1994:33-45) was among the first to point out that the package assumed women's unpaid labour and time to be infinitely elastic. Hence the notion of efficiency embedded in this growth package presumes women as a resource to be freely tapped for making up those shortfalls in social services which arise from budget reductions. The lack of appreciation of differences in contexts and in the social structures that mediate reforms has been a main cause for concern.

In most societies, men, women, boys and girls are still allocated different (culturally defined) positions that affect their entitlements and command over resources. A consensus is emerging on the need to view the economy and the household as co-existing and interdependent; and on how their interaction — mediated through social hierarchies — can cause unjust burdens to fall on particular groups with broad-reaching consequences for a society and its future (Truong, 2000).

Studies have revealed how, throughout the world, cutbacks in state services and subsidies meant a transfer of considerable costs to the private sector, which costs are carried primarily by women. Referring to many studies across the developing world Chant (2003) identifies the main mechanism of transmission of burdens as the rigidity of the gender division of labour in the household according to which domestic provisioning is women's main responsibility. Pressure to diversify sources of household income to meet basic needs further intensifies the demand on women's time and evidence of any corresponding rise in the range and intensity of men's inputs to the household and its survival is mostly either insignificant or totally absent. Chant (2003:4) states: 'A spate of research on the grassroots impacts of structural adjustment programmes in different parts of the world demonstrated unequivocally that the burdens of debt crisis and neo-liberal reform were being shouldered unequally by women and men'. Scholars have noted how this can lead to domestic conflict and violence with serious health consequences (Schubertsmidt, 2001).

Box 3 Examples of Gender-based Time Allocation in SSA

- **Uganda:** the female working day is between 12 to 18 hours per day, compared to the male working day of 8-10 hours.
- **Kenya:** Women work 50 per cent more hours than men on agricultural tasks. They work half as many hours as men when agricultural and non-agricultural tasks are combined: 12.9 hours compared to 8.2 hours.
- **Cameroon:** Men have a weekly labour average of 32 hours; women over 64 hours. Even though much of this disparity results from differences in domestic labour hours – 31 for women and 4 for men – a significant difference was also observed in agricultural labour hours: 26 for women and 12 for men.

Source: Blackden and Canagarajah (2003)

In SSA as elsewhere liberalization policies may have created opportunities for those placed in social and cultural positions that already endow them with greater assets and entitlements. The effects of reforms on those who

do not share the same positions and entitlements, and who are embedded in livelihood systems characterized by precariousness (ecologically or socially determined) are severe. The profundity of chronic poverty is noted as being an outcome of both physical marginalisation – being disconnected from the centres of administration, trade and exchange – and social marginalisation in urban overcrowded enclaves (African Development Bank 2002; Oduro, Abena and Aryee, 2003; Innocenti Digest, Nov. 2002, N. 10). Physical proximity to the centre of power does not necessarily imply social and economic proximity. The key issue is therefore whether the poverty alleviation and growth (measured by income) experienced by some countries should be considered as structural, or whether they are merely the outcome of the temporary affects by some external factor.²⁹ Optimism on the nexus between poverty and growth in particular countries needs to be reassessed by distinguishing two types of poverty: poverty caused by a reduction or loss of personal income; and poverty caused by a reduction of social income as the result of a weakened state being no longer able to maintain its social infrastructure for the majority and thus leaving market dynamics to demarcate the separate enclaves of wealth and deprivation.

2.2.2 Gender-Based Entitlements and Agrarian Change

In primarily agrarian societies with a weak state-based entitlement system and a fragmented civil society the most significant entitlements to human wellbeing are based on kinship and community. Land management is one of the key areas where gender-based entitlements and poverty intersects. SSA societies are no exception. Despite differences in access to land based on patrilineal and matrilineal practices women in SSA are usually holders of secondary land rights, according to their positions within kinship systems. They experience tenure insecurity in a variety of ways and also have greater difficulties than their male relatives in exercising their claims.³⁰ Yngstrom (2002:22) suggests women's gender identities

29. For example the recent rising price of oil; also the stabilisation of prices of some agricultural commodities such as tropical wood (owing to increasing demand from China).

30. According to Cotula et al (2004:19) most customary inheritance laws try to ensure that family and clan lands remain within the control of the lineage. The common approach is to prevent passage of land to outside parties. They tell that "the most common inheritance systems in Africa are patrilineal, whereby succession and inheritance of property are determined through the male line, and normally only sons or other males inherit land from the family estate. Daughters are prevented

(as wives, sisters, daughters and also as divorced or widowed heads of households) define their experience of tenure security. She also points out the existence of multiple rights claims of the same parcel of land and warns that the move towards a market-based individualised tenure system has tended to provoke land loss for women. In the codification process, it appears that generally men have been able to manipulate customs in order to exercise greater control over land.

