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## **Social Policy Development in South Africa: A Shift towards a Redistributive Paradigm? *Research Proposal***

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# Introduction

Social policy and programme innovations in developing countries have attracted widespread international attention. Interesting questions have arisen regarding the emergence, nature and effectiveness of recent social policy pathways, and whether these represent substantively new and transformative approaches to the social development challenges faced in low and middle income contexts. This South African case study contributes to the UNRISD 'New Directions in Social Policy: Alternatives from and for the Global South' which seeks to address these important questions.

South Africa offers a notable contribution to the comparative study of social policy, and the identification of policy drivers of social policy in emerging economies. South Africa represents an interesting case study in the global landscape of social policy, both for its historical and for its current trajectories. Written soon after the advent of democracy, the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) drew on a social developmental paradigm that viewed social and economic development as interdependent within a broad policy framework. However, many challenges have held back the full integration of social and economic policy, towards a redistributive and less unequal society. It is therefore still an open question whether (and why) the actual social policy framework in South Africa constitutes a shift towards a redistributive paradigm built on social justice or whether social policy is primarily viewed as a secondary element in a broader neoliberal economic vision.

## Aims of the research

The project aims to answer the question: 'To what extent is South African social policy leaning in new directions, in policy and in practice?'. In alignment with the overall UNRISD research objectives (UNRISD 2014), the study will seek to determine whether the social policy landscape in South Africa represents a new social policy model, and its relevance to the Global South. This project will contribute to cross-country debates and the compilation of evidence regarding alternative policies for social development in low- and middle-income countries.

Towards answering the research question, we will prepare three output papers and one synthesis paper and seek to respond to the following specific objectives:

- To identify the political and institutional drivers<sup>1</sup> of social policy in South Africa
- To systematically describe the relationship between social, economic and environmental policies and their associated development outcomes.
- To examine disparate social policies in South Africa within an integrated framework of analysis
- To prepare in-depth and sector specific case studies, which can illustrate the role of institutions and actors in shaping social policy
- To contribute to the body of evidence that will inform strategies to meet the post-2015 challenges of social development.

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<sup>1</sup> We understand social policy drivers as the actors, ideas and institutions that primarily influence and direct social policy change (see Conceptual Framework below)

## **Social policy in South Africa: Literature review**

Current trends in policy development in South Africa are complex and in many cases contradictory. Output papers will document and highlight specific aspects of and trends in social policy development in South Africa that contribute to understanding the political and institutional drivers and the nature of social policy paradigm shifts. This brief and selected overview of social policy in South Africa aims to distil certain key dimensions, which are of particular relevance to other emerging economies.

### ***Towards a developmental social policy paradigm***

Historically, South Africa's social policy and welfare systems were rooted in European models, yet aligned with racially discriminatory apartheid policies. The restructuring of the welfare system, after the advent of democracy in 1994, was instituted as part of a larger project to transform South African society according to non-racial principles of justice and equity (Patel 1992, Woolard et al. 2011).

In the realm of its welfare regime, South Africa provides a striking and recent example of a radical consensus to shift from a remedial to a developmental paradigm. The policy shift was negotiated against a backdrop of serious fiscal resource constraints between divergent professional, organisational and sectoral interests (Lund 2008, van der Berg and Moses 2012). At the same time, one of the redistributive achievements has been the relatively high social spending for a middle income country, mainly on health, education, social security (social assistance and social insurance) and housing (ILO 2014).

The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) drew on a social developmental paradigm that viewed social and economic development as interdependent within a broad policy framework. As a result, innovation and good practice examples have emerged which continue to inform theory and practice. For example, the restructuring of the administration of the social security system to improve efficiency and effectiveness through the creation of a national social security agency to manage the delivery of social grants has been an important development (Brockerhoff 2010).

However, many challenges have held back the full integration of social and economic policy, towards a redistributive and more equal society. The course of social policy continues to be contested among strong economic, political and social interests (Lund 2008). For example, the balance between labour rights and economic growth remains disputed between the labour movement, which prioritises the rights of workers, and the private sector, which argues for greater flexibility (Patel 2015). In relation to traditional social security measures, the South African state chose to emphasise social assistance over social insurance, as the latter tends to cover only those in employment (encompassing contributory schemes such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund). This choice was driven by the political and economic pressures of high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, and has led to a significant expansion of social assistance (Woolard et al. 2011). This has been widely hailed as a successful and important poverty alleviation and income protection programme, although it has come at some cost to welfare services, the second arm of social development services as currently structured. Welfare services, such as child protection, or therapeutic services,

or local community development, are largely underfunded and poorly supported in contrast with social assistance (Patel, 2015).

