#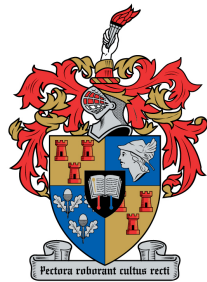 SOCIAL WORKERS' REFLECTIONS ON IMPLICATIONS OF NEOLIBERAL TENETS FOR SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

March 2018

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ABSTRACT

Social work can be said to be a contentious profession, one that is deeply swayed by the socioeconomic and political forces that surround it. These forces can often challenge the profession's commitment to social justice. Neoliberalism, much more than simply an economic theory, has been a dominant force in the global world since its emergence at the political forefront in the 1970s. Disseminated through the global market and organisational bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, neoliberal theory has infiltrated much of societal functioning, including the realm of social welfare and service rendering. The adverse impact of neoliberalism has been widely recognised and debated, linking its influence to the widening gulf between the rich and the poor and the prioritisation of economic means over and above human dignity and rights. Although the impact of neoliberalism has been critiqued and discussed within the field of social work, this has largely been limited to academic circles, and less consideration has been given to the views and experiences of frontline social workers regarding the impact of the neoliberal narrative on their practice. Furthermore, this impact is often subtle and discrete, emerging through various strands of influence or principles of commitment referred to as neoliberal tenets, and thus requires more critical and robust reflections to both recognise and understand how the broader neoliberal conception is at play in social work.

South Africa has not escaped this global neoliberal hegemonic march, and through the contracting of a 1993 IMF loan, quickly saw its redistributive commitments compromised by market-driven expectations. The South African social work profession, it itself in the early stages of rebirth post the demise of apartheid, has been significantly affected by such neoliberal tenets, within the spectrum of managerialisation, marketisation, deprofessionalisation and consumerisation. These challenges are particularly evident within the non-governmental organisation context, in which social work services dominate.

The aim of this study was to explore the implications of neoliberal tenets, such as those identified above, for NGOs in South Africa, as perceived, experienced and reflected upon by frontline social workers and social work managers. Toward this end, the research objectives included the conceptualisation of neoliberalism as a global economic philosophy; the conceptualisation of the

global impact of neoliberalism on social work; the critical analysis of the influence of identified global neoliberal tenets on South African NGOs; the empirical investigation of the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in NGOs through the reflections of frontline social workers and social work managers; and the presentation of conclusions and recommendations for NGOs regarding the management of perceived neoliberal tenets and its implications for social work. These objectives also represent the chapter layout of the study. The research was ontologically cemented in the interpretivist paradigm, focused on understanding narrative, dialogue and meaning; it was an exploratory and descriptive study, within a purposive sample selection of five NGO case studies and a population of 24 frontline social workers and social work managers. The primary research instrument within the case study framework was the semi-structured interview schedule, which was developed based on themes emerging from literature. Qualitative data was analysed through a reliance on such theoretical propositions, logic models, cross-case synthesis and pattern matching.

The resultant empirical analysis explores the narrative of social workers when reflecting on the identified and/or suggested neoliberal implications within their practice. Identified neoliberal tenets at work include the growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations; the development of a dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance, and individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing; employing efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a yardstick, with a preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards; and the deprofessionalisation and diminishing of social workers' professional identity. Through reflections and explorations of these tenets in practice, the deep challenges, needs and successes of the South African NGO and social worker are presented in a manner that is unique in its perspective. At the heart of the study is a warning; a cautioning to the profession to be aware of the often hidden neoliberal impacts and to stand its ground in an increasingly volatile neoliberal world.

OPSOMMING

Maatskaplike werk kan as 'n kontensieuse professie beskou word, wat deur sosio-ekonomiese en politieke magte beïnvloed word. Hierdie magte kan die professie se toewyding tot maatskaplike geregtigheid uitdaag. Neoliberalisme, wat meer is as bloot 'n ekonomiese teorie is, is 'n dominante mag in die globale wêreld sedert die konsep in die 1970s op die politieke voorgrond begin tree het. Deur middel van disseminasie deur die wêreldwye markte en organisatoriese liggame soos die Internasionale Monetêre Fonds en die Wêreld Bank, het die neoliberale teorie maatskaplike funksionering sowel as maatskaplike welsyn en dienslewering in 'n groot mate begin infiltreer. Die impak van neoliberalisme word wêreldwyd erken en gedebatteer, en verbind met 'n invloed op die verwydering tussen ryk en arm, en die prioritisering van ekonomiese middele bo die waardigheid en regte van mense. Alhoewel die impak van neoliberalisme gekritiseer en bespreek word in die maatskaplikewerk-veld, geskied dit hoofsaaklik binne akademiese kringe, en minder oorweging word geskenk aan die sienings van eerstelinie maatskaplike werkers met betrekking tot die impak van die neoliberale narratief op hulle praktyk. Verder, hierdie impak is soms subtiel en diskreet, en vloei voort uit die verskillende invloede en beginsels van toewyding, waarna as neoliberale eienskappe verwys word. Dit vereis dus meer kritiese en robuuste reflektering om die breër neoliberale konsep in maatskaplike werk te herken en te begryp.

Suid-Afrika het nie die neoliberale hegemonie ontsnap nie, en deur die aangaan van 'n 1993 IMF-lening, is die toewyding tot herverspreiding verminder deur middel van markgedrewe verwagtinge. Die Suid-Afrikaanse maatskaplikewerk-professie, wat self in 'n fase van ontwikkeling na apartheid is, word toenemend beïnvloed deur neoliberale eienskappe, met die spektrum gefokus op bestuursbeginsels, markte, deprofessionalisering en oorbeklemtoning van verbruikers. Hierdie uitdagings kom spesifiek voor binne die konteks van nie-regeringsorganisasies, wat maatskaplikewerk-dienste domineer.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die implikasies van neoliberale eienskappe te eksploreer, soos dit deur NROs in Suid-Afrika beskou word, ervaar word, en deur eerstelinie maatskaplike werkers gereflekteer word. Om dit te bereik het die navorsingsdoelstellings ingesluit dat neoliberalisme as 'n globale ekonomiese filosofie gekonseptualiseer word; die globale impak van

neoliberalisme op maatskaplike werk is gekonseptualiseer; die invloed van geïdentifiseerde neoliberale eienskappe op Suid-Afrikaanse NROs is krities geanaliseer; die implikasies van neoliberale eienskappe op NROs is empiries ondersoek; en gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings is aangebied ten opsigte van die bestuur van die neoliberale eienskappe en implikasies vir maatskaplike werk. Hierdie doelstellings het ook die aanbieding van die studie gerig. Die studie is ontologies begrond in 'n verklarende paradigma, gefokus op begrip vir narratiewe, dialoog en betekenis; dit was 'n verkennende en beskrywende studie, met 'n doelbewuste steekproef van geselekteerde NRO gevallestudies en 'n populasie van 24 eerstelinie maatskaplike werkers en bestuurders. Die primêre instrument vir die gevallestudie se raamwerk was 'n semi-gestruktureerde onderhoudskedule, wat ontwikkel is vanuit temas voortspruitend uit die literatuur. Kwalitatiewe data is geanaliseer deur staat te maak op teoretiese voorveronderstellings, logiese modelle, kruis-gevalle sintese en die uitwys van patrone.

Die gevolglike empiriese analise eksploreer die narratiewe van maatskaplike werkers wat neoliberale implikasies op hulle werk reflekteer. Geïdentifiseerde eienskappe sluit in die groeiende verwagting van maatskaplike dienste en NROs om meer op regeringsfondse staat te maak vir befondsing, en om om as besigheidsorganisasies te funksioneer; die ontwikkeling van 'n dominante maatskaplike diskoers wat selfonderhouding bevorder; individue, gesinne en gemeenskappe wat verantwoordelikheid vir hulle eie welstand aanvaar; om effektiwiteit en kostedoeltreffendheid as maatstaf te benut, met 'n oorbeklemtoning van prosedures, norme en standaarde; en die deprofessionalisering en vermindering van maatskaplike werkers se professionele identiteit. Deur reflektering en eksplorering van hierdie eienskappe vanuit die praktyk, word die uitdagings, behoeftes en suksesse van die Suid-Afrikaanse NROs en maatskaplike werkers aangebied, wat 'n unieke perspektief bied. Sentraal tot hierdie studie is 'n waarskuwing wat gerig word: die professie moet bewus wees van verskuilde neoliberale invloede om te oorleef in 'n toenemende neoliberale wêreld.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC – African National Congress

ACVV - Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging

CBO – Community Based Organisation

CDW – Community Development Worker

DESC - Department of Social Work Ethical Screening Committee

DSD – Department of Social Development

GNP – Gross National Product

GEAR – Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy

IASSW – International Association of Schools of Social Work

IFSW – International Federation of Social Workers

IMF – International Montary Fund

MEC - Minerals-enegry complex

NDP – National Development Plan

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

NPO – Not for Profit Organisation

SACSSP – South African Council for Social Service Professionals

SAIRR - South African Institute of Race Relations

SAW – Social Auxilliary Worker

SW – Social Worker

TPA – Terms of Payment Agreement

UK – United Kingdom

US – United States of America

WB – World Bank

WTO – World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Social work, at the global and national level, is encountering an increasingly challenging world. At the very heart of this is a converging global socio-economic policy agenda, through neoliberal reform. This is having a direct and profound impact on welfare and civil society, and thus the very context in which social work functions (Spolander, Engelbrecht, Martin, Strydom, Pervova, Marjanen, Tani, Sicora & Adaikalam, 2014).

Neoliberalism, which was popularised through Thatcherism in the 1970s (Gamble, 1988), has become the dominant international framework for globalisation and economic development (Harvey, 2014; Hay, 2002), so much so that many governments and global policy makers believe that no alternative exists (Miraftab, 2004). Harvey (2005:2), internationally renowned as a commentator on neoliberalism, refers to this phenomenon as a neoliberal globalisation, defining it as "…a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices".

Many scholars have recognised the adverse global implications of neoliberal advancement, linking it to the widening gap between the rich and the poor with the consolidation of wealth and power in the hands of the corporate elite; the increase in environmental degradation; the prioritisation of economic development over matters of social justice; placing individualism over collectivism; the commodification of care; the shift of social service responsibility to private, community-based and non-governmental organisations; and the growing influence of a management and business agenda within social service provision (see for example, Harvey, 2005, 2007; Hay, 2002; Ife, 2000; Midgley, 1997; Spolander et al., 2014).

In South Africa, with the historic rise to power of the ANC, there was a hope that post-apartheid changes would demonstrate a redistributive approach that would redirect the country toward fair and equal growth (Bond, 2000). The ANC's adoption of the Reconstruction and Development

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Programme (RDP) in 1994 represented its determination to address such challenges (Xaba, 2014). However, under the influence of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the RDP was quickly replaced by a more glaringly neoliberal economic philosophy, with the implementation of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic strategy in 1996 (Bond, 2000; Habib & Taylor, 1999; Peet, 2002). According to Desai (2002:19), GEAR represented a "'neo-liberal' service delivery model where the private sector (and private sector principles) dominate", where "the state acts as a service 'ensurer' rather than a service provider'" and where "municipal services are 'run more like a business'".

Within this context, NGOs have come to be at the forefront of South African service provision (Gray & Lombard, 2008; Pratt & Myhrman, 2009). However, the implications of neoliberal tenets have dramatically changed the environment in which social service provision is rendered in NGOs, the nature of such provision, and the consequential role of social workers (Habib & Taylor, 1999; Peet, 2002; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). This has primarily taken place through the rising infiltration of managerialist principles in social work, owing to the prevailing neoliberal discourse and resulting in specific experienced tenets within the South African context, such as the following: the growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations (Gray & Lombard, 2008); the development of a dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance, and individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004); employing efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a yardstick, with a preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards (Engelbrecht, 2015); and the deprofessionalisation and diminishing of social workers' professional identity (Engelbrecht, 2015; Sewpaul, 2013).

However, although the adverse effects of neoliberal reform are being increasingly recognised and discussed in South African literature (See for example, Bond, 2000; Desai, 2002; Engelbrecht, 2015; Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Miraftab, 2004; Terreblanche, 2002; Sewpaul, 2013; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004; Williams & Taylor, 2000), there is a concern that such discussion and examination, specifically within social work, is limited to the academic periphery, without a sufficient exploration of the lived experiences and understandings of neoliberalism for on-the-

ground social workers and managers. To this end, Narsiah (2002:3) recognises, "while academic engagement on such issues is essential, there is a risk that opportunities for progressive change may be missed" if such discussion is limited to the parameters of the academic community.

The dearth of empirical research into the reflections and opinions of on-the-ground, frontline social workers and managers regarding the implications of neoliberal tenets on social work practice and social service rendering, particularly within the NGO context thus leads to two concerns: (a) the effects of the political-economic agenda on the profession, social welfare policy development and day-to-day activities of social work are not properly understood or explored (Spolander, Engelbrecht & Pullen-Sansfacon, 2015); and, (b) the critical voices and activities of NGOs and social workers are not being sufficiently encouraged, showcased or addressed outside of the academic sphere. Toward this end, an exploration of the direct implications of neoliberal policy on social work practice within South Africa was necessary, and particularly so within the NGO context, as a key role player in social service provision within the country.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Xaba (2014: 310), in his recent reflections on the impact of neoliberalism on South African NGOs, which was published in the Journal of International Social Work, accurately recognises that "In post-apartheid South Africa, reconstruction and development policies soon succumbed to the pressures of neoliberal welfare economics calling for NGOs to rely less on government". However, Xaba (2014: 310), who is not a social worker, goes on to say that South African NGOs "have evolved to a position where they reject one of their primary roles, that of social development", and separate themselves from the state in a "private–public stick 'em up" (2014: 310). This claim is contentious, without empirical substantiation and may thus not be an accurate reflection of the profession and NGO context. Instead, it can be argued that the changing neoliberal social welfare climate has the following implications for NGOs: increased defunding of NGOs (Lombard, 2008); limited resource allocation by the state (Sewpaul & Holsher, 2004); poor salary provisions made for social workers working within the NGO context; a plethora of frameworks orchestrated by the Department of Social Development (DSD) to regulate and control social work (Engelbrecht, 2013); denigration of the social work profession post-apartheid (Spolander et al., 2014) and the "brain drain" of social workers from social service delivery (Engelbrecht, 2006:143).

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Xaba's (2014) contentious claims that NGOs have rejected their commitment to social development, represents an opinion or (mis)understanding of the NGO environment that comes from outside of the realm of social work, yet is showcased in international accredited academic literature, and thus demonstrates the urgent need to empirically explore and present the implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in NGOs *through* the perceived reflections and experiences of social workers and managers within these contexts. This will dually allow the addressing of concerns that the function of NGOs and social work professionals as critical voices in the country has been silenced by a dedication to performance-based contracts, managerial control and a neoliberal discourse disguised as accountability (Spolander et al., 2014). Within this context, Engelbrecht (2006: 143) averred a decade ago: "This scenario needs to be managed urgently and constructively in order to retain capacity for the successful throughput and output of the transformation of social service delivery in South Africa". Hence, there is a need for the experiences of frontline social workers and managers to be raised and reflected upon, understanding that beyond an academic periphery, and to be true to its fundamental values, social work must find its voice (Spolander, Engelbrecht & Pullen-Sansfacon, 2015).

Against this backdrop, it can be further asserted that without sufficiently reflecting on and exploring the experiences of social workers within a neoliberal climate, the infiltration of neoliberal ideology may be overlooked, and failing to recognise and properly address structural challenges to NGOs, the profession and the groups they serve. "Without this approach, the profession may (unconsciously or consciously) be aiding neoliberal reform and facilitating its own demise" (Spolander, Engelbrecht & Pullen-Sansfacon, 2015:12).

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question was as follows: What are the implications of neoliberal tenets for NGOs in South Africa, as perceived, experienced and reflected upon by front-line social workers and managers?

This question was unpacked through reflection on the following:

1. What are the global tenets of neoliberalism?
2. How do these global tenets influence the profession of social work and its practice?

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3. How do these tenets reveal themselves in the South African policy development, social work and social service rendering context?

4. How do these tenets influence the (a) day-to-day practice of frontline social workers? and (b) the day-to-day managerial practices of social work managers?

1.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research was to gain an understanding of social workers' reflections of the implications of neoliberal tenets for frontline social work and managerial practice in South African NGOs. To achieve the aim of the research and explore the above outlined questions, the following objectives were devised to:

1.4.1 Conceptualise neoliberalism as a global economic philosophy, by:
  a. Tracing the historical emergence of neoliberalism as a global phenomenon;
  b. Identifying neoliberal tenets within the context of political, economic and social life.

1.4.2 Conceptualise the impact of neoliberalism on social work, by:
  a. Conceptualising the specific neoliberal tenets at work within social work;
  b. examining the implications of these tenets for social work on a global scale.

1.4.3 Critically analyse the influence of the identified global neoliberal tenets on South African NGOs, through reflecting on;
  a. Current South African social welfare policies;
  b. the day-to-day frontline services of social workers;
  c. and the management practices of social workers.

1.4.3 Empirically investigate the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in NGOs, through the reflections of frontline social workers and managers.

1.4.4. Present conclusions and recommendations for NGOs regarding the management of perceived neoliberal tenets and its implications for social work.

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1.5. THEORETICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

The research study was conducted from a theoretical point of departure that is critical of neoliberalism and its impact upon society, socioeconomic policy and social service rendering. The key texts focused upon included internationally renowned authors and critiques of global neoliberalism such as Harvey (2005, 2007), Hay (2002), Sewpaul (2013), Sewpaul & Holscher (2004); analysts and critiques of neoliberalism within the South African context, such as Bond (2000, 2010), Desai (2002) and Xaba (2014); analysts and critiques of neoliberalism within a social work context, both internationally and locally, such as Engelbrecht (2006, 2013, 2015), Midgley (1997), Miraftab (2004), Sewpaul (2013), Spolander et al. (2014) and Smith (2014).

South African policy and legislation further served as key points of departure, including the Assessment of the NPO Act (2005), the 2006 Final Draft Service Delivery Model for Development Welfare Services, Developing Good Governance Practises within the South African NPO sector: Non-Profit Act 71 of 1997, the White Paper for Social Welfare (2007), Benchmark study report (2009), Governance practices of national non-profit organisations and national networking organisations (2010), Codes of Good Practice for South African Non-profit Social Welfare Organisations (2010), Financial awards for non-profit organisations (2011), State of South African non-profit organisations issued in terms of the Non-Profit Act 71 of 1997 (2012), and the National NPO summit: transformation of welfare services sector (2012).

As neoliberal ideology is not uniformly evident in every country, but rather operates as a global force or hidden agenda, one is often best able to identify neoliberal implications through the existence of its core tenets, such as the responsibility of protection of the vulnerable and impoverished being given over to the individual, community-based services, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. In countries where welfare is still made available, such as South Africa, it is done selectively, moving further away from the notion of universal care, with the implementation of stringent assessment models in order to qualify for welfare and social care. Neoliberalism is also largely accompanied by a framework of managerialist principles that govern social spending and operational functioning, thus further impacting on the NGO and social service sector (Engelbrecht, 2013; Sewpaul, 2013; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). This discourse served to guide the research process, within a critical theoretical framework.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The determined research methodology for the study is presented below, with regard to the approach, design, method, nature of data management and means of statistical analysis.

1.6.1. Research Approach

In this study, the researcher made use of a deductive approach, beginning with a research question, a literature study and following this, the gathering of empirical data and analysis. However, a movement between deductive and inductive logic of reasoning did occur during the research process. A collective case study method was used, identified by Stake (1995) as being best when wanting to find out about a particular phenomenon from a number of different cases; this was beneficial for the study, as a select number of NGOs were used as case studies in order to best cover the broad scope of social service intervention within the South African NGO environment. Here, the researcher was interested in a qualitative, in-depth inquiry into the experiences, understandings and opinions of the selected research participants, within a range of five social welfare non-governmental organisations; each NGO represented a case study with a number of selected frontline social workers and managers as participants (Silverman, 2011). Thus, a quantitative analysis of numbers and statistics was of less interest to the researcher, than that of qualitatively understanding the actual phenomenon.

1.6.2. Research Design

In this research study, a combined exploratory and descriptive case study design was used. An exploratory case study design aims to provide initial analysis of a particular phenomenon, and arises out of a lack of information within a particular field or area of interest, as was recognised in the motivation for this study (De Vos et al., 2011:95). A descriptive case study design, alternatively, aims to provide a fuller portrait of the case being studied, with an intensive examination of a phenomenon and its deeper meanings (De Vos et al., 2011:96). The use of a combined exploratory and descriptive case study design enabled the researcher to thus both explore the broader phenomenon of neoliberalism (Bless et al., 2006:182), while also presenting a picture of the specific details of the implications of neoliberal tenets for social work within NGOs, focusing on the 'how' and 'why', as opposed to just the 'what' (De Vos et al., 2011:96; Yin, 2009).

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1.6.3. Research Method

This section offers an overview of population and sampling and method of data collection.

1.6.3.1. Population and Sampling

The researcher made use of a purposive sample selection with five selected NGOs within South Africa functioning in different fields. For this purpose, the researcher approached designated child-protection organisations, faith-based and family-orientated organisations, rehabilitation organisations, social development organisations; and human rights and activism orientated organisations. Within this sample parameter, 24 participants were chosen, comprising of a selection of 14 frontline social workers, and 10 social work managers, with varying samples from each of the five chosen organisations. The researcher decided upon the purposive selection of frontline social workers and managers as participants most directly linked to the research area, within differing professional and performance contexts, with frontline social workers offering day-to-day practice insight and managers offering managerial practice experience. Therefore, the experiences of frontline social workers and managers may have been entirely different, yet accumulatively gave the most accurate overview toward answering the research questions (De Vos et al., 2011:232). Specific criteria for inclusion of social worker participants were: they were a registered social worker with the SACSSP, and had front-line social work practice experience (working directly with service users). Specific criteria for inclusion of social work manager participants were: they were a registered social worker with the SACSSP, and had at least 2 years' experience of managing front-line social workers.

1.6.3.2. Method of Data Collection

The primary research instrument within the case study framework was a semi-structured face-to-face interview schedule based on the conducted literature study and identified themes (see annexure A), based on a recognition of the need for a particular direction of discussion, while still allowing the interviewer freedom to formulate other questions as judged appropriate, and participants, the freedom to choose their own definitions and motivate their own views (Bless et al., 2006:116-117). The researcher approached selected non-governmental organisations for the study through written request, and phone-calls, to key organisation directors, to request permission for the organisation(s) to participate in the study. The researcher then consolidated

with the key director and management personnel of the organisation to determine and identify the frontline social workers and social work managers who acted as willing participants.

The interviews were conducted in English by the researcher. Data was captured through means of audio-recordings, as well as the transcribing of discourses by the researcher after each interview, with permission of the participants.

1.6.4. Data Management

Data management was implemented through the establishment of an appropriate method of data analysis, and methods of data verification, such as data validity, credibility, and reflexivity, discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five of the study.

1.6.4.1. Method of Data Analysis

Reliance on theoretical propositions (Yin, 2009) was the best framework in which data from the study was analysed, as it was believed to best represent the nature of the research question and the phenomenon being studied. Logic models, an analysis tool that involves matching empirically observed events (the experiences of the frontline social workers and managers) to theoretically predicted events (the literature and academic claims regarding neoliberal influences, such as that of Xaba [2014] and others) was utilised. This was done through direct coding by the researcher, matching identified neoliberal tenets and themes within literature to that of the empirical experiences and reflections of the participants. For this research study, where more than one case study was being used, the program-level logic model was best suited, assuming an underlying programme, phenomenon or policy (neoliberalism) which impacts upon the functioning of a number of organisations/professional fields (all social welfare NGOs) (Yin, 2009). As a second tool, Cross-Case Synthesis was used (Yin, 2009), where each individual case (NGO) was treated as a separate study, and final findings were then compared and aggregated across the series of case studies in order to determine patterns and commonly observed phenomena.

The researcher implemented qualitative coding manually. Steps included: identifying repeating ideas, generating themes (although overarching themes were determined through the literature review and served to structure the interview schedule), and grouping themes into theoretical

constructs; these theoretical constructs were finally linked to the research concerns, questions and literature review, thus generating a theoretical narrative.

1.6.4.2. Method of Data Verification

The validity of the research study was strengthened through the use of pattern matching (Yin, 2009), as discussed above; reliability was developed through adequate and detailed explanation of the data collection process, and sufficient transcribing of the face-to-face interviews and data collected in the empirical process (De Vos et al., 2011:177). Credibility was achieved through the researcher's ensuring that the subject matter of the interviews and empirical analysis was accurately identified and described (De Vos et al., 2011: 419).

Transferability can be considered somewhat challenging with qualitative research that is limited to a specific sample group size and the case study approach is also often critiqued for its lack of generalizability (Farquhar, 2012). However, the use of five different case studies, several different participants on different levels of management, and the determining of patterns helped to ensure stronger external validity and some level of transferability. Dependability was determined through establishing a research process that was logical, well documented and audited (De Vos et al., 2011:420), using a database, records of the interviews, case study notes and narrative records.

1.7. REFLEXIVITY

As a registered social worker, the researcher shared some similarity with the participants, and thus recognised that previous experience in implementing social work intervention within NGO contexts resulted in personal opinions and feelings regarding the needs, strengths, weaknesses and objectives of an NGO within a South African context. However, such experience and knowledge was limited, and as the primary data analysis instrument, the researcher ensured that all said opinions and biases were set aside to receive participant qualitative data without predetermined judgments or assumptions (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher was further aware that her participation in an EU-funded Marie Curie research study (contract no: 318938) which contributed to the researcher's interest in this particular research topic, may have also lent itself toward predetermined bias of the implications that neoliberal ideology will have/is having on social work within non-governmental organisations. Although findings and literature consolidated in the

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researcher's previous involvement in research was used, the researcher determined to treat this particular study as something separate, which yielded different results.

1.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the researcher is a registered social worker, this study was bound by the general ethical code of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP, 2011). Such ethical procedures were inclusive of the following:

- Ensuring that at all times, appropriate provision was made for informed consent from participants (after approval from the NGOs has been granted), through the use of official consent forms, as well as informing participants of the voluntary nature of their involvement in the research. Participants were issued individual copies of their signed consent forms, while the originals have been kept in a secured research file (See Appendix B);

- As a continued part of informed consent, the researcher ensured that participants were aware of their right to refuse to answer questions and to withdraw from participation in the research at any time;

- The personal data of participants and their organisations has been secured from improper access, the identity of the participants and their organisations has not be disclosed and confidentiality of information has been maintained at all times;

- The collection of empirical data was not focused on emotional content and thus the research can be regarded as having minimum risk, however, the researcher made provision for the debriefing of participations where necessary;

- Institutional permission to implement a case study within the selected NGOs was granted.

The researcher was further granted ethical clearance for the study from the Department of Social Work Ethical Screening Committee (DESC), before commencing with the empirical study (Refer to Appendix C).

1.9. CHAPTER LAYOUT

The research report is made up of seven chapters, following the exploration of the determined research questions, aims and objectives. With the focus of the research being on the implications of neoliberalism (in the sense of neoliberal tenets) for social work within South African NGOs, the research was framed within a context of examining international trends and neoliberal discourse globally, which served as the first chapter of the literature study, and the second chapter of the research report. In this chapter, *Neoliberalism: A Global Phenomenon,* the researcher presented the historical emerging of neoliberalism; described neoliberalism as an economic, political, and social theory; and further identified the global tenets of neoliberalism. The exploration of the expansion of neoliberalism into social welfare, and its resultant key tenets at play within social work on a global scale makes up the third chapter, *Social Work and the Global Neoliberal Agenda*. The third literature chapter, and fourth chapter of the study, looked at *Neoliberalism in South Africa: Talking Left, Walking Right – The Social Work Dilemma*. Here, the researcher unpacked the history of neoliberal growth in the South African context, alongside the history of South African social work and the rise of the NGO; this backdrop allowed for further in-depth exploration of the current South African context and the development of social welfare policy within a framework of ideological conflict and compromise. The key tenets of neoliberalism within South African social work practice were proposed.

Chapter Five of the study offers more detail on the *Research Methodology* of the study. Chapter Six holds the *Empirical Analysis*, with a presentation, analysis of and discussion regarding the case-studies of the five selected NGOs, and the semi-structured interviews with the frontline social workers and social work managers of the organization. Significant themes, sub-themes and narratives were identified through literature review, robust data analysis, and exploration with corresponding linkages to the literature developed in chapters two, three and four. Finally, Chapter Seven offers final *Conclusions and Recommendations.*

1.10. CONNECTION WITH DOCTORAL PROGRAMME OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

The Social Work Department of Stellenbosch University has been involved in research cantered on neoliberalism and its impact on the profession, civil society and vulnerable groups. The researcher's supervisor has published several works on related topics, and thus the study's research questions fall in line with the current interests of the department.

1.11. IMPACT

Within South Africa, NGOs are very much on the forefront of social service delivery and care. However, within a growing neoliberal context, NGOs are receiving less support, and are under increasing managerial pressure and scrutiny (Pratt & Myhrman, 2009). There is, however, a limited understanding of the on-the-ground and day-to-day implications of neoliberal tenets on NGO functioning and sustainability. Resistance to neoliberal advancement requires that the NGO and the social worker have a critical understanding of the role of neoliberalism in South Africa, it's advancing agenda for welfare and social service rendering, and the role NGOs play in such an agenda. This requires an in-depth examination of the perceived implications of neoliberalism for social work in NGOs. It is the hope of the researcher that in-depth case studies, through interviews with frontline social workers, and social work managers within NGOs operating in various fields, will serve to develop a narrative that could aid in combining on-the-ground micro and meso perspectives with greater macro understandings, and essentially, assist in social workers within NGOs effectively articulating and confronting the challenges they are facing through neoliberal and resultant managerial reform.

CHAPTER 2: NEOLIBERALISM: A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

"The world stumbled toward neoliberalism through a series of gyrations and chaotic motions that eventually converged…"[1]

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Neoliberalism emerged as a dominant political and economic framework in the 1970's through a series of ideas and policies centered on removing the state from the economy and promoting economic liberalisation. Neoliberal theory is cemented in the premise that society is made up of rational actors, each seeking to be acquisitive and instrumental in their relations. Thus, freeing the individual from the economic constraints imposed by the state would result in economic growth and a consequential trickle down effect that would ultimately liberalise the poor. It can be argued that the expansion of neoliberalism has resulted in largely homogeneous global consequences, with wealth being concentrated towards the top of the social strata. Aiding this shift has been the implementation of a regressive redistribution of social services, social protection and social opportunity (Xaiver et al., 2016). Within this socioeconomic policy context, the international and local landscape has seen the increasing impact of public sector and social welfare reform (Spolander et al., 2014), where "finance capital took command in the process of accumulation involving economy and society, politics and culture, and deeply marking the forms of sociability and the play of social services" (Iamamoto, 2009:107). Regardless of its origins as an economic theory, neoliberalism and its various tenets are impacting upon all areas of life, including politics, business, social policy, social services, societal functioning, and even the identity of the individual (Harvey, 2005; Hay, 2002; Midgley, 1997).

As this ideology is not uniformly evident in every country, but rather operates as a global force or hidden agenda, one is often best able to identify neoliberal implications through the existence of

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[1] Harvey, 2007:24

its core tenets. Neoliberalism, over and above being an economic theory, is a doctrine deeply embedded in global societal constructs and norms, spanning social philosophy and emerging as the primary political paradigm of the last three decades (Harvey, 2005).

In this chapter, which serves as an introduction to the neoliberal concept that will later be critically assessed within the realms of social work and post-apartheid South Africa, neoliberalism as a global phenomenon will be explored through the key events and presumptions behind its historical emergence, its geographical and socio-political expansion, as well as the dominant tenets which serve as the soldiers of its hegemonic global march. This chapter will address the first objective of the study, in terms of conceptualising neoliberalism as a global economic philosophy, by tracing the historical emergence of neoliberalism as a global phenomenon; and identifying neoliberal tenets within the context of political, economic and social life.

2.2. DEFINING NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism can be conceptualised in many ways, with some defining it as "a policy paradigm; sometimes more broadly as a hegemonic ideology; and sometimes as a distinctive form of governmentality" (Barnett, 2009:270). In its most common understanding, neoliberalism is a macro-economic policy that aims to reduce the size, influence and regulatory power of the state (Harvey, 2007). The underlying assumption is that with increased deregulation, the promotion of private enterprise and lowered taxation will ultimately lead to economic growth, which would trickle down to liberalise the poor (Harvey, 2005, 2007). Marxist analysts view neoliberalism as "the mobilization of the state, so as to restore profit" (Davies, 2014:314), targeting inflation and trade union power. This leads to reduced labour returns, and raised profit returns, resulting in an inequality that restores class power and promotes privatisation. Neoliberalism is, however, more than just an economic theory, and stretches beyond this science into every sphere of life, with the belief that "market exchange [is] an ethic capable of guiding human action" (Treanor, n.d., cited in Harvey, 2005). Post-structural analysts (influenced by Foucault) focus their analyses on this aspect of neoliberal influence, viewing it as a means of reshaping society and personal life around the principles of enterprise, production and performance (Foucault, 2008).

> *"Here, an ethos of competitiveness is seen as permeating culture, education, personal relations and orientation to the self, in ways that render inequality a fundamental indicator of ethical worth or desire… Distinctive neoliberal policies are those which encourage individuals, communities, students and regions to exert themselves competitively" (Davies, 2014: 315).*

Harvey (2005, 2007, 2014), a renowned writer on neoliberalism, offers a singular definition, which will serve as the primary source for understanding neoliberalism in this research study:

> *"Neoliberalism is **a theory of political economic practices** proposing that human well-being can best be advanced by the **maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms** within an institutional framework characterized **by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade**. **The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices**. The state has to be concerned, for example, with the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up military, defense, police, and juridical functions required to secure private property rights and to support freely functioning markets… **State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum** because the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interests will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit"[2] (Harvey, 2007:22-23)*

However, in offering the above definition, Harvey (2007) also recognises that the implementation and uptake of neoliberalism has been far more nuanced, and its tenets far more complex and intertwined. These tenets will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but can be initially traced throughout the historical expansion of neoliberal birthing and development. This historical exploration will enable a clearer understanding of the neoliberal concept.

