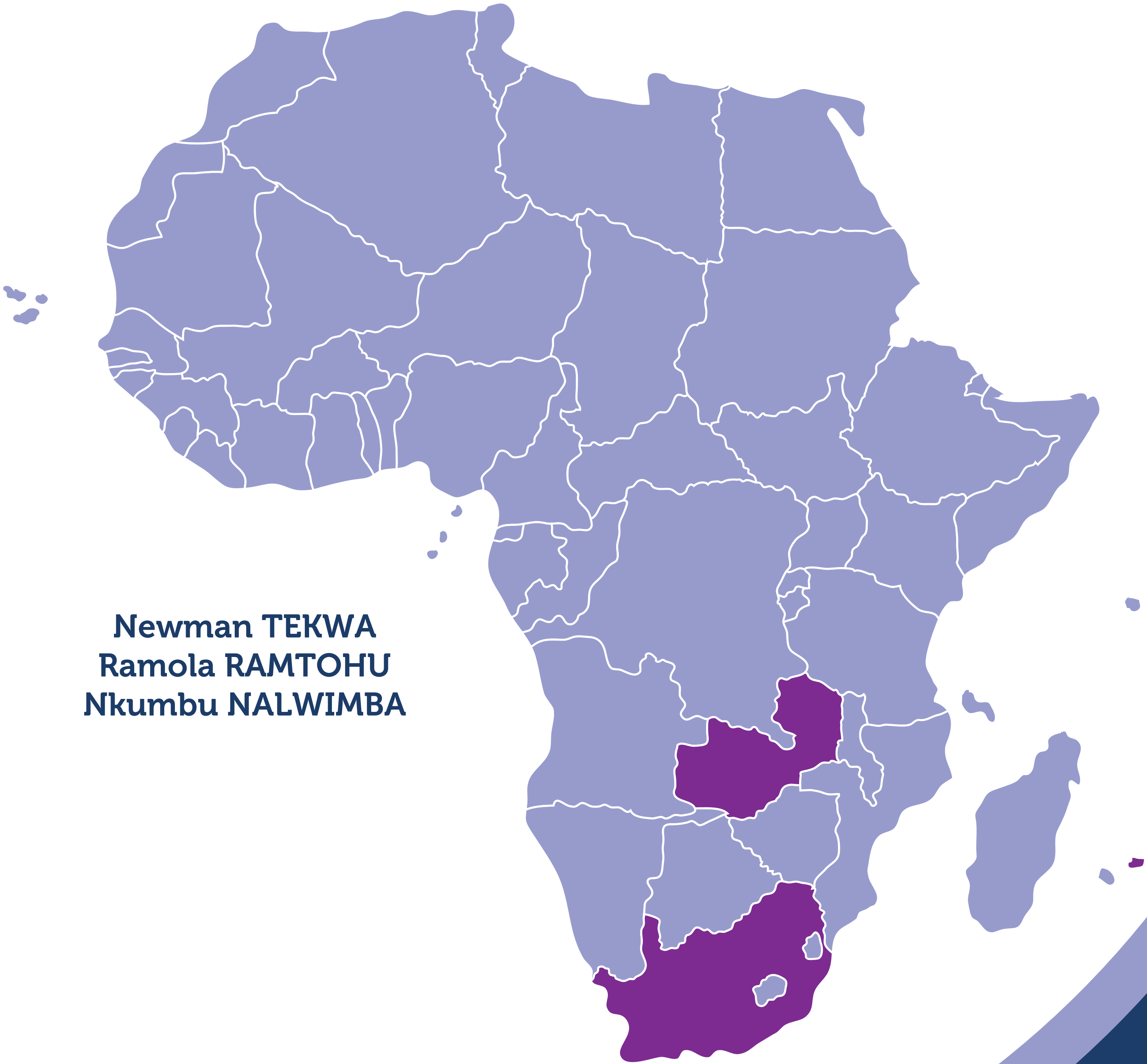
Africa's Social Policy Trajectories
The Case of South Africa, Mauritius and Zambia



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GETSPA
Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Africa

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The GETSPA technical papers are peer-reviewed research reports published by the Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Africa (GETSPA Project). GETSPA is a pan-African project with the mission to transform—through research, advocacy, networking, documentation, and constituency-building activities—the discourses, approaches to, and cultures of social policymaking and implementation in Africa.

This technical paper synthesises findings from research carried out in South Africa, Mauritius and Zambia under GETSPA. The original country reports are also published as GETSPA technical reports and are available for free download at getspa.org.