A review of social spending in South Africa enables a deeper understanding of the complex and non-linear links between social spending and social outcomes. Social spending has increased greatly since 1995, with strong resource redistributive effects and increases in access to housing, electricity, water and sanitation. However, despite high spending on education and health (for example public spending on education is about 6% of GDP), enormous challenges persist in the quality and inequality of services available and in the achievement of desirable outcomes (van der Berg and Moses 2012).

A strong role for the state has been re-emphasised, as the destabilising effects of unregulated financial markets have been made visible during financial crises in South Africa as elsewhere, yet institutional issues and inadequate management and administrative capability have stunted opportunities for integrated development (N.P.C. 2013). Policy-makers face challenges from within the country (e.g. adjusting past and present inequalities in labour markets; slow economic growth; high levels of unmet health needs) and outside (e.g. through the insecurity of global financial markets). The need to create jobs is a critical issue for both economic and social policy, with implications for wage policy, decisions around investment in capital intensive or labour intensive sectors of the economy, social security for formal and informal workers, investment in education and health (Patel 2015).

### ***Constitutionally guaranteed social and economic rights and legal challenges to enforcement of rights***

South Africa's Constitution promotes and protects civil, political rights and social and economic rights (R.S.A. 1996). Together with the Bill of Rights and South Africa's commitments to international human rights, the Constitution provides a strong rights-based framework, where social rights, including the right to a minimum standard of living, are guaranteed – within the financial means of the government (Plagerson and Ulriksen 2014). A vibrant civil society has played a key role in achieving the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights, through both collaborative and adversarial means. While a rights-based approach undoubtedly sets a solid foundation for social and economic policy, in her book 'Social Welfare & Social Development in South Africa', Patel (2015) writes that:

*'a human rights approach to social policy raises considerable public expectations about what the government is expected to deliver and what it can realistically deliver. Managing this tension requires making skillful policy choices and managing pressures from different interest groups. How far redistribution will progress and how far social rights will proceed will depend on the balance of power and pressure exerted by the parties and interest groups which may or may not lead to a compromise between them. It is in this respect that the future is uncertain and that public policy could move in different directions. While the current macro social policy and shift in emphasis provides an enabling environment for social development, institutional factors cannot be ignored.'*

Thus, as in many other countries, South Africa continues to grapple with the challenges of social and economic rights as both a normative and substantive reality, as a future goal to constantly aim towards and as a present standard against which to be evaluated.

## ***Ideological pluralism***

Social policy in South Africa has been forged at the intersection of different ideological premises (Lund 2008, Devereux 2014). In order to identify the drivers of social policy that will determine future trajectories, it is essential to analytically engage with the positioning of different actors, ideas and institutions. The effects of ideological contestation have been observed in various contexts. For example, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which set the framework for social and economic development in 1994, was socially oriented with a strong redistributive remit. However, the subsequent macro-economic policy, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR), adopted in 1997, emphasized fiscal austerity and focused on building a globally competitive economy, attracting foreign investment to promote growth and privatisation of state assets and liberalisation of the economy. This was criticised by the trade unions and sectors of civil society as a conservative neo-liberal economic policy that contradicted the government's previous commitment to social goals (Seekings 2013).

In the area of social assistance, there have been recent concomitant policy shifts towards both universality and towards the introduction of conditionality (Lund 2008). In popular discourse, grants are at times viewed disparagingly, even by senior government officials, as hand-outs that foster dependency and laziness (Marais 2011, Surender et al. 2010). In 2010, conditionalities related to school attendance were attached to the Child Support Grant (CSG) despite the high levels of school attendance (Lund 2011). Yet the CSG has been gradually extended from children under the age of seven to all children under the age of 18 in poor households (Eyal and Woolard 2011). Furthermore, in line with the constitutional promise of progressive realisation of social rights, in a move towards universality, the Minister of Finance proposed in the 2013 budget speech that the Old Age Grant means test should be phased out by 2016, a proposal that signals a move towards categorical coverage based solely on age (Plagerson and Ulriksen 2013).

