



PLUMBING THE BRAIN DRAIN OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WORKERS MIGRATING TO THE UK: IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

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Reference:

Engelbrecht, L.K. 2005. Plumbing the brain drain of South African social workers migrating to the UK: Implications and challenges. *Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI)*. Stellenbosch University: South Africa.

Available:

<http://scholar.google.co.za/citations?user=YUORtfMAAAAJ&hl=en>





PLUMBING THE BRAIN DRAIN

- **Uncover generalisations**
- **Implications for social service delivery**
- **Challenges for service providers**





RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

- Universe = 1 638 subjects
- Population = 164 subjects
- Response rate = 39,63%



BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

How many South African social workers migrate to the UK?



Comparison of the number of registrations with the SACSSP and letters of verification issued by the G.S.C.C. by 18/05/2004

A: SACSSP REGISTRATIONS (18/05/2004)	B: LETTERS OF VERIFICATION G.S.C.C* (18/05/2004)	$B \div A \times 100 = \%$
11271	1638	15%

*For period 1990 - 18/05/2004 (SACSSP, 2005; G.S.C.C., 2004)

Letters of verification issued to South African social workers by the G.S.C.C. from 2000 - 18/05/2004

2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-18/05/2004
224	283	262	342

2004: 72.55% SW's shortage in Dept Social development

2004: Number SW's in only 3 provinces exceeded number SW's migrated

2004: SA lost 66% first time registered SW's to the UK

2005: 13% more SW's migrated to UK than first time registered SW's in SA

SURVEY RESULTS

GENDER

- 15% male
- 85% female



AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age	%
<29	48
30-39	43
40<	9
Total	100

N=65

- Mean age = 31
- Youngest = 23
- Oldest = 53
- 52% = older than 30



PASSPORT ENDORSEMENT

Nature of endorsement	%
Working holiday visa	12
Work permit	83
Ancestry visa	5
Total	100

N=65



POPULATION AFFILIATION

Population affiliation	%
White	71
Coloured	17
Black	6
Indian	6
Total	100

N=65





WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE UK

- 2 months – 7 years
- 2 years = average



WORK EXPERIENCE IN SA

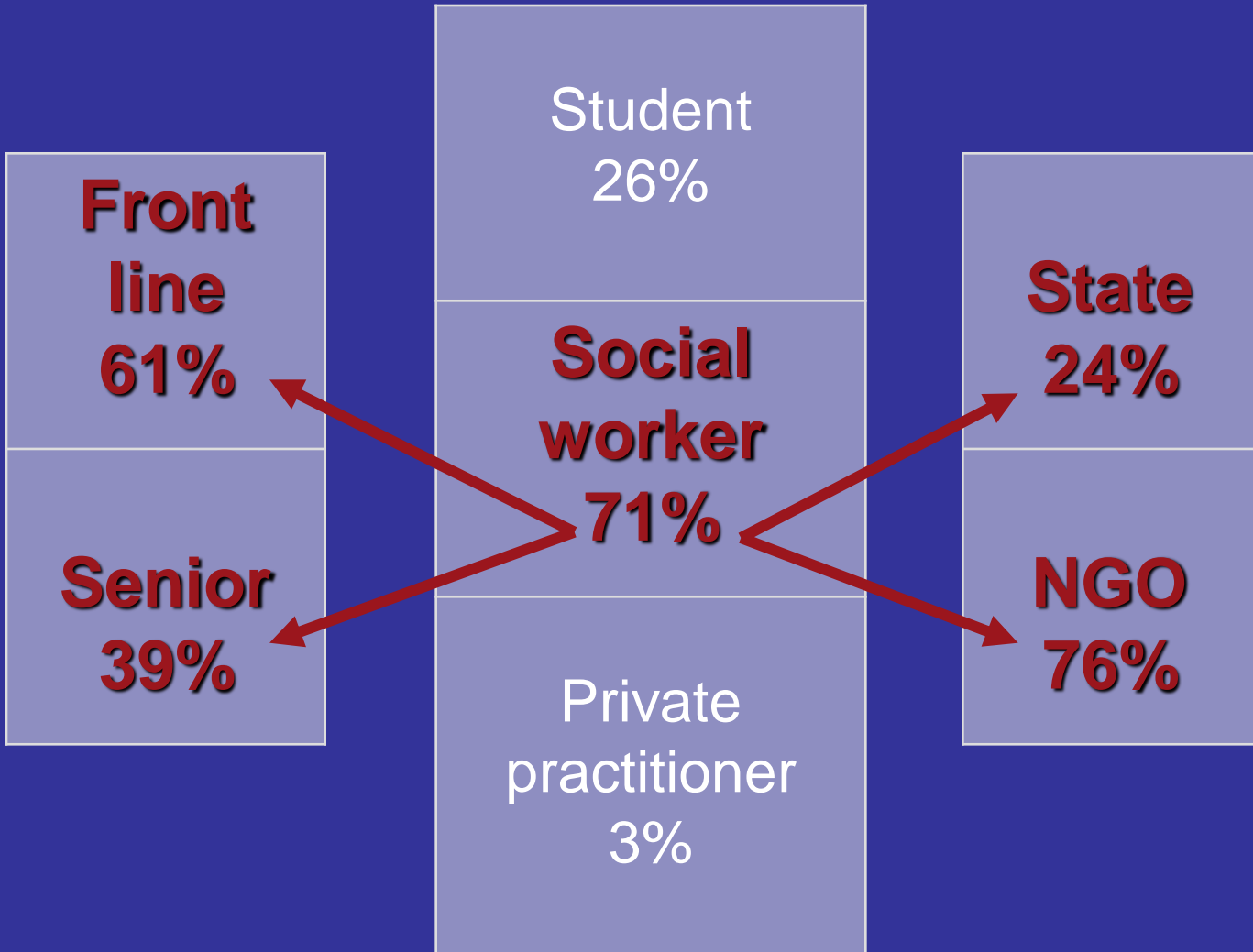
Years experience	%
None	26,15
0-5 years	41,54
6-10 years	15,38
11 -23 years	16,93
Total	100