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Executive Summary

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease 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; and 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. In terms of 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 was continued 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 policymaking. Different ideological underpinnings from racism, which began during the colonial period, to socialist democratic ideologies in the late 19th and early 20th 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 üwere 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 trends of social policymaking highlight 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 report concludes 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; and social distancing and 'stay at home' policies that hit hard as hundreds of millions lost their livelihoods, jobs and incomes. While 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 19th and early 20th 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 one of the report provides a comparative analysis of the patterns and trends in social policymaking in South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius. Part two 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 periodisation: 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 periodisation 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 colonisation in Zambia; Dutch, French and later British colonisation in Mauritius; and British and later Dutch colonisation under *apartheid* in South Africa. Racial discrimination was legitimised and institutionalised during the pre-independence period in all the three countries under investigation (Bond & Malikane, 2019, p. 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 the 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 two per cent of the population in Mauritius, and the white population of European descent, who constitute less than two per cent and slightly above 10% of the total population in Zambia and South Africa, respectively (Mariotti, 2009, p. 18; Taylor, 2006, p. 9). Social policies in land and agrarian reform, education, work and employment, social assistance and healthcare 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 30th June 1913 (Republic of South Africa, 2019, p. 15; Terreblanche, 2010, p. 5). The Natives Land Act of 1913 allotted only seven per cent of the land in South Africa to the five million black Africans, while the rest, 93% of the land, was given to 349,973 white British and Dutch settlers (Budeli et al., 2008, p. 22; RSA, 2019, p. 15).

As part of the concomitant racial agrarian policies, the Act outlawed sharecropping on white farms in in addition to prohibiting black people from renting farms from whites (Budeli et al., 2008, p. 22; RSA, 2019, p. 15; Terreblanche, 2010, p. 5). 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 two per cent 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, p. 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 (Simson, 1985, pp. 9-10; Taylor 2006, p. 8). 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, p. 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 (Taylor, 2006, p. 4). The reserved blocks of land in Zambia were never occupied, as the anticipated white immigration to Northern Rhodesia did not materialise. The result was that over 50% of the unoccupied land returned to indigenes (Simson, 1985, p. 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 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, p. 27). While Bantustans ceased to exist on 27 April 1994, their legacy of racial land inequalities and politicisation 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 19th 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% of planters on the island were Indo-Mauritians who owned 35% of the land under cultivation, producing mainly sugar cane (Allen, 1998; Bowman, 1991).

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[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.

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 the 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, p. 201; Mariotti, 2009, p. 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, p. 190). While missionaries operated many primary schools, by 1942 only 35 indigenous Zambians were enrolled in secondary education (Taylor, 2006, p. 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).

In South Africa, to give effect to the racial policy of *separate development* during *apartheid*, there were different educational legislations and syllabuses for different racial groups (Adam, 2020, p. 3; Gradin, 2019, p. 554). 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 (Adam, 2020, p. 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, p. 13). This gap was exacerbated by gross inequalities in public funding between white and black schools (Dass & Rinquest, 2017, p. 143). The highest quality education in South Africa was reserved for whites, the second highest for Indians, and then Coloureds, with black Africans receiving the lowest quality (Adam, 2020, p. 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 & 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% in 1880 to 9.4% in 1930 and 11.1% in 1955 (Hein & 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, p. 18; Simson, 1985, p. 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, p. 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, p. 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, p. 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 [6] 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 & Malikane, 2019, p. 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, p. 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 & Ukpere, 2011, p. 1094; Mariotti, 2009, p. 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, p. 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, p. 6; Naidoo et al., 2014, p. 2). Thus, the colour bar or 'labour market apartheid' 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 was established (Marriotti, 2009, p. 6; Simson, 1985, p. 11).

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 (Budeli et al., 2008, p. 21; Naidoo et al., 2014, p. 2). 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, p. 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, p. 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 among 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 and 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, as cited in Phiri, 2020, p. 11). Statistics indicate that less than one per cent of indigenous black African children accessed the state maintenance grant during the pre-independence period (Patel & Plagerson, 2016, p. 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 (Bond, 2007, p. 201; Macdonald, 1953, p. 140; Woolard et al., 2011, as cited in Phiri, 2020, p. 11). 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 characterised 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, p. 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, p. 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 (2011), the Mauritian welfare state has its origins in the establishment of non-contributory old-age pensions in 1950. 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, p. 83). The Public Health Amendment Act 57 of 1935 which extended public healthcare to indigenous black people 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, p. 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, p. 83). Similarly, colonialism deprived Zambians of social economic development, and, for several years, the indigenous population was 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, p. 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 & Smith, 1968). Public expenditure in the health sector as a percentage of the budget of the colony of Mauritius rose from 2.2% in 1860-1870 to over 7.7% in 1915 and an average of almost nine 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 central (Kpessa & Béland, 2013). With nationalist/revolutionary agendas as key drivers of development, social policy-making took a people-centred approach. Post-colonial governments of Zambia and Mauritius, the first two countries in the cluster to gain political independence, had a longer period of autonomous social policymaking without much pressure from external actors relative to South Africa.

