RHETORIC VERSUS REALITY: THE EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN A PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANISATION IN ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY.

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DECLARATION – PLAGIARISM

I, True-Love Thembeni Dlamini   declare that:

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed

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Professor Vishantie Sewpaul   **Date**

ABSTRACT

This research was designed to understand the experiences of social workers working in one public service organisation in the eThekwini region. It focused on how social workers explained the discrepancies between their preferred roles and responsibilities and the realities of their day to day practice.

The study was guided by critical theory, which recognises the political dimensions of research and supports the importance of research being used for transformative purposes. Data were collected from 10 individual in-depth interviews and one focus group session with 21 participants. I also adopted the role of participant observer in collecting data. The research was driven by the desire to awaken social workers' critical awareness about the structural injustices that exist in their practice offices and for them to propose solutions to their predicament.

The major themes identified from the data highlighted the difficult conditions under which social workers function, the loss of professional autonomy under increasing managerialist practices; the undue political interference in social work functions, the cooption of social workers into political agendas, abuse of managerial power and lack of essential resources.

The research process has demonstrated the power of critical theory in action. Through engagement in reflexive dialogue, social workers began to appreciate that they were not merely passive victims of the system. They began to see themselves as people who could be assertive and challenge some of the conditions that impacted their functioning. Rather than simply accept instructions, they began to show a willingness to ask questions and seek clarification from management. They made recommendations about improving service conditions so that they could fulfil social work's core mandates in respect of pursuing human rights and social justice and work in the best interests of service users. These are detailed in this dissertation.

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CHAPTER ONE
CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Social work is a humanitarian and communitarian profession. It is guided by principles of respect for people, acceptance and non judgemental attitude. This profession is mandated by the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 to cater for the needs of vulnerable people and to promote and protect human rights from any violation as enshrined. The social work professional mandate is to challenge and eradicate structural oppression, exclusion and marginalisation. Furthermore to liberate and empower those who have internalised oppression. Consciousness raising can be used as a way of challenging and undermining structures of oppression in an attempt to expose the unjustified treatment of the deliberately excluded groups by the privileged groups. According to Freire (1972) people can only gain critical consciousness if they have greater understanding of themselves and their situation. That understanding can come from education or self reflection. The author further stipulates that critical understanding has the power to give people voice and words to explain their predicaments. This way they are able to free themselves and their bodies from the indoctrination of their oppressors.

During my placement in one of DSD offices I constantly heard social workers expressing some sense of helplessness about the autocracy that impacted their roles and functioning. Carniol (1990) and Mmatli, (2008) noted that social worker's lack of input in determining the nature and scope of their work results in a sense of powerlessness and frustration. The global social work definition (IASSW/IFSW, 2014) portrays social workers as having power to liberate people, but for a range of reasons social workers choose not to challenge policies and structural conditions that negatively impact the lives of the people with whom they work with. There seems to be a discrepancy between social work's commitment to serving the poor and marginalised populations in this country and their actual practices.

While it might be to varying degrees, social work students are exposed to anti-oppressive practice and radical theories and practice during their course of study (Sewpaul, Osthus & Mhone, 2011). It would appear that despite this, when social workers enter the working environment, they lose this element in their practice. This became a concern for me as a developing and ambitious social work practitioner to the extent of wanting to explore the issue further. Moreover as an emerging social worker who is concerned about social justice, social change and liberation of people; I would like to create a platform for social workers to engage with some of the issues that impact their functioning and I'm hoping that engagement might help them in addressing those issues using a collective voice.

According to the International Association of Schools of Social Work (2010: 2-3) the ultimate goal of social work is to intervene purposefully in the lives of people and to promote social change when necessary. When you critical analyse the latter statement; it tells us that social workers are supposed to be advocates, analysts and social activists. In order for social workers to assume these roles; they need to revisit their motivation for joining the profession. This is the other reason that motivated me to have the desire to conduct this study. Research is about the creation of knowledge of which practice is based upon. I'm hoping that such a study can add knowledge in social sciences and it may inform and shape the social work practice.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Anti-oppressive practice and critical social work requires social workers (SW) who critically reflect on their practice, and who adopt holistic interventions in their practice. This means the ability and willingness to work at micro, mezzo and macro levels. It also requires SW who are analytical in that they must reflect and question norms, processes and procedures that need to be adhered to in their respective organisations and communities and where these come from, who implemented them and why. Moreover they must improve the living conditions of their service users by advocating for relevant services and changes in the structural conditions and enable

people to understand how social arrangements oppress and disadvantage them and, help them understand that they can do something about these structural arrangements (Adams, Dominelli and Payne, 2004; Mullaly, 1977; 2010). The International definition of social work, and authors such as Smith (2008) specifically state that social justice, social change, human rights, liberation and empowerment of the poor and marginalised groups, lie in the hands of social workers. Patel (2005) noted that social workers have been challenged by making the shifts from residualism to holistic intervention that embraces radical approaches. In practice social workers seem to be still confined at micro level of intervention, where case work is the primary mode of intervention.

Social workers complain about management staff, who demands that they produce more with scarce resources and in a shortest period of time. Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) and Sewpaul (2013) have detailed the impact of neoliberalism and new managerialism on welfare broadly, and on the functioning of social workers specifically. Through my interaction with social workers, it seems that they perceive the Department of Social Development (DSD) as hypocritical. Their sense is that while their senior managers and the incumbents occupying political positions, preach that poor people need to be assisted out of poverty through people-centred, participatory and liberating ways (White Paper for Developmental social Welfare 2007), the reality is that their day-to-day work is governed by the need to economise and by new managerialist policies that favour more technical approaches to working with people. I will elaborate more on the new managerialism and neoliberalism policies on the literature review chapter of this dissertation.

Smith (2008: 372) states that "South Africa (SA) [is] still one of the most unequal societies in the world, with poverty still skewed along racial lines". Terreblanche, (2002: 425), stipulates that SA "is so divided that it seems to consist of two worlds with little interaction: one is modern, smart, professional, efficient and globally orientated, and the other neglected, messy, unskilled, oppressed and thriving on crime and violence". The upper class of the population which is 16.6 % receives 72% of the income with the 50% lower class population receiving only 3.3% of the income

in SA (Smith, 2008). "While South Africa has achieved an impressive liberation from apartheid over the years, extreme poverty, structural oppression, inequality and skewed power relations continues" (Smith 2008: 373). The author states that in this context, social work tries to participate in the national project of building a better life for all. However she argues that many social workers are unable to respond to these realities due to realisms of internalised as well as continued external forms of oppression.

GLOBAL AGENDA ON SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Due to these socially horrifying issues, the (International Association of Schools of Social work, (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social workers, (IFSW) and International Council of Welfare (ICSW) 2012), have committed themselves through the global Agenda into supporting, influencing and enabling structures and systems that positively address the root causes of oppression and inequality (IASSW, IFSW and ICSW March 2012). The Agenda focuses on these key areas:
-Promoting social and economic equalities,
-Promoting the dignity and worth of people,
-Working toward environmental sustainability and
-strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships.

Sewpaul and Holscher (2004), Sewpaul (2013) Hall (2006), Fergusson and Lavallette (2006), suggest that globalisation and neo-liberalism has had far more reaching negative effects on social work practice. Dominelli (2002) asserted that there are various facets of oppression that destroy social work's vision. Gramsci (1971), Payne (2009) and Sewpaul (2013b) critically analyse the impact of domination and the importance of challenging what has been viewed as the social order [social divide, where the class division is seen as inevitable]. Their theses is that the poor are blamed for the appalling conditions they live under, while privilege and wealth are taken for granted as privileged groups believe that they deserve everything they have. Mmatli (2008) advocates for political activism as a social work strategy in Africa. However Sewpaul and Holscher (2006: 174) states that in post-

apartheid South Africa, examples of purposeful acts of resistance by social workers have been rare, with passive resistance more commonly practiced, e.g. leaving their place of work.

LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in one of the welfare service offices of the Department of Social Development in eThekwini municipality.

THE MAIN AIM OF THE STUDY WAS TO:

Understand how social workers explain the discrepancies between the profession's commitment to social justice, human rights and engendering structural changes and the day to day lived realities of their work

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the major roles and responsibilities of social workers in the organisation.
2. To understand social worker's satisfaction with their current functioning.
3. To understand the organisational factors that influence the roles and functioning of social workers
4. To understand social worker's day to day activities in relation to their preferred ideals in relation to social justice, human rights and anti-oppressive practice.
5. To understand what factors might prevent social workers from engaging in their preferred roles and responsibilities.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the major roles and responsibilities of social workers in this organisation?
2. Are social workers satisfied with their current functioning?

3. What are the organisational factors that influence the roles and functioning of social workers?

4. What activities do social workers carry out in their day to day work, versus what they would prefer to do in relation to social justice, human rights and anti-oppressive practice?

5. What are the factors that hinder social workers from engaging in their preferred roles and responsibilities?

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS:

1. That there would be a misfit between how social workers perceive their roles and what they actually do in practice.

2. That social workers would experience their work environment as oppressive and bureaucratic.

3. That new managerialism permeates the work environment and negatively impacts social worker's functioning.

4. That social workers might normalise their work experience and not challenge the status quo.

5. Social workers might be afraid to challenge their working conditions.

POSSIBLE VALUE OF THE STUDY

I believe that research in this field will add value to the body of knowledge. Secondly, the central aim of social work is promoting empowerment, social change, and the liberation of South African citizens. This can be achieved through "engaging people and structures to address life challenges and enhance the well-being" (IASSW/IFSW proposed new definition cited in Sewpaul, (2013) as amended in July 2014). As critical theory is concerned about the liberation and transformation of the mind and that of the oppressed, I believe that through the in-depth interviews and the reflexive dialogue in the focus group, I can raise the awareness of social workers regarding how assumptions about the connection between oneself and social structures/context can function in powerful ways; hence that awareness about the

commonly held assumptions can provide the platform for emancipation and transformative action (Fook, Davies and Leonard 2009). I decided to use critical reflection (dialogue) in this study. When I completed collecting data via the individual in-depth interviews, I presented the findings of the study in a focus group, to engage social workers in a dialogue about structural injustices, and open the floor for critical engagement, with the hope that it will raise their awareness regarding the conflict between their preferred roles and responsibilities and their day to day activities. I entered this study in the hope that this awareness may propel them towards implementing strategies, techniques and actions against organisational and structural oppression and injustice and adopt their preferred roles.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach is adopted in this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 5) suggest that the qualitative paradigm involves interpretive and naturalistic approaches to the world. Dlangamandla (2010: 75) further postulates that "[qualitative research] studies people in their natural setting and interprets phenomenon in terms of meaning people attach to them".

This approach suits the purpose of this study, in that I wanted to study social worker's in their working environment. I assumed the participant observer role, since I'm also a social worker, working in the same office where this study was carried out. According to De-Vos (2002: 278), "[a] participant observer has direct contact with the subject of observation" and this allows studying the type of communication, interactions between staff members and the behaviours they portray in response to their supervisors, managers, situations and other directives from external structures. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 673) state that, the benefit of participant observation allows the "researcher to both observe human activities and the physical settings in which such activities take place". The designs that were utilised are exploratory and descriptive research. The reason for choosing these two designs is because it permits the researcher to conduct an open, flexible investigation that adopts inductive reasoning (Terreblanche and Durrheim 1999). I used a multi-phase

research design to explore social workers' experiences. In phase 1, conducted in-depth interviews with 10 social workers in a designated public sector welfare agency; I also used participant observation in this phase of the research. In phase 2, I made use of a focus group session to: 1) discuss the findings of the study with the social workers in order to increase the reliability and validity of the study; 2), as a Freirian strategy of praxis to raise consciousness about the impact of current working conditions on the practices of social workers and 3), to discuss possible ways forward with social workers in dealing with the profession's core mandates towards social justice and engendering structural changes. The data were analysed through content and thematic analysis. All necessary steps to ensure trustworthiness of the study are detailed in chapter three.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that informs this research is critical theory. This theory postulates that "social structures are oppressive and they are maintained through political and economic power and supported by a range of legitimizing structures" Humphries (2008: 106). According to Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 114) critical theory "takes the standpoint of the oppressed or exploited classes and individuals and makes the judgement that structures of oppression and exploitation benefits certain classes at the expense of others, hence should be radically transformed by social struggles". The relevance of this theoretical framework in this study is that I assume that social workers in DSD offices are oppressed by the new managerialist approach, as well as by neoliberal policies, and therefore, I believe that although it is difficult to fight against and transform the political forces and decisions, it is possible, through a collective voice and actions.

"Critical theory does not accept existing social structures as they are, it is not interested in society as it is, but in what it could be and could become. It deconstructs ideologies that claim that something cannot be changed and shows potential counter-tendencies and alternative modes of development [and thinking]. That the negative resentments are transformed into positive results is not an

automatism, but depends on the realization of practical forces of change that have a potential to rise from the inside of the systems in question in order to produce a transcendental outside that becomes a new whole" Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 113). According to Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 114), the common element of critical theory is that it negates capitalism, firstly by the notion of free thinking individuals that is more than an economic subject, and secondly by the interpretation of freedom as a general state of society that humans have to struggle for. On that note I wanted to raise the consciousness of social workers about the oppression by engaging them in a reflexive dialogue, with the hope that if they feel that they have been oppressed, they might take a constructive radical action to change the system and adopt their preferred roles and responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter was introduced through discussing the context and the background of social work profession and practice. It further moves on to talk about the literature that forms the basis for this research. The political context, Global Agenda on social work and the location of the study is presented. The underlying assumptions, the main aim of the study, the objectives and questions to be answered and the value of the study form part of this chapter. It briefly introduced the methodology, which is detailed in chapter thee. The theoretical framework, which gives the standpoint of the researcher upon which study is based, is discussed. The following chapter deals with the literature review.

CHAPTER 2:

SOCIAL WORK: FROM COLONIALISM AND APARTHIED TO DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

Social work practice has been changing and transforming throughout the decades due to structural, political and cultural transitions around the world. Such changes and transformation in South Africa involve moving from a residual model to a developmental approach to social welfare. The residual model was more concerned about treating the individual rather than looking at the person in the environment. This model did not acknowledge that the problems in people's lives are as a result of a misfit between the person and their surroundings. This meant that there was no room to assist the person holistically. Moreover the residual model was unjust and it created a lot of inequalities due to prioritising the white race over other racial groups. The developmental approach to welfare, which South Africa has adopted is more inclusive, democratic and aims towards justice for all. In a nutshell all racial groups are supposed to get equal services, and the approach acknowledges that people have the potential to develop and advance if they have access to support to reach their goals.

According to Patel (2005: 19), the "meaning of social welfare and the assumptions underpinning social welfare are intensely political and ideological and continue to shape the debate about what the direction of social welfare should be in a society". South African social welfare has moved from operating under colonial and apartheid regime to democracy (Patel, 2005). This literature review is divided into two chapters. The main aim of the first chapter is to give the historic account regarding how the welfare system operated within the colonial and apartheid period. The chapter will then tap into the policies and strategies and regulations adopted by the welfare system towards a democratic country. Some of the policies and approaches that it will touch on are the Redistribution and Development Program (RDP), White Paper for Social Welfare, integrated and developmental approach and the Growth,

Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (Visser, 2004: Lombard, 2008: Dlangamandla, 2010). In the second part of the literature review, chapter three the impact of neoliberalism and managerialism on social work practice will be brought to the fore. The discrepancies between what South African citizens should be experiencing and what they are experiencing due to the powerful neoliberal discourses and practices will be discussed. The human rights and social justice discourses will be drawn from the Global Agenda on social work (International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), 2012), South African constitution 108 of 1996, the Ten Point Plan of the Department of Social Development, human rights and social justice as discussed by different authors, anti-oppressive practice teachings, radical and critical social work by various authors and the political environment and its effects in South Africa. This chapter will conclude by bringing all the contradictions together and propose recommendations to address the issues under scrutiny.

THE COLONIAL TIMES AND ITS IMPACT ON PEOPLE:

During the colonial period the colonisers were more interested in 'civilising and controlling the indigenous people and their cultures after having taken over their countries. According to Patel (2005: 66) South Africa was colonised by the Dutch in the 17th century to the 18th century. The cultural livelihoods of indigenous people, rich cultures, technology, methods of production, forms of social organisations, political, legal and welfare systems were eroded during this period, as those colonised were forced to adapt to the ways of their colonisers.

According to McKendrick (1990) in 1920 there was a growing concern about the deterioration of the white race's socio-economic status which led to poverty. This led to an investigation of what was called the poor white problem. The report of this investigation which was organised by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York was published in 1932 (Drower, 2002). There are two major recommendations that came out of that report towards addressing the

poor white problem. The first one was to 'establish social welfare department, and the second one was to train social workers who would be capable of making a social diagnoses through the scientific study of individual cases of destitution' (McKendrick, 1990: 179). In a nutshell, the social work profession and its casework approach was developed with the aim of addressing the poor white problem. According to Drower, and McKendrick (1990), casework was an approach which was developed in the United States of America and it was based on their values and ideologies. Hence the problems and dilemmas faced by the South African social workers in the democratic country emanates from the fact that it was developed by those who had control over societal structures, and who had their agenda to be fulfilled. As a result of colonial, imperial and apartheid influences South African social workers are still trying to locate themselves and their activities.

This was a period which gave birth to white racial supremacy that portrayed indigenous people as inferior. Forced migration of indigenous men to cities, and mines began during this period since the diamond mine was discovered by the Dutch settlers in 1867 and gold mine was discovered in 1886 in South Africa (Francis and Marchese, 2009). The two authors state that many black Africans were sold to slavery and shipped off to the west. Moreover around this period the whites were the elites of social welfare services, and the welfare policies favoured the white people (McKendrick, 1990). "Colonialism imposed enormous social changes on traditional societies; but no responsibility was taken for the costs of such large scale social disruption" (Patel, 2005: 67).

The indignities experienced by the South Africans did not end when colonialism ended but instead it got worse when the National Party Government won power to rule South Africa. According to Francis and Marchese (2009:1) "during the 1940s and 1950s, White South Africans instituted a policy of apartheid, or separation, designed to guarantee their continued domination over the country and its resources. Under the leadership of Hendrik Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs and later prime minister, the rights of Black South Africans were systematically stripped away, they were denied citizenship and forced to live in either

isolated, impoverished, rural communities or shanty towns surrounding major cities". During the apartheid era the National Party leaders established and enforced laws and policies which were very discriminatory, marginalising to other racial groups and which gravely violated many human rights. The government of the National Party which came into power in 1948-1994 and ruled the country for 46 years adopted a policy of institutionalised racial discrimination which was underpinned by the thinking that "the integration of all races in a common society would not guarantee peace, freedom and prosperity for all, and that the solution lay in the apart-ness or separate development" (Patel, 2005: 66)".