## ***Partnership between public, private and voluntary sectors: cooperation, competition and contention***

A significant feature of social development in South Africa is the model for social sector provision by a partnership of the public, private and voluntary sectors. The drivers of social policy result from the complex nature of these partnerships. The voluntary sector in particular has a long history of expertise and infrastructure in the delivery of services, though not necessarily with a developmental approach (Patel 2012). Because of issues of financing, accountability and trust, the partnership model has met challenges. In response to perceived threats to their autonomy, civil society organisations have in some cases focused solely on service delivery to avoid adverse relations with the state as their funders. In other instances, civil society organisations have vociferously taken on a greater role in monitoring access to socio-economic rights, resorting to legal action against the state where they felt this was necessary (Mirugi-Mukundi 2010, Proudlock 2014). Voluntary organisations are also funded by the private business sector through Corporate Social Investment (CSI) programmes. In 2003, major listed South African companies allocated an average of one percent of pre-tax profit to CSI, which is below the international norm and allows scope for increased CSI allocations for social development (Patel 2015).

Current National Health Insurance (NHI) plans provide a platform for the analysis of evolving relationships between the private, public and non-state sectors. National and pilot initiatives underway to deliver a national social health insurance scheme are being negotiated amidst strong competing interests. The proposals involve the integration of the current two-tier systems of health and health insurance in which private and public service providers have operated largely independently. Trade unions are strongly supportive of proposals to establish the NHI system. Objections expressed by the private sector are focusing on weaknesses in state capacity to manage health services structures (Seekings 2013, Woolard et al. 2011).

### ***The strong nationally-driven nature of social policy, independent from external donors***

The South African social policy framework has roots back to the 1920s and thus developed during the apartheid era, which was a period characterised by international isolation. Post 1994, South Africa has reconnected with the world but remained relatively independent of international aid. This contrasts with the developments in many middle- and low-income countries where social policy developments are more recent and funded largely by international donors. However, as economies seek ways to build sustainable social policies, South Africa is an interesting case as the country has developed and funded its social policies through domestically mobilised resources. In the South African case, it is important to understand how the expansion of social assistance has developed in a context of fiscal constraint but also improved tax compliance and expansion of the tax-base (van der Berg and Moses 2012, Ulriksen 2014).

### ***The expansion of social security***

Internationally, there has been a shift in social security from a 'welfare state' approach to a more conservative residual approach. The developmental approach is an emerging policy alternative which attempts to find a middle ground between institutional and residual approaches (Patel 2015, Midgley 1995, Sherraden 2003). The South African approach to social security incorporates a range of strategies such as social assistance targeted at those in need, social insurance, informal systems of support, which combined seek to address the universal needs of the population. Social assistance has experienced a particularly large expansion over the past two decades and is targeted at the poorest and most vulnerable groups in society, the elderly, disabled and the young (Devereux 2011). Currently, the South African government distributes more than 16 million social grants which means that almost a third of the population benefit from the social grant system (Plagerson and Ulriksen 2013).

The future direction of social security is not settled and is highly contested, as there are strong pressures from grassroots organisations to expand the safety nets (Patel 2015). A major limitation is the lack of social assistance for the unemployed and a lack of access to social insurance for informal and non-standard workers (Devereux 2011).

Gender is a key dimension in the development of social security policy and practice. Levels of poverty and economic vulnerability are higher among women (Posel and Rogan 2012). A large proportion of social assistance recipients are women, principally because the grant with the widest reach is the Child Support Grant, supporting over 11 million poor children, and it is disbursed to the child's primary caregiver, usually a woman. Interestingly, this grant is gender neutral in that the regulations state the primary caregiver can be male or female, but because care work in South Africa remains so strongly gendered, women shoulder by far the majority of caregiving responsibilities (Patel and Hochfeld, 2011). Women are over-represented among informal workers and are therefore disproportionately disadvantaged by the lack of protection in this sector, in relation to poor working conditions, a lack of maternity benefits, and no unemployment, disability and disease insurance (Plagerson and Ulriksen 2013).

### ***The role of institutions in securing the sustainability of social policies and programmes***

Like elsewhere, the implementation of social policies in South Africa is the responsibility of a range of different government institutions. The provision of social services – health and education – is the responsibility of the respective ministries; with varying roles played by national and provisional governments (Coetzee et al. 2012). With the passing of the South African Social Security Agency Act of 2004, the government established SASSA (South African Social Security Agency) in 2006 to administrate the implementation of social assistance schemes. The Act also makes provision for SASSA to regulate insurance schemes, but as of yet social insurance schemes are spread across different implementing agencies (Plagerson and Ulriksen 2014).

