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Colonial political economy, social policy and poverty in Fiji: 1874-1970

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Abstract

Recent analysis of colonial social policy and welfare locates their origin at the period just before and after the WWII. This demonstrates a historical shortsightedness and silences an earlier and racialized and binary Imperial Welfare policy with differential re-distributive structure prior to WW II, which denied services to the colonized. The concepts Metropolitan and Colonial Welfare Regimes are used to capture this binary which also valorized traditional solidarity, of the colonized, as the site for their welfare and absorption social risks. This was in spite of profits which flowed from the colonial economy to imperial coffers under the through the agency of the colonial state. This is held to have contributed to the emergence poverty in post-colonial societies. Fiji is only an example.

Keywords: social policy, colonial state, metropolitan and colonial welfare regimes, poverty

Introduction

Social policy has gained prominence in Fiji's society and economy, recently, with state interventions to assist categories of populations in poverty. This is not dissimilar from other post-colonial societies. Modern social policy, as a response to poverty, includes unemployment relief /insurance, varieties of social assistance, pensions and old age benefits. These were functions of capitalist development as production relations and processes systematically yielded people without adequate means of self-support and facing social/life risks of livelihood. By modern we mean the period of emergence of industrial capitalism and associated aspects, including the state as an administrative bureaucracy,

modern tax systems, racialized perceptions of identity, and the spread of the market and wage labour (Blackburn, 1997: 4).

This paper examines the origin of social policy in Fiji and its links to the emergence of poverty by 1970, the year of political independence. In its beginnings in Europe in the mid-1800s, state welfare services, as part of the capitalist economy were provided through 'Settlements' which recognized the role of workers in the economy (Nell, 1992). Colonialism, as an imperialist project, linked European capitalist countries, as centers of imperial economies, with outlying 'possessions' as either dominions or colonies. By the late nineteenth century these 'possessions', for the British, stretched from Africa, to Asia and the Pacific, and represented a structure of domination for economic profits, and were underpinned by the imperialist logic of race as an ideology and marker of identity and unequal relations (Arendt 1968; Blackburn, 1997). For over half a century 'Settlements,', with a focus on the wellbeing of colonized workers and the provision of social services, were absent in the colonial capitalist economy.

Racial ideology was embedded in the administration of the colonies as much as in the development of an Imperial Welfare State (Yesden and Myers, 2016). This led to a 'paternalist' and 'redistributive' social expenditure of the emerging imperial welfare system (Shilliam, 2018; Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018: Bhambra, 2022) which, inspite of its liberal underpinnings, was perceived as inapplicable to the governance of 'backward peoples' (Harris, 2010). Thus imperialism, as Lewis (2011) has noted, accommodated its liberalism with racism as a component of its ideology, which was expressed through practices of colonial capitalism. This partly underlines the enlisting of the vocabulary 'bastard' to describe colonial capitalism (Brett, 1973; Plange, 1984) which simply means that capitalism, in its colonial form, did not live up to its assumed historical mission. Spivak's (1999: 83) description of this failure of a historical mission is of significance here. "Capitalism", she noted, "is thus the pharmakon of Marxism. It produces the possibility of the dialectic … [but] left to its own resources it also blocks that operation." We hold the benign neglect of the welfare of colonized workers through deliberate denial of relevant social services (these days social protection) as one of many instances of this failure.

The approach in this paper is framed through the acceptance of colonization as an imperialist project and a neo-Marxist analysis of the capitalist transformation of pre-capitalist societies in the nineteenth century under the auspices of a colonial state as the representative of the capitalist imperial state. A racialized welfare practice before the period of independence was embedded in the colonial administration as part of imperial welfare development policy and practice. This excluded the colonized as beneficiaries of social services that address social and life risks within the colonial capitalist economy. Thus, in lieu of state services, the colonized (including in some situations an imported labour) were left to the welfare and care values of their traditional institutions which, simultaneously, the colonial capitalist economy undermined. But this was not due to the valorization of traditional institutions as such. It was an economic decision to contain the resources of the colonial state. It was only about the period after WW II that policy for social services, with the colonized as focus, became part of colonial administration and as a directive from the Colonial office. This exclusion contributed significantly to the emergence of poverty in the colonies (Bowden and Mosley, 2010) by the time of independence. We argue therefore that the historical roots of poverty in many post-colonial societies are, partly, traceable to racialized capitalist imperial welfare policy which benignly neglected the colonized until much later and, we make the case for Fiji in this paper.

We note here that narratives of the historiography of the British welfare state, from late nineteenth century, were without mention of the colonies; indeed as if they did not exist. Criticisms of poverty (Booth, 1886; Slater, 1930) which underscored the search for policies and the famous Beveridge

Report of 1945 were devoid of the existence of colonies. Yet, and rightfully, Harris (2021, in exchange of correspondence and quoting Ginsburg) reminded us that ".the [British] Welfare state has been formed around the contradictions and conflicts of capitalist development in specific historical contexts." And any analysis of British capitalism cannot overlook the existence of colonies which will beg the question by Harris "where did the money to pay for enhanced welfare provisions come from and what role did the Empire play in this?" (Harris, 2021 in exchange of correspondence). That the colonies were part of the empire cannot be more emphasized than the recruitment of their able bodied men as soldiers into the imperial British army in the two wars of the twentieth century

The research for the paper engaged the concept of capitalist transformation and colonial welfare practices with relevant archival documents in Fiji. These include the Fiji Blue Books (henceforth FBB), Legislative Council Reports (henceforth Legco), Council Papers (henceforth CP), Legislative Council Debates (henceforth LCB), Colonial Reports (henceforth CR), District Commissioners Report (henceforth DCR), and correspondence, documents and newspaper articles from 1876-1970. Also included is the wider literature on colonialism and social policy, including on Fiji and other countries we are familiar with.