2.3. NEOLIBERALISM: A BRIEF HISTORY

The history of neoliberalism is complex and to explore it in all its detail would be too great an endeavour for this chapter. Understanding neoliberalism, its principles, and its expansion, requires reflection of its slow, historical emergence, or birthing, which continues to develop to this day. For the purpose of laying a foundational understanding of the key tenets of neoliberal theory,

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[2] Researcher's own emphasis

which the researcher wishes to later explore within the context of social work, a brief historical overview of critical events that led toward the emergence of neoliberalism is presented; this must be seen as an overview and cannot be held as a detailed account.

2.3.1. Setting the Scene: Liberalism as the Preceding Framework for Neoliberalism

"To begin the task of defining the economics of neo-liberalism in a tractable way, it must be seen in relation to its forebear, liberalism" (Storper, 2016:245). Liberalism was a response to the traditionalist and royalist conceptions of society and its order, which prevailed prior to the 1800s. The liberal argument was one of a limited state with legitimacy based on democracy, citizen freedom and self-governance, as an alternative to the historically unelected sovereignty of royalty or the clergy. Initial ideas around free markets, labour, entrepreneurship, decentralisation and exchange were formed within this strand of thought. Storper (2016:246) outlines the growth of liberalism as coinciding with the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution of the 1800s, as "liberals began to develop what would become the theoretical apparatus of modern economics." In these developments, emerged the notion of *the invisible hand*, a term that would later become a central concept within neoliberal theory. This idea was first propagated by Adam Smith (1776) as an explanation for decentralisation, advocating that the market would correct itself through lessened state control. Liberals believed that the ability of the individual and his/her self-interested action would lead to collectively desirable outcomes, and this could be better promoted through a limiting of the state in certain instances.

However, within liberal thought, there were varying positions on the role of, and relationship between, the state and the market, per views on the probability of market failure. According to Storper (2016:247-8), "liberals do not have a monolithic vision of the role of the state, large corporations… [they] do not have an automatic preference in favour of, or against, state action. They take each instance of market function...case-by-case." As disclosed in table 1, these ideas can vary from favouring more state action, to adopting a middle-ground view of equal influence, and further still to valuing increased prioritisation of the market.

Table 1. Varying Positions of Liberal Thought on Market and State

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Progressive Liberal Economists	Modern Liberalism	Chicago Economics
Expansive technical and empirical definition of market failures; Wide sweep of action for the state (Stiglitz, 2009).	Equal emphasis between the state and the market; "place the cursor in the middle" (Tirole & Laffont, 1993).	Market failures are less abundant; More emphasis on market than state; (Ebenstein, 2015)

Source: Adapted from Storper, 2016

Regardless of the position on state versus market influence and failures, the initial development of liberal ideas was based on utilitarian principles and a distrust of government monopolies, greedy merchants and the concentration of power and wealth with the privileged few (Phillipson, 2010). Thus, of principle concern for liberals were the notions of equity and distribution of wealth and power. Although liberals were some of the first to propose that some forms of inequality could maximise economic growth and output, they stressed the development of models of social justice alongside market freedoms to mitigate any negative outcomes. Liberal economics expanded in the 18th and 19th century, however, as will be argued, the 20th century saw a rise in totalitarianism, authoritarianism and socialism. Neoliberalism was a reaction to this decline in liberal and capitalist principles.

As will be explored in the sections that follow, although neoliberalism had its foundations in the liberal thought of free market principles, it took the ideas of individualism and reduced state further to the point that the founding liberal principles of equality and social justice have largely been overrun (Harvey, 2007). As expressed by Storper (2016:248-9), "In contrast to this textured nature of liberalism, a good deal of the critical neoliberalism literature displays a priori preference for statist or collectivist society, and tends to caricature market economies and limited state as inherently oppressive and inegalitarian."

2.3.2. The Phases of Neoliberal Development and Expansion

The development and expansion of neoliberalism will be explored through three phases, which stretch from the 1920s to present day.

2.3.2.1. The First Phase

The emergence of neoliberalism as a dominant political-economic theory is estimated to date between 1978-80 (Harlow et al., 2012; Harvey, 2005). However, constructed in the laboratory of

elitist think tanks, the tenets and ideas behind neoliberalism have been incubating in existing economic theory for some time, as strands within liberal thought and capitalist assumptions (Harvey, 2005; Hayek, 1944). Davies (2014) traces the emergence of the neoliberal concept to the years preceding the Great Depression and to the writings of German theorist Ludwig von Mises, who was an open critic of the rationality of socialism. Jones (2012), too, in his historical exploration of neoliberalism refers to the 1920s-1950s as the first phase of neoliberal emergence. The traditionally popular Victorian laissez-faire liberalism had declined since the late 1800s as a result of rising trends in trade union development, social policies, state regulation, totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

With this decline of liberalism, and a rise in concerning socialist ideas, the 1920s and 1930s saw an expansion of the debate around socialism and organised economy, referred to as the "socialist calculation debate" (Davies, 2014:311). This was undertaken by a group of philosophers and economists known as the "Austrian liberals" (Storper, 2016:251). This group included the works of Mises, as well as Friedrich von Hayek, and was a reaction to the changing European context of the 20th century, bringing to the forefront of financial theory discussion the case for economic liberalism.

These ideas of economic liberalism were further heightened in the 1930s with the New Deal of the US, rising totalitarianism in Europe and the adoption of protectionism and Keynesian macroeconomics. Liberals needed to reinvent their economic theory to combat these shifts in thinking and critical think tanks emerged in which new ideas were debated and formed. It is thought that one such think tank, the *Colloque Walter Lippmann* organised by French philosopher Louis Rougier in Paris, was the "founding public moment for this project of reviving liberalism" (Storper, 2016:251) and was the first space in which the term neoliberalism emerged (Davies, 2014). According to Jones (2012), the term neoliberalism was decided upon as a means of representing a theory, which was more than a return to laissez-faire economics, but rather a reformulation of liberalism to address new concerns of the 1900s.

Table 2. The Rise and Decline of Liberalism

Prior 17th century	Traditionalist, Royalist and Divine conceptions of society; Wealth and power in the hands of the privileged few.
18th Century	Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution; Emerging of liberal thought - the role of the market, individual autonomy, freedom, democracy, decentralisation, the invisible hand.
18th & 19th century	Expansion of Liberalism; Held positions of social justice, some state regulation and intervention to secure equality.
20th century	Rise in totalitarianism, authoritarianism and socialist (collectivist) ideas; Seen as threatening liberalism.

2.3.2.2. The Second Phase

During the Second World War, neoliberal thinking was strengthened, emerging in the public eye through the work of Hayek in his book, *The Road to Serfdom*, and his establishment of the 1947 *Mont Pelerin Society* think tank, with theorists Wilhelm Ropke, Jacques Rueff, Michael Polanyi and Albert Hunold. However, Keynesian approaches to economic policy, which opposingly argued for a stronger role of state, held dominance in the 1950s with the US New Deal and British social democracy, and "much of this period was a superficially lean time for neoliberals", although during this time neoliberalism was said to have "generated intellectual coherence… [and] grew into a recognizable group of ideas" (Jones, 2012:7). With the post WWII crisis of capital accumulation in the 1960s and 1970s, neoliberalism found its momentum within upper classes that began to be threatened by increasing socialist ideals, and propelled by broader societal dissatisfaction with rising unemployment and accelerated inflation. This was referred to by Jones (2012) as the second phase of neoliberalism, which he believed began in the 1950s and lasted until the ascendency of Thatcher and Reagan in the 1980s. Harvey (2007) refers to this period as one of dissatisfaction, discontent and increasing risk to the security of the upper classes, which in turn encouraged a socialialist alternative to capitalist ideas. During this time, Harvey recognises that communist and socialist parties were covering significant ground in Europe and the US.

This shift was threatening to upheave the upper-class dominance and concentrated wealth that had been achieved through Victorian capitalist interventions; "Ruling classes… had to move decisively if they were to protect their power from political and economic annihilation" (Harvey, 2005: 16) and "The appeal of socialism and the prospect of revolution gave added urgency to the debate among economists over the viability of economic planning" (Jones, 2012:3). Taking advantage of such crisis, theorists and economists were fast to jump in and, rather than being linked to the failure of the historically embedded capitalist model, challenges of unemployment and economic recession were labelled as the backlash of a welfare crisis instead (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004), creating an opportunity for a new paradigm of economic policy-making (Davies, 2014:314).

The axing of the Bretton Woods deal was a significant step in such neoliberal infiltration and requires pause. Established in the 1940s to regulate trade and finance, with fixed exchange rates tied to the US dollar, the Bretton Woods deal also led to the establishment of transnational bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) - groups that were organised to bring order, sustainable security and reserve for crises such as those brought on by the war. The role of the IMF was to provide short-term loans in case of temporary liquidity challenges for governments; the World Bank was to make long-term capital available for practical projects geared to attract foreign investment. This time brought with it a period of brief economic growth and stability. However, these actions failed to turn around the economic recession; and "Governments throughout the West were simultaneously failing to achieve the four major economic policy objectives – growth, low inflation, full employment and balance of trade – on which the post-war order had been based" (Pierson, 1991:145).

The economic crisis of the 1960-70s brought with it an increased demand for welfare services from the state. This resulted in what was later deemed a significant share of government expenditure being devoted to welfare services – "as a result, growing state indebtedness and public expenditure came to be associated directly with the costs of the welfare state" (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:40). The collective crashing in of the welfare crisis and economic recession with events such as the Vietnam war, the oil shock of 1973 and the near collapse of industrial relations in Britain (Jones, 2012), deemed Keynesian policies to be no longer working (Davies, 2014;

Harvey, 2007; Jones, 2012). "The Keynes-inspired policies that governments had relied on to deliver a golden age of prosperity and rising incomes for the generation after 1945 seemed exhausted" (Jones, 2012:1).

As indicated earlier, the infiltration of neoliberalism was then swift. Heightened by the oil embargo and price hike leading from the Arab-Israeli war, a global economic recession saw the welfare economy of the 1944 Bretton Woods deal of monetary order abandoned in 1973 in favour of floating exchange rates. This was the moment where neoliberalism firmly placed itself at centre stage of economic and political life within two key political powers at the time, the US and the United Kingdom. The ideas and proposals of Hayek, Mises and Friedman held fresh appeal and politicians adopted them as a post-Keynesian saviour. In 1971, the US denounced the gold standard and introduced universal flexible exchange rates in 1973. By 1974 and 1979, capital controls were abolished in the US and the UK respectively (Pierson, 1991). These policy changes were viewed as stimulating international trade and capital growth. Exchange rates became subject to financial speculation, with a growth in transnational corporations (such as the IMF and WB) and their share in world production and trade.

Shifts began taking place, with national economies that had previously been closed, opening, and what Harvey (2007) refers to as *unprecedented* volumes of capital movement between national economies. Societal power balances began to change and governments came under pressure to adopt policies that protected the capital (particularly corporate capital) accumulation of the threatened classes. This led to "resultant economic policy packages" (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:4) that prioritised corporate tax reductions, the privatisation of government-run economic entities, a significant cutback in government social spending, and the lifting of import controls. According to Jones (2012), neoliberal insights into macroeconomics publically emerged in the 1970s through the administrations of Jimmy Carter, Harold Wilson and James Callaghan, however it is believed that neoliberalism as a total political ideology was finally popularized, and firmly cemented, through the premiership of Margaret Thatcher (1979), (so much so that is often referred to as the birth child of Thatcherism) in the UK, and Reagan in the US (1980) (Harlow et al., 2012).

2.3.2.3. The Third Phase

The history of neoliberal expansion since has been entwined with globalization (Davies, 2014; Harvey, 2007; Stiglitz, 2002), and its influence has rapidly expanded alongside the globalization phenomenon, as advocates of neoliberal principles took up increasing influential positions within centralized banks, the private sector elite, key state institutions, and globalized transnational organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Harvey, 2007). With a shift from state monopoly to that of international monopoly (Huang, 2011), neoliberalism became central in the carrying out of the globalisation efforts of capitalist powers such as Britain and the United States. Jones (2012) refers to this period as the third phase of neoliberalism, and it is characterised by an imperialist expansion of influence from these select country powers.

Harvey discusses this expansion in his two books, *The New Imperialism* (first edition published in 2003) and *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (first edition published in 2005). In *The New Imperialism*, Harvey (2003) highlights two means of imperialist interfusion: *the logic of territory*, in the form of political and military actions, adopted by a consortium of countries (Huang, 2011), and *the logic of capital,* which refers to a global expansion of economic power and elitism (Harvey, 2003). It is through a combination of these two approaches to globalisation that neoliberalism has been so widely expanded, disseminated to developing economies through crisis, debt management, international loan stipulations and agreements, structural adjustment programmes and the opening up of a competitive (yet biased) market.

In his unpacking of the influence of neoliberalism on the developing world, Haque (1999) explores how Asian, African and Latin American countries have adopted the neoliberal and free market ideals of advanced capitalist nations such as Britain and the United States since the late 1970s. This often contradicted the post-independence state-centered and interventionist notions that many of these countries had begun to implement to promote the overall wellbeing and living standards of its citizens. Instead, newly independent countries began to shift toward deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation (Smith, 1991). This was particularly evident (and later, consequently devastating) in Latin America, where "a neo-liberal ideology came to challenge (and in part replace) old views of development centered around the notion of an economically powerful

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state. By the late 1980s state-led developmentalism had suffered a major blow" (Espinal, 1992:33). As recognised by Harvey, Haque and a number of other influential authors and economists critical of neoliberal emergence (i.e. see Bond, 2000 and Walton & Seddon, 1994), developing countries were often coerced into neoliberal ideology through the policies of the IMF, World Bank and international economic experts sent in by global powers, "encouraging the expansion of market forces by undertaking various market-friendly policies" (Haque, 1999:203).

The global trend toward neoliberal economic reforms has affected almost all developing countries (Walton & Seddon, 1994). Haque (1999) traces this throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa (see also Espinal, 1992; Harvey, 1991; Torre, 1993; Walton and Seddon, 1994). This has often been as a result of securing external financial, social and political assistance (Harvey, 2007); this was the case in the 1990s in South Africa with the accepting of an IMF post-apartheid loan, followed by swift neoliberal reform, as will be discussed in Chapter Four of the study.

Reflections on the 1989 Washington Consensus are important in understanding how such structural adjustment programmes were conceptualised and later disseminated across the developing world. According to Lapeyre (2004), the term *Washington Consensus* came to represent ideals such as stabilisation, liberalisation and structural adjustment policies, largely advocated for by groups such as the IMF, the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It served as a means of policy reform, which would be implemented in newly developing countries such as Latin America in the 1990s.

In this consensus understanding, analyses of economic problems were focused on what was deemed excessive government expenditure and key shifts were recommended: tax reform, interest rate liberalisation, increase in competitive exchange rates, trade liberalisation, liberalisation of foreign direct investment, privatisation, deregulation, private property rights, redirection of public expenditure priorities (often away from social and welfare expenditure) (Haque, 1999; Lapeyre, 2004; Jones, 2012).

The structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s disseminated from the US, UK and transnational bodies such as the IMF and World Bank, saw developing countries and emerging economies pressurized into a neoliberal agenda and the adoption of the above principles. This

marked the third phase of neoliberalism. Heightened by the global recession of 2007, dramatic rises in inequality (Harvey, 2007, 2014), and resultant debt crises of many of these developing economies, however, the third phase has seen an increased resistance to neoliberal theory, and with it, an increasing public knowledge base of neoliberal policies and deviant advancements in everyday life.

The table that follows presents a graphical exposition of the three phases of the neoliberal timeline.

Table 3. Neoliberal Birthing: A Timeline

Date	Trajectory
First Phase of Neoliberalism	
1920s	Ludwig von Mises writing critically of the rationality of socialism
1920s- 1930s	Socialist Calculation Debate building the case for economic liberalism (propelled by Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek)
1930s	Rise in socialist ideals - US New Deal (promotion of protectionism and macroeconomics); rise in European totalitarianism
1938	Colloque Walter Lippmann think tank (established by French philosopher Louis Rougier) where the term neoliberalism first emerged
1944	Bretton Woods international conference (US): established an agreement of free trade with fixed exchange rates tied to US dollar and the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB)
Mid 1940s	Strengthening of neoliberal theory through Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* (1944) and the establishment of the 1947 Mont Pelerin Society (think tank)
Second Phase of Neoliberalism	
1960s	Global capitalism was falling into disarray Global recession
1962	Friedman's *Capitalism and Freedom*, referred to as the "American Road to Serfdom" (Jones, 2012: 7)
Early 1970s	Neoliberalism emerged as a prominent economic philosophy in response to the economic recession and welfare crisis. Exacerbated by the oil embargo and price hike in wake of the Arab-Israeli war Global recession led to political decisions to open national economies, which had previously been closed.
1971	US denounced the gold standard
1973	Societal power balances shifted in favour of corporate capital

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Date	Trajectory
	Pressure on governments for policies that protected capital accumulation
	Abandonment of the Bretton Woods accord (established to regulate international trade and finance).
	Replaced by floating exchange rates
1970s	Chicago School of economics bringing neoliberal theory into social and personal life (Milton Friedman, Aaron Director, Gary Becker)
1979-1990	Growing popularity and dominance of neoliberal economic theory through the premiership of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Reagan in the US
Third Phase of Neoliberalism	
1989	Washington Consensus (tax reform)
1980s and 1990s	Global march of neoliberalism through structural adjustment programmes, IMF and WB loans and stipulations
2007	Global Economic Recession

2.4. UNDERSTANDING NEOLIBERALISM THROUGH ITS TENETS

Much like the history of neoliberalism is complex, there has been debate around the uniformity of neoliberal theory (Harlow et al., 2012), with some arguing that in fact, neoliberalism as a singular ideology does not exist, but is rather an umbrella term for several ideological beliefs and assumptions associated with liberalisation, capitalism and globalisation (Jones, 2012), with "contradictions and contestations… forms of refusal, resistance and accommodation" (Clarke, 2004:30), while others believe neoliberalism to be a homogeneous and fully formed stand-alone doctrine. Harvey (2007:27) himself, while offering a robust definition of neoliberalism, recognizes that its implementation can differ from a standard template, as argued below:

> *"The **uneven geographical development of neoliberalism**, and its partial and lopsided application from one country to another, testifies to **its tentative character** and the complex ways in which political forces, historical traditions, and existing institutional arrangements all shaped why and how the process actually occurred on the ground."[3]*

Harvey further proposes, however, that albeit not uniform but rather "lopsided", neoliberalism does represent a global trajectory, and that "there has been everywhere an empathic turn" (Harvey, 2007:23), through the implementation of specific neoliberal tenets, practices or assumptions. Thus, while neoliberal implementation may not look identical/uniform in various countries, it's expansion and influence can be measured through the existence of its principles and overarching dogma, which manifests itself in varying degrees through these specific tenets.

Some of these critical tenets can be identified in Harvey's (2007:22-23) definition of neoliberalism, as offered earlier in the text, and are evident in the tracing of neoliberal development throughout history. Davies' (2014) biographical exploration of neoliberalism further concludes that the various definitions of the term across texts drawn from sociology, economic history and political economy, have four commonalities:

- **Victorian liberalism** is understood as being the initial inspiration for neoliberal ideology (this has been presented earlier in the text). However, this does not necessarily dictate an

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[3] Researcher's own emphasis

exact blueprint. Instead, Davies iterates that neoliberalism in itself, although certainly influenced by the Victorian model, is not a conservative or nostalgic project, but rather a modern, constructivist and inventive force "which aims to produce a new social and political model, and not to recover an old one" (Davies, 2014:310);

- The second commonality that Davies identified is the **targeting of neoliberal policy outside of the market,** such as universities, households, public administration and trade unions. This ties in with the broader understanding that neoliberalism stretches beyond economics. According to the review of literature offered earlier in this chapter, such targeting has one of three objectives: a) to bring these institutions and activities into the market for commodification, b) to reinvent them in a market-like way or, c) to neutralize/disband them so as to mitigate any threat to the neoliberal advancement;

- Despite neoliberalism being understood to hold the principle of reduced state at its core, the effective implementation of neoliberal theory in fact involves **significant action from the state in certain areas**. This was Davies' third commonality found in literature, in that "the state must be an active force and cannot simply rely on 'market forces'" (Davies, 2014:310). Neoliberal states are required to produce and secure the rules of institutional and individual behaviour which support and sustain neoliberal ideals, or what Davies (2014:310) recognises as "a certain ethical and political vision." Part of this vision includes reducing state influence in the provision of services and welfare through privatisation;

- Finally, the principle of **competition** lies at the heart of the neoliberal vision, and this is maintained through the **production of inequality**. These two concepts are considered to hold high value within the neoliberal framework "through which value and scientific knowledge can best be pursued" (Davies, 2014:310).

The above ideas match Harvey's definition and that of several other key neoliberal theorists and/or critics, reiterating the understanding of neoliberalism through its tenets rather than a single template theory. In certain contexts, some tenets may be more actively present and valued than others; it is their influence that helps us to understand how neoliberalism is advanced, and how it impacts upon society.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, an understanding of neoliberalism will be further unpacked through the exploration of key propositions/tenets, which fall under four umbrella areas: 1) Philosophy, 2) Market, 3) Society, and 4) State.

2.4.1. Philosophy

The philosophy of neoliberalism is that of individualism, freedom and choice. Meaning has been constructed through the adoption of these critical terms, which have existed and been valued outside of neoliberal discourse. It has been argued that the concepts of *freedom, individualism, progression, competition* and *globalisation*, have been used as covers for neoliberal infiltration and for the demise of collectivism and equality as egalitarian principles. Jones (2012:9) argues this in his review of the historical emergence of neoliberalism in America:

> *"Neoliberalism had the added appeal of appearing at one with traditions and myths of American individualism. Support for neoliberal policies from politicians such as Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan did not mean they thought of themselves as neoliberal. In the American context, neoliberal ideas usually crept in under the radar, subsumed under the banner of rugged individualism or libertarianism."*

Harvey (2005:2), in turn, defines neoliberalism as being predicated on three axiomatic assumptions, the first of which is methodological individualism. This proposition rejects previous historical notions of a collective interpretation and understanding of society, and instead views society as a sum of (rational) individuals.

As put forward by Harvey (2007:24), the "founding figures of neoliberal thought took political ideals of individual liberty and freedom… as the central values of civilization… in doing so they chose wisely and well, for these are indeed compelling and greatly appealing concepts." Harvey goes on to argue that neoliberal ideology assumes these values to be threatened and compromised by all forms of state intervention "that substituted collective judgements for those of individuals set free to choose." But – this is not to say that freedom of the individual and civil society movements are bound up in neoliberalism and birthed from its value system – rather these values have been co-opted by neoliberal ideology to advance an elitist individualism which proposes that the individual can only be free if it is isolated from, and/or has power over, the collective. Thus, often

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the antithesis of neoliberalism is a collective approach such as that adopted in the socialist Soviet Union – where the individual has no prominence or power and the state is an all controlling, top-down entity (Harvey, 2007).

In doing so, neoliberalism has succeeded in binding values such as individual freedom and dignity to its dogma, laying claim to them as being solely achievable through the neoliberal agenda. It proposes, therefore, that individual freedom can only be attainted if free from the collective of the state, and from the collective at large. As such, it holds as its banner: *The antithesis of neoliberalism is the antithesis of individual freedom.* But this is not necessarily the case – individual freedom does not come hand-in-hand with neoliberalism – in fact, it is argued that although neoliberalism is based on the rights of the individual, the notion of individualism does very little for individual freedom, but rather subjects the individual to the dictatorship of the market and the corporate elite. As outlined by Pratt (2006), individual self-reliance and moral responsibility have become preferable to a culture of decency. Harvey's second axiomatic assumption of neoliberalism (2005:2) is that of rationality theory, whereby individuals are viewed as inherently rational economic actors whose decisions and actions are solely determined by the "pursuit of perfectly formed self-interest." (Pratt, 2006:13). This ties in with the tenet of individualism, but goes beyond so to introduce the dominance of the market, the second overarching umbrella, which proposes an environment of rational individuals, whereby the market acts as a rational controlling entity.

2.4.2. Market

Neoliberal belief is in that of a dominant and limitless market (Harvey, 2007), and the superiority of the market as an institution for optimal resource allocation (Pratt, 2006). This links to Harvey's third assumption, that of market supremacy, whereby the free market is upheld as the ideal mechanism for the regulation and allocation of all societal and social resources (Mearns, 2014). Neoliberalism is concerned with promoting labour flexibility, depressing wages and weakening social welfare arrangements, with the generation of increased profit at the expense of increasing inequality (Harvey, 2007, 2011). Finance was the Capitalist god; in neoliberalism, the rational order of normality is the new deity. It is the DNA of society and must stand at the centre, as the life source of all thought, action and establishment. Increasing deregulation established the

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financial system as a primary centre of redistributive activity through what is argued as "predation" and "thievery" (Harvey, 2005:2-5). A significant feature of such an approach has been the outright promotion of debt incumbency "that reduced whole populations, even in the advanced capitalist countries, to debt peonage." (Harvey, 2005:2-5). This has often been assessed as stemming from a deeper, and darker motive than simply capital accumulation. As argued by Harvey (2005; 2007; 2014) and several theorists, underlying neoliberal financialisation is class power, and in this case, the restoration of such to the elite, restoring the conditions for capital accumulation and class power.

The debt trap which neoliberalism promotes (and more than often, enforces) is its primary means of accumulation *by* dispossession. Within the history of global neoliberal advancement, this has been achieved through the predatory manipulation of crisis, both in terms of its creation and management. It has been in times of crisis that finances have been deliberately redistributed from poorer countries to richer, dominant capitalist Western markets. State and transnational interventions, through groups such as the IMF and WB, have orchestrated crises and devaluations, with structural adjustment programmes introducing neoliberal ideals as the answer to such crises - but instead, these ideals serve to expand the advancement of wealthier states; free trade and an open market are only free and open for the countries who control (but don't necessarily possess) the capital. This stretches beyond country dominance to that of class dominance, with the state acting as the prime agent for the reversing of flow of capital from upper to lower classes that marked the social democratic era. This has resulted in a widening gap between the rich and the poor in environments where neoliberal principles dominate, and economic development is prioritised over matters of social justice and cohesion; discohesion is the tool of selective wealth and resource accumulation.

This can be mapped globally, with the concentration of wealth in the small oligarchies of the elite in countries where neoliberal "shock therapy" was introduced, including Russia and China demonstrating a "staggering surge in income inequalities and wealth." (Harvey, 2007:25). As such, neoliberalism has been viewed as a significant success from the viewpoint of upper classes, and therefore, despite its in fact dismal track record of enabling economic growth, has restored the class position of the ruling elites and thereby is retained and maintained by them. The failure

of other classes to participate in this wealth has been reduced to their individual responsibility, their failure to successfully compete in the market or to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" (Martin Luther King Jr, 1963).

Financial liberalisation further results in what Chomsky (Encirclement, 2009) refers to as a *virtual parliament* whereby irrational policies are voted against by capital flight - these irrational policies are seen as those which don't render capital profit, although they may benefit the wider population. This *virtual parliament* is argued as undermining democracy.

Finally, within this space, managerialism is seen as a dominant tenet of neoliberalism. As identified by Davies (2014), in his biographical literature review, a common theme between Marxist and post-structuralist analysis of neoliberalism is the acknowledgement of the rising power of the corporate in public and private life. "Arguably, it is the managerial freedom of corporate and quasi-corporate actors which is maximised under applied neoliberalism, and not markets as such" (Davies, 2014:315).

2.4.3. Society

The corporatization, commodification, and privatization of public assets, and indeed all public life, have been signal features of the neoliberal project. Neoliberal advancement has infiltrated public utilities, social welfare, and public institutions as new fields of capital accumulation. This includes water, transportation, public housing, education, healthcare, pensions, universities, prisons and the military, as being contracted by private wealth for profit gain. All of these processes amount to the transfer of assets from the public and popular realms to the private and class-privileged domains. Privatization, Arundhati (2001:16) argued, entails "the transfer of productive public assets from the state to private companies. Productive assets include natural resources: earth, forest, water, air. These are the assets that the state holds in trust for the people it represents. . . . To snatch these away and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history." This has markedly impacted the manner in which society functions and views its rights and needs.

Such corporatization has served to redefine the relationship between society and the state and according to Chomsky (2009) undercut democracy by taking these activities and societal rights

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"out of the public arena and… into the hands of unaccountable private tyrannies" (Encirclement film, direct quote). Furthermore, neoliberalism has brought with it the commodification of culture, history and intellectual creativity. Within such a socioeconomic policy context, the international and local landscape has seen the increasing impact of public sector and social welfare reform (Spolander et al., 2014), where "finance capital took command in the process of accumulation involving economy and society, politics and culture, and deeply marking the forms of sociability and the play of social services" (Iamamoto, 2009:7).

2.4.4. State

The primary neoliberal motivation for the reduced role of what is termed *the nanny state* of the welfare model is the public burden theory of welfare (Pratt, 2006). This assumption is one that holds state spending on welfare services as responsible for broader economic recessions and downturns, rather than the capitalist means of profit accumulation. The understanding here is that state intervention, in the form of welfare and safety nets, only serves to create a culture of dependency, poor work ethic and laziness. The neoliberal policy is not necessarily one that is out rightly against the poor (although it does promote capital flight and security to the wealthier classes), but rather positions itself on the notion that generating economic growth will benefit the poor from the top down, more than unsustainable hand-outs. Thus, the privatisation of services, whereby welfare is taken into the market, will be more effective in meeting the needs of the poor in the long run. Therefore, a tenet often identified within neoliberal governments is a shift of welfare responsibility from the state to that of private, community-based and non-governmental organisations. This links to the privatisation of all social and public life, including healthcare, education, housing, water, social services, pensions and unemployment insurance.

It can be assumed that the reduction of the nanny state and welfare provision implies a reduction, and redundancy, of the state altogether within the neoliberal concept. However, the state is in fact a critical role player in the implementation and maintenance of neoliberalism.

Within neoliberalism, one of the primary functions of the state is to create an environment in which neoliberalism and its policies can thrive. It has been argued that one of the more deviant actions in this regard is for the state to orchestrate crises and devaluations that will enable dispossession

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without sparking collapse or revolt (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004); this includes the implementation of structural adjustment policies (as administered by the IMF and WB) with a strong military hand to mitigate any significant resistance from civil society or other relevant groups. The state therefore becomes a prime agent of redistributive policies (Harvey, 2007). However, this largely serves to disempower and disenfranchise the electorate, undermining democratic assumptions of power, choice and responsibility. It shifts the state from one of serving the larger population to one that protects the interests of the elite, and squashes any revolt or need of the poor. Decisions are made by economics and profit, the virtual parliament as coined by Chomsky (Encirclement, 2009). Reforms become a top-down process with influence by (non-elected) supranational authorities such as the IMF and national government elites; all other players have lost most of their influence on national decision-making. As outlined by Monbiot (2016), politics became irrelevant to people's lives and instead, political debate is reduced to a select elite. Outside of such discussion, Monbiot asserts that those who were not within this elite have turned away from facts and arguments to slogans, symbols and sensations.

This is a key tenet within neoliberalism, a state that is an active role-player in neoliberal implementation by promoting privatisation, financialisation, reduced welfare and social spending, and the adoption of readjustment policies that favour profit accumulation over matters of social justice, collectivism and equality. The table below offers a summary of these four umbrella categories, their tenets and assumptions.

Table 4. Tenets and Assumptions of Neoliberalism

	Philosophy	**Market**	**Society**	**State**
Tenets	Constructivism Rationalism	Free Market Privatisation Financialisation Managerialism	Individualism Globalisation Self-responsibility	Reduced State Nanny State Warfare Outsourcing
Key Assumptions	Neoliberalism constructed meaning around the individual, competition, freedom, progression, globalisation. "Connected human freedom to the actions of the rational, self-interested actor in the competitive marketplace" (Jones, 2012: 2).	Democracy is undermined by a virtual parliament whereby policies are protested by capital flight; private sector and its principles dominate; efficiency; cost-effectiveness; profit margins; commodification of care, services.	Individual rather than collective; freedom of choice; inequality and competition; commodification of culture, knowledge, welfare; individual self-responsibility; survival of the fittest (for the market); restoration of class power.	Minimal state intervention; reduction of the nanny state; the welfare burden theory; Warfare; the shock doctrine; Deregulation; structural adjustment.

2.5. NEOLIBERAL EXPANSION: AN INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCOURSE

In all analyses and explorations of neoliberalism, an interpretive understanding of its expansion through discourse, meaning and language is of most significance, for this is the core of neoliberal momentum and sustainability. An interpretivist perspective believes that the nature of reality or being is socially constructed, subjective, and may change (Hussey & Hussey, 1997), and develops understandings through interpretations of meaning and dialogue. Many critics have highlighted the fact the neoliberalism, despite its grand statements, has done very little to achieve broad economic growth and success, with the 2007 financial crisis a testament to this. Since the aggregate global growth rates of 3.5 and 2.4. percent in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, global economic growth has dropped with neoliberal implementation to 1.4 percent in the 1980s, 1.1 percent in the 1990s and less than 1 percent since 2000 (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). In addition, its devastating results of inequality, poverty, environmental degradation, disillusioned politics, and

decreasing social cohesion, stability and wellbeing, begs the question: *how does neoliberalism continue to survive as the largely undisputed global economic philosophy?* Theorists such as Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) and Harvey (2007, 2014) have argued that this stems from three motivations, or persuasions:

1. *Neoliberalisation has come hand-in-hand with the increasing volatility of global capitalism.* Thus, its selective success has served to obscure its broader failure, with periodic episodes of growth interspersed with financial crises labelled as creative destruction or pinned to on-going practices of welfare distribution;

2. *The neoliberal concept has been largely successful in accumulating capital and growth for the richer classes and countries.* With much of decision-making power swayed by these dominant groups through Chomsky's *virtual parliament* (Encirclement, 2009), neoliberalism has remained the status quo and any resistance has been stifled by the elite and powerful;

3. *Finally, it has been embedded in the norms of society and personal life*, largely through dialogue and the construction of meaning.

