Against Imperial Social Policy: Recasting Mkandawire's Transformative Ideas for Africa's Liberation

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Abstract

Forty years have passed since the implementation of the pernicious neoliberal structural reforms on the African continent in 1981. If 2021 marked a 40-year commemoration of a diabolical neocolonial project such as neoliberalism, then the year 2020 signified another 40-year period of rebirth aborted, as the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 was undermined in favour of the Berg Report of 1981. These two periodisations delineate African liberation or continued neocolonial oppression, yet also coincide with Thandika Mkandawire's life's strivings. How do Mkandawire's ideas on social policy, inspired by radical African Nationalists, aid in the dismantling of contemporary forms of racialized neoliberal social policy making? Mkandawire's life straddled two 40-year periods (1940-1980 and 1980-2020) marked by *sui generis* contributions to African and global social sciences. This paper recasts his scholarly contributions on transformative social policy as a prophetic theoretician of African liberation. Mkandawire's scholarly corpus provides a programmatic approach to the unmaking of a hierarchical racialized neoliberal global order.

Keywords

Thandika Mkandawire, Social Policy in Africa, Pan-Africanism, African Nationalism, Neoliberalism, Liberation, African Development, Structural Transformation.

Introduction

The imposition of the World Bank's Berg Report recommendations in 1981 cemented ideas that have accelerated decoupling of social policy from progressive development agendas on the African continent. Since its inception as a defunct economic project, the neoliberal project coalesced into a political and cultural doctrine, shaped institutions, ideas and ideologues that have entrenched commodification of global societies, financialization and neocolonial machinations of development on the African continent. In 1980, a year before neoliberalism became the hegemonic development lexicon on the African continent, intellectuals and policymakers drafted the Lagos Plan of Action as a signature document providing a programmatic plan to shift from imperial development ideas toward radical structural transformation. These two contrasting ideas, market fundamentalism and state-led intervention, constitute contested visions of social policy and development on the African continent. Thandika Mkandawire was one of the intellectuals who participated in the drafting of the Lagos Plan of Action (OAU 1980). How do Mkandawire's ideas on social policy, inspired by radical Pan-African Nationalists, aid in the dismantling of contemporary forms of racialized neoliberal social policy making? Mkandawire's scholarly corpus transgressed and transcended traditional boundaries in the social sciences, contributing to diverse fields such as political economy of development in Africa, development economics, and postcolonial intellectual African history (Murunga 2020, Cheru 2022). My aim in this paper is to recast Mkandawire as a pioneering prophetic theoretician of social policy for Africa's liberation. I critically engage his ideas which I argue, contribute to the dismantling of the global project of a hierarchical and racialized neoliberal global capitalist economy.

Mkandawire was born a Malawian, in then colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to a working-class family, Malawian father and a Zimbabwean mother, in 1940. Malawi was his first country of citizenship. His intellectual reflections and contributions were shaped by his lived experiences of migration, segregation, exile, global scholarly engagements, and travel. Murunga (2020), for example, observes that Mkandawire understood the tribulations of being an intellectual in Africa. After all, he matured into a formidable journalist under Kamuzu Banda's dictatorship and was forced into exile precisely because he refused to kowtow to Banda's totalitarian power. Growing up in then colonial Nyasaland (now Malawi), Southern and Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia) he encountered apartheid segregation firsthand, which elicited questions on how to build inclusive and egalitarian polities. His exposure to global scholarship, travel, and exile in the United States, Europe, across the African continent and Ecuador endowed him with an intellectual arsenal to explain complexities of Africa's unequal integration, through the lenses of world society. Yet, it was his commitment to a global Pan-African knowledge project through the Council for the Development of the Social Sciences in Africa (CODESRIA) that cemented his place as one of the most important pan-African social scientists in the last half century. Mkandawire's term of service at CODESRIA was inextricably linked with the institutionalization of the Council as a key player on the African higher education scene and within the terrain of development thought and practice. He remained integral to CODESRIA's vision of enhancing a globally relevant pan-African-based social science. As Murunga further observes, under his stewardship in different capacities, CODESRIA grew into a significant actor in the pan-African and global knowledge production sphere, seeking, as he stated in the preface to the book *Academic Freedom in Africa*, to "pay greater attention to the nature of the research environment on the African continent".

Mkandawire's birth and life struggles coincided with a long historical genealogy of agitations for Black freedom across the Black Atlantic where people of African descent had been subjected to slavery, empire, colonialism, peonage, violence and social exclusion. His life can be divided into two forty-year periods (1940-1980) and (1980-2020) which coincide with the rise and fall of self-determination (Getachew, 2019a) which resulted in either perpetuation of imperial/neo-colonial domination or enhanced liberation on the African continent. Fifteen years after his birth most African countries shed European colonial rule in favour of "sovereign political projects" aimed at undoing the residues of colonialism and empire. As a young man, he himself participated in demonstrations to overthrow colonial rule in Malawi. This was an era filled with pan-African ideas to undo state violence and exclusion germane to modalities of colonial governmentality. Yet, contrary to many narrow visions of pan-Africanism, the Nationalist central premise, even when they lacked a "state project" as Mkandawire (2005a) himself notes, was that the struggle for independence and nation-building would take place within the confines of the territorial space drawn up by colonialists. This is not a vision that collapses the goals of forging Pan-African federations and unity, rather, as Mkandawire (2005a) further argues: What nationalists sought instead was an aggregation of the various manifestations of anti-colonialism for the liberation of that particular space—united and indivisible.

Mkandawire encountered systematic state violence and exclusion, however, opted not to disparage the role of the state in social policy and development but reflected deeply on it. After all, he was once declared *persona non grata* by the authoritarian Malawian state through his participation in solidarity civic activism as a young student in the United States. His ability not to jettison the meaning of a *dirigiste* state in development and social policy provides an epistemological intervention, whereby contemporary discourses on welfare and wellbeing on

