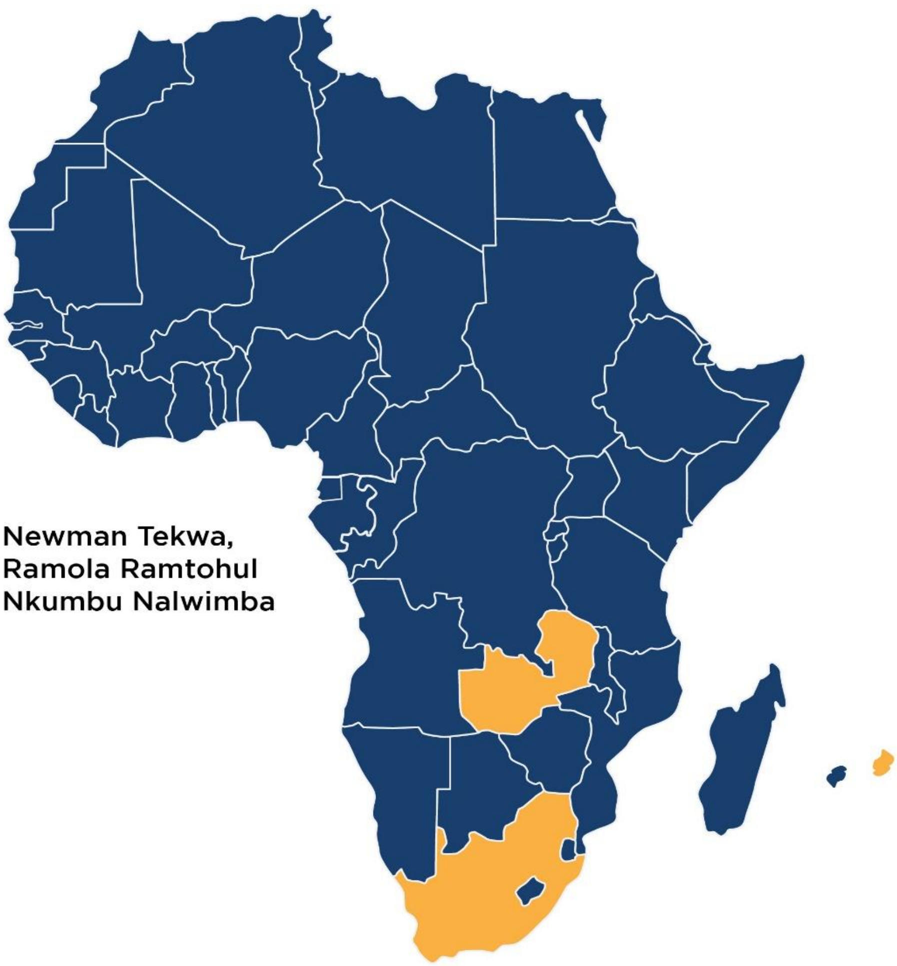
# Africa's Social Policy Trajectories Since the Colonial Period

## An Analysis of the Gender Dimensions of Social Policy in Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia

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GETSPA
Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ........ iv

1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION ........ 1

2.0 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN SOCIAL POLICYMAKING IN SOUTH AFRICA, ZAMBIA AND MAURITIUS ........ 2

- 2.1 Colonial/Pre-independence Period ........ 2
- 2.2 Social Policymaking During the Early Post-Colonial Period ........ 8
- 2.3 Social Policymaking from the Later Post-Independence to the COVID-19 Era ........ 11
- 2.4 Gender Dimensions of Social Policymaking and Their Consequences for Equity and Equality ........ 16

3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL POLICYMAKING IN ANGLOPHONE SOUTHERN AFRICA ........ 19

- 3.1 Underlying ideology, norms and values ........ 20
- 3.2 Actors, Institutions and Interests ........ 20
- 3.3 The Role of the State, Market and Family in Social Provisioning ........ 21
- 3.4 Social and Economic Policy ........ 22

4.0 CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A GENDER-EQUITABLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE POST-COVID-19 AFRICA ........ 22

REFERENCES ........ 25

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The outbreak of the **co**rona**vi**rus **d**isease in 2019 (COVID-19) compelled governments to implement strict measures to curb the rapid transmission of the deadly virus. These preliminary epidemiological measures were composed mainly of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) such as stringent national lockdowns; the closure of workplaces, schools and all public places; a ban on local, regional and international travel; social distancing and 'stay at home' policies that hit hard as hundreds of millions lost their jobs, livelihoods and incomes. Whilst trying to curb the loss of life from the pandemic, governments were called to respond to the emerging livelihoods crises. The speed and efficiency of these public responses depended largely on the depth and breadth of social policies that existed prior to the pandemic. The pandemic created an opportune moment to reflect on dominant frameworks that have guided economic and social policies in the last few decades, particularly the residual social policies focused on minimalist means-tested public support which left many countries completely unprepared for crises of the magnitude induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Focusing on the interface between gender and the social policy, systems that did not address gender were unlikely to address it in times of crisis; the result would be negative implications for women relative to men.

With data gathered mainly through a desk study of archival records, alongside key informant interviews, the purpose of this report covering South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius is to provide:

- a comparative analysis of patterns and trends in social policy over time;
- a thematic analysis of social policymaking over time; and
- a conclusion providing a critique of social policies and possible opportunities for transformation.

The report argues that underlying ideology remains an important factor that shapes social policy making. Different ideological underpinnings from racism, which began during the colonial period, to socialist democratic ideologies in the late 19th and early twentieth century produced different welfare outcomes. Such outcomes cut across gender, which is yet to be accorded much importance. Transformative social policies must pay greater attention to social relations and institutions if gender equality and equity are to become important policy objectives.
Key findings from the research conducted in the three countries indicate that:

- ✓ The historical development of social policies during the colonial period was strongly underpinned by an ideology of racism, with social policy formulation and implementation producing outcomes skewed against indigenous people in the areas of education, health, employment, and social assistance. This was in addition to expropriatory policies meant to dispossess land from the indigenous people.
- ✓ With the advent of political independence, African governments, driven by various imperatives ranging from the traditional beliefs of solidarity to collectivism and risk-pooling, sought to implement policies that would benefit the majority populations marginalised during decades of colonial subjugation. Education and health were expanded for broader access in Zambia; Mauritius had already begun universalising access to social provisioning for its citizens as early as 1815 (see Bunwaree 1994).
- ✓ However, the 1980s and 1990s presented very difficult times for most governments of developing countries in terms of autonomous policy making. National policy making became a contested area and this resulted in the governments of developing countries losing policy space for sovereign economic and social policies.
- ✓ The pursuit of collective interests (democracy) including protecting the welfare and wellbeing of citizens was curtailed mainly by international finance institutions (IFIs), thus eroding domestic political authority and causing the state to roll back social provisioning. While South Africa and Zambia succumbed to external influence by IFIs, Mauritius resisted such pressures and continued to provide universal services to its citizens.

- ✓ The pattern and trends of social policy making highlighted an enduring intersection between gender and ideational processes. Outcomes in the three countries reveal that social policies have been built on deeply embedded cultural assumptions, beliefs and shared social (gender) norms. The influence of these cultural assumptions in the design and selection of social policy alternatives has had negative implications for the welfare of women. With the outbreak of COVID-19, women were more vulnerable to the attendant socio-economic shocks than their male counterparts.
- ✓ Opportunities for transformation could be discerned. In Mauritius, women and girls have been major but indirect beneficiaries of economic diversification and the provision of free education and health facilities. Free education removed the financial barriers to girls' education, leading to a weakening of the dominant patriarchal and male breadwinner ideology. The introduction of publicly funded childcare facilities in Mauritius saw women joining the labour force in increasing numbers in blue-collar and white-collar jobs.
- ✓ The broader welfare strategy adopted by the Mauritian state indicates prospects for gender equitable and transformative social policies, including in the post COVID-19 era. From a feminist political perspective, the implementation of women-friendly social policies, particularly state-provided day care facilities in the form of crèches for infants and day nurseries for young children, remains critical.
- ✓ The universalisation in education, health, social security and care predicated on quality exemplified in Mauritius, and the similar pattern beginning to take shape in South Africa through the introduction of the National Health Insurance, provides promising opportunities for gender equitable and transformative social policies in Africa post-COVID-19.