THE SHIFT FROM COLONIALISM TO APARTHEID AND ITS UNJUST POLICIES

During apartheid the welfare system was underpinned by legislation such as Influx Control Act (68 of 1986) which was set up to control the movement of people from rural to urban areas. Under this influx control law, black males were subjected to having their genitals checked for sexually transmitted diseases (Patel, 2005). Mr Manyoni who was born in 1963-12-17 and who was subjected to this act said "this was a very humiliating, intimidating, undermining and degrading experience that he never wishes for anyone else" (21-08-2014). Moreover there was also the Land Act of 1913 which gave the white farmers the right to utilise a huge amount of fertile land for farming purposes while black farmers were being systematically, brutally and forcibly removed from the fertile grounds to utilise 10% of barren land.

The apartheid regime was very fragmented in terms of welfare services. This law gave birth to homeland policy, where black farmers were moved to the barren grounds to plough. Important to note that farming was the black Africans mode of production and livelihood. There was also the Population Registration Act and pass laws. On top of this, there was also a hut and poll taxes law and squatter law of 1895 which coerced the subsistence farmers into wage labour (Patel, 2005). Men migrated to work in mines under extremely poor conditions and earned next to nothing. The vulnerable groups such as woman, children and the aged were then forced to take care of the homes and ensure that there was food on the table since

men, as the breadwinners, were no longer around to carry out these responsibilities. All these policies and laws were based on racism and discrimination. The oppression of the mind was the most powerful tool that was used to brainwash people into believing that the system could not be changed. For this to change requires critical awareness and analysis of the problem at hand that has the power to transform one's mind and propel him/her to take action to change their circumstances. This is the statement made by a student who went through the Bantu Education-"**Black South African student:** "My awareness was limited because of my education, all the things that we were told at school, you know, about how life is.

One of the things they wanted us to believe is that nobody can change the system as it is, in fact, that it is God's wish that we live this type of life. So that was limiting my awareness, because whenever I would see people having problems and sufferings, I would say this is God's will, you know. But because of the challenge that was presented to the system by the students, I began to realize that, no, these things are manmade and it is possible to change things" (Francis and Marchese, 2009:5).

Social actions and strikes against oppressive and marginalising policies were the highlights during this period. Such strikes were led by the African Nationalist Party, National Union of Mineworkers, Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko, Pan African Congress (PAC), to name a few (Patel, 2005; Bond, 2002). Starting from the 1950s forwards the Department of Social Welfare had its welfare responsibilities for Africans transferred to the Department of Bantu Administration, Indians transferred to the Indian Affairs and Coloured persons transferred to the Coloured Affairs (Visser 2004; Potgieter, 1970). This separation of welfare services was based on racial division, which managed to entrench oppression, marginalization and inequality in the quality of service (McKendrick, 1988). The so called whites benefited from social security at a rate higher than that of other racial groups (Patel, 1992). Furthermore the apartheid government's Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 was another attempt to provide a measure of insurance for white labour against unemployment.

"The Act enforced job reservation and racial separation in trade unions and was designed to afford the white group another legal barrier against non-white infringement" (Doxey 1961:139). Every element and policy of the welfare system during the apartheid era prioritised white protection. This is evident from Van der Berg's (1997:485) statement which says "occupational retirement insurance expanded rapidly in the 1920s to include many skilled, mainly white employees". In the same page the author further stated that the 1956 Pensions Fund Act was another milestone in modifying the pension funds; however there was still this norm of excluding the lower skilled workers from such coverage, which meant that almost all blacks were excluded.

The following diagram illustrates how in 1990 the welfare system categorised its expenditure according to racial groups. These percentages were taken from (Patel, 2005: 71)
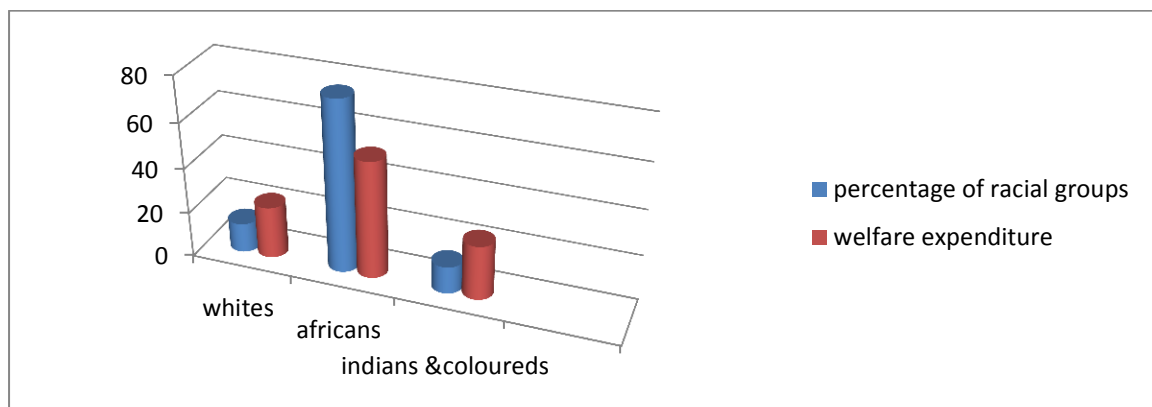
The above graph explicitly shows that the welfare of the black Africans, which was and still is the largest population in this country, was neglected during the apartheid era. These political changes have not taken place without leaving negative consequences for different people in this country. It is empowering though to know that even after all this hardship, the oppressed Blacks never lost hope. Their struggle and expectations of a social security system which was inclusive and equitable began during the year 1955 where in Kliptown near Johannesburg a multiracial anti-apartheid movement in the fight against discrimination and racial division gathered (Visser, 2004). Amongst others, there was the Congress of the People, the South

African Indian Congress, the African National Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats (with a predominantly white membership) and the South African Coloured People's Organisation. These radicals gathered with a purpose to endorse the Freedom Charter – a document that envisaged a non-racial, democratic South Africa. The contents of the Charter reflected basic elements of social security such as unemployment benefits, health insurance, social old-age pensions, disability grants and child and family grants (Karis and Gerhart, 1977).

Most of these black trade unions movements became a political force in the 1970s, but its crux mainly revolved around the issues of wages and political demands. Around 1981 the government tried to implement the preservation of pension rights when people changed jobs. Paradoxically, the trade unions mobilized quickly and successfully against that move and they conquered. That victory became another landmark in the empowerment of black workers. "Thus social retirement insurance which was initially instituted for whites, who dominated the skilled positions in formal employment, was extended to blacks" (Van der Berg, 1997:486). Successful mobilisation of people required the development of political consciousness.

EXAMPLES OF CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING, ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES IN AFRICA

Ndlovu (1998) states that consciousness raising was a tool to fight against structural processes which maintained people at the margins of society. Moreover consciousness raising is about transforming the economy and the political sphere which was created by apartheid. The goal of consciousness raising is the liberation of those who are structurally excluded and deprived. In a nutshell consciousness raising has three parts to it. One being analysis, transformation and liberation. Consciousness raising negates what is seen as the normative way of society and presents counter tendencies. The example is the Soweto uprising in 1976 by the South African Student Movement when high school, university and primary school children fought and lost their lives fighting against Afrikaans language being imposed as the medium of instruction and creating what was called Bantu Education. In one

of the banner that was held by one student on the 16-06-1976 was written "Afrikaans is not only inferior but useless" (New Nation June, 17, 1976). Through seminars held by the South African Student's Organisations the youth of those days began having a critical awareness of their oppression, marginalisation, social and political problems they faced. Antoinette 'Tiny' Sithole who was Hector Peterson's sister states that as a result of being involved in the youth seminars she began writing slogans in her school books such as, 'Black man you are on your own', 'Black and Proud', 'Black is Beautiful'. According to Visser (2004) some youth focused on unemployment issues while others focused on education issues. The following pictures were taken during the Soweto uprising on the 17-06-1976 by Peter Magubane who worked for New York Times. This is the report that came out the day after the first day of the riot:

6 Die in South Africa Riot after Black Student Protest. Source: *The New York Times*, June 17, 1976

At least six people died today when a demonstration by 10,000 black students against instruction in Afrikaans language turned into a riot. Two of the dead were students struck by a volley of police gunfire . . . black leader; the very Rev. Desmond Tutu said that black leaders "have been warning the government about something like this happening for a long time." More than 70 people were injured, 19 with bullet wounds, when the riot erupted in the black township of Soweto, 10 miles from Johannesburg. . . It continued from midmorning until after dusk. . . This area was sealed off from whites. . . It was the worst riot between the races in South Africa since the Sharpeville massacre on March 21, 1960 when police fired on a crowd of more than 5,000 demonstrating black Africans, killing 72 and wounding more than 170. . . The trouble began when the students gathered to protest a government regulation requiring the use of Afrikaans as the language of instruction for some subjects in the township schools. The students complained that the regulation required them to cope with a third language, in addition to English and the African language most of them speak as a

mother tongue. But the strikes had broader political overtones since Afrikaans is the language of South Africa's ruling Nationalist Party (white South Africans).

Mark Mathabane who was part of the riot said to the media "They opened fire. They did not give any warning. They simply opened fire. Just like that. Just like that. And small children, small defenseless children, dropped down to the ground like swatted flies. This is murder, cold-blooded murder" (New York Time 17-06-1976). The above quotes and pictures tells us just how grossly unjust our South Africa was during the apartheid era. White policemen opened fire on peaceful mass demonstrations leaving many dead and many injured. This is one of the reasons the Constitution of South Africa 108 of 1996 has chapter two which is the Bill of Rights which affords every South African citizen rights to live and strive in a peaceful environment.

Section 16 (1) (a) states that everyone has a right to freedom of expression, section 17 emphasizes that everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions, review section **18** speaks about Freedom of association: everyone has the right to freedom of association. **19** (1) afford people a right to political freedom: Every citizen is free to make political choices, which includes the right to form a political party. Ben Ngubane and Greg Houston had an interview with Murphy Morobe in 2004 to hear what she had to say as a person who stayed in Sophiatown during the 1960s around Steve Biko's time.

This was her response, "as much as I wasn't an active member of the Black Consciousness Movement I believed strongly in it …I could understand the politics; I was reading the history … I was a teacher by then. I could understand the need for being proud of myself, being proud, being able to accept myself as I am and do things for myself and start being involved" (Sfiso, 2004: 5). Bonner (1980) promulgate that structural changes does not automatically lead to socio-political changes, but it occurs when the people start to think and act differently. During the evolution and transformation of social welfare system from colonialism and apartheid to democracy, social work practice has also been changing. Social work has been

defined and redefined by different authors due to the discourses regarding what is social work in different contexts. Many policies and strategies have been developed in an attempt to position social work profession in its rightful place and address the inequalities, injustices, discrimination and oppression endured by the black South African men, women, aged, disabled and children in the past and to ensure that everyone enjoys the fruits of democracy, which that a lot of blood was spilled for. Many sacrificed their youthful days like Dr Nelson Mandela, Hector Petersen, Steve Biko, Luthuli, Lillian Ngoyi and Chris Hani, fighting for equity, justice, access to services and redistribution of the economy and power. A lot has been achieved in South Africa after the struggles for freedom though there is still a lot to be done.

TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY:
REDISTRIBUTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RDP)

Democracy and all democratic documents and policies that this chapter will touch on were implemented as a result of the following words which were uttered by Dr. Nelson Mandela on his inauguration day-27-04-1994 as the first black African President after having spent 27 years in jail for fighting the unjust system and apartheid policy: "Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world. Let freedom reign." (Twenty Year Review by the Presidency Office, 2014:3). In November 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was launched in Durban during the height of political unrest in the country.

The formation of COSATU introduced new dynamics into political unionism in South Africa. In its initial stage, COSATU had a total membership of 450 000 (Baskin, 1991). In February 1990 the political organisations were unbanned by the National Party government under the leadership of FW de Klerk after a long suffering of blacks under the leadership of Hendrik Verwoerd who was assassinated in 1966. Such organisations include ANC, the Pan African congress (PAC) and the South

African Communist Party (SACP). COSATU who then entered into negotiations and succeeded in formalising a strategic alliance, known as the Tripartite Alliance (Baskin, 1991). The Tripartite Alliance was formed with a purpose of ensuring that once the ANC became a leading political party in the democratic government, it would implement programmes and policies that was going to be labour friendly (Southall and Wood, 1999). According to Buhlungu (1994), Terreblanche (2003), Marais 2001 the ANC agreed to adopt the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was proposed by the COSATU prior to the democratic election in April 1994. The RDP contained elements of social security; hence the ANC did this in conveying their appreciation to the COSATU for supporting them during the elections (Baskin 1994).

The RDP policy prioritised job creation, land reform, water, housing, electricity, clean and healthy environment, nutrition, telecommunication, health care, and social services in its attempt at meeting the basic needs of the South Africans (Terreblanche, 2003:89). "From 1994 to 1996 the RDP suddenly became the guiding document of the Government of National Unity which was located in an RDP Office within President Mandela's Office, under the immediate authority of Minister without Portfolio Jay Naidoo at that time", (Webster & Adler, 1998:1-2). It was during this period when the democratic government began taking a major review of the welfare system policies. This review propelled the government to address the injustices of the past and implement strategies which were going to be in accordance with the developmental goal of the democratic government.

Hence the draft of the White Paper for Social Welfare was published in 1995 and was formally adopted in 1997. According to Midgley (2001) the RDP and the White Paper on Developmental Social welfare was attuned to the developmental approach and consistent with the caring and people cantered values. However, authors such Adelzadeh (1996) and Sewpaul (2013) Sewpaul point to the shifts in thinking reflected in the RPD base document that supported socialist ideals to the RDP White Paper, which reflects more neoliberal thinking. The following approach was adopted by the South African government in an attempt to tackle problems in a holistic

manner and to move away from the residual approach to service delivery which was a model used during the apartheid regime.

THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH: THE SHIFT TO A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH IN SOUTH AFRICA.

This document is one of many which were implemented with the goal of maximising opportunities for all South Africans to enjoy democracy and equity. Patel (2005) states that the developmental approach to social welfare in South Africa was adopted as the country had a unique background of inequality, and the violation of human rights during the colonialism and apartheid era. Lombard (2005) purports that although there has been some significant and successful movement and initiatives in the social welfare sector prior to 1994, the welfare sector and social work in particular has dismally failed the citizens of this country when it comes to advocacy for social justice and human rights. Patel (2005); and Lombard, (2000); noted that the latter was evident in the submission made by the welfare sector to the TRC in 1998. The White paper is another government document which was developed to ensure that all policies that are developed are just and recognises human rights.

During colonial and apartheid times black people were not allowed to go to certain areas like hotels, restaurants, beaches, black people were not allowed to play soccer and rugby in particular etc. people could not enter urban areas without a pass/I.D. nowadays, blacks did not have access to piped water, electricity and sanitation. Women were not allowed to visit their husbands in hostels which caused many marital problems for those concerned. All this is gradually changing.

WHITE PAPER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE 1997

The White Paper for Social Welfare coincide with the right based approach as it came up with perfect principles and values which were based on the human rights and respect for everybody as it is enshrined in the constitution of South Africa 108 of

1996. Its goal was to prioritise developmental social welfare in an equitable, just, humane and caring society (White Paper for the Developmental Social Welfare, 1997). The White Paper was also implemented with the purpose to respond and address the imbalances, discrimination and inequality of the past. The following are some of the principles which the (White Paper for Developmental Social Welfare, 1997) focused on as a strategy to achieve the goals of democracy. Such principles includes but not limited to: Organisations and institutions were going to be easily accessible and responsive to all those in need. Further than that all barriers had to be removed which have made it difficult or impossible for some people to participate equally in all spheres of life. Special training programmes were to be provided to facilitate the development of accessible services. Humanity (UBUNTU), a principle which emphasizes care for one another, Human Rights as it is enshrined in the Bill of Rights was to be implemented, People-centered policies to replace discriminatory policies like apartheid policy, Investment in human capital, securing basic welfare rights, Equity, Non-discrimination, etc.

Moreover social welfare services and programmes were to promote non-discrimination, tolerance, mutual respect, diversity, and the inclusion of all racial groups in society especially the previously marginalized who were structural and intentionally excluded from enjoying the rights and privileges of the country. Those groups were; Women, children, the physically and mentally disabled, offenders, people with HIV/AIDS, the elderly, and people with homosexual or bisexual orientations. Thus the RDP has some significant success in meeting the needs of the previously excluded poor groups in South Africa.

Some of the examples of that success include the establishment of an extensive welfare system which catered for the senior citizens, children in need, disabled and foster parents (Harsch, 2001: 9). More than this, the poor people who had no means of meeting their basic needs had access to free health care programmes such as small children from 1-5 years, pregnant women, free meals at schools for children between 3,5 to 5 million schools children (Heymans, 1995 and Marais, 2001). More than this retirement fund, medical aid scheme was enlarged to cover the previously

excluded groups. People had been sleeping in small rooms squashed together. That has not changed much. In 1996 the RDP faced many problems when the ANC government encountered the crisis of a depreciation of the rand at a rate more than 25% which buried it and its values. "This was the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution which was led by the developed by a technical team of 15 policy makers comprised of officials from the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the South African Reserve Bank, three state departments, academics and two representatives of the World Bank" (Kotze, 2000:12). The GEAR policy prioritised economic growth more than the welfare of the public needs. The thinking was that the welfare programmes was a drain on the government spending.

"Most of the funds that supported RDP programmes did not come from the government but from international donors", (Midgley, 2001: 270), which is why when the RDP failed to meet the needs of pro poor due to lack of funding; its role of redistribution was reduced to the role of managing the transformation that was taking place (Terreblanche, 2003:109). Hence neoliberalism and new managerialism snaked its way to the democratic government, its policies and its department's processes and practice. Terreblanche (2003:115) argued that GEAR was "openly Thatcherite in content and in tone". In the same vein Van der Walt (2000:75), asserted that GEAR "violates the promise of 'A Better Life for All". GEAR is a pure capitalist approach which operates based on the thinking that people must work hard in order to earn something.

GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND REDISTRIBUTION (GEAR)

The ministry of the RDP was abolished in March 1996 and the office of the RDP was transferred to the office of the then Deputy-President, Thabo Mbeki (Meyer, 2000). In essence GEAR implied that economic development in South Africa had to be led by the private sector and that the state should play a smaller role in the economy. Moreover the state-owned assets had to be privatized and deep cuts in government spending were necessary (Visser, 2004). The value of growth through distribution was replaced by redistribution through growth (Terreblanche, 2003). This meant that

more jobs were going to be created in order to increase the economy of the country so that redistribution would take its place. The international competitiveness and an export orientated economy had to be encouraged. The exchange controls had to be relaxed while social service delivery budgets and municipal infrastructure programmes had to be reprioritized in order to address the claims of the poor to a fair package to meet their basic needs. This shift from RDP to GEAR caused more social problems for the poor of the poorest as the social assistance grants to impoverished children, were the first to be scaled down. The central government independently set priorities and funds to be committed to social and sectoral policies (Bond, 2002; Van der Walt, 2000; and Marais, 2001).

When the RDP was substituted by GEAR, the ANC government was severely criticized by the academics, political economists and labor leaders. It was in a dilemma as many did not believe that GEAR was going to meet the objectives and goals of the RDP; which were the promotion of equality, justice and economic freedom for all (Bond, 2004; Sewpaul and Holscher, 2004). Adelzadeh (1996) argued that GEAR failed to provide a clear, sound, empirical and justified strategy and so he predicted that this policy's conformist macroeconomic framework was going to constraint growth, redistribution and employment and that it was going to increase abject poverty and income redistribution was going to depreciate.