the African continent and the globe have been reduced to narrow visions of social policy as "social protection". My paper is not a hagiography of Mkandawire's ideas; rather an attempt to think with his ideas. In life, Mkandawire gently never shied away from critique, and cherished robust intellectual debates, even with those with whom he vehemently disagreed with. To achieve this, my paper first juxtaposes the global project of neoliberalism against the aspirations of the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980. His reflections on the evolution of the state and development in Africa propelled him to provide a coherent response to neoliberalism. Second, I move on to discuss Mkandawire's scholarly corpus on social policy, which responds to the hegemonic ideas of a hierarchical racialized neoliberal global order. Transformative social policy, as coined by Mkandawire, sharply contrasts with the prevailing orthodoxy on neoliberalism, which emphasises a residual approach to social policy and reliance on the market to mitigate life-cycle risks. It aims to go beyond addressing market failure and specifies five tasks of social policy (production, protection, reproduction, redistribution, and social cohesion/nation-building), the multi-tasking of social policy, the interconnectedness of social and economic policies, and the potential transformative consequences of social policy on the economy, human capability functioning, social relations and social institutions (Mkandawire, 2007, 2010). There is no need to treat social policy as different from industrial or macroeconomic policy, recognising that social policy offers general, horizontal, or social provision beyond its immediately acknowledged goals (Adésínà, 2011). Third, I locate Mkandawire as a prophetic theoretician of social policy toward African liberation and structural transformation and tease out his global vision of a post-imperial global order. This paper is located within growing realizations and agitations for "Africa as a Thinking Space" (see Nyoka, 2020; Getachew, 2019a; Rabaka, 2010, 2020, 2021; Chan 2021) by reifying contributions of Black theoreticians who have shaped the African continent and diaspora's social and political thought historically subverted by epistemic racism.

Neoliberalism as Neo-Colonialism in Africa: The Berg Report versus the Lagos Plan of Action

That contemporary capitalism, which manifests as neoliberalism has morphed into a totalizing pernicious global worldview to order social and power relations on world society, has been extensively documented (see Amin, 2011, 2013, 2018; Day, 2016; Harvey, 2004, 2007). Despite this, some scholarly contributions credit the birth of neoliberalism to Milton Friedman's (1962) articulation of a coupling of freedom and markets in *Capitalism and democracy*. However, almost two decades prior to Friedman's intervention, an obscure economist by the name of Friedrich August von Hayek had provided a powerful articulation of neoliberalism as a worldview that should order world society. Hayek delineated assumptions that nearly all (if not all) human activity is a form of economic calculation, and so can be assimilated with the master concepts of wealth, value, exchange, cost – and, especially, price (Metcalf, 2017). Hayek never shied away from identifying as a neoliberal. Building on classic Smithian liberalism he emphasized the "invisible hand" in the market, and even went on to suggest that "prices are a means of allocating scarce resources efficiently, according to need and utility, as governed by supply and demand. For the price system to function efficiently, markets must be free and competitive" (Metcalf, 2017: 6). Neoliberalism was not only an economic policy; it also became a cultural doctrine toward a reorganisation of social and power relations on a global scale. As Day has observed, "Neoliberalism is a market rationale that orders people to live by the generalized principle of competition in all social spheres of life, making the individual herself or himself an enterprise (and reducing social relations to monetary relations)" (2016: 4). The deepened organization of social and power relation around

the commodification of the human and non-human world is inherent in the neoliberal world, yet foreign to how social organisation prior to the rise of capitalism as a violent global system.

If the high priest of neoliberalism was Hayek, then Friedman (1962) served as its mediator. The worshippers of this religion are split in two camps; the rise of Thatcher and Reagan on both sides of the Atlantic; and the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the World Trade Organization). These ideologues advocated for the retrenchment of the state and the political community to celebrate the 'virtues' of the market, identified as efficiency, deregulation, free trade, privatization of state-owned resources, and an individualistic approach to the articulation of social rights. Mkandawire (2005b) points to the complexities that emerged with the triumph of neoliberalism:

> [T]he rise of the right in the 1980s and 1990s privileged individual responsibility and a limited role for the state. This had a profound influence in some of the key industrial countries. Thatcher's insistence that there "is no such a thing as community" touched on one of the most important ideological underpinnings of social policy—*solidarity and citizenship*. It is this neoliberal ideological position that has set the limits on social policy and underpins the preferences for "user fees', means-testing, market delivery of social services or "partnerships" in their delivery. This ideology has also eliminated the equity concerns that have been central to all the successful experiences of poverty reduction (2005b: 2).

A decade before neoliberalism had become the mantra, the oil crisis of the 1970s precipitated deacceleration of gains (albeit from a low base) made during the almost first two decades of African independence. Mkandawire himself had noted, "While Africa's efforts at industrialisation have been out of sync with the international trend, the first generation of post-independence nationalists in Africa were animated by it. Between 1960 and 1975, Africa's industry grew at an annual rate of 7.5%, albeit from a low base (2018: vii). In other parts of the erstwhile colonised world, such as Latin America, hyperinflations and debt crises had become definitive in the region's economic development lexicon. Responding to what had been deemed as a lack of structural reform, the proposed solution to Latin American countries in this era was the adoption of market fundamentalist policies, initially in Chile, to restimulate growth and undo the ills of import substitution industrialisation. On the African continent, these approaches to policy diffusion and learning were articulated in The Berg Report (World Bank, 1981). This report became the signature document that pushed for liberal capitalist reforms to address the problems of poverty and underdevelopment that had characterized most African countries since the end of colonial rule. Recommendations of this report delineated a totalising project of commodification of human, physical and non-human relations across the African continent. The report masqueraded under the pretence of false humility:

> [T]his is not a recommendation which derives ownership from any preconceived philosophy of ownership. It derives from considerations of efficiency, which suggests that governments can more effectively achieve their social and development goals by reducing the widespread administrative overcommitment of the public sector by developing and relying more on the managerial capacities of *private individuals and firms*, which can respond to local needs and conditions, particularly in small-scale industry, marketing, and service activities (1981: v).

Whereas the reorganisation of social life at the beginning of 20th-century Europe had been achieved through a contested settlement of the welfare state, African countries got the opposite, market fundamentalism. The ideological justification of the welfare state in the Global North degenerated into an attack on developmentalism, socialist ideologies and nation-building that many governments in the Global South had embarked on toward the universal provision of healthcare, education, agriculture and food (Mkandawire, 2001a, 2001b, 2005b, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2018). Mkandawire devotes a detailed account to this tension:

> …like the developed countries many developing countries were themselves also undergoing their own ideological convulsions that tilted the balance toward a narrow view of social policy. The case of Chile under Pinochet is the most emblematic of this internal shift. In many countries, the nationalist and populist pacts that had underpinned universalist social policies were in disarray…. Notions of solidarity and nation-building rang hollow in the face of increasing inequality and blatant self-aggrandizement (2005b: 2).