For Zambia, this period stretched from 1964 to the late 1970s and into the early 1980s (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 to self-governance and equalised access to education irrespective of race, tribe, ethnicity or religion (Mubanga, 2018). As the post-colonial nation faced the critical challenge of a limited trained workforce, 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 United National Independence Party (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 for 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, p. 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's 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 & Sánchez-Ancochea, 2016, p. 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 & Pearson, 2004). With a strong emphasis on social spending, which accounts for nearly 11% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (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 and 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, p. 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 African National Congress (ANC) government, was a people-oriented development strategy in which the state played an active role in restructuring the economy for the benefit of the majority African population (Terreblanche, 2016, p. 1). Ideologically, the RDP was located to the left of centre, resembling the 'social democratic capitalism' of the Scandinavian countries (Terreblanche, 2016, p. 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, p. 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, p. 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 International Monetary Fund (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 two 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, p. 4). According to Terreblanche (2016, pp. 4, 6), the move by the ANC government from the RDP to GEAR constituted an ideological quantum leap from the left (represented by RDP) to a position far right of centre on the ideological spectrum. Regarding state-market relations, GEAR represented a shift from the role of the state to the 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, p. 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 policymaking 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 2003, pp. 1, 5; Patnaik, 2011, p. 8).

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, p. 8). Multinational corporations and international finance institutions came to exert greater influence in domestic policy spaces, with neoliberal globalisation 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 & Azizi, 2011, p. 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 (SAPs) in 1983 to restore economic prosperity. These policies had a negative impact on the social policy environment and economic growth (Tembo & Chisanga, 2008). Thus, with the rise of neoliberalism in the early 1990s, Zambia's implementation of 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 (Goursat & Pellerano, 2016; GRZ, 2011; World Bank, 2012).

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), the Department of International Development (DFID) Zambia and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Many of these social protection efforts, especially those initiated and implemented by international donors or Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), have not been upscaled or institutionalised. 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). Despite repeated abolition of user fees, direct payments have been maintained in both rural and urban areas. Most 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[8] 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, rather, increased inequality. 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 trend in social policymaking in South Africa represents an oxymoron when juxtaposed with the country's economy, which is characterised by deep-seated structural challenges (Terreblanche, 2016, p. 4). Following the abandonment of the RDP and the adoption of GEAR as the country's macroeconomic policy, the 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 & Yusuf, 2009, p. 1). Assessing the effectiveness of NFSP, Matola and Yusuf (2009, p. 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 three-fifths 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 universalise access to quality education although the state channelled huge resources towards historically black schools (Maziya et al., 2003, p. 28). Despite up to 15% 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 & Malikane, 2019, p. 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 et al., 2015, p. 364). This suggests continuity without change, despite the government signalling 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 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.

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, p. 52; Zembe, 2013, p. 39).[8] 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 (Leibbrandt et al., 2010, p. 37; Phiri, 2020, p. 8; Samson et al., 2006, p. 1). Despite covering 18 million people, almost one-third of the total population, and accounting for 3.5% of the 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 (Leibbrandt et al., 2010, p. 22; Phiri, 2020, p. 51). 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 & Köhler, 2020, p. 6; Phiri, 2020, p. 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 (Leibbrandt et al., 2010, p. 37; Phiri, 2020, p. 8; Samson et al., 2006, p. 1).

In contrast with Mauritius, the apartheid dual structure remains a permanent feature of health provisioning in South Africa (Mhlanga, 2021: 484; Pauw, 2021, p. 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, p. 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, p. 3; Leibbrandt et al., 2010, p. 46; Mhlanga, 2021, p. 484).