Fragmentation of social policy programmes and lack of coordination across institutions and levels of government implementing policy can increase the possibility that social policy provisions are ineffective (Lund 2008). Conversely, the establishment of institutions with clear objectives, such as SASSA, can improve the implementation of social policy. Implementing institutions may also affect the direction that social policy takes, for instance, by advocating policy changes. Hence, incremental changes to policy, introduced for pragmatic administrative reasons may come to constitute a substantial shift in the eventual social policy paradigm.

### ***Policy linkages***

The discourse of development in South Africa is one of integrated and intersectoral policy reform. Yet the realities of segmented and vertical administrative structures, and budget allocation processes, generate significant challenges in aligning policy implementation between social and economic and other sectors, and between different pillars of social policy within the social sector (Lund 2008). A number of disjunctions still characterize public policy, for example between policies that target economically productive and economically marginalised actors (Devereux 2014, Ulriksen 2012). These disconnections have considerably weakened capacity to tackle multi-dimensional issues such as persistent levels of high unemployment (Triegaardt 2006).

The mining sector offers an interesting perspective on opportunities for developing stronger intersectoral connections (Coetzee et al. 2012). Historically, the mining sector has remained quite insular, with poor linkages beyond transport and energy sectors, due to a primary focus on extracting and shipping bulk minerals to overseas markets (U.N.E.C.A. 2011). Recent attention to climate change considerations and international commitments, and the need to mitigate emissions, may contribute to redirecting the economy toward low carbon development strategies, providing new opportunities to scale up and mainstream significant socio-economic development as an integral part of natural resource policy (N.P.C. 2013, U.N.E.C.A. 2011, Edigheji 2010).

Public works is also an example of a policy area that has both social and economic features. The Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP) was introduced in 2004, to create employment for the unemployed, mainly in infrastructure projects (Woolard et al. 2011). It is an interesting feature of the South African public works programmes that social insurance schemes have been linked to the provision of wages. However, the multiplicity of objectives also lead to contradictory expectations with some viewing public works primarily as social safety nets and others arguing that public works represent genuine employment opportunities (McCord 2012).

## Theoretical framework

We understand social policy as a means to promoting social well-being, to securing a minimum standard of living for all people and ensuring effective access to a range of basic goods and services (Patel, 2015, forthcoming, Hall and Midgley 2004). We also align ourselves with the understanding that “social policy affects the institutions and policies in the spheres of production, redistribution, protection and reproduction” (UNRISD, 2014, p.18).

The purpose of the framework is to provide a general grid of analysis, in order to determine to what extent South African social policy is leaning in new directions, in policy and in practice. The framework will also help to ensure consistency across the papers.

Figure 1 summarises the approach we will take. In view of our aim to support a comparative study of social policy across the various countries in the UNRISD study of ‘New directions in social policy’, the study will draw on a number of tools of analysis for social policy which are common to many UNRISD research initiatives, including institutional complementarity analysis, political economy analysis and transformational social policy analysis (Amable and Ernest 2005, Mkandawire 2004, Thelen 1999, U.N.R.I.S.D. 2014). National (macro and micro) and international levels of analysis will be taken into account.

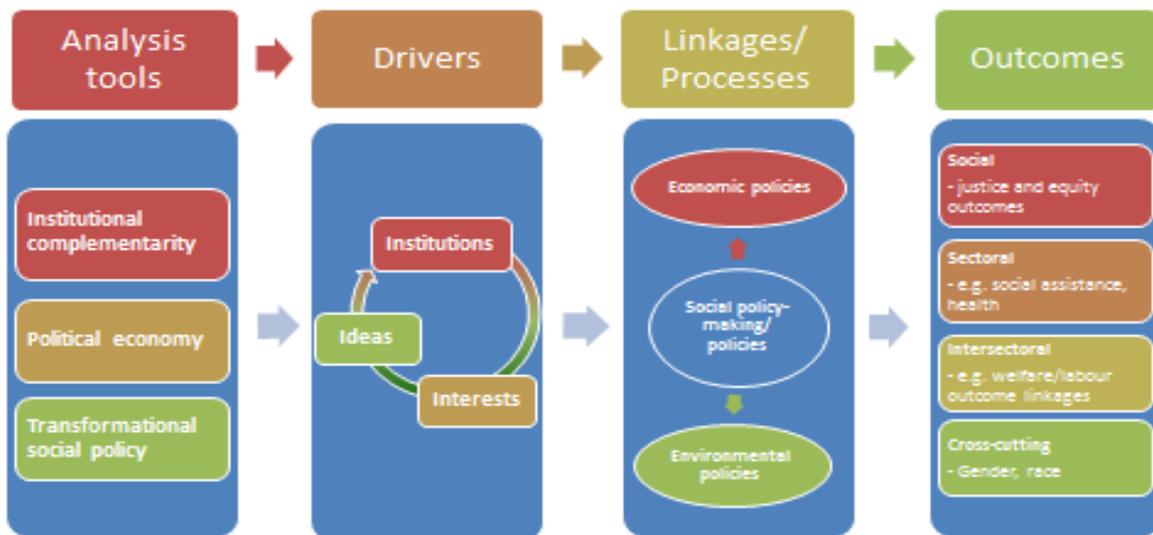
In each paper, in order to identify the political and institutional drivers, an in-depth analysis of ideas, actors and institutions will be undertaken. In the literature, there is of course a range of factors that can affect social policy, but they are conventionally categorised as follows (Hay, 2004):