This approach provides an understanding of social policy in the colonies that is different from others, including in Fiji (Mills, 1996; Narayan, 2013; Navuku, 2018) who, as we argue, did not address imperialism and the racialization of social policy practice in the colonies before the period after WWII, leading to independence. There are also Midgley (2011: 37f), and Macpherson (1987) who each introduced imperialism in their respective analyses of colonial social policy, but only to foreclose a critical analysis of race as a logic of imperialism and its role in colonial social policy. Midgley alludes to the "imperial mission." But there is an ambiguity in his articulation of this concept. In one breath he asserts that "colonies promulgated their own regulations and statutes, administered law and order without much reference to metropolitan authorities", and in the other, writes "Of course London always played a major role and metropolitan instructions were issued with increasing frequency" (Midgley, 2011: 39). Macpherson only noted the relationship between colonial exploitation, inappropriate colonial social policy and underdevelopment (1987).

Apparently, these authors were influenced by, and took their cue from, the post-World War II British Imperial policy on the colonies; the Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940 and the policy and practices it outlined for British colonies. With only a consideration to this historical document, and consequent policy practices, they overlooked the nature of welfare practice in the colonies from the late nineteenth century, which was imbued with the imperialist logic of race. Our argument is underlined by a recent observation that imperialism and race remain yawning gaps in the formulation of welfare capitalism and social policy (Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018). Indeed, in the seminal works of Esping-Anderson on the "Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism" (1998) colonies and colonialism were curiously absent. More recently, however, Yesden and Myers (2016) have implied the existence of a racialized "imperial welfare state", with later resonance in the perception of Commonwealth immigrants to metropolitan Britain post World War II.

Imperialism, race and colonial social policy

The conditions of destitution and poverty in the (British) colonies from the early part of twentieth century up to pre- World War II were similar to those in the imperial metropole in Britain. These conditions had emerged as part of the systematic outcomes of (colonial) capitalism. For the metropolitan economy and society, liberalism compelled policy interventions on poverty, unemployment insurance, and old age pensions (Harris, 2010: 5). These predated the Beveridge Report

of 1942. But Beveridge also recommended policies to address the "…existence of a vast population condemned to wretched conditions of life" as "undesirable consequences (of capitalism) which were its systemic and structural offshoot" (Benassi, 2010). This "systematic and structural offshoot" of capitalism also emerged in the colonies before, and at the time of, Beveridge[1]. Fanon captures this vividly as "…towns (of people) starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal and of light, and a town on its knees" (Fanon, 1963: 81).

This situation was not in existence, in any of the 'possessions' before European colonization in the nineteenth century. Yet, neither Beveridge (Shilliam, 2013) nor his predecessors (Harris, 2010) included the colonies as economic peripheries of capitalist Britain and the colonized workers, poor and destitute, in their recommendations (Harris, 2010; Gardner, 2013). The reason was the imperialist ideology that perceived the colonized as a race of backward peoples who are not yet in modernity (Harris, 2010: 5), and (have) to be ruled with the twin strategies of "hegemony and revenue" (Young,1988: 29). They were thus undeserving of such state welfare expenditure (read 'modern') services (Shilliam, 2018: 73; Gardner, 2013; Noyoo, 2017). Beveridge was emphatic on the beneficiaries of his plan as being the "British race" (Shilliam, 2018: 75). Thus, racialized imperial systems of social security, pension, and welfare services were made available for colonial officers, and settlers where they existed (Gardner, 2013; Ward, 1971; Noyoo, 2017). Selected native officers in the colonial service were included in pension and gratuity systems "as deserving" and only "with the special permission of the Governor" (Fiji Ordinance No. 3, 1914,1: Armed Constabulary Ordinance No. 2,1905,1). The racialized system was replicated by private enterprises where only expatriate officers received social security services (Mkandawire, 2016). In both the civil (now public) and private sectors, the burden and cost of social security and welfare for the colonized was left to their "traditional solidarity" of family and kin (Eckert, 2004; Midgley and Piachaud, 2011). In other words, traditional institutions were appropriated under colonial capitalism to serve the economic responsibility of the colonial state. And miscellaneous taxes from the colonized yielded revenue for the empire (Gardner, 2013: 24). What emerged then was a welfare regime (to use Andersen's, 1990, terminology; Isakjee, 2017,8) of a colonial capitalist type. Indeed a type not considered by Esping-Andersen in his 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism"(1990). I have enlisted the concepts 'Colonial welfare regime' and 'Metropolitan welfare regime' to denote the structure of welfare policy and practice in the British empire and its colonies before independence.

The 'colonial welfare regime' and 'metropolitan welfare regime'

From the above, we argue that there was an inchoate social policy of the emerging British Imperial state before the post-World War II, and this was an outcome of "Settlements" and contesting ideologies, and that its redistributive structure was racialized into a binary of services for the colonized and metropolitan workers respectively (Harris, 2010). We use the concepts *"Colonial welfare regime"* and *'Metropolitan welfare regime"* to denote the binary and differential services of the Imperial Welfare system. We also note that each provided the platform for the emergence of post War II/post-colonial social

[1] "The Beveridge Report is widely regarded as the foundation stone of the post-war British welfare state. Of all social reform proposals put forward in various countries during the 1940s, it is the best known. Indeed, its publication put its author on a plinth of fame among social reformers matched only by that of Otto von Bismarck, whose reputation remains somewhat more sullied. Comprehensive and popular, the Beveridge Report claimed to offer all citizens protection as of right "from the cradle to the grave", thereby abolishing the hated household means tests that had characterized public relief in Britain during the Slump years of the1930s."(Whiteside, Noel, 2014).

policy in metropolitan Britain and the ex-colonies respectively. Hence the similarity in the structures of Social Welfare in British post-colonial societies.

The concept "Colonial welfare regime" has an analytical value. First, it provides a tool for excavating from the archive, welfare policies within a colonial political economy from its beginnings, and its imperial origins. Second, it allows the exploration of linkages between colonial social policies and the emergence of poverty in colonial and later post- colonial society; and third, it assists in mapping the differences in 'Social policy regimes in the developing world' (post-colonial societies) (Gough, 2013) .These differences, we believe, were grafted onto inherited 'Colonial welfare regimes' post-independence. Recent works on social policy in colonial societies (Keese, 2011; Noyoo, 2017) are examples, and indicative of the legacy of 'Colonial welfare regime(s).'