Cotula *et al* (2004) describe how legislative and legal regimes of land across the region contain many tensions between customary practices and the more 'modern' ways of settling land disputes. Where legal pluralism prevails land scarcity and increasing population density combined with market competition has fostered a situation in which 'different actors in different strata of society tend to "shop" for the best institution to represent their own interests'. Since women are usually not represented in decision-making bodies, they have less claims and choices as to which plot of land they may work on (Cotula *et al* 2004: 18-19).

The multi-layered and gender-based control over land has implied that women farmers do face many stumbling blocks to build up sustainable enterprises, for they are also less able than men to make claims on outside resources. Yet they form the backbone of the agricultural sector in this region. A study by Blackden and Bhanu (1999) suggests that on average African women comprise over 70 per cent of all agricultural labour and nearly 90 percent of the labour engaged in food production. A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (Quisumbing *et al* 1995) showed that women do 90 per cent of the hoeing and weeding, 90 per cent of the work of processing food crops and providing household water and fuel wood, 80 per cent of the work of food storage and transport from farm to village, and 60 per cent of the work of harvesting and marketing. A recent study by the Food and Agricultural Organisation makes the point

from inheriting family land. This is explained by the fact that, on marriage, young women go to live in the house of their husband and become part of another family. If her children were allowed to inherit land from her natal family it is argued that there is a risk that the strong community links with the land would become fragmented and weakened. Islamic law does, where applicable, recognise a woman's right of inheritance although her share is usually smaller than that of a male relative". Based on recorded women's life stories Dondeyne *et al* (2003) show how matrilineal customs, which ensure women's access to land through their mother's line, are being eroded due to the practice of patrifocal marriage. Patrifocal marriage is a practice by which the wife moves to live in the home (or village) of her husband. Women who have inherited land from maternal relationships but who marry under patrifocal rules tend to lose control over their land, especially if their home village is too far away to continue the cultivation of it. Their relatives take over the custody of such fields (Dondeyne, 2003: 19).

that this burden is bound to increase due to men's out-migration for paid employment to towns and cities in their own countries or abroad (FAO, 2005). Women now head approximately one in three rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa. With the shortage of labour, land and capital, female heads of household are often forced to make adjustments to cropping patterns and farming systems. These adjustments have resulted in decreases in production and shifts towards less nutritious crops (FAO, 2005).

Furthermore, under the forces of liberalisation and global competition considerable emphasis has been placed on agriculture; therefore land use has become subject to priorities defined according to trade and growth parameters. Such priorities have often bypassed the complexity of the gender bias in land tenure systems and subsequently have not involved women as autonomous farmers. Blackden and Bhanu (1999) found that women still receive less than 10 per cent of all credit reaching small farmers and only 1 per cent of the total credit reaching the agricultural sector. They noted that when women do have access the average loan sizes are smaller than those obtained by men. Oduro and Aryee (2003) confirm the marginalisation of women farmers in West Africa, noting that they are disadvantaged in terms of access to information about innovations because extension agents tend not to target them as beneficiaries. Poor farmers are also constrained by inadequate equipment and inadequate storage facilities, and difficult access to markets and credit (Oduro and Aryee, 2003:36). Given the fact that women make substantial contributions to export crops, Blackden and Canagarajah (2003) suggest that their marginalisation is less a reflection of the gender division of labour than that of gender differences in ownership and control.³¹

Ownership and control affect the command over labour leading to intra-household trade-offs of time allocation and tasks. Women and children's interests – particularly girls' – are often undermined by the arrangements made. A study on the export-oriented tobacco-growing sector in Southern Africa notes that on smallholdings child labour is closely linked to female labour and to peaks of seasonal demands. Women seem less able to demand the help of their male children than they are of their female children – often at the expense of schooling (Eldring *et al* 2000:38). On large estates the forms of child labour are more diverse. Children of farm workers live with their families and provide the 'adjustable labour' during periods of intense

31. For example, Kumar (1994) show that in Zambia women contribute 44 per cent of total family labour to hybrid maize and 33.8 per cent to cotton and sunflowers (in: Blackden and Canagarajah 2003).

activity, and at such times the children become a 'captive labour group'. In other words, men recruit women to increase output and women bring in their children (Eldring *et al* 2000: 87-88). Apart from family labour, child labour also exists in other forms such as forced, bonded and voluntary.³²