- **Interests:** This refers to different actors (politicians, parties, civil society, business and union organisations, voters etc.) that can affect policy in a variety of fora. In a political economy perspective these actors are seen to compete, negotiate and

compromise with regard to different policy preferences (Esping-Andersen 1996, Korpi and Palme 2003)

- **Ideas:** Actors are often informed (implicitly or explicitly) by certain ideas and ideologies and engage in ideational contestations that affect policy directions (Hay 2004). In an interconnected international context, the role of a global diffusion of ideas may also influence the policy options that seem realistic/relevant (Hall and Midgley 2004).
- **Institutions:** Multiple institutions interact with ideas and interests in the policy landscape. Processes of change (the rise and fall of different institutions over time) and the interactions between institutions (institutional complementarity) contribute to the space allocated to social policy within public policy. Institutional change is thus possible, even though institutions tend to create positive feedbacks, which reinforce the recurrence of a particular pattern (Thelen, 1999).

Figure 1: Analytical framework



Source: Prepared by authors, informed by UNRISD concept note

We draw attention to some of the salient features of this conceptual framework, which we believe are particularly relevant to the context of social policy analysis in emerging economies:

1. To capture the complexity of social policy trends, our analysis must draw on multiple perspectives. It cannot for example be limited to institutional analysis, but must incorporate transformational social policy analysis in order to provide an overview of drivers, processes *and* outcomes, since the relationship between these components is by no means linear
2. The definitions of and linkages between ideas, institutions and interests draws on traditional distinctions outlined above, but must be open to transcending these. For example as was outlined earlier, civil society (in all its rich variety) in South Africa plays both a role as an ‘interest’, in competition and negotiation with other interests, but also has an institutional dimension which cannot be neglected.

Following this conceptual framework, the three output papers will seek to determine dominant ideas, interests and institutions that shape general and specific areas of social policy and the interlinkages between different policy areas, with particular attention to the processes of social policy-making. In addition, the papers will consider the possible outcomes of the specific policy fields studied. Within this broad approach, each paper will emphasise particular themes of the conceptual framework, as explained in Section 6.

Finally, particularly in the fourth synthesis paper, this study will seek to critically engage and combine traditional welfare state literature and more recent work on social developmental and social protection, in order to locate South Africa's social policy within a comparative framework (Fine 2014, Gough 2004). In order to gauge whether social policy development in South Africa amounts to any significant change, as well as its direction, the paper will establish the character of its social policy framework at the creation of the New South Africa in 1994 and again, twenty years later, in 2014. To establish a continuum of possible social policy frameworks, we build particularly on Titmuss' work (1974) as he was concerned with the values and ends of social policy (Powell and Barrientos 2011). However we also take with us from Esping-Andersen (1990) the importance of considering social policies as interrelated with other policy areas, and from (2015) the critical role of a plurality of institutions (including civil society and family) in providing welfare.