The difference of RDP and GEAR is that GEAR processes totally rely on the private sector while RDP was led by the state. There are discrepancies that exists as a result of the introduction of the RDP in that in the manifesto of the ANC in 1999, the rhetorics of redistribution through empowerment of the poor and increased access to social services was highlighted; however on the same note the first democratic government-Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Trevor Manuel who was the Minister of Finance at that time declared that GEAR was not a negotiable matter. Hence Bond (2000:192) describe the ANC's strategy as a "tendency to talk left" but to "act right". COSATU argued that restructuring and privatisation of state owned enterprise was going to lead to retrenchment and social insecurity, while increasing the profit for the stakeholders. The latter was prophetic in that in 1990 Nampak retrenched

many workers as a result of shrinking economy and in 1997 South Africa experienced increased joblessness with the Gold mining industry having retrenched 30 000 workers which led to a strike (Meyer, 2000; and Harsch, 2001). Moreover early this year there was another strike of Lonmin mine workers who were fighting for an increase and better working conditions. That strike lasted for about two months without pay. Between the periods 1996-2001, the economy grew by 2, 6% per annum instead of 6% as it was imagined by the GEAR planners and implementers (Lee, 1998). Instead of the promised growth of employment of 1,3 million job opportunities; 1 million job opportunities were lost due to labour saving technology which promoted out sourcing, the use of casual and contractual work. This was not only the affected sphere of the public but even the funding of social welfare services dropped from 9,6% to 9,3%, while the funding for educational programmes decreased from 12,2% to 11,7% in the year 2000/01 (Marais, 2001).

Terreblanche pointed out that in two years of the inception of GEAR people of South Africa had already felt the pitch of its negative outcomes as many began swimming in the pool of the vicious cycle of poverty. In 1994 ex-President Thabo Mbheki launched the Expanded Public Works programme, which involved many well off blacks getting tenders to reconstruct different infrastructure. Hence the widening gap between the rich and the poor increased. The other problem of EPWP was that it provided short term employment for the poor.

"Trade liberalization has often resulted in massive imports, which undermines local production and prices and increase unemployment , thus placing enormous strain on poor people, contributing to children dropping out of schools, women and child trafficking, people engaging in dangerous work, starvation and xenophobic attacks" (Sewpaul, 2013: 17). One example of the trade liberalization made by Sewpaul (2013) is the influx of Chinese trade across Africa which is setting ablaze anger amongst the people of Africa for destroying domestic livelihood. GEAR presented its own unique measures, practices and strategies to increase the economy of the country at the expense of the poor South Africans. Such practices include neoliberalism and managerialism. Sewpaul 2013 further explained that the Chinese

trades have led to shutting down of many industries, leading to many people being retrenched and the growing number of unemployed people in this country. According to Vavi (2012) 7,504,000 people were unemployed. The number of vulnerable people needing social worker's interventions grew while the number of employed social workers stayed relatively the same.

The following diagram illustrates the number of social workers against the population size in South Africa.

Province	Population	Social workers employed by DSD	Social workers employed by NPO'S	Population to social worker ratio
Eastern Cape	6 829 958	998	395	4 903 to 1
Free State	2 759 644	333	132	5 935 to 1
Gauteng	11 328 203	1 398	553	5 806 to 1
KwaZulu-Natal	10 819 130	1 464	579	5 296 to 1
Limpopo	5 554 657	799	316	4 982 to 1
Mpumalanga	3 657 181	466	184	5 626 to 1
North West	3 253 390	399	158	5 841 to 1
Northern Cape	1 096 731	133	53	5 896 to 1
Western Cape	5 287 863	666	263	5 692 to 1
South Africa	**50 586 757**	**6 655**	**2 634**	**5 446 to 1**

Source: Reply by the minister of social development to parliamentary question 56/2012 by Mrs M C Dikgale (ANC – Limpopo), 8 May 2012

During the apartheid era; there were enough social workers and welfare funds to cater for the welfare needs of the whites, such as education, health, housing, etc. However, it is surprising that in the democratic regime, where social service has been extended to all races within a developmental approach the government has failed to employ enough social workers to meet the needs of the increased number of service users. Having said that does not mean that the government alone is responsible for all the failures of democratic promises but cognisance of the effects

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of the neoliberalism forces has made it difficult for the state to take independent decisions. It must also be acknowledged that the state has been making concerted efforts to increase the numbers of social workers through the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (Skweyiya, 2009).

CONCLUSION

This chapter began by reviewing literature that leads the reader to understanding the evolution of social work welfare system, policies and practice under the political agendas. This was done by zooming into an historic account of colonialism, apartheid and democracy. The policies and laws of the welfare system under colonialism and during the apartheid era were put to the fore. There are pictures which depict exactly what transpired in South Africa during different political periods. It further goes on to illustrate how the welfare system neglected the black population under the apartheid government, which ruled South Africa for 46 years. The chapter then discusses the impact of the inherited past policies on social work practice in the democratic country.

The move towards a democratic country and the policies which were implemented to support the commitments of the democratic government is also elaborated on. Amongst the government policies and documents that were implemented includes the RDP, the White Paper for the Developmental Social Welfare and the integrated service delivery model. The discrepancy between the number of employed social workers and the population size needing social work services is also illustrated. The failure of the RDP is clearly discussed and the inception of the neoliberal policy (GEAR) which was introduced as a mechanism to uplift the economy of the country and promised better life for all. The second part of this literature review will focus more on the impact of neoliberalism and managerialism on social work practices.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

NEOLIBERALISM AND MANAGERIALISM

THE IMPACT OF NEOLIBERALISM ON SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Neoliberalism managed to snake its way into the democracy of this country causing more damage than good to the lives of the previously marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Neoliberalism is sometimes used as globalization which means the countries of the world now live in a global village where the movement of people, goods and communication has been made easy by technology. Globalization has both negative and positive effects on the socio-economic life of the people of South Africa. According to Morley and Dunstan (2013) neoliberalism is a dominant set of ideas and practices that has emerged in response to global market pressures.

According to Darja and Subhangi (2010) neoliberalism is a policy that allows the economic exploitation of the lower class by the well-off people which generate profits at the expense of the poor. The two authors further state that this practice further pushes the poor people into poverty. The latter has also been noted by the IASSW, IFSW, ICSW, (2012: 1) in their comments "the full range of human rights are available to only a minority of the world's population; unjust and poorly regulated economic systems, driven by unaccountable market forces, together with noncompliance with international standards for labour conditions and a lack of corporate social responsibility, have damaged the health and wellbeing of peoples and communities, causing poverty and growing inequality".

The neoliberal system introduced the structural adjustment policies (SAP's) which promoted trade liberalisation, cutbacks in state expenditure on public services and welfare programmes, privatisation of state assets and deregulation of corporate world to do business freely and make profit, efficiency with the aim to do more for less (Adelzadeh, 1996; Terreblanche, 2002; Sewpaul and Holscher, 2004; Bond, 2005, 2010; Sewpaul 2013). Neoliberalism allows the lives of the profit makers to be

more valuable that the people who generates that wealth for them. "Globalisation imposes the rules and discipline of the global market on governments and nation states and thus limits the effectiveness of developing countries' national policy", (Khan, cited in Jurcevic and Zivkovic, 2011: 2). The authors further state that globalization "has a tendency to increase inequalities between individuals and regions, forging imbalances among different human needs because of its focus on material wealth over human and spiritual values, resulting in violence, alienation and despair [which becomes the responsibility of social workers to help people pick up the pieces of their destroyed lives]. This is however a challenge for social workers because of three negative trends which has been developed as a consequence of globalization.

"The first trend is the [comodification] of welfare provision, with welfare services and education becoming like goods and services in the commercial market rather than as therapeutic services; the second is giving the priority to market mechanisms and economic development over social development to respond to poverty, social exclusion and inequality; and the third is the emphases that managerialism and new public management (NPM) give to the way services and education are provided" (Payne and Askeland, 2008:106).

Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) Hall (2006) and Fergusson and Lavallette (2006), agree that globalisation and neo-liberalism has had far more reaching negative effects on social work practice. As Morley & Dunstan (2013:142) states, "neoliberalism has resulted to the devaluing of social work skills and knowledge, a reduction of practitioner autonomy and discretion". Ferguson et al (2006) take this explanation further by saying that there has been a   transformation of collaborative relationships between clients and workers to hierarchical relationships in which the worker is positioned as expert and alienated from the wisdom of clients. Dominelli (1996), Healy and Meagher (2004) and Singh and Cowden (2009) state that there has been a shift away from a structural analytic frameworks to the adoption of procedural and technical solutions to addressing complex problems. On the same note Harris (2003), Jones (2005), Healy (2009) and Madhu (2011) point out that

there has been a loss of a meaningful social work identity that is linked with emancipatory social change that is subverted to a neoliberal form of identity that is primarily concerned with governmentality and economic interest. "Global inequalities based on unequal power relations and uneven development of different cities has created tremendous problems for many people living in local communities witnessing the destruction of their living conditions while the promised development and prosperities are not realised" (Jonsson, 2014:38).

"Globalisation has threatened existing cultural identities, and this is manifesting itself in xenophobia, racism, religious fundamentalism, discrimination, oppression, stereotype and prejudice" (Patel 2005:12). Due to these situations many people migrate to their nearest cities. This causes more challenges for social workers working in the cities because it raises their case loads while the human and capital resources stay relatively the same. Ferguson (2004: 1) describes what the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci once defined as 'common sense'.

The author in his article states that there is a taken for granted consciousness of millions of people worldwide, including those involved in social work and social care. The taken for granted assumption is that there is 'no alternative to the market'. He then go on to state that there are profound "implications for this unquestioning acceptance of the capitalist rationality for social work". According to Ferguson; "this has led to what has been described by (Harris, 2003) as the social work business which is no longer dominated by the notions of social justice and equality; but rather with 'value for money', which is led by managers whose remit is to manage budgets rather than meet client's needs, and too often staffed by demoralised practitioners who increasingly feel alienated from their organisations and from what now passes as social work".

According to Stiglitz (2002: 17) 'the trade liberalisation has thus too often not been followed by the promised growth but by increased misery, such that even those who have not lost their jobs are hit by the heightened sense of insecurity'. The demeaning

working conditions and the demoralising shortage of resources has led to decrease morale amongst child care workers in UK which according to (Jones, 2000), has increased the need for radical and empowering social work. This is due to the fact that the lives of the social work service users have not improved under the new labour laws. Butler and Drakeford (cited in Ferguson, 2004: 7) states that to date the leadership of social work profession has singularly failed to resist the attack on the profession, instead has preferred to adapt to whatever changes are imposed and often stressing opportunities 'real or imaginary' that they present. This has resulted in social workers who are struggling to retain their professional values and ethics while carrying out the bidding of the political masters who have totally different ideas and purposes.

Neoliberalism has caused growing inequality, the rich stays relatively rich, and they have access to better health services, can afford to buy healthy food and food supplements which boosts the immune system and prolong their health status. On the other hand the most vulnerable ones fail to afford the mere basics; yet their poor status is worsened by some industries that dump their harmful waste near where the poor and powerless people stay. These wastes are health hazardous, they place the lives of those poor marginalised people at risk and their poor health may deteriorate as a result and causes untimely death. South African social workers are not the only people affected by these discrepancies and practice dilemmas but worldwide. Neoliberalism is aligned with managerialism, which has become a more dominant mode of social work practice.

NEW MANAGERIALISM AS A BARRIER TO EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOCIAL WORK

Managerialism is defined as a government strategy to control public service delivery in order to reduce spending without cutting the volume of services (Van Berkel, Van der berg and Van Gestel, 2010). Its focus is on setting outputs targets and monitoring and regulating individual performance by introducing application of laws, setting up rules, evaluation and monitoring of Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS), key result areas (KRA's), job descriprtion, performance agreement, monthly reports, quarterly and annual reports are all

monitoring tools used to control social work activities and to measure their performance and quantify outputs (Wallace and Pease, 2011). Managerialism is a bureaucratic practice in the name of professionalizing practice (Duyvendak, Knijn, and Kremer, 2006). The domination of social work by budgets, control of resources, the comodification of every aspect of the social work task, negates basic social work values, such as respect for people (Butler and Drakeford, 2001; Sewpaul, 2014). It is however ironic that managerialism is about professional control yet professionalism requires autonomy of the professional to use expertise, knowledge, skills and experience acquired thorough professional training to analyze and solve social problem without prescriptive. This managerialism–bureaucracy rose as a result of fiscal problems, secondly it rose from a concern by government or political parties to create or sustain support because of some threats to their legitimacy and a way of gaining or retaining power (Clarke, Gewirtz and McLaughlin, 2000).

"The efforts made by the government to reduce public spending involve reducing services provided in one of three ways: simply cutting budgets; transferring responsibility to individuals, to the `third sector' or to the market; and transferring responsibility to local governments" (Clarke, et al, 2000: 32). Mmatli (2008) states that the traditional methods of social work such as casework are limited in addressing people's problems due to the fact that this method is used mainly to shift the responsibility for the general social welfare of Africans away from the state. Within the Department of Social Development there is a document called integrated development plan/strategic plan which was developed with the intention to set targets to be met within a five year period. This document is used to control and monitor activities of workers, provide funds based on the predetermined plans of service delivery, manage project and performance and match resources with needs (Gibbens, 2008).

Some authors state that supervision is another mechanism used by the state to control the activities of social workers. Hence one of the proposals made by British social workers was that supervision should be used as a proactive support to

practitioners, rather than as a means of management control (Jones, 2006). In the same vein this was the comment of one of Jone's respondents:

I feel so deskilled because there are so many restrictions over what I can do. Yes I go out and do assessments, draw up care plans, but then we aren't allowed to do anything. I can't even go and organise meals on wheels for somebody without completing a load of paperwork, submitting a report to a load of people who would then make the decision as to whether I can go ahead and make the arrangements. I just wonder why I am doing this. It's not social work. Many of my colleagues in the adult team are looking to get out of social work altogether. They say they don't want to take this garbage any more. That's how they feel. The will to do social work is still there. They are still committed to working with people in distress. That heartfelt warmth has not gone away, but the job is so different (Jones, 2004: 102).

Howe (1996) states that through managerialism and control of social work activities, social work now involves a shift from 'depth' to 'surface' social work. In contrast with this Young (1990) talks about the importance of shared responsibility, where all people in a system might be both victims and perpetrators of neoliberal and new managerial practices. The question that arises is whether social workers are acting ethically in terms of utilising the resources that are given to them or not, and the extent to which control measures might be a response to professional misconduct. The analysis chapter might give us some clarity on that.

SOCIAL WORKERS EXPERIENCES IN GOVERNMENTAL WELFARE OFFICES AROUND THE WORLD

Social workers complain about management that demands that they produce more with scarce resources and in a shortest period of time. Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) and Sewpaul (2013) have detailed the impact of neoliberalism and new managerialism on welfare broadly, and on the functioning of social workers specifically. Through my interaction with social workers, it seems that they perceive the Department of Social Development (DSD) as hypocritical. Their sense is that while their senior managers and the incumbents occupying political positions, preach that poor people need to be assisted out of poverty through people-centred, participatory and liberating strategies (White Paper for Developmental social Welfare 2007), the reality is that their day-to-day work is governed by the need to economise and adopt new managerialist policies that favour more technical approaches to working with people.

Chris Jones who is the Professor of Social Work at Liverpool University conducted a study on 40 front line social workers in local authorities in England and uncovered "extreme levels of demoralization, alienation and anger among these very experienced workers, a sense that social work as an activity had become something quite different from what it had been when they first began their careers." Jones then described this as a "crisis of social work".

He stated that this was experienced by social workers in England, Wales and Scotland. He further added that there was a widening gap between social workers' aspirations and the realities of social work practice. That reality is social work control. Ferguson and Lavallette (2006) further elaborates that according to the Inquiry team's interim report which was released by Scottish executive in 2004 'there appears to be a growing mismatch between what social workers feel they are trained to do and what they are required to do and the team argued that this calls for a need for a new model of practice. In a similar vein Pelton (1999:5) states that "social work whose mission is social justice; have been called upon to work within a system that

is unjust; a system that is not only discriminatory to individuals but which has become increasingly coercive and punitive". The author then goes on to state that in order for social workers to be true to their mission they must strive to benefit each individual as much as is possible within these contexts, but they must also seek to change, rather than succumb to and be complicit with the systems themselves. The pressure of working within such a system adds to the stress levels of social workers which manifest itself in ineffective and inefficient service delivery (Newman, 2005).

LACK OF RESOURCES AND NEGATIVE IMAGE OF SOCIAL WORK

According to Holscher and Sewpaul (2006: 174) 'social workers in post-apartheid South Africa battle with diminishing resources in relation to increasing numbers of service users, spreading our professional time and resources of financial and material aid increasingly thinly'. Holscher and Sewpaul further state that the statutory bodies have been imposing quality assurance procedure on social workers, codes of practice, conduct or ethics. Social workers expend valuable time trying to comply with prescriptive standards and quantifiable outputs, which is not seen as quality of service by service users. This is seen by the two authors as undermining the critical capacities of social workers while transforming them into output generators of welfare products.

Holscher and Sewpaul (2006) comment on the vicious cycle of inadequate resources and high staff turnover which has led to a steady deterioration of working conditions for those who stay behind. Case loads have either remained high or increased while the workers struggle to access basic necessities such as stationery, cars and phones, so as to contact service users. It is ironic that our government is failing to provide social welfare offices with basic resources yet there is money to compensate and give incentives to those tasked to save money on public spending.

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICA

Smith (2008: 372) states that "South Africa (SA) [is] still one of the most unequal societies in the world, with poverty still skewed along racial lines". Terreblanche, (2002: 425), stipulates that SA "is so divided that it seems to consist of two worlds with little interaction: one is modern, smart, professional, efficient and globally orientated, and the other neglected, messy, unskilled, oppressed and thriving on crime and violence". Smith, (2008) further states that the upper class of the population which is 16.6 % receives 72% of the income with the 50% lower class population receiving only 3.3% of the income in SA.

In the mist of all these inequalities, deprivation, unemployment, and social ills, demoralising lack of resources and extreme poor working conditions in welfare offices, the president of South Africa has been able to do home upgrades, which cost the country more than two hundred million rands. Furthermore President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma is said to be the highest paid political leader in the world. The following is Zuma's Balance Sheet: report by Gareth van Onselen 20 August 2012.

