

ann beatrice ntebe

social workers in the transition  
of social welfare : a descriptive-dialogical enquiry



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social work u w c  
1994



**SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE TRANSITION  
OF SOCIAL WELFARE : A DESCRIPTIVE-DIALOGICAL ENQUIRY**



Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the  
Degree of Magister Artium in Social Work -- M A (S W)  
in the Department of Social Work  
University of the Western Cape

Promoter : Professor Adam Small

December 1994

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my deep appreciation to all who have afforded me support and encouragement during the time of my work on this thesis.

I extend special gratitude to my mother who sacrificed for me, often caring for my young children as I was engaged in tasks concerning this work. I am greatly indebted to her.

My husband Solomzi was patiently tolerant, and believed in me all along. I cannot thank him enough for helping to maintain the "space" for me to work in over this time.

Words of real appreciation to Ms Pat Halford for excellent typographical and clerical assistance at all (and sometimes "impossible") times. I could not have had the privilege of better skills and understanding as far as the technical preparation of the work was concerned.

Obviously I am much indebted to sponsors who helped to fund this effort of mine by means of bursary grants: the Erika Theron Bursary Fund of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the Ford Foundation Stipendia Fund (UWC), and Standard Bank. I have to thank Prof Adam Small for his recommendation of me, every time.

I owe much to all the participants of this study, social worker peers without whose willingness to help I could not have

proceeded. In this connection, a special 'Thank You' also to all the people of the Department of Social Work, UWC, in particular Mr Henry de Grass who was responsible for the video-recording of the workshop/seminar (of Part 5 of this enquiry).

Finally, I will remain most thankfully mindful of the manner and style of Professor Adam Small's study leadership and guidance: for his re-kindling of my enthusiasm for this work, and turning me away from a staid positivistic mode of thinking and enquiring. Prof Small opened for me the way to an experience of a special kind of freedom in my sojourn with academic things -- which I consider to be a gift to make most meaningful use of in my relationship with my own students in future. Amongst other things I have in mind Prof Small's creative presentation of "New Paradigm" concepts of research within the context of his encompassing humanistic holistic orientation, and his rejection of what he calls the "crude positivistic and empiricist fetish of 'The Scientific Method'".

In short, my appreciation in this regard is for study leadership which I experienced as novel, liberatingly creative, and exhilarating.

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**DIRECTIONAL QUOTATIONS**

'.....abstracted empiricists.....embrace one philosophy of science which they now suppose to be The Scientific Method. This model of research is largely an epistemological construction; within the social sciences its most decisive result has been a sort of methodological inhibition.'

(C Wright Mills  
in *The Sociological Imagination*)

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'The phrase *qualitative methodology* refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour.'

(Steven J Taylor and Robert Bogdan  
in *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*  
- *The Search for Meanings?*)

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'Dialogue is not a chaste event.'

(Paulo Freire  
in Paul Jurmo. 'Dialogue is not a Chaste Event - Comments by Paulo Freire on Issues in Participatory Research')

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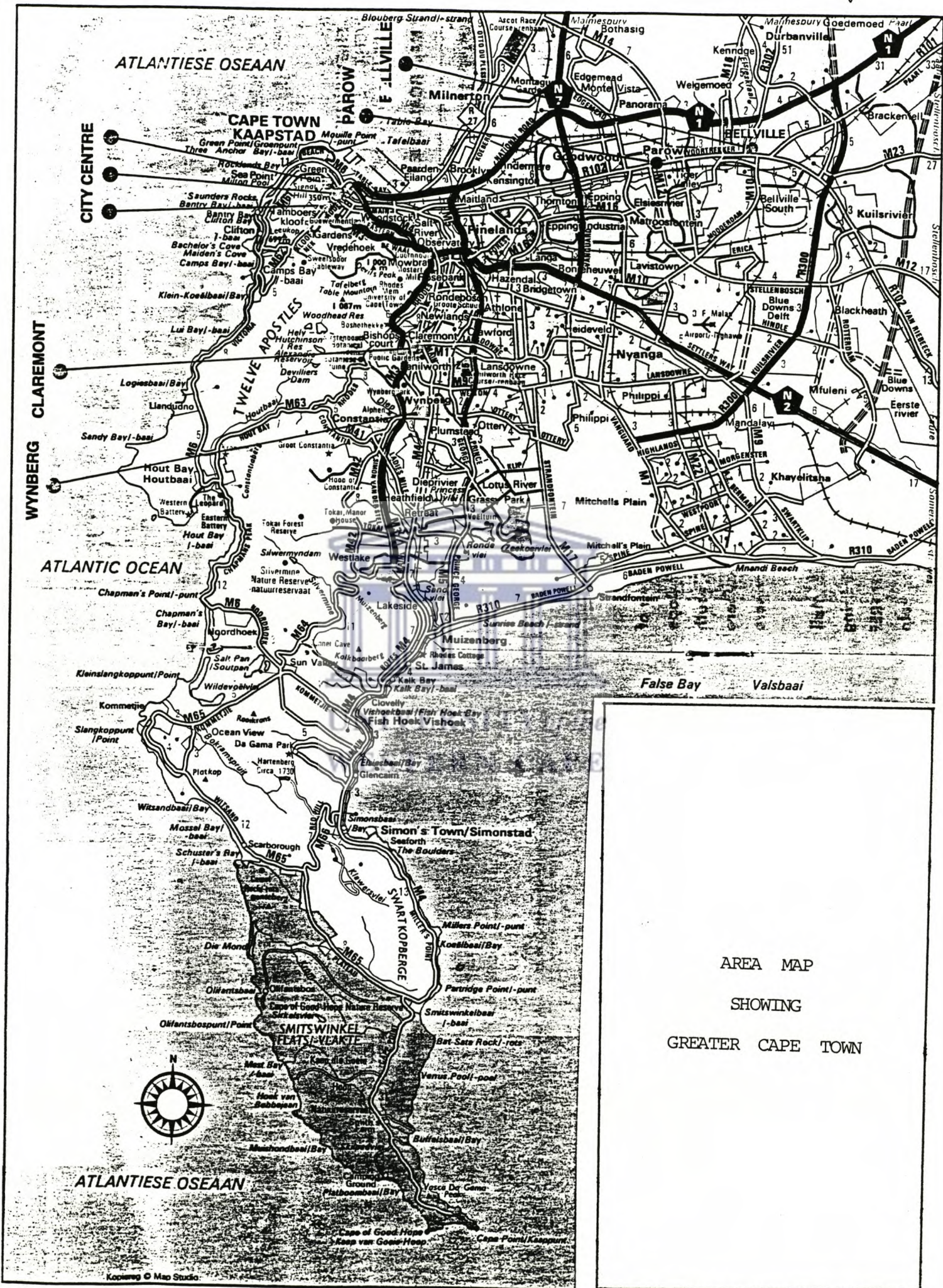
'The telling of a story will contribute to empowerment if the listeners as well as the storytellers recognise the importance of coherence: the relationship between points in a cross-section. Coherence connotes the value of joining ideas and activities which usually remain separate. The student studying the academic literature on power may regard this study and such literature as separate from her domestic life, yet discussion of her interpretation of power also reveals the value which she places on writing, finishing and posting a letter to a friend. The connection between writing and power is made. Fragmentation has been replaced by a feeling of coherence and understanding, the experience of putting things together has contributed to a sense of well-being and direction. Coherence as a goal also characterises the experience of those who are applying scientific procedures in research. Their task is not only to make observations but also to make a connection between observations.'

(Stuart Rees  
in **Achieving Power: Practice and Policy in Social Welfare**)



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AREA MAP  
SHOWING  
GREATER CAPE TOWN

PART 1  
INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH ORIENTATION  
OF THE ENQUIRY

The theme 'Social Workers in the Transition of Social Welfare: A Descriptive-Dialogical Enquiry' has relevance to the practice setting in which I as social work researcher and educator consciously find myself. It refers to the process of contemporary flux and change within the social welfare arena, and the implications for the key role players - social workers. By "contemporary", if we have to be specific, I have in mind the first half of the 1990s.

The majority of South African social workers function from an agency base, whether it be in primary settings, i.e. traditional, direct service settings such as the Child Welfare societies, or secondary settings, e.g. health (hospitals, etc.), or industrial settings. Obviously the "flux and change" would be affecting organizations too.

The historically immediate background of this "flux and change" is no doubt what has been appropriately referred to as the "events of change" of 1976, which "created an environment which challenges human service organizations and workers in unprecedented ways" (Louw, 1991: 25).

The events of 1976 started on 16 June when thousands of Soweto

schoolchildren marched in protest against the idea of Afrikaans being one of the necessary languages of instruction in secondary schools in South Africa.

What started as peaceful protest turned to death and destruction which affected the entire country. The South African police tried to contain the protesters, but in a ruthless manner. Many people were shot, which resulted in injury and death, and hundreds arrested.

The protests and resultant acts of violence were not confined to Soweto. Within two months of the 16th June 1976, black communities - the disenfranchised people - in all parts of the country, expressed their anger by joining in different types of resistance action. Even school buildings, regarded as symbols of oppression, were set alight and burned down. The police were challenged and attacked and state structures and public amenities in general were damaged and destroyed. According to John Kane-Berman's account:

On the morning of Wednesday 16 June 1976, twenty thousand Soweto schoolchildren marched in protest against a decree by the South African government's Department of Bantu Education that Afrikaans had to be used as one of the languages of instruction in secondary schools. It is not altogether clear what happened to the initially peaceful march or what

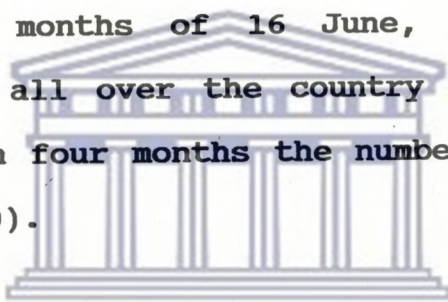
sparked off the violence that was to claim at least 176 lives within little more than a week. Newspaper photographs and several eyewitnesses suggest that the marching students were good-humoured, high-spirited and excited.....

Police vehicles raced to the scene.....

The first child to be shot was evidently a thirteen-year-old schoolboy called Hector Petersen..... Several other youngsters were also shot dead. Then, in the words of one newspaper. 'All hell broke loose'.....

The violence was not confined to Soweto.....

Within two months of 16 June, at least 80 black communities all over the country had expressed their fury; within four months the number had risen to 160. (1981: ix-10).



For black people in the country things had at least come to the point where the emotion was that "Our whole being rebels" (Kane-Berman, 1981: 11). All of this led to the freeing, by the then South African regime, of Nelson Mandela from prison, after twenty-seven years of incarceration.

What has this to do with social welfare and social work?

These events and their effect on South African society cannot be ignored by the human service field. Social workers and social work agencies or organizations operate within a society as a

network of human interaction. The "interactions between people and their social environment" guide the social welfare field in its use of appropriate strategies and tactics (Pincus and Minahan, 1973: 9). But Brake and Bailey make what I consider to be a corrective statement with reference to this, namely that social work is more than just caring about such "interaction" - it is at heart a matter, rather, of

... trying to locate a client's position and problems within wider social groups and political processes ...  
(1980: 9) (Emphasis mine. - A.B.N.)

In other words, the social welfare field cannot be "neutral" or indifferent in respect of the general phenomena of change in South Africa. Paulo Freire criticizes "proclaimed neutrality" as always involving a hidden choice. He notes that

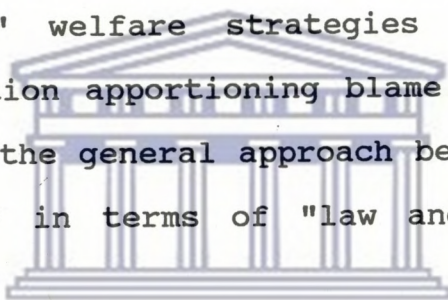
claiming neutrality does not constitute neutrality; ...  
it helps maintain the status quo (1985: 39,113).

As far as false claims of "neutrality" are concerned, we may also note Gary Zukav's intriguing statement that

it is possible to be without an opinion. An opinion is a point of view (and) the point of view that we can be without a point of view is a point of view (1986: 56).

That is, "objectivity" is, at long last, a mere scientific pose. Science contemporarily does not claim "objectivity" anyway. Or if the word is used (and why not) we have to take care to define its meaning in a way which does not oppose it to "subjectivity". The quantum thinkers have pointed the way in this regard since well before the middle of the twentieth century (1).

In any case, the events in the country mainly after 1976 and most recently after February 1990, with the unbanning of three major political groups representing the disenfranchised South Africans, certainly affected approaches in social work which favoured the conventional or "old" welfare strategies of individualizing problems, per implication apportioning blame to, and instilling guilt in the client - the general approach being directed at so-called "normalization" in terms of "law and order", which in effect blocks change.



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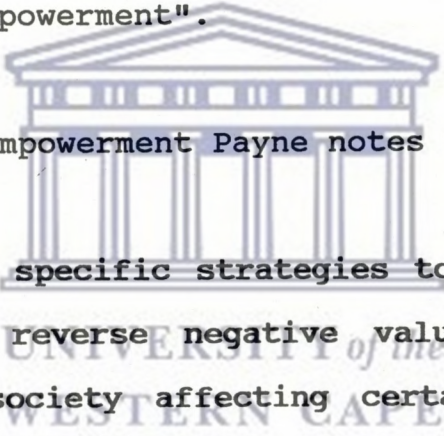
Predominantly the theme of this thesis is to highlight issues in connection with the role of social workers in the process of change away from apartheid society towards democratic society, in which all the country's people in need can be assisted to realize their best human potential in order to live a truly humane quality of life with access to the necessary resources for doing so.

This links with my conviction that social workers have an empowering role in respect of "consumers" of social welfare

services, by engaging themselves (social workers), in participatory activities with all people who would promote the occurrence of those meaningful changes that would affect people's lives. Social workers, in other words, need to strongly and intentionally participate with the victims of circumstances (whatever these may be) to express their problems and needs, and to guide in the joint finding of solutions. Plans of action need to be joint ventures at all times between social workers and "consumers" of welfare services.

Of course we have to work carefully with the easily sloganized word and notion of "empowerment".

In an explanation of empowerment Payne notes that it



aims to use specific strategies to reduce, eliminate, combat and reverse negative valuations by powerful groups in society affecting certain individuals and social groups (1991: 229).

Stuart Rees to my mind presents a sound perspective on empowerment. According to this author, the

rhetoric about empowerment has given the term an aspirin-like quality, as though it is a pill for all seasons ... (1991: 3).

He is of the opinion, however, that

unless the meaning of politics and power and the interdependence of policy and practice are addressed, social workers and those who work in community development and in other human service organizations will be adrift, confronting neither the constraints which affect the direction of the welfare state nor the reasons why some forms of practice are encouraged while others are actively discouraged (1991: 3).

Empowerment though is interrelated with "advocacy", which in general social work terminology means the promoting of

clients' own control and involvement in their lives, communities and services (1991: 225).

In essence it is a process of helping to increase the capacity of people to live their own lives well, by "informing" them - in different senses of the word - of the necessary resources available that may increase the quality of their humanness.

I want to link the social welfare/social work debate on empowerment and advocacy to the broader South African reality. Schrire notes that true empowerment of people is unlikely to be attained if poverty and inequality continue to be "central problems of the South African political economy" (1992: 336-337).



And as Manuel claims (Cape Times, 24 April 1993), unemployment as well as the income and wealth gaps between the "haves" and the "have nots" are most pressing problems for South Africa.

Clearly then the value of pursuing my theme is its significance to social workers in contemporary South Africa as they are faced by political and economic uncertainty.

Social workers in South Africa, as elsewhere, are expected to render quality services as rational professionals, in our case in a society largely fraught with irrationality because of the racist heritage of apartheid and the concomitant constraints upon resources for the vast majority of the people.

Social workers are facing many challenges in the profession. South Africa has just finalized its first non-racial elections in April 1994. The country is involved in serious constitutional development. Leaders of major political movements and parties have been debating issues such as human rights and other pertinent concerns such as violence and its effects on life in the country in general, the crisis in the economy, inadequacy and lack of housing, and so forth.

The point is that the country is experiencing the beginning of a grand transformation from an autocratic, oppressive and racist governmental system to a hopefully participatory, non-racist and democratic one.

This means that social workers wherever they work, whether it be in direct services, research or teaching, need to be interested and enlightened concerning what is happening in the broader society, and they may have, out of necessity, to radically change their conventional approaches to more relevant and appropriate ones.

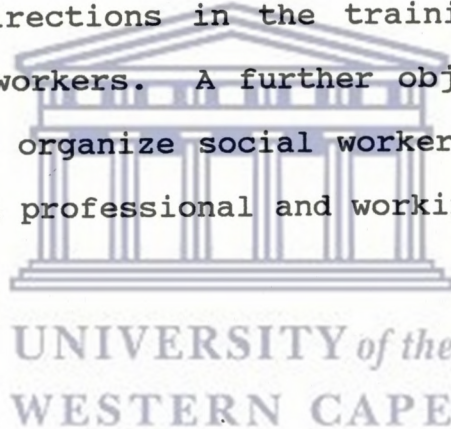
My interest in the theme of this study also stems from my association with the Social Workers' Forum, a "progressive" professional social workers' body, in which I have become increasingly aware of the concerns relating to the contemporary situation of change in respect of the profession.

The term progressive in this study is used to indicate a conscious move away from the "old order" or traditional way of viewing and doing things in the social welfare field, to a "new order" of social interventions in the professional service area and also in the broader South African society (2).

Many social workers have for instance for some time been criticizing the traditional, conservative social work structures of a "blame the victim" approach, for not equipping them with the knowledge and skills to adequately handle issues of poverty, unemployment, housing and job creation.

The Social Workers' Forum is intended to be a vehicle for raising social workers' consciousness to relevant alternatives to "old order" thinking and doing.

This organization was established in June 1988, in Athlone near Cape Town, with the expressed purpose of bringing together social workers with a common vision of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and united social welfare system in South Africa. The Forum would act as a pressure group against apartheid practices within the social welfare field, to search for relevant and indigenous theories and practice strategies and tactics appropriate to new directions in the training and practice of South African social workers. A further objective of the Forum was, and still is, to organize social workers into a union that would see to their own professional and working needs.



It follows that this study may be of value to organizations of the kind, country-wide, that are anxious about the role of social workers in the changing South Africa.

The project is certainly aimed at encouraging social workers to participate in and strengthen progressive social work organizations so that they can actively position themselves in the broader effort on behalf of social justice in South Africa.

This includes an encouragement of social workers to be constructively assertive about participation in developing new social welfare policy and programmes for South Africa.

All of this indicates the critical thinking that progressive social workers have been engaging in. It is in this sense that they have been "progressive" rather than "reactionary". They do not favour the "welfare-syndrome solutions". They are comfortable with the consequences of change, are open to new ideas and do not fear losing "social status". Freire states that as far as such workers are concerned, there is

room in their methodologies for communication, critical reflection, creativity and collaboration (1985: 39).

The present enquiry therefore was entered upon at a clear point of choice. On the one hand there are the traditional modes of intervention and on the other hand the requirement of seeking alternative approaches relevant to the needs of communities that have experienced repression in general.

It may be considered that my position is a matter of "subjectivity" which, if "scientifically" viewed, would bias the enquiry. However there is no way at all, particularly in social

work, that "subjectivity" can be avoided. As a social worker I cannot nullify my real life professional experiences and pretend to be "objectively neutral". I, too, find misconstrued "objectivity" unacceptable insofar as it

means that researchers lose all their own inputs (whereas) they must be involved and aware of their influence on the data (Harmon, 1992: 2).

This kind of statement is supportive of my position.

My personal ("subjective") experiences can also positively contribute to the dialogue of social workers in general, at this moment. My own understanding of the language of social workers will assist me in being sensitive to discrepancies between action and speech, and to understand perceptions held by them. In essence I consider that my "subjectivity" can serve as a stimulus for critical thinking in my exchanges with fellow social workers in their reflection on their work.