The third motivation is, in the researcher's examinations, the most persuasive. Examining neoliberal expansion and influence beyond the 1970s, from an interpretivist perspective, comes through the unpacking of its dominance within hegemonic discourse, affecting ways of thought, and socio-economic and political practices "to the point where it is now part of the common-sense way we interpret, live in, and understand the world" (Harvey, 2007:21). A strong voice in neoliberal development during the 70s was the Chicago School of economics, which extended neoliberal tenets and ideals into the domains of social and individual life, and thus contributed to the broader expansion and construction of neoliberal subjectivity (Davies, 2014:312). Although the Chicago economic strand had been in existence since the first phases of neoliberal development, it is its psychosocial and cultural influence, which is seen as its greatest contribution to neoliberal expansion and modern understandings. It has been proposed, in fact, that the Chicago expansion of neoliberalism heightened its devastating effects by transforming it from a theory of market, state and economic growth, to one that is at play in every sphere of life.

Theorists of the Chicago School of thought such held strong beliefs in the capacity of economics to explain all forms of human behaviour (Davies, 2014), and pushed free market ideas into the areas of industrial organisation, information theory and consumer choice (Storper, 2016). The work of theorists within this school of thought was also understood as being influential in their application of neoliberal economics to social phenomena such as the family, education and crime, that is deemed by many as one of the most transformative achievements of neoliberal advancement (Davies, 2014:313).

Through these works, neoliberalism has moved from being a sound economic theory to protect the elite, to one that holds sovereignty over all aspects of societal functioning, including divisions of labour, social relations, welfare provisions, technology, land ownership and attachments, ways of thought, and even "habits of the heart" (Harvey, 2007:23). It is the lens through which we have begun to understand the world, and as such, has become so normalized that to bring it to question is to question fundamental norms of society and thought. This has largely come about through the "hegemonic mode of discourse" (Harvey, 2007:23) and a philosophical constructivism out of which neoliberal ideas have been channelled into everyday life. If understood through an interpretivist framework, which presumes that reality is a construct of discourse and meaning, theorists, such as Sewpaul and Holscher (2014) have argued that it is the narrative of neoliberalism that has become deeply ingrained in the societal mind and enabled its global infiltration. Such discourse imposes the values of various neoliberal tenets, rather than an entire theory, which, albeit to varying degrees, has a global overarching effect.

This is best summed up by Sewpaul & Holscher (2004:15)[4]:

> *"With the media dominated by upper-class interests,* **the myth could be propagated that certain sectors failed because they were not competitive enough,** *thereby setting the stage for even more neoliberal reforms… In short, problems arose because of the lack of competitive strength or because of personal, cultural, and political failings. In a Spencerian world, the*

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[4] Researcher's own emphasis

*argument went, only the fittest should and do survive. **Systemic problems were masked under a blizzard of ideological pronouncements and a plethora of localized crises.***"

Harvey supports this line of thought (2005:7), pointing to a pervasive influence that affects thinking and practice, to the degree that it has become normalized, with "individual freedoms … guaranteed by freedom of the market and of trade." Thus, it has been argued that over and above the devastating economic effects of neoliberalism, there have been, although at times less tangible, equally poor consequences for other spheres of public and social life (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004).

2.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Neoliberalism signifies an increasingly undisputed primacy of economics over other forms of rationality, where complex political, social and cultural constellations seem to have been reduced to economic issues, where policy decisions appear to make very little sense unless they make economic sense, and where the concept of welfare seems to have been reduced to the very limited version of economic welfare. As explored in the section on neoliberal tenets, neoliberalism's co-opting of principles such as individualism, freedom, success, work ethics, efficiency, growth, education, culture and even the concept and value of time, has served to so deeply embed neoliberal theory within these ideals to the extent that we cannot imagine the structure and functioning of these principles outside of the neoliberal concept. In this regard, even the personal life has been infiltrated and infected with such modes of thought. Competition, individual over collective, the welfare burden, and the concept of "pulling oneself up by their bootstraps" (Martin Luther King Jr, 1963), have become the norms through which we live. In such a world, it can only be understood that various professions and schools of thought are dramatically affected. Social work, a profession that serves as a bridge between the individual and the state, the collective and the structural, is one which has been deeply marked by neoliberal advancements, for such advancements and changes cannot leave the purpose and professional identities of welfare practitioners, such as social workers, untouched. The infiltration of neoliberalism in social work, on a global scale, will be explored in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL WORK AND THE GLOBAL NEOLIBERAL AGENDA

3.1. INTRODUCTION

As a highly contextual profession that works with individuals within their environments, it is critical that social work accurately position itself within the global world, in order to not only recognize and understand the challenges that exist for civil wellbeing, welfare and social service delivery (Spolander et al., 2014), but also to be able to identify and tackle the underlying macro socioeconomic and structural causes of many of the social challenges families and communities face (Harris, 2003; Howe, 1996; Jones, 2001). The social work profession has been, and continues to be, impacted by neoliberal discourse, and it is only through critical consciousness of such impact that the profession can appropriately respond. Such critical consciousness requires reflections of the motivations underlying the emergence of the profession, its vulnerability to (and also compliance with) state-based neoliberal agendas, its international principles and value system, and the challenges and conflicts of interest it is facing in today's neoliberal world. This chapter will explore the specific neoliberal tenets identified within academia as being at play within the social work profession under the banners of marketization, consumerisation, managerialisation and deprofessionalisation. This exploration will be broad in nature, with one or two more contextual reflections from several countries including South Africa. However, before this, for a more contextual understanding of why exploring the impact of neoliberalism on social work is both relevant and necessary, a brief overview of the profession, its beginnings and principles, will be presented.

This chapter will address the second objective of the study, in terms of conceptualising the impact of neoliberalism on social work, by exploring the specific neoliberal tenets at work within social work; and examining the implications of these tenets for social work on a global scale. A more detailed exploration of the impact of neoliberalism on South Africa, and South African social work, is offered in Chapter Four.

3.2. SOCIAL WORK: CAPITALIST BEGINNINGS MAKE FOR NEOLIBERAL CONCERNS

"[I]t will be argued that the profession of social work is inherently connected to the discourse of modernity as it has emerged in the 18th century and, to date, remains a significant force in our conceptualization of the world" (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:17). In their critical review of neoliberalism and social work, Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) present at length the early story of social work, and its relationship with capitalism. Following the above extract, the authors go on to further infer that the early beginnings of social work are rooted in the dual process of industrialization and urbanization, most notably in the emerging capitalist societies of Western Europe and the United States in the 18th and 19th century. These two intertwined phenomena disrupted traditional lifestyles, including early familial forms of support and resulted in the experience of social problems within community groups at large, particularly at that time in urban slums where wages were low and living conditions were poor. It can be argued that social work, therefore, was in fact born out of a need to protect and secure the wellbeing of this economic and class elite. Sewpaul and Holscher (2004:19) argue that even the provision of public welfare was initially motivated by the interests of upper classes who "had the power to define social problems" and "determine which solutions were adequate or inadequate."

The profession, as will be more concretely explored in the Fourth Chapter which looks at the history of South African social work, was thus birthed from both philanthropic ideals and the state's means of controlling urban poverty, illness and discontent (Clarke, 2004; Smith, 2014). As it evolved throughout history, it was subject to political sways and explanations of poverty, which were too, largely political in nature. As put forward by Pierson (1991:22), social work (and the welfare state) was both "a response to working class political pressure", as well as "a means of defusing the demand for further class-based and/or more revolutionary political action." Overtime, with the effects of socialist democratic ideals of equity and fairness, the profession evolved and later emerged as a helping one that was rooted in social justice and a means of holding the state to account for its provision to broader society, and in particular, the vulnerable. This is how the profession is viewed and understood today, a human-centered, and protection- and rights-orientated caring science. However, underlying this is its early commitments to social control and

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maintenance of the status quo. These ties have left a profession that is vulnerable to political agendas, and practitioners often in a state of identity confusion. It is within and through this contextual understanding that the impact of neoliberalism becomes ever more significant.

The table that follows is taken from Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) and presents an overview of the evolution of social work from the 19th century through to the 1970s, reflecting on its alignment with the socioeconomic context, its explanation of and approaches to the subject matter, its predominant model in theory and practice, its predominant intervention target and its location of intervention. The present understanding of social work post the 1970s can be depicted in the exploration of its global definition, which is offered in the section that follows the table. This, coupled with historical and neoliberal explorations, allows for an understanding of the identity confusion, which the profession faces – the two sides of the fence upon which it stands and neoliberalism exerts its influence.

Table 5. The Evolution of Social Work from the 19th Century to 1970s (adapted from Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004)

Year	19th Century	1910s - 1920s	1930s	Post WWII	1960s	1970s
Socioeconomic context	Industrialisation and urbanization	US peace movement and Progressive Party	Aftermath of the Great Depression	Building of the welfare state in Europe: post-war consensus	Student uprising	End of post-war economic growth period
Theoretical and ideological context	Rationalism and moral certainty	Rationalism and moral certainty	Mainstreaming of Freud's and other psychoanalytical theories	Mainstreaming of (positivistic) social sciences	Mainstreaming of critical theory	Mainstreaming of systems theory
Social Work						
Alignment with existing socioeconomic constellations	Emerging bourgeoisie: Fear of the poor; pity for the poor; need for moral upliftment of the poor	Existing professions, esp. medical; middle class; Roosevelt's Progressive Party Peace Movement	Existing professions, esp. medical; middle class; Renewed focus on the poor and unemployed	New academic elites within positivistic social sciences	Welfare state: political and administrative elites; the oppressed; marginalized minorities	Welfare state: political and administrative elites; the oppressed; marginalized minorities
Explanation of and approaches to its subject matter	Need for poor to develop appropriate values and attitudes to cope; Need to improve the socioeconomic	Need to overcome fragmentation of social work; need to develop coherent methodology; need for definable	Need to overcome fragmentation of social work; need to develop coherent methodology; need for definable techniques and	Development of theory-practice divide: diagnostic versus functional approaches; attempt at integration (person-in-situation); scientific	Interests of clientele, social workers and society at large coincide; structural explanations; patterns of exploitation and oppression; power	Interests of clientele, social workers and society at large coincide; any explanation is legitimate as long as it is clear how it fits into the overall explanatory system

Year	19th Century	1910s - 1920s	1930s	Post WWII	1960s	1970s
	conditions of poor communities	techniques and predictable outcomes; focus on psychosocial level of problems; need to maintain social work purpose and value base	predictable outcomes; focus on psychosocial level of problems; Rejection of medical metaphors; interest in concepts of growth and change; move away from intra-psychic explanations	knowledge combined with social values	constellations in society	
Predominant model in theory and practice	Friendly visiting; settlement house movement	Social casework; new specialisations: child welfare, medical social work, psychiatric social work	Social casework model dominates both diagnostic school and functional school of social work	Social casework model dominates both diagnostic school and functional school of social work	Casework; community work; empowerment; conscientisation; social advocacy; political action	Any intervention focus is legitimate; the existence of contradictions inherent in the overall system is not considered
Predominant intervention target	Individual and family; geographic location; sphere of policymaking	Individual and family; geographic location; sphere of policymaking	Individual and family	Individual and family	Individual and family; community at large; sphere of policymaking; society at large	Any intervention focus is legitimate; the existence of contradictions inherent in the overall system is not considered

Year	19th Century	1910s - 1920s	1930s	Post WWII	1960s	1970s
Location of intervention	Home; fringes of institutions; community	Home; fringes of institutions; community	Home; fringes of institutions; community	Home; fringes of institutions	Home; fringes of institutions; community; policymaking; committees; the public at large	Any intervention focus is legitimate; the existence of contradictions inherent in the overall system is not considered

Source: Sewpaul and Holscher (2004:37-3).

3.2.1. Defining Social Work and its Principles

Social work as a profession adheres to a global definition that is agreed upon by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW), made up of a cluster of countries and updated through constant and rigorous reflections and consultations within these umbrella groups. The most recent definition of social work, adopted by the IFSW and the IASSW in 2014 defines the profession as follows:

> *"Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels"* (IFSW, 2014).

This definition was agreed upon through numerous country consultations, with representation of over 110 country members. In examining this definition, Ornellas, Spolander and Engelbrecht (2016) found three critical shifts from that of the previous definition and its broader commentary and analysis, which had been in standing since 2012. These shifts included:

- *The strengthening of theory and knowledge:* This definition reiterated the broad scientific knowledge base of the profession and highlighted the significance of indigenous theory (in critique of the previous dominance of Western bias);
- *A shift from individualism to collectivism:* The previous definition had been heavily critiqued for its reliance on individualism and its advocacy for service delivery that worked from the inside outward. The new definition calls for a commitment to collectivism, in line with its promotion of social and economic justice;
- *A shift from micro-heavy to increased macro understandings of inequality and social problems:* While moving away from an individual-centric position, the revised social definition recognises the underlying structural causes of challenges facing communities

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and emphasises a collective, macro approach that works from the outside inward, to dismantle the structural roots of social problems.

The influence of neoliberalism on the profession can be best understood when mapping neoliberal principles against that of the profession's underlying value assumptions as indicated in the definition described above. Principles such as collectivism, addressing the structural causes of social problems, and reinvigorating the scientific and academic strength of the profession come into direct conflict with the neoliberal ideals of individualism, marketization, individual responsibility, welfare cutbacks and a competitiveness of inequality. Social work as a broader profession, therefore, seems to be in conflict with the neoliberal agenda. It is imperative that the profession understand how the neoliberal model is impacting on its functioning, intervention and development, as well as the communities it serves, so that it may appropriately respond. As highlighted by Ornellas et al (2016:14-15), core concepts such as social capital and social justice may be linked to, or co-opted by, the neoliberal concepts of self-help and a lack of consideration for the underlying structural influences and restrains on personal and social development, and "… unless social work is able to correctly identify the nature and causes of social distress, it will be unable to recommend and support appropriate interventions."

According to Lymbery (2001:369), the contribution of social work to society has always been contested and more recently, economic policy practice is resulting in social work professionals being susceptible to public devaluing of the services they provide.

3.3. THE NEOLIBERAL IMPACT

Within the present global socioeconomic policy context, the international and local landscape has seen the increasing impact of public sector and social welfare reform through neoliberal influence (Harvey, 2007; Spolander et al., 2014), impacting upon all areas of life, including social services and care (Harvey, 2005; Hay, 2002; Midgley, 1997). With a belief in lessened state, privatisation, increased infiltration of business and profit-centric ideals, as well as welfare cutbacks and the promotion of individualism over and above collectivism, the infiltration of neoliberal ideology in many societies has seen the responsibility of protection of the vulnerable and impoverished as belonging to community-based services, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and

the individual themselves. Beyond abdication of the state from its responsibility toward service provision, resource allocation, funding and the meeting of basic needs (which leaves the social work profession and NGOs inundated with community challenges that they have insufficient capacity to address), the actual professional role and identity of social work within society is being contested through neoliberal reform.

As proposed in the closing remarks of Chapter Two, the profession of social work is in a position that leaves itself particularly vulnerable to neoliberalism. Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) defend this particular connection between social work and neoliberal ideology, arguing that social work is distinct from other professions, making it far more vulnerable to the impact of neoliberal principles. This is largely connected to the profession's continuing grapple with its identity and place within not only the broader welfare landscape, but within the functioning of society as a whole. Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) refer to this as an on going questioning of the professional identity of social work, and such questions are not necessarily ones that other professions have to grapple with in the same way.

It is in the researcher's opinion that this stems from the fact that social work is, by and large, a political profession; or at the very least, it is embedded within political ideology and context. This therefore lends itself to the constant swaying of the profession by changing political climates and principles. This is evident throughout the interplay between history and professional shifts and movements. However, the profession has also always held radical and resistant strains which are revived through its continuous commitment to matters of social justice and human rights; when these are contested through political frameworks such as the neoliberal concept, the profession finds itself at a crossroads. Such resistance and radical, critical thought regarding neoliberalism has been evident in social work today. However, neoliberalism, as argued in the previous chapter, is so deeply seated within the societal mind, that its effects within both the ideological commitments, as well as the day-to-day practice of the profession, may not always be visible and social workers may find themselves resisting the neoliberal model, while simultaneously maintaining its status quo, and aiding their own demise. Engelbrecht (2015) refers to this when he recognises that social workers, both frontline and management, unwittingly embrace neoliberal principles through their lack of a critical understanding and assessment of the nature and

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implications of business management tenets on social work management and practice. This is the heart of the researcher's larger exploration - definitively unpacking the impact of neoliberalism on grassroots social work practice, outside of the academic periphery of critical reflection. Before such reflection can be effectively explored however, the specific neoliberal tenets at play within the profession need to be demonstrated through academic explorations.

As the exploration of neoliberalism as a socioeconomic model can best be undertaken through the unpacking of its critical tenets, so the influence of neoliberalism upon social work and its practice can best be understood through specific tenets and influential assumptions.

3.3.1. Neoliberal Tenets Influencing Social Work Identity, Practice and Development

There are several tenets, which can be identified as being at work within the social work environment. Harris (2014), a prolific writer on neoliberalism within social work, identifies three propositions that are increasingly played out in social work around the world in his work on *The Social Work Business*:

1. Markets are efficient and effective and should be introduced in as many and as wide a range of contexts as possible;
2. Individuals should be responsible for themselves and run their own lives;
3. Services in the public or voluntary sectors should be modelled on management knowledge.

He clusters these tenets under three overarching categories: *a) marketisation, b) consumerisation,* and *c) managerialisation*. These three processes represent a direction of travel in many countries, often cloaked by reference to globalisation, but "globalization is not simply a market-driven economic phenomenon. It is also – and very much – a political and ideological phenomenon…. Thus globalization must also be understood as the transnational ideology of neoliberalism which seeks to establish its ascendancy world-wide" (Mishra, 1999:7). Social workers are thus, not observing the impact of neoliberalism from afar. They are caught up in the processes of the marketisation, consumerisation and managerialisation of social welfare. Around the world the three tenets exist in different combinations, have different intensities and evince

different degrees of success in reaching their goals (Harris, 2003), however they represent a common trajectory, or empathic turn (Harvey, 2007).

Through significant literature review and exploration of key texts and authors writing critically on the influence of neoliberalism within the social work profession[5], the researcher has found sufficient confirmation of the above categories as being recognised (predominantly within academia) as influencing the profession. However, the researcher has identified an additional category, namely that of *deprofessionalisation,* which serves as an umbrella term for several additional tenets identified throughout literature as representing neoliberal impact on the profession (Engelbrecht, 2015; Sewpaul and Holscher, 2004). These four categories are outlined in Figure 1 below.

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[5] Dominelli, 2004; Engelbrecht, 2015; Harvey, 2005; Hay, 2002; Midgley, 1997; Sewpaul and Holscher, 2004; Spolander et al., 2014

Figure 1. Categories of Neoliberal Tenets within Social Work
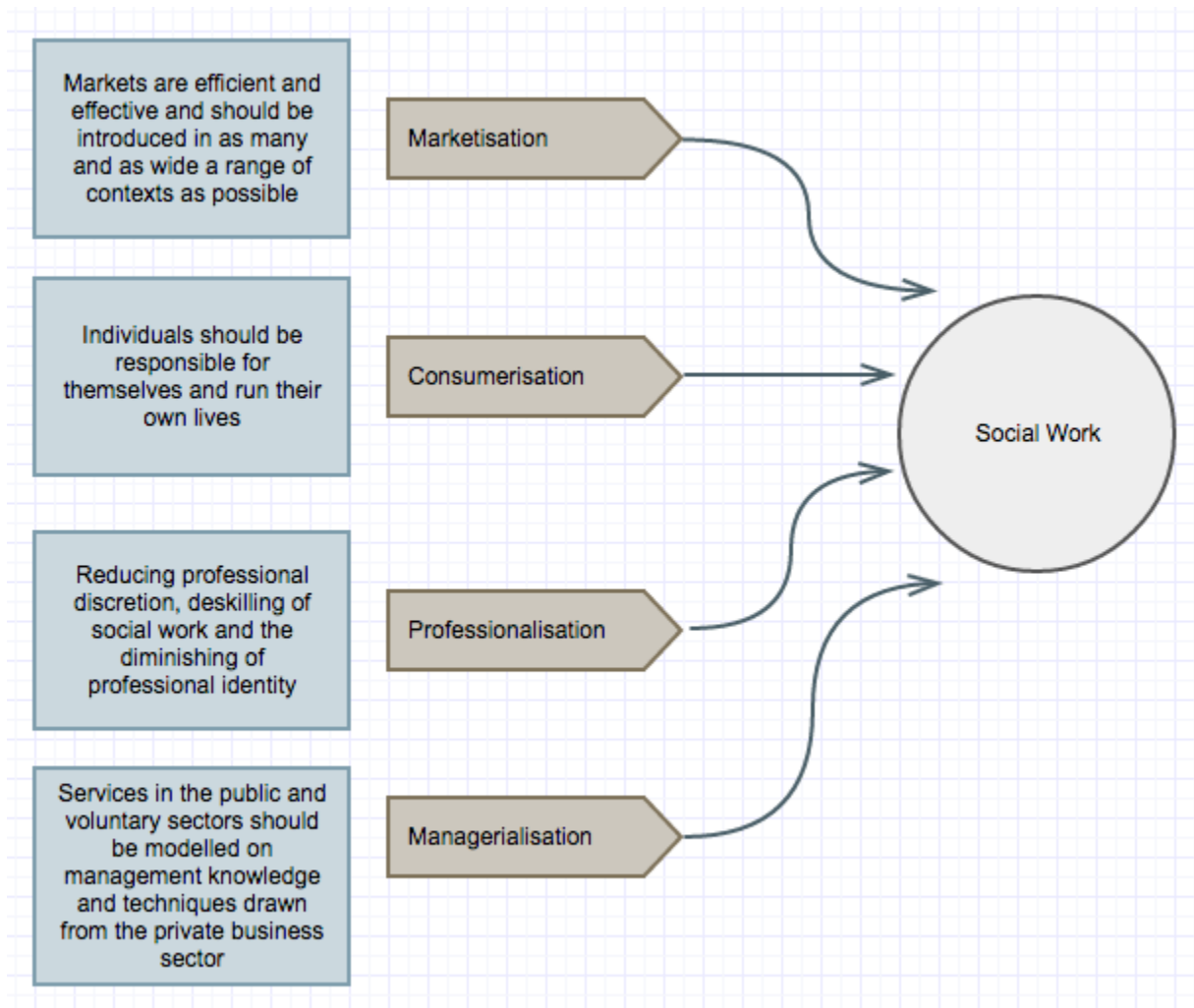
Source: *Adapted from Harris, 2014*

Within each of these categories are a number of specific tenets, which can more easily and tangibly be identified within social work training, practice, management and professionalisation (see Table 6 below).

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Table 6. Neoliberal Tenets within Social Work (adapted from Harris, 2014)

Category	Marketisation	Consumerisation	Managerialisation	Deprofessionalisation
Tenets	The growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations	The development of a dominant welfare discourse, which promotes self-reliance, and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing	Employing efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a yardstick, the preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards, and the predominance of management knowledge	Reducing professional discretion, deskilling social work, and the deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity

Each category is discussed separately in the text that follows.

3.3.1.1. Marketisation

> *The growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations.*

Here, the assumption is that markets are efficient and should be introduced in as many and as wide a range of contexts as possible (Harris, 2014). "Neo-liberalism holds that the social good will be maximised by maximising the reach of market transactions and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market" (Harvey, 2007:3). This tenet links with the broader assumptions within the category of State as explored earlier in the previous chapter. Social welfare is seen as an element of government's excessive spending, and is thus shifted to the market, where it is believed service delivery will be more efficient.

Within many country contexts, this has not always been labelled as an outright removal of the state from its responsibilities, but rather has been introduced under the guise of development, community participation, grassroots interventions and the prioritisation of human rights. Evidence

of this can be seen, for example, in the deinstitutionalization of mental health services, which has been rapidly spreading as a best practice along with the privatisation model (Ornellas, 2014). Based on community-centered and human rights principles, deinstitutionalization was, for example offered up as a way of removing the mentally ill from the damaging clinical environment, and re-introducing them back into society and communities; the idea was to promote community-based care which was viewed as far more humane and sustainable. However, although perhaps initial intentions may have been noble, deinstitutionalization was more often than not a guise for governments to significantly cut back on mental health spending, and to pass this responsibility onto communities and NGOs with often little to non resource, structure, capacity or funding support. The deinstitutionalization of mental health care within the South African context was explored by Ornellas (2014) when reflecting on the views of social workers on their role in mental health outpatient and community-based services; in this study, devastating consequences of this process were noted by social workers within the mental health field, who were interviewed as participants in the empirical study.

The experiences of individuals faced with mental health challenges, rather than being one of reconciliation, has been isolation and struggle. South Africa, for example, currently faces devastating consequences in this regard, whereby 94 out of 1000 individuals released from clinical institutions and placed within NGOs, have died as a result of improper care and capacity on behalf of the NGOs (eNCA, 2017). This reeks of abdication, rather than human-centeredness. As outlined by Gray (1998:25), "whether a greater emphasis on development... civil society [has] to carry the greater load of human need… camouflaging an abdication of the state's responsibility for welfare."

Such shifts are evident throughout the social welfare environment. Social workers operating within state-based departments are increasingly expected to adopt managerial positions, with services outsourced to NGOs and the private sector. Although NGOs have long played a significant role in welfare development, this has often been in partnership with the state, as a supporting mechanism or advocative watchdog. However, the dynamics of such provision are changing and the relationship between the state and civil society is one that is contested and fragmented. Social services and service providers such as NGOs are expected to rely less on state resources,

governance and provision, and instead to operate as private entities based upon private sector principles and expectations. The introduction of markets into social work, therefore, has several consequences for the global profession at large, the most predominant of which is the aforementioned shift of social responsibility to the NGO, civil society and the private sector; this tenet can be summarised as follows:

a. Outsourcing of services

Services are outsourced to private and NGO bodies. As a tenet, this is often identifiable when what were previously state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs. Thus, it is not necessarily a matter of the nature of work being undertaken by NGOs and private entities in the realm of social welfare, but rather a reflection on what of that work has been more recently moved over from state responsibility to other groups, with little corresponding support and structural investment. Moreover, often in monopoly conditions whereby profit is the main driver, the private sector can produce inefficient and expensive services (Flynn, 2007). As recognised by Harris (2014), "markets can introduce a race to the bottom on price alone." A further tenet, therefore, is the existence of private and expensive welfare services accessible to only the wealthy, with poorly resourced and over-capacitated government and NGO services for vulnerable groups. Where previously state expenditure would finance public systems of provision in a manner that was independently and equally applied and monitored, neoliberalism has transformed such services, which are (or should be) a citizen right, to a private market of competition and consumerism. Thus, public provision is seen as simply an alternative to private provision, reducing public services to commodities chosen by consumers, rather than necessary and rights-based; the choice between public and private thus becomes one of cost-effectiveness (Fine & Leopold, 1993:301). This maintains the status quo of inequality and the welfare burden.

Other tenets within the category of marketisation include:

b. Dominance of contractual relationships

A second consequence of marketisation within social work is the dominance of contractual relationships. By contractual relationships, Harris (2014) is referring to the shift of clients to that of service users, who are essentially purchasing or contracting a service as one would within a

business environment. This approach within social work serves create an us and them, input-output social work-service-user relationship (Harris, 2014), and further propagates within social work practice and interactions, a marketisation of relationships. According to Froggett (2002), this results in an expectation for service-users to exercise rational discretion on their own behalf when engaging with health and welfare services, assuming that such needs are transparent, require no interpretation and is simply a commodity to be purchased.

In this regard, neoliberalism promises that markets will liberate service users from their alleged roles as passive recipients and/or victims of social work services and turn them into active, rational, self-interested, choice-making customers (Harris, 2014). Instead this only serves to minimise the impact of social work intervention and turn the client-worker relationship into one of ticking boxes and value-for-money considerations. This largely undermines the social work intervention process and places significant responsibility on individuals to take responsibility for their wellbeing, in a manner that is damaging rather than empowering.

c. *Markets enable governments to hold the consequences of their policies and funding levels at arm's length*

Marketisation further undermines the social justice element of social welfare and social work provision. As outlined by Harris (2003), market outcomes can be presented as the result of impersonal forces that are neither fair nor unfair. This enables governments to deflect responsibility for the consequences of policy changes and cuts, appropriating markets instead to perform a powerful political legitimation function (Harris, 2014) and referring social care to Chomsky's definition of the virtual parliament (Encirclement, 2009) as outlined in Chapter Two.

Historically, social welfare held some form of autonomy and discretion within the socio-political play of society; social work, although a profession deeply embedded in political values, was still able to maintain some distance from the conditions and dynamics of the capitalist market (Marshall, 1981). Neoliberalism has eroded this relative autonomy (Ferguson et al., 2005). As a result, the antipathy of neoliberalism toward welfare is supplemented by the imbuing of welfare within market relations and principles (Harris, 2014).

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3.3.1.2. Consumerisation

> *The development of a dominant welfare discourse, which promotes self-reliance, and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing.*

The third category of neoliberal tenets influencing social work is that of consumerisation, whereby the dominant welfare discourse promotes self-reliance, and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing. From the outset, this does not necessarily sound like a negative encouragement. It can, instead, be viewed as empowering language. However, if examined more closely, it has deviant assumptions of state abdication, and the allocation of individual blame for social problems that are by and large as a result of structural and policy-based failures. Individuals cannot be held responsible for the challenges they face under a state's shortcomings.

> *"It's alright to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps" (Martin Luther King Jr, 1963).*

Harris (2014) outlines, how, beyond the negative consequence of blame, consumerisation also lends itself to individuals defining themselves and their identity through their role as consumers. Engelbrecht (2015) highlights these changes as being reflected in the movement from clients and citizens, toward consumers, service users and service recipients. These two factors then have certain consequences for social work:

a) The Individualism vs. Collectivism Debate

The concept of self-reliance can be linked with the neoliberal valuing of individualisation over collectivism. Individualism designates individuals as free, autonomous agents responsible for their own wellbeing and demise, and much the same, the marketisation and consumerisation of services and service-users stems from this individualistic assumption. Previously, services made available through public sector systems of provision signalled a commitment to collective rather than individual interests, where social and political objectives took precedence over economic concerns (Harris, 2014). This is no longer the case under the neoliberal concept. The collective

wellbeing of communities is seen as being achieved through individual competition and success; inequality drives economic growth and cannot be entirely eradicated.

Through neoliberal reform, welfare policies and social work have taken up this development of individualism and self-reliance (Sewpaul, 2013), over and above the development of a collective, caring and enabling socioeconomic environment. Consumerism equals choice and autonomy, which equals freedom, and which equals further consumerism (Harris, 2014).

> *"The good citizen is one who wholeheartedly engages in an ongoing project of the personality defined by continuous consumption…. "Freedom" is freedom to create personality and identity through the act of consumption' (McDonald, 2006: 127).*

The profession's overemphasis on individualism and self-reliance was identified in the critique of the previous 2012 international definition, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Although the 2014 definition (IFSW, 2014) demonstrates increased awareness of this characteristic within professional knowledge and practice, and signals a shift toward collective approaches, the concept of individualism is still deeply ingrained within the makeup of social work and to be both conscious of, as well as actively move away from this neoliberal logic within today's globalized world is challenging.

However, this debate between the individual and collective perspectives of social work is such that the profession has long been conflicted between these two points, with community work and social change on the one end, and therapeutic individual and family-based intervention on the other (Staniforth, Fouche & O'Brien, 2011:193). While some academics and practitioners suggest that social workers who practice counselling or therapeutic methods as their core functions have 'sold out' (Staniforth, Fouche & O'Brien, 2011:193) and moved away from social work's roots of social justice (Specht & Courtney, 1994), others have maintained that social justice can still be achieved through individual change and that the social worker has a therapeutic role to play in intervention (Buchbinder, Eisikovits, & Karnieli-Miller, 2004). Staniforth, Fouche and O'Brien (2011), highlight that there has been much written about this debate (see Beddoe & Maidment, 2009; Staniforth, Fouche & O'Brien, 2011; Weld & Appleton, 2008).

b) *Neoliberal consumerism is derived from the private sector marketplace, where the goal is to encourage as much demand and consumption (and profit generation) as possible.*

Neoliberalism proposes that the freedom of choice that comes with individualism comes hand-in-hand with a surplus of services and capacity (Needham, 2006:852). However, within the context of social work and welfare, often the relationship between demand and resources does not always allow service users such abundant choice. Thus, as outlined by Harris (2014), social workers are often consumed with the management of scarce resources and capacity in the face of excessive demand, rather than actively involving themselves in a competitive market that encourages consumer choice. Thus, individuals may not always be in the position "where they can shop around and take their 'custom' elsewhere" (Butcher, 1995:161). More often than not, this is the case for individuals who cannot afford the expense of private services that may be more readily, and variably, available.