Rural livelihoods in SSA have mostly been exposed to the fluctuations of world prices of agricultural commodities, dependency on rain-fed cultivation and unpredictable benefits from seasonal migration.³³ The diversification of sources of livelihood is one of the ways such households have adopted to respond to seasonal and cyclical shocks. When successful, rural commodity production as a means of diversification has provided an opportunity for women to gain control over their income. Yet it can break up the household particularly when unemployed men have appropriated the earnings of their wives (Francis, 2002). Marriage can become an unattractive option for these women. Francis suggests that the prevalence of women-centred households is more common among the poor – stressing multigenerational share of resources and domestic labour, and residential instability.³⁴

There is evidence of women's gains from export crops such as cashew nuts in Mozambique (Kanji, 2004), shea butter in Ghana and Burkina Faso (Harsh, 2001) and from horticulture in Kenya, Gambia and Mozambique (Schroeder, 1996; Dolan, 1999; Goheen, 1996). However, studies also

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32. Forced labour involves children who are taken away from their families and made to work in exchange for food and clothing; it can also involve children who are looked upon as the property of an estate owner and must work for the owner's personal benefit. Bonded labour is when parents' contracts are transferred to the children – whether in working off accrued debt to the estate owner or when they themselves are unable to perform their responsibilities on the estates. The most frequent form of child labour however is voluntary labour where children enter into arrangements with estate owners in order to earn a direct wage as a means in assisting their own families (Eldring *et al*, 2000: 40-41). See Figure 4 in Annex 1 for an average percentage of children 5-14 years old in child labour, by sex (1999-2003).
33. De Haan [2002] points out that during the 1930s falling cotton prices, extremely poor harvests and locus plagues led to high out-migration from Sikasso in Mali. In the 1960s and 1970s low cereal prices and stagnating production contributed to out-migration. The Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s had a strong affect on migration patterns. 1962-1984 was a golden period for migration due to the relative over-valuation of the currency in Côte d'Ivoire and because migrants were welcome there.
34. Francis' findings resonate with Chant's observation on power and agency within poverty evaluation, i.e. individuals may make tactical choices between different material, psychological and symbolic aspects of poverty, and that women who split with their spouses may resist men's support because this may compromise their autonomy (Chant, 2003). In a gender order ruled by male-centred norms, women's choice for autonomy is often correlated with their poverty.

show that such crops are traded through commodity chains in which women are involved as producers and factory workers as well as traders (Carr *et al* 2000; Carr, 2004). Gains and losses may not be spread fairly along the chains – particularly when market information is lacking and trade facilitation services (administration, warehouse space, the organisation of economic groupings) are not in place to ensure fair exchange. Given the aspects of intra-gender differentiation and inter-generational transfer of burdens a careful reading is required to provide a balanced assessment of women’s gains from trade.

2.2.3 Gender in the Informal Sector

Gender dynamics behind agrarian change appear closely linked with the formation of an informal sector of commodity production in urban and peripheral-urban areas. In the face of liquidity constraints, diminishing returns, land constraints and falling remittances, households have then to choose from a variety of livelihood strategies depending on local market conditions and household assets (Barrett *et al*, 2001). For many women home-based work or work in adjacent premises allows them to combine unpaid domestic tasks with paid work. Loosely defined by policy-makers as non-farm activities, it is also classed as ‘informal work’ (meaning casual labour). The informal sector has become increasingly female-led in several countries of SSA (Lanjouw and Feder, 2000). Blackden and Canagarajah (2003) also note that in the year 2000 in SSA at least 84 per cent of women non-agricultural workers were informally employed compared with a figure of 63 per cent for men. They predominate in street vending (90 per cent), home-based work (80 per cent) and home work (80 percent).³⁵

A study by Dipak Mazumdar (2000) shows variations in the growth rate of formal employment – particularly in Botswana, Mauritius, Kenya and Zimbabwe – and concludes that the expansion of the informal sector and growth of non-formal employment is also an effect of the rate of urbanization – in the order of 4.5% per annum 1980-1993 – and not exclusively to the general contraction of the formal sector. Mazumdar (2000: 45) asserts the declining trends of real wage for a majority of SSA countries during the last two decades to be consistent. It would seem that urban livelihoods based on the growth of the informal sector in SSA has been subject to a wide-ranging set of dynamics which certainly include

35. The authors define home-based work as market work carried out from the home or the immediate premises; and home work as work done in the home for an outside business on a piece rate system (subcontract work).

those of gender, agrarian instability, urbanization and contraction in formal employment.