Paulo Freire appropriately refers to this process as the "revolutionary praxis" whereby people

emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled (1985: 100).

I relate here to Freire and Shor's view that:

To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic. It is to admit the impossible: a world without (persons)" (1987: 12).

At this point I am clearly called upon to summarize basic assumptions of this enquiry.

As already indicated, at the present time in South Africa, it is imperative for the social welfare field to alter perspectives and begin to see service delivery and the political debate and movement concerning basic social change as inevitably intertwined. Social workers cannot stand at a distance from the political challenges facing the profession. Political movements and all concerned people are debating the issues of human rights, the elimination of racism, equitable distribution of resources, and the like. These are issues facing social workers, too, in the "new South Africa".

Dixon (1981) notes that social goals and objectives in any society are influenced by the prevailing philosophy, which in turn influences that society's welfare policies and related administrative procedures. Social workers need to understand that this statement makes sense in the South African context. They need also to consider or re-consider the reality of

apartheid and how its implementation had resulted in the professional being caught in the web of segregationist service-rendering which did not help to raise the quality of life of the people they serve.

As far as methodology is concerned, I consider this project not so much to be a matter of the discovery of completely new things. It is a matter rather of confirming or not confirming things already suspected. Also, in the end, I as researcher/investigator, may have as many unanswered questions as my social work peers (and interviewees). Thus I explore the ground by way of intensive sharing of "inner being" concerning the realities of social work in the demarcated area. This, therefore, is a dialogical study. The dialogue is with history or events in the field of social welfare as well as the broader societal setting, and with myself as an experienced social worker in the midst of other experienced social workers including - of course - my interviewees of Part 4 and workshop participants of Part 5 of this study.

In Part 2 of this study, therefore, I deal - in a manner of overview - with 'Social Welfare and the "Old South Africa"'. It is not as if this background is not well known, but I argue that we have to recall it every time we intend to move beyond it. It

is necessarily part of dialoguing towards the future. In other words my dialogue in this study would be incomplete without such recall.

Part 3 is a quite personal account of my experience as a social worker in greater Cape Town with reference to my most intimate association with the Social Workers' Forum. This is a matter of dialoguing with myself.

In Part 4 I carry the dialogue forward with the twenty-one interviewees I have mentioned, Part 5 being a (methodological) "cross-checking" of the outcome of the process of Part 4: here - in Part 5 - I present the process of a workshop with social worker peers, held in the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape, in the aftermath of the conduct of the interviews of Part 4.

Part 6 is a concluding section, touching briefly on the matter of the "Reconstruction and Development Programme" ('RDP') of the first government of "the new South Africa".

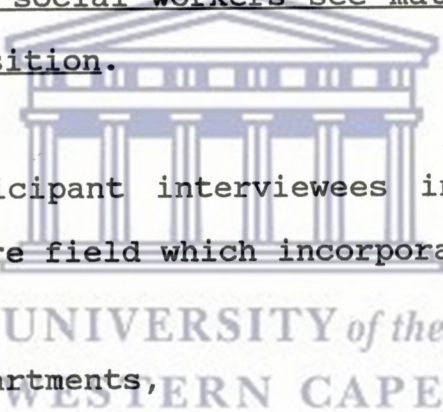
As far as Part 4 is concerned, the interviewees in this process are social workers who were selected for interview on the basis of their known progressive orientation and on the basis of their



number of years of experience and their seniority in their agencies of employment. Among them were ten Social Work Coursework Masters students of the University of the Western Cape. The total number of interviewees was twenty-one, which, particularly in the light of the seniority involved, I judged to be more than an adequate "sample" for my purposes. (I need to note that during this time of course I also engaged informally with social workers, in various areas of employment, who were involved in activities aimed at a new welfare dispensation.)

In essential summary, what I was after was simply a trustworthy impression of how such social workers see matters and themselves in the process of transition.

These twenty-one participant interviewees in the project were part of a social welfare field which incorporates

- 
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- a. State welfare departments,
  - b. Private welfare structures,
  - c. Community based and privately funded organizations,
  - d. Professional organizations such as the Social Workers' Forum and the South African Black Social Workers' Association, and
  - e. Churches.

My geographical area of research was greater metropolitan Cape Town (see map included, p. v).

As researcher, I have chosen specifically to engage the dialogical paradigm with the express purpose of maximizing qualitative participation by all involved (Reason & Rowan, 1981).

This paradigm embraces a democratic and humanistic process of consultation and an active, in-depth exchange of ideas. Its motivation is holistic.

My interviewing style aspired to be of the "phenomenal" kind suggested by Massarik, in Reason and Rowan, which obviously embraces aspects of "depth" interviewing and "rapport" interviewing. I say "aspired to be" insofar as I am quite conscious of the fact that the theme of my enquiry may be considered not to lend itself to any development of "therapeutic relationships" (see Massarik in the mentioned context). However, I feel so strongly about the relationship between and among social workers in common quest, at this time of transition, for meaningfulness in the South African welfare field, that I do not consider the description of my interviewing style as an overstatement. This seemed to me to be especially true also in

view of the fact that

Unlike the conventional interview philosophy that seeks to hold constant the interviewer's impact on the interviewee - a goal of questionable feasibility - this interview style recognizes the inherent humanness of both participants.....

This interview(ing) is characterized by maximal mutuality of trust, attaining a genuine and deeply experienced caring between interviewer and interviewee, and a commitment to joint search for shared understanding..... (1981: 203).

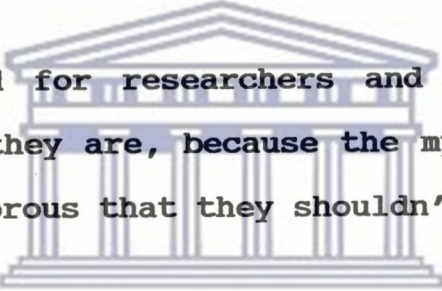
On the whole there is little, in this kind of interviewing,

of simplistic question/answer exchange; rather free-form modes of communication and iterative opportunities for review and clarification identify the process (1981: 203).

This paradigm certainly encourages active participation, open, honest sharing of ideas, and critical thinking.

It was my aim not to alienate or treat the interviewees (Part 4) and workshop participants (Part 5) as "research subjects" of the kind that in the traditional positivistic research paradigm have limited roles to play as persons.

The Concise Oxford English dictionary describes the adjective "alien" as meaning "unfamiliar", "not one's own", and the verb "align" as "to join as an ally". In this study I engage all the interviewees and participants as allies who share openly in the exchange process as distinct from being merely "cold" research subjects who are expected only to respond to a prepared schedule of questioning, in the process being isolated or "numbed" by it all. Both the researcher and the "subjects" are usually negatively affected in the positivistic style of research. Here I identify with what Rowan says, in Reason and Rowan, with reference to Jennifer Platt's work, namely that



it is hard for researchers and subjects to see how alienated they are, because the myth says that science is so glamorous that they shouldn't notice (1981: 95).

This type of research is noted for its strong principled basis of participation by all involved. Thus it is sometimes, I think, appropriately described as a high-energy type of creative action research. This point is concurred with by Ramphele who engaged in participatory research methodology in an enquiry into the living conditions and social interactions of people in the hostels of Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu (1993: 136).

(As an example of co-operative enquiry, she, her research team, and the Western Cape Hostel Dwellers' Association and its

members, fully participated in the exchange of views on the research topic, how it would help to address problem areas, the actual study plan, and methods of carrying out the practical empirical tasks of the study.)

This type of inquiry is also intended as a learning experience for all parties involved. Rowan, in Reason and Rowan (1981: 96, 97), clarifies this further by noting that the paradigm also contributes to social change in the three ways:

1. it makes a difference to the researcher,
2. it makes a difference to those who come to know about the research, and
3. it makes a difference to whatever is studied.

One brings to the project one's own subjectivity, but in a critical way. This point relates to what Harmon says about this kind of qualitative research, that it represents:

A more natural, subjective attitude, one that makes extensive use of the potential of an individual (1992: 1).

In conclusion of this (Part 1) it is important for me to note that, on the recommendation of my promoter (3) I also present, as an integral part of this work, a video-recording of proceedings

at the "cross-checking" workshop (Part 5), and a sampling of my audio-recording of interviewees and myself as interviewer (Part 4).

In other words, as far as this thesis is concerned I show myself not only in the aspect of writing but also in other aspects of myself (my self). I present more of the "potential of an individual" than just the writing potential.

This appears to me, and my promoter, to be consonant with the intended holistic methodology within which this enquiry is set up. The usual exclusive emphasis on writing as far as thesis-work is concerned, goes much more with a philosophy or view of reality as fragmented (rather than interrelated or integrated), and it certainly is merely Euro-centric in a negative sense of the word. In fact it goes with Cartesian and general positivistic dualism and its conception of "science", whereas the holistic-humanistic approach, such as mine may be called, takes another route. In my case it takes another route in the additional sense that my promoter is, in his own words, "serious about the development of academic presentation that does not blindly follow Euro-American or 'First World Western' styles, but makes room for Afro-indigenous reality" (4).

In this way I further try also to give substance to Paulo Freire's view - which is fully correct to my mind - that "dialogue is not a chaste event". (This is the title of an

account of a Paulo Freire workshop on 'Issues in Participatory Research') (Freire, 1985). My reading of Freire's writing and about his manner of community work, has meant much to me in my own study and enquiry.

Finally, my presentation of these recordings as integral to an understanding of this thesis, gives the reader access to much of my process of enquiry. I show much of its "inner workings", so to speak, which coheres with the idea of New Paradigm research as a learning situation for all concerned.



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PART 2


SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE "OLD" SOUTH AFRICA:

AN OVERVIEW

In giving an historical overview of the social welfare system in South Africa, it is important to highlight events of significance of the past in such a way as to note the impact on the lives of people today. Christie notes that history helps us to

understand the present, how things come to be what they are, that change is always happening, and that we are part of the changing process (1989: 29).

I relate this to a view expressed in the beginning of the Nineties that a



future vastly different from anything in the past, lies ahead and that 1992 is seeing South Africa getting down to the political, social and economic challenges avoided and evaded in one way or another since Union in 1910 (The Argus Supplement of March 1992: 3).

Placing the social welfare system of South Africa in perspective, it is important to highlight the socio-economic-political profile of the country. Social work, after all, is a profession within social welfare.



The profession of social work in South Africa has a European origin (McKendrick, 1990a; Midgley, 1981; Bernstein, 1991). It is necessary to indicate these roots and their influence on South African social work.

By the second half of the 19th century a number of organizations and voluntary societies had been established in England to help the poor. The Charity Organization movement started in 1869 to co-ordinate charitable organizations in London and to establish general principles that would guide their work. This was the beginning of social work's own "Code of Ethics" (Bernstein, 1991: 23). The principal characteristics of social work at the time evolved in response to the forces of urbanization and industrialization. This resulted in the focus of the profession being, initially, poor relief. The reference to political economy is obvious, and the concern of a contemporary social work writer such as Stuart Rees, in respect of social work's understanding of and insight into politics and the economy as dimensions of "power", is fully intelligible (Rees, 1991: 3 et seq).

Another specific beginning of social work was the Settlement Movement, which supposedly linked "socially concerned" people from the upper and middle classes with the working class. This movement spread to America from England/Europe and the concept was broadened to include aspects of neighbourhood and community welfare, social reform, better service provision and remedial legislation (Bernstein: 1991).

The differing emphases of the Settlement Movement and the Charity Organization approach resulted in a divergence of focus for the developing profession. The duality has survived throughout the progress of the profession.

Cohen, in McKendrick (1990a: 10), notes that the profession was founded on certain definite human values coherent with:

- (a) humanitarianism,
- (b) a belief in the value and dignity of all individuals,  
and
- (c) democratic ideals.

Its beginning was ostensibly predicated upon faith in ordinary people, in their ability to govern themselves and to handle their rights and responsibilities independently. It was intended to be grounded in a recognition of the potentialities of people, regardless of race, creed, or national origin - an approach to them in terms of what they can become, given equal and just opportunity.

The history of the profession therefore indicates that social work soon developed two parallel-running intentions: the first was the humanitarian, charity-focused activity aimed at deprived individuals and families in society, the aims being to get them to "adapt better" to society; the second was a reformist intention, with a view to change aspects of society that were perceived as impacting negatively on peoples' well-being.

It can be seen, then, how from early on, social work's emphases represented this duality: on the one hand it appears as an agent of social control, on the other hand as an agent of social change.

The duality exists into our time. In 1915 Abraham Flexner levelled criticism against social work that it was not meeting the criteria of a profession, particularly in America. He claimed that professional status and social recognition for it were not possible while social workers were "stigmatized as the 'servers' of the poor" (Humphreys and Diperman, as quoted by Bernstein, 1991). He wanted a "scientific" approach to social work. This resulted in a reduction of interest in social reform in general and increasing interest in "clinical" counselling and working with people of a higher social standing. This tendency is still evident in present-day social work where the profession has become almost over-"professionalized" in the bid to distance itself from the "charity" image. The irony is that the poor who would in all probability benefit from the highly professional services are removed to the realm of "food parcels" while "sophisticated" consumers of welfare are offered remunerated counselling services, since they would not want to be associated with the "stigma of welfare".

Be this as it may, the social work profession in South Africa has been strongly influenced by these "Western" eventualities.

Brümmer, in an inaugural lecture at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1971, points out that social work as a profession was pioneered in South Africa by Lilly Marguerite Mackenzie, who had qualified with a Diploma in Household and Social Science at King's College for Women at the University of London. She came to South Africa in 1922 and joined the South African National Council for Child Welfare as Organizing Secretary in 1926 (1972: 11). She contributed extensively to the development of the profession during her thirty-year practice as a social worker.

In 1969 an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy was bestowed on her by the University of the Witwatersrand as a tribute to her pioneering "professional social work in South Africa" (Brümmer, 1972: 11).

Against this background, McKendrick divides the development of social welfare in South Africa into the following five "stages" (1987: 5-18):

- |      |               |  |
|------|---------------|--|
| i)   | 1652-1800:    | The family and mutual aid period;  |
| ii)  | 1801-1902:    | Expansion, urbanization and poverty;   |
| iii) | 1903-1936:    | Poverty, the growth of a social welfare system, and the formal emergence of social work; |
| iv)  | 1937-1950:    | Growing state activity in social welfare;  |
| v)   | 1951-present: | Modernization of social welfare services and apartheid.                                  |

I do not necessarily agree with this chronology, but the view of this notable South African social work academic is presented here since it serves well enough to highlight the important issues in the unfolding of social welfare and social work in South Africa.

i) 1652-1800: The Family and Mutual Aid Period

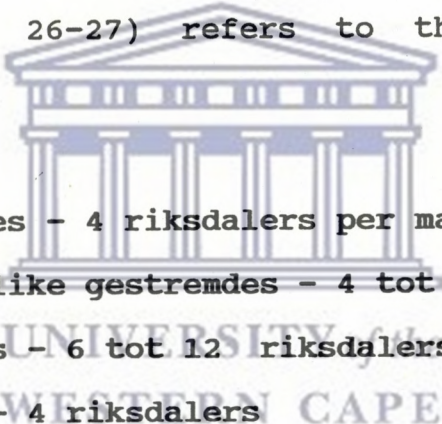
In 1652 the first foreign settlers landed at the Cape under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company. Within the first ten years of the Company's occupation of the Cape, three societal phenomena surfaced that are still relevant today: race conflict, racial intermingling, and poverty.

In order to increase production of much needed fresh supplies for the passing ships, the Company pursued a policy of releasing employees (white settlers) to become "free burghers". In 1657 adverse weather destroyed crops and these free burghers became the needy poor of the Company, who felt sufficient responsibility to raise money for poor relief on their behalf.

This was done through the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland but was later co-ordinated by its representative body in South Africa. In fact the mentioned church facilitated the distribution of poor relief as an agency of the Company.

M M Marais says of the church's involvement in poor relief: "Dienslewering deur die Kerk het vinnig uitgebrei en ontwikkel tot 'n gevestigde stelsel van hulpverlening" (1943: 16).

However, the church was already practising race discrimination in its helping services. This is evident from what Marais has to say, namely that the "Poor White Settlers" were categorized according to their type of need and paid accordingly while "Free Blacks" or "Vryswartes" were paid as a grouping irrespective of the specific need. Potgieter (1970: 26-27) refers to these categories as follows:

- 
- a) Bejaardes - 4 riksdalers per maand
  - b) Liggaamlike gestremdes - 4 tot 7 riksdalers
  - c) Weduwees - 6 tot 12 riksdalers
  - d) Siekes - 4 riksdalers
  - e) Vryswartes - 3 riksdalers.

This was a humiliating situation for "people of colour" who were in need of financial support. It is clearly evident that priority was given to the "Poor White Settlers". (I believe this point is not made strongly enough by McKendrick.)

As the frontier community expanded, the family assumed increasing responsibility for its members and played an

important role in social organization and as a unit where needs were met. The "tribal" groupings of the indigenous peoples formed the basic unit in which their economic, social and political practices embraced measures to care for individuals in the "contingencies of life" (McKendrick, 1987: 8).

ii) 1801-1902: Expansion, Urbanization and Poverty

The Cape then experienced occupations by the British, from 1795, Britain finally acquiring sovereignty over the colony in 1814.

Deep resentment developed amongst the Boers (boere = farmers) towards the British for the latter's supposedly "liberal" ways of handling the indigenous "tribes". They moved away from under British rule only to encounter Black-African "tribes" in the "new land".

On the side of the Black-Africans this contact with the white settlers led to a reduction in the effectiveness of their traditional, tribal life as a caring system for its members, while the expansion served to strengthen the very system in respect of the white farmers whose family units remained the cornerstone for their meeting of human needs.

In any event, in the Cape Colony organized welfare services were being established. Religious groupings took the forefront of "charitable" endeavours. Already in 1814, the

Dutch Reformed Church established the first institutional welfare resource, an orphanage. Later other denominations established welfare resources, notably the Roman Catholic Church in 1854, and the Jewish community in 1859.

An organized pattern of social welfare provision was emerging. Legislation was promulgated which emphasized the care of children, care of the physically handicapped and poor relief. Of course these services were predominantly for "Whites".

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1870, and gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, caused an economic revolution which resulted in urbanization and industrialization which obviously would affect the lifestyles of people.

Major human welfare problems resulted, and affected Whites as well as the African ("people of colour") population.

Many urban Whites did not have the educational and trade skills to compete with immigrants from overseas. Also they were often not disposed to manual labour or willing to accept low wages.

The "Poor White" problem had begun.

Also, Black-African migrants who were attracted to the industrial centres, were offered jobs at low pay, but were



not allowed permanent residence in the towns and cities, were required to register with an employer within six days of being in an urban area, thus limiting their bargaining power. They were essentially denied any say in issues concerning their welfare. In fact, they were geographically and occupationally racially restricted. These restrictions forced profound changes on the family structure. The migratory labour system came into being which forced men to work and live far away from home while the mother was the "lone parent".

Moreover, the legacy of the Anglo-Boer War between 1899 and 1902 was intense hatred between the two White factions, and poverty increased among Afrikaners as the economy stagnated.

iii) 1903-1936: Poverty, Growth of a Social Welfare System and the Emergence of Social Work

M C Potgieter is convinced that the most significant developments in respect of the future of welfare services occurred during the 30 years before the unification of South Africa in 1910 (1970: 30).

The State, from a legislative position, took action with the hope of stifling the ravages of poverty. In 1856 the Cape Parliament passed what may be considered to be the first Welfare Law in South Africa, known as "Die Meesters en Dienstboden" Act. This Act was specifically geared towards the protection of children "in need of care".

In 1879 the "Verbeterinrichtingen Wet" was promulgated which allowed for the establishment of schools of industry for dealing with juvenile delinquents. In 1883 the "Volksgezondheids Wet" was passed.