Moreover, Needham (2006:856) highlights that often individuals are turned away as the services they demand are not available unless they are in a critical condition (as is largely the case with the example of the deinstitutionalization of mental health care in South Africa as raised earlier). This is as a result of increased demand with limited resource and service availability. Thus, they are "being told that they will not receive a service until they get worse" (Needham, 2006:856). This does not encourage empowerment or the generation of wellbeing, nor does it allow for the appropriate (and necessary) implementation of preventative services that are often far more financially and socially effective. Thus, rather than neoliberalism and consumerism creating a surplus of choice, which allows individuals autonomy, the result is often a scarcity of appropriate resources and needed services.

c) *Consumerism hides the reality of how people come into contact with social* work

According to Harris (2014), social work may be less of a consumer choice than it is a response to stressful conditions. However, the neoliberal assumption frames the individual as one that is a rational actor, in control of their life, 'selecting' social work services as they would commercial products. This does not accurately depict the financial, emotional, social and often psychological state many individuals are experiencing when they seek out, or are referred to, social work services. Alongside this, the everyday complexity of social work is sidelined by neoliberalism's

notion of rational, self-interested consumers making choices (Harris, 2014). As was highlighted in a critique of the international social work definition (Ornellas et al., 2016), the neoliberal discourse does little to take into account the underlying structural and macro-collective causes that bring individuals into contact with social work. It is more often less of a consumer choice, than a gross necessity, that often involves the interaction of several professions and interactive processes. Furthermore, neoliberalism idolizes the private sector as holding the answers to the social challenges that individuals may face, while understanding little of the complexity of social work intervention.

3.3.1.3. Managerialisation

Employing efficiency and cost-effectiveness as yardstick, the preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards, and the predominance of management knowledge.

This is likely the most notably impactful neoliberal tenet on social work practice in recent years. Harris (2014) and others go as far as to assert that managerialism has been adopted as a means of spearheading what Harris (2014) refers to as a permanent revolution in the public sphere, whereby neoliberal ideas are materialised through the organizational glue of managerialism (Clarke, 2004). The assumption underlying managerialism is that organisations would be most effective if they operated using business principles, including managerial norms, procedures and standards, efficiency and cost effectiveness as the yardstick through which organisational objectives are identified. As outlined by Clarke (2004:129), "[P]erformance" is a particular development within this framing of organizational control." Thus, performance indicators are developed to reflect organizational objectives, targets are set, and progress is monitored in relation to these identified performance indicators (Harris & Unwin, 2009). Such business principles minimize the human element of social work practice to the 'ticking of boxes' and completion of tasks in a manner that is considered the most efficient use of time, resources and finances. According to Engelbrecht (2015), the emergence of evidence-based practice can be viewed as influenced by managerialist assumptions, where only those practices with high quantitative success rates and promotional value are regarded as worthy of replication.

The impact of this on social work is that for the views and opinions of the profession to be legitimised, there is a need for objective, scientific knowledge over and above often subjectively based human interpretations. Managerialism ties in with the individualism versus collectivism debate, where collective professional loyalty is reoriented in favour of individual organizational commitment (Harris, 2014), and notions of best practice and the one best way prescriptions of managerial models such as New Public Management (NPM) reinforce this individualised stance; NPM is defined in Box 1 on the page that follows.

Although best practice, in the sense of celebrating and unpacking successful organizational innovations within the social work field can hold some benefits, the focus within the managerial approach is one of efficiency over and above social effectiveness.

The implementation of best practice is furthermore, often undertaken with little consideration of context, indigenous knowledge and needs, as well as the measurement of implications over a long period of time. As argued by Flynn (2000:43), there is "no single form of managerialism that suits all circumstances", and to propose New Public Management as the one best way is to yet again minimise the social work approach. This has often been referred to as the MacDonalisation of processes, whereby complex and human-centred processes are broken down into repeatable tasks and activities to produce uniform results and outputs (Harris, 2014). In this way, complex tasks are channelled into clearly labelled boxes that need to be ticked through established procedures, norms and standards.

Box 1. New Public Management

"New Public Management" is the umbrella term used to cover several features of the neoliberal approach to the organisational management of public services. The term came into frequent use in the UK in the 1990s, with the Conservative government's implementation of a marketised approach to public services from 1979 to 1997. The New Public Management (NPM) approach introduces into public service neoliberal tenets such as competition, the demarcation of the consumer versus service provider, the measuring of outputs and outcomes over and above inputs and process, target performance monitoring and evaluation, and the generation of procedures and regulations to maximize organizational and

employee effectiveness and efficiency. Some of the key characteristics of NPM can be summarized as follows (Engelbrecht, 2015; Harris, 2003, 2014):

- Attention to outputs and performance rather than inputs;
- Organizations being viewed as chains of low-trust relationships, linked by contracts or contractual type processes;
- The separation of purchaser and provider or client and contractor roles within formerly integrated processes or organizations;
- Breaking down large scale organizations and using competition to enable "exit" or "choice" by service users;
- Decentralisation of budgetary and personal authority to line managers.

The emergence of NPM can be recognized as the operationalisation of neoliberal ideology, with consequences for service delivery, social worker-service user interaction, process, and the control and accountability of social workers.

Furthermore, in his exposition of social work management versus general business-orientated management principles, which are proposed in the neoliberal model, Engelbrecht (2015:315) outlines the normative nature of social work practice, which "is influenced by value judgements, since all social work activities are ultimately informed by one or another view of what social justice is." Table 7 presented below is adapted from Engelbrecht's (2015) illustration, and demonstrates the contradictions between social work management and that of the neoliberal approach. Although this table focuses on management as a method in social work, it can be largely extrapolated to other areas of social work versus neoliberal functioning. Self-interest, consumerism, individualism, commercialisation, dependence, and profit generation are the antithesis of social work's value of justice, equality, collectivism, citizen's rights, empowerment, development and its service to vulnerable groups.

Table 7. Differences between Social Work Management and Neoliberal Management

CHARACTERISTICS	SOCIAL WORK MANAGEMENT	NEOLIBERAL MANAGEMENT
Values	Social justice, equality	Self-interest, growth through competition
Targets	Vulnerable individuals, families, groups, communities and grassroots movements	Consumers
Accountability	Multiple	Usually single
Primary Beneficiaries	Citizens, clients, service-users, emerging organisations	Owners, shareholders
Primary Funding Sources	Government, donations	Fees, charges
Products	Social welfare services	Commercial products and services
Legal Considerations	Citizens' rights, government's statutory requirements	Consumers' rights, purchasing power
Strategies	Enhancing independence	Creating dependence
Ultimate Goal	Enhancement of people's wellbeing, social development	Maximum profit

Source: Adapted from Engelbrecht, 2015

Once again, the use of dialogue and narrative to construct (or rather cloak) meaning is evident in this regard, as managerialism is introduced under the banner of accountability, transparency, fiscal austerity, and public legitimacy (Clarke, 2004). For example, within managerialism, a key intention is to cuts costs. This is often cloaked in the language of cost efficiency, doing more for less and achieving value for money (Harris, 2014). Sewpaul and Holscher (2004:vii) identify it as social work falling "prey to the 'realism of neoliberalism'… [which] demands a technical, managerial and apolitical approach to re-addressing poverty."

Harris (2014) summarises the impact of neoliberal managerialism on social work as being found in three key trends:

- *Commodification* involves identifying discrete problem categories and a menu of service options in order to quantify and cost service outputs. This often reduces social work to a

series of one-off transactions, depriving it of meaningful working relationships with and commitments to service users;

- *Reducing funding* to produce efficiency gains exerts downward pressure on costs by imitating the pressure towards falling profits in capitalist markets;

- *Exerting greater control over professional space*, for example through the use of 'dashboards' as a means of heightening surveillance of the work of individual social workers and groups of social workers.

Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) further identify managerial impact as leading to:

- Tunnel vision: an emphasis on phenomena that are quantified in the performance management system at the expense of unquantified aspects of performance; and,

- Gaming: minimising the apparent scope for performance improvement to avoid increased expectations and higher targets in the future.

3.3.1.4. [De]Professionalisation

> *Reducing professional discretion, deskilling social work, and the deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity.*

The final category of neoliberal tenets within social work is that of de-professionalisation. This comes about largely through the culmination of the above three categories, resulting in a reduced level of professional discretion and autonomy through the managerialisation, marketisation and consumerisation of the profession. With the neoliberal idolization of the private sector and its principles, and a commitment to cost effective and profit generating social services, the task of social work is often given over to less qualified, or entirely alternative professions. Thus, whereas in the past, social workers have largely been viewed as the primary providers of welfare services, this role is now being shared with various other professions and sub-professions, such as community development workers, child and youth care workers and so forth (Engelbrecht, 2015). As further outlined by Engelbrecht (2015), the employment of non-social workers to manage and

supervise professional social workers, in many cases, is thus a result of neoliberal and managerial tenets, rather than of incompetence or a scarcity of senior and competent social workers.

The role of social work is thus being largely contested and brought into question, and its claims to a specialist body of knowledge have been eroded. One can again bring in the example of mental health care in South Africa as earlier discussed, whereby previously social work-based intervention with individuals experiencing mental health challenges is now being undertaken by the loosely termed mental health professionals (Ornellas, 2014); many of these individuals have been trained in the discipline of health, without holding the necessary social work skills and knowledge base that is required when implementing social intervention. This deskills the profession and diminishes its professional identity. Similar trends can be seen with older people, adults with physical disabilities and child and family welfare. Harlow et al (2012) view this shift as blurring professional boundaries, under the guise of streamlining service provision and encouraging a more flexible workforce.

3.4. NEOLIBERAL SOCIAL WORK: A GLOBAL MARCH

The influence of the above changes and infiltration of neoliberal principles within social service provision and the social work profession has been expressed by social workers and academics across the globe (Engelbrecht, 2015; Ornellas et al., 2015; Spolander et al., 2014). This accumulation of reduced welfare provision; reduced state support of civil society, social work and NGOs; the implementation of managerialist principles; the promotion of individualism and client self-reliance; and the reduction in professional discretion and identity, has led to a profession which focuses more on survival than providing quality interventions to the communities they serve (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). The language and principles of neoliberalism and managerialism is fast displacing the language of participation, equality, relationship and social justice (Heller, 2000:150) and social work becomes a living embodiment of this at both a conscious and unconscious level (Carey, 2008).

However, the above does not necessarily suggest a crude convergence theory in which the same detailed neoliberal template for social work is emerging internationally. In individual countries, the extent to which each of these tenet categories as previously indicated have developed, as well

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as in what combinations they have developed and will develop, are path dependent. The tenets are dynamic processes that represent neoliberalism on the move as it colonises the world and their development differs according to the nature of politics, particularly the extent and intensity of class and other struggles, constitutional arrangements, economic circumstances and so on (McDonald et al, 2003). The more these tenets develop in a particular country, the more they result in neoliberalism becoming a bounded rationality that seeks to limit what is knowable, say-able and do-able in social work (Harris, 2014).

Thus, while the influence of neoliberalism is evident in the social work profession at both international and national levels, it is recognized that the degree of this influence differs across countries, as does the reaction of the social work profession to such policy reformation and challenges. The Western approach has more keenly evolved and moved onto a managerial system. Harris (2014) amongst many other writers and academics, highlight the negative transformation of social work due to managerial influence. The profession has become rigidly structured and increasingly, across Western countries, social work and social services are being privatized and less supported by the state.

For example, in the 1970s, **British** social workers had begun to break away from the narrow, individualised and often pathologising focus, which had characterised much of social work practice until then. The 1980s, however, in contrast, showed a period of dramatic retreat. As the decade progressed, a combination of factors rising from neoliberal reform, which included an increase in mass unemployment, a financial squeeze on social work spending and a hostile government and media agenda, intent on portraying social work as a 'failing profession', combined to reduce the scope for progressive practice (Clarke, 2004). Social work has thus been shrunk to suit the situation, and to perform its bare minimum to stay protected from the brutal accusations. The growth of managerialism and New Public Management within social work during that period, an extension of market forces into the social work profession, further squeezed the potential of social work to act as a force for social change and added to a growing sense of alienation amongst many front-line workers (McDonald, 2006). However, the rise of the neoliberal agenda within the UK has also influenced the re-emergence of a radical and socialist-collective profession through movements such as the activist group SWAN (Social Work Action Network).

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Although such an influence is perhaps most ardently evident within the British context, this is not an isolated development. Rather similar patterns of both influence and resistance within the social work profession can be seen across EU and non-EU countries. Within Europe, the devastating economic crisis and the implementation of stringent neoliberal austerity measures, has had a massive impact upon the nature and scope of social service rendering and social security provision, as well as the debates regarding the re-politicisation of the profession (Ioakimidis, Cruz Santos & Herrero, 2014). The impact of this in many EU countries has been a rising resistance and an active social work voice against such policy reforms. **Spain,** for example, has demonstrated a particularly strong resistance movement, with the establishment of a campaign known as 'The Orange Tide'. This campaign captured the attention of the media and placed pressure on the state to back down from its continued service cuts (Martinez-Roman, 2013). According to the IFSW (2014), the Orange Tide was giving hope, direction and voice to social workers and users of social services. This kind of resistance can be found in many other countries, such as the international movements of SWAN in **Greece**, **Ireland, Canada** and **Japan**; the New Approach movement in **Hungary**; the Direct Social Work movement in **Slovenia**; and the Far East Progressive Social Work movement in **Hong Kong**.

In many developing countries, social work is still attempting to establish itself as a profession, and thus such resistance may be viewed differently, with a stronger emphasis on the development of indigenous knowledge and values. This is perhaps most apparent within **Brazil**, with the much earlier Social Work Reconceptualisation Movement of 1965, that questioned traditional Western models of social work and began to reconstruct itself based on historical and theoretical methodological foundations from the Marxist tradition, relying on ethical and radically humanistic values and principles (Iamamoto, 2009:18). With the infiltration of neoliberal ideology at the state level, Brazilian social work has engaged in social struggles for recognition, equality and the access to rights and social measures for all citizens. Within the **Russian** context, individual social workers are increasingly challenging government approaches to develop services based on contemporary knowledge, despite the Russian social work profession being in its early development stages (Schmidt, 2009).

Within South Asia, the social work profession is still viewed by many as a voluntary activity, and often non-qualified individuals, or professionals from other social science backgrounds, are given social work positions, challenging the establishment of a uniform profession (Li, Han & Huang, 2012). This situation is particularly persistent within **India**, despite the lobby and advocacy efforts of social work bodies to urge governments to make social work an exclusive qualification for appointments to suitable positions within the social welfare board. This is influencing social work professional development, with a high number of social work students electing to move over to human resources and thus serving capitalist forces rather than empowering the impoverished (D'Souza & Muniraju, 2011). Yet despite this, resistance within the profession can still be found, and there have been growing movements toward a social work that is anti-depressive and community orientated. In **China**, the growing influence of neoliberal policies is threatening the post-2006 identification of the need for universal provision of community social service provisions (Li, Han & Huang, 2012), and despite the unprecedented support and investment of the state in the social work profession, the movement of social workers into civil society and community-based organisations has not necessarily been well-received or understood (Li, Han & Huang, 2012).

This contradiction of state policy by neoliberal ideals is also evident in **South Africa**, where despite the adoption of a transformative and developmental framework post-apartheid, creating a new form of developmental social work (Engelbrecht et al., 2015), neoliberal reform has been at play beneath the surface (Bond, 2000), resulting in the task of community-based intervention being handed over to non-governmental organisations, despite a mass reduction in funding and support from the government. The implementation of managerialism and performance-measurement requirements for funding is in direct contradiction to the welfare policies originally established, and has left many South African social workers feeling ineffective and powerless to implement the development agenda.

3.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is evident that the social work profession is undergoing challenges world-wide, with its values and ideals being infiltrated by neoliberal reform, and its continued struggle to establish itself as a certain and politically-autonomous profession. As a result, it can be argued that the profession

has little choice but to become more keenly aware of global realities and forces, and to respond (Jones & Truell, 2012). The tenets of neoliberalism at play within social work can be found within the categories of marketization, consumerisation, managerialisation and deprofessionalisation, leaving a profession deeply marked by the neoliberal agenda at a global level. This is evident in the South African context and holds particular significance with South Africa's apartheid past. The infiltration of neoliberalism into post-apartheid South Africa will be presented in the chapter that follows, alongside a critical and interpretive mapping of the history of social work within both a pre- and post-apartheid South Africa. The development of neoliberalism and social work will be presented alongside each other through key historical events, in order to understand when and how neoliberal ideals began to impact on the profession itself and where current challenges can be found.

CHAPTER 4: NEOLIBERALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: TALKING LEFT, WALKING RIGHT – THE SOCIAL WORK DILEMMA

"Each social-welfare system, in seeking to promote aspects of the human condition, is, as is clearly evidenced in the South African context, shaped by a unique interplay of economic, historical, social, cultural, geographical, religious, and political forces."[6]

4.1. INTRODUCTION

With a history tied to capitalism and state agendas, a dark apartheid-related past, and a confusing short-lived entry into the post-apartheid developmental agenda, the development of South African social work is nuanced and complex, and requires further exploration in order to understand how the infiltration of a neoliberal agenda in the newly democratic South Africa impacted professional practice, and continues to do so today. In this chapter, the development of social work in South Africa will be mapped against the emergence of various socio-political events and policy formations, walking the profession through important eras within South Africa's history, including its shifts from colonialism, to apartheid, to social democracy and, later, to neoliberal contradictions. With this exploration, the present context of South African social work will be critically reflected upon within the country's current socioeconomic and political framework(s). This chapter will aim to meet the third objective of the study, in terms of critically analysing the influence of the identified global neoliberal tenets on social work within South African NGOs, through reflecting on current South African social welfare policies; the day-to-day frontline services of social workers; and the management practices of social workers.

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[6] Chetty, 1999:67

4.2. REVIEWING THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WORK THROUGH AN INTERPRETIVIST PERSPECTIVE

The history of social work in South Africa is wrapped up in colonialism, racialism and a capitalist white hegemony. However, that being said, interpretation of how social work began, expanded and evolved to where it is today is largely dependent on the discourse-framework through which its history (and the history of the country at large) is understood. Interpretivism (also referred to as Subjectivism) is an ontological position, which asserts that social phenomena is accomplished by social actors and infused and defined by their meanings (Bryman, 2012). An interpretivist perspective, as outlined earlier in the text, thus believes that the nature of reality or being is socially constructed, subjective, and may change, and that meaning is constructed through dialogue. In examining the origins and development of social work in South Africa, individualist, liberal, colonial, masculine and white hegemonic discourses generally prevail (Smith, 2014; Tsotsi, 2000; Worden, 2008). Therefore, "how events and developments are understood is determined by which version of history is used to interpret them… The task of examining the origins and development of social work is fraught with competing narratives" (Smith, 2014:305). Smith (2014) identifies three broader competing discourses in South African historical analysis:

- *Marxism*: This represents a discourse that was part of a Marxist, revisionist and black radical paradigm and encourages a radical reinterpretation of South Africa's past (Visser 2004:10). Within this discourse framework, the central issue is the relationship between capitalism, as a mode of production, and apartheid's racial structures (Lester, 1996);

- *Liberalism*: Liberal historians trace the origins of segregation in South Africa to the Afrikaner, frontier tradition of racism (Cell, 1989). South Africa is viewed as a dual economy with two distinct societies, and interpretation of narrative downplays the earlier structural consequences of exploitative relations of production, which used both race and class as a convenient stratifying force;

- *Nationalism (Afrikaner Nationalism)*: This perspective views South African development in terms of the building of the Afrikaner "herrenvolk" nation state, and attaches meaning to the unified experience of the Afrikaner "volk" (Worden, 2008:96). Apartheid, therefore, was an important means of constructing political identity, forged out of Afrikaner diversity.

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Reflecting on South African history from the above three perspectives will result in three varied historical accounts of South Africa, apartheid, social work, and the impact of neoliberalism. It is thus necessary for the researcher to be careful when presenting a historical picture of the profession and subsequent neoliberal infiltration, to ensure that the presentation of history corresponds with the critical stance adopted in previous chapters; this tends to lend itself toward the Marxist discourse as depicted above. However, it can be said that Liberalism and Afrikaner Nationalism have dominated the historical unpacking of South Africa, with occasional alternative hegemony ebbing in and out of interpretations through radical reforms and waves of critical consciousness, although this is understood as being outside of the norm. By and large, the story of South African social work is told through the Liberal and/or Afrikaner nationalistic lens. However, in the exploration of meaning, Gramsci (1935) calls for a counter-history to displace given thought and release common understandings from their privileged positions. Liberal and Afrikaner nationalist discourse may therefore be challenged and displaced by a counter-history, which acknowledges the significant role of capital industrialisation and racist, exploitative relations of production. According to Smith (2014:305), developments within the social work profession are not merely formed from a natural progression of theories and practices, but rather are deeply contextual and shaped by broader conflicts and forces.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, the researcher will explore the history of South African social work, alongside neoliberal emergence, primarily through two key South African texts: the dialectical-historical unpacking of Smith (2014) and the neoliberal critique of Sewpaul and Holscher (2004); several other influential writers will be referred to as means of substantiating findings. The two texts adopt a critical approach to South African historical hegemony, and highlight the role of capitalism (and later neoliberalism) in shaping and determining racial segregation, the structural and narrative fabric of South African society, and the role of social work. The researcher thus adopts a perspective akin to that of the Marxist thought as outlined in the three discourses of Smith (2014) to explore a history that may counter traditional understandings. Such a framework introduces South African social work as not necessarily a purely justice-orientated and humanitarian profession, but as one with dark and conflicting historical beginnings. It further sets the scene for a later neoliberal infiltration and a present

context of, what the research feels, is an identity crisis and conflict within South African social work in non-governmental organisations.

4.3. TIMELINE OF IMPLICATIONS OF NEOLIBERAL TENETS FOR SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The development of social work in South Africa, and how it has grown within the context of various socioeconomic and political changes, will be presented within a timeline of key events and/or policy formations, in terms of (i) the colonial and capitalist beginnings, (ii) the formalisation of social work and the agenda of control, (iii) the Carnegie Report and apartheid compliance, (iv) apartheid resistance and the absence of social work, (v) the role of the NGO and the pre-emptive co-opting of the ANC, (vi) post-apartheid social democracy and the RDP, (vii) the White paper for social development, (viii) from RDP to GEAR, and (ix) the non-profit organisations Act and the Terms of Payment Agreement. Finally, the ideological compromise and identity conflict within South Africa and social work today, against this historical background, will be critically discussed.

4.3.1. Social Work and South Africa: Colonial and Capitalist Beginnings

The emergence of South African social work is interwoven with that of colonization and imperialism. Thus, in exploring the history of social work in South Africa, it is necessary to do so alongside a review of the country's colonial past. According to Smith (2014), although strands of poverty and inequality existed in the pre-colonial era of South Africa, these were largely mitigated by mechanisms of kinship, reciprocity and some institutionalised forms of welfare; at this time, a formal social work profession did not exist as its functions were taken up through familial and community-based support (Chetty, 1999). However, colonialism largely disrupted and denigrated traditional forms of social relations. Colonisation enabled the construction of inequality and consequential deprivation, through the demarcation of an "inferior African other" (Smith, 2014:308). The entrenchment of racial policies in South Africa is said to have begun as early as the 1680s (Tsotsi, 2000). This demarcation of the African as inferior to the coloniser was also what motivated the first experiences of philanthropic work in South Africa, where international liberal organisations sent in missionaries to convert natives to Christianity. However, behind this seemingly philanthropic move were capitalist motives, teaching the poor to "accept their lowly

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position in life, making inequalities between themselves and the rich to appear to be less galling" (Smith, 2014:308). This allowed for accumulation by the white elite and helped to ingrain racially coded relations of coercion and subordination in colonial culture (Bundy, 1992:27). The social work practice, which would later emerge from this context, was thus, too, a product of its time: paternalistic, dominated by individualistic ideology, and favouring Whites as the welfare elite (Patel, 2005); it was deeply linked to a capitalist agenda.

The late 1800s saw a rapid transformation of the South African economy as a result of diamond and gold mining; this only served to further intensify existing racial inequalities through the increased demand for cheap labour (Bundy, 1979). After the 1870s, the structuring of society was significantly affected by the economic interests of mining capital (Smith, 2014). Thus, Smith (2014) outlines how the primary motivation behind a *formalized* racial segregation was that of capitalist and profit-generation interests, rather than being as a sole result of Afrikaner Nationalism ideology. Such ideology existed in the Afrikaner nationalist strand, however mining capitalization served to exasperate these early racial dominations and stratifications (Legassik, 2008). These economic and capitalist drivers are often overlooked in other historical accounts of apartheid and its early developments. With the diamond and gold rush, Africans were further coerced into rural migration to supply cheap labour needs, making them dependent wageworkers. Bundy (1979) describes the territorial and political segregation preludes of the Native Affairs Commission of 1905 as laying the foundation for future formalized racial policies. At the same time, industrialization and the consequences of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) greatly intensified poverty and saw thousands of poor White Afrikaners driven to move to the cities in the 1890s (Chetty, 1999). It was this poor white problem which premised the first more formal development of social services, directed primarily to this group.

4.3.2. The Formalization of Social Work and the Agenda of Control

Social work during the 1800s through to 1900s went through many various stages of formalization, the detail of which is not necessarily relevant for this study. However, of importance is the recognition that social welfare activities during this time remained focused on white juvenile reform and religious philanthropy (Chetty, 1999; Smith, 2014). The first recordings of a formal social work profession in South Africa are often attributed to Emily Hobhouse in the 1900s, a British welfare

campaigner in the South African Boer concentration camps. Credited as the first social worker in South Africa, she was said to show streaks of commitments to social justice by opposing the war and denouncing the activities of the British government within South Africa (Smith, 2014). Yet, as highlighted by Sen (2005: 18-19), Hobhouse was part of a group of "women driven by middle-class anxieties about urbanity and colonialism… armed with great religious and cultural confidence… reactionary in their attitude to the poor, the foreign, the heathen and the non-white." What is often less spoken of is Charlotte Maxeke (1874-1939), a campaigner for women's and workers rights and a native welfare officer in juvenile welfare in Johannesburg; alternative historical accounts recognise her as the first South African social worker. As Smith (2014) asserts, in the historical accounts of apartheid and social work, other discourses such as these often remained unearthed and would only emerge with deeper archival exploration.

The Afrikaansche Vrouwe Vereeniging (AVV), later known as the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (ACVV) is described in formal discourse (Liberal and Afrikaner) as being the first welfare organization in South Africa. It was established in 1904 as a part of rising white philanthropism with a commitment to build "Taal en Volk" (Language and the People) (Du Toit, 2003:27). There was no formal social work training at this time and early social workers practiced on the premise of leadership skills, social commitments, liberal ideals and educational privilege/advantage. The first official social work diploma course was set up at the University of Cape Town in 1924. As identified by Smith (2014), this form of social work was fixated on the maintenance of the status quo. Philanthropic social work was used by the state to disseminate hegemonic racist discourses, international liberal influences and state maintenance of the system, which was successfully generating capitalist momentum of the White elite. Smith (2014) asserts, therefore, that the origins of social work are found in these dynamics of the capitalist system and the resultant conditions of poverty and social conflict. It emerged from societal class-based structures and was used for two primary objectives, 1) as a response to the poor white problem brought about through industrialisation, and 2) as a later capitalist control tool in racial segregation and the dominance of the status quo.

4.3.3. The NGO, the Carnegie Report and Apartheid Compliance

This second motive of social work, as described above, more clearly emerged in the 1920s and 30s, with the establishment of the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1929, and the formation of the Race Welfare Society in 1930, which extended social welfare services to native Black South Africans. This period also saw the development of a more formalised system for the delivery of services to the white population. However, according to McKendrick (1990), this system was clumsy, unethical, inefficient and unaffordable. In addition, the services rendered were predominantly urban-based and therapeutic. Yet, as recognised by Engelbrecht (2011), some credit should be given to emerging Child and Family Welfare Organisations in urban areas who made important contributions in terms of preventative services for families, including the establishment of crèches, playschool facilities, parent training and adult education.

During this time, many non-governmental welfare groups began to develop, much like the ACVV and Child welfare societies; the South African Council for Child Welfare was established in 1924. These predominantly white voluntary organisations were often community-sponsored and formed specialised councils around particular needs and groups, such as that of vulnerable and handicapped children and the elderly (Chetty, 1999). The ACVV and Child Welfare organisations remain to this day as some of the most prominent established NGO groups in social work service delivery (Engelbrecht, 2011; Potgieter, 1998)

Alongside these developments, the 1932 Carnegie Report emerged, which has been identified in history as the official formalization of the social work profession (Seekings, 2008), formulated under the guidance of founding figures of social work education, Professor Bateson of UCT (representing liberalism), and Professor Verwoed of Stellenbosch (representing Afrikaner nationalism). The report was an inquiry into the poor white problem (Engelbrecht, 2011) and deemed foundational in terms of policy, ideology and the discipline of social work and its institutions. Upon this foundation, South African social work embraced the liberal status quo maintenance activities of state policy and legislation. By 1932, the University of Stellenbosch offered a degree in social work, and the Department of Welfare was formalized in 1937. The Huguenot College for white women was established in 1931, and a social work degree was offered at the University of Witwatersand in 1937 (Potgieter, 1998).

Social welfare planning became a significant state activity during this time, while also continuing to serve as an effective segregation tool. For example, the Race Relations Report on the 1936 social work conference in Johannesburg, attended by social workers of all races but dominated by European social workers and ideals, instead of highlighting the injustice of racial segregation, described the remarkable extent to which non-Europeans had benefited from the development of social welfare activities (Smith, 2014). The social work training curriculum at South African Universities was based on Western models, such as those used by British and American schools, with a clinical approach advocating for individualism and personal responsibility (Kotze, 1998). As outlined by Lombard (1998), training had a strong focus on the hegemonic discourses of the Carnegie Report, and social work education had to adhere to policies such as developing separate higher education institutions and services according to racial categorisation (Social Welfare Post-War Planning Conference Proceedings, 1944).

Social work schools for black South Africans only began to emerge in the 1940s, as a rise in poverty and illness in black communities threatened the safety and wellbeing of white populations and was deemed as needing to be controlled. The Jan Hofmeyr College for black social workers was formally established in 1941. McKendrick (1990:182) asserts that these "[e]arly moves were largely stimulated by a genuine desire to train black social workers to work with the problems experienced by black people."

4.3.4. Resistance to Apartheid: Where was Social Work?

As segregation policies began to become more formalized, and more divisive, the provision of welfare services among African people was greatly neglected and the social welfare of the 1940s, 50s and 60s, was tied to the political and economic objectives of the time, with a focus on social control and adaptation to an unjust social system (McKendrick, 1990; Patel, 2005). Formalized apartheid objectives, which began to emerge during this period, further preserved Afrikaner identity and nationalism, protected white supremacy and economic privilege, and prevented African social advancement (Lester, 1996). The formal social work of the apartheid era was largely complicit and collaborative with the segregationist and protectionist policies of liberal ideologies.

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Initially, as outlined earlier, black social work schools were additional pawns in this agenda. However, later, the training of black social workers began to pose a threat to the status quo of the liberal and Afrikaner movements, producing important leaders in the welfare and political field such as Winnie Mandela (Smith, 2014). In 1950, the Hofmeyr College was taken over by the state and shortly closed down "due to the undesirability of admission of 'alien' black students from outside South Africa" (Lowe, 1988:27). In 1959, with the Extension of the University Education Act, separate-race educational institutions were implemented, and other-than-white students were restricted access to non-racial universities such as UCT, Natal and Witwatersrand.

This led to the opening up of independent black university colleges and training institutions in the 1960s (McKendrick, 1990:185) and, building on the foundation of forming movements such as the defiance campaign of 1952, the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955, and the Sharpeville shootings of 1960, the late 1960s to 1970s saw the emergence of waves of Black Consciousness among university students. Led by Steve Biko, the South African Students Organisation was formed in 1969 and mass student protests took place during this time. This movement was further committed to social development among rural and poor black communities. The establishment of formal movements such as the Black Peoples Convention in 1972 heightened resistance and consciousness efforts, threatening the state's status quo.

It is the absence of an appropriate social work response to both apartheid policies and resistance movements that is often overlooked in the retelling of South African social work history (Engelbrecht, 2011). As determined by Smith (2014), it demonstrates the nature of social work as an instrument of the state, rather than a profession of social justice. It was only on the marginal fringe of alternative welfare structures and social movements that a social work of resistance was practised. This form of what was termed radical social work, played a significant role in apartheid resistance, and included the first social work protest action of 1980, a 2-day strike in Cape Town; the formation of the South African Black Social Workers Association (SABSWA); the work of the Build a Better Society (BABS) in the Cape Flats; and others. These movements enabled some mobilization of people around human rights and community development, as well as strands of social work that went outside of the philanthropic and individualistic training of liberalism. The 1980s saw a distinctive rise in such resistance, supported by international movements toward

human rights and increasingly more radical philanthropic ideals. It was also within this context that a more radical and advocative non-governmental organisation sector began to surface. This shift is recognised in McKendrick's (1989) identification of the four key principles at play within the social welfare sector during this period of the early 1980s, which included: (1) the segregation of races; (2) partnership between state and private welfare; (3) critical debate around the ideas of socialism and the welfare state, and (4) a shift from therapeutic and individual-based services toward that of a community-based preventative orientation.