Women's growing involvement in paid work and the informalisation of work in urban and peripheral-urban areas enhance the conflicting demands between domestic provisioning and their work in commodity production – particularly in an environment in which they cannot easily rely on the extended family to alleviate their burdens. Their reallocation of resources and responsibilities at the household level appears to have intensified the practice of child fostering. Child fostering, in West Africa for example, is traditionally a part of the moral economy between urban and rural households in the same lineage (Ainsworth 1992). Each party (*fostering in and fostering out*) has a claim on resources in bad times. Ainsworth emphasizes its prevalence, citing that in 1985 one in five non-orphaned children age 7-14 in Côte d'Ivoire was living away from their natural parents. She notes that throughout the region, fostering children is in fact a short-term strategy linked with the protection and enhancement of household livelihood in the long-term.

Child fostering can take many forms depending on the particular context. In the context of childcare, Ainsworth (1992) notes a growing tendency for urban working mothers to *foster out* their young children (under 6) to grandmothers and other relatives in rural areas for care because it is a more secure and less costly option. Bledsoe and Isiugo-Albanibe (1989: 21, in Ainsworth 1992) record that in Sierra Leone grandmothers actually compete for the care of their grandchildren because of the support benefit involved. By contrast *fostering in* is for home production and usually involves older children – particularly girls – to help out with chores in the host household in return for all their upkeep, possibly including school expenses; though Ainsworth notes that fostered girl children are substituting for domestic work inputs of working mothers and possibly for that of the host household's own children.

Examples of child fostering in the sub-region of Southern Africa reveal that 'widespread fostering can be seen as a conscious strategy to pool the burden of child care more effectively in terms of the availability of resources, shelter, the presence of adults, food and clothing' (Moser, 1999: 13).³⁶ Evidence of changing norms of fostering where economic pressures take hold is also emerging (Dottridge, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2003). As noted by Andvig *et al* (2001: 5) 'the high propensity of African children who move away from their original household is an important

36. Moser (1999: 14) quotes a 1995 study which estimates that 20 per cent of South African children were not living with their parents.

behavioural code developed in a family-based economy. It may generate quite different and often undesirable outcomes when followed in a market-based economy’.

Box 4 Market-based Economy and Child Fostering in Mali and Zimbabwe: Perspectives of the Fosterer and the Fostered

‘In a village in Mali, where Oumo, the first wife of the head of the household runs a restaurant Oumo says that her foster daughters are indispensable for the running of the restaurant and that without their help she would have to hire external labourers. She explains that when her current foster daughters reach marriage age, she will have to look for other relatives to foster’.

Source: Riisoen *et al* (2004: 22).

In the words of a Zimbabwean girl:

‘We want to go to school but I must help uncle in the fields. He said: “you are not my child so I cannot send you to school”’.

Harpus and Marcus (2000:67).

2.2.4 The HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Sexual Entitlements, Health Entitlements and the Burden of Care

Community practices under the conditions of shortfalls in the public health system can place extra burdens on women and children as being both at risk and care providers. Data from Southern Africa – the area worst hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic – highlights pressure on women on two fronts (1) male sexual demands and (2) care (for the self and affected relatives). Originally contracted through sexual contact HIV/AIDS infection has acquired causal dimensions of a social and economic nature. Male sexual demands derived from their privileged cultural position have enhanced the risks of infection for women and children. Studies have shown that women’s health risks stem primarily from the inability to refuse sex or ensure safe sex due to non-negotiable norms about men’s entitlements to satisfaction, both in the context of intimacy and commercial sex (Varga, 1997, Weiss *et al* 2000). With the spread of HIV/AIDS the fear of infection has led men to impose sexual demands on young children – believed to be ‘pure’ (UNICEF, 2003:8). The ‘downside’ of men’s sexual entitlements combined with state failure to respond in a timely manner to the spread of the virus is now known to have allowed the multiple means of transmission further to develop (breast-feeding, blood transfusion and intra-venal drug use) and thus broadened the battle against the disease on many fronts.

Rau points out in his study on child labour and HIV/AIDS in SSA (2002a: 2) that 'girls in particular – whether they are in school, working as domestic servants, trying to earn cash by hawking, or working in overt prostitution – are subject to sexual coercion, manipulation and harassment by men'. In the three countries involved in his study (Zambia, South Africa and Tanzania) there is an acknowledgement that poverty is forcing children to leave school and to take up work under conditions which render them more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. The stigma of the disease is also identified as an important impediment against action. In another study, Rau (2002b) identifies four key clusters of factors influencing children's vulnerability to both HIV infection and child labour. These are: (1) socio-economic inequalities, (2) poverty-induced labour migration and sex work, (3) reduced social cohesion in and across communities, and (4) shocks of failed development. Socio-economic inequality based on gender is reflected in the much higher risks of HIV infection for girls than for boys and men, particularly among low-income groups. Rau emphasizes that poverty and gender are inextricably intertwined and poor women – especially between 12 and 20 years old – are the most susceptible to HIV infection. Poverty also contributes to situations in which people who migrate for work and are away from home face higher risks of HIV infection when searching for sexual comfort through multiple relationships. HIV infection becomes a major drain on the finances and assets of households, communities, businesses and nations; leading in turn to increased poverty. Poverty-induced migration and HIV/AIDS is thus bi-directional. A society's susceptibility to HIV infection and its vulnerability to the impact of HIV/AIDS are determined by the degree of social cohesion *and* by income level. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has come on top of a series of 'shocks' which these countries have received – felt especially by the lower income groups – over the past three decades. For many young people who cannot cope with economic shocks the sale of sex is one way to survive in the difficult circumstances.