Winckler (1969: 32) notes that in 1895 two further laws were promulgated:

- a) The "Wet op Verlate Vrouwe en Kinderbescherming, 1895 (Wet No 7 van 1895)" which allowed for the mandatory duty of the father to support his family.
- b) The "Verwaarloosde Kinderen Verzorgings Wet, 1895 (Wet No 24 van 1895)" made provision for the support, training and apprenticeship of neglected children under 15 years.

The Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal up to 1903 followed the Cape Colony in the application of the aforementioned laws.

Significant service renderers were the churches, especially the Dutch Reformed Church and Afrikaner women's groups. Potgieter notes that this Church already in 1893 organized a welfare conference in Stellenbosch to address the "Poor White Question" (1970: 29).

The focus was "White" poverty.

The Afrikaner women were distressed by the poverty caused by political and economic development. The Roman Dutch Law of inheritance created a tradition of sub-division of farm land amongst the heirs of owners, which sub-division coupled with unscientific, outmoded farming methods, perpetuated and increased poverty amongst White farm families. Lack of job opportunities in the industrialized centres also contributed towards White poverty.

For "White", of course, we may read "Afrikaner" or "White Afrikaner".

This emergency situation gave rise to different White women's organizations with the express purpose of helping the White poor.

In 1904 the South African Women's Federation and the Afrikaans Christelike Vroue-Vereniging (ACVV) were established. In 1911 the Oranje Vroue-Vereniging, and in 1915 the Natalse Christelike Vroue-Vereniging were also established.

The focus remained "White" poverty.

Theron and Stulting note:

Dit is besonder interessant hoedat die vroue, aanvanklik aangespoor deur hulle vaderslandsliefde, byna onbewus so ver gekom het om te aanvaar dat hulle as vroue ook hulle deel aan die maatskaplike opbou van hulle volk wou doen ... .

(1961: 15)

These organizations gave the Afrikaner women an opportunity to be involved in broader development and social upliftment of their nation.

Poverty remained an issue of great concern to the State - "White" poverty, that is.

Considering this almost "natural" or "unconscious"/"subconscious" focus on "White" poverty, it is a theme of interest to reflect - when one considers the later history of South Africa - how the philosophy and policy of Apartheid as it unfolded, hangs together with this early concern over "White" (Afrikaner) poverty, hence with the development of welfare and social work in South Africa. (It is interesting to reflect that H F Verwoerd was a founding father of social work in the country!)

In any case, after Union in 1910, the State became more involved in provisional schemes of relief for the poor.

Social welfare organization and planning now took place along national lines. Brümmer (1972: 6-18) notes another conference on the Poor White Problem organized by the Dutch Reformed Church, held in Cradock in the Cape, in 1916 - a conference which highlighted the public's negative attitude towards the poor. The Rev Pienaar, the chairman, was quoted as saying:

Should the poor not be left to sink or swim by their own efforts?

Other views of the conference-goers were apparently:

The weak deserve to go to the wall, These lazy people should be made to work (Brümmer, 1972: 6-18).

This is no doubt reminiscent of similar sentiments held at the time of the Industrial Revolution in England, where the profit motive dominated over the plight of individuals.

Brümmer makes the point that little sympathy was shown towards the poor and maladjusted, their inability to prosper and survive being attributed to "defects in their character".

But parallel to the "Poor White Problem", there was the growing problem of indigent Africans on white farms. In an attempt to solve this problem the government promulgated the 1916 Native Land Act which provided (separate) land for African settlement. The concept of (Verwoerdian) "Bantustans" was already stirring. These "reserves" offered little or no prospect of improved quality of life. Africans were forced to seek cheap employment on white farms or in the cities where they were hemmed in by the migrant labour policy.

As McKendrick notes (1987: 11), African, Coloured and Indian peoples' problems remained essentially neglected, while public concern about White poverty escalated even further with the depression of the late 1920's.

As is well-known, in 1928, at the initiative of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Carnegie Corporation of New York was approached to fund an investigation to survey and combat White poverty. The Report of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into the Poor White Problem in South Africa of 1932 identified the major causes of poverty as relating to the country's changing economic and social structure rather than to personal inadequacies of poor people. Two of the recommendations made by the Commission dramatically forwarded the emergence of a South African Social Welfare System. At a National Conference on the Poor White Problem

at Kimberley in 1934, these recommendations were accepted:

1. that a state bureau responsible for people's social welfare, be established,
2. that preparations be made for the training of skilled, university-educated social workers.

As a consequence a State Department of Social Welfare was established in 1937, and courses of social work training at South African universities were started, which began the growth of the social work profession in South Africa.

Social work training in the country really dates back, though, to 1924, with the introduction of a two-year certificate course in Social Work at the University of Cape Town; and in 1929 the Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie sponsored a course in the Transvaal which was a forerunner of the Bachelor of Arts degree introduced by the University of Pretoria. Brümmer (1972) reports the introduction of courses in social work at all of the "White" universities as from 1930 onwards (and from the 1960's onwards in the universities then classified by law for other racial groups).

The period from 1930 onwards was therefore significant in respect of the education and training of social workers. According to the well-known Afrikaner woman leader who herself became a professor of social work - Erika Theron -

Dr H F Verwoerd made important contributions to the development of social work as profession during the period 1932-1936 while he was heading a new department of sociology and social work at the University of Stellenbosch. He laid the foundation for a three-year training course at the University, which course he also proposed for the South African universities in general. Theron indicates that Verwoerd not only laid down criteria for generic social work training as distinct from specialization, but involved himself in matters of welfare planning. He often led evidence before commissions dealing with welfare issues, some being: the Provinsiale Kommissie van Onderzoek insake Liefdadigheid, 1932; the Werkloosheidskommissie, 1933; and the Kleurlingkommissie, 1936.

In 1935-1936 Verwoerd initiated the first social work journal in South Africa - which is still in existence today, known as Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk, and still printed and issued by the Department of Social Work of the University of Stellenbosch.

It is a point of note that a man of this intellectual stature (as hailed by Professor Theron), was also the proponent par excellence of "separate development" or apartheid. As is known, he eventually became the head of government in South Africa - and the name historically associated with "grand" apartheid.



iv) 1937-1950: Growing State Activity in Social Welfare

McKendrick notes that it is during this period that "the long-ingrained racial attitudes of white persons were reflected in discriminatory state-sponsored social welfare and social assistance programmes".

It was also a period of growing state participation in welfare matters. This is evident from the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare in 1937. But the Department was also a vehicle of separate development! As Brümmer reports, state welfare services were now allocated to specialized departments dealing with different racial groups in communities (1972, 14).

The priority was care and service to White communities. There existed discrepancies between and among communities in terms of "race", in respect of money allocation and services. As McKendrick points out, of a "total of R9,750,000 allocated for social assistance and social assurance in 1943, R8,300,000 went to Whites, R800,000 to Coloureds and Indians and R600,000 to Africans" (1987: 13).

Racist discriminatory practices abounded. But one example: the Children's Act, 1937, which provided for children in unsatisfactory conditions to be declared "in need of care", was scarcely implemented where Black-African children were concerned.

World War II brought further welfare challenges. The war casualties, as a result of combat action, contributed to a public demand for a national system of social security. This, though, did not materialize.

Another challenge to social welfare was the increased "influx" of Black-African persons into towns, in search of employment. The shortage of adequate housing obviously led to a growth of squatter settlements. This phenomenon has not drastically changed at all. In fact the situation has (naturally) escalated.

Of course an event of major significance for social welfare in South Africa, was the coming to power in 1948 of the Nationalist Party government. The policy of apartheid was now legally enshrined in the statute books, and the implementation of "separate development" affected the lives of the disenfranchised irrefutably.

v) 1951-1990's: Modernization of Social Welfare Services and Apartheid

I expand this section of McKendrick's "stages" to include population and demographic profiles.

At this stage the development of the South African welfare system is associated with two phenomena: the unfolding of "modern" social work practice, and apartheid.

The emphasis in social welfare services became increasingly orientated towards the rehabilitation of persons in need, rather than institutional measures. There was also a focus on community services.

Furthermore there was an increase in community-sponsored welfare bodies. McKendrick notes that by 1976 there existed 1,908 registered welfare organizations in terms of the National Welfare Act, 1965.

Also, a "partnership" developed between the State and voluntary welfare bodies, and welfare legislation took prominence at this time.



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The following tables serve to illustrate the discriminatory and racist nature of apartheid welfare. They give information on population size in terms of racial groups, their average incomes, and the state's welfare expenditure on the "nation" in these racist terms.

**Total Population of South Africa : 1990**

	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>
African	28 258 000	75,3
Asian	978 000	2,6
Coloured	3 244 000	8,6
White	5 052 000	13,5
<u>Total</u>	<u>37 532 000</u>	<u>100,0</u>

(South African Institute of Race Relations, 1989/90: 35)

Black South Africans, vastly the majority, by no means shared anywhere near equitably in the wealth of the country.

**Average Household Income Per Month : 1988-1989**

	R
African	521
Coloured	1 059
Indian	1 604
White	3 297

(South African Institute of Race Relations, 1989/90: 658)

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These disparities are of course noticeable at all levels of South African societal structures. Welfare provision has had the same racist slant. The welfare budget for the 1989-1990 financial year was as follows:

**All Welfare Expenditure 1989/90**

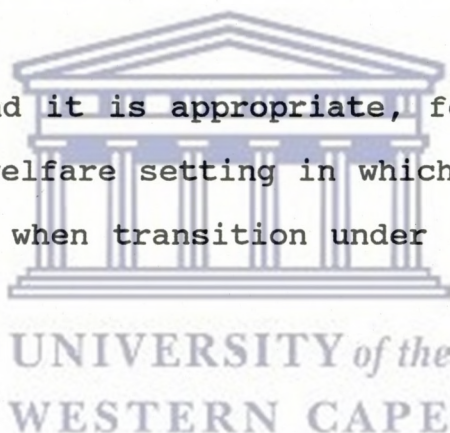
	R
African	2 469 803.662
Coloured	798 363.000
Indian	197 531.000
White	1 019 214.000
<u>Total</u>	<u>4 484 911.662</u>

(South African Institute of Race Relations, 1989/90: 307)

Of the "population groups" listed above, it is clear that proportionately whites were far more advantageously endowed than others.

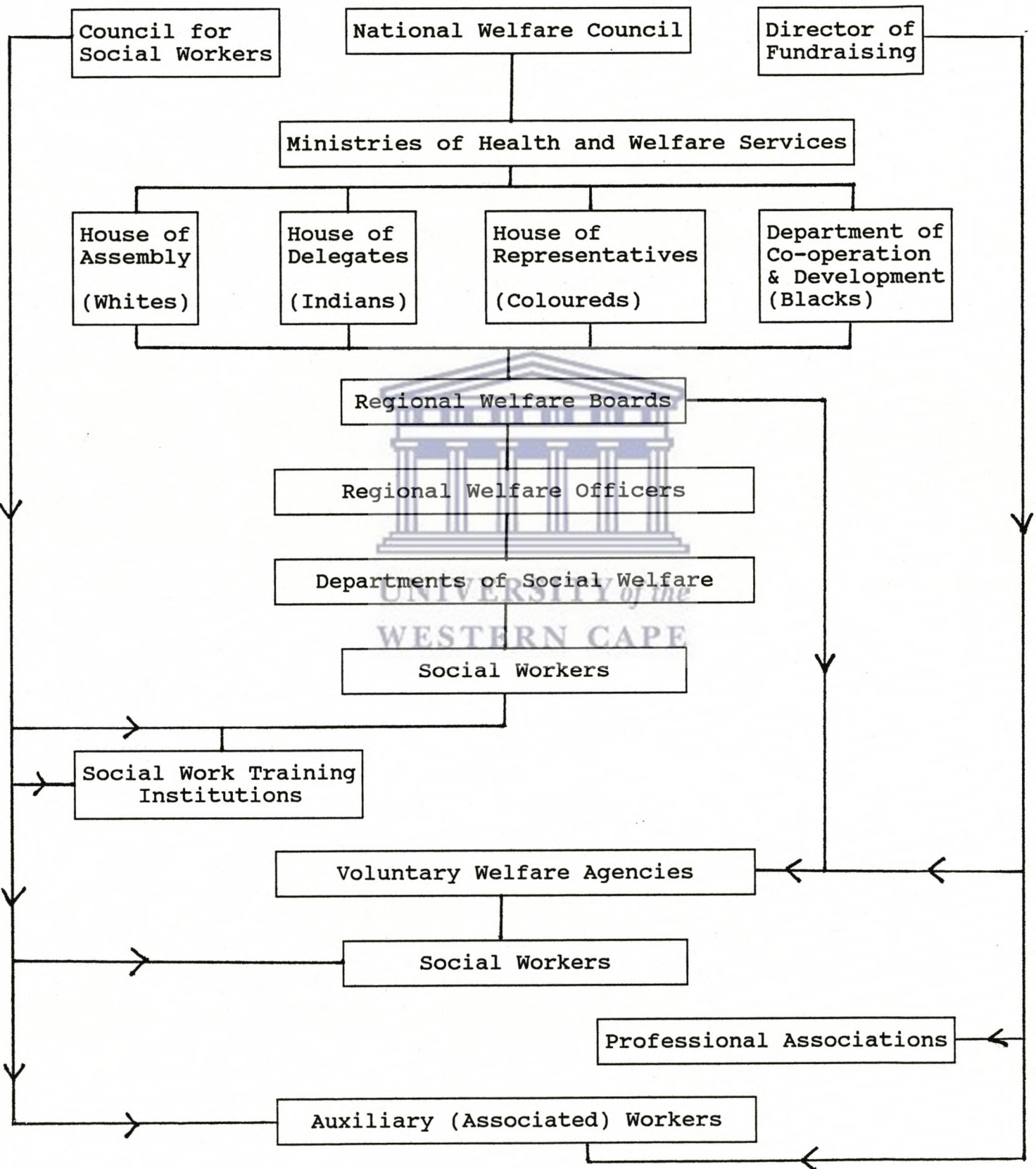
It is as clear as possible, then, that social workers have been compelled to function as professionals within structures of utterly unequal provision.

Against this background it is appropriate, for our purposes, to briefly describe the welfare setting in which the social workers are located at a time when transition under a new government is about to take shape.



The following table is adapted from Keating, 1987: 14:

**COMPONENTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WELFARE STRUCTURE  
PRIOR TO 27th April 1994**



The diagram clearly indicates the following components of the social welfare system:

- (a) Legislative structures
- (b) Policy making structures
- (c) Statutory welfare departments
- (d) Voluntary welfare organizations
- (e) Professional associations
- (f) Training and research institutions.

#### Aspects of Legislation

McKendrick (1987) and Keating (1987) both indicate the three statutory acts which provide the framework for social welfare provision: the National Welfare Act No 100 of 1978, the Social and Associated Workers Act No 110 of 1978, and the Fundraising Act No 107 of 1978. These Acts were subject to the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983, which enabled welfare, organized as it is, on a racial basis. These Acts were/are (5) still in place at the time of this writing, in a state of suspension however, due to the constitutional and general state of transition of the country.

The major purposes of these Acts were/are:

- To control and regulate the activities of social workers, student social workers and Auxiliary workers by mandatory registration.

- To formulate national welfare policy and to regulate voluntary welfare activities by way of formal registration procedures. Further control through co-ordination and planning of welfare services at local level through the different welfare boards, and to advise the Minister of Health and Population Development on welfare matters through the South African Welfare Council.
- To control the collection and receipt of public donations through fundraising ventures.

The following Acts also contribute to the regulation of the social welfare response to people in need or at risk, in a specialized way:

- The Abuse of Dependence Producing Substances and Rehabilitation Centres Act, 1971;
- The Aged Persons Act, 1967;
- The Blind Persons Act, 1968;
- The Child Care Act, 1983;
- The Criminal Procedure Act, 1977;
- The Disability Grants Act, 1968;
- The Mental Health Act, 1973;
- The Social Pensions Act, 1973.

The formulation and promulgation of Acts of Parliament, which affect the standard and quality of life of South Africans, have until now, for the most part, been left to politicians and



personnel who find themselves in the high and higher places of bureaucracy, where consultation with the "lower ranks" is not generally part of the work practice. As a result laws have frequently been passed which further disadvantage the needy. As an example, one can cite the February 1992 Social Assistance Bill which was about to be promulgated without consultation with the specific organizations that work with the aged. Social workers of the ANC Welfare Department and the South African Council for the Aged, along with the Black Pensioners' Association, the Phumlani Organization for the Aged, and other social service organizations publicly protested the terms of this Bill. Appropriately the representative Crisis Committee responded to the Minister concerned that the Bill was developed "without consultation with the people (the aged) most affected". The memorandum makes mention of "the undemocratic and unacceptable process of policy-making in our country".

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This action resulted in social workers staging a public placard demonstration in Cape Town. Social workers were beginning to take up advocacy roles, which positioned them in social action events, in support of the demands of their clients.

"Traditionalists" within the social work arena regarded this manner of involvement as "radical" and unacceptable. To "progressive" social workers, however, it seemed that such action

worked towards an empowering of people to face those "powerful, faceless" ones who, without consultation, make decisions on their behalf (Galper, 1980; Bailey and Brake, 1975; Freire, 1985).

### Policy-Making Structures

Historically the development of most social services in South Africa reflects a pattern of "partnership" between the State and the private sector (Lea and Foster: 1990; Keating: 1987; McKendrick: 1987). Thus the policy-making structures are conceived on two levels, namely, statutory and non-statutory. Essentially the State lays down the policies and provides differential funding, while the private sector contracts to provide the bulk of the services.

On the statutory level, the policy-makers have been appointed by the Minister of National Health and Population Development. The task of the Ministry has been the provision of "personal social services" which are delivered through the regional and local offices of four state departments as indicated in the diagram above. Again, a fundamental feature at this level of things is that all transactions follow racial lines. As late as 1992 subsidies for social security such as disability grants, single parent grants and old age pensions, are still paid to racially differential rates.

Non-statutory policy-making structures consist mainly of National Councils such as the National Council for Mental Health, the

National Council for Child and Family Welfare, South African National Council for the Aged, and so forth. These bodies are directed by volunteer committees which are elected by the membership of these welfare bodies, and they are constituted in terms of the National Welfare Act No 107 of 1978. This private sector, through their national and provincial structures, determines the need for services which, then, are further developed and co-ordinated in their functional fields.

At a national level there exists the South African Welfare Council which is a statutory body with an advisory role in respect of the Minister concerned on social welfare needs and issues. The members are appointed by the said Minister, from a broad spectrum of social welfare organizations.

I consider this an arena where social workers should be playing a very prominent role, insofar as policy-making structures need to be in touch with the field for whom the policies are made. However, under apartheid, many social workers have steered clear of formal positions lest they were seen as being "co-opted by the system". The South African Council for Social Work is an example in question, where a majority of social workers would not even participate in the elections for this body - in spite of its character of important policy-making in the welfare field. Social workers have to be registered with the Council for Social Work in order to practise the profession: they help finance the

administration of the Council with their registration fees. Yet we have a scenario where only 27.2% of social workers voted in the August 1992 election for the Council (Council for Social Work Letter, September 1992). Social workers found/find (6) themselves trapped in a dilemma of conscience and practical functioning.

### Statutory Welfare Departments

Regional and local welfare offices of the different racially-based state departments (the Departments of Health Services and Welfare of the House of Representatives, Assembly, and Delegates respectively) were delivering social welfare services, while the Department of Co-operation and Development rendered services to the (Black) African population (McKendrick, 1987).

Statutory welfare services are:

- foster care placements;
- children's enquiries;
- reconstruction services to families where children have been removed in terms of the Child Care Act, 1983;
- supervision, reconstruction and after-care services in respect of criminal offenders in terms of the Criminal Procedures Act, 1977;
- general family welfare services including material aid.

Some of the aforementioned services are shared by the private welfare sector in a shared working relationship with the state.

The state, though, through its regional welfare offices, has to give official ratification for services (like children's court reports for the removal of children or admission of substance abusers to rehabilitation centres, etc.).