4.3.4. The Role of the NGO and the Pre-emptive Co-opting of the African National Congress

As international pressure on South Africa increased, demanding the abolishment of its apartheid practices, NGOs and civil society movements became integral in fighting racial inequality and were at the forefront of bringing about the end of Apartheid in 1994 (Gray, 1998; Mazibuko et al., 1992). Ntebe (1994:41) recalls how in the late 1980s, factions of the formal and informal welfare sector began to group and organize, as "progressive social workers of various persuasions" began to question their own roles in human service delivery. Other movements were sparked, including the Free the Children Campaign, the National Children's Rights Committee, and the Detainees Parents Support Committee (South African History Online, 2013). According to Norward (2007), the political resistance of black student movements and women's movements were the initial platforms for radical non-governmental social work participation. In contrast, the laudable contribution made by established NGOs, such as the ACVV and the Child Welfare Societies, towards the establishment of sophisticated social welfare services and structures in South Africa, was eclipsed by the fact that these NGOs and their services were predominantly focused on poor whites. The core business of these NGOs was that of family care work within the context of poverty alleviation. Within this time, many of these traditional organisations removed themselves from social actions, despite political pressures, as they were concerned such engagement could estrange their volunteer corps and compromise the quality of their service rendering (Engelbrecht, 2011). However, shifts in thinking were unavoidable for some, and progressive social workers even within traditional NGO environments began to seek out a unitary, non-racial and democratic welfare system. Nevertheless, the social work profession at large

continued to be an actor of the state and did little to formally engage in changing political discourses (Ntebe, 1994).

During this time of resistance, it is necessary to pause and reflect on emerging neoliberal undercurrents as South Africa began its transformative shift. As outlined in Chapter Two, ideological shifts were taking place in policies of the global North in the 1980s and 1990s, which served to disempower and undermine many of the social policies of emerging independent states (Bond, 2000; Patel, 2005). According to Patel (2005:77), critical observers believed that with rising resistance movements and international philanthropic concerns, political change in South Africa was inevitable. With the recognition of the radical socialist democratic African National Congress (ANC) as the undeniable post-apartheid political leader, the Global North believed that neoliberal ideas, including the privatisation and marketization of welfare, would prevent a post-apartheid government from adopting radical redistributive policies, which would threaten the national and global elite. In line with its crisis-orientated infiltration, neoliberalism thus snaked its way into South Africa before the final fall of apartheid in 1994, through the pre-emptive offering to the ANC of a US$850 million loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1993 (Bond, 2000; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). To secure this loan, the ANC agreed to "manage the economy responsibly" (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:70) when it took over. This agreement would, however, see the ushering in of a neoliberal agenda, and cause the ANC to contradict its socialist ideals, sending South Africa and its emerging welfare commitments into an ideological compromise.

4.2.5. Post-Apartheid Social Democracy and the RDP

With the dismantling of apartheid in 1994, the ANC came into power with a socialist and redistributive agenda. The election of this new political power brought with it a hope for change. The ANC based itself on a foundation which promised welfare and social protection for all citizens, land and economic redistribution, fairness and equality, social justice and community development designed to meet basic human needs (Adato, Carter & May, 2006; RDP, 1994). The social democratic principles that the party held to were largely based on an actively involved state that was deemed necessary to break the power of white-owned business and monopoly, creating opportunities for the black elite to enter business (Mbeki, 2009). It is thus argued that, for the ANC, the political and ideological project of national building became increasingly paramount,

superseding the concerning aspects of the socioeconomic crisis into which the ANC was stepping (Legassik, 2008).

These commitments were clearly outlined in the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP, 1994). The RDP of 1994 adopted a rights-based approach to education, healthcare and basic services, including welfare. The primary agenda of this policy document was equitable development through redistributive measures. With this in mind, the RDP advocated for a significant increase in service provision spending, as well as generating job creation, mitigating the marginalisation, inequality and unemployment rendered under apartheid rule. The approach was both people-centred and people-driven. This was supported by the consequential output of several other policy documents, including the 1996 Report of the Lund Committee on Child and Family Support (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) and the 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare (Republic of South Africa, 1997a). This ushered in a new era of social development and with it, a new developmental social work.

4.2.6. The White Paper for Social Development (Republic of South Africa, 1997a)

The White Paper for Social Welfare (Republic of South Africa, 1997a) was the founding document for a newly evolved social work profession, and outlined broad policy guidelines built on much of the principles expressed in the RDP. It thus advocated for a social democracy and welfare service rendering based on equity, Ubuntu, non-discrimination, human rights, people-centeredness, human capital, sustainability and partnership. It opted for the rights-based and developmental agenda of the newly elected ANC, which shifted greatly from the traditional, paternalistic and individualistic social work birthed out of the colonial era. The White Paper can be considered institutionalist in its formulation, featuring productivist thinking about the role of social policies in promoting economic and social development.

In this new post-apartheid context, if the social work profession was to survive, it would need to depart radically from the forms of intervention and service provision of the past, and adopt a new social work that implemented equitable, developmental and redistributive interventions. As articulated in the selection of text below, social work had come to be viewed with much disdain

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during the resistance movements of the 80s and 90s, and was expected to significantly redefine itself if it was to remain a valuable profession in the new South Africa:

> *"During the heightened resistance to apartheid in the late 1970s and 80s, social work came to be regarded with some disdain. Social workers were seen as 'shoring up the system', 'papering over cracks' or acting as a 'band aid'. … social workers tended to eschew an approach that took into consideration the impact of prevailing economic policy and relations of power" (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:vii).*

This newly outlined developmental social work, which the White Paper proposed, was to be based on collectivism, radical redistribution, cooperation and partnership with grassroots organisations and NGOs, as well as in conjunction with the development of state welfare and social protection that was expansive and unheard of within African (and many other developing) countries. As outlined by Chetty (1999:73), developmental social work involved the following transitions:

- Greater use of auxiliary workers[7], volunteers, and family and community-based care;
- New funding criteria for developmental welfare programmes rather than the funding of social work posts;
- Greater emphasis on anti-poverty programmes;
- Capacity building and self-reliance to empower people to play a meaningful and productive role in the economy;
- Commitment to continuing publicly funded non-contributory grants for the elderly and disabled and the introduction of a new child-support benefit;
- Restorative criminal justice involving communities in the supervision of sentenced children and juveniles;
- Reforming the social security delivery system to improve efficiency and eliminate fraud;

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[7] The social auxiliary worker is a supportive sub-profession within social work (which falls under the SACSSP) and can render some social work activities, although the professional group may not undertake statutory or therapeutic services for which the position is not qualified.

- Creating a sound relationship between the government and the voluntary (NGO) sector by redrafting the Fund Raising Act (Republic of South Africa, 1978), now the Not For Profit Organisations Act (Republic of South Africa, 1997b).

However, despite the notably positive commitments of documents such as the White Paper and its developmental agenda, the shift from a social-treatment approach to social development did not uniformly occur. A number of contributing factors acted as barriers to this partial transition, including the argument that there were different interpretations about what the approach conceptually entailed, as well as a lack of institutional capacity to implement the policy; further still, resistance to change and a lack of clear direction about how to implement the developmental approach have also been highlighted as hindering mechanisms (Patel & Hochfeld, 2013). However, the predominant reason for this poor transition was that the policies of the RDP and White Paper did not depict the market-centric principles that had accompanied the 1993 IMF loan (Bond, 2000), which had stipulated the ANC's commitment to:

- A reduction of the government deficit to six percent of GNP;
- Avoidance of tax increases
- Control of government expenditure, as well as the civil service wage bill
- Avoidance of genuine wage increases
- Monetary targeting
- Inflation control
- Industrial Liberalisation (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:70-71).

Facing significant post-apartheid challenges politically, economically and socially, the ANC had little leverage to resist and with a global movement that promised incorporation into the global market, socialist redistributive policies such as the RDP were quickly replaced with competition, privatisation and reduced welfare, signalling a neoliberal advancement. Such pressures and conditions coerced the South African government into pursuing open-market economic policies that would allow for a favourable business climate for investment, trade and growth; however, these were also, or perhaps instead, the conditions that would best serve the primary agents of neoliberal global expansion, the bank, the cooperations and, at that time in South Africa, white

monopoly. This brought with it a swift shift from the socialist and reconstructive RDP to that of the neoliberal GEAR instead.

4.2.7. From RDP to 'F[G]EAR'

With a swift shift from the RDP to GEAR in 1996, South Africa also witnessed a swift, and often confusing, shift from developmental to neoliberal social work. The researcher will argue that it is within this confusing transitionary period that the newly evolved South African social work of today has attempted to find its footing.

The global shift to neoliberalism was a commitment to rampant capitalism and the logic of the market as the solution to the world's problems, dictating an unfettered free market, fiscal discipline and privatisation (Noyoo, 2003:37). This form of pressure for developing societies to don the neoliberal cloak (Engelbrecht, 2015) from international and supranational bodies such as the IMF, WHO and World Bank, has been widely recognised (Bond, 2000, 2010; Harris, 2003; Xaba, 2014). According to Miraftab (2004), the provision of external financial aid by groups such as the World Bank and the IMF were conditioned on the commitment by governments to the adoption of neoliberal policies, which favoured greater freedom of market and business-driven forces.

By 1996, South Africa's redistributive and radical RDP had been replaced by a neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) that retained only a few protective aspects of the RDP's social policy. Instead, neoliberal discourse became evident, with a new emphasis on the deserving poor as a means of mitigating the worst effects of structural adjustments, rather than collective and equal redistribution. Through GEAR (1996), "Social policy was given a residual role of coping with the consequences of socially blind macroeconomics" (Lund, 2006:vii) and the South African government, like other conservative governments such as those of Thatcher and Reagan, embarked on a process of change in the welfare system based on the logic of the market (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). GEAR has since been central to a commitment to marketization, deregulation, decentralization and the restructuring of the South African state to facilitate these changes.

Miraftab (2004) indicates that GEAR brought about divides between the population and class groups in terms of access to services and resources, including electricity, water, housing,

sanitation, education, transportation, healthcare and social work, and has further regenerated the casual labour market of the apartheid era. In reflecting on how the neoliberal shift of GEAR influenced social welfare and social work, one finds significant evidence in its social welfare financing guidelines, which is summarized by Adelzadeh (1996:3):

> *"[V]irtually all the fiscal stimulus necessary to achieve the rate of GDP growth projected by the document must come from the private investment (93% of the total stimulus). Thus the realization of the projected growth rate is almost completely dependent upon the rapid success of government policy in stimulating private investment"*

Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) unpack this impact, explaining that the transition of the apartheid-birthed social welfare system to one that was more equitable, was to be financed through existing budgets, rather than redistribution of resources. Thus, as outlined in GEAR, partnerships between the state and voluntary organisations would require a focused attention on identified vulnerable population groups, particularly those in under-serviced areas, thereby freeing resources from the expensive and institutionally based services. GEAR thus addresses the deserving poor with little, to none commitment to true, equal and sustainability uplifting redistribution and redress; this represents yet again the maintenance of the status quo – an area in which South African social work continues to this day, to be deeply embedded.

Against this backdrop, much like the global social work trends presented in Chapter Three, a social work "business" discourse emerged in South Africa, as the culture of neoliberalism "colonized the public sector as business thinking and practices crossed the public-private sector divide and were transplanted into activities such as social work" (Harris, 2003:5). This culture began to permeate the very new and partially transitioned developmental social work, and in doing so in such early stages of this transition, has arguably succeeded in masking itself behind a developmental agenda. For example, developmental discourse would be presented alongside ideas of entrepreneurship and market participation; individual self-help is promoted to service-users as "empowerment", often overlooking the structural causes of social challenges brought over from the apartheid era. The theory of social development was focused on social justice and socialist principles; the RDP and Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a)

made for a reputable social work profession. However, it has been captured and conflicted by a neoliberal agenda (Bond, 2000; Patel, 2005).

> *"In itself, social development pursues important social justice ideals; however, when transposed onto a neoliberal capitalist agenda, it becomes co-opted for the maintenance of the corporatist and capitalist system" (Smith, 2014:322).*

This conflict between developmental (RDP) and neoliberal (GEAR) principles continued to be reflected in new policy developments such as the National Development Plan (NDP) for 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2011), and the need to reach consensus on what this vision and agenda means for social development in terms of the proposals put forward in the White Paper of 1997 (Republic of South Africa, 1997a) has been raised in the recent Comprehensive Report on the Review of the White Paper for Social Welfare, (Department of Social Development, 2016). In examining this neoliberal contradiction in the transitioning South Africa, it is further necessary to understand the impact this has had on the role of NGOs as partners in the rendering of social welfare services within the newly democratic South Africa.

4.2.8. The Non-Profit Organisation Act and the Terms of Payment Agreement

Although NGOs became prominent in South Africa during the 1980s as lobbyists against apartheid (Xaba, 2014), their role in the rendering of social work services dated back to as early as the 1920s as indicated in previous sections of this text. Thus, NGO groups were often made up of traditional philanthropic and religious organisations such as the ACVV and the Child Welfare Societies, or that of the more radical and resistant NGOs of apartheid such as Black Sash and the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (Habib & Taylor, 1999:74). Regardless of their origins or commitments during the apartheid era, both the traditional and radical NGO became more clearly cemented within South African policy developments alongside the White paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997a). Post apartheid, the new welfare system highlighted the importance of the third sector and the cooperation of civil society through formal and informal welfare sectors, with government no longer being the sole group to hold social welfare responsibility. These formal and informal welfare sectors represented two principle welfare contexts in South Africa (Gray, 1998; Mazibuko et al., 1992; McKendrick, 1990). The formal welfare system was embedded within state-organised parameters, such as public state

departments and private welfare organisations; the informal welfare system was made up of NGOs and Community-based organisations (CBOs).

With the ANC's adoption of a developmental framework, the role of NGOs as social welfare service providers were undertaken as partnerships with the state, to assist the government in rendering services it was unable to fulfil. The Non-Profit Organisation Act established in 1997 (Act No. 71 of 1997) was enacted to allow for an administrative and regulatory framework within which non-profit organisations could conduct their affairs through a registration facility. This Act served to replace the previously widely criticised Non-Profit Bill of 1995, which enabled the government to subpoena NGO employees and intervene in the management of these organisations. It also replaced the 1978 Fundraising Act, which had limited NGO abilities to raise funds (Habib & Taylor, 1999:77). The 1997 Non-Profit Organisations Act instead allowed for a system of voluntary registration and provided benefits, subsidies and allowances for NGO groups rendering key social welfare services. The NPO was defined in terms of Section 1 of the NPO Act as a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and of which its income and property are not distortable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered; non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) fell collectively under this banner of non-profit organisations (NPOs) (Republic of South Africa, 1997b).

Many of the traditional and advocacy NGO groups that had formed during the end stages of apartheid took on more formal relationships with the state as supportive service providers. As such, NGOs came to be increasingly at the forefront of South African service provision (Gray & Lombard, 2008; Pratt & Myhrman, 2009; Spolander et al, 2014; Xaba, 2014). This distinctly facilitated the role of the social worker as being one that was primarily linked to the NGO, and NGOs began to act as a critical provider of social service delivery, more so than in many other countries (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). The scope of NGO service delivery is outlined in the table below, taken from the National NPO Database of 2011, DSD.

Table 8. Scope of Registered NGOs in South Africa (2011)

Service Area	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Social Services	26,199	34
Development and Housing	15,797	21
Religion	8,839	12
Health	8,723	11
Education and Research	8,655	11
Culture and Recreation	4,069	5
Other	3,893	6

Source: Kumuran, Samuel and Winston, 2012: 32

This table shows the significant growth of NGOs in the post-apartheid era, and the wide scope and extent of NGO service delivery that existed by 2011, infiltrating all key fields of social service rendering. The third column demonstrates the percentage of all registered NGOs that render services within the demarcated focal area; as is evident, social services (such as child and family welfare) holds the highest saturation of NGOs, followed closely by development and housing. This table allows some insight into the influence of NGOs on citizen wellbeing and developmental outcomes.

However, alongside the growing neoliberal trends of GEAR, this relationship between NGOs and state began to shift toward an increasing business model of outsourced service rendering, over and above partnership and support (ISDM, 2005). Such shifts could be seen in changes to the funding policies of NGOs and the development of contractual agreements between the state and these groups. This trend could be seen, for example, with the 1999 financing policy for welfare released by the Department of Welfare and Population Development at the time (Republic of South Africa, 1999), with Sewpaul and Holscher (2004:84–5) offering a quote from one of the key authors of the document, where they insisted that "The State is an entrepreneur of its own. It must

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make a profit where it can…The state must be minimalist, it must really do the least and the last. Civil society, empowered civil society is to do the most".

This demonstrated an increasing reliance upon the principles of market supremacy to inform welfare policy (Engelbrecht, 2015; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). Within this legislative context, the nature of business management, commodification and profit accumulation became the dominant school of thought for the running of social service provision organisations.

The rise in NGOs in South Africa can thus be said to have been directly influenced by two factors; firstly, the increased need for organisations that are able to meet the requirements of citizens and vulnerable populations at the human level, organisations which can best represent citizens in the face of an impersonal market economy that is actively alienating the population, and particularly the vulnerable (Pratt & Myhrman, 2009); and secondly, the advancement of neoliberal policies which advocates for lessened state involvement, service rendering and welfare provision, thereby increasing the need for civil society to fill the democratic vacuum (Pratt & Myhrman, 2009). This saw a surge in NGO growth as a key social work employer; in 2012, for example, there were a recorded number of 16,740 social workers registered with the SACSSP (Moloi, 2012) - of these social workers, 40% were employed by the state, with the remaining 60% working for non-governmental organisations, in private practice capacities or recorded as being inactive (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

However, this corparticipant development of NGOs to step in where the state has failed, or abdicated responsibility for, its citizens (Miraftab, 2004; Xaba, 2014) is not the only symptom of neoliberal reform within the NGO context. Non-governmental organisations within South Africa are encountering a number of operational challenges birthed from the infiltration of neoliberal ideology. As such, although neoliberal reform has created a vacuum for social service provision need, and essentially the activities of NGOs and CBOs find enhanced meaning in the context of the privatization of public sector activities (Miraftab, 2004:90), it has equally dramatically changed the environment in which social service provision is rendered, the nature of such provision, and the consequential role of social workers within South African society (Ashwin, 2003; Habib &

Taylor, 1999; Gray & Lombard, 2008; Peet, 2002; Pratt & Myhrman, 2009; Spolander et al, 2014; Xaba, 2014).

The NGO context has shifted from being one that was established, or re-established from more traditional philanthropic NGOs, as a rights-based and development-orientated sector, to now one of business plans, competition, efficiency, performance audits, and cost-effective measurements (Engelbrecht, 2015; Spolander et al., 2014). Although the state has outsourced much of social work to NGOs, it does so through subsidies for social work posts and with such funding come Terms of Payment Agreements (TPAs) that stipulate the outputs and service activities of the NGO; these have to be reported on regularly:

> *"To apply for registration as a NPO, organisations fill-in a prescribed application form and submit it to the Directorate for Nonprofit Organisations with two copies of the organisation's founding document i.e. a constitution for a volunteer association; memorandum and articles of association with the company's registration letter for a not-for-profit company; and a deeds of trust with the trustees authorisation letter for a trust. The founding document of the organisation must meet the requirements of section 12 of the NPO Act.*
>
> *Once the organisation is registered, it is obligated, in terms of sections 18 and 19, to submit within nine (9) months after the end of its financial year, annual reports (a narrative report, annual financial statement and an accounting officer's report) including any changes to the organisation's constitution, physical address and office bearers."* (Department of Social Development)[8]

Furthermore, the growing privatisation of services and outsourcing to NGOs has also facilitated a negatively competitive environment where NGOs are required to compete and bid against one another for funding (Chetty, 1999).

The table on the page that follows offers a selective overview of some the key transitions, events and shifts explored in this brief historical overview of social work and it's challenging and contradictory development. The table concludes with the stepping in of Thabo Mbkei as president

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[8] http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=66&Itemid=114

– this is not to ensue that events after this period were insignificant to the neoliberal march or social work (re)formation (as this was discussed in some more detail in the text), but rather, the researcher feels that with the stepping in of Mbkei, the neoliberal agenda was firmly cemented, and contradictory fiscal and social policies became the heart of South Africa's post-apartheid, post-Mandela shifts and developments.

Table 9. A Historical View of Social Work Development within South Africa's Socio-Political and Economic Transitions

Date	Event
1814	First orphanage for white orphans established by the Dutch Reformed Church
1898	New York school of philanthropy established as first school for social workers
1899	Outbreak of South African war (until 1902)
1900	Emily Hobhouse (British social worker) forms relief fund for "white" South African women and children
1902	Charlotte Maxeke (first South African social worker)
1904	Establishment of the ACVV
1905	Native Affairs Commission
1908	First Child Welfare Society in SA (Cape Town)
1910	Establishment of Union of SA (with the interests of mining capital paramount - Jan Smuts, Minister of mining)
1912	Funding of African National Congress
1913	South African natives land act
1914	WWI
1924	First social work diploma course, UCT
1929	Formation of South African Institute of Race Relations

Date	Event
1930	Formation of Race Welfare Society (used theories of eugenics to limit the fertility of 'poor whites', cultivate a healthy & productive white population and avoid 'white race degeneration')
1932	Stellenbosch University offers first degree course in social work
1932	Report of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into the "poor white problem"
1933	Verwoerd becomes Chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Stellenbosch
1936	Social Work Conference in Johannesburg and Race Relations Report
1937	Establishment of Department of Welfare (under South African Party and National Party fusion government)
1941	Jan Hofmeyr College for black social workers
1944	Post WWII planning of social welfare
1950	Population Registration Act; Immortality Act; Group Areas Act; Suppression of Communism Act
1955	Congress of the People in Kliptown and adoption of the Freedom Charter
1959	Extension of University Education Act
1960	Sharpeville shootings and banning of ANC, SACP and PAC
1969	Formation of South African Students Organisation led by Steve Biko
1972	Black Peoples Convention
1978	National Welfare Act 100/1978; Social and Associated Workers Act 110/1978; The Fundraising Act 107/1978

Date	Event
1985	Declaration of state of emergency
1987	Washington Consensus as the start of the neoliberal era of global capitalism
1989	Launch of the mass democratic movement civil disobedience (defiance) campaign and resistance against apartheid
1993	Negotiations and Interim Constitution
1993	Transitional Executive Council signs IMF loan agreement with a commitment by the ANC to the freedom of the market rather than regulatory interventions
1994	Democratically elected ANC Government under Nelson Mandela
1994	Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)
1996	Adoption of the South African Constitution and Lund Committee Enquiry into Child and Family Support
1996	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) to replace RDP
1997	White Paper for Social Welfare and Nonprofit Organisations Act (no. 17 of 1997)
1999	Thabo Mbeki overtakes Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa
1999	Financing Policy of Social Welfare Services no. 463 of 1999

Source: Adapted from Smith (2014

4.3. SOCIAL WORK IN A NEOLIBERAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA: AN IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT AND AN IDENTITY CRISIS

In understanding how neoliberalism is impacting upon social work and social welfare in South Africa, reflection of influential legislation and policy documents determines that although there is a recognisable commitment to the rhetoric of justice, equality and people-centred development, it is the neoliberal discourse of managerialism and market-centric values that have become prominent in the practical enactment of these legislative documents (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004:72).

Today, South Africa is in a state of ideological compromise; as it continues to commit to some of the remaining ANC ideals of social protection, state welfare and collectivism, while promoting market-driven policies of privatization, marketization and commodification of care. This has left the country void of little radical change post-apartheid, and matters of economic liberation for non-whites, and land redistribution, remain barely moved within the neoliberal bubble that keeps the country talking left, while walking right (Bond, 2000). Bond (2012) highlights how, for example, the post-apartheid neoliberal transition has strengthened the minerals-energy complex (MEC), has introduced and allowed for financialisation and capital flight, has heightened acts of deindustrialisation, and alongside these, has amplified poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Thus, while South Africa is said to be one of the wealthiest countries in the world in terms of its mineral resources (Amandla, 2012), the paradox of high levels of social injustice associated with the majority of South Africans is clear. Formulations of the current ANC government are, according to Satgar (2015), based on a narrow liberal understanding of freedom and democracy, with the conceptualisation of social capital void of a sufficient understanding of power relations, and a productivist idea of economic change and what this entails. Satgar (2015:5) concludes as a result that the South African state is one that "hovers above class contradictions" and links economic change simply to "more growth and industrial jobs." An extract from Hill (2009:612) summarises the condition of South African society today:

> *"The universal, transhistorical principles of rights and justice that were associated with the individualistic portrait of mankind that capitalism promoted, suggested a degree of freedom that*

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was wholly incommensurate with the structures ultimately imposed upon its 'freely' contracting subjects"

Neoliberalism and the inequality it promotes in the name of competition and economic growth can, and has been, devastating for many societies, and particularly emerging economies. However, these neoliberal principles (and consequences) for South Africa post-apartheid, a country ravaged by inequality, is entirely detrimental. Political freedom was attained, but economic freedom was not. In his review of the impact of neoliberalism on the South African working class, Desai (2002) highlights how although wages for skilled workers have steadily grown, the gap in South African society between the unionized and better skilled versus the mass marginalized population is widening.

Beyond this, Desai (2002) indicates that nonstandard (precarious, temporary, casual, part-time) employment has increased and resulted in a largely unstable and nonunionized workforce, with full time employment recorded for only 40 percent of the economically active population; this is one third of the African population. This, alongside spiralling unemployment is having a significant impact on levels of poverty and social problems in already previously disadvantaged communities. The 1996 South African Census showed that the poorest 40 percent of the population was receiving less than 3 percent of the national income, with the richest 10 percent receiving over 50 percent of national income. Desai (2002) indicates that the situation has worsened since, with 20 percent of urban households a decade later having no electricity, a quarter no running water, and 80 percent of households having neither. The consequence of such a neoliberal shift is that the rich and elite classes continue to get richer, although shrinking in size, while on the other hand, the poor are increasing in number and such poverty is worsening. Desai (2002) notes how the previous Minster of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya, raised the above in a speech on the state of inequality in South Africa. In light of this, neoliberalism compromises the welfare reach-out of the state, pushing for a shift away from statist service delivery and welfare models towards one where the private sector and its principles are dominant instead. According to Desai (2002:19), within such a neoliberal shift, the state acts as a service ensurer rather than that of a service provider and social services, including state-based and NGOs, are run more like a business "with financial cost recovery becoming the most effective measure of performance." The

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status quo of inequality and poverty has thus not only remained, but arguably worsened, and it has been levied that social welfare and social work, particularly within the NGO context, continue to only bandage these wounds, failing to challenge and address the underlying structural causes.

Following the dismantling of apartheid, social work faced a positive opportunity for re-birthing, however, as asserted by Smith (2014:322), South African "[s]ocial work evolved after 1994 within this neoliberal context." It can be argued, therefore, that the infiltration of neoliberalism post-apartheid was far too swift for the social work profession to successfully determine, and cement itself in, its new developmental identity. Likewise, the role of NGOs is being largely influenced by either traditional philanthropic and religious commitments, or neoliberal market-driven and individualistic principles. While radical strains have remained, many have argued that social work has in fact retained its commitment to the status quo, as it did during apartheid, and although it address social problems from the foundation of social justice and human rights, it yet again does little to challenge the structures and forces which bring about these problems. Sewpaul (2013), for example, In reflecting on the proposed Family Policy of 2005, concluded that the attitude of the document was one that shifted blame and responsibility for the large socioeconomic barriers and challenges in South Africa onto the individual, the family and the community, with little to non recognition of the underlying structural causes of these issues, such as unemployment, poverty, exclusion and inequality. In doing so, the roles of the state and society in contributing to these challenges is overlooked and it is rather the moral fibre and work ethic of the individual that is held up as the panacea for all socioeconomic struggles.

Some believe that within South Africa, the effect of neoliberalism has been the development of a social work profession, which focuses more on survival than actually servicing communities (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004), as the language and principles of a neoliberal discourse displace the language of participation, equality, relationship and social justice that emerged in the developmental social work approach (Heller 2000). South African social work thus faces an identity crisis, as it stands with one foot on either side of the fence, fighting between two commitments:

1. Its historical allegiance with the dominant power system and status quo, which followed it from its emergence throughout apartheid, to the (arguably unconscious) taking on of the neoliberal agenda;

2. Its radical strands that show a commitment to the principles of social justice, the dismantling of oppressive dynamics and equality.

Through hegemonic discourses, social work historically supported the maintenance of the racist status quo and the capitalist mode of production, with individualist and liberal ideologies of freedom of choice and personal responsibility. It can be argued that today, the profession continues to do so through its support (or lack of resistance to) the state, Westernized knowledge and neoliberal principles. However, the profession retains one foot over the other side of the fence. South African social workers have also played a significant role in forming and shaping resistance movements and a lobbying for the state's commitment to welfare provision. This form of social work was enshrined in South Africa's early policy commitments. Community and social development, as espoused in the White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997), became the urgent project of social work education post-1994 and elements of this remain. Social development is concerned with empowerment; non-remedial intervention; participation and networks; and concern with economic development (Gray & Simpson, 1998). These radical responses offer counter-narratives and challenge the hegemonic discourses of traditional and neoliberal South African social work, although neoliberal capitalist discourses have remained dominant.

Thus, social work in South Africa is often found to exist within these two dimensions or practice arenas. These are comparable to the formal and informal comparisons of Patel (1992), in her political analysis of the South African welfare system. These separate characteristics as identified by Patel (1992) and later supported by Sewpaul and Holscher (2004), hold much merit in the analysis of social work in South Africa today. However, the interplay of the 'formal' and 'informal' approaches within day-to-day social work practice is far more nuanced, and thus the proposal by Patel at that time (1992), which demarcated these two opposing approaches as falling strictly within the formal versus informal sector, can now be viewed as largely contentious and inaccurate. Both dimensions of the profession exist within both territories. However, the demarcations

themselves are still valuable, and the researcher will argue that rather than formal versus informal, the social work profession battles between the two dimensions within both the Department of Social Development (state) and the NGO. These dimensions can be understood as representing one of neoliberal trajectory versus a social development approach.

Thus, on the one hand, the neoliberal-influenced professional practice is largely undemocratic and authoritarian, unaccountable, aimed at social control, and ineffective to the needs of the disadvantaged majority (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). Social work approaches in this regard are individualistic, with an "individualising of social problems, looking to the market as the primary mechanism for meeting all needs and state intervention in welfare planning.

Comparingly, the social development approach largely represents democratic, participatory, empowering and effective welfare principles, aimed at redistribution and responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged majorities. Here, social work offers an approach that is developmental, emphasizing both the individual and the collective in the context of an enabling environment (Patel, 1992:152). It advocates for the need for social policies over and above the market and an enabling rather than interventionist state. Table 10 is adapted from the earlier work of Patel (1992) and outlines these two differing practice contexts:

Table 10. The Two Dimensions of South African Social Work Practice (adapted from Patel, 1992)

Dimension	Affiliated Sector / Groups	Ideals and Principals	Social Work Approach
Neoliberal	- State-based social work and traditional philanthropic NGOs - Infiltrating developmental NGOs and grassroots social work movements	- Undemocratic - Authoritarian - Unaccountable - Aimed at social control - Ineffective to the needs of the disadvantaged majority	- Individualistic, Individualizing of social problems - Looking to the market as the primary mechanism for meeting all needs and state intervention in welfare planning

Dimension	Affiliated Sector / Groups	Ideals and Principals	Social Work Approach
Social Development	• Indigenous and radical strain of social work • NGOs and civil society	• Democratic • Participatory • Empowering and effective welfare approach • Aimed at redistribution and responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged majorities	• Developmental • Emphasizing both the individual and the collective • Enabling environment • Advocates for the need for social policies over and above the market • Enabling rather than interventionist state

The profession faces an on-going identity crisis, yielded by historical underpinnings, which it has not been able to shed (arguably by a lack of critical hegemonic unpacking and re-encountering), as well as conflicting state expectation, guidance and policy frameworks. These competing discourses have come to be simultaneously embedded in the makeup of the profession, to the degree where to academically identify their existence and impact is a far cry from understanding how this influences social work on the ground. For the researcher, the question remains as to whether the profession itself is aware of these underlying influences and agendas and whether individual on-the-ground social workers have an understanding of their participation in, and promotion of, one or the other.

4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS: TENETS IN PRACTICE

Social work academics have outlined the effect of neoliberalism on social work, and as presented in the previous chapter, the tenets of managerialism, consumerization, marketization and deprofessionalisation are as much at play within South African social work as they are globally. Some examples of this were briefly discussed in the country reviews of Chapter Three, of which South Africa formed a part. However, as argued by the researcher in her introductory chapter of the study, research into the exploration of these tenets in day-to-day social practice is dearth; and as argued, to academically label social work practice as being on one side of the fence would likely not be an accurate portrayal of the complexities of the professions practice (as well as

contradictions and confusions) within the country. In particular, the NGO context is viewed as being disempowered and compromised by these contradictions. It is from this foundation that the empirical study presented in Chapter Six is launched and explored, into the perceptions of frontline social workers and managers in NGOs of the influence of neoliberal tenets on their work and identity. To unpack this through dialogue and an exploration of meaning will enable the development of on-the-ground understandings and consciousness of neoliberalism within social work, and the role and impact of social work in South African society.

To an objective end, the researcher, although offering a critical review of the profession, its history and its complacency today within the face of neoliberal advancement, ultimately believes in the ability of social work to actively engage with its "radical" and "developmental" strands, to truly and authentically adopt the social work first emerging post-1994.

> *"Such is the urgent imperative for social work: to respond to its call to be a social justice profession and resist status quo maintenance and oppressive hegemonic discourse. Consistent critical consciousness, examination of and contribution to new discourse and action are essential" (Smith, 2014:323).*

Before empirically exploring the views and practices of frontline social workers and social work managers, the methodological underpinnings of the study will be unpacked in more detail.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of the reflections of frontline social workers and social work managers on the implications of neoliberal tenets for social work practice in South African NGOs. The research stems from recognition of the infiltration and expansion of neoliberal theory and ideology, both within the social work context and the South African welfare context. However, with this comes a corresponding recognition of the dearth of on-the-ground research into the impact of neoliberal tenets for frontline social workers and social work managers, outside of a smaller academic periphery.