The reports conclude that the trajectories of social policies across time and within the countries studied reflect either a change or consistency in the underlying ideological persuasions. Contestation by different actors with competing interests within the policy space remains important in understanding changing regimes of value, including the role afforded the state vis-à-vis the market and the family in social provisioning and the implications for gender equality and equity. The potential of social policies to transform social relations including those of gender and race remains critical in imagining African gender equitable and transformative welfare or social policy typologies.

The following key recommendations are proffered.

- ➢ Ideological consistency and stronger African states that can resist external influence in the domestic policy space, as exemplified by the Mauritian case, must be emphasised.
- ➢ The state must assume an elevated role in social policy as opposed to greater reliance on the market for social provisioning. The contrast between social provision in Mauritius and South Africa is an important case in point.
- ➢ A universalistic approach to social policy for education, health, social security and care, predicated on quality, is the best option for African governments. In this regard, the proposed South African National Health Insurance is an important development that should provide key lessons for other African governments.
- ➢ Social and economic policies must be held in tandem to build the important human capital critical for socio-economic development.
- ➢ Transformative social policies need to pay greater attention to social relations and institutions if gender equality and equity are to become important policy objectives in a post-COVID-19 Africa.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The highly infectious COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by WHO on 11th March 2020. With no approved vaccine, treatment or known prophylactic therapies at the time, various governments, including those of South Africa, Mauritius and Zambia, implemented strict measures to curb the rapid transmission of the deadly virus. These preliminary epidemiological measures taken to contain a life-threatening virus comprised mainly non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) such as stringent national lockdowns; closure of workplaces, schools and all public places; bans on local, regional and international travel; social distancing and 'stay at home' policies that hit hard as hundreds of millions lost their livelihoods, jobs and incomes. Whilst trying to curb loss of life from the pandemic itself, governments had to respond to the emerging livelihood crises. The speed and efficiency of these public responses depended largely on the depth and breadth of social policies that existed prior to the pandemic. The interface of gender and social policy in the context of a pandemic was brought to the fore. This was because decades of residual social policies that focused on minimalist means-tested public support left many countries, including those in the developed world, completely unprepared for crises of the magnitude induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. As countries could only expand what they had, systems that did not address gender would not address it in times of crisis, and this had negative implications for women relative to men. It is these gendered contours traced by the pandemic that formed the core of the historical analysis of social policy development in South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius from the colonial era through the post-colonial period to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall objective is to build a gender-equitable and transformative social policy agenda in Africa, post COVID-19.

Based on the experiences in South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius, we argue that ideology remains an important factor shaping social policy making. Different ideological underpinnings, from racism which began during the colonial period to socialist democratic ideologies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, tend to produce different welfare outcomes. These outcomes cut across gender, a subject that has not been accorded much importance thus far. Transformative social policies must pay greater attention to social relations and institutions if gender equality and equity are to become important policy objectives. Part 1 of the report provides a comparative analysis of the patterns and trends in social policymaking in South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius. Part 2 provides a thematic analysis of social policymaking over time. The conclusion presents a critique of social policies, identifies possible opportunities for transformation and makes broad recommendations for transformative social policies for a gender equitable post-COVID-19 Africa.

## 2.0 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN SOCIAL POLICYMAKING IN SOUTH AFRICA, ZAMBIA AND MAURITIUS

While the cluster countries obtained political independence at different times, the comparative historical analysis of patterns and social policy making uses the following periodization: the colonial period; the early post-colonial period; and the late post-independence up to the COVID-19 period. Distinct ideologies, norms and values appeared to underpin social policy making during the different time periods. The result was distinct and remarkable social policy outcomes along racial, ethnic, class, spatial and gender dimensions. Zambia and Mauritius obtained independence in the same decade, 24th October 1964 and 12th March 1968 respectively, while South Africa, the last Southern African country to be liberated, gained political independence three decades later on 27th April 1994. The same periodization is applied to all these countries despite the different forces, actors and interests that their governments had to contend with, particularly since the late post-independence period.

### *2.1 Colonial/Pre-independence Period*

The ideology of racism influenced policymaking during the colonial/pre-independence period in the countries studied. This period covers the time before 1964, 1968 and 1994 for Zambia, Mauritius and South Africa respectively. All three countries have a history of colonialism: British colonization in Zambia; Dutch, French and later British colonization in Mauritius; and British, and later Dutch colonization under *apartheid* in South Africa. Racial discrimination was legitimized and institutionalised during the pre-independence period in all the three countries under investigation (Bond and Malikane 2019: 13). This resonated very well with the words of one social policy expert during key informant interviews:

> *The development of social policy must be located in the history of colonial domination, the historical contours we need to place analysis of social policy in South(ern) Africa.*
> *(Key Informant Interview 31 August 2021, Cape Town, South Africa)*

Evidently, social policy formulation and implementation in Southern African countries was skewed, with colonial regimes in the region exercising racial segregation towards indigenous people (Fanon 2004). A fuller contextually and theoretically informed cultural analysis of the origins of the racial and ethnic composition of the cluster countries is provided in specific country reports. Pre-independence, the three cases under study can best be described as white minority dominated, with the ideology of race influencing dominant values and norms that underpinned and framed social policy development. The dominant minority are the Franco-Mauritians, who make up only 2 percent of the population in Mauritius, and the white population of European descent, who constitute less than 2 percent and slightly above 10 percent of the total population in

Zambia and South Africa, respectively (Mariotti 2009: 18; Taylor 2006: 9). Social policies in land and agrarian reform, education, work and employment, social assistance and health care during the pre-independence period were illustrative of the period's dominant racial ideology.

European settlement in Southern Africa, like elsewhere, was marked by colonial racial domination and supremacy, which went hand in hand with land expropriation (dispossession). In South Africa, after the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, a series of oppressive, discriminatory and expropriatory laws were enacted and implemented, largely against black Africans. The most notorious with effects lasting to date is the Natives Land Act 27 of 30$^{th}$ June 1913 (Republic of South Africa 2019: 15; Terreblanche 2010: 5). The Natives Land Act of 1913 allotted only 7 per cent of the land in South Africa to the 5 million black Africans, while the rest, 93 per cent of the land, was given to 349,973 white British and Dutch settlers (Budeli et al 2008: 22; RSA 2019: 15). As part of the concomitant racial agrarian policies, the Act outlawed sharecropping on white farms in addition to prohibiting blacks from renting farms from whites (Terreblanche 2010: 5; Budeli et al 2008: 22; RSA 2019: 15). Similarly, in Mauritius, in the absence of a native population, the French settlers became the first landowners, permanent settlers and citizens on the island, and they allocated to themselves large tracts of land as early as 1721. This racial group, despite making up only 2 percent of the population, became the wealthiest and the largest land-owning elite in Mauritius. Driven by an ideology of racism, early European settlement in Zambia in the 1890s saw the displacement of indigenous Africans from highest quality soils to make way for white large-scale commercial farms (Taylor 2006: 8). The greatest land alienation from the natives occurred in the Southern and Central provinces where large tracts of land were appropriated from the Tonga people, and where over 60,000 land-alienated indigenous Zambians were moved to reserves set up from 1928 until 1930 (Taylor 2006: 8; Simson 1985: 9-10). Subsequent racial agrarian reforms in 1936 saw not only deductions in the final price paid for products purchased from indigenous Zambian farmers, but also lower prices for their maize relative to those paid to European farmers (Simson 1985: 10). No efforts were made to develop indigenous agriculture during the pre-independence period, with the minority British retaining control over land extending into the 1950s during the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland[1] (Taylor 2006: 4). The reserved blocks of land in Zambia were never occupied, as the anticipated white immigration to Northern Rhodesia did not materialize. The result was that over 50 percent of the unoccupied land returned to indigenes (Simson 1985: 10).