The imposition of prescriptions of the Berg Report (World Bank, 1981) on African countries fortified racialisation, White supremacy, neocolonialism and commodification of society. Whereas the previous five hundred years of empire and colonial domination were predicated on expropriation, violence on the Black body (male and female) and mutilation of African people, the expropriation of resources and wealth through mercantile and racial capitalism in the 20th and 21st centuries took a different shape. Racialized neoliberalism coalesced into neocolonialism through sterile ideas that infantilize/d the African social policy landscape emphasizing the importation of market fundamentalist ideas and ideologues to African countries as policy advisors and pundits from Washington, London, Paris and Brussels descended on the continent. This new architecture further relied on a *comprador bourgeoisie* trained as technocrats and policy pundits across the Global North, who became the mouthpiece of imperial approaches to achieving structural transformation that was deemed necessary for the African continent. The neoliberal moment negated the idea that poverty and inequality across Africa were caused by the infliction of "ontological wounds" (Fanon, 1963) (under what West [2017] coined the "Age of Europe"), on the so-called inferior peoples of the world, racial capitalism, and histories of imperial accumulation and dispossession of African wealth and capital through unjust means (Amin, 1972, 1974; Williams, 1944, Rodney, 1972). It was the prophetic theoretician of African liberation, Fanon (1963), who had already dismissed these imperial ideas, by overcoming simplistic assumptions of colonial modernity. Fanon's theorization of Europe as the "totalizing Man" and the bastardized "Other", affirms the idea that the so-called Third World materially gave birth to Europe.

Prior to the fiendish prescriptions of the Berg Report (1981) being adopted, the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 had already articulated a paradigmatic plan that offered a sovereign development and social policy imagination. To enhance self-reliance and radical structural transformation for the African continent, the plan clearly outlined what was needed. The impetus of socio-economic development equates to the improvement of life for the entire population of a nation. The attainment of this objective requires full participation of all segments of the population in gainful and productive employment and provision of all essential services for enrichment of life of the community. It also requires effective programmes of *social welfare*, community development, *social security* and mobilization of the masses for the development of public works and community services. These approaches to structural transformation coupled economic dictates with wider societal needs. Such a way of theorizing on the economy produced a third space,[1] whereby the economy is embedded within societal and power relations. This third space rejected a colonially informed lexicography of Africa's backwardness and the Europeanization of their modernity. As Rabaka (2010: 169) has argued, "it is not as though Africana peoples were or are inherently against modernity or modernization, but unequivocally the Europeanization (and/or imperialization) of their modernity". The proviso articulated in the Lagos Plan of Action on enhancing welfare was neither a rejection of development nor a romanticization of a precolonial African past. Against a background of post-modernists' critiques, Mkandawire (2005b) provides a sophisticated reading of this "third space" that was articulated in pan-African social imaginations,

> The association between nationalism and development, often understood as involving industrialisation has been so close that Ernest Gellner (1983) suggested that the two were virtually inseparable. Indeed, in the African case independence was associated with the 'right to industrialisation'. It is important to stress this point, especially in light of the argument that 'development' was externally imposed, which was, to say the least, misinformed and quite frankly insulting to many African leaders and intellectuals who have sought material progress for their societies. The link between Africa's domination and techno-economic backwardness did not escape the nationalists. The founding fathers[2] of pan-Africanism, such as William Blyden, were keenly aware of the imperatives of 'modernization' if Africa were to escape the domination and humiliation it had suffered at the hands of the West and attain self-reliance and independence (2005b: 13).

The Lagos Plan of Action was cognisant of the fact that the latter half of the 20th century produced two competing versions of development: one based on freedom and liberation from all forms of oppression; the other, on the commodification of society and addressing societal ills. For the peoples of the Global South, the inspiration toward a post-imperial order and alternative development paradigm first took place at the Bandung Conference of 1955. At this conference, representatives of erstwhile colonized peoples united forces and proposed alternatives to the world order dominated by the superpowers (Getachew, 2019a, Prashad, 2007). Such approaches to alternative thinking influenced Mkandawire never to shy away from using the term "catching up" in development, yet without abstracting from its imperial machinations. He had already noted that "development and the 'catch up' aspirations driving it [are] not foreign impositions but part of Africa's responses to its own historical experiences and social needs [and have] much deeper historical roots and social support than is often recognized" (Mkandawire, 2011: 7). The spirit of Bandung provided contours of how the Third World had come to be constituted. The conference triggered solidarity movements among the peoples, countries, states and nations of Africa and Asia. It made possible the representation of Global South countries in the United Nations, and "the recognition of the voice of colonized peoples in the world order. It accelerated the complete re-conquest of independence of Africa and Asia. It led to the Non-Aligned Movement between the two blocs of superpowers. It allowed the newly independent countries to lead a development based on their national, popular and sovereign interests" (Africa-Asia Conference, 1955). Further, "it contributed enormously to the prevention of a possible Third World War and to the evolution of humanity, towards a more just and peaceful world" (Africa-Asia Conference, 1955). Getachew observed the following:

> While the Anglophone world emerged as the central site of black internationalism by the end of World War II, anticolonial worldmaking was not limited to the central characters of the Black Atlantic. Broader political formations such as the Bandung Conference and the Non-aligned Movement also advanced the project of constituting a post-imperial world order. Organized around the rubrics of Afro-Asian solidarity and the Third World, these formations played a central role in securing a right to self-determination and envisioning a New International Economic Order (NIEO) (2019a: 5)

Contemporary approaches to social policy jettisoned aspirations of the Bandung project especially with ambitions to forge a NIEO. Embedded in the new approaches to social policy experimentation in the Global South under the guise of the hegemonic dominance of Western-backed institutions is individualization of social risk and militarism. More recently, social policy has been reduced to targeted conditional cash transfers (CCTs) through the social protection paradigm (SPP), with key advocates, such as Barrientos (2012, 2016) and Devereux (2016). The ideological mobilization had already been laid by the publication of Schuck and Zeckhauser's (2006) book, *Targeting in Social Programs: Avoiding Bad Bets, Removing Bad Apples*. They argued that "the public domain boasts many programmes; however, social programmes are not nearly as well targeted as they could be, and a few are so poorly targeted as to call their social value into serious question. Public policy should improve the targeting of

social programmes so that they can accomplish more of their goals while using the same resources to assist the same needy populations" (Schuck and Zeckhauser, 2006: 1). In contrast, Lavinas (2013) has argued conceptually that we should see CCTs as a confluence of two sets of ideas: human capital on the one hand, and "targeting" welfare spending, on the other hand. Lavinas (2013) suggests that, if Chicago School economics was the founding matrix of the former, the latter took shape under the influence of behaviourist economics and 'decision theory' as embodied by RAND Corporation reports from the late 1960s. McNamara commissioned the RAND analysts to write reports for the Pentagon applying economic thinking to various aspects of military strategy.