The research aim is unpacked through several objectives, whereby neoliberalism as a global economic philosophy is conceptualized through the identification of neoliberal tenets within the context of social work and welfare, and examining the implications for these tenets for social work on a global scale for the profession at large. Following these, a third objective was to critically analyse the influence of identified global neoliberal tenets, as indicated through the first and second objectives, on South African NGOs and social work within this context. The empirical investigation of the implications of such neoliberal tenets for social work in NGOs, as perceived by frontline social workers and social work managers meets the fourth objective, closing finally with the fifth objective, in terms of conclusions and recommendations for NGOs regarding the management of perceived neoliberal tenets and its implications for social work.

It was understood that to meet these objectives appropriately and effectively, a robust scientific approach was necessary. Scientific research allows for the greater exploration of a phenomenon to better facilitate knowledge development and evidence-informed response (Babbie, 2014). In this case, the scientific exploration of the phenomenon, neoliberalism, on social work practice within NGOs in South Africa, will better inform social welfare policy development that is effective, and a social work profession that is relevant, strengthened in identity, and able to resist ideology which may threaten its commitment to the promotion of human rights, social cohesion, collectivity, and solidarity (IFSW, 2014). Exploring a phenomenon, or question, in a manner that is rigorous and robust requires an undertaking of scientific research processes based on established

research design, theories and evidence; this will enable claims and knowledge development that is epistemologically valid (Rubin & Babbie, 2007). What follows is a presentation of the philosophical and methodological framework in which this study has been implemented and tested.

5.2. RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

Before tackling the methodological frameworks, models, and design for the research study, it is of value to understand the broader picture of the scientific research process, in terms of the philosophical, ontological, sociological, epistemological, and methodological dimensions through which the research techniques were devised and understood, and the phenomenon was ultimately explored.

5.2.1. Philosophical Dimensions

"Social research is concerned with exploring, describing, and explaining social phenomena involving human behaviour" (Sufian, 1998:3). The efficiency and effectiveness of social science research is dependent on philosophical justification (Uddin & Hamiduzzaman, 2009) and functions on philosophical assumptions about truth and knowledge. At the start, this requires consideration of a central question: *Why Research?* The answer to this is based on a set of assumptions from the researcher concerning the nature of society and science (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

> *"The relevance of the philosophical issues discussed arises from the fact that every research tool or process is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular version of the world and ways of knowing that world made by the researcher using them" (Hughes, 1987:13).*

A researcher's understanding of these concepts will have a direct impact on what they choose to research, and the ontological, epistemological, sociological, and methodological dimensions for the overall research design and process. These interacting dimensions are explored in more detail below and accumulatively formulate an overall philosophical research approach.

5.2.2.1. Ontological Dimension

Ontology, defined as the science or study of being (Blaikie, 2010), relates to the nature of reality, whether reality is "the product of one's mind" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979:1). An ontological position

is largely concerned with whether social entities are perceived as objective or subjective. Objectivism (or Positivism) is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors whereas Subjectivism (or Interpretivism) is an ontological position which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2012).

In this study, the focus was on exploring, understanding, and interpreting a phenomenon, as it perceived by social work practitioners and managers. The research gap identified was that of on-the-ground reflections and perceptions of the impact of neoliberal ideology for social work practice, that went beyond the academic periphery – human interpretation is thus at the very centre of this approach. The assumption is not that social workers are uninfluential bystanders upon whom neoliberal tenets are enacted, but rather that social work managers and frontline practitioners are actively engaging with these tenets, whether consciously or unconsciously, and thereby influencing how these tenets are both perceived and able to influence broader social work experience and interventions.

The ontological dimension is therefore one that is largely subjectivist in its approach. This implies that data consolidated is interpretivist and humanistic in nature. This had various implications for the research methodology and design (see Table 11).

An interpretivist perspective believes that the nature of reality or being is socially constructed, subjective, and may change. The scientific mapping of quantitative data, for example, would not have been of value to the determined research question and ontological dimension, as it would not have allowed for an incorporation of the human interpretive element, which this research primarily seeks. Thus, the research has been implemented within a framework that reflects on qualitative data, the exploration of a phenomenon that is open to interpretation, and that is humanistic in its approach. These assumptions have, in turn, influenced the sociological dimension(s) of the study (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Table 11 demonstrates the differences between the two alternate philosophical approaches, in terms of the broader and methodological assumptions associated with either the objectivist or subjectivist philosophy.

Table 11. Alternative Philosophical Approaches

Objectivist	Subjectivist
Quantitative	Qualitative
Positivist	Phenomenological
Scientific	Humanistic
Experimentalist	**Interpretivist**
Traditionalist	
Functionalist	

Source: Hussey and Hussey (1997)

5.2.2.2. Sociological Dimension

Reflections of the sociological dimension involved a choice between two views of society – society as regulatory, or society as radical change (Holden & Lynch, 2004). Per Holden and Lynch (2004), a regulatory society is one where the researcher assumes that society is unified, cohesive and evolves rationally; a society of radical exchange, on the other hand, is understood as being in constant conflict as humans continue to struggle to free themselves from societal structures.

This study assumes a critical view of neoliberalism, as an economic and political ideology that is having a potentially negative impact on society and it's functioning. It assumes a series of conflict and compromise, a human struggle. The researcher thus leaned closer toward the sociology of radical change, over a regulatory view of society. Neoliberalism, which is argued in the earlier two chapters to be an expanding global phenomenon, is thus a societal structure from which the researcher assumes humans struggle to free themselves. It is not a uniform phenomenon, but rather diversely implemented in several countries through a number of identified tenets. Thus, society is not understood as being entirely unified or cohesive, although some unification is evident in the form of global expansion of the broader neoliberal theory. It is understood, through the subjective lens, that society is made up of symbolic discourse – this is a critical element to global infiltration of neoliberal theory - the use of language and discourse, which constructs a reality that individuals engage with and are influenced by. It is the influence of such discourse on the social work profession, as a cumulated phenomenon, that was of interest to the researcher.

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Thus, the exploration of the research question(s) rests upon an interpretivist assumption of a society that is in conflict and undergoing some form of radical change. This lends itself toward an epistemological understanding of the limits of inquiry.

5.2.2.3. Epistemological Dimension

Epistemology is concerned with "the nature, validity, and limits of inquiry" (Rosenau, 1992:109). Thus, rather than what reality *is* or how it's constructed, which is an ontological exploration, epistemology is concerned with how reality can be known, the relationship between the "knower" and the "known", and the assumptions that guide the process of knowing. It explores the grounds of knowledge/relationship between reality and research (Carson et al., 2001:6). Within an interpretivist framework, the epistemological approach of this study is one which recognizes that the limits of inquiry is perceived knowledge, and the relationship between reality and the research process is developed through an understanding of the specific context of the phenomenon being explored. Thus, knowledge is 'known" through social construction, rather than an objective determination (Carson et al., 2001:5). This again ties in with the exploration of the perceived implication of neoliberal tenets by social workers themselves – the phenomenon of neoliberalism is explored and described through narrative and lived/perceived experience(s). Therefore, the broader concept of neoliberalism as a larger theory is understood through the subjective exploration of human experience in a particular field, in this case, social work.

The research approach of this study assumes a subjectivist stance that leans a little away from extreme nominalism, anti-povitism and voluntarism, which are indicated in column one of the table below. Instead, the research assumes reality is more a realm of symbolic discourse than it is a projection of human imagination; man is an actor within this symbolic environment that can influence and manipulate his/her surroundings. The exploration of truth in the sense of the research process is to understand the patterns of symbolic discourse – in the sense of reflecting on how the tenets of neoliberalism, essentially the symbolic discourse of the ideology which permeates society, impacts on social work practice – how social workers interpret, understand, and are affected by this discourse. Thus, the ontological and epistemological approach of this study falls within column three, as indicated in Table 12.

This approach assumes an inherent researcher bias in the selection of the research topic, driven by the researcher's own interests, beliefs, skills, and values. The aim of the research process was to understand a phenomenon or occurrence, to develop ideas through an induction of evidence, and to understand a larger context through the identification of patterns (Holden and Lynch, 2004:9).

Table 12. Subjectivist Approaches to Social Science

	1	2	3
Core Ontological Assumption (Reality)	Reality as a projection of human imagination	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a realm of symbolic discourse
Basic Epistemological Stance (Knowledge)	To obtain phenomenological insight, revelation	To understand how social reality is created	To understand patterns of symbolic discourse
Assumption about Human Nature	Man as pure spirit, consciousness, being	Man as a social constructor; the symbol creator	Man as an actor; the symbol user

Source: *Adapted from Holden and Lynch, 2004*

5.2.2.4. Methodological Dimension

The figure below maps out the interacting nature of ontology and epistemology, and the influence of these frameworks on the methodological dimension of the study. As demonstrated in the figure, it is evident that an ontological and epistemological approach that is subjective in its philosophy is centered on a research strategy that may be inductive or deductive, and uses qualitative data. This is unpacked in more detail through a description of the methodological dimension of the study. Within an ontological and interpretivist approach that assumes subjectivist knowledge, there are certain methodological models of understanding that are adopted. The focus of research was on understanding and interpretation, and the researcher was concerned with experience and narrative. Thus, although rigorous and scientific, there is an element of reason and feeling that governs the research exploration process. The phenomenon is understood, defined, and discussed through interpretations of subjective meaning. Although reflexivity and bias is

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recognised and accounted for in the research process, influences from both science and personal experience is accepted in this approach. Therefore, the methodological dimension is one that is guided by human experience and meaning and involves the researcher in the process. The methodological dimension(s) are further explored in the sections that follow, in terms of the research approach, design, method, management, and analysis. Figure 2 offers a visual overview of the impact of ontological and epistemological positions on research design and approach.

Figure 2. The Impact of Ontology and Epistemology on Research Design and Approach
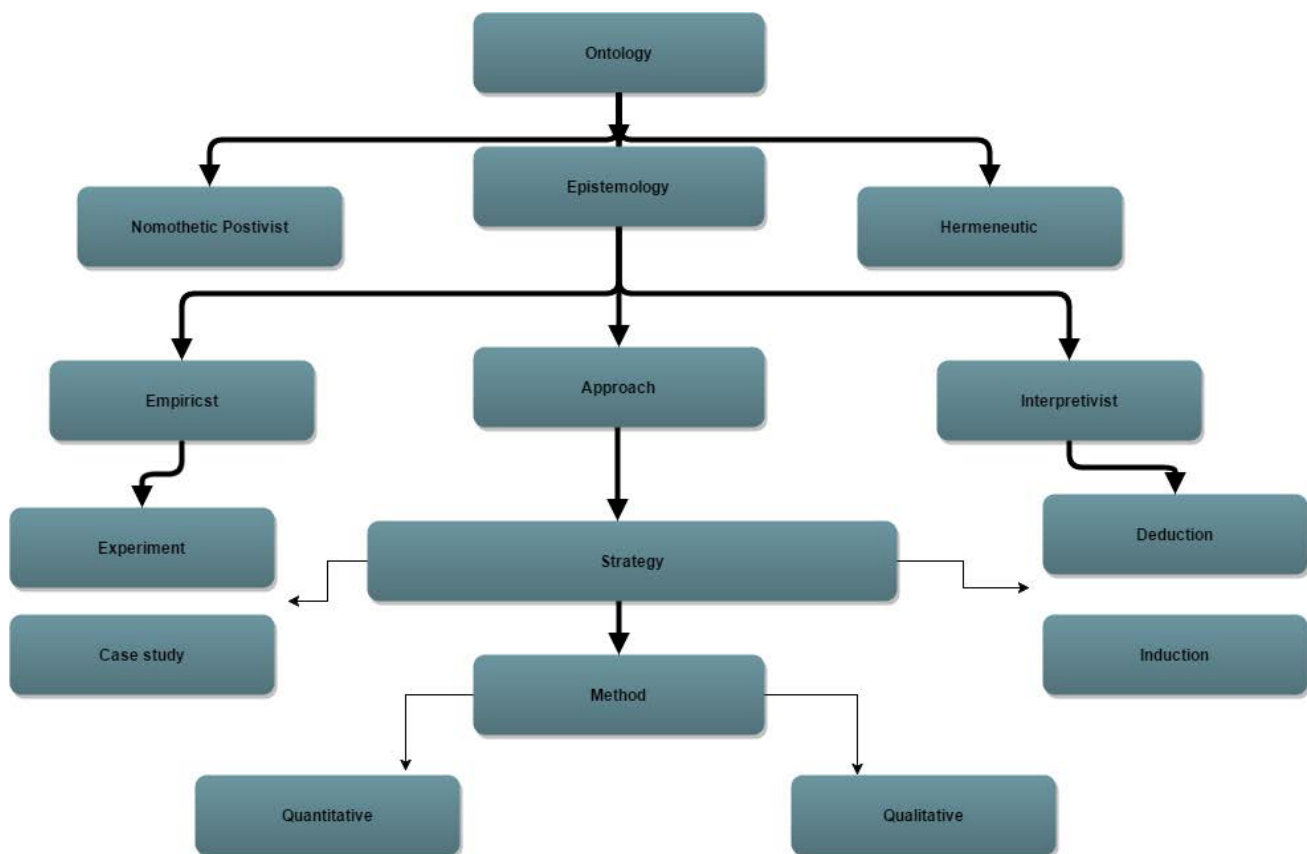
Source: *Adapted from Dudovskiy, 2016*

5.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

In this research study, the focus was on five selected non-governmental organisations, as representatives of the wider population group. Here, the researcher was interested in the

behaviours, which take place within the organization (Silverman, 2011), and the reflections of the organization employees on the specific phenomenon. The use of the case study research approach was seen as being the most effective in exploring the phenomenon of the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets on NGOs in South Africa, which is an extensive and broad topic in and of itself. Therefore, the selection of representative NGOs as case studies, within an subjective interpretative framework, as defined earlier in this chapter, was determined as an effective means of understanding and exploring this phenomenon.

5.3.1. Case Study Method

In this study, the researcher made use of a qualitative case study method as the primary research approach. A case study research approach serves as a strategy of qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2003), which aims to investigate an individual, group, institution, or community in order to answer specific research questions (Gillham, 2010; Jupp, 2006). This involves up-close, in-depth, and detailed examinations of a subject of study/phenomenon and its related contextual conditions. Thomas (2011), in his exploration of the case study method, defines this approach as being one that analyses persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions and other systems to be holistically studied. In his definition, the case being enquired after and/or studied is often a class of phenomena that acts as the analytical framework for the study.

The use of the qualitative case study method is often referred to as a form of ethnographic research focused on "a system bounded in space and time and embedded in a particular physical and sociocultural context" (Silverman, 2011:16). Research is conducted using a varied number of data collection methodologies and sources, including that of participant's observations, interviews, audio-visual materials, and documents (Silverman, 2011:16). It allows for the exploration of meaning, perceptions and practice influence.

Despite the existence of criticism against the case study approach due to its limitations in generalization ability (Silverman, 2011:16), the use of numerous cases is not always necessary to identify and assess the negative impact of a phenomenon, policy or programme on individuals, a group or an organization (Jupp, 2006). Instead, the established criteria for the selection of the case are what allow for a more robust test (Jupp, 2006). In this study, the researcher selected

five representative NGOs, operating in different fields with different target groups, as the focused case studies; this allowed for some overview of perceived implications for NGOs within the broader South African context. The researcher worked with a sample group of several participants within each organization from which qualitative data and narrative evidence was collected; these included frontline social work professionals, as well as social work managers within the organisations. The table below offers an overview of the three dimensions discussed above (ontological, sociological and epistemological), and the research assumptions that will serve as the broader framework for this study.

Table 13. Ontological, Sociological and Epistemological Assumptions of the Study

Dimension Category	Ontological	Sociological	Epistemological
Selected Dimension for the study	Interpretivism / Subjectivism	Society as Radical Change	Limits of inquiry – perceived knowledge
Dimension Research Assumptions	the nature of reality or being is socially constructed, subjective, and may change	Meaning is found through Symbolic Discourse; Participants affected by structural forces; enabling participants to share their stories to develop knowledge	Interested in patterns of symbolic discourse; Social workers as the symbol 'users'

In the sections that follow, the methodological dimensions of the study are explored, in terms of research design, data collection and analysis methods, as well as data verification tools.

5.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Yin (2009) believes that the case study method is preferred when 'how' or 'why' questions are being asked; when the researcher has little control over the events; and/or when the focus is on a contemporary issue. Farquhar (2012:5) proposes, "Case study research is also concerned with studying the phenomenon in context, so that the findings generate insight into how the

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phenomenon actually occurs within a given situation". In designing the case study research approach, one could use a descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory approach (Yin, 2003), depending on the nature of the phenomenon and the objectives of the case study. In this research study, a combined exploratory and descriptive case study research design was used.

5.4.1. Exploratory Method

An exploratory case study design aims to provide initial analysis of a particular phenomenon, and arises out of a lack of information within a particular field or area of interest (De Vos et al., 2011:95). This particular approach is thereby used to explore a context in which the intervention/phenomenon being evaluated doesn't have clear, set outcomes (Yin, 2003).

5.4.2. Descriptive Method

A descriptive case study design aims to provide a fuller portrait of the case being studied, with an intensive examination of a phenomenon and its deeper meanings (De Vos et al., 2011). This approach is used when the objective of the case study is to describe an intervention or phenomenon within the real-life context in which it is occurring/did occur (Yin, 2003).

As the intention of this study was to present the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets for South African NGOs, the initial need to explore this phenomenon further was recognised, in order to then gain an in-depth understanding toward the development of a more extensive description of said phenomenon. Therefore, the use of a combined explorative and descriptive research design is found to be accurate for this study.

5.5. RESEARCH METHOD

According to Gillham (2010:5-6), the naturalistic researcher's first stage of their study is to review the context from which the research questions, means of investigation, and likely hypotheses will emerge; as an exploratory and descriptive research method was used, no hypothesis was pre-formed, but exploration was based on several research questions. This is achieved through the use of inductive theorizing. Within this study, an inductive research method was implemented through the development of a literature study, population and sampling within the chosen case study organization, as well as various data collection methods related to the case study design. The specifics of these are explored in greater detail below.

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5.5.1. Literature Study

A literature review allows for the examination of how "others have already thought about and researched the topic" (Berger, 2001:19). According to Lyons & Doucek (2010:55-56), a literature review should contain the following key elements and objectives:

- A well-reasoned and clearly articulated case for the research;
- A structured argument that covers all relevant literature; the literature needs to be critiqued, synthesized and evaluated;
- Descriptions of how the various pieces of literature relate to one another;
- Understanding of how the above relationships mean for the research specifically;
- Descriptions of how the research will impact the advancement of social work knowledge;

The literature review should be based on established parameters, which are related to the research question at hand, defining inclusion and exclusion criteria that can be considered defensible in terms of the methodological dimensions, theoretical models, problem area(s), as well as determined keywords. (Lyons & Doucek, 2010). In the case of this study, the researcher made use of both local and international research, online databases, library research, peer-reviewed articles, and some grey material where necessary. Parameters were based on a selection of keywords:

> *Neoliberalism, neoliberal, neoliberal tenets, globalisation, economic theory, privatisation, non-governmental organisations, NGOs, South Africa, welfare, welfare ideology, social work, managerialism.*

The literature study is comprised of three chapters (as presented in Chapters Two, Three and Four): 1) Presenting an overview of neoliberal ideology and its influence in global macro socioeconomics, it's history, key tenets, and it's expansion into social welfare and social work; 2) Reflecting on the impact of neoliberalism within social work at large, identifying specific tenets at play; 3) Reviewing the specific development and impact of neoliberal tenets within the South African context, in terms of the impact on, and present functioning of, NGOs and social workers. This literature study focused on key texts and authors, including internationally renowned authors and critiques of global neoliberalism Harvey (2005, 2007), Hay (2002), Sewpaul (2013), Sewpaul

& Holscher (2004); analysts and critiques of neoliberalism within the South African context, Bond (2000, 2010), Desai (2002) and Xaba (2014); and, analysts and critiques of neoliberalism within a social work context, both internationally and locally, Engelbrecht (2006, 2013, 2015), Midgley (1997), Miraftab (2004), Sewpaul (2013) and Spolander et al. (2014).

The literature study enabled the researcher to form a framework of understanding within which data collection and analysis could be better understood. In particular, the unpacking of neoliberal tenets, through both global and local literature, allowed for an initial exploration of language and dialogue and how neoliberal ideology is constructed.

5.5.2. Population and Sampling

A population is "the target set of all possible individuals about whom information is sought… and the strictness in which they are defined should mirror the aims of the investigation or data gathering exercise" (Krzanowski, 2007:23). With regards to this particular study, the population is made up of non-governmental organisations within South Africa. There are a number of different approaches to sample determination within the case study method. In this study, the researcher opted to use a collective case approach. Stake (1995) identified this approach as being best when wanting to find out about a particular phenomenon from a number of different cases. By circumscribing the area of a study to a small number of units, the case study researcher is able to look in depth at a topic of interest or phenomenon. This small number of cases contrasts with large samples that feature in survey research (Farquhar, 2012).

A case study research design often requires a purposive sample, whereby the research makes the decision about not only the organization(s), which will be the focus of the study or the case, but also the individual participants who would most likely contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth (Jupp, 2006:244). This refers to the purposive selection by the researcher of participants most directly linked to the research area. Therefore, a sample is formatted that contains the most characteristics or typical attributes of the population that best serves the purpose of the study (De Vos et al., 2011:232). Samples within case study research can include single or multiple case studies (Yin, 2014). In this research study, the sample is made up of five selected NGOs within South Africa, as case study representatives, which function in

different fields/with different target groups. The types of NGOs approached were determined according to the scope of NGOs and their predominant focus areas within the South African context. Due to the dominant scope of NGOs within the field of social services, three child and family welfare NGOs were selected, alongside two developmental and health/rehabilitation-based NGOs, to best reflect the broader NGO case study within South Africa. However, these child and family welfare organisations had different target areas, groups and objectives and thus still represented different cases.

Within this sample parameter, 24 individual participants were chosen, with differing sample groups per case study, comprising of a purposive selection of front-line social workers and social work managers from these five chosen organisations. The researcher determined to make use of both frontline social workers, as well as social work managers to gain a deeper understanding into the broader social work experience within the NGO context; it was felt that the perspectives of the social work manager may hold different insight to that of social workers undertaking frontline services. The parameters for participant selection included:

- Front-line social workers: Individual was a registered social worker with the SACSSP, and had front-line social work practice experience (working directly with service users).
- Social work managers participants: Individual was a registered social work with the SACSSP, and had at least 2 years' experience of managing front-line social workers.

The discourses of frontline social workers and social work managers are, however, not explored separately in this study, but rather, the same research questions and themes were presented to both groups in order to gain an understanding of the social work NGO picture in its entirety, exploring the patterns that may emerge in the nuances, variations and similarities of the opinions of both types of social work professional. Thus, the researcher perceived each organisation as a case study and was interested in the narratives of the participants – regardless of whether they are on a frontline or management level. The separate NGO case studies formed part of a larger case study of the NGO context and social work experience, and thus the dialogue of social workers is analysed in its entirety, rather than aggregated within each separate organisation – one thus would want the whole spread in each case study; the individual NGO case study focused

on an overview of the organisation type, the identifying particulars of the NGO population sample, the key services provided by the population sample, and the predominant challenges they faced. This would allow for some understanding of the variations, which existed, if any, between specific NGO groups and/or types.

5.5.3. Method of Data Collection

Creswell (2003) determined that data collection, when using a case study method, occurs over a sustained period of time. Gillham (2010:1-2) further stipulates that no one kind or source of evidence is likely to be sufficient on its own. Rather, the use of multiple sources of evidence, each with its strengths and weaknesses, is viewed as being a key characteristic of case study research. According to Yin (2009), there are six primary sources of evidence for data collection within a case study approach. These include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct-observations, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. Yin (2009) further believes that such sources can often be complementary and thus a good case study approach will use a combination of more than one method.

In this research project, the primary research instrument within the case study framework is a *semi-structured interview schedule*; this was developed from the literature study and allowed for the collection and exploration of narrative and constructed meaning (Refer to Annexure A). The semi-structured interview was made up of four themes, which were identified in literature as the primary tenets of neoliberalism within the social work context (see Table 14).

In the interview, social workers were presented with a definition for each of the above themes, and were invited to reflect and offer their opinions and experiences.

Table 14. Empirical Themes in the Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Theme 1	The Marketisation of Social Work
Theme 2	The Consumerisation of Social Work
Theme 3	The Managerialisation of Social Work
Theme 4	The Deprofessionalisation of Social Work

A semi-structured interview schedule recognizes the need for specific information, or a particular direction of discussion, and therefore the interviewer comes with some previously established questions and framework schedule when conducting the interview, as indicated above (Bless et al., 2006). However, the interviewer is also free to formulate other questions as judged appropriate within the given situation (Ornellas, 2014). It is also important that the research participants are not necessarily confronted with pre-existing definitions or answers to the problem being addressed, but instead are given the freedom to choose their own definitions and motivate their own views within the focal area (Bless et al., 2006:116-117). Interviews were conducted in English; the appropriate climate-setting techniques were implemented in order to ensure that participants were comfortable and able to share freely (De Vos et al., 2011). Data was captured through the means of audio-recordings, as well as the transcribing of discourse by the researcher after each interview. This allowed for the capturing of in-depth qualitative data.

Interviews were conducted over several months, from May 2017 through to August 2017, depending on participant availability. These interviews were conducted in-person or telephonically, depending again on the availability of participants, as well as if their location was outside of the Western Cape; telephonic interviews were still audio-recorded. The average length of the individual interviews was approximately 45-60 minutes in length; some were slightly shorter than this. This varied according to the time participants had to offer, as well as the level of depth in the narratives and discussions when exploring the interview themes.

As stipulated by Gillham (2010) and Yin (2009), the case study method involves a varied number of data collection techniques, of which the semi-structured interview is the primary tool. In this study, additional techniques for data collection, over and above the interview, included:

- ***Documentation*** - Administrative documents such as proposals, progress reports, internal records, formal evaluations, articles, agendas and other written reports. Such documents are considered particularly important for corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources (Yin, 2009). These documents enabled the researcher to build a profile for each organisation, understanding it's agenda, target audience, and practice, as well as mapping any changes or neoliberal influence - essentially the larger narrative of the NGO

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- before further enriching and interpreting such evidence with individual interviews. A summary profile of each organisation is presented in the empirical chapter of the study, and further substantiated with participant narrative to build individual case studies.

- ***Direct observations*** - these were implemented through field visits to the selected organisations, when conducting the interviews (Yin, 2009). These were largely informal and included observations regarding the condition of the physical work environment and the interactions of workers and managers. The observations of the researcher are not included in the empirical study, however they better informed and enriched the researchers understanding of each NGO context and enabled a contextualisation of participant narrative.

5.6. DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Data management and statistical analysis are implemented in this study through the establishment of an appropriate method of data analysis, and methods of data verification, including data validity, credibility and reflexivity.

5.6.1. Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process whereby order, structure and meaning are brought about to the data, which has been collected (De Vos et al., 2011). According to Stake (1995:1), when collecting and analysing data using the case study method, "we enter the scene with a sincere interest in learning how [actors] function in ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn".

Yin (2009) identifies three core strategies for data analysis within the case study research design, which include relying on *theoretical propositions* which will shape and establish analytical strategies and priorities; thinking about, defining and testing *rival explanations*; and developing a *descriptive framework* for organising the case study, which is referred to as a *case description* - however, this approach is not always effective when the original objective of the study was descriptive in nature.

The researcher determined that reliance on theoretical propositions would be the best framework in which data from the study is analysed, as this was believed to best represent the nature of the

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research question and the phenomenon being studied. Within such a framework, two particular data analyse techniques and tools, relevant to the case study approach, were implemented.

The researcher implemented qualitative coding manually. Steps included: identifying repeating ideas, generating themes, and grouping themes into theoretical constructs; these theoretical constructs were finally linked to the research concerns, questions and literature review, thus generating a theoretical narrative and hypothesis(es).

5.6.1.1. Logic Models

Logic models fall under the broad umbrella of pattern matching, however are distinguished from explanation building in that they involve matching empirically observed events to theoretically predicted events (Yin, 2009). As originally developed by Wholey (1979), this form of analysis involves tracing events when some form of intervention or change was intended to precede a certain outcome. Yin (2009) describes this process as involving the recognition and analysis of the following:

- The immediate outcomes produced from the initial activities of the intervention (or change);
- The intermediate outcomes produced from the immediate ones;
- The final, or ultimate outcomes that arise as a result.

Here, the idea is the existence of repeated cause-and-effect sequences which link together, matching empirically observed events (the experiences of the frontline social workers and managers, the larger NGO case studies) to theoretically predicted events (the literature and academic claims regarding neoliberal influence, such as that of Xaba [2014] and others). Pattern matching was implemented through direct coding by the researcher, matching identified neoliberal tenets and themes within literature to that of the empirical experiences and reflections of the participants. For this research study, where more than one case study is used, the *program-level logic model* was best suited, assuming an underlying programme, phenomenon or policy which impacts upon the functioning of a number of organisations/professional fields, as in the case of neoliberal ideology on NGO functioning (Yin, 2009).

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5.6.1.2. Cross-Case Synthesis

Cross-Case synthesis, as a data analysis technique, is best used when the research study involves multiple cases (Yin, 2009). Within this approach, each individual case (NGO) was treated as a separate study, developed through interviews, documentation and archive analysis, and direct observations. Findings were then aggregated across this series of individual studies. For qualitative approaches, which use a modest number of cases, as in this particular study (five NGOs, 24 participants), word tables, which display data from individual cases according to some uniform framework (Yin, 2009), are often the most effective and were implemented in this study, developed through qualitative coding (which identified common words, themes) and the use of keywords which were identified as representing neoliberal tenets in the literature study (and semi-structured interview schedule). Cross-Case synthesis was implemented twice in the data analysis period: first, within the individual case studies (NGOs), the researcher made use of a word table to assess and identify patterns in the narratives and perceptions of frontline social workers and managers; this enabled a deeper and more robust case study development per NGO. Secondly, cross-case synthesis was implemented between/across case studies, finding patterns between the larger five NGO studies.

Thus, analysis involved logic building per individual case study (NGO), followed by a larger cross case and word table synthesis within and between case studies. The researcher believes that a combination of the above tools allowed for a particularly robust and effective data analysis.

5.6.1.3. Denaturalisation

In the collection of data, the researcher additionally manually transcribed audio recordings of semi-structured interviews with participants. This allowed for a more robust exploration of patterns, themes and dialogue interpretation. In the transcription process, the method of denaturalisation was undertaken. Denaturalisation allows for the correction of grammar, where deemed necessary so as not to hinder or obstruct the understanding of participant narrative; for the removal of interview noise such as pauses and stutters; non-standardized accents are standardized (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005). The representation of participant dialogue is incredibly valuable in a qualitative study, and particularly this study with its interpretative ontological approach as discussed earlier in this chapter; how narrative data is presented can

affect its conceptualisation. Thus, "Periods of reflection at crucial design and implementation points may provide a valuable exercise in honouring both the research process and participant's voice" (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005:1286).

5.6.2. Method of Data Verification

In analysing data, it is essential to ensure its verification as quality data through reflecting on aspects of validity, reliability, credibility, transferability and dependability.

5.6.2.1. Validity

Validity, according to De Vos et al (2011) refers to the extent to which an empirical measurement adequately reflects the real/true meaning of the concept being studied This therefore involves aspects of truthfulness, accuracy, authenticity and genuineness, or the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to (De Vos et al., 2011:172). Yin (2009) recognises pattern matching as being an analysis technique that can strengthen the internal validity of a study, particularly if empirical and predicted/alternative patterns coincide. In this study, pattern matching through two data analysis tools (logic models and cross-case synthesis) ensured sufficient validity of findings.

5.6.2.2. Reliability

Data is considered to be reliable if it is determined that the same results would be yielded in future studies or endeavours or tests (De Vos et al., 2011:177). Thus, reliability is dependent upon the data measurement instrument, in ensuring that in measuring the same two things twice, it will yield the same results (Ornellas, 2014). Reliability is somewhat challenging within a qualitative study that fits within an interpretative and subjective philosophical dimension. However, the researcher implemented a through the use of *split-halves reliability* within the semi-structured interview, to ensure that the narrative data yielded could be viewed as reliable. Per Bless et al. (2006:153), "the split-halves reliability method is concerned with the internal consistency of instruments [and] involves splitting the test into two halves and finding the extent of correspondence or reliability between the halves." This approach was used through the development of four versions of the same question within the semi-structured interview, two representing a negative answer, and two representing a positive answer; the question was

ultimately the same, only phrased somewhat differently. Thus, the reliability of the data would be tested through the commonality of narrative provided in each answer. For example, where themes were explored as the framework for the interview schedule, definitions of these themes often overlapped, and restating similar tenets under more than theme, using varying language, allowed for further reliability of responses (Bless et al., 2006).

5.6.2.3. Credibility

Credibility requires that, in the data collection process, the subject matter is accurately identified and described (De Vos et al., 2011:419). This was achieved through a number of interview techniques, such as paraphrasing, probing, summarizing, clarifying and focusing (Ornellas, 2014) to ensure that the subject matter was clearly presented and understood.

5.6.2.4. Transferability

Transferability looks at whether the findings of the research can be transferred from one specific case to another, which is often referred to as external validity (De Vos et al., 2011). This is somewhat challenging with qualitative research that is limited to a specific sample group size; the case study approach is also often critiqued for its lack of generalizability (Farquhar, 2012). However, the use of five different case studies, a number of different participants, and the determining of patterns that are measured against alternative/rival options will help ensure stronger external validity and some level of transferability.

5.6.2.5. Dependability

This is determined through establishing a research process that is logical, well documented and audited (De Vos et al., 2011:420). This was strengthened through an accurate record of all data, including the use of a case study database, audio and transcribed records of the interviews, case study notes, document analysis and narrative records, as well as detailed descriptions of logic building and cross-case synthesis.