Drawing on this literature, we consider pluralistic social policy frameworks to be placed somewhere between the poles of a basic and a transformative framework. The basic framework has the most minimal form of social policy; it is based on norms of individual responsibility, gives provisions based on narrow forms of reciprocity, considers social policy as subordinate to economic policies, and regards the market as primary welfare provider, with the state taking the final responsibility. The transformative framework, on the other hand, is built on norms of solidarity, provides services and transfers based on rights, and considers social and economic policies as complementary. These poles are, of course, extreme types, and it is expected that countries place themselves somewhere in between and that the variety of policies may have conflicting elements. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the substantive policy changes in South Africa over time and considering their hierarchical placement and weight, the framework will give some indication of the direction of policy change (towards the basic or the transformational) and which elements constitute newness in comparison to more traditional social policy frameworks

## **Methods**

The project aims to answer the question: 'What is the overall direction of social policy in South Africa?' Towards answering the research question, we will prepare three output papers and one synthesis paper (see Section 6 for more detail).

Each output paper will consist of an overview of specific social policy trends, in their historical and national (and international) policy context. These overviews will then be followed by two case studies in which theoretical hypotheses can be tested and applied. Systematic secondary data research will inform social policy overviews, drawing on available literature. Primary research for the in-depth case studies will draw on quantitative and qualitative datasets available to the CSDA (for example current

projects being conducted in mining communities and gender impact studies of social assistance programmes), and on interviews with purposively selected key stakeholders (to include, as appropriate, representatives in National Treasury, Department of Social Development, Department of Labour, Department of Health, as well as experts within each field addressed in the papers).

Key informant interviews (approximately 10-12 over the course of the study) will be carried out by team members, with carefully prepared questionnaires, structured around the conceptual framework and research questions, but also flexible enough to introduce new relevant themes. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts will be undertaken by the researchers. The conceptual framework (Section 4) will provide an integrated analytical approach, which will ensure consistency between the papers.

The synthesis paper will draw on the three output papers and analyse the convergence and divergence between social policy pathways as examined in the output papers, and reach conclusions regarding the political, social, economic and institutional drivers of social policy in South Africa, and the opportunities for cross-country policy transfer. As part of the research for this synthesis paper (in collaboration with UNRISD mobile teams – tbc), we plan to have a feedback workshop with key stakeholders and experts. At this workshop the three output papers would be presented and a discussion on the broader social policy directions could be facilitated. This would provide essential inputs to this final synthesis paper.

## **Research questions and hypotheses**

The central research question is: ‘To what extent is South African social policy leaning in new directions, in policy and in practice? In order to address this question, the team will produce the following four papers:

### ***Linkages between social, economic and environmental policies in South Africa (Question 2 in Concept Note, p10)***

Research questions:

- What is the relationship between social, economic and environmental policies?
- How do competing development paradigms affect the nature and priority of social policy?

Policies that are labelled ‘social’, ‘economic’ or even ‘environmental’ are intertwined (Elson 2004). One way to explore a possible shift on social policy directions in South Africa is to focus on how social policies are linked (or not) to other policy areas. Thus, the focus of this paper is on whether policies are designed and implemented as complementary. Particular attention will be given to understanding the processes of policy-making, their location and trajectories, and which actors and institutions are included/excluded in these processes. The paper will consist of two parts. First, an overview of policies, processes and institutions, which determine the degree of integration and flexibility of interaction between social, economic and environmental

policies in South Africa. This analysis will be informed by institutional complementarity tools as well as themes of transformational social policy (Amable and Ernest 2005, Mkandawire 2004). In the second part, two case studies will provide analytical examples of linkages (or lack of them): a) public works (links between social and economic policies) and b) mining sector (linkages between economic, employment, environmental, social and health policies).

Hypotheses (drawn from our experience and current knowledge of the literature): 1) With respect to policy documents, the priority of the social dimensions of a policy (vis-à-vis economic and environmental dimensions) are dependent on the primary location of that policy (for example within labour, social security or environmental legislation). 2) With respect to policy implementation, potential intersectoral linkages may be lost or changed due to competing political and civil society interests, institutional involvement, and economic factors.

### ***A political economy and institutional analysis of social policy development in South Africa (Questions 3 & 4 in Concept Note, p10)***

Research questions:

- What political-economy factors influence social policy choices and developments?
- How do key institutions affect social policy developments?

This paper combines two theoretical frameworks within the welfare regime literature – political economy and institutionalism. The former focuses on the power relations and political interests of different groups in society in affecting social policy; such groups include both state (national, local and sectoral) and non-state actors in the political, social and economic spheres (Mkandawire 2004). The latter emphasizes the role of specific institutions and path dependency in shaping policy developments (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). The relative weight of these two explanatory factors in policy development may vary over time, depending on how well established the policy framework is. Two case studies are analysed: 1) The development of the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme. This policy is currently in its pilot phase and political interests and bargaining are expected to dominate. 2) The social cash transfer system. This social policy area has a long history and is being implemented by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). It is expected that this institution is increasingly taking a stronger role in influencing policy developments over that of political interests.