Social workers in statutory departments are often viewed as "working the system". As I have suggested, this does not mean that of these social workers do not want to change the operations of the system. Individuals have spoken out about racial practices and have joined "progressive" groupings like the Social Workers' Forum (see Part 3) in an effort to connect with that social work field which is striving towards a unitary, democratic welfare system.

#### Voluntary Welfare Organizations

As far as voluntary welfare organization is concerned, historically the religious bodies played a vital role in providing services. We have noted that as early as 1665 the Dutch Reformed Church assumed responsibility as the Dutch East India Company's "agent for the distribution of poor relief" (McKendrick, 1987: 7). In present day service rendering, the religious bodies still play a very important role along with community organizations. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and voluntary associations render a valuable supportive infrastructure and link network in the South African welfare system. There are some 1600 registered welfare organizations with many affiliated to the nationally organized structures.

South African welfare organizations are usually specialist organizations, dealing with a particular welfare client system, e.g. the aged, physically disabled, cerebral palsied, the blind, and so on. They employ professional social workers who are academically trained and formally registered with the Council for Social Work. In this way the organization is able to apply for state subsidies for social work salaries as well as for the service programmes operated by the organization. Programmes could include counselling through casework and group work, community work projects, provision of training centres and sheltered employment workshops for handicapped clients.

Funding is generated from the public through social responsibility programmes of corporate bodies, from individuals through legacies or private donations, from funding organizations like the Independent Trust Fund or the Community Chest, and so forth.

Social workers in private welfare organizations are obviously key players in social welfare service rendering. They are the ones best acquainted with their field. But these social workers are on the whole not part of policy-making, policy-making and control being vested in the management committees or boards of organizations. This is a contentious issue as non-social workers are not allowed to practise social work in South Africa but may

control a social work agency. Templeton, for instance (1985), has reservations on this issue. Social workers, he believes, are able to manage their own affairs quite adequately. They seem to have a pertinent role to play in questioning this structure of management committees or canvass for appropriate people to be elected onto them in the interest of development and vision.

As far as professional associations are concerned, there exists a number of such associations in South Africa, each with its own mission or guiding principles. There are those who came into existence as racially exclusive while others were racially inclusive. Professional groups like the South African Social Workers' Association, South African Black Social Workers' Association, Society for Social Workers, Social Workers' Forum, Concerned Social Workers, Welfare Policy Committee (Durban) and Co-ordinating Committee Against the Welfare Policy (Johannesburg), are - at the time of writing - just some of the existing structures which social workers throughout the country have been utilizing as forums to address professional issues.

Social workers, especially those in progressive and racially integrated groups, are not just expressing their views on better working conditions and higher salaries, but are pertinently concerned also with the question of greater involvement in policy-related issues of welfare. For example: in their exploration and demands for a unitary, democratic and just welfare system, social workers in the Western Cape, in October

1989, staged a public picket stating their views. This was followed up by a delegation of social workers delivering a memorandum to the office of the Minister of National Health and Population Development in Cape Town (Social Workers' Forum: 6 October 1989).

Social workers, especially those operating in disadvantaged communities, are realizing the need to address the racial and racist differentiation in social welfare service delivery. Professional organizations in alliance with the broad political democratic movement can provide a meaningful base for social workers who are committed to the struggle of the needy and disadvantaged for services that would meet their needs. In short, professional organizations have an important role to play in the development of a new welfare structure for South Africa.

The last component of the social welfare system is the Training and Research institutions.

#### Training and Research Institutions

Social work training is offered either at university or college level in South Africa. The major universities such as the Universities of the Western Cape, Cape Town, Natal, Witwatersrand, South Africa, etc, through their Schools of Social Work, offer the four-year undergraduate training programme as the means to entry to the profession. This of course is preliminary to postgraduate social work training.



It is envisaged that all training institutions must have their tuition and training programmes acknowledged by the South African Council for Social Work in terms of Section 10 of the Social Work Act, 1978 No 110 (SA Council for Social Work: 1991). The accreditation standards and procedures are still in question.

As early as 1924 the University of Cape Town established a Certificate in Social Studies as a two-year training course for social workers. It appears that the older the School or Department of Social Work, the more "established" is the curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. But as McKendrick notes training programmes have to be flexible in order to allow change that would be relevant to a "practice in South Africa beyond apartheid" (1990b: 247). This point links with what Small calls "consciousness of the necessity for (social) construction" by social work educators (1987: 10).

Social work educators obviously play a necessary role, preparing practitioners for the field, and need consistently to review their modes of educating. (Van Delft (1988), Gama (1984), Ramasar (1988), in McKendrick (1990b: 246). Our educators may still rely too much on the lecture as the primary method of teaching, focussing on memory in examinations, which mainly defeats the purpose of encouraging creative abilities.

The consequences of the "banking education" method (Paulo Freire, in Hope and Timmel (1988: 49)) is unfortunately experienced in the direct service rendering arena, where the practice competence of some social work graduates may be questioned. Gama in her study observed that many of the 75 social workers whom she interviewed did not know how to set realistic goals, prioritize issues, evaluate treatment outcomes, or when to terminate with their clients.

Too much of the South African educational system may be based on the premise that the teacher or lecturer is "all knowing" with students mere "receptacles". Interaction between the two parties is thus limited. From my own experience as an educator, students find it "comfortable" to simply record what is being said "from in front". Class participation is often disappointing.

The other important component of training is research.

Research, whether published or unpublished, has an important position in Schools of Social Work, for its contribution to the "knowledge base" of social work.

McKendrick (1990a) considers appropriately that social workers need to record the wealth of information from their experiences in teaching and practice so as to develop an appropriate and coherent data bank of indigenous South African theory and practice.

At the 1989 "Towards a Democratic Welfare System" Conference held at the University of the Witwatersrand, one of the resolutions called on social work training institutions to formally plan consultative meetings with community constituencies and practitioners as part of the process of developing curricula for student training in order to respond appropriately to contemporary community needs (Patel, 1989).

The complexity and diversity of the South African situation demand of social workers to be educated and trained so as to be flexible and creative, and certainly assertive and committed.



Social work in South Africa finds itself faced with the challenges of a society in transition from the old segregationist and exploitative apartheid situation to a just, humane, and democratic one. Therefore the role of social workers, as Freire notes, has to be viewed and developed in the "broader domain" of society (1985: 38).

As Galper (1980) and Leonard in Brake and Bailey (1980) say social work is a political act. This position certainly

threatens the "status quo" because it demystifies the "professional" role of social workers in society and challenges an inegalitarian socio-economic system.

Very definitely the history of social welfare in South Africa relate to the present political developments. As Helm (1982: 18) has noted, "Southern Africa is inextricably caught now in the coils of modernization .... It can go nowhere except onward." Brümmer (1972: 18) was, I believe, right to remark that "change is characteristic of a living society".



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PART 3

THE NEED FOR CHANGE (I) :

THE SOCIAL WORKERS' FORUM - A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

Having "dialogued with history" (Part 2) - which of course, and obviously, already contained a "dialogue with myself" - I turn, now, to an account of my quite personal involvement in the field of social welfare and social work in the greater Cape Town environment. This implies that I am continuing the dialogue with myself. But clearly, in its own way, this quite personal account itself is part of the contemporary history or narrative (of the concept and reality of welfare) of my demarcated area, and indeed of South Africa.

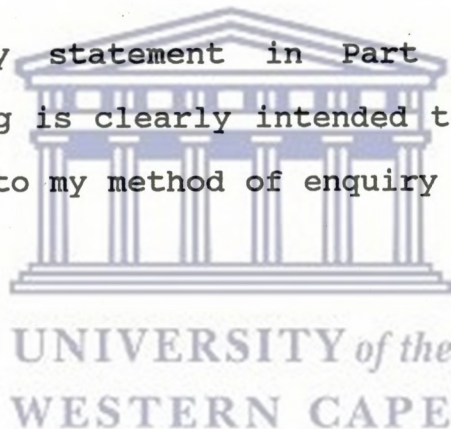
In this connection, as far as the "sense" of the chapter is concerned - why do I include it as part of this thesis-writing at all? - I appeal intellectually to Stuart Rees' notion of the "promise of biography" (Rees, 1991: 9, 21 et seq):

Biography refers to individuals' experiences and to careers of movements and organisations. It is a beginning and end point in empowerment, a possible source of misgivings about the risks of breaking new ground but also the means of coherence which comes from fitting together those things which may have remained

separate. In this respect the individual or collective biographies of students, practitioners, clients or others could be used.....

The telling of a story will contribute to empowerment if the listeners as well as the storytellers recognise the importance of coherence: the relationship between points in a cross-section. Coherence connotes the value of joining ideas and activities which usually remain separate.....

As suggested by my statement in Part 1, this "story" or biographical offering is clearly intended to give expression, or partial expression, to my method of enquiry (research).



The Social Workers' Forum was founded on Saturday 23rd June 1988 in the Meeting Hall of the Western Cape Foundation for Community Work (FCW) in Springbok Street, Kewtown, Athlone (near Cape Town). The founding of the organization at the time helped many social workers to make up their minds as to which side of the welfare spectrum they were on: were they status quo professionals who claimed "neutrality" and whose work (to my mind) contributed to a blocking of fundamental change, or were

they critically conscious of the limitations of the existing "social reality" and prepared to openly and visibly challenge the discriminatory and racist apartheid practices in welfare.

It was also clear that all social workers, including the "status quo" ones, wanted their own concerns merely as workers addressed. The founding meeting therefore discussed a wide range of issues, which included questions of service contracts, working conditions, salaries, unionization of all social workers in the Western Cape, and so on. The issue of joining or affiliating to existing social work professional associations or broader social service groups such as the Organization of Associated Social Service Workers of South Africa (OASSSA) provoked serious discussion. The final decision of the founding meeting was that an organization should be formed which would see to the professional needs of its members in addition to broader interests of the community.

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Some of the guiding principles agreed upon and incorporated in the constitution of the Forum were:

- To work for a unitary, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic welfare system at all levels, towards the ideal of attaining basic human rights and social justice in South African society.
- To work towards the establishment of a national union for all social and associated workers through ongoing recruitment campaigns.

- To work towards the improvement of working conditions and salaries for all social and associated workers.
- To promote and safeguard the interests of all members, and to protect them against victimization resulting from their propagation of the aims of the organization.
- To operate according to democratic principles and to strive towards increasing the accountability, critical consciousness and commitment of all social and associated workers to their communities, their work and their profession.
- To enhance and promote sound social work training and research and also community education within the African (continental) context by way of workshops, conferences, and publications.
- To work towards raising the standard and quality of social work practice.
- To liaise with other progressive organizations sharing these ideals, locally, nationally and internationally, exposing discriminatory practices and working for the total eradication of apartheid in the welfare field.
- To promote greater participation by grassroots communities and all social and associated workers in welfare policy-making and policy-implementation, and the management of welfare agencies.

I am giving this written account of the history of the organization in my capacity as its Chairperson for 1993-94.



The realization of the Social Workers' Forum was preceded by significant events which need to be noted.

Firstly, the Forum has a few predecessors which also looked for common ground on which to unite social workers as professionals, with a view to challenging apartheid and other discriminatory practices in welfare.

A body worth mentioning was the Association for Social Workers which existed between 1983 and 1985. This association was based in metropolitan Cape Town from which it attracted its members, who were employed by the traditional welfare organizations, training institutions, and other social service agencies.

Similarities in the constitution of the two bodies were:

- the ideal of working towards the establishment of a (national) union for all social service workers;
- the objective of the improvement of working conditions, including the remuneration of all social service workers;
- the aim of work against apartheid and other discriminatory practices in the social services; to promote co-operation and alliances between all workers in the social services; and to prevent fragmentation of and amongst the various fields (of social service).
- the principle of liaising with other progressive organizations with similar ideals, locally, nationally and internationally.

The two organizations certainly agreed on the issues of working towards unionization - a united front of social workers. The Forum, however, clarified its target group (in its March 1991 Annual General Meeting) to be social workers only. Also, insofar as this definition of its membership was concerned, the Forum's constitution included guiding principles which had specific reference to enhancing and promoting social work training, research and community education. This idea was one of working towards raising the standard and quality of social work education and practice through participation in research and training programmes which would contribute to appropriate curriculum development.

The Forum, from its inception, had an holistically-intended vision of social work in the sense that it recognized the sheer political import of the profession. Although the Forum itself may never have spelt things out philosophically, the social work and community work orientations of a Stuart Rees and a Paulo Freire (as examples) clearly come to mind.

The participating social workers found the Forum an acceptable vehicle through which they could channel their energies and beliefs in a structured and organized way. It is also interesting to note that the active Forum members were mainly "products" of the Department of Social Work, University of the Western Cape, some of whom had experienced detention during the Eighties. The majority of the Forum members studied at UWC during the period 1970-1986.

These members also derived, mostly, from the disenfranchised sector of our South African society, where they had experienced poverty, humiliating "second class"-citizen experiences under apartheid, forced removal from places such as Kirstenbosch, Newlands, Paarl Central, Parow ("Die Akker"), and other places, when these were classified "white" under the Group Areas Act.

The Group Areas Act of 1963 legally condoned racial residential discrimination in South Africa. The consequence was the forced removal of people even from their places of birth, to areas specially "set aside" for them. At this point I mention my personal experience under the Group Areas Act.

I was born in Kirstenbosch, a beautiful "Green Belt" at the foot of Table Mountain. Kirstenbosch is well-known for its botanical gardens in which the national flower, the Protea, grows. Thus the Kirstenbosch village was named Protea by my community, in which a strong sense of togetherness prevailed.

The Protea village community was physically and emotionally destroyed by the mentioned Act. Two authorities took control of the area, namely the old Cape Divisional Council and the Cape Town City Council. As a result part of the community was removed to the Steenberg and Lotus River areas which are part of the southern Cape Flats of metropolitan Cape Town. My family and our immediate neighbours were removed to Heideveld, Manenberg and

Bridgetown, part of the northern Cape Flats. These were low-cost housing areas - and a picture of dull, lifeless uniformity.

The sad consequence of the removals and resettlements was the disintegration of communities. Life-long friendships and neighbourly togetherness and extended family support systems were disrupted. It was a most traumatic "moment" - one of many, of course - in the history of the disenfranchised people of South Africa.

Also as far as Cape Town is concerned, the social welfare system had to contend with vast scale human dysfunctioning as a consequence of the Group Areas Act. This remains the case. Social ills such as high crime rate, general community conflict, child abuse and neglect, school truancy, marital conflict, adult and child vagrancy, depression, and unemployment - amongst others maladies - occur widely.

Social workers such as those mentioned, who themselves were victims of the "resettlement" phenomenon, were expected to help communities almost totally disempowered. Understandably such social workers found it necessary to pool their resources, expertise and knowledge, in an effort like the Social Workers' Forum where they intended to work towards a (holistic) vision of democracy and social justice not only in social welfare, but in South African society as such.

It was a Conference with the theme 'Social Welfare at the Watershed', hosted by the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on 16 and 17 October 1987, that paved the way for the founding of the Forum. In a sense the Forum was a continuation or extension of concerns of the Department of Social Work, UWC. September and Keating (1987) note that the Conference brought together a number of practitioners, students and academics concerned about the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning's document of the time entitled: 'Proposed Welfare Policy for the Republic of South Africa' (March 1985).

This document was circulated to national councils of specific social welfare interests and universities (Schools of Social Work) for comment. Patel notes: "Organizations submitted comments, but these were ignored" (1989: 2). Proper participatory consultations never occurred. There was much anger and confusion in the welfare field. In various parts of the community such as Durban, Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, concerned social workers, in tandem with the broader welfare community, organized specific protest actions in opposition to the proposed state policy.

F Kotze, a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape, summed up the situation appropriately in a newspaper article: "Social welfare services in South Africa are in a state of confusion; some people even believe we are heading for a crisis".

Essentially, the government's social welfare policy was in "conflict with the beliefs and desires" of the public - at least that public most affected by it. (Sunday Times, 1 November 1987).

A crisis certainly it was insofar as the state was proposing and in fact implementing a policy of "welfare reform" which implied an even further fragmentized welfare situation in terms of racial grouping in line with the tricameral governmental system of "own affairs" and "general affairs".

The then Minister of Health and Welfare Services in the House of Representatives then compounded the confusion by promulgating his own "Coloured" social welfare legislation, the so-called 'Gemeenskapswelsynswet: Raad van Verteenwoordigers, 1987'.

One indication of opposition was expressed at the National Social Welfare Policy Conference of May 1989 at the University of the Witwatersrand. Its 'position statement' noted that the state's policy was rejected for the following reasons:

1. it entrenches racial differentiation in the social services;
2. it will lead to further fragmentation and bureaucratization in service delivery, already extremely inefficient and costly to implement;

3. privatization of social welfare will result in increasing impoverishment of the poor;
4. it provides for state control with considerably reduced state financial responsibility for the development of social services.

The Conference mentioned, strongly reiterated the feelings of the "progressive" sector of the welfare community. "We reject the state's attempt to manipulate welfare in accordance with its reform initiatives ...", said (Patel, 1989: 2).

In Cape Town participants in this UWC Conference concurred that more information and greater clarity on this "welfare reform" and its implications were needed "before some kind of collective reaction to the welfare proposals can be embarked upon" (Patel, 1989: Preface). A working group was mandated to continue the discussions, through informative meetings and the dissemination of literature, on the new welfare policy. A follow-up meeting of a broad section of social workers was to take place in February 1988.

Many smaller meetings took place subsequently. These, though, were unstructured, informal discussions. The main working group also linked up with a group of concerned social workers in the Elsie's River area who was particularly concerned about the quality of life of the people, whom they, as professionals, were rendering services to. According to a prominent social worker of

SHAWCO, Elsie River this group had its meetings in their offices as the organization shared the sentiments of this group.

The point of all of this is: things were "stirring" in a "progressive" direction - seriously so - among social workers during this time.

During the first six months of 1988 these social workers not only shared their dissatisfaction with the proposed (new) welfare policy but also explored avenues through which they could effectively channel their feelings.

After considerable intensive debate, the Social Workers' Forum was established (in June 1988). Only in September, though, a formal executive was elected with specific portfolios. On the 22nd October 1988 the Forum was officially launched at the University of the Western Cape: a very significant event to happen on that campus, with strong support by its Department of Social Work.

As concerned social workers in Cape Town were organizing themselves, so were those in Durban and Johannesburg. In Durban a co-ordinating committee consisting of representatives of 80 welfare organizations was formed. At their meetings the proposed welfare policy was widely rejected (Patel: 1989). The body became known as the Welfare Policy Committee (Durban).



In the Transvaal, the Concerned Social Workers, Johannesburg Indian Welfare Society, South African Black Social Workers' Association, and the Society for Social Workers (Witwatersrand), had formed an alliance in their joint rejection of the new welfare policy.

Although each region had its specific issues of concern, there was consensus on central issues:

- protests to the then Minister of National Health and Population Development in which she was strongly urged to:
  - i) help dismantle apartheid in the welfare field (and apartheid in general);
  - ii) seek alternatives to privatization in the welfare field;
  - iii) seek solutions to fragmentation, duplication, bureaucratization and the waste of resources as a result of the implementation of apartheid in social welfare.
  
- questioning of the role and significance of the Council for Social Work;
  
- formalizing a national unity structure for social workers;

- the issue of salaries of social workers
- a Welfare Charter.

(Social Workers' Forum National Planning Meeting Minutes,  
September 1990)

The Social Workers' Forum started highlighting the issue of the unionization of social workers through lengthy discussions in its membership as well as consultations with organizers of Nehawu (National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union) and Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions). The organization was prompted to consider the issue of unionization as some social workers were approaching the organization to protect and support them against unfair labour practices, harassment, and disciplinary actions. In support of two social workers who were faced with disciplinary action at their places of employment, the Forum also came to realize how inadequately equipped social workers were on matters of labour rights and related issues.