The table that follows offers a visual overview of the methodological dimensions of the research study.

Table 15. Methodological Dimension(s) of the Study

Methodological Dimension	Research Approach	Inductive	Research Question; Literature review; empirical data exploration; analysis
	Research Design	Collective Case Study Method	5 NGOs representing 5 case studies
		Exploratory	Initial analysis of the phenomenon
		Descriptive	Further portrait of deeper meanings
	Data Collection	Purposive Sample Selection	Selected NGOs from 5 different fields to represent social work practice; 24 participants (a selection of frontline social worker and social work managers from each organization)
		Semi-structured Interview	Focused exploration; freedom of ideas and patterns
	Data Analysis	Logic Models	Matching empirically observed events/understandings to theoretically predicted events/understandings. Each NGO will be a single case study assessed through a logic model
		Cross-Case Synthesis	Determine patterns between 5 case studies
	Data Verification Tool	Pattern Matching	Patterns between case studies and within case studies, as well as literature

5.7. RESEARCH ETHICS

As the researcher is a registered social worker, this study is bound by the general ethical code of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP, 2011). As a result, the established values and principles of social work practice were applicable when implementing data collection and analysis, particularly in all interactions with participants (De Vos et al., 2011). There are also existing established rules and behavioural expectations regarding the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students within general research practice which must be upheld throughout the research process (De Vos et al., 2011; Ornellas, 2014).

5.7.1. Ethical Guidelines in Research

General ethical guidelines for the research process include voluntary participation, prevention of harm to participants, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

5.7.1.1. Voluntary participation

Any and all participation of both the larger NGO bodies, as well as individual frontline social work and manager participation was entirely voluntary. NGO bodies were approached by the researcher, informed of the research study and requested to participate as case studies; the five NGOs did so voluntarily, after the research process, outcome and dissemination was clearly outlined by the researcher. Following the recommendation of managing bodies within the NGOs, several front-line social workers and social work managers within each organisation were approached to participate in the study; contact information for individual frontline and social work managers was provided through overseeing management once permission to involve the NGO in the empirical study was granted. For some organisations, permission was granted in writing with some stipulations (i.e. the research study must be sent to the organisation upon completion), for others it was done so orally with some written and/or oral recommendations of potential participants to contact. The researcher reiterates here again that this was done so voluntarily, individuals were not pursued if they indicated they did not wish to participate. Following the recommendation of overseeing management, the researcher emailed each participant with the detailed request and research proposal; this email was followed up with a phone call if there was no response. Some participants declined to participate in the study, this decision was respected. Those that accepted were then sent the research interview schedule and the consent form and a date and time for the interview that best suited the participant

was determined. All individuals were informed of their right to exit the study at any point, none of whom felt the need to do so.

5.7.1.2. Prevention of harm to participants

Prevention of harm to participants, also referred to in social science research as non-maleficence, is the active practice of ensuring no harm is brought to participants during their voluntary participation in the research study; this includes physical and emotional harm. In this research study, data collection, which directly involved participants, included a semi-structured interview and direct observation on NGO field visits. These procedures did not bring any physical harm to the participants, and the researcher only interacted with social workers and managers within their working environment. The prevention of emotional harm was ensured through the use of various climate-setting techniques during the interview process, to ensure the participants was at ease; it was further clearly indicated to participants, in the acquiring of their voluntary consent, that they were able to stop the interview process at any point they felt uncomfortable.

5.7.1.3. Informed consent

To further strengthen the voluntary nature of participants in the study, informed consent was obtained from both the larger NGO bodies, in terms of developing a case study on their functioning and practice, and the use of relevant documentation and observation, as well as individual participants and their participation in semi-structured interviews. Participants gave permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded and transcribed. A copy of the informed consent form was given to the NGOs and individual participants for their record; original forms have been stored in a safe, and locked, place should they be required (See Annexure B).

5.7.1.4. Anonymity

The anonymity of both the NGOs and individual participants has been reserved throughout the study. The case studies developed on each NGO did not reveal specific details about the name, location or employees of the organisation and any documentation or archives were reviewed by the researcher only, and stowed away with the consent forms in a secured space. The individual interviews, although audio-recorded, did not give an indication of the participant's name, place of employment or any other personal details. The identity of the participants will remain anonymous; this is an ethical commitment of the researcher to the study's participants.

5.7.1.5. Confidentiality

Alongside anonymity within the actual study, the confidentiality of any personal or private information of the NGOs and individual participants remains confidential throughout, and beyond, the research process. The researcher ensured to not include any private funding or internal functioning details of the organisation that may have been revealed in archived documentation or interview discussions; this also relates to any personal information shared by the participants themselves. The use of anonymity at all times further strengthens the confidential nature of the study.

5.7.2. Research bias

As a result of focusing primarily upon qualitative data, the researcher recognizes that she is the primary data analysis instrument in the research study. Therefore, the researcher ensured that any feelings toward the subject matter/phenomenon was determined and recognized, and was taken into consideration throughout the study. Within an interpretative and subjective ontological approach, influence from both science and personal experience is accepted; as indicated earlier in the chapter, the methodological dimension is one that is guided by human experience and meaning and involves the researcher in the process. However, recognition of personal bias was undertaken and such awareness throughout the study ensured that such bias, feeling or opinion did not influence the overall research process or findings (De Vos et al., 2011).

As a registered social worker, the research shares some similarity with the participants, and thus previous experience in implementing social work intervention within NGO contexts has resulted in personal opinions and feelings regarding the needs, strengths, weaknesses and objectives of an NGO within a South African context. However, the researcher also recognizes that she has limited experience and knowledge in such practice, and therefore ensured that all said opinions and biases were thus set aside in order to receive participant qualitative data without predetermined judgments or assumptions.

Finally the researcher is further aware that her participation in the EU-funded research study, which lead to the development of this particular research question, may also lend itself toward predetermined bias of the implications that neoliberal ideology will have/is having on non-governmental organisations, social work and social welfare practice overall. Although academic reports and literature consolidated in this previous study has been used, the researcher determined to treat this particular study as something separate, which may yield

different results from the researcher's previously established assumptions or ideas. Thus, the researcher engaged in continuous and regular personal reflection, as well as supervision with her thesis supervisor.

In reflecting on the empirical study, the researcher initially found the willingness of social work participants to be challenging. While institutional permission was relatively easy to attain, the high caseload and work volume of social workers made setting aside time for an interview difficult. The researcher found that the willingness of participants to engage in the study was largely determined by their opinions regarding the importance of the study and its potential impact on their work.

5.7.3. Summary of research ethics

Summary of ethical procedures are inclusive of the following:

- Ensuring that at all times, appropriate provision was made for informed consent from participants, through the use of official consent forms, as well as informing participants of the voluntary nature of their involvement in the research. Participants were issued individual copies of their signed consent forms, while the originals are kept in a secured research file.
- As a continued part of informed consent, the researcher ensured that participants were aware of their right to refuse to answer questions and to withdraw from participation in the research at any time.
- The personal data of participants is secured from improper access, the identity of the participants will not be disclosed and confidentiality of information will be maintained at all times;
- Institutional permission to implement a case study within the selected NGOs was granted; this included the use of organization literature, policy material and general environmental observation.
- In light of ethical considerations within social work practice and policy regarding vulnerable groups, participants of the research remained within the established boundary of social work professionals. The researcher was granted ethical clearance from the Department of Social Work Ethical Screening Committee (DESC), before commencing with the empirical study (See Annexure C).

5.8. LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

According to De Vos et al. (2011), limitations in research studies are important elements, which the researcher needs to be aware of, recognize, acknowledge and present clearly. Within this study, the researcher can identify two potential limitations.

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Firstly, according to Remenyi et al (1998), the primary limitation of a case study approach is often its lack of objectivity and rigour. With the aim of a case study method being one of in-depth analysis and understanding of an often-contemporary issue, within its context, objectivity is not always the primary aim (Farquhar, 2012), nor easily achievable. However, as this study is centralized on the reflections of social workers and managers, increased subjectivity is accounted for. In terms of rigour, the researcher attempted to ensure this through the use of a coherent research design, and appropriate research strategy, as well as effective data collection and analysis methods (Farquhar, 2012).

The second limitation can be found in terms of the small sample size used within the qualitative case study approach, as this can often cause concerns regarding generalizability of the findings (De Vos et al., 2011; Farquhar, 2012, Yin, 2014). However, the use of purposive sampling, across five different NGO-types, has allowed the researcher to ensure that a broad, varied and representative sample of participants was used from a number of social work and NGO contexts; thus, ensuring access to a wider scope of data. This was, in fact, so much so that saturation was reached with regard to participant inclusion. As outlined by Mason (2010), saturation can often be determined by the overarching objective and goal of the qualitative research study, and additionally, Morse (2000) outlines how participants that hold expertise in the phenomenon being explored can further lead to quicker saturation, particularly in smaller studies. With regard to this study, saturation was reached with 24 participants, and the researcher felt that the addition of participants outside of this number would not yield different results.

5.9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study was implemented within a subjective, interpretivist ontological approach that particularly focused on the value of dialogue and the meaning it constructs toward understanding broader phenomena. A total of five NGO case studies were engaged with, through 24 participants representing varying numbers of frontline social workers and social work managers from the selected organisations; these organisations served as separate case studies in some respects, together forming a larger singular case study of the social work NGO context within South Africa. These separate case studies are presented in the next chapter, followed by a more in-depth presentation of participant narrative, which was analysed across case studies and formed a larger picture of the social work experience within the South African NGO. In line with the ontological assumptions of the study, participant narrative forms the basis for the empirical analysis.

CHAPTER 6: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of literature exploration, this chapter will present the empirical findings of the data collection phase, in which semi-structured interviews were held with 24 frontline social workers and social work managers from five different non-governmental social work organisations. Through the presentation of these findings, the views of social workers on the implications of neoliberal tenets on social work and NGOs will be further explored. As this is a qualitative study that is largely concerned with the interpretation of meaning, the empirical findings will be presented in the form of narratives and an exploration of dialogue and its meaning. This will be done under four primary themes, which were identified in literature and served as the basis for the semi-structured interview schedule:

Table 16. Empirical Themes in the Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Theme 1	The Marketisation of Social Work
Theme 2	The Consumerisation of Social Work
Theme 3	The Managerialisation of Social Work
Theme 4	The Deprofessionalisation of Social Work

In the interviews, social workers were presented with a definition for each of the above themes, in terms of what is being discussed and proposed in literature, regarding the impact of neoliberalism on the functioning of the profession and NGO context within South Africa. Participants were then invited to reflect on these definitions and to offer narratives on whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements presented in literature, whether they had experienced, in practice, such implications and their views and opinions on how these various themes were playing out on-the-ground and in their personal practice. In the extrapolation of the empirical findings, the definition of each theme, as presented to the participant, will be outlined and used as sub-themes to allow for a more in-depth exploration. Repeated narrative patterns and/or opinions have been traced throughout the transcribed dialogue and offered as categories. These will be clearly outlined for the reader. However, before beginning this process, a case study for each participating organisation is offered, to allow the reader to better understand the NGO context out of which this dialogue is emerging, as well as the identifying particulars of the

participants, to allow for a broad overview of the sample population group, and the sub-samples within each organisation.

6.2. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION CASE STUDIES AND IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS OF PARTICIPANTS

The sample population of frontline social workers and social work managers was taken from five social work non-governmental organisations within South Africa. These organisations represented different social work contexts, while also ensuring an accurate representation of the social work NGO spread, which falls predominantly within the designated child protection field. Thus, two organisations represented this organisational type, one of which also identified as a predominantly faith-based organisation. The third organisation was focused on rehabilitation and homelessness; the fourth on gender-based violence, and drug abuse, acting as a place of safety; and the fifth organisation specialised in adoption. This is outlined in the table below.

Table 17. Participating Organisational Type

Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E
Child and Family Welfare (Faith-based; Child Protection)	Child and Family Welfare (Child Protection)	Adult Rehabilitation and Shelter	Gender-based Violence, Drug Abuse, Place of Safety	Adoption (Child and Family Welfare)

A brief case study of each organisation is offered below.

6.2.1. Organisation A

6.2.1.1. Organisation Overview

Organisation A is a ***faith-based and designated child protection social work NGO***; and represents one of the oldest and largest welfare NGOs in South Africa. Organisation A is people-centered and strengths-based in its approach, and offers services to families, children and older persons. This organisation has branches across the country and is deeply immersed in communities within both urban and rural settings. The branches of the organisation are largely financially independent from one another, governed by volunteer boards and affiliated with an overarching national body and management. This overarching management determines the policies and strategies of the organisation, through a democratic process in which independent branches hold equal voting

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power and participation. The operationalisation of these policies and strategies are implemented through a National Council, which renders support through its top and middle management to affiliate branches and service areas. These managers specialise in supervision and aim to guide and support management committees and staff.

6.2.1.2. Core Business of the NGO

Organisation A separates its core business into four categories:

Social Work and Child Protection	**Early Childhood Development**
Older Persons and Special Needs	**Leadership and Training**

Participants were asked to identify the core business of their NGO in the semi-structured interview. Although their responses are largely uniform, referring to the organisation as a child protection NGO, that offered child and family welfare and protective services, participants emphasised certain activities over others. Reflection on this enables a richer understanding of how participants identify with the organisation and the work it does, as well as the services and activities, which they immediately recognise as significant and/or of value. For example, participant A identified the core business of their organisation as being to "*protect and develop those in need.*" From there, the participant outlined the four service categories:

> "*We have distinct service sectors, and that is child protection, which includes all social work services, and child and youth care centres, then we have ECD and daycare, and then we have older persons… from the cradle to the grave." (Participant A).*

Participant C also recognised the four service areas, however identified them slightly differently to participant A, referring to awareness and reunification services as key activities within the NGO:

> "*Child protection, protecting older persons removing of children, mediation, ECD, prevention of abuse, awareness, four levels: awareness, early intervention, statutory and reunification services." (Participant C).*

This differs somewhat from participant B, who focused primarily on the child protection aspect of the NGO:

"Our core business is mainly Child protection – making sure children are taken care of, are protected by family, parents." (Participant B).

6.2.1.3. Organisation Sample Population

The sample population group of Organisation A was made up of four participants, one of which was a frontline social worker, while three were social work managers. All of the participants were acting under government-subsidised social work and supervising posts.

Table 18. Identifying Particulars of Participants of Organisation A

	Position	Years of Social Work Experience	Years of Management Experience
Participant A	Social Work Manager	35 years	28 years
Participant B	Frontline Social Worker	10 years	NA
Participant C	Social Work Manager	11 years	5 years
Participant D	Social Work Manager	30 years	10 years

As demonstrated above, the sample population group in organisation A consisted predominantly of seasoned social workers, whether frontline or in management positions, with the experience of participants within the social work field resting at a minimum of 10 years, and a medium of 21.5 years. Two of the social work managers had experience in social work both pre and post-1994, and one social worker also held management experience pre and post 1994, which allowed for rich comparisons of both if and how the social work and NGO environment has changed with the dismantling of apartheid, the movement toward social development and the infiltration of neoliberal ideals.

Participants were further asked to clarify their core performance areas in terms of their job description and the work they undertake within the organisation. Extracts of these narratives are offered below, allowing for the development of a more detailed picture of the sample population and their particular context within which the impact of neoliberal tenets was later explored. These core performance areas link up with the description of the NGO and the services rendered through the organisation. Each social work manager identified supervision and

management-related activities within their job description; however, participants C and D also indicated that they undertake child protection work alongside their managerial responsibilities.

Table 19. Core Performance Areas of Participants of Organisation A

	Job Description / Core Performance Areas
Participant A	- National Manager - Supervision - Guidance and direction of all social work child protection services within Organisation A - Workload management of social workers - Funding of posts for national council - Networking and administration - Training and capacity building of social work staff
Participant B	- Following up on reports of child abuse and neglect - Family and child safety assessment - Child removal and investigation - Rehab applications - Old age home applications
Participant C	- Supervision - Managing the office - Supervisor for crèches - Street children project - Child protection services and court proceedings
Participant D	- Supervision - Child protection and Statutory Work - Support, guidance, empowerment of the volunteer management board to see that they function according to the legislation, practice code and policies

6.2.1.4. Primary Challenges as Identified by Participants

Participants were asked to identify, if any, the primary challenges they were experiencing within their work environment. Many of these challenges were raised again and further explored under the four research themes of the interview schedule, however the identification of challenges without any previous introduction or guidance toward particular topics offers insight into what social workers initially and immediately view their primary

challenges to be. Participants within the sample group for Organisation A primarily identified six core challenges within their practice:

- Time
- Funding
- Managing of the human factor
- Management and Volunteer Board who are not social workers
- Staff capacity and Resources
- Safety of social workers

In terms of time, participants indicated that there simply was not enough time to complete all the tasks they were required to and/or wanted to and that the extremely high caseload of social workers was a significant challenge. Furthermore, participants identified their time as being largely overtaken by funding and management tasks.

> *"The biggest challenge that I experience is to find enough time for the professional side of it, because your time gets gobbled up by funding issues. I told the National Council the other day, my job gets actually reduced… often I feel reduced to branches without money, it's all about money." (Participant A).*

Some participants identified managing the human element, over and above funding and capacity, as being a challenge; *"Managing the human factor… that is for me the main challenge"* (Participant D).

In particular, however, participants felt that having an overseeing management and volunteer board that were not social workers, or did hold social work experience, presented one of the biggest challenges to their work - and this was, they felt, largely connected to the capacity, time and funding issues that they had further highlighted.

> *"Even within [my organisation], a big challenge is that the employer is a volunteer , so we have 53 social work offices, they are all managed by volunteer boards, so it remains a challenge because you have people who is your boss who is not a social worker.... That to me is still a challenge, you need to fight for your position, and I think it's because they [the funders] are not social workers, they don't understand." (Participant A).*

> *"Your other challenge is your management board who don't realise the functions we have on the ground level, so to them it's about what do you really do, because you don't see what we do, our work is not something that you can see, people don't come back and say we've done well… they only give the negative side of social work." (Participant C)*

A limitation of staff capacity and resources was an additional challenge identified by participants:

"In terms of removing children and finding safety parents, that is a big problem, and the homes and child and youth care centres are so full, the capacity of, they're so full, that you don't find places, and sometimes you leave that child in that situation because where do you go if you take the child?" (Participant B)

Finally, the safety of social workers, particularly in the context of child removal within communities, was highlighted as a challenge that participants were dealing with in their work.

These challenges will be further unpacked and explored through the narratives of participants under the four respective empirical themes.

6.2.2. Organisation B

6.2.2.1. Organisation Overview

Organisation B **acts as an adoption agency, under the umbrella of child and family welfare**. They are a designated and accredited child protection organisation, and additionally form a part of a faith-based executive welfare council. Organisation B has the mandate to facilitate and oversee local as well as inter-country adoptions, and render such a service as a means of facilitating an integrated child protection framework through the building and support of families. This organisation has a head office and satellite branch which render services in two provinces within South Africa; services are rendered to additional provinces in the country through a partnership with another adoption and statutory NGO. Their staff is made up of management, social workers, social auxiliary workers and administrators, and their reach includes up to 500 children annually.

The vision of the organisation is to provide holistic child protection strengthening services through family development and support, including the rendering of statutory services, alternative care, the screening of adoptive parents, counselling services for biological parents and families, facilitating local and inter-country adoptions, creating awareness within communities particularly around crisis and unplanned pregnancy, option counselling, referral and support, capacity training and further lobbying and advocacy within the field of adoption. A volunteer board of directors oversees the organisation.

6.2.2.3. Core Business of the NGO

Organisation B separates its core business into four categories:

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Birth Parents	Child
(Option counselling, therapeutic services, alternative care referral, legal support)	(Statutory services, permanency assessment, medical and emotional assessment and prep; places of temporary care)
Social Services	Adoptive Parents
(Partnership, capacity building, awareness and training)	(Screening, recruitment, prep, family care)

Participants were asked to identify and indicate their opinions on the core business of their NGO in the semi-structured interview(s). Although their responses are largely uniform, the emphasis of certain activities over others enables a richer understanding of how participants identify with the organisation and the work it does, as well as the services and activities, which they immediately recognise as significant and/or of value. All of the participants referred to their NGO as being one that "specialises in permanency" or "gives permanency to children."

Specific activities that participants identified as the core business of the NGO included:

- Working with children and families
- Find families for babies and children
- Working with biological mothers signing consent for adoption
- Screening of adoptive parents
- Training government social workers in adoption services

6.2.2.2. Organisation Sample Population

The sample population group of Organisation B was made up of three participants, two of which were social work managers, and one a frontline social worker. All of the participants were acting under government-subsidised social work and supervising posts.

Table 20. Identifying Particulars of Participants in Organisation B

	Position	Years of Social Work Experience	Years of Management Experience
Participant E	Social Work Manager	25 years	13 years
Participant F	Social Work Manager	36 years	16 years
Participant G	Frontline Social Worker	4 years	NA

As demonstrated in the table above, the social work managers are seasoned practitioners with extensive experience in both social work and management / supervision. The third social worker is newer to the fieldwork with less frontline experience, and no management experience to speak of; this social worker (Participant G) had only been with Organisation B for several months, and had previous experience in the child protection and criminal rehabilitation fields. The median of work experience for all participants was 21.6 years.

Participants were further asked to clarify their core performance areas in terms of their job description and the work they undertake within the organisation. Extracts of these narratives are offered below, allowing for the development of a more detailed picture of the sample population and their particular context within which the impact of neoliberal tenets was later explored. These core performance areas link up with the description of the NGO and the services rendered through the organisation.

Table 21. Core Performance Areas of Participants in Organisation B

	Job Description / Core Performance Areas
Participant E	- Supervision in the office - HR - Group supervision - Inter-country adoptions - Networking with other NGOs
Participant F	- Disclosure adoption - Investigating adoptability of the child - Counselling of biological parents and family - Screening of adoptive parents - Supervision - Abandonment tracing

Participant G	• Screening prospective adoptive parents • Home visits • Background information checks • Counselling and marriage counselling

6.2.2.4. Primary Challenges as Identified by Participants

Participants were asked to identify the primary challenges that they were currently experiencing with regard to their job description and core performance areas within the NGO. Participants identified challenges within three categories, that of service-users, that of other organisations or the larger welfare environment, and that of specific challenges within their NGO context. Within the area of service-users, participants identified abandonment tracing as the most challenging element of their work, as well as the cultural difficulties that can be associated with adoption and particularly its confidential nature.

> *"Cultural challenges with adoption, particularly outside of the family, as well as the understanding of adoption being a permanent move, especially with grandparents and extended family members. The biological parents must sign consent – there is then a confidentiality agreement - if the biological parent doesn't want to indicate this to the family and they later find out, legally at the end it may become challenging" (Participant F).*

With regard to the challenges experienced in working with other NGOs and the broader welfare environment, participants indicated difficulties in their work with home affairs and how systems and procedures were often changing in this regard, and that birth registrations and the forms and feedback required for court procedures through Home Affairs often involved long and difficult processes.

In addition, participants then highlighted challenges that they were experiencing within their NGO environment, and much like organisation A, this was largely linked to a limitation of resources, funding, as well as management, which was considered to be distant and less aware of the work that went on in the satellite office, where participants for the study were located. These are outlined in several narrative extracts below:

> *"Our main challenge at this stage is that we don't have enough cars to do our work, so we make use of our own cars and I don't think that's good practice" (Participant E);*

> *"We are limited, we don't have all the counselling rooms, so that is a bit of a hinder, to schedule work" (Participant G);*

"...if your management team is not here… sometimes we would say they don't really understand, because we don't have that contact… we don't have a real management team here, we also don't have a board… our board is also in [location of head office]" (Participant E).

6.2.3. Organisation C

6.2.3.1. Organisation Overview

Organisation C identified as a faith-based organisation that worked in adult and family rehabilitation, acting as a shelter through the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless and rehabilitating adults. The mission statement of the organisation is to be a place of spiritual, psychological and material renewal for destitute men and women, restoring broken spiritual and familial relationships, and "bringing wholeness to broken people." This organisation is a relatively small NGO, based in the Western Cape, falling under the patronage of 12 mainline churches. They offer services such as drug rehabilitation, life skills development and coaching, therapeutic services and workshops, short-term accommodation and linkages of clients with specialised services where needed; their target group is men and women between the ages of 25 to 65 years. Their single office is run by a small multidimensional team, which includes a CEO, an administrator, a housemother, an assistant housemother and a social worker. A volunteer board of directors linked to their church affiliates oversees them.

6.2.3.2. Core Business of the NGO

Organisation C identifies its core business as being one of renewal for destitute individuals, in terms of the following areas:

Self Renewal	Family and Relational Renewal
Spiritual Renewal	Material Renewal

Participants were asked to identify the core business of their NGO in the semi-structured interview and the activities identified were in line with the description of the NGO, with key activities including:

- Renewing lives
- Helping homeless people renew their lives

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- Reintegration into society
- Reunification with families

6.2.3.3. Organisation Sample Population

The sample population group of Organisation B was made up of one participant, who served as the designated social worker for the organisation. Although a small sample size, the inclusion of this organisation served as a representative of smaller welfare NGOs and the experience of social workers in this regard. This representative has had significant social work management experience in the past, with 19 years of social work experience, four of which were at Organisation B, as well as 2 years of previous social work management and supervision experience at a child and family welfare organisation. Thus, although acting as a frontline social worker within their organisation, also undertakes management responsibilities and is classified as representing both.

H

Table 22. Identifying Particulars of Participants in Organisation C

	Position	Years of Social Work Experience	Years of Management Experience
Participant H	Social Work Manager and Frontline	19 years	2 years

The participant was further asked to clarify their core performance areas in terms of their job description and the work they undertake within the organisation. The participant focused largely on the rehabilitative element of the NGOs work, in terms of therapeutic services with individuals grappling with drug addiction and broken down relationships as a result.

Table 23. Core Performance Areas of Participants in Organisation C

	Job Description / Core Performance Areas
Participant H	- Addiction problems - Supporting people with addictions - Getting their lives back on track - Building relationships broken whilst being in active addiction

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6.2.3.4. Primary Challenges as Identified by Participants

The participant was asked to identify the primary challenges that they were experiencing within their work environment, and as a whole, identified this as being connected to the limitations they have in rendering a quality service for the service-users of the NGO. It was particularly noted that to help individuals "get their lives back on track" (Participant H), intensive therapeutic services were needed, which the participant did not always feel were rendered, either through a lack of time and capacity, the need for more staff and/or a dearth of specialised services within the organisation. The participant indicated that all of these challenges "boil down to finances" and that it was about rendering the right service from the right person (specialisation) in a cost-effective manner.

> *"We run this place with a small staff component and if we had more people to do the work, then we could do more, but now we work with what we have… To really help someone, you need a multi-professional team and we don't have that. We tap into the other organisations... but we can't help everyone" (Participant H).*

6.2.4. Organisation D

6.2.4.1. Organisation Overview

Organisation D is a one-stop centre for women and children who are survivors of abuse, domestic violence, gender-based violence and/or substance abuse. It serves as the first multi-disciplinary one-stop service for abused women and children in the country. The aim of the organisation is to provide a safe house and safe space for women and children, and to promote the protection of human rights, empowering women and children to exercise their rights to their full potential. Organisation D provides services such as 24-hour emergency shelter, medium-term residential care, childcare, therapeutic counselling, mental health support, legal and economic empowerment services, research into gender-based violence, and job skills training. It has one single branch, but partners with many other organisations across the country and is overseen by a managing board.

6.2.4.2. Core Business of the NGO

The core business of Organisation D can be clustered under four categories:

24-hour emergency shelter and medium-term residential care	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support
Research and Advocacy Work	Services for Women and Children: Therapeutic Services, Childcare, Job skills training

Participants were asked to offer their understandings of the core business of their NGO and outlined activities including:

- Substance abuse treatment
- Victim empowerment
- Gender-based violence services
- Short-term treatment interventions
- Safe house
- Domestic violence
- Safekeeping of women and children

6.2.4.3. Organisation Sample Population

The sample population group of Organisation D was made up of two participants, both of which were frontline social workers at the organisation. However, Participant K has previously served as a social manager for several years within different social work settings and is therefore classified as both in terms of the reflections the participant brings to social work frontline and management understanding. All of the participants were acting under government-subsidised social work and supervising posts.

Table 24. Identifying Particulars of Participants in Organisation D

	Position	Years of Social Work Experience	Years of Management Experience
Participant I	Frontline Social Worker	3 years	NA
Participant J	Social Work Manager	41 years	20 years

As demonstrated in the table above, the two participants have varied experience, with participant I being relatively new to the field, while participant J has had extensive frontline and managerial practice. The median of work experience for all participants is 22 years.

Participants were further asked to clarify their core performance areas in terms of their job description and the work they undertake within the organisation. Their responses have been summarised below, allowing for the development of a more detailed picture of the sample population and their particular context within which the impact of neoliberal tenets was later explored.

Table 25. Core Performance Areas of Participants in Organisation D

	Job Description / Core Performance Areas
Participant I	● Assessments ● Intake
Participant J	● Social worker in the substance abuse unit ● Individual counselling ● Group work

6.2.4.4. Primary Challenges as Identified by Participants

Before delving into the established themes for the semi-structured interview, participants were asked to share what they felt were the core challenges that they were presently dealing with in terms of their work and their performance areas. The two participants from Organisation D outlined the following challenges:

- Funding

"Yes, especially when it comes to funding. There's a lack of it. With the present economic climate the funding is not so easy to get. At the end of May, two of the departments at [the NGO] had to be closed, it was the child counselling and the legal… Now the social worker has to see to both the mothers and the children." (Participant J)

"One of the criteria of the substance unit is that they must be unemployed, or they can't go and work so once again the finance is a problem." (Participant J)

- Capacity, particularly in terms of space and finding alternative accommodation

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- Difficulties in terms of the confidentiality of work and decision-making processes

"Challenges? Yes, there are a lot. Because… this is a walk-in service. Very often, once people are here, the story changes such a lot. And they don't want you to have contact with families to get collateral, so you have to go on what they tell you." (Participant J)

6.2.5. Organisation E

6.2.5.1. Organisation Overview

Organisation E is a designated child protection NGO; and represents one of the largest non-profit, non-governmental organisations in the country. The mission of this organisation is to promote, protect and enhance the safety, wellbeing and healthy development of children and families. The organisation has over 265 member organisations across the country, with all offices and affiliate branches focusing on the rendering of social work services, child protection, statutory work, outreach projects, early intervention services, prevention services, and child and family care and development.

Affiliate branches are generally financially independent and work output and expectations varies in different provinces; all affiliates fall under a National Council, with each affiliate having an overseeing board of directors and management team. Key objectives of the organisation include fostering the sustainment of the family unit, protecting children within the family environment, addressing the needs of both individuals and families through social work services, empowering communities through capacity building, awareness programmes and developmental projects, collaborating with other organisations within the welfare field, implementing poverty alleviation and eradication programmes, participating in, and supporting advocacy and legislation development toward the protection and promotion of the rights of the child.

6.2.4.2. Core Business of the NGO

The core business of Organisation E can be clustered under four categories:

Awareness and Prevention	Early Childhood Intervention
Statutory Services and Child Protection	Community Engagement and Advocacy

In identifying the core business of the NGO, participants offered significantly varied responses, highlighting the incredibly broad work undertaken by social workers within this organisation. All participants did indicate, however, in exact words that the core business of their NGO was child protection. In terms of what this specifically involved, identified activities included:

- Protecting the best interests of children
- Rendering services to children and families
- Protecting vulnerable groups such as women, children and youth
- Group work, case work and community work
- Drug and rehabilitation referrals
- Old age home application and support referrals
- Removal and placement of children
- Families

6.2.4.3. Organisation Sample Population

The sample population group of Organisation E was made up of fourteen (14) participants; this represented the largest sample group for the empirical study. The use of such a large representation was two-fold: organisation E is one of the largest welfare NGO in the country and thus to sample only one office would bean insufficient representation of the organisation, its functioning and the experiences of its social workers. Secondly, Organisation E was identified as significantly representing the broader social work NGO context within South Africa, as much of the work undertaken by non-governmental social workers falls under the governance and guidance of this organisation and its National Council.

The population sample was taken from one affiliate organisation, which operated through three separate branches. In presenting a case study of this organisation, it felt significant to highlight that these three branches were overseen by the same management body and board of directors, within which there was one supervisor responsible for all social work and auxiliary staff. Within the sample population, there were two social work managers, eleven (11) frontline social workers, and one social auxiliary worker who was in the process of completing her final year of social work studies. All of the participants were acting under government-subsidised social work and supervising posts.

Table 26. Identifying Particulars of Participants in Organisation E

	Position	Years of Social Work Experience	Years of Management Experience
Participant K	Social Work Manager	39 years	32 years
Participant L	Frontline Social Worker	27 years	NA
Participant M	Frontline Social Worker	10 years	NA
Participant N	Frontline Social Worker	14 years	NA
Participant O	Frontline Social Worker	3 years	NA
Participant P	Frontline Social Worker	2 years	NA
Participant Q	Frontline Social Worker	Several months	NA
Participant R	Frontline Social Worker	2 ½ years	NA
Participant S	Frontline Social Worker	8 months	NA
Participant T	Social Work Manager	20 years	10 years
Participant U	Frontline Social Worker	6 months	NA
Participant V	Frontline Social Worker	6 months	NA
Participant W	Frontline Social Worker	1 year	NA
Participant X	Frontline Social Worker	8 months	NA

As demonstrated in the table above, participants greatly varied in terms of their experience within the social work field, although it is noted that there were a significant number of new/young social workers that had just entered the field for a few months; this can be attributed to how large Organisation E is and its employment scope. The median in terms of years of experience comes to roughly 9.3 years, which is much lower than the other four organisations.