The ' Metropolitan Welfare regime', was arrived at (and indeed continues with the role of worker unions) through 'struggles and settlements' (Shilliam, 2018 esp,ch 5) within the parameters of liberal democracy, and it was constituted of a combination of state (public) and private (market) sector services with very limited family or traditional service. On the other hand, 'The Colonial Welfare regime' was imposed by the Colonial State, was also constituted of state (public) and private (market) but with a large component of welfare services provided by indigenous institutions; family and community. The state services were for colonial, and 'chosen' native officers, and settlers in Settler colonies (Gardner, 2010). Private (market) services were for expatriates in the new economic enterprises in the colonies (Mkandawire, 2016) and for the colonized, traditional sources were (assumed to be) the provider. Thus, unlike the metropole there was no state provisions for households of the colonized against social risks. It was almost half a century later, and in the context of the crisis of European imperialism and its internal war and efforts to reassert its dominance (Eckert, 2004) and avert unrest in the colonies, that the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (Colonial office, 1940; Shilliam, 2018, 76) materialized in "recognition of the extent of poverty in the tropical colonies" (Havinden & Meredith, 1993: 218). This followed the Colonial Development Act of 1929 though it differed with its inclusion of 'Welfare." However both, in current policy language, were 'social policy by other means' (Seelkopf, 2015). The design of the 1940 Act, though interventionist in terms of colonial welfare was meant to "ease unemployment in Britain by stimulating demand for manufactured goods" (Gardner, 2010: 129) and "promote commerce with or industry in the United Kingdom" (Shilliam, 2018,69) In the next sections we apply this framework to Fiji, for the period from 1874 to 1970.

The Political economy of Fiji: Colonial capitalist transformation and social policy

Fiji was absorbed into the structure of British imperial economy in 1874. This was after an intervention which arrested dubious efforts of European settler plantation owners to usurp control Fiji in the midst of the 'civilizing mission' of evangelizing Christian missionaries from the 1830s. The 'Civilizing' paraphernalia, including schools and churches, had penetrated Fijian society and provided the earlier compliant Fijian, and later Indian, clerks for the Colonial State (BB, 1880). Characteristic of the emerging white settler plantation economy was a concomitant labour trafficking scheme which transported Pacific Islanders to and from Fiji (Derrick, 1946, XV; Owen, 1956), and included the kidnapping of able-bodied Melanesians (Higginbotham, 2017) from mainly, though not exclusively, the Solomon Islands. The latter, reminiscent of African slavery, is described in the literature as 'Blackbirding' (Derrick,1946,167ff.) and it provided cheap labour for the disparate sugar, copra and

cotton plantations from about the 1860's to the early1900s. Their poor conditions of work, neglect by the planters, and later by the colonial government, have been chronicled by Gillion, (1962). Together with the supply from other Pacific Island countries, described as Polynesian labour, these provided labour for the emerging new economy (CR, 1888-1890). This labour pool without any bereft of any welfare services, by the settlers, was inherited and utilized by the colonial state from its installation in 1874 before negotiations at the higher echelons of the empire endorsed indentured labour for Fiji's colonial economy (Lal, 1992). Within the broad outlines of the argument in this paper this category of workers, a total of about 5637 males and females by the end of the 1880s (BB, 1880), represented the beginnings of wage/food related poverty in Fiji (Naidu, 2021, conversations on labour in colonial Fiji).

Large scale plantation sugar cane production with indentured labour from India, expatriate capital from Australia, and indigenous Fijian land, were the main factors for the transformation of Fiji's pre-capitalist to a colonial capitalist economy from the late nineteenth century (Howard, Plange, Durutalo & Witton, 1984). The Colonial State brokered indentured labour from India from 1879 to 1916 (BB, 1890-1937; Legco, 1884-1970) to enable plantation sugar production alongside copra. An initial five year indentured contract with a return at the labourer's own expense, or an additional and second five year with return at the expense of the state secured and underwrote long term labour, for the new economy dominated by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (hence CSR). A complicit Colonial State overlooked the application of Temple ration, (Harvard Law Review, 2021), abuses, and minimal changes in the indentured condition, which led to rampant resistance in the cane fields (Naidu, 1980;Lal, 1992; Narsey, 1979; Plange, 1990). The colonial state also established the working age as, initially, ten then twelve, and later fifteen years (Gillion, 1962: 108). To "relieve employers from the burden of an indefinite expense"(Legco CP No.1, 1890,1ff) the Colonial State established the Indian Immigration Introduction Fund, Indian Immigration Return-passage Fund, Destitute Indian Fund (not to be confused with the later Destitute Allowance), and Polynesian Immigration Fund (Legco, 1888, 1893) with the key expatriate economic enterprises as contributors and beneficiaries. An Ordinance of 1885 provided "for the Care and Maintenance of Orphan Indian Immigrants" (Legco, 1885, CP.No.3).

With imperial instruments of 'Pacification' (Plange, 1984) such as Regulations, Ordinances and Proclamations, and a modern public administration, backed by, and actual use of, an Armed Constabulary with Fijian footmen, the colonial state asserted its dominance and power over the multiple sovereignties of Fiji's regional chiefdoms and re-ordered their multiple structures of customary authority into a single Native Administration (Legco, C.P No. 34, 1899; France, 1969). In the process "disaffected and dangerous natives in particular localities" were confronted with the constabulary and "pacified" (Ordinances 1876 and 1887). Other Ordinances (Section 111 of 1887) "provided for the confinement of dangerous Natives to particular localities' while Ordinance 1875 allowed the removal of persons from one to another district. Indeed between 1875 and 1905 series of Ordinances established and ensured the dominance of the colonial state (Fiji National Archives) against any resistance to its forceful entrenchment. Compliant chiefs were co-opted into stipendiary magistrates, others given "political pensioning" to abdicate (BB, 1879, 106-108), and for the highest Chief, a pension, "For maintenance of himself and family and for the surrender of certain rights and privileges enjoyed by him before cession" (CR, 1880, 62). This established a small native salariat which grew with the colonial administration, later, into a full 'Public Service' (Legco, 1937). Other regulations endorsed Fijian ownership and retention of their land through legally registered