Rau's main aim in documenting well-founded evidence for the link between HIV/AIDS infection and child labour in particular socio-economic environments was to stimulate more focussed and effective policy responses. Whiteside (2002) also traces a causal chain between the disease and poverty, showing how it runs from macro-factors (weak health infrastructure due to fiscal discipline) through communities to households being overstretched by the burden of care as well as the reduction of income (arising from adult labour deficit). An individual's immune system eroded by the disease is further weakened by poor nutrition – which may partly be due to a shift of expenditure from food items to medical care

and funerals. Households affected by the disease can experience a rapid transition from relative wealth to relative poverty. In some cases this can mean an average fall of the monthly disposable income by 80 per cent in five years, as shown in a five-year retrospective study of 232 urban and 101 rural AIDS-affected persons in Zambia (Whiteside 2002: 322). Whiteside's findings concur with Rau's on the mutual cause-effect between poverty and HIV/AIDS:³⁷ poverty causes the disease to spread; the disease deepens the poverty of affected households. He warns that whereas the first two decades have seen the burden of HIV/AIDS shifted to the household and community level, in the future the disease will likely shrink national economies, thus reducing the resource base to address the pandemic. Poku (2002: 538) points out that SAPs have weakened a government's ability to act. 'At a time when up to 70 per cent of adults in some hospitals are suffering from AIDS-related illnesses – placing extreme pressure on health services – many African countries have had to cut their health expenditures in order to satisfy the conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB)'.

Faced with what Simms *et al* (2001) have called 'the collapse' of health care, households and communities have handled the pressure of the disease in ways that distort the norms of the 'economy of affection'. Young and Ansell (2003) illustrate how HIV/AIDS-affected households often opt for migration with a differentiated logic between adult and child migration. Adult migration is a common response to the need to increase income for stressed households; but child migration from HIV/AIDS-affected households to non-affected relatives is often a coping strategy to cover the children's material needs given the severe reduction of resources (time, labour, finance). Child migration from non-affected households can also be connected with (care) demands by relatives affected by the disease, in which case they go to help to provide care and cover labour deficit. Ansell and Blerk (2004) show how in Lesotho and Malawi children commonly move over long distances and between urban and rural areas and are generally not consulted or informed about the migration decision, which affects them directly. Difficulty with integration in the host families can sever the ties and children who have opted out of such situations have ended up in institutions or on the street. Eldring *et al* (2000: 54) have documented how in South Africa factors related to poverty, HIV/AIDS-related deaths and lack of access to education have forced children to

37. Citing Botswana with the highest per capita income in Africa and with the highest level of infection Whiteside (2000) points to the high level of income inequality and the spread of HIV/AIDS among low-income households. Lack of income redistribution is an important contributing factor.

seek employment on agricultural estates. In Malawi HIV/AIDS orphans sometimes are bonded to estates' owners because their parents have used their labour as collateral for access to a loan or to pay back a debt. The death of a parent can force these orphans to stay on the estates in order to support themselves and their household (Eldring *et al* 2000: 41).

To recapitulate: the omission and/or inadequate attention to gender relations across a wide spectrum of institutions that mediate the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes has led to a number of social outcomes with particular economic implications for women and children. Overburdened low-income families have resorted to the common practice of 'child fostering' as a temporary coping mechanism. The practice is thus acquiring structural features, affiliated with debts and crisis, which include movement through greater distances – particularly when households have exhausted current livelihood options. Under such circumstances children have to shoulder the burdens of adults – be it *in situ* or through their mobility between different locations.