Worth reiterating were subsequent policy developments under apartheid rule that were meant to give effect to its racial ideology of segregation and *separate development* in South Africa. The

[1] In 1953, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) joined two other Central African territories, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi), to form a three-nation political and economic unit known as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

promulgation of the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1976 led to the designation of 10 small areas as homelands for black Africans, infamously known in South Africa as the Bantustans, categorised according to state designated ethnic groups (Butler et al 1978; Phiri 2020: 27). While Bantustans ceased to exist on 27 April 1994, their legacy of racial land inequalities and politicization of ethnic identity persists. Unlike in pre-independence South Africa and Zambia, the exploitative Franco-Mauritian monopoly over land encountered significant challenges from the 1870s to the 1920s following a fall in the price of sugar, a shortage of labour and ensuing financial constraints. Although not state-driven, the period saw the sub-division of sugar estates, known as the *grand morcellement*. The process involved the parceling out of plots of lower quality land to Indo-Mauritians who had saved sufficient capital. The size of plots varied from hundreds of acres in the rural areas to an acre in the urban regions (Alladin 1993). *Grand morcellement* reduced the number of sugar plantations during the late 19$^{th}$ century, altering the distribution and ownership of land as it generated a new group of Indo-Mauritian small planters and landowners who moved up the social ladder to become middle class successful farmers, civil servants and professionals (Meisenhelder 1997). By 1921, 93 per cent of planters on the island were Indo-Mauritians who owned 35 per cent of the land under cultivation, producing mainly sugar cane (Bowman 1991; Allen 1998). These developments marked a significant transformation in the country's agrarian structure. The acquisition of land as well as ownership of property formed the basis of power in Mauritius. Unlike in South Africa where land ownership still remains in hands of a minority group, the transfer of land to the Indo-Mauritians broke the monopoly of land ownership and power that were historically held by the minority Franco-Mauritians (Alladin 1993).

Similar patterns were evident in educational policies that were underpinned by oppressive and segregationist racial ideologies. The colonial government in South Africa spent very little on black education in the rural areas. The result was that of all the racial groups in the country, Africans had the poorest quality of education (Bond 2007: 201; Mariotti 2009: 4). Similarly, in Zambia the colonial government spent most of its resources on the needs of white settlers while neglecting those of the indigenous population. Thus, by 1935 there was not a single secondary school in Zambia, with the colonial authorities arguing that the territory was too poor to afford one (Andreasson 2001: 190). While missionaries operated many primary schools, by 1942 only 35 indigenous Zambians were enrolled in secondary education (Taylor 2006: 9). Thus, racial colonial policies deprived indigenous Zambians of access to education for decades (Mhone 2014). The same could be said for Mauritius prior to 1936. Only children from the upper and middle classes had access to primary education, whereas children from working class backgrounds worked in the fields to supplement the low wages of their parents (Joynathsing 1987). As with South Africa, colonial education was segregated along racial, ethnic and gender lines, although a few Indo-Mauritians and Creoles had access to schooling (Bunwaree 1994). To give effect to the racial policy of *separate development,* during apartheid, there were different educational legislations and syllabuses for different racial groups (Gradin 2019: 554; Adam 2020: 3). These included the Coloured Persons Education Act 47 of 1963 and the Indian Education Act 61 of 1965, in addition to the Bantu Education Act, 1953. The latter was considered the most invidious, designed to ensure indigenous people could not pursue higher education (Adams 2020: 3). Thus, the gap between white and black education widened dramatically because of the suppression of black education by the racist apartheid regime (Mariotti 2009: 13). This gap was exacerbated by gross inequalities in public funding between white and black schools (Dass and Rinquest 2017: 143). The highest quality education in South Africa was reserved for whites, the second highest for Indians, and then Coloureds in that order, with black Africans receiving the lowest quality (Adams 2020: 3).

By contrast, during the same pre-independence period Mauritius began to take a different path in its education system. Education for girls started as early as 1815 when Governor Farquhar approved the establishment of a free day school for all children in Port Louis, irrespective of class, ethnicity, sex or religion (Bunwaree 1994). This measure opened up an avenue that was previously not accessible to girls. General primary education was jointly provided by the government and the English and Catholic missions (Ramdoyal 1977). As early as 1834, there were 40 primary schools in the colony of Mauritius, and Ordinance No. 6 of 1856 provided for primary education for children of the poor (Hein and Hein 2021). Mass primary education therefore began in the late 1850s. As a precursor to universal publicly funded education, by 1880, 93 primary schools were either run or subsidised by the government. The percentage of the government's budget devoted to education rose from 1.3 per cent in 1880 to 9.4 per cent in 1930 and 11.1 per cent in 1955 (Hein and Hein 2021). Indo-Mauritians considered education a major avenue for social mobility. A wide school building programme was undertaken to ensure that all children could receive primary education, and universal primary education became available during the early 1960s (Joynathsing 1987). A divergence in the patterns and trends in social policymaking of the three cases under study could be discerned as early as the early 1800s.

Regarding work and employment, the historical development of social policies during the pre-independence period was linked to the discovery of diamonds around 1886 in South Africa, the location of vast deposits of copper around the 1920s in Zambia and the establishment of sugar plantations as early as the 1720s in Mauritius (Budeli et al 2008: 18; Simson 1985: 11). While South Africa's and Zambia's early colonial economies were predominantly mineral based, that of Mauritius was predominantly agrarian. Racial ideology and supremacy influenced the South African and Zambian colonial governments' preference for migration, as a social policy instrument to deal with a skilled labour shortage, rather than the training of the indigenous population for skilled work that was required in the mines (Seeleib-Kaiser 2019: 268). In South Africa, the policy drew an influx of Europeans, mainly of British origin, to do much of the skilled work in the mines (Budeli et al 2008: 18). Similarly, in Zambia, the 1920s saw the migration of some 40,000 skilled white settlers, mainly from South Africa, to work in the country's copper mines (Simson 1985: 11). In Mauritius, the rapid expansion of sugar cultivation due to a vast sugar market in the British Empire for Franco-Mauritian planters saw a sharp rise in the demand for cheap labour. As Mauritius had no indigenous inhabitants, the demand was met through the importation of cheap, exploitable servile labour – initially slaves from mainland Africa and Madagascar, and following the abolition of slavery, Indian indentured labourers (Allen 1999).

With indigenous Africans providing much needed cheap labour in the mines in South Africa and Zambia and in sugar plantations in Mauritius, came gendered labour market policies underpinned by an ideology of racism (Bond and Malikane 2019: 13). In Mauritius, prior to 1936, sugar plantation workers were paid meagre or 'starvation' wages for long hours of work; they had no income during old age. Racial discriminatory wage legislations in Zambia guaranteed high wages for white mineworkers, equivalent to what they could have earned in South Africa, whilst earnings for indigenous Africans working at the mines were kept very low (Marriotti 2009; Simson 1096). At that time, an estimated 6,840 whites and 44,000 Africans worked in the Zambian Copper belt (Simson 1985: 11). The racial Wages Act of 1925 in South Africa allowed for wage discrimination by race, class and sex of workers, laying the foundation for the persistent racial and gender wage inequalities to date (Jordaan and Ukpere 2011: 1094; Mariotti 2009: 4). Subsequently, a series of racial labour market laws were enacted in South Africa and Zambia to produce a racially exclusive industrial labour market system that favoured the dominant minority white population (Gradin 2019: 55). The racial policy of 'job reservation' in South Africa and Zambia allowed colonial governments to declare certain occupations reserved for whites, as companies in the two countries were organised on the same basis as other British colonies (Mariotti 2009: 6; Naidoo et al 2014: 2). Thus, the colour bar or 'labour market apartheid' was established that gave rise to a discriminatory racial allocation of low skilled and low paying jobs to non-whites, particularly black Africans, and high skilled and high paying jobs to emigrant white workers of European origin (Simson 1985: 11; Marriotti 2009: 6). The racial discriminatory pass laws implemented in South Africa and Zambia specified where and when black Africans could search for employment, whilst white male workers were at liberty to move around or change jobs at will (Naidoo et al 2014: 2; Budeli et al 2008: 21). The pass laws and the resultant migrant labour system saw around two million indigenous African men in South Africa circulating as migrant workers between their rural homes and urban areas, whilst in Zambia 60% of able-bodied men were working away from home within or outside the country (Simson 1985: 9). Alongside residential segregation and concerted efforts at preventing long-term African settlement in urban areas, the absence of able-bodied men in rural areas resulted in their impoverishment, which undermined the rural economy, thus creating stark rural/urban spatial inequalities (Simson 1985: 11).