It seems correct to say that in 1989 and 1990 the issue of unionization was not a priority matter to social workers in the Durban or Johannesburg regions. It was in Cape Town, however, and yet the matter lingered, only to surface again in 1994. In July 1994 the Forum was asked to co-ordinate a meeting of social work professional groupings in the Western Cape, with the specific objective of exploring and investigating the possibility of uniting social workers into a professional union. As in the past, social workers felt that the profession was marginalized by other related professions because of the non-existence of a

formal national united structure that could strongly present the views of the profession and its professionals.

The Forum was regarded by its members and many social work groups as having the credibility, expertise and commitment to address such issues of concern to social workers. Its vision of a unitary, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic welfare system, and the attainment of basic human rights and social justice in a "new" South Africa was appealing to social workers who desired "change from the "old order"".

What follows is a global, narrative account of main activities and events the Forum engaged in over the years 1989 to 1994.



During this important period the Forum participated in, and was called upon for its views on a wide range of activities. The regular membership never exceeded 30, yet there was much passive support of the organization. This was evidenced, for instance, in the campaign of 6 October 1989 for a "welfare system for all" or a "unitary welfare system", organized by the Forum in the greater metropolitan Cape Town area. Social and social service workers rallied in large numbers for a street placard picket and delivery of a memorandum to the offices of the then Minister of Health and Population Development.

The Forum had set goals which emanated from its broad guiding principles in the constitution. However, the membership found it necessary to draw up a clear mission statement at a workshop on 22 October 1989 at the Department of Social Work, University of the Western Cape.

This statement committed the Social Workers' Forum to building alliances with the "Mass Democratic Movement" and the then United Democratic Front (UDF). Again, the political and economic context of social work and of social workers was focussed. Of course the organization was simultaneously committed to the rendering of specific social work services where needed, insofar as these related to the search for democracy - whether in counselling, supportive action, crisis assistance, whatever; and also to addressing the needs and interests of its members and the broader social work field particularly through entering labour disputes.

The activities named below are evidence of the practical implementations of the mission statement.

Political activity (public protests/marches/public meetings) such as the public meeting held on 5 July 1989 in the Samaj Centre Gatesville, became commonplace. At this meeting Rev Lionel Louw, a well-known Forum member, and lecturer of the School of Social Work, University of Cape Town (UCT), was the main guest speaker

on the topic: 'The Way Forward'. He addressed issues such as:

- Pro-active strategy and tactics with regard to the state's social welfare policy;
- Education of members, the broader community and consumers of welfare services on the South African welfare system and the unequal distribution of resources;
- A Welfare Charter which would pose an alternate, democratic welfare system;
- Building a united welfare front, through alliance building across the welfare field;
- Unionization - a process of investigation and conscientization of social workers of their labour rights and the ultimate formation of a formal structure.

This public meeting was attended by social workers as well as representatives from community-based organizations. The Forum was able to inform the broader community of the concerns of the social work profession and social workers.

Social workers were beginning to "take social work to the people". Again, the Forum did not articulate matters this way, but Stuart Rees' warning about the danger - in the social work profession too - of "separating people and ideas", is fully to the point insofar as such "forms of separation are disempowering and compound other forms of separation" (Rees, 1991: 3). Albeit inexplicitly, the Forum social workers were beginning to understand and give expression to this insight, tangibly.

Another event (mentioned earlier) was the 6th October 1989 placard protest picket by social and social service workers against discrimination, fragmentation and privatization in social welfare. The picketers called for a unitary welfare system to benefit all South Africans. In order to reinforce the sentiments and demands of the picket, the Forum rallied together ten directors of welfare organizations in the Western Cape to deliver a memorandum to the offices of Dr Rina Venter, Minister of National Health and Population Development. Amongst the supportive directors were Toni Tickton of Cape Mental Health Society, Allen Jackson of CAFDA, Retreat, William September of the Department of Social Work, UWC, and Ds G Pick of Diakonale Dienste, Western Cape. (Interestingly, Ds Pick was a member of the Council for Social and Associated Workers at the time. Others were Rev Bruce Duncan of the City Mission Homes, Peter Templeton of the then Catholic Welfare Bureau, and Dr (Rev) Lionel Louw of the University of Cape Town.

The delegation was met by a police major who diplomatically received the memorandum from myself as chairperson of the Forum, and dutifully thanked members of the delegation. He promised to pass it on to the absent Minister. The organization did receive a response by way of an invitation to "talk", but this was not taken up at the time, as "talking" was regarded by Forum members to be premature.

The first "talking" happened months later in the form of a meeting with Lt Gregory Rockman, first Chairperson of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU). He was the policeman who publicly exposed and challenged the activities of the riot police against the community, especially school children at Mitchells Plain, in September 1989. Rockman, himself a victim of racial discrimination, believed that demonstrations and riots were the legitimate expressions of political views. He felt, though, that "views cannot be changed with violence and differing ideologies should be discussed, not beaten out of people" (Rockman, 1989: 174).

As a policeman he saw a need for the riot police, but felt that they need to "act professionally", have the "right attitude" towards the public, and do away, as a matter of priority, with "racial prejudices" (Rockman, 1989: 174).

The courageous actions of this policeman gained him popularity and respect. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev Allan Boesak at that time noted (Rockman, 1989: x)

(Rockman) found the moral courage to take on the apartheid system, a formidable adversary, and for that bravery, the oppressed community and indeed the whole world salute him.

The Forum was pleased to have Rockman at their April 1990 general meeting. The contact occurred in accordance with the Forum's alliance with "the people", and POPCRU needed the support of social workers in addressing the concern over children being held in adult cells at Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town.

The Forum later supported a protest march of POPCRU in central Cape Town, against detention of children in adult prisons, and bad working conditions of POPCRU members (AGM: 1991).

Another Forum event with political connotation was its April 1990 Maputo Conference attendance. The theme was 'Health and Welfare in Transition'. This Conference for the first time brought the health and welfare progressive sectors together with (the external wing) of the African National Congress (ANC). The Forum certainly was put on the agenda of the political movement. Also the issue of unity between the health and welfare sectors needed to be addressed.


The issue was in fact a continuation of talks that had already been started in South Africa. The Forum had been part of meetings in the OASSSA offices in Ledger House, Athlone, for months. It felt that unity between the two sectors could not be forced upon bodies who themselves had not exhausted the discussions and decisions amongst its members. The health sector, however, paid scant attention to social work and general welfare needs and proceeded to form a Health Forum in July 1991



at the first Joint Health and Welfare Conference which was held at the University of the Western Cape.

Often it appears that medical doctors do not have much regard for social work, that generally they do not have a positive and constructive attitude to the welfare sector. This may be due to professional status power-play. But medics must accept that the "medical model" of intervention, "diagnosis and treatment", is seriously in question (and has been so far a long time).

Presently, the Forum does not engage in any joint activity with the Health Forum.



In September 1989 the Forum participated in the Mass Defiance Campaigns in the Cape Town City Bowl area. It was a time of mass action and alliances were of great importance. Alliance was built with the Mass Democratic Movement, the ANC, and the Labour Movement.

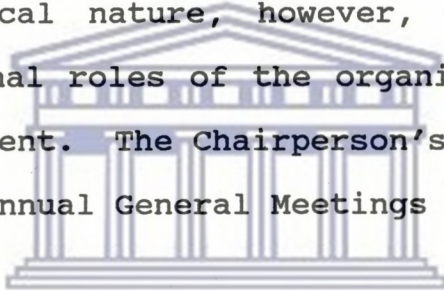
The Forum also participated in the Peace March through the streets of Cape Town in September 1989. It was important for us to be visible in events which supported democracy and social justice. McKay highlights the notion of "visibility in the community". This writer stresses the importance of social work professional groups and organizations becoming "part of the network of people who offer their skills in training and empowering the people" and in the process of interaction making

their principles of non-racism and democracy known. She underlines the importance of alliance building and networking:

As social work practitioners we should look to our role as advocates in the community and join forces with other groups to find solutions.

(1991: 284)

Actions of a political nature, however, did not eclipse the service or professional roles of the organization, as spelt out in its mission statement. The Chairperson's reports at the 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993 Annual General Meetings sufficiently indicate this.



In order to encourage maximum member participation, the organization was divided into working committee structures: Welfare, Media and Education Sub-committees.

The Education Sub-Committee organized workshops on labour issues which aimed at informing members on the issue of unionization. This was supported by a May Day Rally and a discussion on worker rights in 1989. This committee linked the Forum to various labour organizations such as the Trade Union Library, South African Committee for Higher Education, Nehawu and Cosatu, etc.

It made relevant literature available to the members. It certainly succeeded in raising the awareness of the members on the issue of unionization and the labour rights of social workers.

The Welfare Sub-Committee pursued the area of welfare policy issues. An important workshop was organized on 22 October 1989 where members scrutinized the structure, and membership in terms of manpower and skills, and prioritized issues to be worked on: concerns of a united welfare system, a Welfare Charter, alliance building with progressive structures, rural outreach, education and research, and continued protest action against discriminatory practices in service rendering.

These points were highlighted further at a follow-up workshop on 21 April 1990, held in the Department of Social Work, University of the Western Cape. This was an important workshop as it analyzed the Forum's position within the health and welfare arena. It considered broad strategy and tactics for building a united welfare front, and alliance building with the health sector in South Africa. A plan of action was decided upon with specific tasks delegated to various social workers.

These tasks have not been completed as members became side-tracked by many issues leading up to the watershed political year, 1994. Then the unexpected and most significant, historical

Parliamentary speech of President F W de Klerk on 2nd February 1990 took in our whole world. The almost unbelievable message read:

- ... today is the lifting of the 30-year-old ban on the African National Congress.
- The unbanning of another 33 organizations, including the Pan African Congress and the South African Communist Party.
- The imminent release of political prisoners.
- The lifting of the media emergency regulations.

(Joyce, 1990: 140)

The implications of this political event meant that South Africans could openly and freely indicate their political party affiliations. Social workers, too, as part of the broader community and in particular as members of the Forum, made their individual choices. Very interestingly, active participation and commitment to the Forum became less prioritized. This was not necessarily a negative development (7).

However, the Welfare Committee, through continued organizing, kept on providing information to members, creating opportunities for critical discussion and analysis of the new situation.

To return to the years preceding 1990, however: A workshop of 15 April 1989 entitled 'Warfare Thru Welfare' which was presented by Desiree Hanson, a senior researcher in the Institute for

Criminology at the University of Cape Town, provided an opportunity for initial discussions on the implications of welfare policy on social welfare organizations. It also prepared the Forum membership for active participation in the May 1989 National Conference with the theme 'Towards a Democratic Welfare System - Options and Strategies' held at the University of the Witwatersrand. Two members of the Forum Welfare Committee served on the National Planning Committee for this conference.

The following Conference resolutions were accepted and endorsed by the Forum (Patel, 1989: 79-82):

#### **BUILDING A UNITED WELFARE MOVEMENT**

This national conference notes that a democratic welfare policy can only evolve when it is based on:

- (1) the will of the people;
- (2) the democratic participation and involvement of the people in this process;
- (3) a just and equitable economic and political dispensation which will meet the needs of the people;
- (4) a comprehensive strategy incorporating all persons, organizations and institutions involved with social services committed to this vision;
- (5) conscious efforts to begin the process of dismantling the old welfare order and laying the building blocks for the new.

Believing that a broad unity of all organizations and institutions concerned with social welfare on the basis of an anti-apartheid stance is a necessary step towards the goal of building a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist welfare policy for South Africa, the conference hereby resolves to:

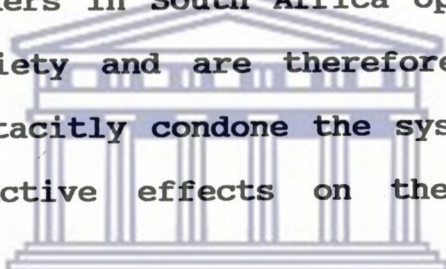
- (1) initiate a process of building a united welfare movement made up of welfare organizations, community services organizations, religious groups, academics, students, professional social service groups, progressive social service organizations and trade unions in evolving a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist welfare policy for South Africa;
- (2) set in motion a consultative process with the above organizations towards the formulation and adoption of a welfare charter which will serve as a basis for national unity. This will involve:
  - reporting back to regions;
  - discussing the proposals at a local level;
  - establishing committees in areas where they do not exist;
  - convening a national meeting within 12 months;
- (3) mandate the conference participants to work through the convening organizations to take responsibility for the implementation of the conference decisions.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST SOCIAL WORKERS FOR  
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

This national conference of over 400 social workers held at the University of the Witwatersrand on 19-20 May 1989, notes the repression and political victimization that social workers in this country face.

We therefore pledge support for, and solidarity with our colleagues facing disciplinary actions in terms of the Social Workers' Act.

Social Workers in South Africa operate in a conflict-ridden society and are therefore not able to stand aside and tacitly condone the system of apartheid and its destructive effects on the well-being of the people.



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The Council for Social Workers cannot expect 'normal social work' practice in an abnormal society. We therefore call on the Council for Social Workers to refrain from victimizing social workers for their political activities.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA

We the professional social service organizations

gathered at this national conference note:

- (1) the problems generated by the continued state of emergency and its negative effects on the social functioning of the people;
- (2) that the continued imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners remain an obstacle to the resolution of the conflict;
- (3) that the state's welfare policy seeks to perpetuate a system of apartheid and economic injustice which is manifested in the inadequate, inappropriate and unequal provision of social services.

We hereby resolve to:

- (i) become change agents and to forge linkages with the democratic movement in the struggle for democracy, peace and justice in South Africa and in other countries;
- (ii) continue to contribute to the evolution of an appropriate social welfare policy;
- (iii) promote appropriate social work training, research and community education in the South African context;
- (iv) support trade union demands, and in particular, the campaign against the new Labour Relations Act, and, in our daily work, to advocate for the needs and rights of workers;



- (v) explore the possibility of establishing a national union for social service workers.

#### SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The conference calls on social work training institutions to formally plan consultative meetings with community-based and progressive organizations as part of the process of developing curricula for students' training in order to respond appropriately to contemporary community needs.



#### STATEMENT BY STUDENTS FROM SIX CAMPUSES

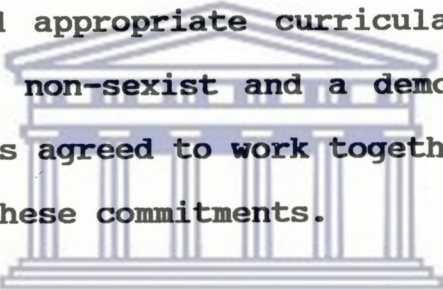
We, the social work students of the University of the Witwatersrand, University of the Western Cape, University of Cape Town, University of Natal (Durban), University of Durban-Westville, University of Fort Hare, and the University of South Africa, attending this national welfare policy conference wish to make known our support for all the organizations involved in the planning and organization of this historic conference. We therefore support the call for the rejection of a welfare system which is built on racial discrimination and privatization in social welfare.

The need for an alternative policy must be based on the needs of the working class. The demands for housing,

education, health and welfare is a right not a privilege.

We further note the inappropriateness of social work training and curricula in relation to the present socio-political climate in South Africa. We reject compulsory and forced registration with the Council for Social Workers as we see it as an illegitimate and racist body.

We therefore commit ourselves to working towards unified and appropriate curricula for students for a non-racial, non-sexist and a democratic South Africa. The students agreed to work together nationally towards realizing these commitments.



The Welfare Committee of the Forum further engaged in activities of a professional nature as set out in the mission statement. In 1990 the Committee organized a meeting between the Forum and a South African Council for Social Work representative, Ms Shelagh Hurford. Concerns regarding the composition of the Council as well as its functions and operations were discussed. A strong concern was expressed that the Council was not addressing the needs and concerns of social workers (who, after all, were its paying members).

Further activities included a petition voicing the Forum's opposition to the South African Council for Social Work's

decision to implement disciplinary action against Ms Greta Appelgren - a social worker in Natal, for her political involvement.

Another task of the Welfare Committee was to follow up contact with Dr Rina Venter, Minister of Health and Population Development, after the delivery of the memorandum of 6 October 1989. The Committee was mandated by the general body to work out a plan of action that would allow for input from resource people outside the Forum.

Then the Forum had a Media Sub-Committee. This Committee was to serve as the mouthpiece of the Forum in relation to its broader goals. It set out its own specific objectives to be worked on.

These were:

- 
- Media coverage;
  - Press liaison;
  - Popularizing the Forum;
  - Acquiring relevant skills for the organization by means of attending workshops.

The above objectives were realized by, amongst other things:

- the printing of newsletters which contained information on the organization's launch, articles on conferences and workshops attended by Forum members, social work services and policies and other information relevant and appropriate to the social welfare field;

- attending media and newsletter workshops where specific relevant skills could be acquired;
- setting up exhibitions of Forum activity.

The motto of the Committee was "Strengthening the Organization is the collective effort of all concerned".

The service role of the Forum was indicated by the specific projects members engaged themselves in, e.g. the Yengeni Counselling Support Group, the Repatriation Group, and the Emergency Services Group.

The Yengeni Counselling Support Group was so named after Tony Yengeni, accused no 1 in a political trial, who was from Cape Town. Yengeni was a MKhonto We Sizwe Commander of the African National Congress, an illegal organization at the time. He and his co-accused were being charged for being members of a banned organization, the ANC, and engaging in activities to overthrow the apartheid regime.

The Repatriation Group was specifically established to create and manage support structures and services for returning exiles after the announcement on 2 February 1990 of the unbanning of political organizations. Some returnees who had been out of the country for many years needed help with tracing their families, adapting and settling down, and employment.

The Emergency Services Group rendered supportive services through counselling, financial aid, short-term accommodation, and so forth, for released political prisoners from Robben Island, Pollsmoor Prison, and surrounding prisons in the Western Cape.

Forum members and sympathizers offered professional counselling to families of political trialists, ex-political prisoners, especially those from Robben Island, who were placed at the Anglican Church Centre - Cowley House, Woodstock.

Some Forum members who were employed by Cape Mental Health Society, one of the structured social welfare agencies, were given time off to render their counselling services where needed.

The involvement of the Forum in the mentioned support groups is of course a matter of viewing social work as of political consequence. The fact that the Forum supported the struggle for democracy and social justice, as required by its guiding principles and mission statement, made it outstandingly different from the traditional "old order" professional organizations.

The Forum has also undergone organizational change. In 1991 a proposal of area working committees was made. This did not prove effective. Also in 1992 a proposal was made and accepted that instead of an executive body steering the organization, the

executive portfolios should be maintained but a working group should be the decision-making body now. This was implemented and seems to be working well in the sense that broader decision-making occurs. The previous interest committees have fallen away, as well as the area committees.

Clearly not all activities of the Social Workers' Forum could be recorded here. I have drawn on some merely by way of examples of Forum work as change work in the welfare field, within the larger context of South African socio-political reality.

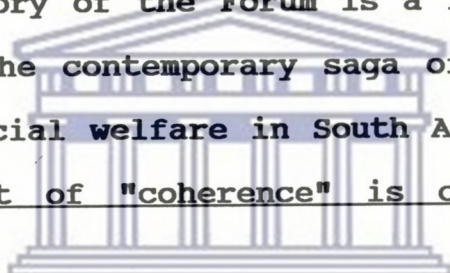
In respect of its actual activities, the Forum has certainly remained within the mandate of its mission statement.



At the time of this writing, a goal still to be seen realized is that of a union for social workers. The second guiding principle of the constitution of the Forum indicates clearly the task goal of working towards the establishment of a national union for all social and associated workers. The union is seen as a body that will be able to formally bargain and negotiate issues such as working conditions, service contracts, salaries, labour disputes, etc, on behalf of its social welfare fraternity membership. There has been a lull in the organization's pursuance of this task goal due to other matters of priority, but discussion on the issue resurfaced in July 1994.

It is my opinion that the prerequisite for a Union of Social and Associated Workers, is a very wide consensus of opinion on the matter.