Hypotheses: Based on the theoretical framework, it is hypothesized that, amidst a myriad of competing interests, the role of politics is predominant in policy areas still being developed, whereas implementing institutions take a stronger role in affecting policy developments once the policy framework is established.

### ***Gendered social and economic outcomes of social security in South Africa (Questions 5 & 6 in Concept Note, p11)***

Research questions:

- What are the gendered social and economic impacts of different social assistance and social insurance policies in South Africa?
- How can social assistance and social insurance both validate women's care role within the private sphere and promote women's economic independence in the public sphere, without compromising either aim?
- In what ways can the gendered social and economic outcomes be considered as contributing to transformational social policy?

Through the lens of gender, using transformational social policy analysis tools, this paper will aim to go beyond the scope of many impact studies by taking a multi-layered approach to exploring the economic and social outcomes of social security. These outcomes will be evaluated at the levels of household dynamics, especially social reproduction, labour participation, citizen engagement, and from a social justice and human rights perspective.

As social policy in South Africa is a fusion of neo-liberal and redistributive policies, the social and economic impacts of social security on individuals are complex and often different for men and women, particularly when social reproduction is considered. This paper will focus on the cases of social assistance and social insurance and analyse how these two policy areas have both positive as well as undesirable consequences in the public and private realms, with a particular focus on care arrangements and the gendered economic responsibilities for caring for children (Patel and Hochfeld 2011).

Hypotheses (drawn from our current knowledge of available evidence): Evaluations of social assistance and social insurance programmes have demonstrated important material relief for households and given particularly women some financial independence. However, these mechanisms have reinforced women's social reproductive responsibilities, especially in the case of the Old Age Pension and the Child Support Grant, rather than relieve them. These gendered outcomes are systematically different (in type and extent) for social assistance and social insurance policies.

***What is the overall direction of social policy in South Africa?  
(Question 1 in Concept Note, p.9 and Synthesis of papers 1-3)***

Research questions:

- Which social policy areas represent a new policy paradigm in the South African contexts, and which areas do not?
- To what extent are policies moving from a residual, neo-liberal model to a more comprehensive and redistributive model? (e.g. from a basic to a transformative framework)
- What are the political, economic, social and institutional drivers of social policy in South Africa?
- What new social policy levers and innovations present opportunities for cross-country policy transfer?

Descriptively and analytically, this paper will present a bird's eye view of social policy in South Africa, and the complex web of social, economic and environmental policies reviewed in this project. The different components of conceptual framework developed in Section 4, will be brought together in this paper. Transnational, global, regional and national actors and institutions will be mapped to outline the dynamic and evolving environment in which social policy is developing. The authors will assess whether overall, and in the light of historical pathways, these amount to a new direction in social policy, following the conceptual framework and engaging with the welfare regime literature as described in Section 4,. Drawing on the findings of the three output papers, this synthesis will seek to identify the main social, economic, political and institutional drivers of social policy in South Africa. Reflections on emerging themes will be applied to the local context of South Africa and more broadly to other emerging and developing economies in the Global South.

Hypotheses: It is the reality of a complex nexus between redistributive and neo-liberal policy that constitutes a new direction for social policy in South Africa, with broad relevance to many countries. Navigating a coherent path for social policy in the context of multiple competing paradigms (derived at the intersection between ideas, interests and institutions) is the challenge that faces policy-makers and civil society going forward.

## **Timeline and fieldwork**

Each paper will require a detailed literature review, data collection and analysis and writing up of findings, and revision in response to comments from reviewers.

### ***About the researchers and the Centre for Social Development in Africa***

The strong track record of the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) in social policy research and engagement in South Africa places us in a position to provide a dynamic and expansive view of social policy in South Africa. The areas of expertise within the team include: social development research and policy development (including of the White Paper), political economy and welfare regime research, social science and epidemiology, gender studies and social protection, qualitative and quantitative methods. We are an experienced multidisciplinary team, who are used to working together as researchers and authors and we have a proven ability to deliver outputs in a timely manner. Our established networks in academia, policy and activism as well as our already substantial primary research on social policy in South Africa allow us to implement this project effectively.

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