communities. Within these communities they were supposed to live, under customary law, with usufructuary rights, and be protected "against the corrupting influences of the planter community" (France, 1969: 107). A Land Commission which examined disparate land ownership claims by settlers concluded with the allocation, to them, of over ten percent of land as free hold. (France, 1969). Other land appropriations, leases and rentals were arranged by the Colonial State (France, 1969). In-kind taxes, later supplemented by monetary taxes, were levied on Fijians (Fiji Labour Ordinance, 1876/1895; BB, 1876-1890; Knapman, 1988). The latter was used to induce the entrance of Fijians into the emerging colonial capitalist economy (Plange, 1985; Sutherland, 1992: 27-47) and, by the early 1900s, these taxes accounted for an average of thirty percent of total state revenue (Legco, 1900-1940). A structure of colonial state power exercised through a tripod of administration practices in relation to each of the 'racial' groups in the colony. First were the colonial state approved customary practices, regulations and 'traditional' leaders all bundle into what was described as Native Policy. Second was a Department of Immigration for Indian Affairs and third white planter interest with priviledges and represented in the legislative council. These ensured the colonial structure of domination. And, a la Foucault (2008), but also contrary to his analysis, governmentality in (Fiji) colonial situation was "non-hegemonic with persuasion outweighed by coercion in its structure of dominance"(Guha,1997,xii). This was underscored by a combination of show and use of force, and processes of bio-power; census, birth and death registrations (Wickramasinghe, 2015; Young, 1995), disease notification, a dossier on location and movement of indentured labourers and, for Fijians particularly, the designation and documentation of villages and land owning groups (France, 1969). And with both, Fijians and indentured Indians, for some time, the control and supervision of their movement out of designated spaces.

In the labour market, Fijian access to communal land encouraged the under payment of the full value of their labour, as employers alluded to Fijian communal life as the provider of security (Sutherland, 1992: 29). This practice, in the face of an increasing dominance of wage work and wages, later contributed the tendency to " conceal the emergence of pockets of poverty and destitution among Fijians for which there was no services" (MacNaught, 1982: 70). Meanwhile, the collapse of the cotton market at the end of the American war also impacted on white planters who, with an eye on their profit margins, intensified exploitation of labourers. Other planters, who were not so successful, became destitute through the collapse of their businesses. For indentured labourers, the maintenance of 'Temple ration' meant poverty and starvation (Gillion, 1962). These systemic issues within the economy slowly begun to yield a category of poor within Fiji's society

Imperial social policy in Fiji and the 'colonial welfare regime'

Imperial welfare policy and social security instruments including retirement, pensions, gratuity and later, a racialized Unemployment Relief (for the destitute Europeans) were part of the social policy response to issues of social and life risks in the new and emerging economy (Legco, 1888; BB, 1880; Legco, 1927). Significantly, the policies and regulations provided no service or welfare coverage for the workers inherited by the colonial state. A Pension Ordinance of 1880, with amendments up to 1938, established pensions for the Fiji Colonial Service, including the Armed Constabulary Police of selected Fijians under European command (BB, 1876-1890: Ordinance, No. XIII, 1907; Legcos, 1900-1946; Constabulary Ordinance, 1905, 1906)). For the Native Constabulary "the Governor may from time to time grant rewards and gratuities to such members of the Force as he deems deserving thereof"

(The Armed Constabulary Ordinance, No. 2, 1905). Fijians appointed to the Fiji Colonial Service were included in the pension scheme but only "as they are deemed deserving" (Constabulary Ordinance, No. 2, 1905) and at the discretion of the Governor, but with different actuarial calculation of their pension. They received ten-sixtieth in respect of each year completed compared to fifteenth-sixtieths for European officers. For the latter a bonus was added for "employment in tropical climates" (Ordinance, No. XIII, 1907: 56). These expenditures were documented as .imperial pensions paid in the colony and recoverable from the paymaster General in London as debts (CR, 1886, 295). This was in addition to the Imperial-grant-in-aid on Annexation, of over hundred thousand pounds, as public debt (CR, 1880-1883: 14).

This racialized pension system of the administration was replicated by the new economic enterprises. The Sugar Industry Employees Benefit and Provident Fund, with medical benefits and life pensions, was reserved for European officers. Fijian and Indian workers received only discounted prices for goods purchased in the company shops (BB, 1928: 207). The same pertained for the Gold Industry, together with racialized residential facilities (Plange, 1984; Bain, 1988). With generous access to the main factors of production, by capital, Fiji's economy was transformed successfully (C.R, 1890-1940; Knapmann, 1983, 1985; Narsey, 1979). By the turn of the century, the indentured labour population was over 17,000, and the total Fijian population was about 87,000. This was after a precipitous decline from 114,748 in 1881. Together with other categories, including over 2000 Europeans, the total population of the colony was around 140,000 (BB, 1889). Amendments of the Fijian Labour Ordinance in response to the demands of the economy added more Fijians to the emerging wage labour pool (Labour Ordinance, 1885). The Immigration Funds established before the turn of the century were used to defray costs of indentured labour related expenses such as re-indenture, return, transfer, cemetery, burial and hospital cost (Fiji Ordinance No.IX,1885; Legco,1889, C.P. No. 1) but not welfare provisions.

With economic prosperity (Legco, 1920-36; C.R, 1926-1928), limited deficits and trade surplus of over twenty million pounds, Fiji became "a profitable economy" and, by 1913, "surpassed the West Indies as a British Empire sugar producer (Knapman, 1985: 1). From this, the Colonial State paid out pensions and gratuities which, by 1938, reached a total of 42,443, from its beginning, in 1878, of 1611, pounds (B.B, 1878; 1900-1937). Other shares of this surplus included premiums paid by the CSR to its shareholders of 203,000 and 325,000 pounds, in addition to other miscellaneous payments in excess of 5.7 million pounds in cash over a nine year period (Narsey, 1979). Neither the indentured labour, Fijian wage earners, nor the remnants of Melanesian and Polynesian, labour shared in this redistribution of surplus from the economy. A majority of Indians remained in the sugar cane farms, while a larger population of Fijians, under the umbrella of a Native Policy, were contained in their village communities under their chiefs, and used increasingly as source of cheap labour for the growing economy. Their destinations for labour recruitment included the mines, ports and miscellaneous wage work (Plange, 1984). Portions of rent and royalties accrued from Fijian land yielded profits for Fijians. However traditional norms of distribution ensured the retention of a larger portion by eminent and compliant chiefs of the administration and turning them into wealthy 'landlords' (Durutalo, 1990).