1. Annual Salary**:** [R2 275 802.00 to R2 753 689.00.

• Approximate Five Year Total: R12 315 706.00

2. Medical Aid: [At least R1 300 000 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total**:** R6 500 000.00

3. Pension Payout on Retirement: [Approximately R2 753 689.00]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R2 753 689.00

4. Spousal Support**:** [At least R15 517 500.00 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total**:** R77 585 000.00

5. Private Vehicle**:** [70% of salary - R1 835 792.00, for two vehicles]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R3 671 584.00

6. Flights – VIP Squadron: [An approximate average of: R46 838 476.00 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R234 192 383.00

7. Flights – Additional**:** [R6 331 174.67 plus additional cost of two planes]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R10 000 000.00

8. Flights – VIP Protection Services: [Unknown]

9. Flights – Helicopters: [At least R14 400 000.00 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R72 000 000.00

10. Overseas Allowances – President: [An average of R25 400.00 per year]

• Approximate Five year Total: R127 000.00

11. Overseas Allowances – First Ladies: [Unknown]

12. Accommodation – Hotels: [An average of R420 000.00 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R2 100 000.00

13. Accommodation – Official Residences: [An average of R5 300 000.00 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R26 500 000.00

14. Accommodation – Private Residences: [R6 400 000.00]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R6 400 000.00

15. VIP Protection [An average of at least R12 000 000.00 per year]

• Approximate Five Year Total: R60 000 000.00

16. Legal Costs: [Unknown]

Last update on 15 May 2014 by Carol Kearney; President Jacob Zuma approved a salary hike of R45-million for government despite earlier calls to freeze pay increases. The 5% pay hike applied to the 2013/2014 financial year and is for members of Zuma's executive, premiers and various other provincial and parliamentary government officials. Amongst the increases, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe would receive an additional R118 000; while national assembly speaker Max Sisulu and the national council of provinces chairperson Mninwa Mahlangu would each be getting about R100 000 more.

Premiers would receive an increase of about R94 000 (Mail & Guardian, 9 May 2014).

Smith (2008: 373) states that "while South Africa has achieved an impressive liberation from apartheid over the years, extreme poverty, structural oppression, inequality and skewed power relations continues". What we now see is apartheid based on class. The author states that in this context, social work tries to participate

in the national project of building a better life for all. However she argues that many social workers are unable to respond to these realities due to realisms of internalised as well as continued external forms of oppression and exploitation. Moloi (2012) a researcher at the Institute of race relations, said, 'According to the DSD, 16 504 social workers are required to provide the social welfare needs of children in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

This figure accounts for 99% of all registered social workers in this country. This illustrates the shortage of social workers given that some social workers work specifically in areas like substance abuse, older people and people with disabilities, crime prevention and support, and HIV/AIDS among other things. According to the press release of the South African Institute for Race Relations (14 August 2012) in the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) of DSD developed in 2005, the desired caseload per social worker is 60 cases. But the Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, concedes that owing to high levels of poverty, deprivation, and a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, the actual caseload per social worker is far higher. The government is failing to employ enough social workers, yet 72% of the budget goes to the privileged few.

Political leaders speak of liberation and freedom of the oppressed, peace and prosperity for all, poverty elimination, women, youth and children empowerment, justice and economic freedom for all, which do not translate into reality. There is a structure called the provincial treasurer in DSD which is put in place to guard against financial waste of public services. The strategy that guides this structure is called cost saving strategy. This shows how our political leaders talk right and walk left. The principles and practices of neoliberalism exploit the disadvantaged groups who are social work service users. Neoliberal and new managerial practices are inconsistent with the social work mandate, which is the promotion of social justice and the protection of human rights.

The cutting down on public spending by the state, privatisation of state owned companies, deregulation of the market to take a lead on economic growth and

development issues which promotes free trade is inconsistent with the mandate and rhetoric of social work which is supported worldwide. Though difficult to fight against the heavy storms and earthquake of neoliberal practices, social work practice is shifting towards the promoting of social justice and human rights as supported by the Global Agenda on Social Work, the Global Standards for SW Education and Training, the White Paper on Social Welfare, the Global Definition of SW, our progressive comprehensive legislation, constitution, government and department policy documents which were developed in the democratic era.

FEELINGS OF SOCIAL WORK AROUND THE GLOBE REGARDING THEIR DIMINISHED AUTONOMY

Social workers feel like they are treated like robots which are programmed to carry out tasks without questioning authority figures. Due to this autocracy in the offices of DSD social workers in this office are constantly meditating about leaving this department in search for agencies that will take them serious as professionals and value what they have to offer. From the beginning of this chapter it has become evident that the there is an overwhelming tension and confusion regarding the preferred roles and responsibilities of social workers and the reality of their day to day work activities.

The discussion in this chapter has illustrated that there are many discrepancies between the dominant practices of neoliberalism and new managerialism and the ideals stated in the White Paper, literature regarding social work as a human rights and social justice profession, the RDP, Global Agenda and Global Standards, Ten Point Plan of DSD and Recruitment and Retention strategy. The following dominant rhetorics and ideals illustrate that they coincide with social workers ideals and expectations but there are also inconsistencies that exist in their actual practice through the realities of neoliberal policies and managerial practices.

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Social justice and human rights: International Commitments

The 1995 and 2000 World Summits on Social Development identified a number of commitments for all member governments. Particularly relevant for social workers are:

Commitment 2

'ensure that national budgets and policies are oriented as necessary to meeting basic needs, reducing inequalities and targeting poverty as a strategic objective',

Commitment 8

'ensure that when structural adjustment programmes are agreed to, they include social development goals, in particular eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment, and enhancing social integration'.

Translating that rhetoric into reality is a difficult task. Social workers see little evidence of these grand commitments being applied in practice. The rhetoric seems to make little difference to the people affected.

International Action

International organizations, including the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, need to make a continuing commitment to implement the objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Summit on Social Development, the Kyoto Protocol and related international statements. This should be based on an understanding that the full implementation of human rights is not possible unless social issues are addressed. The over-riding objective to nurture a sustainable environment, the right to work, the right to housing, food, clothing and medical care, the right to education, civil and political rights, and the right to the protection of the law are all under threat for those in poverty. These social rights need to be affirmed at the international level, (International Federation of Social Workers 23 February 2012).

Social justice, liberation of people, empowerment, human rights, social change and social cohesion is at the heart of social work education and practice since its inception and it is supported worldwide as the above statement and commitments are stressed. Social work considers the person in environment and recognises how the connectedness of socio-economic, political, cultural and personal factors either presents opportunities for development or as barriers to social advancement. This can be observed from the global definition of social work which was reviewed in July 2014 which reads as follows, "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation people.

Principles of social justice and human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanitarian and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IASSW & IFSW, July 2014). In analysing this definition one discerns that the main aim of social work is to address social inequalities, adopt a participatory approach in their interventions, uphold and respect human dignity as enshrined in the Bill of Rights, discussed in the White Paper, demanded by Batho-Pele principles. Hence the roles social workers need to adopt include that of social activist, advocate, lobbyist, broker, mediator, protector, supporter, educator, consciousness raiser etc.

Social work is at all times concerned about ensuring that justice is done to people especially the marginalised groups (Smith, 2008). Social work is a profession which is fighting against oppressive policies and actions that undermine, humiliate, degrade, and violate people's rights (Pelton, 1999). However being short staffed and over burdened with high case loads makes it harder for social workers to intervene effectively and make an impact in people's lives. There are social work academics and researchers who continue to enlighten social workers and people at large about the structural dynamics of social world, causality and resolutions.

CRITICAL AND RADICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

Social work education system has played a huge part in shaping social work profession in the 21st century in ensuring that they have enough knowledge to fight and challenge injustices. As a result of teachings on critical, feminist, structural theories, anti-oppressive practice has now produced critical thinkers, resisters, who do not take things for granted, people who question things and people who are not afraid to confront and challenge situations in an attempt to make sure that human rights are realised and enjoyed by all. This is not an easy task as Smith (2011: 2) discovered in his study done in Toronto that social workers who are social activist "at times, they deploy creative and innovative tactics to by-pass and undermine oppressive policies; yet these same "resisters" will simultaneously engage in practices that seem highly compliant, obedient, and sometimes even contrary to the needs of service users and their own interests as workers".

Smith further noted that there were tensions which existed between what they imagine themselves to be and what they have to do in order to hold on to their jobs. Higher education institutions have played a great part in the democratic regime by introducing emancipatory education and anti oppressive practice (AOP) to social work students (Sewpaul, Osthus and Mhone, 2011; Sewpaul 2004). This tries to conscientise social workers about the societal problems which maintain people at the margins of society. It is concerned about social justice and raise the awareness of social workers about the different types of people they are going to work with, the different contexts that they will be expected to work in, the political, cultural and organisational dynamics they will work in, and how these can at times marginalise, disadvantage and oppress some vulnerable groups.

Furthermore, it teaches social workers about how political, cultural and organisational contexts can affect them in their mandate of ensuring that social justice is served and realised by all equally.
Moreover these teachings help social workers to be able to analyse existing inequalities, raise consciousness of the oppressed about these structural issues and together with the service users find ways to eliminate all forms of oppressive

structures that place service users at the margins of society, violate their human rights and undermine their dignities. In a nutshell, AOP confronts social workers with the realities of life and its contradictions in order for them to be innovative, informative, proactive and effective in fulfilling their professional mandate (Dominelli, 2002). The importance of challenging what has been viewed as the social order [social divide, where the class division is seen as inevitable] is noted by Gramsci (1971) and Payne (2009). Their stance is that the poor are blamed for the appalling conditions they live under, while privilege and wealth are taken for granted as privileged groups believe that they deserve everything they have.

Mclaughlin (2005) states that the inception of AOP in 1970s was due to the criticism of welfare and social work which was individualizing social problems rather than seeing it as a structural issue which called for collaborative action. Social work is struggling to position itself in the society that has clashing social and economic policies.

The International Association of Schools of Social work, (IASSW), International Federation of Social workers, (IFSW) and International Council of Welfare (ICSW) 2012), have committed themselves through the global Agenda into supporting, influencing and enabling structures and systems that positively address the root causes of oppression and inequality (IASSW, IFSW and ICSW March 2012). The Agenda focuses on these key areas: Promoting social and economic equalities, Promoting the dignity and worth of people, Working toward environmental sustainability and strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships. The South African Council on Social Service Professions has imposed Continuous Development Points (CDP) on social workers to keep up with new developments in their field of practice and globally. A study conducted by Dominelli in 2001 with social workers in Great Britain revealed that social workers had limited insight about the influences of globalization processes on social work practice at the local level. Social workers in America claimed that they were too busy with the day to day issues of clients to worry about global policies (Jurcevic and Zivkovic 2011: 37-38).

THE TEN POINT PLAN OF ACTION

The struggle towards social justice is also seen in the Ten Point Plan of the Department of Social Development which was developed in 2008. Amongst the issues that this plan covered was rebuilding of family, community and social relations, integrated poverty eradication strategy, comprehensive social security system, violence against women and children, older persons and other vulnerable groups, HIV/AIDS, accessibility of social welfare services, service's to people with disabilities. The department has committed itself to train, educate, re-deploy and employ a new category of workers in social development, to restore the ethics of care and human development in all welfare programmes, design an integrated poverty eradication strategy that provides direct benefits to those in greatest need especially women, youth and children in rural areas and informal settlements, develop a comprehensive social security system that builds on existing contributory and non-contributory schemes and prioritizes the most vulnerable households.

Moreover to respond to brutal affects of all forms of violence against women, children, older persons and other vulnerable groups, as well as design effective strategies to deal with perpetrators. Moreover the programmes will include a range of services to support the community-based care and assistance for the people living with HIV/AIDS, make social welfare services accessible and available to people in rural, peri-urban and informal settlements, and ensure equity in service provision, redesign services to people with disabilities in ways that promote their human rights and economic development. The department is putting some efforts to respond to the issues of the South African citizens but there are still some gaps here and there. Such gaps involved but not limited to; is the implementation of the Integrated and developmental approach to social welfare.

CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED AND DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO WELFARE

Landman (2005) states that social workers in South Africa are involved in various services delivery interventions. It involves community development located at macro level and statutory services located at micro level. The researcher further stipulates that although the developmental approach was adopted in South Africa through the white paper for social welfare (1997) there is still a lack of understanding amongst social workers regarding what developmental social welfare and developmental social work entails. Fouche and Delport (2000) explains that even if the **what** was known the **how** remains uncertainty. In support of the latter statement: this is the comment made by Dlangamandla's respondent in his study done is DSD Gauteng province in (2010: 80):

"My experience is that, we are not really sure how to implement the developmental approach, yes we are trying but there is no implementation, very little is put into practice"

This is so partly because both the approaches are time consuming and has different methodologies. Landman (2005:42) states that "trying to execute both these approaches by a single social worker is like sitting in two different chairs at the same time; therefore making failure of both approaches inevitable". According to the United Nations (1999) the poor people are faced with interrelated social problems which require integrated approach to social problems. These involve the unemployment, health related issues, institutional, political, educational, infrastructural, housing and environmental all of which are addressed by social work profession.

Lombard (2007: 295) indicates that though social workers are expected to implement this integrated developmental approach "the lack of proper guidelines as to **how** social welfare should achieve development goal is an obstacle". Anderson, et al (1994); Ayittey, (2005); Braathen, et al (2000) and Sivard as cited in Mmatli (2008), noted that the main problems affecting Africa and its people includes unemployment, poverty, inequalities, illiteracy, homelessness, child streetism, ill-

health, HIV/AIDS, abuse of human rights and civil liberties, civil conflicts and official corruption. Moreover; Mmatli (2008) states that in all African countries the agenda for social work is mainly defined by other professionals groups like politicians, economists, and bureaucrats who have little insight into the problems experienced by social work clients. The author further states that social workers are not strategically placed to articulate the issues of their clients and how they should be addressed instead they have been systematically excluded from the broader social policy formulation responsibilities and confined to the administration and supervision of ill-defined and inadequately funded welfare programs. The marginalisation and exclusion of social workers is not only the experiences of African social workers but even in the well developed countries.

Social workers neither define the purpose of social work nor the means by which is done (Bailey and Brake, 1975: Carniol, 1990: Dominelli, 2002: Jordan, 2004: Mullaly, 1993: Ralf, 2000). Mmatli (2008) and Carniol (1990) states that the structural and political nature of these issues points to the need for political solutions. Mmatli (2008) goes on to argue that African social workers need to become overtly active in the political processes and debates in their respective countries partly because the structural problems that African social workers regularly face are typically a result of political decisions and requires political solutions. However Sewpaul and Holscher 2006: 174) states that "in post-apartheid South Africa, examples of purposeful acts of resistance by social workers have been rare, with passive resistance more commonly practiced, e.g. leaving their place of work". A platform should be provided for social workers to take necessary political actions to protect their clients and themselves from any form of oppression and exclusion.

CONCLUSION

This chapter begins by discussing the impact of neoliberalism and new managerialism and how it has shaped social work practice in South Africa. The picture of social workers experiences and what social work should be and the dilemmas they face in their day to day practice is painted throughout this chapter.

This was done through viewing social worker's experience from the global perspective.

The paper goes on to discuss the global agenda on social work and social development, social work as a human rights profession, justice and social work, critical and radical social work, anti-oppressive practice in social work, the socio-political context of South Africa, social workers experiences in governmental welfare offices around the world, lack of resources and negative image of social work, new managerialism as a barrier in effective and efficient service delivery in social work and how it has made Batho-Pele principles hard to implement.

It discusses the strategies adopted by social work around the globe to protect themselves from the face of diminishing autonomy, and the challenges faced by social workers in the implementation of integrated and developmental approaches to welfare. From the global structures to the local levels of service delivery; social worker's mandate and the importance of its existence is ensuring that they challenge and remove the barriers which inhibits people from enjoying the fruits of democracy and to ensure that their human rights as enshrined in the constitution of this country is realized by all. Social worker's should at all times in their interventions refer to the definition of social work in order to be guided on how to fight against oppression, marginalization, exclusion and exploitation of the vulnerable groups in our society and to understand their identity and their role in the field of practice.

CHAPTER THREE:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study. Its focal point is on the research paradigm and design, sampling strategy, data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness of the data collected, the ethical considerations posed by this study and the steps taken to minimize harm to the research participants. In this study I adopted a qualitative research paradigm. In order to reduce bias I used triangulation of three data collection strategies to accurately describe social worker's' experiences. I conducted in-depth interviews with 10 social workers in a designated public sector welfare agency. Participant observation was used to understand their experiences holistically in more natural settings and I used a focus group with 21 social workers to confirm and verify the data obtained via participant observation and the in-depth interviews, and as a means of consciousness raising.

Pearce (1971:4) stated that ``There is no pure looking with a naked, innocent eye", because in the process of describing certain aspects of the phenomenon under study, one begins to transform that experience or event. Awareness of this made me more mindful of the importance of reflexivity, which is one of the main concerns of critical theory. This was particularly so in this instance as in studying the experiences of social workers in the organization I was effectively studying myself, as I work in the organization where the research was undertaken.

QUALITATIVE PARADIGM

According to Parton and Cochran (2002) qualitative research is characterized by the need to understand some aspects of human life experiences. Qualitative research uses methods of analysis involving words rather than numbers. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 5) take this definition further by suggesting that qualitative research involves

interpretive and naturalistic approaches to the world. Because qualitative methods generate a high volume of data the sample is smaller. However, the researcher has to ensure that data saturation is reached. Dlangamandla (2010: 75) postulates that "[qualitative research] studies people in their natural setting and interprets phenomenon in terms of meaning people attach to them". This study investigated social worker's experiences in their working environment. The following is the design that was used in getting answers to the questions of this research.

RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Crotty (1998), the research design depends on the objectives of the research in order to be able to answer the research questions. Therefore the designs that were utilized were **exploratory and descriptive** in nature. The reason for choosing these two designs is because it permits the researcher to conduct an open, flexible investigation that adopts inductive reasoning (Terreblanche and Durrheim 1999). When one explores and describes certain phenomenon the major emphasis is on gaining ideas and insights and in determining the frequency with which something occurs. According to Sandelowski (2000) the descriptive design in qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to describe details and the finer facts of the phenomenon being studied. However, Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995) states that there are no ``facts'' outside the particular context that gives those facts meaning. Therefore descriptions always depend on the perceptions, inclinations, sensitivities, and sensibilities of the describer (Giorgi, 1992; and Wolcott, 1994).

MAIN AIM OF THE STUDY AND UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

The main aim was to understand social worker's interpretations of the issue under investigation in this study, which is the discrepancy between their commitment to social justice, human rights and engendering social change and the reality of their day to day activities. The aim was to either confirm or dispute the underlying assumptions that I had regarding social worker's experiences in DSD offices. Such assumptions are that:

- There would be a misfit between how social workers perceive their roles and what they actually do in practice.
- That social workers would experience their work environment as oppressive and bureaucratic.
- That new managerialism permeates the work environment and negatively impacts social worker's functioning.
- That social workers might normalize their work experience and not challenge the status quo.
- Social workers might be afraid to challenge their working conditions.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

Sampling is a process of deliberately and logically selecting sources that will provide the required information (Babbie and Rubin 2008). Taking into consideration the sensitivity of the study, some social workers were scared to be part of the research. I used convenience sampling where the main criterion for inclusion was voluntary participation. This choice was aligned with the requisites of research ethics and I believed that it would minimize the chances of people dropping out of the research before the study was complete. This study involved a sample of social workers in one of DSD welfare service office in the EThekwini municipality. Ten social workers formed the sample.