N=65

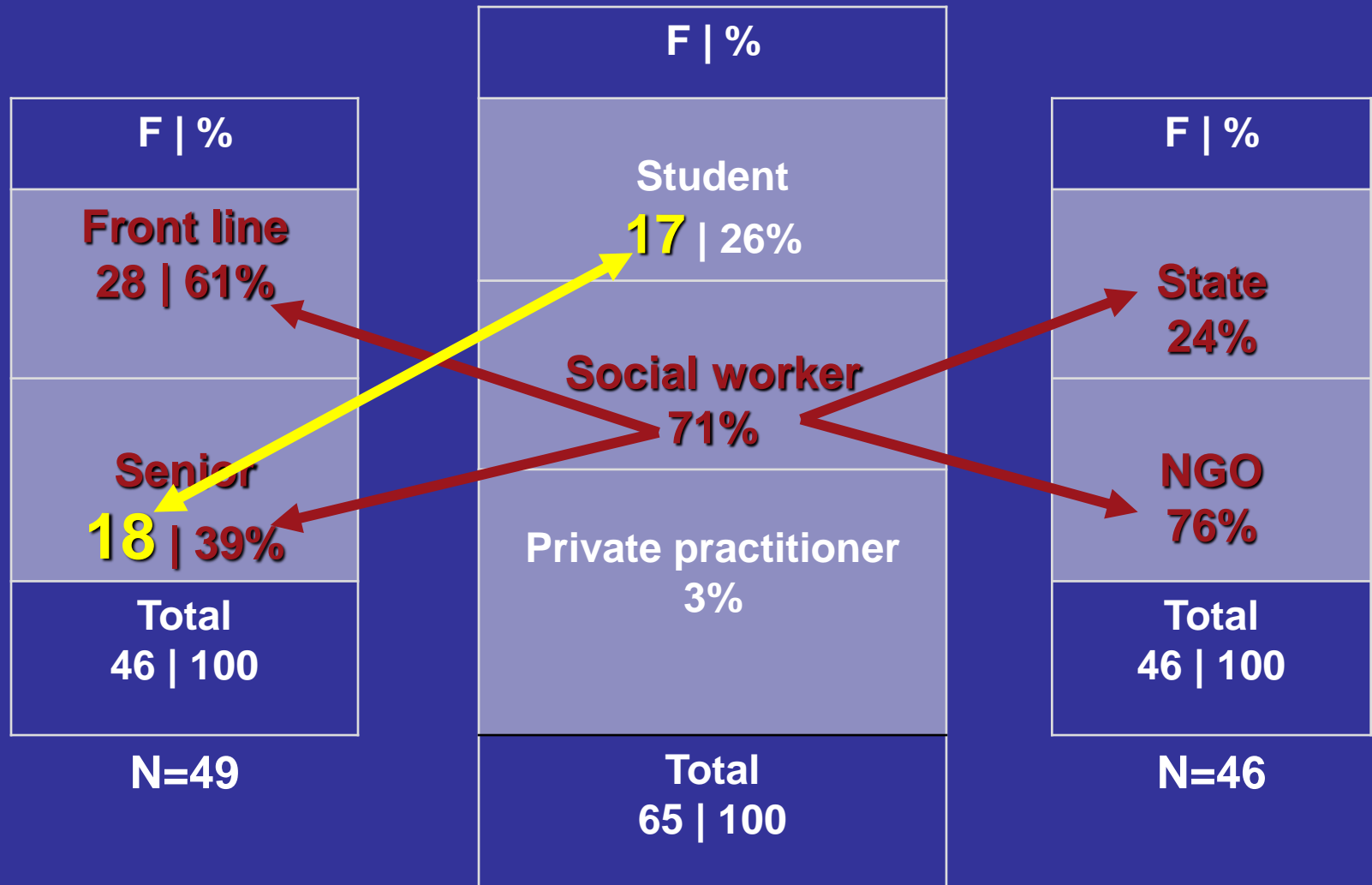
- 0 – 23 years
- 5 year average
- 32,31% more than 6 years