In the area of social assistance, South African social policies were framed around eradicating the 'poor white problem,' as the Union government was discriminatorily concerned with reducing poverty among whites rather than with any other racial groups in the country *(Key Informant Interview 31 August 2021, Cape Town South Africa).* Existing social assistance programmes, which included old age pensions, state maintenance grants, disability, foster child and care dependency grants, exemplified a welfare state programme that was geared towards serving the white minority rather than the entire national population (Seekings 2007a cited in Phiri 2020: 11; Seekings 2006: 3). Statistics indicate that less than 1 per cent of indigenous black African children accessed the state maintenance grant during the pre-independence period (Patel and Plagerson 2016: 39). Despite the old age pension being extended to black Africans in 1944, the level of benefits was much lower, suggesting a racially tiered and discriminatory colonial welfare system (Woolard et al 2011 cited in Phiri 2020: 11; Bond 2007: 201; Macdonald 1953: 140). Similarly, in Zambia during the initial years of colonial rule, there was no functional social policy, and social protection programmes were strictly for metropolitan citizens employed in the colonies or in white settler communities. The welfare system favoured people of European descent over other racial groups. In essence, the social policy was characterized by racial classification, whereby Europeans had better quality social services compared to indigenous Zambians (Noyoo 2007). In the absence of any state support, Africans formed their own welfare societies throughout the copper belt through the Federation of Welfare Societies that were outside state structures (Simson 1985: 14). No old age pensions were provided in Mauritius prior to 1936. Sir Mackenzie Kennedy, the British governor of Mauritius from 1942 to 1948, introduced pensions for sugarcane agricultural labourers, as well as cooperative societies for small sugarcane producers to assist each other (Joynathsing, 1987: 123). The Poor Law Ordinance of 1902 provided for the payment of social assistance to impoverished households. In 1951, the term 'public assistance' was used in place of 'poor law'. According to Seekings, the Mauritian welfare state has its origins in the establishment of non-contributory old-age pensions in 1950 (Seekings 2011). A social security system was established and a policy for non-contributory pensions was set up for Mauritians over 65 as well as for widows' pensions and relief for orphans. In 1953, the age at which women were entitled to receive pensions was brought from 65 to 60 years; the same was done for men in 1967. The Family Allowances Ordinance, introduced in 1961, provided for the payment of child allowance to heads of households in families where there were at least three children and earnings did not exceed a prescribed ceiling (Gopaul et al 2021). These developments marked the beginning of universal welfare provisions under colonial rule in Mauritius, distinguishing the country's patterns and trends in social policy from the rest of the cluster countries.

The provision of healthcare in South Africa during the pre-independence period was racially segregated, differentiated and highly fragmented (van Rensburg 2012: 83). The Public Health Amendment Act 57 of 1935 which extended public healthcare to indigenous blacks through the creation of a Native Medical Service was characterised by stark inequalities in the distribution of medical staff and quality of service (van Rensburg 2012: 83). Thus, the colour print was branded on healthcare provision in South Africa that continued to be fragmented, racially unequal and pluralistic (van Rensburg 2012: 83). Similarly, colonialism deprived Zambians of social economic development, and for several years, the indigenous population were overlooked and denied access to health care, education and other types of social protection (Mhone 2014). By contrast, while before 1936 there was virtually no provision for medical care for the poor in Mauritius, in 1951 the state first increased expenditure on public health, including malaria eradication, which led to a significant decline in infant mortality. Fully equipped hospitals were built to cater for the sick (Joynathsing, 1987: 123). Although Mauritius did not have a free national health service at that time, medical expenses were controlled, with some groups including labourers and public servants receiving free health care (Titmuss and Smith 1968). Public expenditure in the health sector as a percentage of the budget of the colony of Mauritius rose from 2.2 per cent in 1860-1870 to over 7.7 per cent in 1915 and an average of almost 9 per cent in 1940-1960. Consequently, in contrast to the social policymaking in the two other case studies, the island of Mauritius was set on a path towards universal access to health care prior to independence (Paturau 1988).

### *2.2 Social Policymaking During the Early Post-Colonial Period*

The early post-colonial period ushered in an era for newly independent governments to implement policies that would benefit the majority populations who were marginalised during decades of colonial subjugation. These efforts took the form of various imperatives of modernisation, nation building, and the traditional beliefs of solidarity, collectivism and risk-pooling that constitute the foundation of African family norms – also referred to as ubuntu/hunhu in other literature. These values were central in shaping early post-colonial nationalists' thinking about social policymaking. In the Zambian context, Marxist-Leninist communitarian norms and values that were intended to establish equity on the social front and remove the racial segregation imposed by colonial social policy regimes were quite central (Kpessa and Be´land 2013). With nationalist/revolutionary agendas as key drivers of development, social policymaking took a people-centered approach. Post-colonial governments of Zambia and Mauritius, the first two countries in the cluster to gain political independence, had a relatively longer period of autonomous social policymaking without much pressure from external actors.

For Zambia, this period stretched from 1964 to the late 1970's and into the early 1980's (Mhone 2004). Based on notions of unity and slogans such as 'One Zambia, One Nation,' modernist narratives of development constituted the nationalist, state-building project of Zambia's first President, Kenneth Kaunda (Larmer et al. 2014). The era is often described as the most progressive period of economic and social development in Zambia, with positive outcomes in the form of stability, nationhood and human development (Noyoo 2010). Using incomes generated from the high prices of copper, the nationalist government of Kenneth Kaunda implemented various social services for equitable distribution of national resources (Scoot 1980). As colonialism had deprived Zambians of social and economic development, heavy state intervention in the economy was aimed at improving the conditions of living of the common people. Pragmatic social policies were formulated, and development projects were targeted at providing social amenities to places that were severely neglected by the colonial government (Noyoo 2010). Reforms in the education sector constituted the key driver in the country's quest for development. As a new nation emerging from a long period of colonial discrimination, post-independence Zambia aspired for self-governance and equalising access to education irrespective of race, tribe, ethnicity or religion (Mubanga 2018). As the post-colonial nation faced a critical challenge with trained manpower, education was tasked with a social policy objective of responding to national development imperatives. Additionally, the nationalist government tasked the same social policy instrument (education) with the objective of promoting a sense of national identity and unity. Therefore, the UNIP government of Kenneth Kaunda embarked on an ambitious programme of constructing secondary schools in every district of the country in addition to vocational schools, teacher training colleges, and the University of Zambia (UNZA), built in 1966 (UNESCO 2009). The Educational Reforms of 1977 provided nine years of basic education with school fees in secondary schools abolished in the same year. Similar reforms were witnessed in the health sector. Huge investments in health increased the number of hospitals four-fold from only 19 at independence in 1964 to 42 by 1990; rural health centres increased from 187 to 661 during the same period (CSO 1992: 42). These improvements were largely government funded activities made possible because of a thriving economy in the immediate post-independence period. This was an era of autonomous social policymaking that set the country on an inclusive development path.

While Zambia sought to build people-centred social policies, Mauritius' political leaders of the early post-independence period, heavily influenced by Fabianism, proceeded with consolidating the Mauritian welfare state. Distinct from the people-centred social policies of Zambia, Fabianism is an ideology that seeks to advance the principles of democratic socialism through gradual democratic reforms (Meisenhelder 1997). The guiding and underlying principle of much of the social policies adopted by post-colonial Mauritius was to ensure a form of justice for all citizens by making basic needs and services available to them. Given that Mauritius has a plural society, the main focus was on an ideology of redistribution in order to prevent ethnic polarisation and conflict. An export tax introduced by the first post-independence Mauritian government generated significant revenue needed for consolidating the country's welfare state. This was in addition to encouraging public-private partnerships for capitalist economic growth and establishing a modern welfare state (Meisenhelder 1997). Thus, the origins of Mauritian shared values were established, and a foundation laid for a common ideological connection critical for cementing the population into a stable community. This made it easier for successive Mauritian governments of the post-colonial period to bring different stakeholders together to cooperate in the interest of the country, with concomitant progressive social policy outcomes. The governments made conscious efforts to construct a welfare state modelled along the lines of northwest European democracies. Thus, Mauritius has been described as one of the 'robust social states in the South' and 'an exceptional case in Africa' (Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea 2016: 51).

The welfare policy adopted by the Mauritian state highlights an attempt to provide universal entitlements to social and welfare benefits, namely health, education, pensions as well as food and housing subsidies (Razavi and Pearson 2004). With a strong emphasis on social spending which accounts for nearly 11 percent of the country's GDP, the Mauritian welfare state provides free universal medical care and education, universal non-contributory pensions as well as targeted forms of social aid in the form of social welfare. This is in addition to free transport for pensioners and students, a range of social security benefits for vulnerable groups, moderate rent, subsidised social housing, subsidies on staple food products including rice, flour and bread, as well as cooking gas (Gopaul et al. 2021). Free education to all Mauritian citizens led to a rapid accumulation of human capital (Frankel 2010). As noted by Razavi and Pearson (2004: 19), Mauritius is among the very few countries that aspired to construct an inclusive social democratic welfare state. This further strengthened state legitimacy, with social policy being one of the key components of the Mauritian development model (Bräutigam 1999).