The shock therapy approaches prescribed in contemporary policy experiments can be traced to the militarization of social policy. Lavinas (2013) opines that, while Ellsberg's contributions were pivotal, the McNamara commission also included a 1966 paper, "Economic Theory of Alliances" co-written by Olson and Zeckhauser. Olson had just codified the "free rider" problem in his *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965), and here he and Zeckhauser, then a doctoral student at Harvard, applied similar reasoning to the uneven distribution of defence spending among North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries—small states "free riding" on the United States. Zechhauser moved on to the problem of welfare, writing a RAND report in 1968 which asked: "How should assistance programmes to the poor be structured so as to maximize the utility function of the representative citizen?" The answer was "targeting", by encouraging the poor to work through tax incentives—something Zeckhauser recommended to the Nixon Administration in 1970, influenced by Friedman's ideas on a "negative income tax". Positive incentives were only one form of targeting; however, Zechkhauser subsequently suggested that allocation of transfers could also be improved by imposing "restrictions on recipients" (Olson and Zeckhauser, 1966, Zeckhauser 1968). In order to qualify, recipients would have to meet certain "deadweight costs", heart-warmingly referred to as "ordeals": demeaning qualification tests and tedious administrative procedures, for example, or work requirement that meant accepting precarious, "menial" jobs with low wages (Nichols and Zeckhauser, 1982).

The neoliberal moment profoundly shaped the reconfiguration of state and societal relations. Simultaneously the neoliberal moment also quietened debates on poverty and inequality culminating in the "lost decades of development" in the 1990s. The resurgence of the poverty reduction debate in the 2000s, with a renewed emphasis on inclusive growth and development, was still aligned to the neoliberal global project and paradigm. The scholarly literature that emerged in this period masqueraded as promoting transformative social change; yet, it mimicked the social risk management approach under the hegemony of the World Bank by championing effectiveness of policy implementation through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), good governance, managing debt through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, Randomised Control Trials (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011), sound management of fiscal and monetary policies, and deregulation of the state. In pursuit of alternative development paradigms, the World Bank has also experimented with social policies aimed at "universal" social policy at an ideational level to address the loss that had led to the lost decades during the 1980s and 1990s (World Bank, 2015, 2009). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and World Bank went as far as endorsing the instrumentalization of "universal" social policy by stating the following:

> In the early 21st century, we are proud to endorse the consensus that has emerged – that social protection is a primary development priority. Well-designed and implemented *social protection* systems can powerfully shape countries, enhance human capital and productivity, eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and contribute to building social peace. They are an essential part of National Development

> Strategies to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development with equitable social outcomes. Universal coverage and access to social protection are central to ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity, the World Bank's twin goals by 2030. Universal social protection coverage is at the core of the ILO's mandate, guided by ILO social security standards including the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, No. 202, adopted by 185 states in 2012 (2015: 1).

Despite a heightened focus on "social protection" the ubiquitous nature of policy failures has manifested in almost all the countries and regions of the Global South. The narrative of poverty reduction in Africa was encoded in the World Bank's (2009, 2018) development lexicon. The reality is different: the percentage of Africans living in poverty declined but the absolute number of people in extreme poverty increased, simultaneously, inequality has been on the increase (Adésínà, 2009, 2020). In the first twenty years of the 21st century, some African countries saw a resurgence of growth, dubbed "Africa Rising" driven by a resurgent China through the commodity boom, embrace of liberal economic policies and entrepreneurial initiatives. As I (Phiri, 2012) and other critical scholars (Brooks, 2018) have argued, such growth was deficient and baseless. It decoupled the "social project" from the economy, a crucial ingredient that is a *sine qua non* toward achieving Africa's radical transformation. The Covid-19 pandemic has only reified these pre-existing inequalities around health, wealth, infrastructure and food access.

Various arguments have been advanced either to negate or affirm the blatant injustices that are in the current regime of thinking in social policy shaped by the neoliberal moment. Conservative thinkers have opined that the failure of countries in the developing world is the result of a loose embrace of the policies that have been imposed on them. Across the African continent, pseudo ideas pay little or no homage to the historical evolution of social policy or the development debates. However, such "false starts" are not methodologically nor theoretically anchored in the social and political realities they seek to define. Against this background of neoliberal globalisation, Mkandawire's scholarly corpus on social policy as transformative asked new questions that aimed to make sense of Africa's past, its present policy predicaments and the future knowledge ecologies that will enhance liberation not only for African people across the world, and also those who suffer the violence of neoliberal globalisation.

Mkandawire's Social Policy Corpus: 2000-2020

Through his corpus, Mkandawire stands out as a theoretician of social policy by developing novel contributions linking the literature on democracy, development and social policy itself for the purposes of liberation on the African continent. Thus, his theorizations of social policy as transformative emerged not as a reactionary approach but rather the evolution of his ideas (2001a, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018) toward a clinical theorization of underdevelopment, inequality and social policy in the Global South. While working at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), he was pivotal in promoting the visibility of this work through the flagship paper, "Social Policy in a Development Context" (Mkandawire, 2001a). The role of the state in enhancing welfare and wellbeing was always central. Mkandawire was highly critical of *laissez-faire* ideas that usurped state intervention; at least comparatively looking at the rise of welfarism in Southeast Asian countries. He argues that these countries were far from paragons of "laissez-fairism" and, instead, were highly *dirigiste* economies in which the states had governed markets to ensure higher levels of accumulation, technology absorption and conquests of foreign markets (2001: 292). Mkandawire went as far as providing a theoretical contribution of the feasibility

of “developmental” states in Africa. The paper published in 2001 provided a less cynical view of the African state:

> I have argued that for most of the first generation of African leaders, ‘development’ was certainly a central preoccupation. African leaders have always been aware of the need for some ‘nationalist-cum-developmentalist’ ideology for both nation building and development. By political commitments and social origins most of the leaders were deeply committed to the eradication of poverty, ignorance, and disease which formed an unholy trinity against which nationalist swords were drawn in the post-colonial era (2001: 296-297)