Within the economy and society, a process of state induced class formation on racial lines was evident by the second decade of the twentieth century (Plange, 1985). The commanding heights and the middling ranks, of the economy, from where profits, surplus and pensions were accumulated, were

occupied entirely by expatriate European capital, with bureaucratic support from the Colonial State in collaboration with eminent Fijian chiefs (Plange, 1985). There were also failed, struggling, but relatively few, European settlers and small scale farmers threatened with extinction (Narsey, 1979; 96; Legco, C.P. no. 19, 1920). There were now also free and end-of indentured-Indians with the option to stay. Few ventured into independent work as hawkers, vegetable farmers, miscellaneous wage workers. Others became interpreters and clerks with the administration, where the number Fijians grew steadily. There were also, as part of the controlled intra-empire migration, others from Gujerat, Mauritius and Guyana, who had voluntarily migrated to Fiji, as news of its prosperity grew, and established small businesses in trade and distribution. At the lower ranks was an emerging poor and impoverished and, some, destitute indentured farm labourers with meagre wages, poor working conditions, and in debt, but without any state welfare. Of these categories of wage workers a member of the 1931 Legislative Council debates observed that "With regard with the laboring classes…… I can assure you that their wages have come down very considerably (to) 1s. 6d. a day which you will admit is a heavy cut" (Legco,Oct,20,1931).

There were also Fijian and other wage workers, of the 'Blackbirding' generation, poor and in substandard houses in towns (Legco, C.P. no. 46, 1919). Added to these were Fijian villages becoming poor and starved of young and able bodied men away in towns. (CP 40.1958). Together these constituted, in Fiji's political economy, and in the words Beveridge (1942) "systematic and structural offshoot" of (colonial) capitalism.

The response by the administration was race-based. "Provisions were made", "for Assistance to struggling Europeans and their children" (Legco,1920,C.P.No.13) and for which, the administration expressed disappointment that it was "only in recent years that the cases of destitution among European population have been brought to notice of government" (From Colonial Secretary to Brother Claudius of Marist Brothers, Oct 1918, Legco). Additionally, the administration, "arranged financial support through Planters Loan Bank (Social policy by other means?) of between 300,000 and 400,000 pounds for dairy farming for the failed European settlers" (Narsey, 1979). Included in this package was support for "Returned Sailors and Soldiers of the Great War" (Legco, April, 1921) and, later, an "Unemployment Relief Board for assistance to Europeans" (Legco, Feb, 1932). An Imperial War Pensions Fund, separate from this assistance package, covered the few "Native members of the Fiji Labour Detachment" (Legco, CP.27, 1918) recruited later for the war effort.

For the Indian poor, paupers, destitute, and ageing, there was no state assistance except hospital, cemetery and burial payments debited to the Destitute Indian Fund (B.B, 1927-1930; Legco 1920-1940). Nor was there any assistance to Fijian and other wage workers. For both, the policy response was a "Commission" after the Indian Labourers strike in 1921, "to Enquire into the Cost of Living" (Legco,1920, C.P. No. 46).

The Crisis of Poverty and Welfare in the Colony

Growth of the economy, encouraged by access to the Colonial Development Loan (Legco, C.P.No.68, 1929) and an abundance of indentured labour produced, by the earlier part the twentieth century, a total Indian population of over 60,000 and increasing diversity in the ranks of wage labour (see Table 1 below). Amendments to the Native Labour laws also pushed/pulled more Fijians from their villages

into the wage sectors (see Table 1) with racial differentials, in wages, of about one to seven (Narsey, 1979: 85) in spite of the strike in 1921 (see table 2 below).

Ethnicity	Total Population	%	Agriculture	%	Industry	%	Professional	%
Fijian	84475	57%	2285	10%	845	19%	253	7%
Indian	60634	41%	19433	88%	3179	72%	1244	37%
European & Others	3894	3%	412	2%	379	9%	1905	56%
Total	149003	100%	22130	100%	4403	100%	3402	100%

Table 1. Population and economic sectors - 1929. Source: Fiji Blue Book, 1929

Chapple (1921: 161) noted the extremely low wages for cane farm labour, compared to wages and allowances for European workers. Similar wage and salary structures prevailed in the Copra industry and the Gold mines (Table 2) inspite of falling fortunes from copra and the calls for assistance from the state from planters (Legco, March, 1934)

Employment category	Number employed	Average daily wage
Government	1601	Unskilled ------- 2/6 Semi-skilled— 3/0—6/8 Skilled-------------- 4/0---20/-
Colonial Sugar Refiners (CSR)	European 8 Colored 2460	14/9.5 2/0.3— 2/3.6
Other than CSR (Industrial & Manufacturing) Manufacturing Saw Milling	3000	European 13/6 Colored 2/6.2---2/9 European Tradesmen 20/- Half-caste Handymen 6/- European 18/- Native 3/- Native 3/-

Table 2. Race and wages. Source: Fiji Blue Book, 1927

Ali (1980: 91) observed that with the low wages the Indentured labourer met the deficits for livelihood through Spartan eating habits, loans from the sugar company or the avaricious money lenders, "and for many, after paying for the rations little or nothing was left out of their wages" (Gillion,1962: 105). Living conditions described in detail by Gillion (1962, 103 ff) were conducive to ill-health and disease, and high mortality rates, and suicides were common. (Naidu, 1980; Sutherland, 1992: 36). "The rooms", Gillion noted, "had no floor except that made by the immigrants themselves out of cow dung with three bunks, and firewood, field pots, cooking utensils and wet clothes cluttered about, smoke soot, split food, flies and mosquitoes; and they were neither comfortable nor sanitary" (1962: 105 ff). Resistance, with strikes, similar to, and influenced by ideas from, and political unrests within the empire, especially India, were rampant (Plange, 1984; 1990). These were met, not with redistributive social policies, but, punitively, with incarceration of offenders (Mensah,1995: 204 ff).