Unlike in Zambia and Mauritius, in early post-colonial South Africa an autonomous policy space for nation-building was short lived. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the main policy platform for the newly independent ANC government, was a people-orientated development strategy in which the state played an active role in restructuring the economy for the benefit of the majority African population (Terreblanche 2016: 1). Ideologically, the RDP was located to the left of centre, resembling the 'social democratic capitalism' of the Scandinavian countries (Terreblanche 2016: 6). Unlike Mauritius, the dilemma that faced the new ANC government was that the South African population hardly qualified to constitute a society with shared values, and lacked the common ideological connection critical in cementing the population into a stable community (Terreblanche 2016: 6). This resonated very well with Thabo Mbeki who, whilst he was deputy president of the ANC government, observed that:

> *South Africa is a country of two nations. One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous.... the second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor* (Mbeki 1998).

The nation building agenda in South Africa remained a mirage as the country remained too deeply divided to consider itself a nation (Gumede 2020: 3). Due to ideological power struggles within the ruling ANC government; policy influence from self-interested pressure groups, particularly South Africa's business sector; and other external actors including the World Bank and the IMF, the RDP was abandoned within two years while the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy was adopted as the country's guiding macroeconomic policy. Adopted in 1996, barely 2 years after independence, GEAR was prepared by a group of 15 neoliberal conservative economists with representatives from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA); the South African Reserve Bank; the Departments of Finance, Trade and Industry; and the World Bank (Terreblanche 2016: 4). According to Terreblanche (2016), the move by the ANC government from the RDP to GEAR constitutes an ideological quantum leap from the left (represented by RDP) to a position far right of centre on the ideological spectrum (Terreblanche 2016: 4, 6). Regarding State-market relations, GEAR represented a shift from the role of the state to a privileging of the function of markets in social provisioning; from a culture of collectivism to individualism and limited state intervention characteristic of neoclassical economics (Gumede 2019: 4). Subsequent social policies in South Africa outlined in the next section are illustrative of this position.

### *2.3 Social Policymaking from the Later Post-Independence to the COVID-19 Era*

Neoliberalism presented very difficult times for most governments of developing countries in terms of autonomous policymaking from the late post-independence up to the COVID-19 era. As if made from the same mould, and irrespective of contextual imperatives, similar patterns and trends in social policy making emerged across the developing world with very few exceptions. Neoliberal globalisation saw the ascendancy of the self-interested capitalist agenda of dominant global finance capital which was to mould economic policies of pliable governments within the developing world. National policymaking became a contested area, with the result that governments of developing countries lost the autonomy needed for sovereign economic and social policies (Patnaik 2011: 8; Patnaik 2003: 1, 5). This loss of autonomy and control over their policymaking spaces had negative implications for the proper functioning of the state and its articulation and pursuit of collective interests (democracy), including protecting the welfare and wellbeing of its citizens (Patnaik 2011: 8). Multinational corporations and international finance institutions came to exert greater influence in domestic policy spaces, with neoliberal globalization representing an attack on the nation state and its capacity to control events within and beyond, particularly policymaking practice and the governance of policymaking spaces. The results, which manifested in the patterns and trends in social policymaking, reflect the erosion of domestic political authority and the rising influence of foreign capital in policymaking in developing countries (Noruzi and Azizi 2011: 1).

In Zambia, the social policy achievements of the first decade of independence did not last long. From the mid-1970s, a crisis set in following the decline in the prices of copper on the world market, high oil prices, rising global economic protectionism, mounting external debt, and changes within the political economy. Ill-advisedly, the government adopted the Structural Adjustment Programmes in 1983 to restore economic prosperity. These policies resulted in a negative impact on the social policy environment and economic growth (Tembo and Chisanga 2008). Thus, with the rise of neo-liberalism in the early 1990s, Zambia's implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) had adverse impacts on the social sector. Since then, the Zambian government has been implementing various neoliberal initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the lives of vulnerable people, with social protection being identified as central to social policy. Interventions in social assistance have included the targeted household cash transfers, school feeding programmes and food assistance (World Bank 2012, GRZ 2011; Goursat & Pellerano 2016). However, although the government implemented several social protection programmes, a very small number of the poor and vulnerable have been able to escape the poverty trap (World Bank, 2016). Social protection (cash transfer) programmes in Zambia are largely donor-driven and the main actors are the German Development Agency (GTZ), DFID Zambia and UNICEF. Many of these social protection efforts, especially those initiated and implemented by international donors or NGOs, have not been upscaled or institutionalized. With the outbreak of COVID-19, Zambia's emergency cash transfer that targeted the poorest was mainly donor-driven and intermittent. This can partly be explained by the lack of fiscal capacity of the Zambian government to fund social assistance programmes from the public purse. Health financing has been an ongoing challenge in Zambia. In the 1990s the Zambian government tried to introduce social health insurance, but this failed due to lack of political will, poor design and inadequate interest from the global community. In the early 1990s, the out-of-pocket health costs became very high and had spatially differentiated adverse impacts, particularly in the rural areas (Michelo 2018; GRZ 2017). Despite repeated abolition of user fees, direct payments have been maintained in both rural and urban areas. The majority of Zambia's population is not covered by health insurance because of the high cost involved (Michelo 2018).

Neoliberalism represents the dominant ideology underpinning the framing of social policies in Zambia, exemplified by a strong inclination towards market rather than the state for social provisioning. For example, instead of an agrarian input subsidy policy that embraces all the poor, the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) caters for only farmers who can raise 25% of the cost of the input. Similarly, employee benefit schemes and salaries are pegged on profitability to the employers. In the past decade, although Zambia experienced positive economic growth rates, poverty rates have remained stubbornly high. The high rate of economic growth has not been in tandem with poverty reduction, suggesting a disconnect between the country's economic and social policies. Economic growth has been accompanied by high inequality, hence the insignificant impact on poverty reduction. The Gini coefficient has remained high over the last 20 years, increasing from 0.60 in 2010 to 0.69 in 2015, much higher than Africa's (0.43) (CSO 2015).

The pattern and trend in social policymaking in South Africa represent an oxymoron when juxtaposed with the country's economy which is characterised by deep seated structural challenges (Terreblanche 2016: 4). Following the abandonment of the RDP and the adoption of GEAR as the country's macroeconomic policy, the pattern and trend of social policymaking in South Africa became decidedly liberal, with a scaling down of the state's role in the economy and society. The country's social policies in education are illustrative. In 1996 the government introduced the 'No Fee Schools Policy' (NFSP), a key social policy intervention in the education sector, to reverse the apartheid regime's racially discriminatory public funding in education and achieve fiscal parity (Matola and Yusuf 2009: 1). Assessing the effectiveness of NFSP, Matola and Yusuf (2009: 4) argue that the education system in the country remains characterised by a two-tier system comprising privileged and well-resourced schools, mainly white and Indian, alongside poor and disadvantaged schools catering for black and coloured children. Spatially, many of the 'no fee schools' are located in the former Homelands, which represent the poorest provinces in the country. This tends to reinforce a spatial segregation in addition to exacerbating the race and class divide within the country. While ⅗ of all schools in South Africa are currently designated as 'no fee schools', equitable access to quality education remains elusive for the majority of learners in the country. Post-independence educational policies in South Africa failed to universalize access to quality education although the state channeled huge resources towards historically black schools (Maziya et al 2003: 28). Despite up to 15 per cent of South Africa's national budget being devoted to public education annually, racial, class and spatial inequalities persist largely due to the disconnect between the country's social and economic policies (Bond and Malikane 2019: 12). These challenges became magnified during the COVID-19 period.