2.3 Child Development Outcomes³⁸

Chigunta (2002) makes the point that in SSA during the early years of independence (1960s and 1970s) issues of child development and youth were not of great concern to policy makers. Rising problems related to the situation of children and young people have emerged in the context of protracted and profound economic crisis. Those who were born and have been growing up during the crisis period have been particularly affected. Increased child poverty and youth instability are particular outcomes of economic decline and social disintegration; these have generated negative trends. Social marginalisation is one – apparent in the formation of street sub-cultures, youth gangs and youth involvement in militarized conflict (Chigunta, 2002). A web of poverty and violence seems to have been formed, requiring new methods of analysis, assessment and structural support to reverse the situation.

Compared with the rest of the world issues facing children and youth in SSA are of a greater order of magnitude when assessed by population size,

38. For data on child development, and as a bench mark for planning, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18. Sociological notions of childhood are multifarious and depend on economic and cultural contexts in which adulthood, youth and childhood are defined by factors other than years of age.

Source for basic data: UNICEF (2005) *The State of the World Children*. Compiled by Elizabeth Johanna Brezovich. See Annex 1.

indicators of deprivation and government financial capability to redress the situation. With an overwhelmingly large population of young people whose life expectancy is currently little more than 45 years³⁹ there is a high dependency ratio.⁴⁰ Given that militarized conflicts and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are taking high tolls, children and young people are likely to become the ones shouldering future change.

Figure 1.1 shows that SSA – taken as a whole – has the world’s highest percentage of population under age 18: slightly over 50 percent compared with the world average of about 36 percent.

Figure 1.1 Percentage of population under age 18 in 2003 (World Regions)

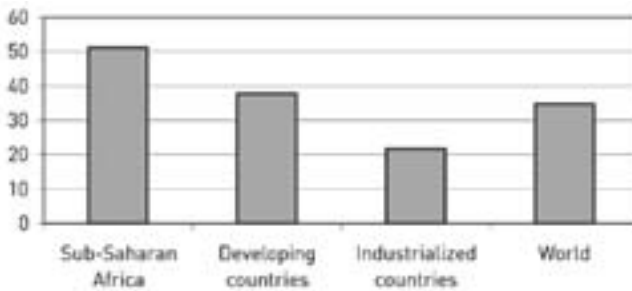
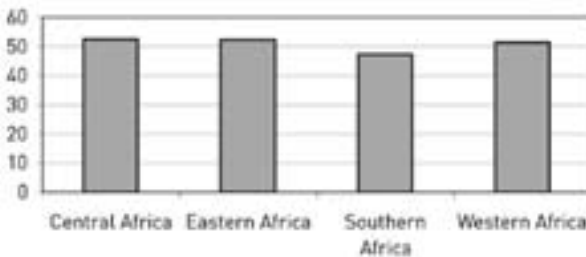


Figure 1.2 gives percentages of the population under age 18 by sub-region. Southern Africa can be seen as having the lowest proportion of persons under 18 and the one sub-region where they comprise less than 50 percent of the overall population.

Figure 1.2 Percentage of population under age 18 in 2003 (SSA)



39. Defined by UNICEF as “The number of years newborn children would live if subject to the mortality risks prevailing for the cross-section of population at the time of their birth”.

40. ‘Dependency ratio’ is that of economically-active household members to those who are economically dependant.

With regard to children under five, SSA is also highest with 17 per cent as against the world average of 10 per cent and about 11 per cent for all developing countries taken together (See Figures 1.3 and 1.4⁴¹).

Figure 1.3 Percentage of population under age 5 in 2003 (World Regions)

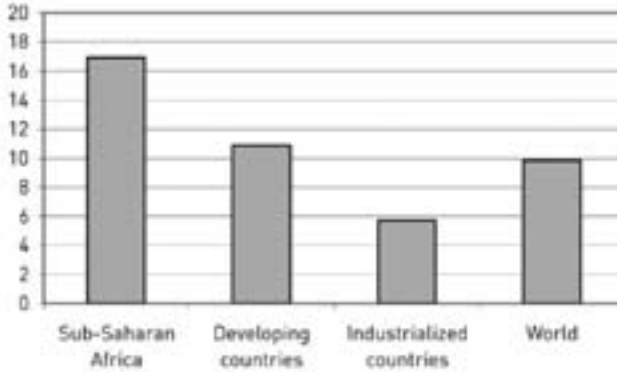
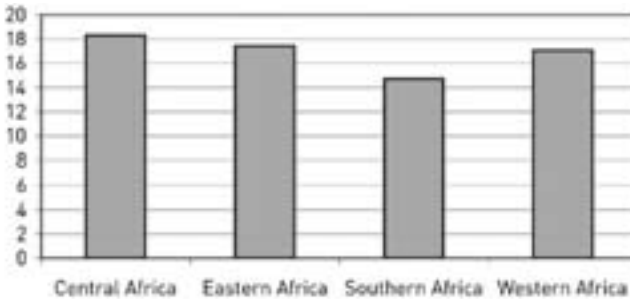