The reason for choosing this organization was because it is where I did my practical work as a fourth year student in 2012, where I was subsequently employed upon graduation. I had been schooled in emancipatory social work at University and noted a discrepancy about what we ought to be doing as social workers and what was happening in practice. I also heard social workers speak about disillusionment regarding what they thought they should be doing and what they were actually doing, and the political and structural constraints within which they were working. I therefore wanted to undertake research into the area, and based on the philosophical foundations of critical theory hoped that through it, I would contribute to

organizational change and transformation. Being an employee in the organization proved to be a double edged sword. While it offered me an easily accessible sample, it produced unique challenges. While management granted permission for the research to be undertaken, some difficulties arose during the course of the study as management considered some of the processes – even the very act of interviewing workers, and their heightened sense of assertiveness in challenging injustices - as a threat. These, which had a direct bearing on my employment status, had to be negotiated with care and sensitivity. It was also difficult as in studying the experiences of social workers; I was studying myself, which called for a great deal of critical reflection. Maintaining a dialectical distance to be both on the inside and the outside at the same time was not easy. I managed this by engaging in dialogue with my colleagues and supervisor; and by keeping a reflexive journal, and by being acutely aware of my position and possible conflict of interest. I was aware of the possible threat to my position in the organization at the inception of the study and I was willing to take the risk.

<u>Process followed in the sample selection</u>

Permission was sought and obtained from the gate keepers (See Appendix 1 & 2) to conduct the study in the designated organization. After the necessary permission was granted I approached the intended participants, who I believed will be willing to share their experiences in a formal research context. I explained that I was doing my Master's degree in social work and that I sought to better understand their experiences as social workers. I further explained the confidentiality clause to the participants. Some of the intended participants were concerned about losing their jobs should anything they disclose to me leak out. Participants were informed that being part of the study was a choice and that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that there would be no penalties for withdrawing (see appendix 3).

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is a strategy used to gather the information from the participants, which will capture the meaning of what the researcher is observing and hearing (Terreblanche and Durrheim, 1999). Since this study sought to get thick description of the experiences of the participants I used triangulation where I used three data collection strategies. This involved individual in-depth interview with the aid of an interview guides (see appendix 4), a voice recorder; and participant observation, which according to (De-Vos, 2002: 278) allows the researcher "direct contact with the subject of observation." For demographic information I used interview schedule (see appendix 5).

This allowed for studying the type of communication, interactions between staff members and the behaviors they portray in response to their supervisors, managers, situations and other directives from external structures. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 673) state that participant observation allows the "researcher to both observe human activities and the physical settings in which such activities take place". Thirdly, I used a focus group to check for transferability of data, for verification and as a consciousness raising strategy.

Use of in-depth interviews

Boyce and Neale (2006) sates that in depth interviews are a qualitative research method where the main goal is to explore intense or in depth point of view, feelings, experiences and perspectives of a small sample. The two authors go on to say in depth interviews are more relevant in a qualitative research that needs to get sensitive information and thick descriptions from respondents. Hence the environment where the interview is conducted should be a place where there will be no external disturbances and if possible let the respondent choose that place (Prairie Research Associates, 2001). Moreover the researcher should continually reassure the participants throughout about confidentiality of information given and of their personal details (Patton 2002).

In order to get participants' attention, the researcher need to call them and explain the purpose of interview, explain the social value of the study and set a date for

interview in conjunction with the participant's working schedule (Woods 2011). The researcher should also create rapport with the participants in order to allow them to share the information freely, openly and hopefully honestly. The time and date of the interview should be convenient for the participants. The interviewer should be flexible in a way that allows a little deviation of the participants from the topic and sensitively guide them back to the topic. Colleen (1997) states that interview guide should have few questions, which allow probing so that the researcher can get that thick description of the participant's views or experience. According to Kvale (1996) the question in the guide should begin by asking general questions so that the interviewee is at ease. Moreover Boyce and Neale (2006) states that the questions in the guide should be based on the objectives of the study and that the guide is just a method, which ensures that you do not forget to ask the important questions. The question should be open ended in nature and the researcher should be patient try not to rush the respondent. Interviewers should have active listening skills and should talk less.

Coleen (1997) further states that the interviewer should avoid asking questions in a jargon language and that the respondent should be reminded about the interview date in advance so that they don't forget. The interview should be a free conversation as much as possible. According to Terreblanche at, al (1999) researchers should ask positive questions before the negative ones as they are emotionally draining. Boyce, et, al (2006) stipulates that the interview should be tape recorded and transcribed in verbatim (word for word) of the responded and that body posture and facial expression is very important in the interview as it will either limit or expand the information you will get. The latter can help the researcher in the analysis of the data. Transcribing is time consuming. The researcher can either hire a professional transcriber or can do it her/himself.   Transcribing the data oneself gives one an advantage of understanding the data more, hence the analysis becomes easier.

Process followed in individual interviewing

I had 10 individual interviews to obtain thick description of respondent's views. I did the interviews and I transcribed them. In the initial stage I approached all the prospective participants. I introduced myself and the study purpose as well as the value of the study. The participants were concerned about the confidentiality; hence I gave them the consent form which addresses confidentiality issues and anonymity. All of them signed the consent form after the explanations and the availability of the consent form. An interview guide was constructed with the objective of the study in mind. I continually reminded the participant about interview time and date as it drew closer. Some interviews were done in the offices of the participants but some were done in my office; especially of those who had their offices next to management offices. I used simple understandable language and words. Though the interview guide was in English some of the participants preferred to be interviewed in IsiZulu for better understanding. This was made possible by the fact I understand both these languages. I then had to transfer a lot of IsiZulu to English in the transcribing phase. I sat in the opposite direction of the participant with an open posture, leaning forward a bit and maintaining an interested and polite eye contact. The interviews took between 35 minutes to an hour, although there was one which took a one hour thirty minutes. Note that the length of the interview is not so important; but the richness of data collected is what is important. These were the steps followed:

- Construction of the consent form,
- Construct the interview guide,
- Contact the targeted participants,
- Introduce myself and the study purpose,
- Give the participant the consent form to read, understand and sign if giving consent
- Set date and time for the interview in co-operation with participant
- Remind the interviewee about the interview date in advance
- In depth interview
- Transcribing the interview

Use of participant observation

According to Bernard (2006: 29) participant observation is the most natural way of studying human experiences, 'it connects the researcher to the most basic of human experiences, discovering through immersion and participation the hows and whys of human behavior in a particular context'. Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, (1995) state that in participant observation the researcher takes notes; recording voices, sounds, and images; and asking questions that are designed to uncover the meaning behind the behaviors. Additionally to this Jorgensen (1989) and DeWalt & DeWalt (2011), agree that in many cases, we are trying to discover and analyze aspects of social scenes that use rules and norms that the participants may experience without explicitly talking about, that operate on automatic or subconscious levels, or are even officially off limits for discussion or taboo. Participant observation as a qualitative research data collection tool has its own advantages and disadvantages. According to Jorgensen (1989) participant observation is exceptional in studying processes, relationships, organisation of people and it puts the researcher at an advantage of being able to describe what goes on, what or who is involved, when and where things occur, how and why that particular event is happening.

It is "a logic and a process of inquiry that is open-ended, flexible, opportunistic, and requires constant redefinition of what is problematic, based on facts gathered in concrete settings of human existence" (Jorgensen, 1989: 5) . However this method is not easy since it time consuming and documenting data is even more difficult partly because you sometimes cannot write everything you are observing while you are participating (Bogdewic, 1992) . Moreover writing the data later on may lead to the researcher giving inaccurate account of an event or even lose some utterances as human memory sometimes fades away quickly (Johnson and Sackett, 1998). Kawulich (2005) adds that sometimes participant observation can be subjective yet research requires objectivity. For these reasons the author states that this tool should be triangulated with other methods of data collection to strengthen rigor and reliability because inference and interference could be inevitable.

Inference means that a researcher may add his/ her data to what was observed and interference means that researchers may interfere with the behavior of those being

studied (Gans, 1999). Participant observation data consists of detailed field notes which are taken by the researcher on daily basis through the use of daily journal capturing objective data. This is more helpful in ensuring that data collected are objective and it assists the researcher in avoiding their preconceived ideas (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Yount, (2006) describes this as a selective observation, and adds that this may be caused by the fact that observers are also humans who have feelings, aspirations, emotions, biases' and fears. Participant observers should be good listeners and should always be willing to learn and be open to the unexpected (DeWALT and DeWALT, 1998). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) participant observation has some ethical problem which arises when the participants do not know that someone is studying them. Hence obtaining informed consent from informants is of high importance. Being a participant observer is not easy since the researcher is forced to adopt dual roles, making her/him to be on the inside while also being on the outside (Mauthner, and Andrew, 2003).

"Reflexivity is the capacity to reflect upon one's actions and values during the research, when producing data and writing accounts and to view the beliefs we hold in the same way that we view the beliefs of others" (Seale, 1999: 14).This requires that the researcher should constantly reflect on their thoughts, feelings and dilemmas they experience as a result of these roles which sometimes collides (Saunders, 1996). This enhances credibility of the study. In the participant observation role; I first went to each and every social worker; explained to them that I was doing a study which sought to understand their experiences and I asked for permission to take notes in their informal conversation and use it as part of my analysis. The participants agreed by way of signing that consent form. When this request was granted to conduct the study, I began taking notes in informal settings e.g. climate meetings, staff meetings, lunch breaks, tea times, little office group chats, at awareness campaigns and captured the reactions and behaviors on a daily basis, which could not have prevailed in a formal interview setting.

The result of this discovery and systemization is that we not only become acceptable participants in some venues but it also generates data that can meaningfully add to

our collective understanding of human experience (Kvale, 2007). Through the help of the daily journal I was able to express my feelings, thoughts, challenges and experiences as a researcher and a practitioner. Whenever I was prepared to make observations and take notes I took my journal with me where I recorded my observances and my feelings. The most tiring part in my participant observation role was that sometimes found myself struggling with balancing the dual roles of practitioner and researcher. On the 6th 03-2014, I had a social worker coming to my office after the group discussion and told me how she had been victimized in that office by management, she then cried bitterly when she shared that she hates the manager and her supervisor and she emphasized that she will never forgive them for ganging up on her. On this account I also broke down and cried as I had also been victimized by supervisors in that office as a way of taming me and in attempts to prevent me from continuing conducting the interviews. The unsigned constructed consent form of this strategy will be attached as annexure 3.

Use of group discussion

Giroux (1980) stresses the importance of deconstruction and reconstruction of our thoughts and ideas. On the same note Friere (1972) states that the latter process relies on the heightened awareness about the exploitation and oppression of the self that has the ability to propel people towards taking radical actions and transform their world. Dominelli (2002) explains that liberating practice from oppression starts from the analysis of the social problems that affects a certain group. Sarachild at the First National Women's Liberation Conference outside Chicago, November 27, 1968 stated that consciousness raising is a radical weapon in a group because it has the power to prompt people to organize and to act on a large scale when they are aware who or what has an interest in maintaining the oppression in their lives.

Therefore because this is a critical research which aims at empowering, raise consciousness, build up resistance against exploitation and oppression and develop strategies of fighting against oppressive systems, the focus groups was then conducted at the end as a research as a possible means towards transformation. Apart from using the group for the purpose of verification, the findings from individual

interviews were used to stimulate group discussion (critical reflexive dialogue) and simultaneously raise awareness of oppression. Moreover the use the focus group was also a strategy of checking **transferability and dependability** of the findings from individual interviews and from participant observation notes. This was done through creating a platform to discuss the findings of the study with social workers of DSD in the same office, who were not part of the study in order to see if they shared the same experience. The structured interview guide which was used to stimulate group discussion is attached (See appendix 2).

<u>Process followed in recruiting the group.</u>

As critical theory demands consciousness raising for the oppressed; I invited interested social workers to attend a reflexive dialogue in the boardroom through an invitation that I put in the notice board. In that invitation I specified that attending that reflexive dialogue was totally voluntary and that people could leave the dialogue at any point should they feel uncomfortable.

DATA ANALYSIS

Powell and Renner (2003) and Krueger (1998) stipulate that data consists of tons of words and observational notes which require analysis and interpretations. Hence this process requires creativity, an organized approach and discipline, (Powell, et, al 2003; Micheal, 2002 and Ratcliff, 1990). "Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data" (De-Vos 2002: 339-340). This author further asserts that qualitative data analysis searches for general statements about relationships among categories of data. There are various ways of analyzing data, and there is no right or wrong way as long as the strategy is able to answer the questions of the study.

<u>Process followed in data analysis</u>

The data analysis strategy that was used in this research is thematic and content analysis. According to Henning (2004) content analysis is about closely studying sets

of data in order to form overviews and to capture the context. Therefore data analysis was done through content and thematic analysis. I categorized the related codes into groups by way of colour coding common themes in order to form thematic patterns. This presents the patterns of related themes in a logical sequence. Common themes were cut out across interview transcripts and then I browsed through those themes to get the description that gives the thick explanation of that experience. In each theme, I noted the number of respondents who gave common answers and related reasons for their responses. The data were then linked with existing literature and previous research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that informs this research is critical theory. This theory postulates that "social structures are oppressive and they are maintained through political and economic power and supported by a range of legitimizing structures" Humphries (2008: 106). According to Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 114) critical theory "takes the standpoint of the oppressed or exploited classes and individuals and makes the judgment that structure of oppression and exploitation benefits certain classes at the expense of others, hence should be radically transformed by social struggles". The relevance of this theoretical framework in this study is that I assumed that social workers in DSD offices are oppressed by the managerialist approach, as well as new neoliberal policies.

I believe that although it is difficult to fight against injustice and to transform the political forces and decisions, research has enormous potential for transformational purposes (Antonette Jefferson, 2008). Research provides empirical evidence that might contribute to collective voices and social action (Sarachild 1978). Research, informed by critical theory allows social work academics and practitioners to make oppression visible and to expose oppressive and exploitative practices (Humphries, 2008). This is aptly captured by Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 113):

Critical theory does not accept existing social structures as they are, it is not interested in society as it is, but in what it could be and could become. It

deconstructs ideologies that claim that something cannot be changed and shows potential counter-tendencies and alternative modes of development [and thinking]. That the negative resentments are transformed into positive results is not an automatism, but depends on the realization of practical forces of change that have a potential to rise from the inside of the systems in question in order to produce a transcendental outside that becomes a new whole.

This is the reason I used the Freirian strategy of praxis where I presented the major themes extracted from the ten individual interviews to the larger group. This was done with the intention to raise the consciousness of social workers about the impact of the current working conditions on their practices. One of the main aims was to discuss possible solutions and a way forward with social workers in dealing with the profession's core mandates towards social justice and engendering structural changes. My experience and observations often reflected the normalization and internalization of oppression and capitalistic hegemony (Freire, 1970; Gramsci, 1971) by social workers. Sewpaul and Larsen (2014: 244) argued that:

Skilled facilitators of the Gramscian ilk play a profound role in engaging people in consciousness raising exercises, enabling them to reflect on the external structural sources of oppression and/or privilege, and on the constraints of their own thinking. Such praxis validates people and it makes them appreciate that they are much more than that defined by their social circumstances; it enhances their sense of self, increases self-confidence, belief in themselves and instil hope that change is possible.

According to Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 114) the common element of critical theory is that it negates capitalism, firstly by the notion of free thinking individuals that is more than an economic subject, and secondly by the interpretation of freedom as a general state of society that humans have to struggle for. On that note I wanted to raise the consciousness of social workers about oppression by engaging them in reflexive dialogue (Freire, 1970; Sewpaul and Larsen, 2014), in the hope that they

might take constructive action to change the system and adopt their preferred roles and responsibilities.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Guion (2002) and Olsen (2004) triangulation is the most powerful way of ensuring that the findings of any qualitative study is trustworthy and it helps to minimize researcher bias. Moreover validity, in qualitative research, relates to whether the findings of your study are true and certain. "True" in the sense of your findings accurately reflecting the real situation. "Certain" in the sense of your findings being backed by evidence. "Certain" means that there are no good grounds for doubting the results i.e. the weight of evidence supports your conclusions. This is the reason I used in depth interviews, participant observation and focus group methods of data collection. This was done to increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

According to Terreblanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006: 70) validity in qualitative research refers to the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings, through using a design, methodology and data analysis that is rigorous, justifiable and feasible. Janice, Morse, Barrett, Olson, and Spiers, 2002: p; 16, state that "without rigor, research is worthless; it becomes fiction, and loses its utility". In my attempts at ensuring that this study was trustworthy, I used three methods of data collection, interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. With regard to **Transferability and dependability** a platform was created to discuss the findings of the study with social workers of DSD in the same office, who were not part of the study in order to see if they share the same experience. This was done without revealing the identities of the social workers who were involved in the in depth interviews. This was also done in order to see if the findings were credible and applicable to the rest of social workers in this office, and to be mindful about my biases. **Credibility.** My position in the research is clearly established and articulated. The theory used in this study clarifies my stance, my partiality towards social workers in the organization, and my vested interest in it. The limitations and risks involved have been acknowledged and the attempts to address them are

clearly stated. The permission to take notes as a participant observer was sought and authorized by staff, including management.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research is concerned about the morality of the study being carried out (Jameton, 1984). It's emphasis is on the "protection of dignity of subjects {in} the publication of the information in the research" (Fouka, and Mantzorou, 2011: 4). The latter authors state that the ethical codes were introduced after 1940 when there was a realization that human lives were being exploited by researchers. Hence the protection of human rights became the priority. Research codes focus on voluntary informed consent, autonomy, permission to withdraw from research process, protection from physical and mental harm, or suffering and death. According to Beebe and Smith (2008) and Robinson (1992) people have a right to make an informed and intelligent choice based on true and transparent information afforded to them by the researcher. Parton, et, al, (2002), state that the researcher has the responsibility to her/his participants to uphold the following ethical issues: autonomy; respect; beneficence; non-maleficence; not doing harm; justice; and equity. Murphy 1983 and Swanson 1993, postulate that the following major ethical issues should be considered in any study with humans. **Respect for privacy**: "Privacy is the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent, and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others" (Carr, 1994).
Respect for the anonymity and confidentiality: It is not possible for researchers to measure how and what could be the repercussions that may befall participants as a result of the information shared. Therefore it is very important to keep the identity and identifying details of participants confidential.

 Voluntarism and informed consent: "Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures that will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which respondents may be exposed, as well as the credibility of the

researcher, be disclosed to potential subjects or their legal representatives"
(Williams, Marroux-Galarneau & Malcom et al, 1996: 30).

The crux of this ethical issue emphasizes the importance of knowing that people have a right to make free choices without being pressured or threatened to participate or complete the study. The study involved sensitive and emotionally draining experiences. I considered the possible emotional harm to participants and addressed this by formulating a consent form which included confidentiality issues, voluntarism and freedom to quit at any stage. The consent form was signed and dated by the participant and researcher. Moreover, in the consent form it was stated that should any of the participants experience discomfort and need counseling as a result of the study, they would be referred for such service. The interviews and the focus group, however, provided for empowering shared dialogue and discussion.

LIMITATIONS AND STEPS TAKEN TO MINIMISE LIMITATION

- One of the limitations was that social workers are forever busy with their day to day activities so I had to constantly .remind them about the meeting for individual interviews.