South Africa's post-independence government expanded the breadth (coverage) but reduced the depth (generosity) of social assistance programmes it inherited (Patel, Knijn and van Wel 2015: 364). This suggests continuity without change despite the government's signaling a break from the racial and exclusionary social system of the colonial and apartheid period. The country's tax-funded social assistance programme is unmatched on the continent. It comprises a mixture of 5 (five) main state assistance grants, namely the State Old Age Pension (SOAP), the Child Support Grant (CSG), the Care Dependents Grant (CDG), the Foster Care Grant (FCG) and the Disability

Grant (DG), in addition to the Older Persons Grant (for persons above 75 years), the War Veterans Grant (WVG) and the Grant in Aid, making a total of eight (8). To signal a continuity from the pre-independence period, the CSG recently changed its name from the former racial State Maintenance Grant (SMG) that targeted white children living in poor white households and which largely excluded black African children (Phiri 2020: 52; Zembe 2013: 39). The only shortcoming of the State assistance grants in South Africa relates to their neoliberal targeting, means testing and the exclusive focus on the 'deserving' poor, reminiscent of the colonial and apartheid social policies (Phiri 2020: 8; Leibbrandt et al 2010: 37; Samson et al 2006: 1). Despite covering 18 million people, almost ⅓ of the total population, and accounting for 3.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the country's social assistance system can be described as inequality reinforcing. South Africa's social security can be described as a two-tier system. The first is the employment-based social insurance system and the second a state provided social assistance serving the majority of South Africa's poor, particularly rural and urban black households (Phiri 2020: 51; Leibbrandt et al 2010: 22). Additionally, the country's social provisioning is underpinned by a liberal assumption that 'able-bodied' South African women and men can support themselves through wage work, a premise reminiscent of the pre-independence period (Bhorat and Kohler 2020: 6; Phiri 2020: 51). This perception endured into the post-independence period, despite high levels of unemployment and heavy dependence on state assistance grants. It can safely be argued that South Africa's social security is characterised by the 'missing middle,' a demographic group not covered by the targeted state assistance grants (Adesina 2020), as revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain critical of the country's neoliberal targeting, means testing and exclusive focus on the 'deserving' poor within its social assistance programmes (Phiri 2020: 8; Leibbrandt et al 2010: 37; Samson et al 2006: 1).

In contrast with Mauritius, the apartheid dual structure remains a permanent feature of health provisioning in South Africa (Mhlanga 2021: 484; Pauw 2021: 1). This is evident in the country's high quality, privately provided health care system vis-à-vis a poor quality, publicly provided one. The former comprises a network of private health care providers operating within a network of private hospitals whose clients are covered mainly by private medical insurance, while the latter is under-resourced, providing very poor service to the majority, mainly black African population (Pauw 2021: 1). Thus, a two-tier healthcare system comprising the insured vis-à-vis the uninsured, rich/poor, high and expensive/poor quality cheap health service, white/African, private/public health care dichotomy is being reinforced (Conmy 2018: 3; Leibbrandt et al 2010: 46; Mhlanga 2021: 484).

A point stressed by one key informant in an interview summarised the pattern and trends in social policymaking in South Africa:

*South Africa represents what Richard Titmuss described long back indicating that social policies specifically designed for the poor produce poor outcomes.*

*Key Informant Interview, 06 September 2021. Pretoria, South Africa).*

Unlike Zambia, South Africa and most developing countries that experienced a rolling back of the state with the introduction of SAPs, Mauritius resisted liberalisation pressures from the Bretton Woods institutions, protecting its welfare state spending. Social policy making patterns and trends in the late post-independence up to the COVID-19 period in Mauritius suggest that the state remained true to its traditional concern for social justice and for playing an active role in shaping its social policies (Dommen and Dommen 1999: 18; APRM 2010). There existed and continues to exist a strong conviction that the state has the moral responsibility to mitigate negative socio-economic effects for severely affected citizens. Norms of solidarity between grassroots movements, "labour and the poor resisted substantial cuts in social expenditure and access to social assistance programmes seen as a sacrosanct right of every Mauritian citizen" (Phaahla 2014: 4). The welfare state, especially universal welfare provisions in Mauritius, is a highly sensitive terrain that political leaders dare not tamper with for fear of losing electoral support. This is because, in addition to the detrimental effects that any such tampering with the welfare provisions would have on the vulnerable, there is the risk of social unrest in the country resulting from ethnic and communal tensions.

To illustrate, the social policy of free education in the public sector was maintained. Unlike South Africa, the Mauritian state continued to play a more significant role in the management of the education sector in line with its development needs. The provision of universal education has been a key guarantor of social cohesion and economic progress in the country (UNDP 1994). The Education Act of 2005 extended the age for compulsory schooling from 12 to 16 years. Apart from free transport from home to school and back, students in primary school also benefit from free textbooks and students from low-income families benefit from social security grants. When concerns about poorer children receiving substandard education in state primary schools were raised in 1991, the Master Plan for Education set aside special assistance for low-achieving schools. In January 2019, tertiary education towards an undergraduate degree was declared free in public institutions, thereby widening access to university education in the country. Despite maintaining a universal education policy at all levels, the Mauritian education sector is characterised by serious problems of regional and ethnic inequalities. This is partly explained by intergenerational poverty and lack of cultural capital with regard to children from poor families. Many come from the creole population who are the descendants of Africans who were brought as slaves, many of whom failed to save and buy land. Free health services represent the most significant achievements of the Mauritian health system; they have led to a significant improvement in life expectancy, maternal and child health, as well as a successful population control programme (African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) 2010). Medical care, including medicines, is free at all points of access.

The Mauritian state continues to provide generous social security payments for the elderly and civil servants, price controls, and subsidies on certain basic food products such as rice and flour. More recent subsidies were introduced for cooking gas and free public transport for pensioners, the disabled and students. In 2009, the government introduced unemployment benefits covering a maximum period of one year. The quantum of the benefit is 90 percent of the salary of the first quarter, 60 percent of the second quarter and 30 percent of the last two quarters (APRM 2010). The success of these economic measures and the ensuing economic progress of the country helped to foster a greater sense of belonging nationally and to strengthen the meaning of citizenship among the local population.

### *2.4 Gender Dimensions of Social Policymaking and Their Consequences for Equity and Equality*

The pattern and trends of social policy making in South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius highlighted the enduring intersection of gender, ideational processes and social policy. Social policy outcomes in the three countries reveal deeply embedded cultural assumptions, beliefs and shared social (gender) norms upon which social policies have been built. From a feminist perspective, the unexamined cultural assumptions about women and the family and what are perceived as problems of the day are an integral part of the prevailing institutional culture. These deeply embedded cultural assumptions have had a profound influence in the design and selection of social policy alternatives and the construction of welfare regimes (Beland 2009: 258). The way policy problems are presented or framed subtly represents the 'politics of needs interpretation' (Beland 2009: 568), which remains critically important from a feminist social policy perspective. It is the social construction of social policy problems, particularly institutional cultures and their gendered welfare outcomes, that have often eluded conventional social policy analyses, although they are a key concern in feminist social policy scholarship. We will draw some illustrations from the cluster countries.

During the pre-independence period, colonial racial labour market policies had implications for the intersectionality of gender and race. The categorization of 'worker' was equated to 'male'; this led to the establishment of male-dominated formal labour markets and workplaces that discriminated against women for centuries (Sinden 2017: 37; Quanson 2014: 1). Within the colonial migrant labour system, women bore the burden of adjustment to male migration (Simson 1985: 50; Bond and Malikane 2019: 13). In the South African context, a gendered analysis of the apartheid system reveals a persistent alienation of women from the labour market as they faced multi-faceted discrimination in the workplace (Quanson 2014: 1). While a few white women were employed in the formal sector, particularly in administrative positions, an intersectionality of gender and race resulted in black women occupying the least paying jobs as domestic workers and cleaners relative to their white counterparts, a phenomenon that has persisted to date (Sinden 2017: 37; Msimang 2000 cited in Quanson 2014: 5).