It is time to say that the Social Workers' Forum has provided a worthwhile platform for ongoing change-activities in the welfare sector of the Western Cape, and that it has certainly served as a catalyst for social workers to take up most pertinent issues affecting the profession and the communities it serves. Above all, at least as far as greater Cape Town (and the Western Cape) is concerned, the story of the Forum is a link, I would say an essential link, in the contemporary saga of "social workers in the transition of social welfare in South Africa" as far as the narrative requirement of "coherence" is concerned (see again Stuart Rees).



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PART 4 & PART 5

THE NEED FOR CHANGE: AN IN-THE FIELD ENQUIRY

Introduction

My enquiry, as has been noted, is firmly set within the arena of "New-Paradigm" research which explores ways of enquiry that would "do justice to the humanness of all those involved in the research endeavour" (Reason and Rowan, 1985: xi). The purpose is to explore and try to make sense of human actions and experience.

I explained my resort to a qualitative, participatory, action research-type design characterized by principled participation of all concerned.

Qualitative methodology is "humanistic" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984: 7).

It is important to indicate that New-Paradigm Research has different dimensions which, however, all form part of a continuum of methodological enquiry which endeavours to avoid "dead knowledge" in terms of so-called "objective" research as much as

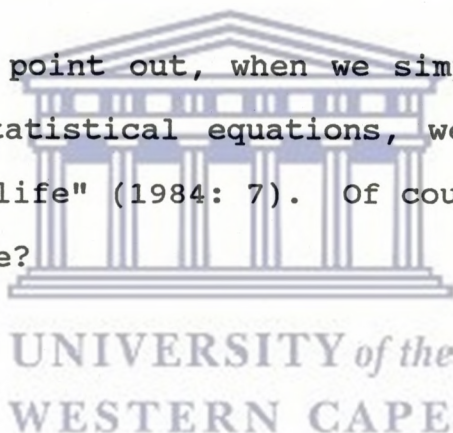


possible. For:

in order to get away from the subjectivity and error of naive inquiry, the whole apparatus of experimental method, quasi-experimental method, statistical significance, dependent and independent variables, and so on, is set up. While this does counter some of the problems of naive inquiry, it also kills off everything it comes into contact with, so what we are left with is dead knowledge.

(Reason and Rowan, 1985: xiii).

As Taylor and Bogdan point out, when we simply "reduce people's words and acts to statistical equations, we lose sight of the human side of social life" (1984: 7). Of course, what other side can "social life" have?



Against this background my "empirical" study (New Paradigm-empirical) consists of two phases. Phase One is a phase of in-depth individual interviews with 21 senior social workers in metropolitan Cape Town. These personal interviews are guided by a detailed questionnaire of mainly open-ended (but also some closed-ended) questions.

I incorporate the questionnaire in the text of this chapter instead of presenting it in the conventional fashion as an 'Appendix'. Again, I reveal my process in the way I explained in

Part 1 in respect of the video- and audio-recordings. The questionnaire appears as pp. 110-125 of this writing. It is intended for reading coherently with the main text of this work, not as something "separate".

These interviews were audio-recorded, which technique enabled the interviewer to cross-check information on playback. Of course the use of the technique of audio-recording was negotiated between myself as the interviewer, and the interviewees, in the spirit of true dialogical enquiry.

I repeat that the (New Paradigm) spirit of this enquiry is such that it does not "clinically" hold back from showing its inner workings, the gut (so to speak) of its methodology. To remind, "Dialogue is not a chaste affair" (Paulo Freire), it is a "human" affair.

Phase Two of the empirical process covers the consultative workshop which engaged 30 members from community-based organizations, social work training institutions, state welfare departments, and the private welfare sector.

The immediate aim of the workshop was one of consultation as additional cross-checking of the First-Phase interviews: a methodology of built-in corrective enquiry. This was intended to promote the "validity" and "reliability" of the enquiry.

Importantly, this workshop also facilitated the bringing together of social work professionals in a spirit of critically looking at social welfare and the role of the social worker in it, with a view to contributing to the current regional and national welfare debate.

In this section, then, I describe the processes and outcomes of Phase One and Phase Two. The two Phases are covered in two chapters or Parts indicated in the Table of Contents as Part 4 and Part 5 of this study.



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## PART 4

### THE NEED FOR CHANGE (II) : INTERVIEWS

This phase of enquiry was in essence a collaboration between myself as researcher and the senior social worker participants, considered as co-researchers or co-enquirers, in a quest for making sense of social work at this point of transition in the country. It involved a selected sample of 21 senior social workers from private welfare agencies, a state department, a psychiatric hospital, and a training institution in metropolitan Cape Town.

The participants can be broadly described as follows: senior social workers, senior either by agency status or by being five or more years in professional practice. It is my assumption, as researcher, that within five years as a practising social worker in any of the primary or secondary settings, considerable experience is acquired, sufficient to warrant the description "senior". From consultations with agency social work staff, I concluded that there really does not exist a uniform or standard procedure of evaluation in this connection.

My questionnaire comprised thirty-six (36) questions, divided into four (4) sections:

Section one (1) contained the usual questions on personal detail;

Section two (2) explored the social workers' training;  
Section three (3) enquired about their employment and work  
roles; and

Section four (4) (further) explored views of these social  
workers concerning national welfare policy formulation.

The questionnaire follows (pp. 101-118), and recall that I  
consciously present it as part of this chapter - not as an  
"Appendix" - for reasons of the philosophy of the kind of  
research I considered myself to have been engaged in (8).



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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

University of the Western Cape  
Department of Social Work

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Social Welfare in Transition :  
The Role of the Social Worker

**CANDIDATE:** Home: Mrs Ann Ntebe                      Work: School of Social  
4 Mshumpela Way                      Work  
Settlers Place                              UCT  
Langa    Private Bag  
Tel: 694 6086                              Rondebosch 7700  
Tel: 650 3473 or  
650 3483

**PROMOTER:** Professor Adam Small  
Head  
Department of Social Work  
University of the Western Cape  
Tel: 959 2277

Agency	Name of Social Worker

**IMPORTANT**

Respondents are requested to note the following points:

1. This study is undertaken for a Master's Degree in Social Work.
2. All information is confidential and will be dealt with as such. Research participants' identity will not appear in the completed document.
3. In this investigation, the focus is on the social worker with specific reference to the professional role played in the social welfare field through service rendering and policy formulation.
4. It would of course be appreciated if all questions could be answered as frankly as possible, in discourse with the interviewer.

5. The analysis of the collected information will be contained in the completed thesis which would be available for public scrutiny.

Thank you so much for your co-operation.

Date: October 1993



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NB: Questions with an asterisk (\*) added, are intended for some elaborate discussion.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS**

**RESEARCH TOPIC:**

**SOCIAL WELFARE IN TRANSITION : THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER**

**SECTION I**

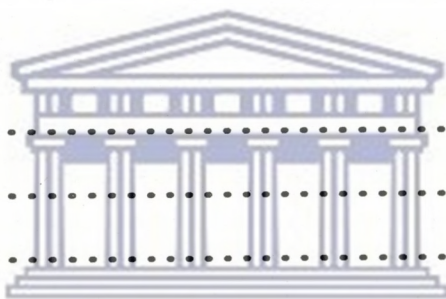
**PERSONAL DETAILS**

\*1. Sex:

Male  
Female

1	
2	

Comments:.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



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2. Age:

20-24  
25-29  
30-34  
35-39  
40-44  
45-49  
50-54  
55-59  
60 years and over

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	



3. Marital Status:

Single	1	
Married	2	
Separated	3	
Divorced	4	
Widowed/Widowed	5	
Living Together	6	

\*4. Under the apartheid system, have you been classified:

African	1	
Asian/Indian	2	
Coloured	3	
White	4	

5. What is your home language?



English	1	
Afrikaans	2	
Xhosa	3	
Zulu	4	
Sotho/Tswana	5	
Other .....	6	

6. What is your Religion:

Catholic	1	
Anglican	2	
Muslim	3	
Apostolic	4	
NG Kerk (Family)	5	
Moravian/Lutheran	6	
AME/Methodist	7	
Jewish	8	
Other, specify .....	9	



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SECTION II  
SOCIAL WORKERS TRAINING

7. Academic Qualification(s) obtained:

- 3-year Social Work BA Degree
- 4-year Social Work BA Degree
- 3-year Social Work Diploma
- 4-year Social Work Diploma
- Social Work BA Honours Degree
- Social Work Higher Diploma
- Social Work Masters Degree
- PhD Social Work

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

Other, specify .....



8. In which Year did you Qualify as a Social Worker?

- 1960-1964
- 1965-1969
- 1970-1974
- 1975-1979
- 1980-1984
- 1985-1989
- 1990-1992

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Other, specify.....

\*9. Are Social Workers in South Africa Adequately Prepared in their Training for the Demands of the Field?

Elaborate.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

\*10. In your view, did the training prepare you adequately for the successful, initial entry as far as practice of the following main Social Work Methods is concerned, eg

- Casework,
- Group Work,
- Community Work,
- Social Work Research,
- Social Work Administration,
- Social Policy Formulation.

Elaborate.....

.....

.....

.....

\*11. In Your Opinion can Universities or Training Institutions ever Completely Prepare Social Work Students for Field Practice?

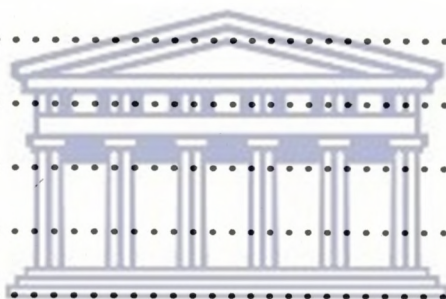
Explain .....

.....

.....

.....

.....



\*12. What can Agencies do to Carry Some Responsibility for the Continued Education of its Social Work Staff?

Explain .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

\*13. What can you as a social worker do to carry some responsibility for continued education?

Explain .....

.....

.....

.....

**\*14. Do You ever refer to your Theoretical Training When in Field Practice and How do You do That?**

Explain.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



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SECTION IIIEMPLOYMENT AND WORK ROLES

15. What best describes your employment status?

Full-time employment

1

Part-time employment

2

Self-employed

3

Unemployed

4

Retrenched

5

Housewife

6

Student

7

Retired

8

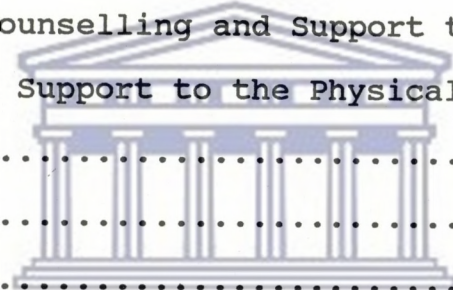


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16. Which of the following categories best describe the service of your place of employment?

- Care of the Aged
- Child and Family Care
- Child Welfare
- Parent Support and Training
- Pre-school Child Care
- Marriage Counselling
- Mental Health Counselling and Supportive Services
- Offender Support and Prevention Services
- Anti-Drug & Alcohol Counselling & Supportive Service
- Counselling and Support to the Deaf
- Counselling and Support to the Blind
- Counselling and Support to the Physically Disabled
- Other, specify.....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	



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17. What position do you hold in your place of employment?

Social Worker	1	
Senior Social Worker	2	
Chief Social Worker	3	
Social Work Manager	4	
Social Work Supervisor	5	
Student Supervisor	6	
Director	7	
Professional Consultant	8	
Other, specify.....	9	
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		

18. How long are you with your place of employment?



- 1- 5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years

1	
2	
3	
4	

19. How many years of experience do you have as professional social worker?

- 1- 5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- More than 20 years

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



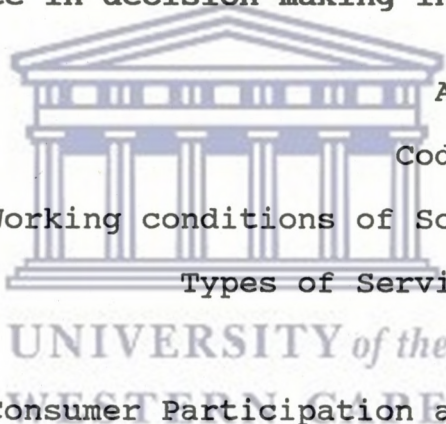
20. Which of the Following Best Describes your Role in terms of Service Rendering?

- Supervising of Social Workers
- Co-ordinating and Directing Social Worker Team(s)
- Staff Developer and Trainer
- Co-ordinating and Supervising Social Work Students
- Co-ordinating, Directing and Implementation of Agency Policy and Services
- Direct client service rendering
- Other, specify.....
- .....
- .....

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

21. Do you participate in decision-making in your agency in respect of:

- Agency Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Employment/Working conditions of Social Workers
- Types of Services Rendered
- Funding
- Client and Consumer Participation and Interests
- General Issues



1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Other comments.....

.....

.....

.....

22. Does your organization network with community service organizations in terms of policy-making?

Yes  
No

1
2

Explain .....

.....

.....

23. Does your agency network with other agencies with a common goal in order to enhance co-ordination and reduce duplication of services, with the ultimate aim of rendering effective services to the consumers of welfare?

Regularly  
Occasionally  
Never  
Could Improve

1	
2	
3	
4	

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....



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24. To what extent are your consumers/clients involved in projects in your agency?

Fully  
Minimally  
Not at all

1	
2	
3	

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

25. To what extent are your consumers/clients consulted re: types of services rendered?

Fully	1	
Minimally	2	
Not at all	3	

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

26. In you opinion, do your agency services meet the needs of your target consumer/client groups?

Yes	1	
No	2	
Unsure	3	

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....



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27. Does your agency utilize the three main methods of Social work in the course of service rendering, namely casework, group work and community work? Which is the predominant social work method utilized by your agency?

Casework	1	
Groupwork	2	
Community Work	3	

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

28. Which of the following roles/positions would be appropriate to you as a social worker in relation to your consumers/clients of welfare services?

Educator	1	
Organizer	2	
Enabler/Facilitator	3	
Motivator	4	
Mediator/Social Broker	5	
Advocate	6	
Trainer	7	
Other specify .....	8	

29. Are the services of your organization available to all racial groups in South Africa?

Yes	1	
No	2	

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

.....



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SECTION IV

VIEWS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN NATIONAL WELFARE POLICY FORMULATION

\*30. "The present South African Welfare System is seriously flawed by racism, elitism, bureaucratization and a residual philosophy which renders it unable to respond in any dynamic and creative way to the immediate pains and demands of people who are vulnerable and at risk in a rapidly changing society."

(Patel, L and Taback, R: 1989)

As a social worker, what is your response to this?

Agree

Disagree

Unsure

1	
2	
3	

Other Comments .....

.....

.....

.....

\*31. As a social worker, which of the mainline social work methods would you consider to be the most appropriate and why, in the South African context?

Casework,  
Group Work,  
Community Work.



General comments .....

.....

.....

.....

\*32. Should social workers become more involved in the development of rural communities, and why?

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

**\*33. Do you think that your social work training prepared you to handle pertinent issues in practice such as:**

- Poverty,
- Lack of Housing,
- Unemployment,
- Effects of Racial Laws in Social Welfare,
- Counselling Political Prisoners,
- Counselling Returning Exiles.

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

**\*34. As a social worker do you feel that your training equipped you to make a contribution to social welfare policy formulation?**

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

**\*35. With reference to the following roles do you think that social workers can make a specific contribution to a social welfare policy that will eventually be formulated?**

- (a) Promote appropriate social work training in research and community education in the South African context?
- (b) Promote the rights of consumers of services and advocate for their needs?
- (c) Explore effective and appropriate intervention strategies and methods that would maximally meet needs of consumers of services?
- (d) Become change agents in the struggle for democracy, and social justice?

Elaborate .....

.....

.....

.....

**\*36. In your opinion as a social worker, which of the following main welfare models should South African social welfare fraternity embrace?**

State Welfare Model;  
Partnership between State and Voluntary Sector;  
Privatization Model.

Elaborate .....  
.....  
.....



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In making sense of all the information, views, ideas, opinions, positions, exchanged during the personal interviews, I highlight the following:

Excepting only one participant, interviewees were current field practitioners, of whom 10 (ten) were at the time of my enquiry also students in a Social Work Master's Programme.

The twenty current practitioners were from agencies rendering family, individual, and group care services. These services comprise counselling, rehabilitative service, institutional care, child foster placements, court work, social welfare administration, youth programmes, and educational programmes. Some of these agencies also actively engage in developmental work programmes with their clients and in their geographical areas of service rendering. (The need for linking and networking with other role players or resources has become a necessity in view of scarce resources).

The one participant not conventionally practising at the time was nonetheless associated with a training institution as a student supervisor, and also actively involved in development projects in the community.

The following data tables give more specific information concerning the constitution of the group of interviewees:



**Table 1****Gender****No.  
of  
Females**

16

**No.  
of  
Males**

5



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**Table 2****Age**

<b><u>Years</u></b>	<b><u>No.</u></b>
30 - 34	8
35 - 39	5
40 - 44	6
50 - 54	2



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**Table 3****Academic  
Qualifications  
in Social Work**

<b><u>Degree/Diploma</u></b>	<b><u>No.</u></b>
Masters	4
BA Honours	12
SW Higher Diploma	3
BA (3-year)	1
Diploma (3-year)	1



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**Table 4****Year of Qualification**

<b><u>Years</u></b>	<b><u>No.</u></b>
1957	1
1970 - 1974	6
1975 - 1979	3
1980 - 1984	9
1985 - 1989	2



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**Table 5****Years of Professional Experience as Social Worker**

<b><u>Period</u></b>	<b><u>No.</u></b>
1 - 5 years	1
6 - 10 years	4
11 - 15 years	9
16 - 20 years	4
More than 20 years	3



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**Table 6****Positions Held in Places of Employment**

	<b><u>No.</u></b>
<b><u>Male:</u></b>	
Director (local)	1
Chief Social Worker	1
Senior Social Worker	<u>3</u>
	<u>5</u>
<b><u>Female:</u></b>	
Director (local)	1
National Deputy Director	1
Professional Consultant	1
Chief Social Worker	3
Senior Social Worker	4
Student Supervisor	1
Social Work Manager	2
Programme Director	1
Social Worker	1
Social Work Supervisor	<u>1</u>
	<u>16</u>

This presentation is directly linked to the trend, still general, of female dominance in the social work profession as far as numbers are concerned. (Historically, care-giving has by and large been relegated to women. Women have (patriarchally?) always been seen as role models of emotional and physical care, and social work regarded as a profession of care-giving, nurturing and mutual sharing).

On the other hand, in spite of sentiment of the consultation workshop of Phase Two which held that males in social work tend to reach senior positions much sooner than females, this was not the trend presented by this sample. My earlier point that agencies have their different evaluation criteria for seniority holds.

The (very) senior positions held by some of the female participants are:

- Children's Home Principal/Manager;
- Children's Home Programme Director;
- Agency Social Work Manager;
- Agency Director;
- National office - National Deputy Director;
- Professional Consultant/Projects Co-ordinator.

This should be indicative of the experience, skills and abilities of these interviewees.

Significant aspects of the process were as follows.

Of the 21 participants interviewed, ten were (part-time Coursework) Master's students, and eleven field practitioners. As an indication of the qualitative, participatory research design within the research-study continuum mentioned, I as researcher first of all made contact with the Master's students as a group. Here I was introduced, and given an opportunity to present my topic of study in detail. These prospective participants exchanged views with me on my research plan, and I gained their agreement to be interviewed. That is, the process of their becoming interviewees, was participatory, and established a basis for a sound working relationship between myself and in the individual interviews with them which followed.

The meeting (with them as a group) helped to connect me with those whom I would be working with, establishing a trust relationship with those I was meeting for the first time, as well as strengthening such relationship with those I already knew through common professional exchanges in the field.

In respect of the field practitioners (apart from the Master's group), telephonic contact was made individually, and an explication given of the research study. I was known to all these professionals, so it was not difficult to obtain their agreement to personal interview.