- Some social workers were suspicious of my intentions, especially around confidentiality issues. The informed consent assured them that things discussed during the interview were not going to be revealed to the superiors. I assured them that I will be using pseudonyms and that their identities would not be revealed.

- There was a possibility of conflict of interest since I'm working in the agency. To check my biases, I kept a note book where I recorded my observations on a daily bases.

- This research had the potential to jeopardize my working relationship with my colleagues and the management at large. I tried to be as humble and as friendly as possible, and tried to resolve issues in assertive and constructive ways.

- Many social workers in this agency did not do their Masters. Hence the management especially thought I consider myself better them. In this instance, I was

as sensitive, friendly and humble as I could be to avoid tension that had the potential to block me from completing the study.

CONCLUSION

The emphasis of this chapter was on the research methodology used in this study. The chapter begins by providing us with the research paradigm, which is a qualitative one. It moved on to give us the research design used, which is exploratory and descriptive research design. The assumptions underlying the study are also brought to the fore. The sampling strategy, data collection, data analysis and processes which were followed are clearly and extensively discussed, with advantages and disadvantages of each method brought to the fore. The dilemma, struggles and challenges faced by the researcher as an observer and a practitioner at the same time are also discussed. The use of a daily journal which served as a field note journal as well as a reflexive journal is also discussed. The   issues of trustworthiness, triangulation in the data collection strategy and the ethical considerations posed by this study and the steps taken to minimize harm to the research participants are included.

CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

"Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structures and meaning to the mass of collected data", (De-Vos 2002: 339). This author further stipulates that qualitative data analysis searches for general statements about relationships among categories of data. Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews with ten social workers, participant observation and a focus group discussion with 21 social workers. This chapter begins by presenting the main aim of the study and the underlying assumptions. The profiles of the participants are presented. The major themes are then be analysed and interpreted through the presentation of data from the multiple data collected and the theoretical framework which guided this study.

THE MAIN AIM OF THE STUDY WAS TO:

Understand how social workers explain the discrepancies between the profession's commitment to social justice, human rights and engendering structural changes and the day to day lived realities of their work.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

1.That there would be a misfit between how social workers perceive their roles and what they actually do in practice.

2.That social workers would experience their work environment as oppressive and bureaucratic.

3.That new managerialism permeates the work environment and negatively impacts social worker's functioning.

4.That social workers might normalise their work experience and not challenge the status quo.

5. Social workers might be afraid to challenge their working conditions.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Of the 10 participants, there were 8 females and only 2 males. The gender presentation is not surprising as the profession is overpopulated by women and it is associated with compassion which for decades has been linked with women characteristics. Their ages ranged from 21 to 50. The largest number fell into the 21-30 age groups. The latter presentation is the true reflection of the office staff as the ages between 31-60 comprises of the management and the frontline social workers fell into 21-30 age group. The majority did not have prior social work experiece before coming to the agency. One of the participants worked as a social worker at Child Welfare Durban and District for one year before coming to this Department while the other worked at the same Non Government Organisation for 3 three months before joining the department. The third one had worked at a retail shop as a stock taker before embarking on social work studies.

Of the 21 group members who formed part of the reflexive dialogue; they were all women. Their ages ranged from 21-50. Fifteen of them had two years working experience, two had three years working experience, two had four years working experience, 1 had five years working experience and the last one had 7 years working experience.

THEMES, SUB –THEMES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING:

REASONS FOR CHOOSING SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

The major reasons for choosing social work included a commitment to human rights and social justice and to contribute to poverty alleviation. They saw themselves as caring and compassionate individuals who wanted to make a difference to the quality of people's lives, and to protect people in need, such as the elderly and children.

People are motivated by different things into any career path and when they reach there they expect to fulfill certain personal goals.

The fulfillment of those goals largely depends on the support from the employing organisation, without which they may become demoralized. As such Deci and Ryan (1985: 25) state that "If anybody [has] a lovely shiny car, but it's worthless if it doesn't have the power of a great engine behind it. Employees are the engines of an organization and like any finely tuned engine their workforce [is to ensure that the organisation] operate smoothly and effectively", let's check what was the motivation that propelled these participants into social work profession.

Pelton (1999) stated that the social work mission is about promoting social justice and that justice should be considered on an individual level. Out of the ten interviews four social workers stated that they wanted to maximise access to resources for the previously disadvantaged individuals. Two out of ten stated that they aspired to represent or give their clients a voice especially orphans. Four of them acknowledged that during apartheid many people were oppressed, deprived and marginalised and stated that they came to social work with the vision to liberate those people through community dialogue, psychological support, skills development, advocacy and linking them to educational institutions. Moreover they aspired to disseminate information about the available resources.

Smith (2008) stated that social work profession was a human right profession from its inception. Seven participants were inspired to fight for human rights. Two out of those stated that they wanted to be a broker while one said she wanted to empower people with skills and the last one said that he wanted to raise consciousness about rights regarding elderly abuse. Many social workers did not mention what the Bill of Rights or the Constitution entails regarding people's general rights and that might be caused by the fact in that office there are no reading material; e.g. acts, policies etc for social workers to refer to in different circumstances. The only reading that is there is the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and no other readings despite the fact social workers deal with all social ills and social issues.

Triegaardt and Patel (2005: 17) state that **"poverty and inequality have co-existed for generations both in developed and developing nations despite of the multiple interventions"**. This is exacerbated by the high rate of unemployment which was estimated to be 42.5% in 2005, (Statistic South Africa 2005).The core mandate of the Department of Social Development is to respond to this devastating situation as guided by the Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 especially section 27 and 28. Section 27 (1) (b) and (c) which states that everyone has a right to have sufficient food and water; and social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants". Eight out of ten participants in the study stated that they were motivated to become social workers so that they could ensure that every child has access to education to break the chains of poverty, while one stated that she was inspired to ensure that every child gets their social grants. Ten out of ten aspired to make a difference. The definition of social work states that social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. Social work is underpinned by humanitarian values. This is reflected in the field when ten out of ten participants stated that they were motivated to encourage the development of youth. Three wanted to role model a good behaviour to young girls and instil hope that a bright future was possible. Moreover one of them wanted to strengthen girl's self confidence and to decrease HIV new infections. The following are the words of one of the participants:

Well, I grew up in the rural areas, other people there they also didn't have a clue of what is happening to such an extent…ehh they, they didn't know that there is money for orphans, yet there were many orphans there surrounding me, so I…ehh, the purpose of becoming a social worker was to help them, you see, to recognise that besides living in a South African rural areas does not mean they don't deserve some services, but they do deserve all kinds of social services being provided in South Africa, and to empower them also so that they could stand up for themselves, and I also grew up with teenager who were younger than myself and some a little older than me, they just seemed to be clueless about life, they seemed

like they thought life was just about having a boyfriend and have sex, Yah so I really wanted to motivate them that when I grew up, I wanted to be educated and to be able to work for myself and be independent, I think being a social worker for me was to teach youth about the importance of education, how to carry themselves out and about being independent, and about HIV especially right now all those teenagers who surrounded me then are now infected with HIV.

Social work definition as reviewed in July 2014 by International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and International Association of School of Social Work (IASSW) stresses that social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people is at the heart of this profession. As such six out ten were motivated to create a peaceful environment and strengthen support for individuals through mediation in family conflict and substance abuse counselling while three were motivated to modify behaviour of deviant children and help people discover their identities and self acceptance. One was motivated by the scholarship but now this is what he said "now that I am here there is not a better profession I would have chosen".

REASONS FOR SOCIAL WORKER'S GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT IN PRACTICE

Although all of the participants entered social work with noble aspirations, they found themselves being disillusioned in the field. Chris Jones who is the Professor of Social Work at Liverpool University conducted a study with 40 front line social workers in local authorities in England and uncovered "extreme levels of demoralization, alienation and anger among these very experienced workers, a sense that social work as an activity had become something quite different from what it had been when they first began their careers".

He further added that there was a widening gap between social worker's aspirations and the realities of social work practice. In the same vein Pelton (1999:5) states that "social work whose mission is social justice; have been called upon to work within a system that is unjust; a system that is not only discriminatory to individuals but which has become increasingly coercive and punitive". Some of the reasons that were presented by social workers and student social workers in the recruitment and retention strategy was the student's knowledge about the low salary levels of Social Workers in practice they "generally indicated that social work is financially not a lucrative career to follow and also that the profession offers very little benefits and few career path opportunities" (Department of Social Development, 2003). The following are some examples which were elicited by social workers as hindrances in their ability and willingness to fulfill their mandate as a human rights profession and which demotivates them to stay in this profession.

Ten out of ten social workers reported that it seemed like DSD did not have a clue of what the social work profession was all about. All ten participants reported that they were not adequately compensated for the work that they were rendering. Moreover they reported that there was no upward mobility (promotions) which could improve their salaries. All ten stated that further studying is not encouraged, and educational levels were not considered in the advertisement of higher posts in DSD. Six out of ten stated that their cultural and religious beliefs socialised them to respect elders whether right or wrong. The ripple effect of this was that the management were all elders which inhibited them from challenging them. These are utterances made by one of the participants:

> *Even when the department advertise posts of supervisors or managers; they only include 10 years' experience …ehhh…and these positions are never advertised looking for higher qualifications but they will be like looking for social work Bachelor's degree and 10 years experience…ehm why don't they consider maybe 5 years experience and maybe if you have a Master's qualification you can get a management post…you know? you know it's also like they are not encouraging us to study further…but also*

because there can't be many posts of managers…maybe they could consider…ehhh saying you move from the entry level to maybe level 8 or 9 and if have a PhD maybe move you to level 10…..you can't be holding a master's qualification and still be at level 7….you know?

FRUSTRATION ABOUT LACK OF RESOURCES

According to the Recruitment and retention strategy (2003) one of the reasons why the department failed to retain social workers was lack of support and the poor working conditions that Social Workers are subjected to, which often lead to burnout and inability to render effective services. All ten participants reported that the lack of resources impacted on their work negatively. The frustration about the lack of resources was accompanied by demotivation to excel in service delivery from 8 respondents. Two of them complained about and showed me the deplorable conditions of the offices that they were working in. The offices leaked when it rained, had no windows, the floors had rainy maps and they were sitting in torn chairs. The ceiling boards were falling. One of them complained about the electricity wiring which was hanging out. She feared for her life. The following are just few quotes from data which captures the experiences of social workers in the office:

"The problem of lack of resources is huge in this office, my programme is an extensive one…yet…there are no papers, computers, coloured papers, highlighter, snacks for trainings, printers, fliers, pens, staplers, date stamps, pamphlets, no charts....ehm…DSD is the one that funds NPOs and NGOs but it is frustrating that most of the time we go to the NGOs to beg them to give us resources from theirs".

"We are also not the same I know that I am a coward person, so I just tell myself that I'll keep quiet although my heart never rests because I know that the outputs are needed but no resources to fulfil this demand"

One of the participants in the focus group stated that they all were experiencing extreme shortage of basic resources that affects their work. There were few cars to go and do home visits, no code for the telephone to call clients for screening, there were also no computers to type reports. If they did find a computer to type, there would be no papers to print out reports. In response to this comment all the group members concurred with the speaker. This is also supported by my observation as a practitioner in that office.

Everyday there are fights between staff and the management over submissions that are not done due to lack of resources. While timely submissions are required the resources to facilitate them are extremely limited. The management also experienced the same resource constraints. In all staff meetings, and sometimes entire climate meetings were spent discussing the issue of resources but not much had been done besides creating tension between workers and the management. The management would get very angry with the person raising the issue; not because they did not see the problem but because they felt helpless and they felt that they were failing the staff. When this was discussed in the group, one participant said:

> *We should be proud that we can thoroughly evaluate both the verbal and the non-verbal communication of the person; however some due to lack of cars to do home visits end up not doing in-depth screening, they just call people in, assess them there, give them school forms to fill in and start writing reports.*

These findings are supported by Holscher Maseko and Sewpaul (2006: 174) who stated that 'social workers in post-apartheid South Africa battle with diminishing resources in relation to increasing numbers of service users, spreading our professional time and resources of financial and material aid increasingly thinly.

BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL BY MANAGEMENT AND PROTOCOLS

Managerialism is a bureaucratic practice in the name of professionalising practice (Duyvendak, Knijn, and Kremer, 2006). It is however ironic that managerialism is

about professional control yet professionalism requires autonomy of the professional to use expertise, knowledge, skills and experience acquired thorough professional training to analyze and solve social problems without undue prescriptions. Howe (1996) states that through managerialism and control of social work activities; social work now involves a shift from 'depth' to 'surface' social work.

"The increasing significance of formal management, quality control and standardization of procedures is often seen as a fundamental curtailment of the discretionary power of the front-line worker" (Clarke and Newman 1997). This has led to what Friere calls the *culture of silence*. According to Freire 1972 as cited in Young, (2004: 34), "oppressed people become so powerless that they do not even talk about their oppression. If they reach this stage of oppression, it creates a culture wherein it is forbidden to even mention the injustices that are being committed. The oppressed are silenced". They have no voice and no will. All participants complained about management's control over every aspect of their practice activities. The following participant captured the negative feelings of being controlled:

> *As much as social workers may want to do justice to their clients…it is not possible because they don't have such powers. I sometimes feel like an "ant" in this department, social workers also almost have the same problems that are faced by their clients, justice is not done to them, even their human rights are violated, to say it clear…social workers are as oppressed as their clients are by those above them.*

*Another participant said: "the bureaucracy in this department just demotivates you from wanting to advocate for people, it just makes you keep quiet, we do all the wrong things not because we want to but because we can't argue or question the superior's decisions".*Pollit (2003) states that managerialism assumes that managers are the ones who have the potential to solve the huge amount of economic and social problems and not the professionals.

In one climate meeting when social workers complained about their activities being controlled by the management, one of the supervisors responded with: "the old staff were taught about complying to their 'principals' and complain later, in fact we are not suppose to ask questions from our principals. Our job as employees is to carry out the mandates of our principals and it's a pity that the new staff did not get this message; that is why they want many answers before they do anything". What the supervisor said here contradicts social work definition because social work is a profession which needs critical thinkers, resisters, who do not take things for granted, people who question things and people who are not afraid to confront situations in an attempt to make sure that human rights are realised and enjoyed by all (Smith, 2008).

LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Behavioural theories state that there are two general types of behavior exhibited by Leaders: Concern for People and Concern for Production. Both the leadership types have different beliefs which propel leaders to treat their subordinates in certain ways (Stogdill and Coons 1957). The following theories could explain why the management feels that they need to controls workers.

MCGREGOR'S THEORY X AND THEORY Y

Theory x: leader assumes	Theory y: leader assumes
1.Employees inherently dislike work and, whenever possible will attempt to avoid it.	1.Employees can view work as being as natural as possible, will rest or play
2.Because employees dislike work, they must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to achieve desired goals	2. Men and women will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the to achieve objectives
3. Employees will dodge responsibilities and seek formal direction whenever possible	3. The average person can learn to accept, even seek, responsibility
4. Most workers place security above all other factors associated with work and	4. The ability to make good decisions is widely dispersed throughout the

will display little ambition	population and is not necessarily the sole province of managers

This theory suggests that if the management beliefs are based on theory X then they will do anything in their power to control and closely supervise and monitor the work activities of workers to ensure that productivity happens. So from the participant-observation notes, group discussion and the ten individual interviews; the researcher concluded the working relationship of supervisor supervisee is affected by theory X. The following theory presents to us the possible consequences of leadership style.

LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION STYLES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

According to Carpenter and Webb (2012) supervision was promoted international to increase job satisfaction amongst workers, reduce work stress and burnout and retain workers within the organisation. The author further states that the functions of the supervisor are:

• Administrative case management,

• Engaging workers in reflective exercise and on learning from practice

• providing personal support,

• Mediation, in which the supervisor acts as a bridge between the individual staff members and the organisation and

• Promoting professional development.

Renner Porter and Preister (2009) states that "Supervision works best when it pays attention to task assistance, social and emotional support and that workers have a positive relationship with Supervisors" especially in an the emotionally charged type of work like social work field. However this was not the case amongst the social workers in the office of DSD office where this research was conducted. The researcher discovered that many workers wish to leave the department and some were very stressed because supervision was a hierarchy/vertical and because supervision was not well understood by supervisors and also felt that they had no

advocate to protect them from the department's higher management dictatorship. One participant expressed herself this way*:*

> *It's because… the way we see things happening here, we are not allowed to talk but we are expected to be submissive, there were other times in the past where I would go home and cried, sometimes I miss my friend who resigned from this office because that was one person whom I could speak to about my frustration and cry, and she would hold me tight and comfort me, when things starts happening, if you think; how can one fight for other people out there who are suffering when they can't fight for themselves? If you are in a place where you can't fight just for your rights, how can you fight for others? you will never, instead you'll always suffer with your people, that is exactly what is happening here,*

> Another participant stated that; *"The problem is that I think we lack a back bone and we are forced to fear management, we fear when we hear the name MEC and we feel like urinating on ourselves and we are threatened about the management in regional office".*

On the 25th of every month social workers are expected to submit monitoring tools, non financial data (NFD), form 1A, monthly reports, war room reports, Victim Empowerment reports and source documents. All of these submissions are put in place to quantify outputs of every worker and to monitor performance. Secondly; social workers have to submit quarterly, half yearly and annual reports as a way to measure and quantify their outputs. This process is guided by the Employee Performance Management Development System (EPMDS) Policy. Administrative work has overshadowed service delivery in this department. Cheng, Chou and Yu Wu (2004) state that there are many leadership styles which have different effects; therefore cognizance of how subordinates are treated should be the priority because usually they reciprocate.

SUPERIORITY OF SUPERVISORS, CLASH AND CONFUSION ABOUT SUPERVISION ROLES

Ten out of ten social workers reported that they had a problem with the management style in that office. One participant stated that it seemed like supervision was not well understood by supervisors and this alienated supervisees as the supervisors became too authoritarian. In her own words:

> *I think where this thing goes wrong it's in the supervision phase; to say what supervision is. If supervision is well known by supervisors, there wouldn't be many problems because most of the issues, the social worker should be discussing with their supervisors. The relationship between the supervisor and supervisee at DSD offices is lacking; if they can start understanding what is supervision.*

In informal settings social workers often chatted about how useless, incompetent and small their management staff made them feel when they walked into one of their offices.

FORCED CONFORMITY

All participants said that when they entered practice they were forced to do things the way they were always done, such as writing reports through copy and paste and editing from somebody else's report. They are not allowed to reference books, acts and policy documents in their reports except the Children's Act. Conformity has been made possible by criticism and negative remarks by supervisors to those who wanted to do things differently. One of the participants said she understands this negative attitude towards those who wanted to use references in their reports.

She was of the view that this was related to the knowledge gap between management and junior staff in the office.

One participant stated that: *"I would love to implement some of the things I learnt from university, to work with groups, work with community…eish, but no space to apply acquired university knowledge".* This participant indicate that *"DSD does not entail what I studied at university, it's really something else, it is not social work, I don't know what to say but it seems like there is a lot of confusion about what is social work, there is too much control"* (frowning).