The termination of the indentured labour scheme in 1920 within the British imperial economy presented multiple social and economic problems for the Colonial State, as negotiations for alternative forms of labour supply failed (LCD, Oct/Nov, 1921).With a keen interest in maintaining cheap labour, the Administration went to lengths to discourage its return, while taking steps to encourage Indian

settlement in Fiji. In the end, over forty per cent of the 60,000 indentured labourers opted to remain in Fiji. Now, as free people they presented the liberal democratic demands touted by British imperialism to wit, decent wages wages (LCD, 1931) fair representation in the imperial appointed, and capital dominated, Legislative Council (LCD, 1924) and welfare services from the revenue from taxes accrued by the state (Legco,1938; 443ff). By now the Indian community was also diverse, and included, ageing, poverty stricken and free, indentured labourers, without means for a return passage, poverty stricken households of small holder cane farming families, casualties of the restructuring of the cane industry, and a growing population of paupers (Blue Book, 1923-1930). For the small-holder farmers' payments of credits and rent, demanded by CSR, rendered them impoverished (Shephard, 1945) and dependent for livelihood on the Sugar Cane Planter and money lenders (Gillion, 1962: 143), while, , as the Indian representative in the Legislative Council noted, "almost ninety-nine per cent of them have mortgaged their crops, land and their material conditions steadily deteriorating" (Singh: Legco, 24th Oct,1934). Poverty, combined with maltreatment by the CSR, triggered more resistance in the cane fields with leadership provided by an Indian lawyer, Mangalal Doctor, who had arrived in Fiji via Mauritius. These conditions prompted the call within the Legislative Council to ascertain the general economic condition of the people with reference to the Indian community and making relevant and necessary recommendations (Legco, 1938). However, from the perspective of the colonial state social security and welfare of indentured were their own and families responsibility as much the care of the old and infirm (Gillion, 1962, p103ff). Meanwhile deterioration in housing standards in the labour lines, and in the towns, problems with sanitation and cost of living increases, and the depletion of able-bodied men from Fijian villages in search of wages, dominated the persistent demands on the Administration by the emerging unions (CR, 1930: LCD, 1938).

The population of Fijians had also increased steadily after the shocks of an earlier influenza epidemic, and 'expectations' of their possible extinction (Legco C.P 28, 1936); but crushing taxes had led many to "abandon their plantations in the villages" (Legco C P, No. 6, 1932) in search of work and wages, and this "put their village at risk of social disorganization" (Knapman, 1987: 47). Additionally, "the pressing need for cash in rural life also began to create conditions of destitution, as a serious problem in some parts of the country" and "with truly desperate cases of poverty and neglect" (Macnaught, 1982: 70). Within both Indian and Fijian communities, neglect of living conditions by the Administration, and increasing poverty, contributed to the deterioration of health, and high infant mortality as shown below (Table 3).

Race	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931
Fijian	337	323	379	500	267
Indian	164	159	165	245	197
European	5	5	7	-	-
PEMD	5	5	9	-	5

Table 3. Race and Infant Mortality Rates, 1927-1931. Source: Fiji Blue Book, 1927-1931

These challenged the official administrative policy of the preservation of Fijian communal life as other opinions, represented by Acting Governor T.E Fell, suggested changes in vain (CSO, 14/1922). In search for alternative source of cheap labour, the Administration now turned to Fijians as the future for the economy. It opted to utilize the existing Immigration Fund, now over hundred thousand pounds, " for the purpose of preserving the Fijian race as the source of future labour supply for the colony" (Legco CP. No 71, 1928). This, and other issues with sanitation in Fijian villages, according

to Lal (1992: 66), led to the establishment of a Fijian Infant Welfare Scheme. It was attached to the Department of Health but also with training in agriculture to ensure the health and well-being of the Fijian new born and, later, skills for the economy (Legco, CP, No. 76, 1928).

Social crisis and policy response: The destitute relief

The administration's policy on social services was primarily on education and public health. An established Department of Education, under which was located budget allocations for social service, ensured the provision of basic education, with grants in support of the missionaries' schools (Legco, 1920-1968). For poverty related cases, the administration maintained its enduring policy. For Fijians it maintained its abiding belief in Fijian social solidarity with traditional Fijian values of family care and support (CR, 1936-1950). With Indians it proffered that, "the community has risen rapidly in material prosperity to constitute their advance in the future" (CR, 1928: 54). And in response to a request by the Indian representative in the Legislative Council for "the large surplus in taxes from the community should be returned to them," in social services the Financial Secretary replied that, "Are we not returning them as fast as we can to the community in the shape of those additional education, medical and other public services that we are showering upon them" (LCD, 1936: 448). Notwithstanding this response, debates on poverty and destitution persisted within the Legislative Council and especially on the Appropriation Bill (1940), for a "Policy to provide sustenance for the poor classes of this colony" (LCD, Dec, 18th 1940). The response from the Administration was an unfunded, racially targeted Destitute Allowance or Relief, in 1936; almost half a century after the onset of indentured labour in Fiji. Thus, contrary to other writers on Fiji (Navuku, 2017; Mills, 1999), we argue that 1921 was not the beginning of official policy of social assistance, as Destitute Allowance, for poor Indians in Fiji. Nevertheless, as an instrument of welfare it was not new. It came from the emerging Imperial Welfare State tool-box of Poor Relief with three-fold eligibility criteria; (i) old indentured labourer, (ii) absence of any visible means of livelihood and (iii) no visible means for a return passage to home of recruitment. The relief was bifurcated into Indoor (as home for the aged, poor and bedridden) and Outdoor (periodic cash allowance) with an expectation of additional help from charity organizations (Legco, 1936 CP, No.16).

However, this policy was inconsistent with the structural changes in Fiji's economy and society. The downturn in copra prices and the restructuring of the sugar industry, and by 1938 onwards low wages for miners had, together, contributed to increase the ranks of the poor, destitute, paupers and the unemployed, across ethnic categories which, now, included few Europeans and People of Mixed European Descent (PMED) or half castes (Report on Expenditure, Legco, 1931). Access to the Colonial Development Loan to "promote commerce with our industry in the UK "(Legco, 1929, CP, no. 68/1929) had contributed to growing the economy through investments in infrastructure, with a comparable increase in the size of wage labour, as Fijians abandoned villages in search of cash. Yet, wages remained low with consequent issues with livelihood, unemployment and poverty and, as a member of the Legislative Council observed, "with regard to the laboring classes, so called, that is mechanic class, and also field labour, I can assure you that their wages have come down very considerably " (LCD, Oct 1931). In unison another member observed that "poverty finds no official recognition and …in the interest of a good administration this fact of deep and deepening poverty should be frankly recognized so that the energies of the government might be directed towards undertaking remedial measures". And indeed, the Governor concurred. He responded that

"unemployment is unfortunate and that there is considerable hardship", but this was only "especially in the European and Half-caste communities" (Legco, Feb, 1932). He upheld, then lauded, the racialized Unemployment Relief Board, which provides services in processing applications for assistance from Europeans" (Legco, 1933, C.P. no 14, Destitute Europeans) and requested "recommendations as to the type and scale of relief to be granted" (Governor Address, Legco, Feb 16/1932). The Destitute Allowance as designed provided separate services: one to Indians, and another for Pacific Islanders. For the growing numbers of poor Fijians, the Administration continued to maintain trust, and enduring belief, "in the good fortune of their social system …to meet the slings and arrows of a crisis such as this" (HE Governor, Legco, March 1934).