POSITION AND NATURE OF WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA



POSITION AND NATURE OF WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA



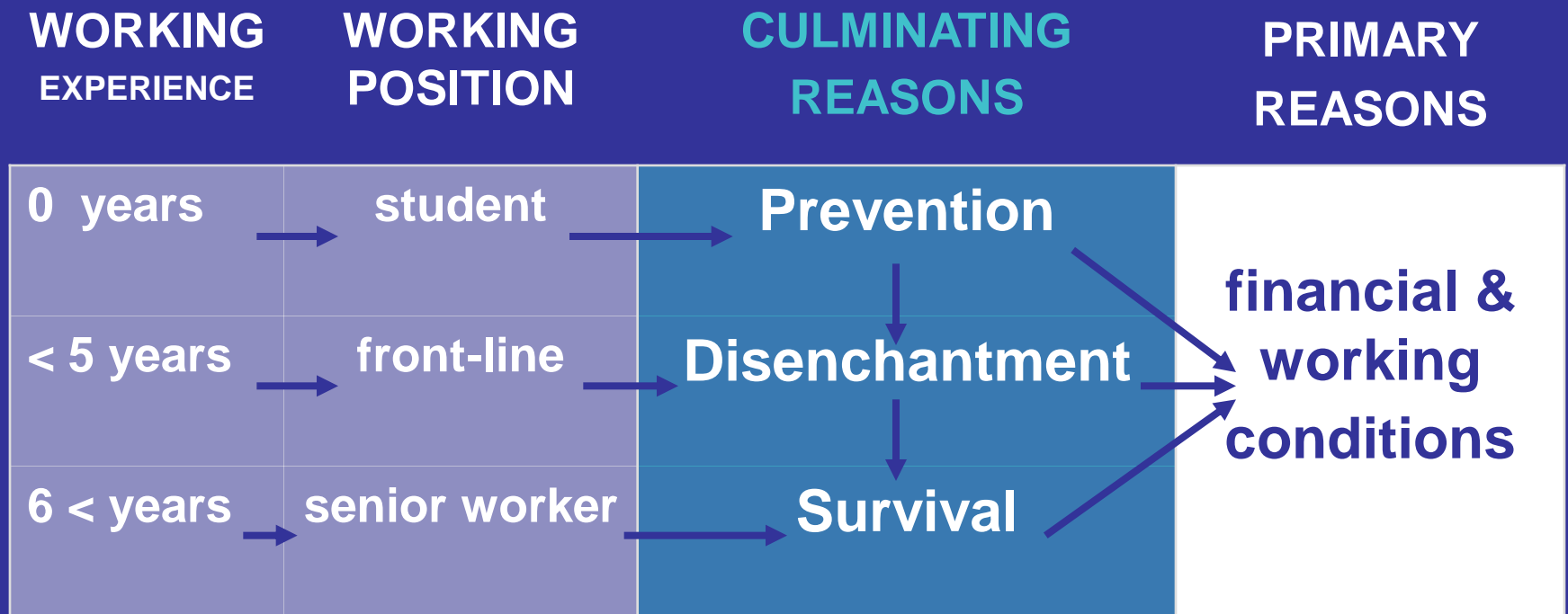
PUSH AND PULL FACTORS BEHIND MIGRATION TO THE UK

Reasons for migrating to the UK

	%
PRIMARY REASONS	
Financial reasons	100
Working conditions	82
Personal reasons	3
SECONDARY REASONS	
Further career development	49
Travel the world	37

(N=65)

CONTINUUM OF PUSH FACTORS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WORKERS' MIGRATION TO THE UK





JOB SATISFACTION IN THE UK

- **Work in UK meets expectations of 72%**
- **97% would recommend working in the UK**



FUTURE PLANS RE RETURN TO SA

FUTURE PLANS	%
Prefer to return to SA	72
Stay in the UK	22
Unsure	6
Total	100

N=65

- 60% (of 72%) don't know when
- 79% (of 100%) plan to remain in UK for next 5 years



WILLINGNESS TO DO SOCIAL WORK IN SA

Willingness	%
Willing to return to social work in SA	65
Not willing to return to social work in SA	35
Total	100

N=65

- 65% envisage personal and working-specific conditions before they would think of returning to SA



IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- lost generation
- lack of experience and capacity
- migrating is an obvious solution
- unable to retain social workers
- improved financial compensation is not the only way



CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- Directed to:
 - Provincial Departments of social services
 - NGO sector
 - Labour unions
 - Professional associations
 - Universities
- Under leadership of:
 - National Department of Social Development
 - SACSSP

CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- Reliable and consistent data on migration
- Proactive consolidated retention strategies
- Establish bundles of linked coordinated human resource management interventions
- Transform lack of experience and capacity
- Repackage social work in terms of pull factors
- Improve image of social service providers among social workers
- View retention dimensions (organizational structures, job characteristics, financial compensation) as interrelated
 - an overall national welfare financing structure
 - work-life balance approach – flexibility to females
 - suitable minimum and equal numeration
- Publish a regular national official journal

Where have all the social workers gone?