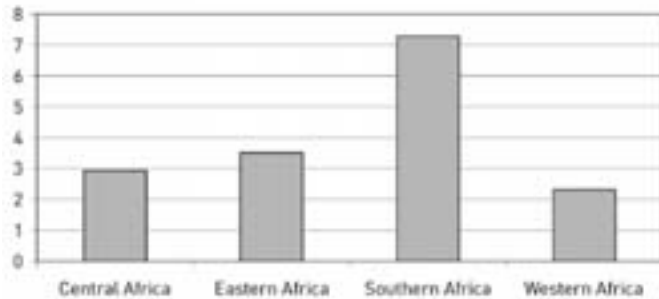
Figure 1.4 Percentage of population under age 5 in 2003 (SSA)



The HIV/AIDS pandemic has hit the Southern African region the hardest: estimates give a figure of more than 7 percent of persons age 0-17 having lost either one or both parents. The figures for Eastern Africa, Central Africa and West Africa – being roughly 3.5, 3 and 2.5 respectively – emphasize Southern Africa’s predicament (State of World Children 2005: 121).

41. Idem.

Estimated Percentage of Children 0-17 who were orphans due to AIDS in 2003



Note: A child orphaned by AIDS is defined as one who has lost one or both parents to AIDS.

Economic crisis and austerity have resulted in drastic cuts in social expenditures worldwide. In SSA the real growth rate in social spending per capita was negative for the period 1980-1993. Data show that in 1980 – prior to adjustment – SSA already had a *negative* rate of about 1 percent. During the period of adjustment this *negative* rate increased to 3.8 per cent and in 1993 plunged to more than 8 per cent (Simms *et al* 2001). The impacts of a protracted squeeze on social spending are revealed in the state of health and education of the young.

Gordon *et al* (2003) produced an assessment of child poverty and deprivation in the developing world using seven indicators: food, water, sanitation, information, education, health and shelter. This showed SSA to have the highest rate of deprivation with respect to four of the seven indicators: water, education, health, shelter. Rural children are more likely to belong to the most deprived groups although urban children in overcrowded areas may face similar problems expressed in different forms. The study found a consistency of gender discrepancies in education in the disfavour of female children; deprivation in health and food shows a mixed picture of gender inequalities.

Compared with the rest of the world SSA made the least progress in cutting the mortality rate of under-fives; and absolute mortality of both the under-fives and infants was twice as high as the world average in 2003 (See Figure 2.1 to 2.5 in Annex 1). Slow progress in cutting the mortality of under-fives in SSA may be the best indicator for the acute situation of child deprivation that results from budget cuts in social expenditures. UNICEF considers the under-five mortality rate as one of the most sensitive indicators of the overall development of a society. The probability of a child dying during its first five years is influenced by the levels of parents' education and literacy, by income and by access to basic social services – general factors of safety apart. All these aspects reflect the level of wealth and social cohesion.

The relationship between the privatisation of health care, poverty and child wellbeing is illustrated in a study on a mission facility in rural Tanzania (the Mukumi health centre). The study shows how the introduction of user fees has acted as a deterrent to health care, raising barriers against care for many poor and vulnerable groups. According to a study by Save the Children (Simms *et al* 2001) one particularly important observation made by several service-providers was the extent to which user fees dissuaded mothers, particularly among the poorest, from seeking what could have been timely treatment for their children. 'Children are arriving at Mukumi in an extremely weakened condition, with very low haemoglobin levels and more than half are dying within 48 hours' (Simms *et al* 2001). The undermined access to health care services has increased the spread of diseases and the vulnerability to infection and death. This is reflected to some extent by the apparent stagnation of the under-five mortality rate.

With respect to education, the Sub-Saharan 'gender gap' in enrolment is greater than for all developing countries, let alone the world average. In Southern Africa the gender gap is the smallest. At primary level the greatest difference is to be noted in Western Africa. The problem worsens at secondary school level with Central Africa the worst performer in this regard. This is in particular stark contrast to the industrialized countries where females are actually enrolled for secondary school at a greater rate than males (see figures 3.1 and 3.2 in Annex 1). Attendance can in fact offer a better measure of educational achievement than enrolment figures. A recent study by UNESCO (2003) provides some reasons for low female enrolment and attendance. At the most basic level intra-household allocations of resources and division of labour have affected girls' entitlements to an education. The costs of education (school fees, books, school uniform, transport) assessed against the limited gains due to gender inequality in the labour markets often discourage parents to release female children for schooling. Furthermore, as described in previous sections, an intensification of women's work in paid and unpaid forms has led to the transfer of burdens onto girls primarily because the women have less command over the labour of their male children.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic further curtails access to education. It has been pointed out that in SSA women constitute 58 percent of those living with the pandemic; and in Southern Africa girls aged between 15 and 19 are infected at rates four to seven times higher than boys – a disparity which is linked to widespread exploitation, sexual abuse and discriminatory practices inside as well as outside the schools (UNESCO, 2003:13).