BEING UNDERVALUED

Eight out of ten reported that they did not feel valued as professionals by the department and by the management. One participant pointed out that *"my supervisor telephonically called me while I was on sick leave and she interrogated me about a certain case that I was suppose to investigate a day before I got sick. She did not want to listen to what were the reasons for not attending to that case; all she did was to say "you should have completed this case first because you knew that you were going to be sick"* (this participant cried bitterly as she recounted this).

NO WELLNESS PROGRAMS

According to Sangweni who is the chairperson of Public Service Commission stated in his foreword in (2006) the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was implemented in South Africa to help employees deal with challenges associated with organisational transformation, personal problems, increasing work place stress and the growing HIVAIDS infections. He further adds that such programs have the potential to assist departments by improving performance and productivity. The Public Service Commission conducted a research on the national Public Service departments as well as provincial departments in KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Gauteng to investigate the effectiveness of available EAP programs.

A total of 1 680 respondents provided their inputs and the first four department's respondents indicated low levels of satisfaction. Eight out ten social workers in this study reported that there are no wellness programs to decrease the stress levels and prevent burn outs. One of the participants said: "*our work exposes us to many emotionally draining issues yet we do not have a structure like EAP where we can ventilate our issues or have an outing and have fun for a while so that we rejuvenate our spirits and emotional well being*".

THE EROSION OF THE PROFESSION AND ITS LEGITIMACY

Social workers were of the view that political interference eroded the legitimacy of the profession. Nine out of ten participants reported that they thought that the department was the reason that the social work profession is not recognized as a legitimate profession. Social workers are forced to do the bidding and electioneering for political parties. If they resisted social workers were shouted at like children, threatened about losing their jobs and they were victimized by the management. Two reported that they had been targeted as people to be dealt with because they always verbalized issues. They all reported that they were not satisfied about the deployment of MEC's and Ministers in this department. Five asked why deploy a nurse as an MEC instead of a social worker who understands the processes and challenges of the profession. They further expressed that that alone undermined social work as a profession which cannot produce leaders. Another participant articulated that:

Well since I came to this department I have never ever seen real social work, but I think there is a lot that needs to be done before social work can be realised and felt by the people. I'm saying this because there are people out there who are saying DSD is degrading this profession of social work and I'm afraid it's true and this will take time to be corrected because it all went wrong up there in the higher levels of the department, especially at the national level. So really instead of thinking about what needs to be done in

your case load; we always preoccupied about oh God I wonder what will they be requesting from us today and really most of the time it's about the department's demands and needs and not the good of the people……We are never preoccupied about service delivery, our critical cases, thinking about different resolutions to the problem but it's all about this department, so the roles of being a social worker and the co functions of social workers…you can never ever understand in this department what is really expected of you, because you never complete anything you start due to their disturbances.

LACK OF PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

Young (2004: 2) state that "The idea of powerlessness links to Marx's theory of socialism: some people "have" power while others "have-not". The powerless are dominated by the ruling class and are situated to take orders and rarely have the right to give them. Some of the fundamental injustices associated with powerlessness are inhibition to develop one's capacities, lack of decision making power, and exposure to disrespectful treatment because of the lowered status". Harris (2003), Jones (2005) ,Healy (2009), and Madhu (2011) point out that there has been a loss of a meaningful social work identity that is linked with emancipatory social change, that is subverted to a neoliberal form of identity which is primarily concerned with governmentality and economic interest. All the participants reported that they felt that they had no power to make independent decisions regarding how they preferred to do their work. Even their court inquiry and review reports were marked and re-marked till it got closer to its lapsing date.

One of the participants said "it's not possible to do justice in this department because there are too many regulations, policies and protocols of doing things in a certain way, this limits your function as a social worker, even when you have done your assessments and made recommendations; those recommendations will still have to be weighed by the supervisor".

Another participant said: "sometimes they take their time to sign reports, even when you go and reason with them regarding signing a critical social relief or distress report or a case that is close to lapsing date, they will not sign without having shouted at you for rushing them".

COPING WITH HIGH WORKLOAD AND MANAGING COMPETING DEMANDS

All social workers reported that they had to deal with high workloads which they were unable to manage and that they were unable to meet targets. Amongst the participants one of them stated that:

> *There is just too much on our plate, services that I'm responsible for. I do foster care placements, monitoring and supervision of those placements, I issue social relief of distress, I do guardianship reports, I'm part of elderly program, I do late registration of birth requests for clients who do not have Identity books or birth certificates due to various reasons, I do family preservations in family conflicts, I do removals of children who are in abusive circumstances or homes, I do counseling for bereaved and troubled individuals, I do awareness campaigns at schools and at communities regarding different issues, I attend war room meetings, I do administrative work whereby I sort my files, write minutes and agendas, attend count inquiries, write and submit monthly reports, compile and consolidate statistics of non financial data of the office, it's just a lot. I can't finish them all.*

Another participant expressed this: *"We should be encouraging radicalism, we should be BULL DOZERS when it comes to social justice but there is just so much that is happening in this office that we even fail to go out there and say to people-we stand for social justice… We rarely have time to even go out and teach, train and raise awareness of the structural injustices happening in their lives and prepare them to take necessary action, human rights is another document that is beautifully written but its implementation is not possible…it's just not practical".*

The difference in the two participants is that one is involved in a program that involves doing awareness campaigns in some parts of the year and the other is in a program that rarely does awareness campaigns in the office.

POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENT INTRUSION ON PRACTICE

Taylor (2002) noted that South Africa is still affected by structural problems, such as unemployment and poverty in the democratic time. The economic policies are failing to address this issue. Seidman-Makgetla, (2004: 54) noted that "poverty is evident to the human eye and is "profiled by shacks, homelessness, unemployment, casualised labour, poor infrastructure and lack of access to basic services".   To give a clear picture the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), (2005a: 18) states that over twenty million people in South Africa lived in poverty and the concentration of poverty and inequality "lies predominantly with black Africans, women, rural areas and black youth". 98% people who are social work service users in this office are black, about 70% are black women, +-15 % are black youth and the rest are black males who come from informal settlements.

One participant expressed the view that*, "People who are leading us are politicians; and the problem with that is that they use propaganda to win people's votes. They make too many promises to poor people and they don't deliver on their promises… People are still oppressed, poor and are affected by unemployment although we have exited apartheid*

FAVOURISM

Five out ten participants reported that there is favouritism in the office and this is how one participant described it:

> *You see, ehmm, what I came and saw in this office, I don't know whether I can say there are special favors or what, I don't know how to put this, but let me put it this way…for instance, you have been nominated to be in a*

sub-programmes, since we have sub-programmes here, so those people are given codes to call their clients and the ones doing generic are not given that code, which… just, ehm make me think that I'm not working, I'm not existing or I don't deserve to be able to communicate with my clients, those are some of the things…

OPPRESSION

Dominelli (2002) asserted that there are various facets of oppression that destroy social work's vision. Young (2004: 2) identified five types of oppression: "1. **Exploitation "**which is the act of using people's labours to produce profit while not compensating them fairly. 2. **Marginalization** is the act of relegating or confining a group of people to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge of society. 3. **powerlessness** links to Marx's theory of socialism where some have while some have not. The powerless are dominated by the ruling class and are situated to take orders and rarely have the right to give them. [This creates something called] **Culture of Silence** within an individual.   According to Freire, oppressed people become so powerless that they do not even talk about their oppression. If they reach this stage of oppression, it creates a culture where it is forbidden to even mention the injustices that are being committed. The oppressed are silenced, they have no voice and no will. 4. **Cultural Imperialism** involves taking the culture of the ruling class and establishing it as the norm. 5. **Violence** is probably the most obvious and visible form of oppression.

Members of some groups live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property". These attacks do not necessarily need a motive but are intended to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person". In relation to this, all the participants during in-depth interviews and the group members reported that they felt very oppressed in the office. The word "oppression|" appeared 60 times across the interview transcripts and in one participant's transcript it appeared 12 times while in another transcript, it appeared three times in one paragraph as reflected below.

*I don't know where it has gone wrong, but somehow DSD have lost its route, yah, I don't know what to say, but something has gone wrong in this department, **I** don't know…but it makes you feel so oppressed, yah, oppression is taking place in this department especial on this profession of ours, people feel so oppressed so much so that they can't speak out about their issues.*

These are the words of one of the participants:

Me personally I look at these things with my own views and observe and say nothing. You can see that in order to be at peace with yourself; you must just recycle the paper so that you give them the reports they aggressively and forcefully demand. You do these things in order to make sure that you don't lose this "temporary employment", because really as much as people speak about being in democracy but we tend to think that democracy does not fully exist in real terms. What are you running away from? You are running away from avoiding being pointed out and people say you said something, you rather prefer to keep quiet and tell yourself that I'll cope with what is available and persevere until I reach my retirement time because there is nothing you can do. At the same time it is very painful because you end up being viewed as someone who does not want to do their jobs, and you end up even when you wake in the morning thinking of going to work you no longer enjoy to go because you know you can't do your job the way you would love to and you can't speak for yourself since if they ask why haven't you submitted the required reports. You can't say these are the challenges I've had because they will think you are being rude. I can just put it that way.

POOR WORKING CONDITIONS AND LACK OF INCENTIVES

Social workers do not feel validated. Their sense is that the structural working conditions inhibit them from validating their clients or service users. This is the statement which is made by one of participants:

> *This office does not instil feelings of hope to clients; look at the torn chairs I'm sitting in as a social worker, look at the floor the condition it is in; with rain maps and the roof…..the ceiling has holes and rain maps; I do not want to mention what happens when it is hot! (Clearing her throat), there is no air condition in here. I feel that as a person working with risky individuals, I'm not safe working in such an office. I won't stop stressing the importance of a window; because when people come in….you cannot tell whether they are under the influence or not. Having no window really puts me at risk of being raped. It does not make sense to say I'm working with such people but my office is in such an isolated corner.*

SOCIAL WORKERS RESPONSES TO THE RHETORIC VERSUS REALITY SPLIT:

OPTING OUT OF THE PROFESSION

Sewpaul and Holscher 2006: 174) states that "in post-apartheid South Africa, examples of purposeful acts of resistance by social workers have been rare, with passive resistance more commonly practiced, e.g. leaving their place of work". Seven out of ten social workers said they were seeking new employment elsewhere. Some of them wanted to opt our of social work altogether. One social worker actually resigned during the course of this study and was unemployed. Despite having no other employment, she could no longer contain her frustration associated with work stress. The following is an expression made by one of the participants:

"We are not happy anymore, me personally, I'm not happy, any more, you know? I came into social work but I want to get out as soon as I could possible get out, if there is a way…even if I come across people who want to do social work, I say no!! Consider other professions, because you know".

Out of ten, eight of the participants expressed a wish to re-register at universities and study towards other career paths.

SENSE OF POWERLESSNESS AND HOPELESSNESS

Friere (1970) argues that the goal of the oppressed is to liberate themselves and their oppressors. The difficulty of achieving this goal comes about because in the initial stage of their struggle against oppression, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend to become oppressors themselves (or ''sub oppressors''). This is because although their ideal is to be fully human, their model of ''full humanity'' has been the oppressor. This is what Freire called ''identification with the oppressor''; at a certain moment of their existential experience, the oppressed have adopted an attitude of ''adhesion'' to the oppressor, they "find in the oppressor their model of 'manhood''' (pp. 30–31), and they may even "feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressor and his way of life'' (p. 49). They have "internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines'' (p. 31) for action and interaction in the world". This is the kind of behaviours observed from the management, 2 participants and other frontline social workers in the office where the study was conducted.

Two social workers displayed feelings of losing hope in the system and they felt that they had no power to change their predicaments. This is the expression of one of the participants: "I don't bother myself with things I know very well that I'll never get". However these two individuals fear victimization and losing their source of income through forced resignation. According to reports they previously witnessed one social worker from another office within the department being maltreated because she openly expressed herself in a Social Work Indaba in 2009.

In the group discussion, all of the 21 participants reported that sometimes they keep quiet and what is required of them not because they want to but because there was no trust, no solidarity amongst them as workers. They reported that sometimes they agree to take a certain action to fight against whatever it is that they think is not right but others will go behind their backs and tell the management, some would go against the agreed upon plan of action secretly. These have also been observed by the researcher; there was no solidarity. However, there has been some changes since their involvement in the research process.

SYSTEM STABILISING EFFORTS

Buying and use of personal resources

These are some of the efforts made by social workers in an attempt to respond to client's demands and protect the department from negative actions from the public. All ten social workers reported that sometimes they use their personal lap tops to type their reports and six reported that they even buy papers to print out those reports. Four reported that they take money from their pockets and buy snacks for youth who come for trainings. Two reported that they take service user's files and type at home at night which compromised their quality time with their families.

Deception

One of the participants expressed herself this way.
(Laughing with a little bit of shame).”You know sometimes I steal cars allocated to other colleagues knowing very well that they also need it but with the pressure to meet targets in this programme; I become selfish and deprive other people the opportunity to fulfil their jobs”. She gives reasons for this deception; “I steal….not because I want to but because there is a hard push for production and meeting of targets. And another reason for this act it's because at the end of the month ... when they ask for outputs … you cannot start your sentence with I had no car”.

In concurrence another participants stated that some of her colleagues steal cars to do their work. The negative effect of this act is that it "*causes a lot of conflict between us but I am compelled to do it…I can't help it, I do not want to say we are under pressure but the truth is that we do feel under pressure*". I am as equally guilty of adopting some of the system-stabilising strategies, as unacceptable as these might be, as on the 26-09-2014 one of my colleagues cried because I stole her car which she was going to use to attend a war room meeting.

I did this because I had an appointment with the court manager and I had no car to represent and protect the right of my service user regarding maintenance. One of the participants stated this: "*So what I end up doing recycle papers which have people personal details in the back, or collect donations from colleagues and take from my own pocket in order for my programme to be successful*". Some due to having no working tools, shortage of cars and stationery are unable to deliver effective and efficient services. To those who are dedicated to their work; these hindrances lead to work stress.

RESISTANCE – AGENCY AND POWER

Ferguson and Lavalette (2006) and Sewpaul, (2006) noted that the seeds of dissatisfaction has germinated into a more openly expressed resistance in social work. In 22 climate meetings, 8 staff meetings and 17 ad-hoc meetings openly expressed resistance has been observed by the researcher where social workers confidently, respectfully and firmly opposed the authoritarianism and autocratic opinions of the management. Although some social workers succumbed and some used the silent approach, when the outspoken ones and the silent ones were having lunch or tea together, the silent ones would applaud and encourage the outspoken ones to keep on opposing the top down approach used in the office. One participant said that she used the Social Work Indaba as an opportunity to verbalise their concerns and challenges in the presence of the MEC.

RESEARCH FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL PURPOSES

The theoretical framework that informed this research is critical theory. This theory postulates that "social structures are oppressive and they are maintained through political and economic power and supported by a range of legitimizing structures" Humphries (2008: 106). According to Fuchs and Sandoval (2008: 114) critical theory "takes the standpoint of the oppressed or exploited classes and individuals and makes the judgments that structures of oppression and exploitation benefits certain classes at the expense of others, hence should be radically transformed by social struggles".

Humphries (2008) affirms that research for transformational purposes is unashamedly political. Fook, Davies and Leonard (2009) state that raising people's awareness about the commonly held assumptions can provide the platform for emancipation and transformative action, which was, to a certain extent, achieved through this research process. Freire, (1972) takes this explanation further and say people can only gain critical consciousness if they have greater understanding of themselves and their situation. That understanding can come from education or self reflection. The in-depth interviews, and the group discussion produced resistance amongst those who were involved in the process. One of the actions that were taken by social workers in the office was to draft a petition, sign it and fax it to the head office and their union. They detailed their dissatisfaction about the working conditions and the treatment from the superiors of the department. Although this act caused tension amongst workers and management, it soon settled down as some of the management staff understood the plight of social workers. As mentioned above even those who feared management have begun to be less fearful and to take a more critical approach to the office processes. They question more, and they are not willing to merely take instructions.

Through their engagement in the research process, the majority of social workers in the organisation developed a sense of solidarity amongst them to take a course of action collectively. There appeared to me more trust among themselves and the fear

of betrayal decreased. In another instance early this year the MEC had promised to supply some service users with food and school uniforms. Social workers profiled those families and discovered that they were indeed needy. There was a function where the MEC was supposed to hand over those items to the families that had been profiled, which did not happen. Instead she sent an instruction which was bound to cause conflict between workers and the service users.

Having adopted this critical approach, they all in a common show of solidarity refused to follow the instruction from the MEC. They told the management that they were not going to work that day until the promise made to those service users was fulfilled. The MEC was informed about staff's decision and she gave the management a go ahead to do the supply. Social workers persistently requested a phone codes to be in touch with their clients which was granted after one year of request.

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY SOCIAL WORKERS

On the basis of the findings of this study, the participants recommended that:
- There is a need to have EAPs within cluster offices.
- The department needs to be taught about what the social work profession is about and the mandate of social workers.
- MEC's should be deployed based on social work qualification and experience in the field of social work.
- Social workers should be serious and take social action and be able to carry them out so that everybody will sit up and take note of the importance of social work.
- In the advertisement of managerial positions, differentiated educational levels should be part of the criteria.
- Social workers should not remain in one level for more than five years; there should be upward mobility after five years in the field and changes in the salary notches.

- Social workers should learn to trust each other and be committed to any planned courses of action.
- The department should employ more social workers in order for caseloads to decrease to a manageable size for improved quality in service delivery.
- The department should consider implementing a task team which will have signing powers for each cluster office to avoid delaying critical cases by following a very long protocol.
- The department should employ people who will supply them with data bases within offices because the unreasonable return dates compromises social work activities and causes them to neglect their clients.
- Social workers and management should have a refresher cause on the definition of social work maybe every two years so that they don't lose the fabric of social work, which is fighting against injustices and the protection of human rights.
- Social workers should understand their job description and prioritise their work and use ethics, Batho-Pele Principles and Acts as a site of resistance.
- Supervisors should encourage innovation and acknowledge worker's efforts and reward excellence rather than demotivation those implementing new things.
- Social workers to be allowed to create a space where from time to time they can gather to discuss their challenges and try to find solutions collectively.
- Social workers should be given signing powers to provide social relief of distress without requiring many signatures.
- Management to be provided with a course on management styles so that they can choose more progressive styles that would validate, support and encourage social workers to be the best they can be and to produce positive results.
- Each office should have a cabinet of social work books, journals, policies and legislative documents to refer to in times of need.
- Social workers to be supplied with full stationery and working tools upon employment.

- Management to discuss all things and processes with social workers especially those which affect them, for example strategies of working within the office and not have these imposed.

- The higher offices of the department to abstain from making emergency requests and unrealistic demands, often politically motivated, because these disrupt social workers' plans.

- Workers' strength and weaknesses should be assessed when giving a programme to co-ordinate it, in order to ensure success of each programme.

- The senior managers should attend staff meetings because middle management staffs fear their seniors, so much so that social workers suspect that the concerns that they raise are not filtered up the hierarchy.

- Protocols and management structures to be decreased to avoid seeking many signatures for requisitions and, particularly for emergency cases.

- Supervisor supervisee relationships to be strengthened and abstain from belittling social workers.

- Political leaders to remove their hands from social work processes.