Racializing colonial pensions: Local and overseas

Government pension's expenditure at this period stood at an annual average of 40,000 pounds (CR, 1930-1940) and covered, in addition to Europeans, a few 'deserving' Fijians and Indians. A Pension Ordinance of 1938 was introduced by the Administration, to "limit pension liability to absolute minimum" through an exercise to "Review the existing organization of emoluments, and other conditions of employment of the Public Service in Fiji, and to make recommendations for any changes which may be considered desirable" And it did. The result established a racial binary of Overseas and Fiji Service. The former was described as providing competitive positions for expatriates (read Europeans) and was open for applications within the empire (CP.no. 2, 1937), and the latter for the "deserving" locals, now comprising both Fijians and Indians. The Fiji Service now became non-pensionable offices. And the Governor's address to the Council noted that "the conditions of service for members of Overseas Service cannot be extended unreservedly to local promotions" (Legco, Governors Address, Sept, 1937, p7). For the Fiji service, a contributory Provident Fund (Legco, 1937, and 1938: Providence Fund Ordinance No. 16) was introduced, against the resisting voices, led by member Mr. H. Ragg, in the Legislative Council which cautioned on the unreliability of Provident Funds as social security and the chances that benefits being dissipated, or lost, through unwise or unfortunate investments. (Legco, October, 12 1937). Other benefits for imperial war veterans came through the Imperial War Pension in 1943, from which Fiji's ex-service community benefitted. In this category were Fijians who had enlisted, or been conscripted into the imperial army with laudable comments of their gallantry in defense of the empire. Hence the Fiji Ex-servicemen After Care Fund (Legco, 1944 CP.No.6) "to provide continuity of colonial pensions in respect of officers serving with his Majesty's Forces in time of War" (Legco, 1945, CP, No. 6).

None of these obviated the emerging poverty in the country. Nor was there any formal administrative entity to address poverty or "any statutory provisions for unemployment" (CP 1952, p13). Social Services within the Department of Education was concerned with social and moral welfare, juvenile delinquency, probation and the provision of Approved Schools (Department of Education, Annual Reports, 1931-50: Legco. CP no.26/1964; Social Security in Fiji). Yet, The Colonial Development and Welfare Fund noted the "pressing need for the imperial center to financially support the development of social services in the colonies" (Moyne Report Recommendations of the West India Royal Commission. 1941: 1-2). However, it had no re-distributive social policy for (the colonies) Fiji's political economy, notwithstanding the Administration's sound fiscal situation in the 1940's with assets of an annual average of over two million pounds (Colonial Reports, 1944-1950: Records of Public Finance). Within the Legislative Council "The Colonial Development and Welfare Grant" was argued,

by representatives of mainly planters, to have over-emphasized social services at the expanse of development and this led to the revision of the plan. Audited expenditure of the Grant showed allocations for infrastructure, sewage and construction (CR, 1950: also Appendix 1 CP.1957: Colonial Development and Welfare), all of which contributed to the growing wage labour population (Table 4) for whom there was no statutory provisions for unemployment, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, or any other form of social security (italics added). (Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Labour, 1947-1952). This was the first time,1952, (CP,29/1952.Annual Report of Commissioner of Labour) indeed almost a century after colonization, that the vocabulary of social security was enlisted to express, in social policy thought and practice, an aspect of the unfolding political economy of Fiji. But only to denote its absence rather than practice.

By the 1940s an evolved 'Colonial Welfare' regime in Fiji, was clear. It had three main pillars. Pillar one consisted of Colonial state services, and included the Pensions for Overseas Colonial Service officers, Unemployment Relief for Europeans, and Destitute Allowance for Indians. Annual expenditure on pensions, and Destitute/Unemployment relief payments were 79,714 and 23,000 pounds respectively. Pillar two was made up of the market determined services, provided by the private economic enterprises and the unfunded Provident Fund for local employees of the Fiji Colonial Service (Legco, 1939-1940; Colonial Reports, 1935-1950). Pillar three constituted miscellaneous services, for Fijians, from the complex Fijian traditional value systems of kin care and reciprocity. This pillar also contained services from churches and community members. Administratively, this welfare regime included an appropriation of a traditional facility in the service of a modern colonial capitalist economy, for welfare. It was an abdication of state responsibility of redistribution to a section of the tax paying community. Altogether for ordinary workers who did not meet the conditions of destitution, there was no general "system of social insurance or old age pensions in force in the colony". With persistent demands and increasing agitation by the Industrial Unions and Associations (Plange, 1993) an Industrial Relations officer was seconded through an imperial exchange to explore services for ordinary workers. This produced a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance as protection for the growing wage labour force (Legco, 1942, CP, No. 42 and 44).

The 1960's: Poverty, destitution and colonial social policy

Destitution and poverty "continue to increase by the month with indications that it will go on increasing as more and more people become old and unable to maintain themselves as no other form of social security exist" (DCR 1950, 1952). This situation was indicative of an administration which turned a blind eye on welfare services in an economy in which "the basic opportunities are not there" (Ward, 1971: 220). The development budget of the 1960s provided nothing on social security (Development Budget Estimates, 1954) even as, now, large numbers of Fijians requested support as "they become detached, either temporarily or permanently, from their villages, and with Fijians the village constitutes the basis of their social security" (Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labour, 1957:8). This exposed the limitations of the eligibility criteria for the Destitute Allowance as much as it undermined the valorization of 'Traditional solidarity 'of care as a viable welfare facility in a colonial capitalist economy. In response, and after almost a century of exclusive pensions, gratuities and, unemployment relief, and almost thirty years of Destitute Assistance/Relief, the Destitute Relief was deracialized in 1960, and Fijians were made eligible for destitute relief (CR, 1960).