Armed conflicts also destroy physical and social infrastructures, creating a swelling population of refugees, children with disabilities and child soldiers. According to the same source approximately 100, 000 girls

have directly participated in conflicts in at least thirty countries in the 1990's – as fighters, cooks, porters, spies, servants or sex slaves (UNESCO, 2003:14). School attendance by children with disabilities is generally low. Little attention has so far been given to the gendered experience of being impaired, displaced or in conflict situations and how this may affect children's school attendance in post-conflict situations.

It would seem clear that child development outcomes in SSA after two decades of structural reforms do convey important policy messages of 'lost youth', 'lost human development' and 'lost growth'. Countries in West and Central Africa emerge as the main losers; the HIV/AIDS pandemic may well place Southern Africa on the same track in decades to come. Current data show that deprivation among children and young persons in Western and Central Africa is severe; these data provide an important empirical source for reflection and debates on migration and human trafficking in the region. The tendency to reduce explanations to 'tradition' and 'culture' may well omit important material forces that have spurred trafficking and the proliferation of human rights abuse.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter places the links between poverty and migration against the background of different crisis tendencies in SSA, and shows how economic stagnation and the failure of the adjustment policies have amplified migration as a component of traditional livelihood systems. A balanced account of the nexus between growth and poverty (reduction) cannot bypass an analysis of social relations – to which gender relations are central – for it is these that mediate between market forces and household resources. Local gender norms of entitlements have played a central role in transmitting the burdens of adjustment to women and children. Evidence on the gains from trade through export crops and the expansion of informal production should be reassessed from the perspective of the intensification of female and child labour and the corresponding rewards or lack thereof.

We note that as liberalisation takes hold in a context where a state-based entitlement system is non-existent or dysfunctional for the majority of the people, considerable pressure has been placed on the moral economy and its norms have been altered as a result. A decay of traditional norms is occurring along with the development of new ones under a different logic but based on the same social relations. But the (re)formed norms of entitlements are tending to leave women and children vulnerable to economic exploitation, particularly when they migrate or are temporarily mobile. Constant movement even when hosted by kin can

dilute structures of accountability, particularly under economic pressures. Maltreatment by extended kin and clan members may not be recognized since it occurs within the same framework of 'traditional' practices. The intensified use of the system of child fostering to address labour deficit in domestic provisioning, home-based production and farm production gives a measure of limits to the resilience of the household – a factor for policy consideration. The consequences of what are now referred to as 'split', 'double-rooted', 'fluid' households and elastic household boundaries predicate a dissolution of social cohesion that has implications for poverty transmission from one generation to the next; and this should be taken into serious consideration in poverty reduction strategies.⁴²

SSA societies may well benefit from international cooperation that involves indigenous scholars contributing to a culturally sensitive reading of the gender and poverty nexus and its implications for future generations. A focus on local entitlement rules and their transformation by market forces may help to shed more light on the ways of 'coping' adopted by individuals and groups and how these can entail a transfer of burden further down the line. A possible entry point to a policy dialogue on local entitlement rules, their transformation and their implications for burden sharing, may be found in the policy agenda of 'good governance' and participatory planning. Under such an agenda gender issues in local development should be a sub-theme of decentralisation – a key area being increasingly subject to greater scrutiny.

The aim of decentralisation is to create more responsible local government and ensure more effective service delivery with improved quality and coverage. The outcome so far is varied. Culturally sensitive analysis of structures where gender distinctions and hierarchies have served as a basis of legitimacy for a variety of social arrangements is helpful to explain gender-based entitlement rules (and the associated social dynamics) and thence to consider policy for transformation of them. Rather than framing gender as an issue of 'culture and tradition' or a 'residual' element, efforts to promote social justice must foster constructive dialogues on the relations between a culture and an economy in which gender has a role. To effect change in local regimes of gender power – especially at their interface with global changes – the assumptions about 'gender' embedded in policy and participatory frameworks must be challenged.

42. In the case of South Africa, Moser (1999) points out, 'split', 'double-rooted', 'fluid' households and elastic household boundaries are the legacy of apartheid rule seeking to prevent black migratory workers from bringing their families to cities. This legacy continues to affect racialised forms of violence and poverty in South Africa.