Mkandawire (2010) noted that the research agenda itself was inspired by the Copenhagen Social Summit held in 1995, whose resolution insisted that social development and economic development are not separable but mutually constitutive and that, although the situations of developing countries and developed countries differ, social issues in each revolve around the same fundamental matters of economic welfare, equity, and social justice. In the 2000s, Mkandawire noted that there was a shift in global thinking where social rights were respected in the process of economic development. Mkandawire had already noted in the early 2000s that developments in economics and other disciplines gave impetus to new analysis—as well as a rediscovery of some of the ‘old’ development insights—bringing to the fore what hitherto had been treated passively, reactively, and secondarily to macroeconomic growth and development (2001a, 2001b, 2005). Conceptualizing social policy as transformative moved beyond the residual approaches to welfare that have defined the current dispensation of thinking as ubiquitous in the social protection paradigm. In the transformative social policy (TSP), social policy is defined as public intervention that directly affects wellbeing, social institutions, and social relations. Social policy can therefore be a purposeful instrument to transform race, class, gender and other social and power relations through, for example, affirmative action, anti-discrimination legislation and laws pertaining to marriage and the family (Mkandawire, 2011).

His conceptualization of social policy as transformative (Mkandawire, 2001, 2007, 2010, 2016) challenges asymmetrical knowledge relations, which often pit themselves against Africa with the lenses of theoretical impossibilities. The realisation of social policy as transformative is through policy instruments that are components of a social policy regime in Global South countries that aim to connect the dimensions of development, democracy and social policy previously neglected. It departs from the conceptualization of welfare regimes through the lenses of the “welfare regime approach”, which emphasized contested settlements of class coalitions. Rather, TSP highlights the norms, functions, outcomes and instruments of the approach. It involves overarching concerns with redistribution, production, reproduction, protection, nation-building and social cohesion, and works in tandem with economic policy in pursuit of national social and economic goals (Mkandawire, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2017). For example, education as one of the tasks of achieving TSP performs multiple functions in the equation of societal transformation. Decommodified education enhances both the productive and social reproduction capacity of a given society; with the potential to transform inequalities of opportunity and outcomes, at least for societies in the Global South. Similarly, linked to an agenda for total liberation, social assistance programmes like universal basic income grant and cash transfer programmes have the potential to perform not only the task of protection, but rather social reproduction and redistributive roles in a regime that does not decouple the economy from wider social relations. Further, decommodified health services as a transformative social policy instrument performs the tasks of protection and production if market imperatives are removed from the question of providing healthcare.

The same can also be said about radical land and agrarian reforms as instruments of transformative social policy specially to undo global histories of dispossession, which bequeathed patterns of unequal patterns of wealth and capital accumulation and violence. The TSP approach, therefore, departs from the focus on indigence and the narrow vision of social protection (Adésínà, 2011) as a paradigm that is suitable for societal transformation across Africa and the Global South. Cognisant of the pitfalls of neoliberal contemporary social policy making, TSP further, proposes that social policies can also be deployed to regulate existing, or to produce new, social institutions and norms (Adésínà, 2011, 2015). In addition, social policy "must be concerned with the redistributive effects of economic policy, protecting people from the vagaries of the market and the changing circumstances of age, enhancing the productive potential of members of society, and reconciling the burden of reproduction with that of other social tasks, as well as sharing the burden of reproduction" (Mkandawire, 2011: 150-151). Applying the early approaches, it is understood that social policy does not merely deal with the "causalities" of social changes and processes; it is also a contribution to the welfare of society as a whole (Adésínà, 2015).

Before the neoliberal approaches to social policy Mkandawire (2005, 2010, 2011, 2016, 2017) provides a strong emphasis on the role of Nationalist social policies in imagining new societies upon the demise of the colonial project. In the same vein, Adésínà goes on to suggest that public spending on education and healthcare played 'instrumental' roles of enhancing production, and the 'normative roles' of 'social cohesion' and enhancing functional citizenship (Adésínà, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2020). The nationalist framing of social policy through agricultural marketing boards served similar purposes as pension funds in Europe and Asia; in several countries, the surplus was central to infrastructure and industrial development (Mkandawire, 2007, 2010, Adésínà (2015: 108) further suggests that "a lesson of the period is that the binary divide between the normative and instrumental uses of social policy, which is sometimes realised in the literature, is more conceptual than real. The instrumental use of social policy was underpinned by normative concerns. Further, "although Ghana and Nigeria attempted to build welfare states in the framings of the Beveridgean model, the road taken in the immediate, and the instruments employed, were not the standard "social protection" ones used in the War on Want" (Adésínà, 2015: 109) in contemporary thinking. In addition, "the exigencies of 'nation-building' and social cohesion were such that social policies became a central aspect of the early years of 'development planning'", as Aina (2004) notes. Social expenditure was understood in its multiple tasks: for enhancing society's productive capacity, protection, reproduction, and nation-building. The link between social expenditure and economic development/growth was immediate and was as much a powerful motivation of social spending as freedom from ignorance (Mkandawire, 2001, 2007, 2016, 2017).

The invocation of this period is not to suggest that post-colonial African societies moved toward a "radical transformation" of society as the Nationalists envisioned. Mounting criticism emerged to challenge what had defined both internal and external dilemmas of the Nationalist project, which, in their naïve expressions, replicated European modernity's conceptualization of the nation-state, as one nation, one language and territory. Mkandawire had already provided alternatives to the dilemmas that pan-African Nationalists faced. He noted that "the critical intellectual task is not to simply state this rather banal fact but to engage society in acknowledging and addressing (without necessarily) eliminating such dilemmas (2005: 46). Mkandawire (2010, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2017) is critical of an authoritarian state and acknowledges that gains of development were unevenly distributed, and the overall development strategies did not address issues of poverty and the growing inequality despite the relatively more extensive social policies of the time. Nationalist dilemmas include those of

individual or local rights and national sovereignty; the conflict between the particularism of nationalism and the universalism of its aspirations; the thin line between unity and uniformity; and cultural homogeneity and provincialism; and the trade-offs in the development process. Every case of nation-building has had to address these questions (2005a: 46), he argues. However, the emergence of an "outsourced state" on the African continent has its progenitor in a hierarchical, racialised, neoliberal world order.