The gender situation changed insignificantly post-independence. In 2020, only 45.3 per cent of Mauritian women of working age were in the labour force, in contrast with 69.3 per cent of men (Statistics Mauritius 2021a). With a narrowing gender employment gap, the South Africa Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) stood at 48.9 percent in 2018 (SA-TIED 2019: 2), whereas Zambia's FLFP was as low as 28.6 percent. In a study comparing FLFP of single and married women in Mauritius, Gaddis and Ranzani (2020: 10) note that single women's participation in the labour force matched that of men, estimated at 78.3 per cent in 2018. By contrast, labour force participation for married women was much lower, estimated at 52.6 per cent in 2018. The labour force participation gap between Mauritian married and single women expands early in women's life cycle, reaches a peak at around age 25 and virtually closes after age 55, as Mauritians approach the eligible age for the basic retirement pension (Gaddis and Ranzani, 2020: 10). This pattern indicates that social reproductive roles that come with marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and care prevent women of childbearing age from (re)entering the labour market due to prevailing social and gender norms that assign care and reproductive work primarily to women (World Bank 2017). As highlighted in an interview with the South African Chairperson of the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE):

> *The closing gender employment gap obscures more than it reveals. The relatively high FLFP comes at a cost for women. The South African patriarchal labour market is insensitive to the other needs of women. Women need to go to maternity but what we find is that employers are not sensitive to the dynamics of maternity leave and what happens during maternity leave.*
>
> *(Key informant interview 02 September 2021. Pretoria, South Africa).*

Marxist feminist social reproductive theory illuminates the constraints that women face in labour market participation, which force them to give up their jobs to become mothers, caregivers and homemakers— an aspect that mainstream labour market economists are yet to recognise (Sinden 2017: 42; Leibbrandt 2010: 7; Phiri 2020: 44; Tekwa and Adesina 2018: 58). Even in Mauritius where the welfare state is relatively developed, it has not led to gender equity and women continue to bear the burden of domestic duties. Gender sensitive employment policies need to ensure that women enter the labour market in a manner that takes cognisance of their social reproductive roles (Sinden 2017: 38).

Another indicator of the gendered nature of social policies within the labour market relates to gender pay gap. Gender pay gap (GPG) refers to differentials in the average hourly pay of men and women at the same occupational level (Brynin 2017: 7). It is an important reflector of the value that society places on gender equality, and it has implications for the welfare of women and their families (Bosch 2020: 6). In Mauritius, the GPG stood at 29.7 per cent, with women's average monthly incomes in 2019 pegged at Rs 19,100, whereas the figure was Rs 25,100 for men (Statistics Mauritius 2020). For Zambia, GPG was found to be greater than 30.0 per cent. While South Africa had made considerable progress in narrowing the gender wage gap from 40 per cent in 1993 to 25 per cent in 2019, the equal pay for work of equal value clause in the EEA of 1996 is yet to become a reality for South African women (SA-TIIED 2019: 2; de Villiers 2019). The 20th CEE Annual Report revealed that the gender wage gap is highest at the top-positions, suggesting that few women in South Africa occupy these highest earning posts in the labour market (SA-TIED 2019: 1). The *Business Insider* reveals that the gender pay gap among female and male top earners in the South African labour market is as wide as 39 percent, highlighting the prevalence of gender occupational segregation and stratification (de Villiers 2019). The South African labour market is characterised by a "'sticky floor effect,' a pattern that keeps a certain group at the bottom of the job scale, predominantly occupied by female, particularly black African" (SA-TIED 2019: 1). Commenting on factors underlying the persistently high gender wage gap in South Africa, the Chairperson for the Commission for Employment Equity said:

> *South Africa by its very nature is a patriarchal society that rates males higher with women regarded as second-class citizens. That norm has sort of penetrated the labour market, becoming a pattern in which men are paid much better than females and get more opportunities for appointment than females.*
> *(Key informant interview 02 September 2021. Pretoria, South Africa).*

Reflecting the intersectionality of race and gender, the high skills tier of the South African labour market is characterised by high demand for white male, white female, though to a lesser extent, and a low skill tier characterised by an over-supply of African males and females (Gradin 2019: 553; Naidoo et al 2014: 4; Klaveren et al 2009: 45). The 20th CEE Annual Report 2019/2020, which traces segregation across six occupational levels, reveals that vertical gender-based occupational segregation begins to narrow from the fourth level (Skilled level) down to the unskilled category (CCE Report 2019/2020). At senior management level the share of males relative to females is as high as 64.7 per cent to 35.3 per cent, rising to 75.6 per cent males to 24.4 per cent females in top management (CEE Report 2019/2020). The intersectionality of race and gender reveals that only 5.4 percent of African females are in top management relative to 52.4 per cent white male representation, despite the latter constituting a mere 4.9 percent of the total labour force in South Africa (CEE Report 2019/2020). Thus, despite significant strides in FLFP recorded since independence, occupational segregation remains black and white, with blacks, particularly African females, systematically segregated into low skill low paying occupations (Gradin 2019: 554; Leibbrandt et al 2010: 6; Wilson 2021; Sinden 2017: 37; Quanson 2014: 1). Similarly, Mauritian women are highly underrepresented in leadership positions in the business sector as well as in parliament, local and district councils. As of August 2022, only 20 per cent of seats in parliament were held by women, and only 3 out of the 24 ministers are women. There was also no woman mayor in the five municipalities in 2020. Only 11.9 per cent of working women were heads of business compared to 18.6 per cent of men in 2020 (Statistics Mauritius 2021a). In the civil service, the proportion of women in senior positions was 39.7 per cent as at 2020 (Statistics Mauritius 2021a). These statistics indicate that there is a significant gender gap at the level of positions of power and authority in Mauritius. Although men and women have the same rights, gender inequity remains a reality.

The South African social assistance programme tends to reinforce gender cultural norms as women constitute the major recipients of the Child Support Grant (CSG), with only 2.3 per cent being male (Bhorat and Kohler 2020: 4). From a feminist perspective, the emphasis on child poverty exemplified by the CSG in South Africa has an unintended effect of separating the welfare of children from that of their mothers (Lister 2006: 315). Rather than challenging the gender culture, the CSG seems to reinforce gender division of work (Bhorat and Kohler 2020: 4). Missed by policy makers is the interrelationship between women's poor labour market position and children's poverty, on the one hand, and the failure to use social policy to facilitate parents' (in practice mothers') ability to combine paid employment and family responsibility, on the other (Lister 2006: 315). The child poverty discourse, dominant in South Africa's social assistance programme, obscures the persistent gendered nature of care giving (Lister 2006: 315). This stems from the ideological underpinnings of liberalism that generate a perception that the family and the market are outside the realm of state action. This perception leads to a shifting of the burden of caring to families, and women in particular, without financial recognition for their time nor effective support from the state. It is a situation that is reminiscent of the colonial/apartheid era (Hassim 2004: 14).

## 3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL POLICYMAKING IN ANGLOPHONE SOUTHERN AFRICA

This section provides a thematic analysis of social policymaking and the gendered welfare outcomes across the three countries under investigation. It discusses the four dimensions: ideological underpinnings; the relative external influence in policy making; the importance of the state, markets and family in social provisioning; and the link between social and economic policies.

### *3.1 Underlying ideology, norms and values.*

Cognitive and normative underpinnings remain critical in comparative analysis of social and economic policies, both spatial and temporal (Braun and Capano 2010: 2). The preceding section revealed both resilience and change in the ideologies, norms and values underpinning social policies across time and space. Ideology is defined as the system of ideas and ideals that form the basis of social and economic theory and policy, whereas values are the embedded cultural characteristics that define what is important, meaningful and desirable in a given context or at a specific point in time (Corvellec and Risburg 2010 cited in Corvellec and Hultman 2014: 357; Corvellec and Hultman 2014: 358). The social policy trajectory in South Africa reflects changing ideology and regimes of value, beginning with a racial ideology during colonialism (1910-1947), which intensified under apartheid's (1948-1994) segregationist and exclusionary policies that privileged whites over the black majority in all spheres of life, from land, through education, to health, work and employment, and social assistance. These policies succeeded in their primary objective of creating a racially ordered society and economy in South Africa with no historical parallel (Naido et al 2014: 2). The post-independence period in South Africa reflects a high degree of ideological inconsistency demonstrated by the ANC government, which began from the 'left of centre' (RDP 1994-1996) and moved to the 'right of centre' (GEAR adopted in 1996). This trajectory reflects a liberal ideology underpinning much of the country's social and economic policies. The primary objectives were severely undermined as the country remains too deeply divided to consider itself a nation (Gumede 2020: 3; Mbeki 1998). Zambia's social policy began with a racial ideology that privileged the white minority during the colonial period and changed to a people-centred ideology during the early post-independence period. This was short-lived, for the country adopted neoliberalism during the late 1970's and early 1980's. Subsequently, the primary objective of social policy was severely compromised, as much of the social and economic gains of the early post-independence period were reversed with the changing regimes of value. Contrastingly, the ideological consistency and unchanging regimes of value that have characterised Mauritius from the early 1800s are worthy of note. From a Fabian or social democratic ideology adopted at independence in 1968, successive governments of post-colonial Mauritius made a conscious effort to construct a welfare state modelled on democracies of northwestern Europe. This is partly explained by shared values and a common ideological connection—qualities that are missing in the South African context with its varying social policy outcomes (Terreblanche 2016: 6).