All participants were first informed of the use of the questionnaire (interview schedule), and then some schedules were personally handed to participants, others posted.

All participants were asked permission for the use of the audio-recorder during interviews. It was important to get the cooperation of the participants on the use of technology that normally tends to have an inhibiting effect on spontaneity.

As mentioned, data were collected by means of a questionnaire or interview schedule which served as an interview guide, the questions being mainly open-ended but also closed-ended (in respect of obviously "straightforward" data).

The "closed" questions are found in Section 1 of the schedule which merely required personal detail, the open-ended questions in Sections 2, 3 and 4.

All participants were satisfied with the questions and the layout of the questionnaire. As part of the interview in each case, they had the opportunity to express their acceptance or not of the questions as guide to their responses. I found that the schedule helped to put forthcoming thoughts, concerns, opinions, ideas and proposals into context. In essence, it helped all concerned to consider and review the theme under consideration critically.

The schedule allowed for the provision of specific information while at the same time it enabled the participants to expand on responses and encouraged them to delve deeper in respect of the research topic.

The individual interviews lasted between one hour and one-and-a-half hours. (Usually at the end of an interview both interviewee and interviewer expressed relieved exhaustion after the process of intense consideration of the issues!) In the general exchange on questions, both parties shared deep feelings about the profession of social work.

(I may even mention that at the end of all the personal interviews, I sent a "Thank-you" card to all participants as indication of my gratitude. I intend also to make the completed thesis available to all of them, through the library system at the University of the Western Cape, and/or by way of a meeting where this final presentation of mine can be addressed.)

I have mentioned the interviewing instrument of the audio-recorder (in respect of these individual interviews). I had asked the permission of the interviewees for its use, and had explained my reasons for wanting to use the technique. I was aware of possible consequences of the use of the recorder (insofar as it is the general belief that it can be an alienating factor.)

For this enquiry I have no doubt that its use proved to be constructive, for these reasons:

- It did not cause self-consciousness with the interviewees. These were senior persons not inhibited by the procedure. They readily consented to the use of the instrument.
- Importantly, this was also a period when people were beginning to feel more at ease with recordings of interviews: in the old apartheid era, people were very security conscious, of course, anxious that their expressed views might be used badly against them!
- The replay of recordings also served us as a "mirror", beneficial for checking and re-checking information. (Such replay certainly helps a researcher to place responses in sound perspective. It further obviously helps the process of data analysis.)
- Then, of course, the technique supplemented my memory, which would just not have been able to register all of the dialogue satisfactorily.

The availability of such tapes in essence builds in checks and controls for the enquiry. (All these recordings are at hand and available.)

In any case, all the participants therefore were fully accepting of the audio-recorder as part of the interview situation. All the participants, holding the positions they did, were in fact also acquainted with such recording as a means of communication. It is often used at social work conferences, meetings, seminars, and so forth.

In addition, the acceptance of and the mentioned trust in respect of myself as interviewer, made for full acceptance of whatever technology I was bringing into the interview situation.

I conclude confidently that the audio-recorder was a useful technical means assisting the research, rather than an alienating factor in the process.



I proceed to recount significant responses of interviewees to the noted questions.

With reference to the open-ended questions in Sections 2, 3 and 4:

**Question 9:** Are social workers in South Africa adequately prepared by their training for the demands of the field?

- There was consensus amongst respondents that university theoretical training can only serve as a foundation or basis for the future social worker. The nature of social work as profession lends itself to continued learning, thus theoretical input is imperative but practical field input necessarily presents further learning and training situations.
- All of the respondents were of the view that they themselves had valuable learning experience in the field, often "greater than at the university". It appeared to them that there often is a mismatch between theoretical input, and knowledge gained in practice.
- University training in terms of theory is still greatly Euro-centric and North American-orientated. Use should be made of indigenous South African literature. Such literature should be developed. Literature should also be culturally and racially sensitive.
- University training is mostly generic in approach, yet the social work practice field has specializations. This situation is overwhelming to new social workers as their training mostly did not prepare them for it. Thus demands should be made on specialist agencies for staff development and in-service training programmes.

- There should be more in the way of university education and training that take in broader horizons than just "social work", such as inputs on economics and the law (legal aspects). This would help social workers to relate the profession to the broader needs of communities, as well as to broader understanding of human society. Training should also include specific skills such as project management and budgeting which could be transferred to community people in development programmes.
- Their training often still equipped social workers as clinicians, counsellors, and caseworkers, but - exceptions granted - sadly lacks the community work method which would have equipped them to work in development programmes which are a need of the majority of South Africans.
- The different emphases of curriculum at the University of the Western Cape on the one hand, and the University of Cape Town on the other hand, do not facilitate matters in respect of the future of social work (in the region of this enquiry) insofar as the divergence between "developmental" and "clinical" work, respectively, creates tension in the field.

**Question 10:** In your view, did training prepare you adequately for the successful, initial entry as far as practice of the following main Social Work methods is concerned, e g

Casework,  
 Group Work,  
 Community Work,  
 Social Work Research,  
 Social Work Administration,  
 Social Policy Formulation.

- Participants were unanimous in their response. Casework training has been adequate, for initial entry into the direct service field. In addition, specialized agencies offered in-service training, which further equipped the new social worker with casework skills.
  
- The participants who were in social work for ten years and more reported minimal input on groupwork, while community work was the most neglected method of all. These social workers learnt the practicalities of the method in their agencies through community outreach programmes, supervising students in community work field placements, and supportive reading material on the subject from the university.
  
- Research and social policy formulation was non-existent at the undergraduate level for twenty (20) of the participants. Social work administration was superficially covered in terms of client files and relevant recording of interviews.
  
- A participant who was basically trained in Europe, had training in all the methods. The response of the South African participants was throughout that their training was supplemented by agency in-service training and practical programmes.

**Question 11:** In your opinion can universities or training institutions ever completely prepare social work students for field practice?

Question 12: What can agencies do to carry some responsibility for the continued education of its social work staff?

Question 13: What can you as a social worker do to carry some responsibility for continued education?

Question 14: Do you ever refer to your theoretical training when in field practice and how do you do that?

(Questions 11, 12, 13 and 14 are clearly interrelated, of course.)

- All of the respondents were of the opinion that training institutions could never fully prepare social workers for the field, as societal needs are changing all the time, human society and community being a dynamic affair. Demands differ according to the circumstances.
- Insofar as the university can only give the foundational, preparatory input, social workers have to keep abreast with new developments by keeping themselves informed all the time through reading and acquainting themselves with relevant and applicable literature, engaging in critical discussion and analysis, attending workshops, seminars, conferences, where there is a debate. Social workers can also enrol for formal post-graduate studies which would suit their work demands. Continued education in terms of refresher courses is vital to keep social workers relevant in their service rendering.



- Social welfare agencies, according to all the respondents have a specific responsibility for further orientation and training of their social work staff. This could take place in the form of staff development and in-service training programmes. This would equip the social workers for more efficient service rendering in specialist agencies. Agency directors or managements should also encourage staff to engage in further training by giving them time off and remunerating them for and in respect of further study.
  
- Participants indicated that staff development is important but was often not a priority, given the priority lists of employers. The participants felt that educational support and encouragement from middle management to top management in terms of the aforementioned, would boost the confidence and morale of old and new staff members alike.

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Questions 15 - 20 (refer to Questionnaire):

The responses to these questions are noted in the specific tables listed earlier in this chapter.

Question 21: Do you participate in decision-making in your agency in respect of:

Agency policy;  
 Code of Conduct;  
 Employment/Working conditions of social workers;  
 Types of services rendered;  
 Funding;  
 Client and Consumer Participation and Interests;  
 General issues.

- Fifteen (15) of the respondents participate in decision-making in their agencies in respect of agency policy. By the very nature of their positions, they could be involved in types of services rendered including client participation and interests.
- Six respondents were more involved with direct service to clients. It appears that the more senior in position the social worker, the greater her/his involvement in policy issues. Direct service rendering appears to be relegated to the junior or more junior ranks.
- A direct response: "I am the only social worker but I do look at conditions of other staff members: care workers, nurses while on the premises, security and administrative staff."



**Question 22:** Does your organization network with community service organizations in terms of policy-making?

- Eleven (11) of the participants said that their agencies are networking with community service organizations in terms of policy-making while ten (10) indicated that there is no such network. Networking has been and still is a slow process of growth, and it takes hard work to get ideas and approaches changed. One participant observed that the younger social workers (lately coming from university) are more participatory and all-inclusive in their approaches.

This question of course overlaps with Question 23, in respect of which all participants indicated that they regularly refer to other service or community agencies with the ultimate goal of enhancing co-ordination and reducing duplication of services.

**Question 25:** To what extent are your consumers/clients consulted re types of services rendered?

- Fully;
- Minimally;
- Not at all.

- Eleven (11) of the participants indicated that their agencies began to work with clients or consumers of welfare in terms of needed services or programmes.
- Four (4) indicated only minimal participation of clients, while six (6) indicated no participation or consultation at all.

From the above it appears that some agencies have indeed shifted from the old approach of themselves deciding what services are needed for clients. Those agencies which do embark on developmental projects, see the necessity of consumer participation.

**Question 29:** Are the services of your organization available to all racial groups in South Africa?

All the participants indicated that their services were available to all racial groups, the reality however being that to start with the geographic areas were racially demarcated under apartheid, thus the clients would be racially classified anyway.

Furthermore, agencies as well as clients experienced problems at a statutory level. The state still responded to clients on a racial basis.

**Question 32:** Should social workers become more involved in the development of rural communities, and why?

The overwhelming response was that more social welfare agencies should render services to the rural communities.

Respondents indicated that the social work profession is far too urban-biased, to the neglect of rural interests. Some agency policy indicates area demarcation, thus services are not rendered beyond boundaries which (inevitably) are in the city area.

Agencies are known to quote lack of person-power, services too expensive, and insufficient funds, and inaccessibility of areas, as reasons for not entering the rural areas. Professionals who are trained, living and working in the city, do not want to be

inconvenienced by the limited resources and poor working conditions which the rural areas offer. This was seen as a problem, yet "rationally" it was agreed that services should be extended.

**Question 36:** In your opinion as a social worker, which of the following main welfare models should the South African social welfare community embrace?

- State Welfare Model;
- Partnership between State and Voluntary Sector;
- Privatization Model.

In response to this question, one (1) of the participants favoured the State Welfare Model. The participant's view was that the central state/government should address the inequalities and injustices of the past and ensure that everybody has a minimum standard of living.

In order to achieve this, the central government should impose compulsory company taxes that would serve as revenue for the redistribution of wealth. The rich or "haves" should be required to make sacrifices during the transition period, in order to promote a liveable position for all South Africans.

This participant was also of the opinion that the state should legislate a minimum wage for all workers, so as to ensure respectful, human living.

With reference to specific social welfare and social security issues, the participant proposed that the state should pay maintenance grants to those parents who cannot support their children acceptably, as an alternative to the removal of children on charges of parental neglect and then paying a new (foster) family for their care. This would be in keeping with the general view that children belong with their biological families. Also the non-removal of the children would eliminate the trauma of having to adapt to another family's lifestyle.

All the other (twenty) participants supported the model of "partnership" between state and the voluntary sector, as a realistic alternative to the central state model. They were of the opinion that the economy of the country at this stage is not strong and stable enough to be able to generate sufficient funds for the running of a state-centred welfare system. There are too many issues of human need that have to be addressed, inherited from the old, discriminatory apartheid system. Thus, because of limited national funds, the view is that the voluntary, private welfare sector should remain a partner in funding and service rendering.

Further proposals were:

- The new government should nonetheless take a major financial responsibility for social welfare and pro-actively address the discrepancies instituted by the apartheid government system. A way forward would be to administer the equitable

distribution of resources, keeping in mind the areas of most dire need.

- However, concerted effort has to be made on the part of the state and voluntary sector to counter the welfare-dependence syndrome. There has to be a decisive move towards development projects which incorporate client/community decision-making about needs.
- The means-test whereby people are checked for their degree of poverty or need, has to be abolished by the new partnership, insofar as it entails aspects of humiliation.
- There has to be one welfare structure under which all the racially-categorized departments have to be combined. This new structure would have to include new personnel from outside the state structures who would be able to bring in new ideas and a different way of thinking (based on democratic principles of consultation, participation and equity).

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**Questions 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33 and 34:**

The responses to these questions are not separately recorded in this section, since they are indeed covered by the responses to the other questions. (In a sense some of the questions are repetitive, but this is to be expected in a Questionnaire intended to allow interviewees the greatest possible opportunity to expand on their views.)

These personal interviews allowed the participants and myself to revisit and critically examine our social work profession within the context of transition. The exchange clearly brought forth deep feelings of concern, yet as clearly expressed optimism for the future.

The outcome of these interviews were then shared, in a "general" way, with the participants in the workshop/mini-conference on 3 December 1993 at the University of the Western Cape - the "cross-checking" workshop previously mentioned, which constituted the Second Phase of this in-the-field enquiry.



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PART 5

THE NEED FOR CHANGE (III) :

A 'CROSS-CHECKING' WORKSHOP/SEMINAR

This Part (or Chapter) is accompanied by a video-recording of the proceedings of the consultative Workshop/Mini-conference mentioned earlier. Of course this phase of the study is integrally part of the execution of my research design.

Here I give an account of the workshop as the Second Phase of a "humanistic" process of consultation and qualitative, participatory research interaction.

Insofar as the workshop/mini-conference was preceded by the one-to-one interviews, its purpose was not merely the information to be gleaned, but also to cross-check those first outcomes. I reasoned that in this way the validity and reliability of the interviews and their process could be facilitated.

Importantly, a further purpose of the workshop was to actually demonstrate, to an audience of social workers, including social work academics, dimensions of new paradigm research as engaged in by myself in this study.

A most constructive spin-off of the workshop was the bringing together of professionals with the common purpose of critically dialoguing the topic of social welfare and the role of the social

worker in South Africa with a view to contributing to the current regional and national welfare debate.

The workshop or mini-conference was attended by 30 participants in all, on 3 December 1993, between 09h00 and 13h00, in the Department of Social Work, University of the Western Cape.

The participants derived from community-based organizations, churches, all three universities in the Western Cape (Schools of Social Work), private welfare agencies rendering family care services, a development and funding agency, a relief agency, and state welfare departments.

This mix of delegates from various sectors of social welfare services reinforced the overall purpose of broader consultation and participation. It may be noted that apart from the participants, the occurrence of the workshop had support and interest from many more people in the social welfare field who had sent their good wishes with apologies for not being able to attend.

Part one of the workshop consisted of an introduction by my promoter Professor Small, who also heads the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape. He emphasized the participatory "New Paradigm" context of the project.

Part two consisted of myself giving an impression of what work had been done thus far. The workshop thus also amounted to a preliminary report-back on the interviews reported in Part 4. During this part of the workshop participants gave valuable critical input on the information presented.

The most important questions raised concerning the research method and content concerned the issue of the seniority of the participant interviewees of Stage One, and the issue of the size of the sample of those participants.

Part three consisted of group discussion in the sense that participants were randomly divided into three (3) discussion groups with a facilitator chosen by the group as group leader in each case. The following HANDOUT by myself, with specific questions as a guide, was used by each group.



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## HAND-OUT

### QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

The purpose of the questions is to encourage participants to share their views on the theme of the study which concerns the role of social workers in a changing society from the old apartheid order of things to that of a "new South Africa".

Participants are encouraged to express their opinions as to how these changes in the social welfare support network may affect their agencies, in terms of their existence and their service to consumers of social welfare.

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The contribution of participants on how they view the role expectations of social workers during this change process would be invaluable to the study.

#### Question 1

A quotation from Rees, Stuart. Achieving Power. Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991.

Unless the meaning of politics and power and the interdependence of policy and practice are

addressed, social workers and those who work in community development and in other human service organisations will be adrift, confronting neither the constraints which affect the direction of the welfare state nor the reasons why some forms of practice are encouraged while others are actively discouraged.

Without a critique of politics and power as they are applied in different contexts, education to address the various tasks in social work and social welfare will once again reproduce mirror images oblivious of shifting political alignments (Bitensky 1973).

Even among serious-minded commentators, rhetoric about empowerment has given the term an aspirin-like quality, as though it is a pill for all seasons, to 'reverse the process of disempowerment or oppression' (Reisch, et al 1983), or to say 'no' to agency demands (Smith 1975). These examples belie a tradition which has avoided claims about immediate cures."

Discuss the above

Against the background of the discussion which emerges from your consideration of the above-mentioned view of Stuart Rees, consider the following questions:

**Question 2**

What social welfare model will be appropriate, relevant and applicable to a social welfare dispensation in a "new" South Africa?

How can the model chosen be realistically implemented?

**Question 3**

How do people view social workers in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), state departments, and private welfare organisations?

Do social workers have a place in shaping the future welfare system?

How can social workers guide a new government and, related to the aforementioned, how can social workers be more expressive and assertive concerning contributions to the well-being of society?

---

The group discussion highlighted many pertinent matters and no doubt harmonized with views expressed in the personal interviews. But as might be expected in a setting of complete spontaneity, not all the suggested questions were equally well discoursed.

- It was suggested that on the whole the training of social workers is somewhat constrained. It should be broader than just professional "social work" training and could incorporate specific practical skills that would help the social worker to facilitate the community as a resource base.
- Social workers need to think of contribution to policy-making as part of their professional function. Presently social workers are visible as social workers mainly in the delivery arena of the profession. Study and training need to highlight policy-making and delivery as integrally interrelated dimensions of social workers' function.
- Social workers need to be meaningful "change agents" within the structures within which they work. They need to challenge the inhibiting, traditional mode of things, e g racial policies and practices, authoritarian approaches, and so on. Thus social workers should initiate structural changes at agency level as well as at community and indeed national level through pressure group action.

As one participant phrased it: "Social workers must think nationally and act locally".

- Social workers need to become more assertive and to "empower" themselves first. They need to change much of their traditional mind-sets.
- There needs to be greater co-operation between the "mainstream" social workers and other social service workers. This would enhance the quality of services to the community and decrease duplication of services which, of course, is financially unacceptable anyway. This co-operative working could contribute to eliminate the negative perceptions that communities have of the traditional welfare setup as conservative and authoritarian. (Community-based organizations appear on the whole to be viewed with respect as available and accessible to consumers, and are regarded as guardians of human rights.)
- "Empire building" needs to be broken down. This tendency is strengthened by the work model of specialization. The proposal is for services to be "broad and comprehensive" from pre-birth to death, within a setting of prevention (preventative approach).
- The issue of "empowerment" was strongly addressed. Social workers must through their educative and resource roles and



functions, help communities to take responsibility for their lives. They must "empower" people by informing them of available resources, aid them to independently explore and use resources within their communities, make them aware of the things that go against their humanness. Simple examples to be highlighted are concerns like maintenance grants which women do not know how to access. They have a right to it but do not know how to go about getting it. Another quite ordinary but important example is what to do when in arrears with an account.

The point of "empowerment" is that people be guided to do things for themselves instead of social workers doing things for them. Significant "empowerment" combats the "dependency syndrome".

- Social workers need to be more visible in the communities they serve. One way is to work flexible hours instead of the 09h00 to 17h00 "office" hours. The social work profession has been left out of major decisions affecting broad political change because it is "not available" at pressure group meetings of civic and community movements. Social workers need to be part of community action (even if this may clash with policies of employing agencies). (Recall my "narrative" of the 'Social Workers' Forum', Part 3 above.)

- Social welfare should be developmental and preventative in orientation as opposed to the handout - dependency-orientated mode of service delivery. Incorporated in the above is the will to a truly democratic approach to service rendering. There must be participation of those who are the receivers of services. A holistic approach to service rendering is implied.
  
- Social workers need to develop a culture of Human Rights which needs to be passed on to the people they render services to.
  
- Social workers should involve themselves in continuing "refresher" training courses so as to keep abreast of new developments.