Mkandawire's dialectical conceptualisation of both the perils and potentials for transformation through the state is incisive. He does not provide simplistic or idealised versions of a "benevolent state" across the African continent. He had already been in conversation with his peers and interlocutors, who showed reluctance on the role of the state in Africa, even those on the progressive side. For instance, Claude Ake (1996) had pointed out the perils of state intervention under Nationalism, as he opined: The ideology of development was exploited as a means of reproducing political hegemony; it got limited attention and served hardly any purpose as a framework for economic transformation. Mkandawire (2019), however, provides a dialectical reading of the "developmental democratic state" that is transformed to champion transformative social policy. In an interview with Meagher (2019), published in *Development and Change,* Mkandawire suggests the following:

> It is not that I am a lover of the state on a gut level — I mean, many of my generation of African academics were refugees, for heaven's sake! What I have been objecting to in my work is the assertion by some that what has happened elsewhere — the use of the state as an instrument for social transformation — is impossible in Africa. The reasons given range from 'cultural impossibility', to 'World Trade Organisation (WTO) does not allow it'. I mean, it is this idea of foreclosing an option that has been so vital to transformation elsewhere that I find objectionable and ill-informed. This idea that African states are incapable of fostering development was constructed in the 1980s and 1990s to justify rolling back the state to facilitate market-led governance. In the neoliberal era, it was often claimed that while the positions of the [International Financial Institutions] were based on 'sound macroeconomics', the perspectives of their local critics were entirely driven by greed and self-interest. Failures of African states were never seen as inadvertent but as ineluctably linked to rent seeking and neopatrimonialism. This kind of view not only supports the punitive interventions undertaken by IFIs but also eliminates the state's essential space for trial and error, which is key to development policy (2019: 12-13).

Contemporary approaches to addressing poverty have been reduced to initiatives like "Just Give Money to the Poor" (Barrientos et al., 2010). They have reified targeted approaches to welfare. Mkandawire had rigorously engaged this emergent literature. Advocates of targeted approaches to social policy, such as Barrientos and Devereux, hardly engage any theoretical contestations on universal provisioning in the Global South. Devereux (2016), for example, suggests that the support for universal provisioning was taken to its logical conclusion by Mkandawire (2005), and this line of thinking also led to a movement for a "Basic Income Grant" in many countries. Devereux further makes the point that at the political level targeting is often derided by its critics as neoliberal and socially decisive, whereas universalism is reified as rights-based and upholding social solidarity (2016: 172). He concludes

> "that subsidy reform processes now underway across the world, strongly supported by the World Bank, involve abolishing universal subsidies and replacing them with targeted cash transfers. The World Bank has also '*successfully*' promoted the adoption of cash transfer programmes throughout Latin America and beyond, whereby social protection is withheld from families who fail to comply with conditions of their behaviour" (Devereux, 2016: 176).

In Devereux's (2016) postulations, that is, only those who are poor and do not have access to social security or private insurance should qualify for social assistance under a national Social Protection floor, which requires identifying and targeting the poor. He concludes that "a right

to social protection does not imply a right to free cash transfers from the state; rights can be realised through targeted rather than universal programmes" (2016: 176).

Under this new approach to social protection, inequality has still been on the increase. Inherent in the Social Protection Paradigm are theoretical limitations that divorce the "social" from the "economy", and in addition, the construction of a racialised uncivilised "Other". Mkandawire's earlier responses had been less sanguine about the SPP. The fiscal argument against targeting suggests that, in the face of limited fiscal resources, it is better to target the resources to the "deserving poor". However, this literature Mkandawire decries, presents governments as if they are confronted with an exogenously fiscal constraint and are enjoined to do their best under the circumstances (Mkandawire, 2005, 2010). Mkandawire (2005), however, counterbalances this argument, as he suggests that

> the fiscal constraint is not always exogenously given. In many cases, it is an outcome of deliberate attempts to limit the state, on the assumption that one can attack poverty with less money. The most widely applied taxes and the easiest to collect (for example, taxes on trade) are removed as part of adjustment policies. This is then invoked to argue that, partly because of the fiscal crisis and retrenchment, the state has less capacity for providing universal services and is better off targeting both its limited financial resources and its much-reduced capacity' (Mkandawire, 2005).

As Adésínà (2011, 2015, 2020) further argues, paradoxically, it is during this period of reduced state involvement that the mantra of "pro-poor" growth came to dominate the global policy agenda and became deployed by the same global and local institutions responsible for engineering the subversion of inclusivity.

Targeting has become fashionably woven into the language of "inclusive growth" and "structural transformation", even increasingly as the European welfare state has faced attacks in a political environment averse to solidarity and equality. In the SPP lexicon, targeting can be used as a means of flattening the distribution of income and as an administrative means to reach groups in society whose income falls below a defined level (Barrientos, 2016, 2004; Devereux, 2016). Yet, as Mkandawire (2005, 2010) has argued, one of the criticisms levelled against universalism is that it is not redistributive. In contrast, targeting is portrayed as quintessentially redistributive precisely because "it is premised on the view that the social returns for a given level of transfers are higher for individuals or households at the lower end of the income distribution than at the upper end" (Mkandawire, 2005: 6). Mkandawire (2005) suggests that the main objection to universalism is often aimed at the redistributive policies that come along with it (such as tax structures and labour market policies). Stripped of these other redistributive measures, universalistic policies may be embraced by conservative governments, especially when, as is often the case, they are based on regressive taxation. This might explain why, even among late industrializers, the push for universalism was not always made by radical governments but by conservative regimes concerned with social peace and nation-building *a la* Bismarck.

The battle with targeting is the grammar of how poverty is defined. The focus on poverty and the ultra-poor has often displaced the space for a robust discussion of structural elements in economy and society responsible for producing poverty. The focus on poverty has shifted to what used to be understood as "destitution": US$1.25 per person per day rather than the US$2.50, as the indicator of poverty (Adésínà, 2011). Mkandawire (2005) substantiates the argument that the ideologies driving targeting are distinctly opposed to equity and are guided by a philanthropic principle at best, and at worst, a mean-spirited paternalism. The point is not that there is some functional relationship between universalist policies and redistributive

policies in other areas, but that there is an elective affinity between the preference for universalism and other measures, such as high progressive taxes (Mkandawire, 2005). Targeting leads to segmentation and differentiation. In service provisioning, targeting leads to the creation of a dual structure—one aimed at the poor and funded by the state, and one aimed at the well-to-do and provided by the private sector (Adésínà, 2020; Fischer, 2018, 2020; Mkandawire, 2005). Mkandawire further makes a poignant point about targeting and persistence of durable inequality:

> [I]n many countries [in] which targeting has been effectively implemented, income inequality is already high, so that the segmentation in social provisioning does not raise eyebrows. Geographical targeting often leads to horizontal inequality so that the poor in one area might benefit more than the poor in non-targeted areas—assuming of course that the rich in the targeted area do not capture the resources. Such inequality can be explosive politically and is often the basis of ethnic conflicts. In many countries where ethnic, religious and cultural space is coterminous with geographical space, such geographical targeting can lead to inequitable geographical selectivity (2005: 7).