By 1966 the number of unemployed stood at 5000, or four percent of the population over fifteen years (Ward, 1971: 220; Legco, 1968). In search of social security junior and middle grade officers within the Fiji Civil Service and skilled workers began to migrate to either New Zealand or Canada to avail themselves of liberal social policy and social security systems (Legco, 1965, CP No. 23: Annual Report, Commissioner of Labour, 1964). Meanwhile, life insurance companies, sensing opportunities for profit, began to peddle policies but without much success. These were not lost on the Administration as the Governor conceded to the "increased social welfare problems in the colony due to unemployment and that Government can only provide limited support to voluntary organizations" (Legco,1960, CP,NO. 35). Evidently the Administration had no recourse to any meaningful 'redistributive policy.' It adhered to its development policy "which was too narrow and not directed towards an equitable and appropriate distribution of national income" (Ward, 1971: 202). Additionally, the basic education it provided was not complementary to the skilled manpower required by the growing economy (Ward, 1971: 222) and the "methods of financing (schools) resulted in the imposition of relatively greater financial burden on parents of children of school going age rather than the cost being borne by the community as a whole" (Gillion, 1965: 179). Migration to the towns with inadequate housing also resulted in "unhealthy and structurally deficient buildings in Suva" (Burns Commission Report, 1959) and the emergence of "squatter settlements" at the fringes of the main towns (Bryandt-Tokelau, 1992). By 1969 approved expenditure on destitution and related facilities reached a total of 200,000 pounds (Legco, 29, 1969) and covered an estimated total of 5,700 Destitute and their dependents. There was also an ageing (over sixty years) population of 12,500 that is four percent of the national population, without access to any state services.

Facing restive and vocal Worker Unions the Administration now considered "the desirability of introducing some form of social security in the colony" (C.R, Oct, 1963). Again, it resorted to an Imperial instrument via aspects of Beveridge Report. It introduced a National Provident Fund, in 1966, for white collar workers but not wage workers and the nearly 16,000-strongcane farmer population on ten acre lots (Plange, 1990). The objective was for income security at a retirement age set at fifty-five. The target community was the growing junior public and statutory sector workers (National Provident Fund, 2011). This added another pillar, of self-contributory pension facility for the colonized, to the 'Colonial Welfare' regime, but it also differentiated the category of beneficiaries from the government pension facility for the Overseas Service employees who, by now, numbered about five hundred with a claim of over 500,000 pounds on the national purse (C.R, 1950-1970). The Destitute Allowance was also changed, in name, to Family Allowance with emphasis on the 'Family' as the repository of 'moral responsibility' as agreed at the 1954 Ashbridge Conference on Social Development (Shilliam, 2013: 79). However, these were all blue prints from the Imperial Welfare state policies, but inappropriate for (a colonial capitalist economy) Fiji's economy and society.

By 1970 Fiji's economy had a poverty rate of seven percent (Gounder, 2012). This constituted of predominantly impoverished rural semi-subsistence and peasant farmers, proletarianized and semi-proletarianized workers including in the emerging tourism industry (Plange, 1996), women working as house helpers, and the growing unemployed in the emerging slums in the towns without access to state services and a fractured traditional system of care. Indeed, by 1969, the Colonial State in Fiji had been made aware of deepening poverty in the colony from a study it had endorsed in 1959 (Spate, 1959) and another in 1968 (Legco, CP, No.29). There was also an increasing number of destitute

people, serviced by the newly created Social Welfare Department, which had the task of the managing Destitution, amelioration of hardship and distress and supervision of the Homes, probation and juvenile delinquents (C.R, 1969). The Old Age Home initially targeted for poor and old indentured Indians now had to cater for destitute Europeans, and Fijians for whom the burden of care was supposed to be traditional solidarity. For the categories of poor workers there was no provision for either 'Settlements' or services from Beveridge's liberal schemes. To mute resistance and demands for 'Settlements' the Colonial State resorted to The Wages Council Act of 1960 and higher expenditure on law and order (Ward, 1971: 194). The Social Welfare Department, now detached from Education, was established in consonance with changing international context of post-World War II (Secretary of State, 1940; Eckert, 2004: 469) including the need for "…social services that minister to the wellbeing of the people as a whole" (Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940: 4). At independence, in 1970, a welfare regime with a restrictive redistributive structure within a Social Welfare Department established within a colonial capitalist economy was inherited. It reached only a limited population of the needy leaving majority of services to be provided through family and kin relations and charity. In this form it differed from its metropolitan alternative where state services continued to be expansive.

Conclusion

The administrative apparatus of the Colonial State in Fiji included, for the first fifty years or so, welfare facilities and redistribution programmes that were discriminatory against the colonized from whom economic profits were extracted through taxes, produce, and labour. A 'Colonial Welfare regime' insensitive to the social risks of the colonized afforded no social security to workers and valorized Fijian traditional institutions as provider of their care. A tool from imperial Britain's Poor Relief 'welfare tool box' was enlisted to serve the Indian poor and destitute. This was later expanded to accommodate other racial categories as the economy yielded poverty across racial groups. But it was inappropriate to stem the tide of poverty which, by 1970, the year of political independence, had reached seven percent. The ranks constituted of urban low wage and unemployed workers, old people, families on destitute allowance of both racial groups. For the latter an Advisory Committee on Relief of Destitution only recommended a change of name to Family Assistance (Legco, CP. No. 29, 1969) and improvements in the system with a caveat that many of them through their work in previous years will have contributed to the conditions which make such improvements possible.

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Professor Nii-K Plange is a professional social scientist with over 30 years of work which combines academic, technical and managerial experience in development. Areas of academic expertise include Social theory and Research methods with an interdsciplinary approach. He has considerable experience working with multilateral and bilateral organizations, national governments, and civil society organisations. He is currently the coordinator of the Postgraduate Social Policy and Interdiscplinary Climate Change Programmes at the Fiji National University