A point stressed by one key informant in an interview summarised the pattern 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 policymaking 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 (APRM, 2010; Dommen & Dommen, 1999, p. 18). 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 [is] seen as a sacrosanct right of every Mauritian citizen" (Phaahla, 2014, p. 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 inter-generational poverty and lack of cultural capital regarding 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 (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% of the salary of the first quarter, 60% of the second quarter and 30% 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 of social policy making in South Africa, Zambia and Mauritius highlight 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, 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, p. 258). The way policy problems are presented or framed subtly represents the 'politics of needs interpretation' (Beland, 2009, p. 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 categorisation 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 (Quanson, 2014, p. 1; Sinden, 2017, p. 37). Within the colonial migrant labour system, women bore the burden of adjustment to male migration (Bond & Malikane, 2019, p. 13; Simson, 1985, p. 50). 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, p. 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 lowest paying jobs as domestic workers and cleaners relative to their white counterparts, a phenomenon that has persisted to date (Msimang, 2000, as cited in Quanson, 2014, p. 5; Sinden, 2017, p. 37).

The gender situation changed insignificantly post-independence. In 2020, only 45.3% of Mauritian women of working age were in the labour force, in contrast to 69.3% of men (Statistics Mauritius, 2021a). With a narrowing gender employment gap, the South Africa Female Labour Force Participation (FLFP) stood at 48.9% in 2018 (SA-TIED, 2019, p. 2), whereas Zambia's FLFP was as low as 28.6%. In a study comparing FLFP of single and married women in Mauritius, Gaddis and Ranzani (2020, p. 10) note that single women's participation in the labour force matched that of men, estimated at 78.3% in 2018. By contrast, labour force participation for married women was much lower, estimated at 52.6% 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 & Ranzani, 2020, p. 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 (Leibrandt, 2010, p. 7; Phiri, 2020, p. 44; Sinden, 2017, p. 42; Tekwa & Adesina, 2018, p. 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, p. 38).

Another indicator of the gendered nature of social policies within the labour market relates to the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap (GPG) refers to differentials in the average hourly pay of men and women at the same occupational level (Brynin, 2017, p. 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, p. 6). In Mauritius, the GPG stood at 29.7%, 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, the GPG was found to be greater than 30.0%. While South Africa had made considerable progress in narrowing the gender wage gap from 40% in 1993 to 25% in 2019, the equal pay for work of equal value clause in the Employment Equity Act of 1996 is yet to become a reality for South African women (de Villiers, 2019; SA-TIIED, 2019, p. 2). 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, p. 1). The Business Insider reveals that the GPG among female and male top earners in the South African labour market is as wide as 39%, 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 women, particularly black African" (SA-TIED, 2019, p. 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 men and women (Gradin, 2019, p. 553; Klaveren et al., 2009, p. 45; Naidoo et al., 2014, p. 4). 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. At senior management level, the share of men relative to women is as high as 64.7% to 35.3%, rising to 75.6% men to 24.4% women in top management (CEE Report, 2019/2020). The intersectionality of race and gender reveals that only 5.4% of African women are in top management relative to the 52.4% white male representation, despite the latter constituting a mere 4.9% 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 black people, particularly African women, systematically segregated into low skill, low paying occupations (Gradin, 2019, p. 554; Leibbrandt et al., 2010, p. 6; Quanson, 2014, p. 1; Sinden, 2017, p. 37; Wilson, 2021). 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% of seats in parliament were held by women, and only three out of the 24 ministers were women. There was also no woman mayor in the five municipalities in 2020. Only 11.9% of working women were heads of businesses compared to 18.6% of men in 2020 (Statistics Mauritius, 2021a). In the civil service, the proportion of women in senior positions was 39.7% 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% being male (Bhorat & Köhler, 2020, p. 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, p. 315).

Rather than challenging the gender culture, the CSG seems to reinforce gender division of work (Bhorat & Köhler, 2020, p. 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, p. 315). The child poverty discourse, dominant in South Africa's social assistance programme, obscures the persistent gendered nature of care giving (Lister, 2006, p. 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, p. 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 policymaking; 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 & Capano, 2010, p. 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 & Risburg, 2010, as cited in Corvellec & Hultman, 2014, p. 357; Corvellec & Hultman, 2014, p. 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, p. 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, p. 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 1970s and early 1980s.

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, p. 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, p. 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 organisations. 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, pp. 34-35, as cited in Mkandawire, 2016, p. 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, p. 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 & Köhler, 2020, p. 6; Phiri, 2020, p. 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. In South Africa, 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% of the country's 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 GENDER-EQUITABLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE POST-COVID-19 AFRICA

The trajectories of social policies across time 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.

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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 Export Processing Zone (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 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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