By the end of the 1980s, for most parts of the African continent, poverty and development were unceremoniously pushed off the scene as policy shifted towards macro-economic issues of stabilization and debt repayment (Mkandawire, 2005, 2010, 2011). In the African context, the inspiration for the change came partly from the poor performance of MacNamara's big integrated rural development projects. The real crisis, however, as Mkandawire (2010) identified, is the ontological dislocation that existed between the Western-backed approaches that were anti-statist while placing enormous faith in rather reified markets. As Mkandawire (2010: 43) suggests, "the crisis and the ideological shifts conspired to dethrone developmental concerns and to place stabilization at the core of economic policy. These are the same policies and practices that have justified a narrow view of social policy to cash transfers, and a failure to link social policy to the broader goals of development". In this "new assault of the development agenda, there was a notion of causation, which insisted that growing poverty in Africa was due to poor economic performance produced by internal policy mistakes that were purported to have brought development and change" (Mkandawire, 2010: 43).

Positioning Mkandawire as a Prophetic Theoretician of Social Policy: Global Vision of a Post-Imperial Order

Mkandawire's life strivings straddled two forty-year periods (1940-1980) and (1980-2020). How then should Africa and the world think with Mkandawire's scholarship? The first forty-year period, between 1940 and 1980, was inundated with African nationalist projects to undo colonial and neocolonial machinations, which defined the constitution of the "social" and the "political" in development and social policy imagination. Ignoring the geographical racist Manichean view of Africa that demarcates sub-Saharan Africa from North Africa, this was inaugurated by Nasser's socialist revolution that emphasized anti-imperialist critiques, land, agrarian and social reforms, and, nationalization and modernization of the Egyptian economy. It was subsequently followed by second generation pan-African Nationalists, such as Nkrumah, Nyerere, Senghor, Touré, Mondlane and Machel, who articulated visions of radical socialist reforms that aimed to create a "New Human" without the residues of colonial machinations. Getachew observes that "[c]entral to the nationalist project of postcolonial citizenship was a developmental and welfarist state that would restructure the national economy to ensure equality" (2019b: 36). The New Human project aimed to transcend a bifurcated colonial political economy which had dissociated the "native" as a "social" from the "economy". In Nkrumah's articulation Africa's transformation was to be achieved through the triple political artefacts of Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Socialism. Nkrumah prophetically pointed out

the pitfalls of Nationalism, and rather elucidated an emancipatory project to undo the racial hierarchies in the nation-state. He averred thus:

> The nationalist phase is a necessary step in the liberation struggle but must never be regarded as the final solution to the problem raised by the economic and political exploitation of our peoples. For *nationalism* is narrow in its application. It works within the geopolitical framework produced by the colonial powers which culminated in the carve up agreed upon in 1884 at the Berlin Conference, where today's political maps of Africa were drawn… The concept of African unity embraces the fundamental needs and characteristics of African *civilisation and ideology*, and at the same time satisfies all the conditions necessary for an accelerated economic and technological advance. Such maximum development would ensure a rational utilisation of the material resources and human potential of our continent along the lines of an integrated economy, and within complementary sectors of production, eliminating all unnecessary forms of competition, economic alienation and duplication. The idea is not to destroy or dismantle the network of foreign mining complexes and industrial companies throughout Africa, but to take them over and operate them in the sole interest of the African peoples (Nkrumah, 1968: 25, 26).

The second phase of his life, the forty-year period, 1980-2020, was defined by encounters of the triumphant proclamation of market fundamentalism by neoliberal ideologues. Racialised neoliberal order solidified an ideology that entrenched an incessant attack on the state, commodification of public goods, humanity and the non-human world, which produced a disgruntled citizenry and an "outsourced state". In the Hebrew scriptures, the number forty symbolizes a period of testing, trial, probation, and renewal as evidenced in the prophetic tradition to inaugurate a new human community, or alternative, to prolong suffering. Mkandawire's life strivings are sandwiched between two epochs that oscillate between "renewal" and "a period of testing". Rabaka's (2010) intervention on W.E.B. Du Bois's work as a pioneering founding sociologist cautions us to be less sanguine about labelling the works of social scientists as prophets. However, Mkandawire's scholarship aimed to bridge Pan-Africanism, Nationalism and Socialism for an emancipatory project. He is thus a prophet calling on the African masses to reclaim the "Black Radical Tradition" under an epoch where such views were considered anachronistic and would therefore be an antidote to what is deemed "neoliberal progress". This is reified in Africa's inability to produce a vaccine to mitigate against the Covid-19 pandemic. The virtues of self-reliance as articulated in the pan-Africanist Nationalist discourse have never been realized. It is true that the core capitalist countries perpetuate suffering of both the human and non-human world, more evident through vaccine nationalism and apartheid, global medical hoarding. However, the development trajectory that most countries have followed on the African continent is a far cry from the expositions of self-reliance that Nationalists, such as Nkrumah and Nyerere, practised toward the subversion of empire and racist capitalism.

Mkandawire's scholarly corpus was fraught with limitations. Normative assumptions of transformative social policy presume that poverty and inequality can be alleviated through policy interventions and a teleological goal of "catching up". It is not by accident that the so-called "darker races" of the world constitute the majority of the world's poorest. Historical processes of colonialization coalesced and conspired with power, skewed understandings of geographical endowments, gender, citizenship, and scientific racism to produce new forms of social organization that pivoted race to be the entry point of accessing social, political and economic rights. Colonial fascism (of which neoliberalism is one manifestation amongst many) facilitates a regime of domination whereby the modern global economy is built and sustained by anti-Black racism and Black death. Social policy is therefore enmeshed in processes of policy and colonial violence, and can, thus, not be abstracted from the triple oppressions of racism, capitalism and patriarchy, which continue to reproduce a hierarchical political economy. Of course, TSP insists on altering social and power relations; yet this is not the same

task as that of forging a post-imperial world. Notwithstanding the identification of neoliberalism as a purveyor of African social ills, Mkandawire (2016) was not blind to imperial social policy. For he had already articulated the contours of what he coined the "Fourth Great Transformation". He averred thus:

> With the neoliberal model now in ruins, it is important to think of a new global order which will actually be built on, and will facilitate, social orders that are developmental, socially inclusive and democratic. We do not, as yet, have any global institutions that mobilise collective action against the disruptive consequences of globalisation or that channel processes of globalisation towards what we all collectively deem desirable. The first task, therefore, relates to the creation of global institutions that would ensure that the commitments to justice, equality and democracy are translatable into global and national policies. The second task involves intellectually and ideologically challenging the views and discursive practices that too often fetishised globalisation into some exogenous force that ineluctably imposes its laws on the human race (2016: 16).