- Communication to be strengthened between supervisors and supervisees.

- Social worker must learn to learn stand up for their rights and the rights of their clients and fight against autocracy and injustices within the department. Moreover they need to move away from the shy reserved label that is given to them by the public, other professionals and their employers.

CONCLUSION

This research showed that social worker's job dissatisfaction is compromised by the experience of being oppressed, pre-set goals not being met by the department, lack of career opportunities, lack of monetary and non-monetary incentives, authoritarian leadership style/autocracy, poor working conditions, extreme demoralisation, lack of resources, dealing with competing demands and managing extremely high caseloads due to high populations and an insufficient workforce. Furthermore participants felt disrespected and not trusted by their management.

Moreover the unavailability of wellness programs and lack of support, political intrusion pervades their work activities. Social workers in the public sector are often used as political agents, to serve the interests of the ruling party. They are often require to "drop everything" and do the bidding of politicians, particularly during election campaigns. By virtue of being employed in the sector, they are not expected to desist, but to demonstrate loyalty. All these challenges impact the quality, quantity and range of services to the public. Moreover these factors have led to job dissatisfaction where some workers only work because they have to take care of their family expenses. There are others who work because of the appraisal and gratitude they get from their service users and the intrinsic nature of the rewards in helping people. While social work is a calling, it is also a profession and an academic discipline, requiring several years of academic study. Social workers, as with other professionals, deserve decent work conditions, respect, trust and autonomy in fulfilment of their professional responsibilities.

The lack of resources contributes to conflicts among colleagues due to deception by some in attempt to meet targets. Moreover deception disrupts good working relationships amongst workers and increases hostility. However, as this research has shown, even in a government driven authoritarian organisation, social workers are not without agency. Sometimes social workers use fear of reprisals not to challenge and confront injustices. While social workers are oppressed, it must be understood that their service users are often far more disadvantaged and oppressed than them. It is the moral and ethical responsibility of the social worker to challenge structural conditions in the workplace for their own well-being and satisfaction. More importantly, they need to re-claim their professional and ethical obligations to render the best possible services and engage people in the most empowering and liberating ways possible.

CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The global definition of social work affirms that it is a human rights profession that struggles for social justice. Its mandate is to empower and liberate people especially those affected by discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and oppression. Social work strives to ensure that there is peace and harmony between the person and his/her environment (Smith, 2008). The profession is guided by the constitution of South Africa which affords every human being a right to live, grow and prosper, and it tries to facilitate transformation which is embedded in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997: 7) which stresses that welfare should "facilitate the development of human capacity and self reliance within an enabling and caring socio economic environment". Furthermore all social services are guided by Batho-Pele principles, which emphasize openness, transparency of the departments, information dissemination, access and courtesy. The mandate of this profession is supported world wide ranging from the international global definition of social work, Global Agenda on social work, international and national codes of ethics and educational standards.

On a national level, it is supported by the Ten Point Plan, and the objectives, vision and mission of the Department of Social Development. The purpose of this study was to understand how social workers explain the discrepancies between the profession's commitment to social justice, human rights and engendering structural changes and the day to day lived realities of their work. The research was guided by the qualitative paradigm and it sought to obtain thick descriptions of the experiences of social workers in one of DSD office. The data collection tools were a semi-structured interview guide for the ten in-depth interviews with social workers, a group discussion of 21 group members, and participant observation where I focused on the interactions, comments made by all parties involved, tone of voices used and behaviours. These were recorded using a field note journal.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND MAJOR CONLUSIONS

Many studies including this one done around social worker's experience in the field reveal that social work is limited by many factors in its attempt at fulfilling its core mandates as a human rights profession. These range from political interference in their work, coopting social workers into furthering party political agendas, focus on audits and statistics rather than quality services; and being forced to produce a lot in the face of diminishing resources and very poor working conditions. Meeting of targets is one of the things which inhibit social workers from delivering quality services and to positively impact individuals, families and communities as the most important thing to the political leaders is 'how many, how many'.

Social workers in this study expressed the view that their profession is slowly but surely losing its identity and autonomy. Social workers were limited by the fear of the unknown and of repurcussions should they engage in fighting for justice. Such fears are implanted by management, who from my observation and interaction with them were also afraid of their superiors. The fears are grounded in reality as some staff were victimised and had witnessed other social workers being victimised previously. Social workers almost always never finished what they started because of marked interference from the upper management in the department.

Those interferences and their inability to work with service users in meaningful ways had demotivated them from doing real social work. They had accepted that doing real social work was a dream which was highly unlikely to come true. They had so much resistance when it came to drawing up daily and weekly plans. Their stance was that drawing those plans was a waste of time, because it was never followed as it should be, as upper management would willy-nilly issued directives that thwarted these plans. While the national requirement is to pursue the vision, aims and objectives of developmental social welfare as embraced by the White Paper, even the more conservative eco-systems theory was not being applied in that DSD office. They were still using the treatment model which focuses on treating the problem the

service user reports, and they did not really undertake holistic client in environment assessments.

Apart from managerial and political interference, the key driver to the nature of the work is the high caseloads that social workers have to deal with. They are also confined to one program for a prolonged time, that stifles innovation and creativity. One of the most extreme examples of social worker's autonomy, creativity and originality being stifled is that social workers who do write original reports are frowned upon. What would be deemed to be professional malpractice is actually encouraged. Social workers are asked to copy and paste reports from one to the other. This is deemed to be more efficeint as it saves time. In this way even efforts to read is shadowed and pushed aside because it seems useless. The study also revealed that there is so much of autocracy that some social workers do not bother about reflecting on their interventions. All they have internalised is ensuring that they meet targets, particularly foster care targets as demanded by the department. Some of them had adopted neoliberal thinking where they actually verbalise that the public is becoming too lazy and too dependent on the government. The forced conformity in the office has taken away the spirit of social work among the newly employed social workers. Social workers were not considered as thinking individuals, and were not accorded due regard and respect as professionals. Social workers worked under extremely poor conditions and they experienced extreme shortage of resources yet submissions were non-negotiable and, at times undue demands were placed on them.

Some social workers, including myself ended up adopting system stabilising strategies like buying photocopying papers, using personal USBs and computers, with some reverting to behaviour that they knew was unacceptable like "stealing" and using the department's cars when it was their colleagues turn to use the car. Social workers felt that their department is the one dragging their profession in the mud by not remunerating them according to the services they are rendering, by not giving them autonomy to do their work without many regulations and following protocols, by not understanding their professional mandate, by allowing politicians to use them for

electioneering and by not including educational levels in the advertisement of higher posts. All the participants stated that they were very oppressed in this department so much so that many were meditating about opting out of the profession all together. On the other side of the coin, there were a few social workers who tried to buck the system, and not in constructive ways. Stringent rules do not necessarily contribute to an ethical workforce. Indeed, the more stringent the rules and the more violating of human dignity, the greater the likelihood of staff resistance that might manifest in a range of unacceptable behaviours. In some instances social workers themselves began to take on the dominant ethos of the department, reflected a lack of work ethic and abuse of resources – e.g. personal use of the department's cars an/or not following up on home visits. This creates a circular, tension-filled environment. Such conduct on the part of social workers makes management believe that it vindicates their strict and coercive approaches, but this might contribute to even greater obstructive and unethical practices.

Some social workers, due to family responsibility and fear of loss of job were not prepared to challenge the structural oppression. But many of them lacked the courage and the personal integrity to challenge such oppressions, which have an enormous impact on the lives of service users. Social workers, in this study, indicated that they had entered the profession as they wanted to make a difference and had hoped to alter the quality of life for the people living in South Africa. However, they found that what they had been educated to do, and the ideals of the profession was a far cry from the reality. It was this rhetoric-reality split that was hard to reconcile; it demotivated social workers from trying to do real social work as their efforts were not supported by their management. There was a seed of resistance observed from some social workers which was thwarted by mistrust amongst themselves. Disunity among some social workers was a factor that worked against all of them. Through their engagement in the research process and in reflexive dialogue, social workers began to coalesce around some common objectives. The acts of resistance taken by social workers within the office as a result of their awareness of the structural oppression resulted in middle management admitting that there is a problem in this department. However, they attributed this to

challenges and impositions from higher levels of the department and they believed that there was nothing much they could do about it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings of this study; the following recommendations are made:

- The Department of Social Development to devise a plan of having a refresher course on the definition of social work and social work ethics
- Supervisors to obtain proper training on supervision once they are promoted from social work level to social work supervisor to ensure humane, empowering and supportive supervision
- The deployment of MEC' s to be based on social work experience
- Social Development to have a pack of working tools ready upon employment of workers to avoid work related stress which could be as a result of their inability to perform due to lack of resources
- The department to provide adequate cars to social workers for their effective functioning
- The department to have EAP facilitators based in every cluster office
- The social workers to understand that they are human right professionals and should take a stand and claim their identity, identify structural oppressive systems, challenge them and eliminate them for the best interests of service users
- To employ more social workers in order to decrease the work load of social workers
- Political leaders should stop interfering with social work roles and responsibilities
- Social workers to have some autonomy to control and plan their activities
- The leading political party to stop constantly confining social workers in the offices by always demanding data bases and statistics of different

periods which is not seen as quality of work by social workers and service users

- The manager to protect the workers from external intrusion
- The department to improve the working conditions of social workers
- The department of social development to improve social workers salary and move them from level seven to level eight upon employment
- The department to encourage studying further in social workers by including educational level as part of the criteria for higher posts
- The department to consult with social workers when introducing new working Social Work Screening forms
- The department to stop thinking of social workers as puppets who have no brains to think
- Upward mobility should be considered after five years
- Social workers to stop misusing the government state vehicles
- Social workers to also act responsibly so that the need to be monitored will be mitigated
- The department to provide danger allowance as social workers work in informal settlements and in places where there are substance abusers and they also work with sexual abusers who become violent when the worker tries to intervene and protect the children as commanded by the Children's Act 38 of 2005,
- Social workers' roles to be clear in order to allow workers to plan and undertake their planned interventions in order to eliminate frustration associated with the inability to finish anything they start due to unplanned and unreasonable demands from management and politicians.
- From a research perspective, this research could be replicated in other DSD offices and further research could consider conducting research focusing on the supervisors' and management experiences within the department.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study was to understand how social workers explain the discrepancies between the profession's commitment to social justice, human rights and engendering structural changes and the day to day lived realities of their work. The findings revealed that there are discrepancies within social work practice. All the participants reported that their aspirations of joining the profession had been shattered as they believed that what they were made to do was definitely not social work since all what was important to the department was the statistics (meeting of targets) and not making an impact on service users, the majority of whom were vulnerable. The love of social work for the majority of social workers was still there but the work was markedly different from what they had expected. I am an integral part of this social work workforce, and this research is part of my attempt to work against this rhetoric-reality split and re-claim social work's mandate as a human rights profession, and one that is deserving of integrity and respect. It is in validating the profession that social workers can work in validating and empowering ways with services users at individual, family, group, organisational and community levels.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings of this study confirmed all the underlying assumptions in that there would be a misfit between how social workers perceive their roles and what they actually do in practice, that social workers would experience their work environment as oppressive and bureaucratic, that new managerialism permeates the work environment and negatively impacts social worker's functioning, that social workers might normalise their work experience and not challenge the status quo, social workers might be afraid to challenge their working conditions. All the participants reported that they were oppressed as they said there was too much autocracy/ top down approaches in the department.

They also reported that there was too much control on their work activities and long protocols which delayed their intervention processes. Many of them had internalised the oppression to such an extent that they did see it and were not willing to challenge

it. Their stance for not challenging oppression was to some extent normalising the situation, not expecting anything different or better and feelings of powerlessness. They believed that nothing anyone could do to change their predicaments because what was happening had been happening for the past twenty years. Some of them had fear of victimisation from the management which inhibited them from challenging anything. Some of them had avoided engaging with oppression issues because of fear of losing their source of income. Some of them wanted to be seen positively in the eyes of management and were not willing to engage in anything that might jeopardise their privileges and upward mobility. These are human dynamics that often work against a common solidarity within the profession and towards human rights and justice for all.

However, this research process in small ways increased social workers' awareness of the oppressive actions and processes within the department such that they devised some strategies to fight against oppressive acts and talks. Amongst those strategies, they used petitions to express their concerns, they discussed and decided to stop bringing their personal lap tops and USBs to the office. They also collectively agreed that no one must buy printing papers. In the climate meetings and staff meetings they no longer merely sat there and received the reports from the programs; but they constantly challenged oppressive talks and directives. They began to collectively protect the rights of their service users by advocating on their behalf. There was a great deal of tension between social workers and management when these changes took place but as time went by the management began admitting that the working conditions were not conducive. They expressed the view that there was nothing they could do because they had reported these issues time and again to the head of department without any positive outcomes. Moreover the management felt that the critical questions raised in the meetings were an attack on them. Perhaps the next best step in the process would be for a common solidarity to be developed across middle management and social workers to get upper management to listen with authentic understanding, empathy and responsiveness. It is critical to raise the consciousness of the upper echelons of governement officials

about what social work is really about and how we can, as a collective, work in the best interests of all who live in South Africa.

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MASTERS RESEARCHPROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM:

Dear Manager/interim manager/supervisor

CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

My name is True-love Thembeni Dlamini, a newly employed social worker in this department. I am currently doing Master's degree part time in social work. As per requirement I am expected to conduct research based in social work in order improve knowledge base in the field of social science.

I would like to request a permission to interview social workers in this office regarding their practice. The purpose for this research is to understand the practical experiences, opportunities and challenges of social workers in DSD offices. I'm hoping that the information I will get might help the Department avoid losing the human capital (work force) to NGO's and other international agencies. Confidentiality and anonymity about participants will be observed in the publication of the theses.

My contact details: 079 1359080, email: 209513626@stu.ukzn.ac.za. My supervisor's details: Professor Sewpaul, her contact number is 031 2601241

Manager signature……………………...   Researcher's signature…………………..

Date signed……………………..   Date signed ……………………

FAX
Telephone/ Ucingo /Telefoon
Enquiries/ Imibuzo / Navrae   : Miss TT. Dlamini

MASTER'S RESEARCH PROGRAMME

APPENDIX 2

Dear T.T.Dlamini

CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Your undated letter signed on 18-04-2013 refers:

You are granted permission to conduct research on social workers in this office as requested during the period 2014.

…………………………….

ACTING SERVICE OFFICE MANAGER

DATE SIGNED

……………………………..

<u>**INFORMED CONCENT FORM:**</u>

My name is   : Thembeni True-love Dlamini

Contact details   : 0791359080

Occupation   : Registered Social worker

My supervisor   : Professor V. Sewpaul

Occupation   : social work lecturer

Contact details   : (031) 2601241

Institution   :   University of Kwazulu Natal (Howard College)

I would like you to participate in this study that I'm conducting.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

- To understand what do social workers in this agency believe the major purposes of social work to be,

- Understand if there are any discrepancies between what they think the major purposes of social workers are and their day to day practice,

- Engage social in a reflexive dialogue on human rights and social justice during in-depth interviews and in a focus group,

- Understand what they think their roles are in the agency and whether they are doing what they think they should be doing according to the international definition of social work.

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY:

- ➢ I would like to have an hour long interview with you and I might need to have a follow up interview when necessary if that would be fine with you.

- ➢ I would need to record our interview so that I'll be able to capture the interview accurately.

- ➢ The interview will be in your office and at most convenient time.

If you decide to participate in this study; these are the important things to note:

CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE

- Whatever you disclose to me will never be revealed to anyone except my supervisor at school. I will submit my reports to my university supervisor with your real names withheld,
- No other person in this organisation be informed about the content of your interview with me,
- I will make sure that in my theses, your name, and any other identifying details are not mentioned.
- You will remain anonymous to the readers. I will give you a fake name.
- You have (pseudonym).
- The information will be kept in a safe place and will be destroyed at a later date.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS TOTALLY VOLUNTARY, THIS MEANS:

1. you can disclose as much information as you are comfortable with,
2. you can quit from this study anytime if you feel uncomfortable; and
3. There are no adverse consequences of non participation or withdrawal from the study.that you will experience as a result of quitting.

<u>CONSENT</u>

I hereby agree to participate in the research regarding social work experiences in the DSD office. I understand that I am participating freely without being forced in any way. I also understand that I can withdraw from this study at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in way affect me negatively.

The purpose of the study was explained to me and I understand what is expected of my participation. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not to necessarily benefit me personally.

I understand that my answers will remain confidential

Signature of the participant   signature of the Researcher

………………………...   ……………………………….

Date   Date

……………………………   ……………………………….

In addition to the above, I agree to audio recording of this interview for the purpose
of data capturing. I understand that no personally identifying information or recording
concerning me will be released in any form. I understand that these recordings will
be kept secure in a safe and will be destroyed once data capturing and analsis is
complete.

……………………..   ……………………….

Participant signature   Date

Should you have any concerns or questions or comment regarding this research;
you can contact the research office (HSSRES) on the following contact details

Ms. Ximba

Contact: 031 260 3587

Email: Ximba@ukzn.ac.za

12-06-2014

INVITATION TO ATTEND A REFLEXIVE DIALOGUE

MASTERS RESEARCH IN SOCIAL WORK

PURPOSE: FEEDBACK FROM INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

VENUE: **Main Boardroom**

DATE: **26-06-2014**

TIME: **9:00 am**

RESE4ARCHER   Thembeni

All interested social workers are invited to attend a reflexive dialogue regarding the findings of the study that was conducted in this office by the above mentioned researcher.

VOLUNTARY

Attendance is voluntary. Bear in mind that if you decide to attend you reserve the right to leave the venue should you feel uncomfortable being part of the discussion and there are no negative consequences for such an act. You have the right not to disclose what you are not comfortable with because confidentiality may not be guaranteed in a group setting.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

The dialogue should take 1 and a half hour.

T.T. DLAMINI

APPENDIX 4

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

THEMES TO BE COVERED/INTERVIEW GUIDE:

What was your motivation to become a social worker?

- What do you think the main purposes of SW are?

- Are they aware of the international definition of social work?

- Exploration of social workers views on social justice and human rights?

- Their main roles and responsibilities in the organisation.

- What are the resources that you would need to carry out your work?

- Methods employed by them in the organisation.

- Their thoughts on their roles, responsibilities and methods in relation to social justice and human rights.

- What personal factors might prevent the pursuit of social work's core mandates for social justice and human rights

- Cultural factors?

- What organisational/political factors might prevent this pursuit

- What strategies do they think they might be adopted to deal with constraints in pursuing social work's core mandates

APPENDIX 5

➢ **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Please provide this information for statistical purposes.

Age: 1. (21-30) ⬭   2. (31-40) ⬭   3. (41-50) ⬭   4. (51-57)

Race group: 1. African   2. Indian   3. Coloured   4. White.

Home language………………………………………..

Gender   1. Male   ☐. Female   ☐3. Other, specify

What is your Qualification?...

 Where did you obtain this qualification?...

Which year did you start working here? ……………………………………….

Have you ever worked anywhere else before? | Yes | No |

If your answer was yes in question above, briefly explain – what type of work did you do, the roles you adopted and what was the reason for leaving your previous employment.