### *3.2 Actors, Institutions and Interests*

The ideological shifts or resilience observed above can be partly explained by the contesting interests of domestic and external actors, particularly the policy space ceded to the latter. The ideological inconsistences of post-independence South Africa and Zambia reflect the role played by both domestic and external policy actors. In the South African context, the World Bank got the moniker ‘knowledge bank’ due to its excessive influence in the country’s social and economic policies, from reforms in the water sector to a willing-buyer-willing-seller market-based land reform and the social assistance grant system (Bond 2000: 109). The weak funding capacity of the state in Zambia and its heavy reliance on donor funds exposes the country to external policy influence (Kayula 2020). Heavy donor reliance manifested itself once more during the country’s emergency response to COVID-19 (Pruce 2021). While 43% of Zambians needed assistance, only 16% reported having received help. Pre-COVID-19 social protection interventions were spearheaded by the state but funded in large part by global voluntary organizations. Contrastingly, in Mauritius the ideological consistency and resilient regimes of value reflect the country’s resistance to both external and domestic influence, particularly the IMF and the World Bank, despite the risk of rolling back its welfare gains. Thus, the country has managed to protect its social and economic gains whereas many others have experienced a reversal of such achievements.

### *3.3 The Role of the State, Market and Family in Social Provisioning*

As welfare regimes are defined as “the combined and interdependent ways in which welfare is produced and allocated between the state, market and families” (Esping-Andersen 1999: 34-35 cited in Mkandawire 2016: 1), the prominence of each of the three institutions is determined by the dominant ideologies underpinning policymaking. It is argued that the minimalist role afforded the state in welfare provisioning in South Africa has persisted from the colonial through the apartheid to the post-independence period. Serving only a minority white population, minimalist state sentiments existed throughout apartheid rule as the government of the day was opposed to the development of a welfare state (Bond 2014: 6). With the exception of the proposed universalist National Health Insurance (NHI), the market is regarded as the source of welfare, and state assistance is available only for those unable to work, a category that encompasses children, the elderly and the disabled (Bhorat and Kohler 2020: 6; Phiri 2020: 51). Under conditions of extreme poverty, such a system tends to produce gendered welfare outcomes as the state’s absence in welfare provision shifts the responsibility to families, particularly women. Zambia transitioned from a small state serving only the white population to an enlarged state during the early post-independence period when the government of Kenneth Kaunda sought to expand service provision to every Zambian, including those in the neglected rural and black urban areas. The role of the State in social provisioning was subsequently reduced to a minimum when liberal policies were adopted during the late 1970s and early 1980s. By contrast, in Mauritius the social democratic values underpinning social policies saw the establishment of a comprehensive welfare state in which the state plays a prominent role in social provisioning. The resultant welfare outcomes on the economic and social front are incomparable in the region and beyond, particularly for Mauritian women.

### *3.4 Social and Economic Policy*

Transformative social policies highlight the importance of keeping in tandem social and economic policies. While the colonial and apartheid governments succeeded in deploying their economic policies to advance the welfare of the white population, for instance in the education sector, this has not been the case with post-independence governments. The shift of resources from the former white schools to historically disadvantaged ones has not produced the desired social policy outcomes due to the disconnect between the country's social and economic policies. This is reflected in the high unemployment rates and the skills mismatch that characterise the country's labour market. Zambia's impressive progress during the early post-independence period highlights the consciousness of Kaunda's government regarding the need to invest the country's copper revenues in building human capital for social development. This demonstration of responsiveness appears to have been lost since the late 1970s when the country adopted liberal policies. A key lesson for South Africa and Zambia is to link their social policies to their growth policies through investing in human capital to expand the tax base. Keeping its economic and social policies in tandem and resisting pressures to cut social expenditure, the Mauritian welfare state currently accounts for nearly 11 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Gopaul et al 2021). Economic diversification in Mauritius led to job creation, which should be an important lesson for Zambia. Mauritius' investment in the health and education of its population improved the quality of human capital critical for sustained economic growth. Such policies have contributed to the embourgeoisement of the Mauritian working class and those previously deprived, especially of free health and education. State interventions in the management of education brought the sector in line with the development needs of the country, a key lesson for South Africa.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A GENDER EQUITABLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE POST-COVID-19 AFRICA

The trajectories of social policies across time and within the countries studied reflect either a change or consistency in the underlying ideological persuasions. Contestations by different actors with competing interests within the policy space remain important in understanding changing regimes of value. These include the role afforded the state vis-à-vis the market and the family in social provisioning and the implications for gender equality and equity. The potential of social policies to transform social relations of race and particularly of gender remains critical in imagining African gender equitable and transformative welfare or social policy typologies. While the three countries under investigation were initially patriarchal, through the adoption of social policies underpinned by liberal ideologies, South Africa and Zambia persistently remained patriarchal. This tends to reinforce inequalities and differentiation among the sexes in social security and employment, as well as in access to health, education, and productive resources including land. Mauritius has historically been a family oriented and patriarchal society with women considered as minors and men traditionally considered as the heads of household and breadwinners. With the diversification of the economy and provision of free education and health facilities, women and girls turned out to be major and indirect beneficiaries, especially of education. The dominant patriarchal and male breadwinner ideology hitherto limited girls' access to higher education while favouring an investment in boys' education and careers. Once the costs of education were taken over by the state, the financial barriers to girls' education were removed. Women subsequently joined the labour force in increasing numbers, whether in blue-collar jobs in the EPZ or in white-collar jobs. The welfare state and social policies adopted by the Mauritian state have contributed to the empowerment of women and girls in the country. Although the state remains to some extent guided by a patriarchal ideology, progress for women is a by-product of the broader welfare strategy adopted by the state. Based on the extent to which social policies can be a vehicle for transformation of inequitable social relations, countries can be classified in a continuum, from strongly patriarchal gender regimes or typologies, to which Zambia and South Africa belong, to female-oriented gender equitable and transformative welfare regimes that are underpinned by ideologies of gender equality. Mauritius would be classified as a moderately female-oriented gender equitable and transformative welfare regime. The Mauritian welfare state, albeit patriarchal and guided by a male breadwinner ideology, indirectly benefitted women and girls, leading to a different gender profile in the country relative to its comparators. We acknowledge that a great deal of work still needs to be done on African gender equitable and transformative welfare typologies, particularly the kind of variables that can be used in clustering countries into different groups.

The broader welfare strategy adopted by Mauritius indicates that prospects for gender equitable and transformative social policies remain possible, including in the post COVID-19 era. From a feminist political perspective, the implementation of women-friendly social policies, particularly state-provided day care facilities in the form of crèches for infants and day nurseries for young children, saw a growing number of young women taking up employment outside the home, especially in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ). The EPZ enabled women and girls with minimal education to gain some form of financial autonomy, save money and delay marriage. These women also were no longer totally dependent on male heads of households, whether they were fathers, brothers or husbands. Increased female economic independence or autonomy can reduce gender-based violence, which is one indicator of gender inequality. Overall, women and girls were major beneficiaries, especially of health and education, which contributed to their eventual economic empowerment. Thus, Mauritius has been praised for its exceptional growth and fast progress which enabled it to achieve high standards of living and earned the island the labels 'Mauritius Miracle' and 'African success story' (Bräutigam 1999; Frankel 2010). By 1996, Mauritius had reached the top of the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), joining high-income countries of the West. In July 2020, the World Bank put Mauritius on its list of high-income countries.

The following recommendations are proffered for change based on the analysis of the current state of social policy and the possibilities it presents for implementing gender equitable and transformative social policies in a post COVID-19 Africa:

- Ideological consistency and stronger African states that can resist external influence in the domestic policy space should be prioritised, as exemplified by the Mauritian case.
- The state must assume an elevated role in social policy as opposed to greater reliance on the market for social provisioning. The contrast between social provision in Mauritius and South Africa are important cases in point.
- A universalistic approach to social policy for education, health, social security and care, predicated on quality, is the best option. In this regard, the proposed South African National Health Insurance is an important development to continue tracking.
- Social and economic policies must be held in tandem to build the important human capital critical for socio-economic development.
- Transformative social policies need to pay greater attention to social relations and institutions if gender equality and equity are to become important policy objectives in a post-COVID-19 Africa.

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