Throughout his scholarship, Mkandawire hardly wrote on processes of race and racialization, but remained critical of imperial public policy making. Rather than conceptualizing social policy as "transformative", the imagination of "social policy as reparations" provides potent articulations of inaugurating a post-imperial world order. Poverty and inequality are sustained because of policy decisions being carved out of colonial violence. Conceptualizing social policy as reparations removes the impetus of its normative instruments. The contemporary African philosopher, Táíwò (2022), opines that most theorizing about reparations treats it as a social justice project — either rooted in reconciliatory justice focused on making amends in the present or, they focus on the past, emphasizing restitution for historical wrongs. Neither approach is optimal; rather, Táíwò (2022) advances the case for reparations rooted in distributive justice, which he refers to as the "constructive" view of reparations. Billions of Africans and the formerly colonized people across the world live through the dystopia wrought by racialized hierarchical neoliberalism. Their plight cannot be undone by adopting "transformative" social policies. Transformative social policy is not an antidote to world poverty. I, therefore, agree with the Afro-pessimistic literature (Sexton 2010, 2011; Wilderson, 2008, 2020), which opposes humanist social scientists who engage the history of Black subjectivity as one of entrenched political discrimination and social ostracization; for Afro-pessimism maintains that Black people are constitutively excluded from the category of the self-possessing, rights-bearing human being of modernity (see Wilderson, 2008). While second generation pan-African Nationalism was tethered to the nation-state, Getachew (2019:25) also cautions us "that the worldmaking of decolonization should be understood as an internationalism of the nation-state". She goes on to argue: "The pursuit of international nondomination entailed a thoroughgoing reinvention of the legal, political, and economic structures of the international order. The postimperial world order was not only more expansive and inclusive but also grounded on the ideal of creating an international society free from domination" (Getachew, 2019: 25). This is the lure of 21st-century Pan-Africanism that will dismantle the racialized global neoliberal project.

Conclusion

Neoliberalism is a coherent theory that has been articulated to commodify and order human and non-human relations. Mkandawire's scholarship provided prophetic antidotes and epistemic interventions at the nexus of social policy, democracy, and development that challenged the knowledge hegemony produced under the neoliberal gaze. He never refrained from engaging Africa's position of the world through the lenses of world society, thereby positioning Africa as an interlocutor and pioneer in conceptualizing wellbeing and welfare. His corpus on social policy bequeathed a tradition of an "Africa" as a "Thinking Space, ",

manifested across unique periodizations of the continent's dynamic socio-economic and political landscape. Mkandawire's social policy corpus is unique in that it never lost the materialist impetus that constitutes the life's strivings of millions of African citizens that live under the scourge of authoritarian and outsourced states, imperial public policy making and the dilemmas of the pan-Africanist Nationalist project. His observations on social policy and development have become much more poignant for an African continent and a world that has faced the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic; emanating from a racialized neoliberal crisis that places emphasis on the rollout of physical and social infrastructure; as well as the infantilization of the African state as incapable of being benevolent to champion citizens' wellbeing. Building on these foundational tenets of transformative social policy, I also argue that conceptualizing "social policy as reparations" provides a powerful articulation of decentering the global White polity for Africa's liberation and structural transformation.

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Biography

Madalitso Zililo Phiri is a critical pan-African Black Sociologist who is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg's, Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study, Sessional Lecturer, Sociology Department at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He is currently working on a monograph building on his doctoral dissertation tentatively 'The Colour of Inequality in South Africa and Brazil: Making Sense of Transformative Social Policy' under contract with Brill. Phiri's myriad publications include book chapters and refereed journal articles in internationally accredited journals such as the *Monthly Review*, the *Journal of Southern African Studies* and the *South African Journal of International Affairs*. He is a Fellow, Next Generation of Social Science in Africa, through the Social Science Council, New York, United States and the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), Johannesburg, South Africa.

Notes

[1] I borrow the idea of the "Third Space" from Fantu Cheru's (2022) engagement with both Mkandawire and Amin's ideas on Africa's liberation. Cheru suggests that the old categories of First World, Second World and Third World do not make sense anymore. The First World, whose development experience Africans are constantly told to emulate, is in deep crisis and the 2007-08 financial crisis only helped expose the insanity of free market dogmatism. The Second World virtually does not exist anymore. What used to be the Third World has gone in different directions – while many countries are immersed in poverty, looting and self-destruction, the other half is making their own history, thus fundamentally shifting the balance of power in the world economy. What once used to be the 'periphery' now has a significant influence on what goes on in the 'core' countries. The past is dead and the future is unknown (Amin). Is this a good thing or a bad thing? The Third Space is an epoch whereby Africans are finally free from the tyranny of 'received ideas' so that they can make new history.

[2] Framing Pan-Africanism through the language of "founding fathers" is a problematic motif. Pan-Africanism as an anti-colonial movement pivoted women as makers of history and not just peripheral figures. Rabaka (2020: 7) cautions us not only to include and accent women's contributions to Pan-Africanism but also critically

explore how gender and the patriarchy of many male Pan-Africanists historically influenced and continues to inform what we conceive of as the Pan-African idea and movement. The articulation of the plurality of Pan-Africanism—which is to say, Pan-Africanisms—is one of the most distinctive discursive characteristics of Pan-Africanism in the twenty-first century. If we turn to the Pan-African Conference of 1900, then and there we should note that six of the fifty-one conferees were women, including Anna Julia Cooper, Fannie Barrier Williams, Ella D. Barrier, and Anna H. Jones. Were we to turn our attention to the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which is also commonly called the "Garvey Movement," throughout its existence, and certainly during its peak period (circa 1917–1927) women played pivotal roles in the movement, including Amy Ashwood Garvey, Amy Jacques Garvey, Henrietta Vinton Davis, Queen Mother Audley Moore, Mittie Maude Lena Gordon, and Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena (Rabaka 2020: 7).