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Broadly, these were main points covered in the workshop/mini-conference. Feedback on the day was that the critical analysis must continue beyond the workshop. Social workers have a valuable contribution to make and valuable roles to play in developing democracy in South Africa.

The following were some of the direct comments from participants at the end of the proceedings:

- "'n Groot dag. 'n Mooi oggend. 'n Begin van iets wat ons verder kan neem."
- "Ek persoonlik het baat gevind by the gedagtes wat uitgekome het oor die welsynsmodel. Almal het gepraat van 'n ontwikkelingsmodel."
- "Its a good way of testing your research process."
- "Important that Ann's got a new approach."
- "Good to bring people from different backgrounds together."
- "I was very interested in the discussion on transitional changes. I wish Ann all of the best."

It is most significant, I believe, that the operative process of consultation with participation of a broader network of organizations was based on the democratic principles of consultation and participation. The participants were consulted on pertinent issues such as social development and social justice, etc. They exchanged ideas, views and inner feelings in an open and honest manner in the group discussion. It was evident, from the seriousness of the input, that these organization representatives were contributing to and shaping a unitary, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist welfare system.

These contributions certainly must have a sound entrée to the Reconstruction and Development Programme which will be briefly considered in the next chapter, by way of conclusion.

PART 6

SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE "NEW" SOUTH AFRICA:  
FROM "PROGRESSIVE" SOCIAL WORK TO  
RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The foregoing chapters of this study reviewed social welfare in the "old" South Africa and further noted events and activities in the field of social welfare in the country with reference to "progressive" social workers in their struggle for a "new" South Africa.

This concluding chapter briefly addresses the so-called Reconstruction and Development Programme of the first government of the "New" South Africa, with reference to social welfare and the role of social workers.

It is clear that the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) relates directly to the concerns of this thesis, which was conceptualized and indeed largely researched before any detailed RDP statement came to hand.

The fact is that the RDP is the kind of programme and process that "progressive" social workers have been thinking and ("hands-on") working towards contemporarily. If we consider the outcomes of this enquiry as given in Part 4 and Part 5 (the one-to-one interviews and seminar/workshop) - these, as mentioned, being resultant upon a process of research that took place before the publication of the first more or less extended RDP outlines in

1994 - it is evident that the ideals of the "progressive" social workers and those of the RDP generally correspond.

Also, the underlying philosophy of social welfare and social work that characterizes my own thinking and practice as one of these "progressive" professionals (consider for instance my account of the work of the Social Workers' Forum in Part 2), harmonizes with RDP thinking. Essentially the problematics of social work practice and its context of a social welfare arrangement, are political affairs (or affairs of political consequence) and as such relate to the societal phenomenon of "power".

Stuart Rees' vision is relevant throughout. Also relevant is the vision of what used to be called "radical" social work: although Rees' presentation of views appears to be rather less partisan, and more "philosophical", than that of "radical" social work.

Unless the meaning of politics and power and the interdependence of policy and practice are addressed, social workers and those who work in community development and in other human service organisations will be adrift.

(Rees, 1991: 4)

Much of what the social workers in my enquiry were saying may be construed as generalized (or over-generalized), and even as naive statement. Similarly, much of the new government's RDP outline may be considered as simplistic.

My view is that, be this as it may, the essential "line" of "progressive" thinking - such as that of my interviewees for instance - and of the thinking underlying the RDP (shortcomings and all), indicates the only way for social workers in South Africa to go meaningfully as far as their conduct of their profession is concerned.

Here it is most interesting to note what a thinker on the meaning of "profession" such as William Johnson Everett has to say. To practice a profession may be to have a "job", but what does that mean?

... in order to profess ourselves we have to have some basis from which to act - our properties, that which is proper to us.

(1988: 136)



According to Everett,

Both Marxists and liberals tried to get at this point but failed to hit it squarely enough. Property is not merely some possession, but the medium for our entering into a public realm and finding confirmation in it ...

From the standpoint of a theory of the public, we must seek ways to transform property relations into being once again matters which are "proper" to a self as a being seeking public action. Thus, everyone must not

only have some property, but his property must be oriented to its function of being a medium of publicity. A job, for example, is not enough if it is merely a source of monetary power. Jobs, in reality, are much more in people's lives - a source of general meaning, confirmation, and psychological support. They are a primary stage for public action (1988: 137).

(The emphasis here is mine. - A.B.N.)

It is precisely this directedness upon public action that my view of social work as a profession is about (Part 3), and that I interpret the views of "progressive" social workers (Part 4 and Part 5) to be about.

And, of course, the RDP is a matter necessarily directed to public action, also in its emphasis of, ideally, being community-based, "driven by 'the people'". One would accept that this is not merely a matter of a slogan that lacks insight.

What is the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)? In the African National Congress (ANC) document, 'The Reconstruction and Development Programme' (1994: 1), it is explained that:

The RDP is an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. It seeks to mobilize all our

people and our country's resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future.

The ANC won the April 1994 democratic elections, and consulted broadly with key mass organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and research organizations. The business sector is strongly encouraged to support the implementation of the programme in that, without sufficient funding, the programme cannot move.

The ANC-led alliance before 1994, and thereafter the Government of National Unity, have developed socio-economic positions and a legislative programme of government. The new vision of nation-building, the pursuance of peace and security, people-participation and democratization of the state and society, is a really different approach to government, and represents a fundamental break with apartheid practices in South Africa. A strategy of empowerment through people-involvement, decision-making and implementation - of communities "owning" the RDP - is envisaged.

In addition to the government recognizing areas of dire need where it will take responsibility for "kick-starting" the process of transformation, the idea is that it will be encouraging local communities to draw up their own programmes in accordance with RDP criteria.



The six basic principles underlying the RDP are:

1. It needs to be a socially integrated and economically sustainable programme;
2. It should be a "people-driven" process;
3. It must aim at peace and security for all;
4. A key goal must be nation-building;
5. It should link societal reconstruction and development;
6. It must contribute to the democratisation of South Africa.

Sufficient funding for the RDP is crucial as insufficient financial support for community-based projects will lead to disillusionment and distrust of the new government. The nation is, after all, expecting the government of national unity to deliver its election promises.

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According to the government Minister concerned, R2.5 billion is available for the 1994-95 RDP programme.

The "socially integrated" ideal of action of the RDP is illustrated by its indication of the following five major policy programmes:

- meeting basic needs;
- developing our human resources;
- building the economy;

- democratising the state and society, and
- implementing the RDP.

When one considers these points and read them with the ANC's Freedom Charter, one may say that the RDP is a further stage of progress on the long continuum of the human struggle for liberation, justice, peace and democracy in South Africa.

We may recall the Freedom Charter which was an articulation of aspirations of a thorough cross-section of community-based organizations opposed to apartheid:

### The Freedom Charter

#### Preamble

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people;

That our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

That only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white, together equals, countrymen and brothers adopt this FREEDOM CHARTER. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

**The People Shall Govern!**

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All the people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

**All National Groups Shall Have Equal Rights!**

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

The preaching and practice of national, race or colour discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The People Shall Share In The Country's Wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industries and trades shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions.

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The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seeds, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All Shall Be Equal Before The Law!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without fair trial;

No one shall be condemned by the order of any Government official;

The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on the grounds of race, colour or belief shall be repealed.

All Shall Enjoy Human Rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad;

Pass laws, permits and all other laws restricting these freedoms shall be abolished.

There Shall Be Work and Security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and to draw full unemployment benefits;

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work;

Child labour, compound labour, the tot system and contract labour shall be abolished.

The Doors Of Learning And Culture Shall Be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

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There Shall Be Houses, Security and Comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space to be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no one shall go hungry;

A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;  
Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided  
for all, with special care for mothers and young  
children;

Slums shall be demolished and new suburbs built where  
all shall have transport, roads, lighting, playing  
fields, creches and social centres;

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall  
be cared for by the state;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all;  
Fenced locations and ghettos shall be abolished and  
laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There Shall Be Peace And Friendship!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which  
respects the rights and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and  
the settlement of all international disputes by  
negotiation not war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be  
secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities  
and status of all;

The people of the protectorates Basutoland,  
Bechuanaland and Swaziland shall be free to decide for  
themselves their own future;

The right of all the peoples of Africa to independence  
and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be  
the basis of close cooperation.



Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here:

"These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty."

And President Nelson Mandela notes in his Preface to the RDP document of 1994:

In preparing the document,  
and in taking it forward,  
we are building on the tradition of the  
Freedom Charter.

The tradition is one of people-involvement through consultation and participation, encouraging the expression of the people's needs and aspirations as these exist at grassroots.



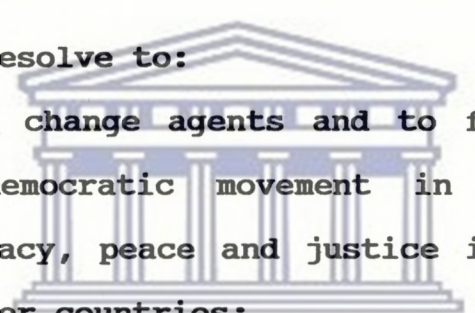
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Anthony Johnson (Cape Times, September 14, 1994) acknowledges the important role of social welfare and social work agencies in the implementation of the RDP. He is of the opinion that agencies such as Cafda, and Shawco, and others, can serve to speed up RDP implementation since they have "a track record of accountability and efficient performance auditing and are geared towards RDP objectives". I believe that this is a realistic acknowledgement

of the existence and role of social welfare services, the social work profession, and social workers.

The RDP creates the opportunity for the social welfare sector to bring to fruition ideals it had cherished for long. For instance, at the 1989 National Welfare Conference, social workers, along with other social services workers, critically reviewed the profession in the light of the many challenges that faced it. The following main resolutions are to the point (Patel, 1989: 81):

**We hereby resolve to:**

- 
- i) become change agents and to forge linkages with the democratic movement in the struggle for democracy, peace and justice in South Africa and in other countries;
  - ii) continue to contribute to the evolution of an appropriate social welfare policy;
  - iii) promote appropriate social work training, research and community education in the South African context.

In addition to the above, the Conference also appealed to training institutions to relate and consult with community-based and "progressive" organizations, with the aim of developing relevant curricula for student training, responding appropriately to contemporary community and national needs.

I should be emphasizing that the time for hard work has arrived.  
I agree that:

... there can be nothing as necessary for substantially  
successful RDP than honest-to-goodness hard work

(Adam Small, Weekend Argus, August 27/28, 1994).

Of course we are dealing with South Africa and the call is for appropriateness of social welfare policy, training, education, research, and so forth. Patel and Taback (1989), Taback (1991), and Small (1994) all refer to the issue of indigenization. Work has to be "indigenously inspired".

Midgley too (1981) emphasizes that social work, particularly in developing and transforming countries, needs to be based on the principle of indigenization, which incorporates the concept of appropriateness. This means that social service roles, methods, approaches, and service delivery should be appropriate to the unique, identifiable, developmental needs of the country.

In this sense too the Reconstruction and Development Programme presents a challenge to social workers.

In conclusion, the RDP is nothing short of a concept of comprehensive national "upliftment", politically, socially in general, and economically, hence the description of its

intention to be "an effective programme of government" based on a "process of consultation and joint policy formulation". The key phrase appears to me to be "an effective programme of government".

Given the emphasis on the RDP's implementation by means of a "process of consultation and joint policy formulation (by 'the people')", as described, perhaps social workers too can feel assured that the "programme of government"-idea is not that of a totalitaristic blue-print. However, as far as the role of "progressive" social workers in the process of transition and transformation of South African society is concerned: firstly, their position in it all is a central one insofar as the RDP is a programme with as much reference as possible to societal situations and problems that impact on social welfare and, hence, on social work; and secondly, they will have to position themselves as collaborators in and facilitators of projects, and the work that must be done in general, while simultaneously maintaining themselves as conscience of the RDP process, on behalf of and with "the people" - social workers as I see it will have to find themselves as both appreciative of the government's concept of the RDP and, whenever the occasion arises, as critical of the government's strategies (should they view this as not conducive to the interests of communities).

In other words, as profession - and especially as university-educated and -trained profession - social workers will not, in the sense of should not, forsake their role of critique, at the

same time that they will actually actively participate in whatever it is that, in terms of communities' needs, must be done.

The critique and the doing are the twin sides of the same professional coin. As far as this thesis is concerned, I confirm this in the spirit of the important social work professional and writer Ruth Wilkes, who stresses the need for philosophical insight in social work as profession and equally emphasizes the fact that "in the end social work is about practical things" (1981: 8).



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NOTES

(1) - p. 5

In this connection I appreciatively acknowledge the clarifications on aspects of philosophy of science, and the impact of it on thinking in social work, which I achieved in exchanges with my promoter Prof Small.

(2) - p. 9

Of course the term "progressive" has also had a sloganizing ring to it during these years of heightened partisan political activity in South Africa. Obviously this thesis works with it in another sense.

(3) & (4) - pp. 20, 21

I am deeply appreciative of my promoter's willingness, in fact his insistence, to make room for "the whole potential" of a student, as far as possible; also, parallel with this, his view that there is no reason whatsoever for us to stay "slavishly" with so-called Western, or rather Euro-American academic ways and conventions (valuable as the best of these obviously must be as guides).

I am quoting Prof Small from my notes in conversation with him.

(5) & (6) - pp. 46, 51

At this time of transition it is often difficult to know -- and it certainly is frustrating : does one use a past tense or a present tense? In this case I write "were/are" insofar as, at the time of writing, the Acts concerned were still "in place", yet also clearly in a state of suspension.

(7) - p. 83

The Forum's anti-apartheid emphasis was heavy. Now that the demise of apartheid had set in, obviously some of the urgency of the Forum's "message" was dimmed. At the same time, however, the direction for social work as a profession of political consequence and importance, was becoming clearly visible insofar as the new government's 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' (RDP) is to a large extent a concept of "social welfare".

(8) - p. 100

The Questionnaire bears the original working title of this research. Of course I have to retain it here "as is" (or rather "as was"). At the same time my leaving it like this is part of the "New Paradigm" sharing with readers the process, rather than merely the results, of the enquiry, process being all-important in "New Paradigm" approaches.



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What is provided below is (A) a listing of sources actually quoted from in the foregoing writing, and (B) a listing of a selection of other sources that I found helpful as background to and in the process of my enquiry.

(Obviously much more in the way of literature went into the ultimate "making" of this thesis, but as obviously all of this cannot be listed.)

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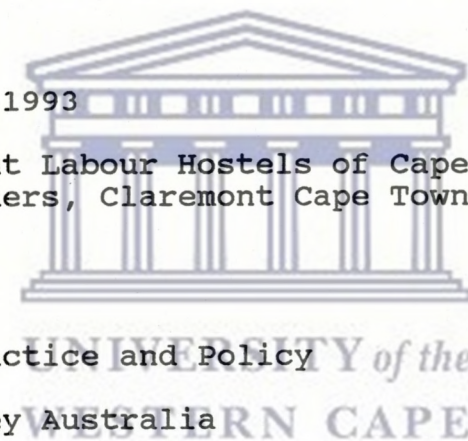
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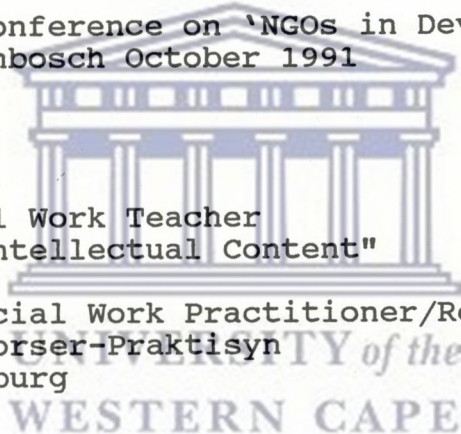
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SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE TRANSITION OF SOCIAL WELFARE :  
A DESCRIPTIVE-DIALOGICAL ENQUIRY

---

SUMMARY

The time period of this study is the contemporary first half of the Nineties, a momentous time in the history of South Africa. The country is passing from apartheid (the "old" South Africa) to the hope of democracy (the "new" South Africa). Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as President of South Africa in May 1994.

Social workers, too, find themselves in transition.

What is the thinking of experienced progressive social workers at this historical moment, concerning themselves and their profession within its context of social welfare as societal institution? This is the question I explore, specifically with reference to senior social workers within the area of greater Cape Town (see map, p. v).

It is important to note that in terms of the research philosophy underlying this enquiry, the methodological process of the thesis is integral to its substance.

My approach, along "New Paradigm" lines, is descriptive-dialogical. Implicit in it is a "confrontation of the positivistic epistemology of 'The Scientific Method' in the misguided sense of an 'absolute and only' method of science,

which unfortunately is still prevalent in standard practices of enquiry inside and outside the university" (see Note [i] at the end of this Summary).

My thesis therefore offers not only outcomes but, as much as possible, also the process of the enquiry.

A descriptive-dialogical approach also takes the idea of narrative seriously, "narrative being a mode that makes room for -- in fact, that insists on -- more than merely written presentation" (see Note [ii] at the end of this Summary).

My research philosophy and methodology accommodate as far as possible "the whole academic and professional potential of a student, rather than just the student's writing potential" (see Note [iii] at the end of this Summary). In line with this, I submit as an accompaniment to this writing -- and as holistically intrinsic to this thesis -- a relevant video-recording and audio-recordings illustrating myself at work in the execution of this study (see Note [iv] at the end of this Summary).

As far as the written content of the thesis is concerned:

- The DIRECTIONAL QUOTATIONS (pp. iii, iv) suggest all of the above.
- In PART 1 I set out, in detail, the theme and -- as integral to it -- the research methodology of the study.

- In PART 2 I attempt an overview of realities of social welfare in the "old" South Africa as these have been realized historically, insofar as this constitutes a necessary background to the contemporary situatedness of social workers and their profession. The "need for change" from the old order becomes evident.
- PART 3 is an autobiographical, and as such explicit, narrative concerning progressive social workers' thinking about the theme of change. The story is that of the Social Workers' Forum, a significant (greater) Cape Town-based organisation of the period concerned, and one in which I have been quite personally involved.
- In PART 4 and PART 5 I present my in-the-field enquiries as these were conducted through interviewing and seminar/workshopping. Process and outcomes are shown alike.
- Finally, in PART 6 I relate the study to the 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' (RDP) of the new South African state insofar as the RDP is essentially a "welfare" programme, and as such a programme of action towards the end of a democratic society as envisaged years ago by the 'Freedom Charter' which, in turn, was and remains essentially a "welfare" statement.

\*\*\*\*\*

In conclusion of this Summary I must indicate my promoter's and my own serious commitment to the possibility of creative indigenusness of academic style and presentation. This must be

viewed within African and South African context, and it explains much of the "humanistically holistic" tenor of this study. This, of course, is in no way intended to discount the worthwhileness and substantiality, in fact the necessity for us, of recourse to the best tenets of European and Euro-American university tradition.

ANN BEATRICE NTEBE

Langa (Cape Town)  
December 1994



For NOTES TO SUMMARY please turn over.  
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NOTES TO SUMMARY

[i] - p. 186

The quotation is from notes of mine in conversation with my study leader, Prof Small, in this case with reference to the sociologist-thinker C Wright Mills (see also 'Directional Quotations', p. iii).

[ii] - p. 186

Again the quotation is from notes of mine in conversation with Prof Small. The reference is mainly to the social worker-sociologist Stuart Rees on the theme of narrative in relation to "empowerment" and "coherence" (see 'Directional Quotations', p. iv).

[iii] - p. 186

Again from my notes, this time with reference to Harmon (see p. 20) who, concerning research, speaks of the "extensive use of the potential of an individual".

[iv] - p. 186

My study leader's view, with which I cannot find fault, is that the over-insistence on writing in the matter of thesis-presentation, is a style typical of the Euro-American conception of literacy. Important as writing obviously is, it is necessary however not to overlook other modes of meaningful expression (visual and aural in particular) in indigenous environments or environments other than European-American ones. This certainly is incumbent on research philosophy of "holistic" intent.