Participants were further asked to clarify their core performance areas in terms of their job description and the work they undertake within the organisation. Summaries of these narratives are offered below, allowing for the

development of a more detailed picture of the sample population and their particular context within which the impact of neoliberal tenets was later explored.

Table 27. Core Performance Areas of Participants in Organisation E

	Job Description / Core Performance Areas
Participant K	● Management ● Organizational management ● Overseeing of supervisors ● Quality assurance in terms of organisational performance
Participant L	● Foster Care Supervision ● Statutory work within the continuum of care ● Child and Youth Care Centres ● Family reunification
Participant M	● Safety Assessments ● Child removal and placement ● Court proceedings and statutory work ● Foster Care
Participant N	● Intake worker ● Court proceedings ● Group work ● Community work ● Parenting skills
Participant O	● Intake worker ● Assess and review all new incoming cases ● Foster care applications ● Marriage mediation and counselling ● Overseeing auxiliary worker(s) and students
Participant P	● Intake ● Court and statutory work ● Investigatory work ● Casework and Group work
Participant Q	● Child Protection
Participant R	● Intake ● Case management ● Assessment of referrals ● Court investigations and feedback ● Referrals to other services ● Reports for rehab admittance

	Job Description / Core Performance Areas
	● Foster care and child placement
Participant S	● Meeting the outputs of the TPA ● Community-based services ● Empowering families ● Finding places of safety ● Group work with children and parents ● Skills development ● Awareness programmes ● Preventative work
Participant T	● Working with clients with family problems ● Addressing referrals from stakeholders ● Intensive therapeutic work ● Assessment ● Parenting Skills ● Family conferences
Participant U	● Intake ● Statutory work up until placement and court proceedings ● Foster care groups ● Casework
Participant V	● Foster care placements ● Reunification services ● Linking with SASSA grants ● Parenting skills workshops ● Foster children groups ● Supporting existing social work cases
Participant W	● Community Development social worker ● Community development for children ● Child abuse prevention ● Life skills development ● Community development programmes ● Vacation programmes ● Capacity training and awareness
Participant X	● Intake ● Therapeutic casework

6.2.5.4. Primary Challenges as Identified by Participants

Participants were asked to identify the primary challenges they were experiencing in within their NGO contexts, in terms of their job description and core performance areas. The challenges identified by participants in organisation E were relatively vast. The challenges are presented below, followed by a selection of narrative extracts which present an overview of the key challenges outlined by a majority of the participants, in terms of challenges related to funding, caseload management and the TPA:

- Finances and Resources
- The expectations of the TPA
- High caseload
- Complicated and difficult cases
- Transport availability and traveling distance
- Top-down management
- Clear definitions of roles and mandate
- Human relations in the office
- Build up and backlog of work
- Time Management
- Lack of differentiation between NGO sectors

- Divisions between intake and foster care workers
- Insufficient support from senior workers and supervisor(s)
- Insufficient supervision and debrief support
- Insufficient placement options for children
- Lack of change in communities
- Safety of social workers
- TPA expectations versus funding

Challenges with regard to funding and resources:

"You don't get donations very often, when I do a programme I like to have food there, children don't have anything to eat / little to eat, incentivise to attend the programme, if there was food, they would sooner come" (Participant W)

"In terms of the funding, they fund only child protection, but what is expected of you is to do the basket of services, and that's everything, and a huge problem for me is that… mediation and parental rights and responsibilities is part of the children's act, but for funding purposes it's part of families… so we do meditation but we don't get the funding for that.. we don't have a choice." (Participant K)

Challenges with regard to the TPA:

"The TPA – it limits you – this is a new post that was created, so now I can focus on getting what the TPA needs us to do – then I can focus on problems" (Participant W)

"To meet the norms and standards… the norms and standards are in the Children's Act, but you can't implement it because you don't get funding according to that… Norms and standards says one supervisor for every six social workers, it's not like that… We've got fifteen social workers and it was only [supervisor x] and me… and I must do the mediation, and I must do this… you can't. That is why you can't delivery quality services… that is why there is such a huge turn over." (Participant K)

"They have to start to differentiate between the sectors within your NGO sector… Your social worker in child protection and your social worker in people with disabilities is a huge difference but we get the same subsidies. So, child protection lose their social workers to go to the softer jobs.. because they don't have that pressure… the chances that they will be reported for professional misconduct in comparison to a social worker in child protection is almost zero, where we get reported almost monthly." (Participant K)

"That is another huge problem - if you look at the TPA and what is expected of you, they don't fund managers in the NGO sector. I must still do some supervision over the supervisors, and they subsidise me as a supervisor, it's not like in the department where there's different grades...and you'll get supervisors and managers, the NGOs don't have it, they don't cater for it. We don't receive subsidy for any administration positions." (Participant K)

Challenges with regard to Caseload Management:

"It [caseload management] can be quite overwhelming" (Participant O)

"For me, the counselling part is a huge challenge, we have so high workload, and so much clients to attend to, that we can't really do the necessary counselling work that the children need, long waiting list for counselling referral" (Participant S)

6.3. AN OVERVIEW OF THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES

Against the backdrop of the above organisational case studies and population sample profiles, the empirical data findings from the interviews with participants will be presented, analysed and discussed under determined themes, sub-themes and categories. As discussed in Chapter Five, the themes and sub-themes for the empirical study were pre-determined through the literature review and were offered to the participants in their semi-structured interviews for reflection and critical dialogue. These were presented as follows:

Table 28. Themes and Sub-Themes as Presented in the Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Theme	Sub-Theme
THEME A **The Marketisation of Social Work**	A.1. Previously state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs
	A.2. Growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations
	A.3. Dominance of contractual relationships
THEME B **The Consumerisation of Social Work**	B.1. Dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing
	B.2. Overemphasis on individualism (micro work) above addressing structural causes (macro work)
THEME C **The Managerialisation of Social Work**	C.1. Social work and NGOs are becoming increasingly expected to act like a business
	C.2. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness employed as a yardstick
	C.3. Preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards, and dominance of management knowledge
THEME D **The Deprofessionalisation of Social Work**	D.1. Reducing professional discretion and deskilling of social work
	D.2. Deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity
	D.3. Social work tasks are being taken up by other professions

The above themes and sub-themes were offered to participants as existing opinions within academic literature, in terms of representing neoliberal tenets, interpretations and outputs impacting on the social work profession. Upon reflections and critical responses from participants on these topics, several categories within each sub-

theme emerged; the exploration of these categories will allow for a richer understanding and description of the views of social workers (frontline and managers) on the broader sub-themes and themes. These categories were determined through thematic coding and are presented in the table below. In the sections that follow, each theme with its related sub-themes and categories will be explored through an analysis and interpretation of participant narratives and their interlinks with literature; extracts of dialogue are offered to substantiate these findings.

Table 29. Themes, Sub-Themes and Categories

THEME A. THE MARKETISATION OF SOCIAL WORK			
Sub-Theme A.1 **Previously state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs**			
Category A.1.1.	*Category A.1.2.*	*Category A.1.3.*	
The state is taking back services	Services have always been outsourced to NGOs; this isn't new	NGOs are expected to do more (with less)	
Sub-Theme A.2 **Growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations**			
Category A.2.1.	*Category A.2.2.*	*Category A.2.3.*	*Category A.2.4.*
Expectation from State for NGOs to act as private operations and procure own funding	Expectations to act as private operations and procure own funding from NGOs themselves	Government providing less, still expectation for NGOs to render majority of services	NGOs struggling financially and funding takes up large portions of time
Sub-Theme A.3 **Dominance of Contractual Relationships**			
Category A.3.1.	*Category A.3.2*	*Category A.3.3*	*Category A.3.4*
State TPA is dominating NGOs	State TPA is creating a negative environment for NGOs	State TPA holds NGOs to account and is fair	TPA contract does not allow for process / flexibility of definitions / understanding of NGO context
THEME B. THE CONSUMERISATION OF SOCIAL WORK			

Sub-Theme B.1			
Dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing			

Category B.1.1.	Category B.1.2.	Category B.1.3.	
Self-reliance is positive and should be promoted	Self-reliance is good but should take into account the environment	State Grants are creating dependency and this is negative	

Sub-Theme B.2			
Overemphasis on individualism (micro work) above addressing structural causes (macro work)			

Category B.2.1.	Category B.2.2.	Category B.2.3.	Category B.2.4.
Society has changed and individual work is more effective / feasible	Social workers don't have the capacity / time for macro work	Social workers don't have the funding / resources for macro work	The TPA emphasises / funds casework

Category B.2.5.	Category B.2.6.	Category B.2.7.	
Tradition keeps social workers focused on micro work	Macro work is necessary, but isn't / shouldn't be the role of social workers [only]	Social workers should be connected to the bigger, structural picture	

THEME C. THE MANAGERIALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

Sub-Theme C.1
Social work and NGOs are becoming increasingly expected to act like a business

Category C.1.1.
Yes, NGOs feel they are increasingly expected to run like businesses

Sub-Theme C.2
Efficiency and cost-effectiveness employed as the yardstick

Category C.2.1
Work is limited by what is cost-effective

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Sub-Theme C.3 Preoccupation with procedures, norms, standards, and the predominance of management knowledge			
Category C.3.1	*Category C.3.2*	*Category C.3.3*	*Category C.3.4*
Outputs are more important than quality of work and emphasis on ticking boxes	Prevalence / Dominance of top-down management	Management are not social workers and don't understand	Supervision has become about management
THEME D. THE DEPROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK			
Sub-Theme D.1. Reducing professional discretion and deskilling of social work			
Category D.1.1.	*Category D.1.2.*	*Category D.1.3.*	
Specialised social workers have an easier role; child protection has the hardest job	Profession is becoming "cheaper" and therefore poorer in skill	Limitation and Pressure of the TPA is causing a deskilling of social work	
Sub-Theme D.2. Deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity			
Category D.2.1.	*Category D.2.2.*	*Category D.2.3.*	
Identity of profession is poor	The attitude of social workers is the reason the profession isn't respected	There is a brain-drain of social workers	
Sub-Theme D.3. Social work tasks are being taken up by other professions and groups			
Category D.3.1.		*Category D.3.2.*	
Sub-professions are causing confusion and deskilling		Sub-professions are supportive and ease the workload, but clear boundaries and training are required	

The empirical findings are first presented through the narrations of participants within each identified category; the researcher will offer a full account of the participant responses and experiences for each category and sub-theme in order to maintain the flow of the narrative. At the end of the exposition of each theme (through the sub-

themes and categories), the researcher presents a discussion and literature control for the overall theme. This ties in with the subject interpretivist approach, in that pehoneomena can be explored and understood through dialogue and constructed meaning (Hussey & Hussey, 2014). This layout further supports the case study metholdoligcal approach (Thomas, 2011)

6.4. THEME 1: THE MARKETISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

A suggested impact of neoliberalism in social work within the NGO context is that of the marketisation of social work. This pertains to the notion that social work and welfare NGOs are becoming increasingly expected to act as private operations in the rendering of their services, relying less on government support and funding; at the same time, social services are being outsourced by government to such NGOs and where funding is provided, it is done through a contractual relationship that has been viewed by some as facilitating the shuffle of the welfare NGO to a business-orientated organisation that is governed by output and performance. Despite being expected to act as private operations, NGOs continue to be bound to the state and the rendering of previously and/or traditionally state-run services through the means of such service agreements and their reliance on government subsidy. This definition was offered to participants from the five participating organisations, and their critical reflections led to several defining categories, as outlined in the table below. These are discussed further in this section.

Table 30. Theme A: Sub-Themes and Categories

THEME A. THE MARKETISATION OF SOCIAL WORK			
Sub-Theme A.1 **Previously state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs**			
Category A.1.1.	*Category A.1.2.*	*Category A.1.3.*	
The state is taking back services	Services have always been outsourced to NGOs; this isn't new	NGOs are expected to do more (with less)	
Sub-Theme A.2 **Growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations**			
Category A.2.1.	*Category A.2.2.*	*Category A.2.3.*	*Category A.2.4.*

Expectation from State for NGOs to act as private operations and procure own funding	Expectations to act as private operations and procure own funding from NGOs themselves	Government providing less, still expectation for NGOs to render majority of services	NGOs struggling financially and funding takes up large portions of time
Sub-Theme A.3 **Dominance of Contractual Relationships**			
Category A.3.1.	*Category A.3.2*	*Category A.3.3*	*Category A.3.4*
State TPA is dominating NGOs	State TPA is creating a negative environment for NGOs	TPA contract does not allow for process / flexibility of definitions / understanding of NGO context	State TPA holds NGOs to account and is fair

6.4.1. Sub-Theme A.1: Previously state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs

Participants were asked to reflect on the above statement and/or opinion in literature and indicate whether or not this was something they had and/or were experiencing in their practice on the ground. They were further asked to broadly reflect on whether it was a statement they largely agreed or disagreed with, and why. This discussion led to varying views and opinions that were often found to be relatively uniform within each organisation, yet with slight differences between organisations themselves. Some felt this to be true, services were being increasingly outsourced to NGOs and NGOs were expected to do more (with less), while others, although agreeing that they were the primary renders of welfare services, suggested this was not a new phenomenon but had been this way since the beginning of their practice and experience; others disagreed and in fact suggested that, in their opinion, the state was attempting to take service rendering back from NGOs and this was having a negative impact.

Category A.1.1. The state is taking back services

When reflecting on the above sub-theme, a selection of participants offered up a disagreement, expressing concerns instead that they had begun to notice a shift, which felt like the state was attempting to take back many of the services that had been run by NGOs for a long period of time. This is clearly articulated by Participant A, who proposed,

> *"The state in South Africa, for me, my experience was that most welfare services were actually provided by NGOs, the state is now taking back instead of outsourcing." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

Participant A asserted that NGOs had long been providing social welfare services to communities and proposed this as a standard means of service delivery within South Africa; the idea of the state 'taking back' these services was considered a foreign concept and expressed negatively. This negative association was further explored by Participant L, who felt that this assumption by the state, that they could render the same services as NGOs at the same costing, was largely misinformed:

> *"So, the problem is, within the Social Development [DSD] National and maybe in certain provinces as well, they have the perception that they can do the same work as the NGOs. I don't know if it's a matter of being threatened, but we know that they can't do it. The problem is they don't understand... I don't think they've ever done a costing exercise to see what it costs for Social Development to have a social worker in their employment, versus the NGO sector." (Participant K, Organisation E).*

The idea that the state 'taking back' services is negative was again clearly expressed in the above narrative, alongside the viewpoint that for the state to even consider that they could do what NGOs were doing, was in some way an insult to the workload and outputs of NGOs, and a poor understanding of just how limited they were financially despite rendering services of such broad scope and high quality.

Participant D, also from Organisation A, alongside Participant A, showed similar opinions, however, proposed that while the state was taking back services run by NGOs and in fact decreasing their outsourcing load, they were at the same time expecting NGOs to continue with some service rendering as private operations. Here the participant was referring to the difficulty that an NGO would find in continuing to deliver their services, while receiving little to no subsidy support from the state through the outsourcing process. At the same time, it seems that the participant believes government would still largely dictate the output and agenda of the NGO.

> *"We get two opposing messages from the department: the one is that NGOs must not rely on government funding, we have to function privately… and especially the previously advantaged NGOs - this is the very direct message that we get. But then on the other hand, they don't want to outsource the services. The department said we want to do all the statutory work with regards to child protection… you [the NGO] must do the prevention work" (Participant D; Organisation A)*

It is worth noting that the participants who expressed concerns of the state taking back services from NGOs were from the two largest organisation groups in the sample population, both of which are child protection organisations, representing the significant majority proportion of NGO-based social service delivery. It would not

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necessarily be accurate to differ these opinions to other NGO types, but rather to reflect that perhaps the state, as outlined clearly by Participant D, is in fact expressing interest in taking back statutory work, which is almost solely run by designated child protection NGOs in South Africa.

Category A.1.2. Services have always been outsourced to NGOs; this is not new

Some participants, as opposed to those who either agreed or disagreed with the statement of Sub-Theme A.1, felt that social welfare services had always been outsourced to NGOs and that NGOs had always been faced with some expectation to run as private and independent operations, particularly in terms of procuring their own funding, government subsidies aside. In a sense, this is in agreement with Participant narratives provided under the previous category, in that this was NGO territory and always had been:

> *"I won't say it has changed, even when I was a student, from the start, we need to always as an NGO, except for the subsidy we need more money, because the subsidy only pays a part of it…" (Participant F; organisation B)*

Although this was a viewpoint shared by some from the sample population group, it did not necessarily represent the majority opinion; some believed differently.

Category A.1.3. NGOs are expected to do more (with less)

An additional selection of participants differed from the above two categories, in their viewpoint that services were in fact being increasingly outsourced to NGOs, and that NGOs were being expected to do more. Participant I verbalised this as a falling of boundaries:

> *"After 1994, my belief is that boundaries fell, and we [NGOs] work more in all sectors, the expectations of the NGO is to do more – do more community, group and casework" (Participant H; Organisation C).*

However, neither of the above categories served to represent a larger proportion of the group, but rather the three opinions expressed as three sub-categories were more or less evenly shared, with one not necessarily strongly outweighing the other. That said, the opinion that the delivery of services had always been dominated by the NGO sector and that alongside this, NGOs were now expected to do more, did represent a majority view, which was expressed continuously throughout the interview process: *NGOs were the ones doing the work.* The second sub-theme analysed below suggests that alongside this largely shared belief was an additional impression: *They were increasingly expected to do so with less.*

6.4.2. Sub-Theme A.2: Growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations

Participants may have had differing opinions regarding whether or not services were being *increasingly* outsourced to their sector, however they were almost entirely in agreement regarding the notion that NGOs were, at present, undertaking the majority of social service delivery and that they were doing so within an increasingly financially baron environment. In fact, those earlier participants who expressed concerns that government was taking on or taking *back* existing NGO services such as statutory work, further suggested that this was more a cost-saving exercise than anything else. Funding was a huge challenge for the organisations interviewed in this study, and could in fact be labelled the greatest challenge; in every theme, sub-theme and category, it without fail manages to rears its nasty head.

In this particular Sub-Theme, the idea that NGOs were being expected to rely less on government support and funding, and to instead procure their own funding (aside from post-based subsidies, which were recognised by many as significantly dropping), was almost undisputed; NGOs were being expected to run as private operations. Whether this was deemed negative or positive, and the reasons as to why this was a growing expectation is where some differences could be found.

Category A.2.1. Expectation from State for NGOs to act as private operations and procure own funding

This first category serves as an agreement from participants with the statement presented in Sub-Theme A.2: Yes, there was a growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations.

Not all participants were entirely sure why this expectation was increasing. Some felt the government simply did not understand what it cost to do the work NGOs were undertaking, others felt it was a result of policy shifts and changes, and some exerted that it was less of a purposive act by the state and rather a reflection of the current economic environment. One participant articulated this as being largely due to the saturation of NGOs within the field, although also expressed some reluctance from government to spend money on their sector:

> *"I fully agree with that [after being read Sub-Theme A.2]. The funding from the state… it's a long process and it [government] is not always readily a giver… there's such a lot of other NGOs that need funding, because they want to reach all the NGOs, it's thinly spread across the board." (Participant J; Organisation D)*

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In terms of policy impacts, certain participants indicated that the underlying policy agenda of funding had changed, and that programmes were more readily funded than that of social work posts:

"I remember that time in the 1970s, early 80s, they used to fund social work posts, but now it's no longer the post, its the programme." (Participant J; Organisation D)

However, this opinion is also somewhat contradicted in later sub-themes explored, where the limitation of government subsidy funding to casework and statutory initiatives is inferred. It can be proposed, however, that by 'programmes', the participant was not necessarily referring to social work specific programmes, and this would then support later viewpoints. Regardless, participants also felt that the risk of subsidiaries provided for social work posts dropping was definitely apparent:

Researcher Question: Do you feel that the risk of those subsidies being dropped over recent years is increasing?

"Absolutely, absolutely. Almost 100%." (Participant E; Organisation B).

Many participants were particularly upset with the hijacking of their time and capacity that came with the increasing expectation for NGOs to procure their own funding:

"We don't really do that much marketing and funding, I think that comes more from head office and management, that's not a big portion of our job, but in terms of, like last time, we had to write the lotto report application and that took a lot of time… government only subsidies our salaries and nothing more. If we really need money we run to one of the churches." (Participant B; Organisation A)

"The problem with NGOs, helping ...to fund their own community projects and stuff, is now you have a double purpose, because on the one hand, now you have to have… it's not marketing, it's more entrepreneurship of getting funds, and on the other hand you must do social work. And in the years this is something that's changed. We start with 70 cases, now some of the NGOs have 200 cases on a social worker. So we could work very effectively [previously], now they cannot work and the cases also become more difficult, complicated, now in between they still must have time for business, to be sustainable." (Participant F; Organisation B)

"I said to our National Chairperson, you did not appoint me to raise funds. We have a disagreement about social work posts and costing, and she said to me, but how much funding have you collected? And I said but you didn't appoint me, and actually in fact I did get [x amount] from business brands, but I wasn't appointed to raise funds and neither were the social workers. Social workers should have the money to do their jobs. … I'm not a marketer." (Participant A; Organisation A)

As indicated in the narrative extracts above, social workers (largely social work managers) felt that the burden of raising funds for the running of their NGOs fell on them and also at times, the frontline social workers they were managing; this was not their task nor their area of expertise. Participant G recognised this as a new phenomenon, or something that had changed in recent years. All indicated it was negatively affecting their work. This opinion that NGOs were required to solicit their own funding and act independently was, however, not always viewed as a negative proposition.

Category A.2.2. Expectations to act as private operations and procure own funding from NGOs themselves
Some participants, when reflecting on the notion that NGOs had to act as private operations and secure funding for themselves, while agreeing to this, further suggested that it was as it should be; NGOs should be responsible for themselves:

> *"Yes, there is an expectation to rely less on government support and funding, even within the NGOs themselves, it's not just from government. The attitude from NGOs is that we are too reliant on government." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

One participant likened it to the dependency of community members on social security grants and 'hand-outs', although also clarifying that while it may be the responsibility of the NGO, the funding climate was dry:

> *"As an NGO we've also got responsibilities, we can't just… stand hands open and just expect. We need to bring outside as well. In the past we used to get a lot of hand-outs, now people just don't have money anymore and that's okay, but we also still have responsibility." (Participant C; Organisation A)*

Despite, or rather co-existing with, this opinion held by some participants, many agreed that funding from state was lessening, and yet the workload and expectation of NGO output was not; participants felt that NGOs were still taking on the majority of work within the social welfare field.

Category A.2.3. Government providing less, but still expectation for NGOs to render majority of services
This category flows from the one before it, building upon the opinion that funding and support from the state is being reduced, and introducing this alongside the concern that such reduction has in no way lessened the workload expectation of NGOs. Rather, NGOs continue to take on the large majority of social work service rendering. Many participants explicitly inferred that NGOs were doing a lot more work than that of state social workers within the Department of Social Development (DSD):

"There is less funding from the state. If there were more funding, we will be paid as much as social development social workers are being paid, and funny enough, we do more than they do… Like for example, I work in [x area]... [x area] is divided into two offices, it is divided amongst [organisation E] and Social Development [DSD]. And we only have one intake worker at our office and one foster care worker. At their office, they have four social workers...but we're dealing half-half." (Participant O; Organisation E)

"I think we do more work" (Participant S; Organisation E)

Some suggested that the Department simply did not understand what it cost to do such work, nor the funding and provision differences between the state and the NGO sector. Several participants referred to recent cutbacks in social work posts with certain provinces in the country, whereby the subsidies for entire offices were swiftly removed:

"It is definitely the case. The other reality around is that government funding is also limited. [A branch of Organisation E in x Province] - their funding was stopped completely. So, the problem is, within the Social Development [DSD] National and maybe in certain provinces as well, they have the perception that they can do the same work as the NGOs. I don't know if it's a matter of being threatened, but we know that they can't do it. The problem is they don't understand... I don't think they've ever done a costing exercise to see what it costs for Social Development to have a social worker in their employment, versus the NGO sector. We can't pay the same benefits. So, the fact that NGOs are forced into entrepreneurial things is a fact." (Participant K, Organisation E)

Of particular concern, was the limitation of funding from government towards certain activities, while exerting a continuing expectation that other activities, not subsidised or supported by the government in anyway, would still be run by NGOs. It served as a contradiction to the message of NGOs needing to act as private operations; as if, they had to do so financially, but had little control over how that affected their mandate or output:

"In terms of the funding, they fund only child protection, but what is expected of you is to do the basket of services, and that's everything, and a huge problem for me is that… mediation and parental rights and responsibilities is part of the children's act, but for funding purposes it's part of families, that's not part of the Children's Act… so we do meditation but we don't get the funding for that.. we don't have a choice." (Participant K, Organisation E)[9]

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[9] The researcher recognises that this category is saturated with the opinion of Participant K, however this represents a wider opinion offered by a number of participants. Furthermore, Participant K represented one of the most seasoned and senior social work managers within the population sample and held particular expertise in this area.

This was, according to some, not only an attitude of Social Development (DSD), but other state departments and actors as well:

"Justice says it's not their problem, we must take it up with Social Development, Social Development say but in terms of their funding model, it's part of families. And see, the problem with parental rights and responsibilities is that the Act says anyone can virtually draw up a parenting plan, but you can't go to children's court. So, if there's a problem with the agreement, then they can't subpoena the mediator because the mediator is not a designated social worker or family advocate… Our Children's Court refuse, no, [Organisation E] you will do it, and they subpoena you in person." (Participant L, Organisation E)

The belief that government funding and support was deteriorating was a largely majority held opinion amongst participants in the sample population group. Funding (and finances), in particular, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, was the single largest struggle raised by NGOs, and although literature and history may propose that a dearth of funding within the NGO sector is not necessarily a new phenomenon, the extracts presented in this category suggest otherwise; the spirit of the NGO seemed to be more acutely weighed down by finances; one participant referred to it as a 'crumbling' of the NGO sector. This financial struggle, which flows from this category, is further explored in the section below.

Category A.2.4. NGOs struggling financially and funding takes up large portions of time

> *"The deep financial struggle of NGOs was a wound laid bare in each conversation; the phrase "but, the funding" interrupted near all ideas and reflections. The issue of finance appeared to hang over their heads like a solid mist, infiltrating every aspect of care and service delivery. It was as if, at times, participants presented themselves as soldiers to be shipped off to war with little to no artillery." (Researcher's own reflections, 23 August 2017).*

The findings in this category need little introduction other than the above, and need little assessment or explanation beyond the dialogue of participants themselves:

> *"The biggest challenge that I experience is to find enough time for the professional side of it, because your time gets gobbled up by funding issues." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

> *"Especially with the funding part, because we need to do group and community projects as well, and it's a bit of a struggle when we don't have money. And even small things for our clients for birth certificates for home affairs that they have to pay, they don't have the money, for traveling fees to wherever, to go look for jobs or get to jobs, we don't have the funding to provide to our clients and so on." (Participant B; Organisation A).*

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"Cause sometimes we just terminate some things if we don't have the funding. Otherwise you need to go market ourselves out there" (Participant B; Organisation A)

In South Africa, the NGO sector is quite strong but crumbling, many organisations, because… the growth in subsidies is not equal to the inflation rate." (Participant A; Organisation A).

"Very often you can't embark on certain activities or render a service the way you would like to… very often you just have to take out of your own pocket. If I want something to be done, I have to do it." (Participant J; Organisation D)

"They [my colleagues] are frustrated with it, working over time and on weekends, if we don't get paid for working over time, then why should we do it? It disrupts our schedule… There's already so little time to do our work in the office, that we already have to take work home." (Participant S; Organisation E)

"The misperception is that, but you're in Child Protection and children is the soft spot of everyone, that's not true, that's absolutely not true. We sit in here with the wealthiest people in South Africa, we don't get funding from them. Why? They don't want the connection between the alcohol industry and [Organisation E], they say it to us bluntly. We don't receive funding from a single corporate in [Organisation E location]...except one… they'll give money to your educational NGOs or to [x organisation], but [x organisation] can't do what we are doing. And [x organisation]'s last resort is if everything else fails, refer to [us - Organisation E]. But they [x organisation] receive the millions." (Participant K, Organisation E)

"Yes, especially when it comes to funding. There's a lack of it. With the present economic climate the funding is not so easy to get. At the end of May, two of the departments at [Organisation D] had to be closed, it was the child counselling and the legal… Now the social worker has to see to both the mothers and the children." (Participant J; Organisation D)

"It's also different in child protection again, I can't advertise [to procure funding]. What do I advertise? A child with a blurred face?" (Participant L, Organisation E)

6.4.3. Sub-Theme A.3: Dominance of Contractual Relationships

Alongside the expectation of NGOs to run as private operations, the [felt] increased outsourcing of state services to NGOs, as well as the reduction of state funding and support, came the dominance of contractual relationships. In this Sub-Theme, the impact of, and reflections, on the TPA (Terms of Payment Agreement) between NGO and the Department of Social Development (DSD) is explored through participant narratives. Aside from funding (whilst also largely interlinked with it), the TPA was the second largest topic for discussion presented by

participants within their NGO context. This included viewpoints such as the TPA dominating NGOs, the TPA creating a negative impact for NGOs, the TPA holding NGOs to account and being fair, the TPA not allowing for process and/or flexibility of definitions, nor reflecting an adequate understanding of the NGO context. These are explored as categories below.

Category A.3.1. State TPA is dominating NGOs

In discussions around NGO funding, the relationship of the NGO with government and the Department of Social Development, was often raised in relation to the TPA agreement and how this dominates and/or controls NGOs, their outputs and their service delivery. As articulated by Participant B and Participant A, due to the subsidy of state for social work posts, they, as a result, can further dictate the overall actions of the NGO:

> *The funding we get from government, we have a TPA, a transfer payment agreement, where they say what you must do and the amounts you must do and it's according to their criteria that you must work and you must reach those goals in order to get the funding. So now your focus is so on that, that you cannot do anymore extra, even though you want to." (Participant B; Organisation A)*

> *"They [government] are funders, but they're also referees. They make the rules and they decide how much you get." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

Participants further highlighted that they had little say in what the TPA looked like or the targets it determined for each NGO activity-base:

> *Qu. Do you have any negotiating power in what those targets are?*

> *"No. What they do, I think, is on your quarterly report, how you report, they will adapt your figures." (Participant K, Organisation E)*

In addition, participants expressed some indignance toward the fact that although NGOs were expected to comply with the agreements of the TPA, the Department did not necessarily demonstrate the same commitment, and that this inequality in workload and output created a sense of pressure for NGOs, which was particularly difficult within an environment of limited funding:

> *"With them [the department / DSD] it seems that there is a contract, that you have to comply, but they don't have to comply, and this is only the message we get here in the Eastern Cape, is that we review the money and you*

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do as we say and if we don't do or act in a way which is fair, then you can't actually do anything about it." *(Participant D; Organisation A)*

"Work with state colleagues – they are very delayed in doing what is expected of them, but when we have do our work in terms of TPA, then it must be done, no longer than a certain time, so that puts pressure on us as social workers, especially because we are dependent on that funding." (Participant S; Organisation E)

It is against this backdrop that the second category in this sub-theme emerged, that of the TPA creating a negative service delivery and working environment for NGOs and it's social workers.

Category A.3.2. State TPA is creating a negative environment for NGOs

As much as the issue of funding was raised as a means of limitation to how and what NGOs were able to do within the social work and welfare mandate, so the TPA was regularly offered up as an additional restrain, creating a negative and challenging work environment. Participants attributed this to various reasons, including the reporting and statistics that had to be provided to government monthly and quarterly; the funding limitations that the TPA imposed in terms of the type of work NGOs were financially supported to render; and the high (and fixed) figures NGOs were expected to deliver as quantitative outputs, which placed a strain on the capacity, resources and autonomy of NGOs. Some of these reflections are articulated in the narrative extracts below:

"Currently, there are 13 separate statistic forms that each SW branch needs to submit to the department monthly… it's getting totally out of hand… what they do with it, I don't know… nothing comes from it, according to me… they change it constantly" (Participant D; Organisation A)

"It is very, very true. We submit stats monthly, we submit the TPA quarterly to the department. So everything we do within this organisation needs to be reported… it takes a lot of our time. It takes a day or two to finish a TPA or stats, which takes a lot of your time for clients and interviews with already such high caseloads and backlogs." (Participant O; Organisation E)

"...there's too much red tape. Because you must report on this, you must report on that, because Social Development National wants the figures, and it boils down to social workers on the ground. We spend four days out of the month to complete our stats, and once a quarter we almost spend a week just to complete our quarterly report to DSD… Social Development, they've got admin people to do the stats. Here, [supervisor x] must do it. And the social workers, many times, they don't even understand what they're doing." (Participant K, Organisation E)

Beyond creating a negative environment for NGOs in terms of increased pressure and reporting procedures, participants also indicated that the TPA restricts their work through its emphasis on output that is fixed, rather than allowing for flexible and fluid process.

Category A.3.3. TPA contract does not allow for process/flexibility of definitions/understanding of the NGO context

Within this sub-theme, participants raised a particular concern with regard to the rigidity of the TPA, in terms of its definitions, units of measurement and its understanding of the NGO context. Participant I offers a concrete example of this in terms of the output expectation for their organisation (Organisation C) for family reunification services, which they believed, was not an accurate reflection of the type of work their organisation undertook:

> *"If I can explain it like this: I have to give them statistics on how many people did you [the social worker] reunite with family. So, being an adult, not a lot of them return to their homes of origin. Or if they were divorced, they don't go back to their wife, so there's no reunification in that sense. So we can't really count that. But there's a lot of work done in restoring the relationships… they live as a normal adult, living independently and visit their family… but you can't count it. We fall under their basket of services that they render to families and children… when they measure reunification, they actually measure if the person can go back to the family… It's very seldom that any of the people that we get through rehabilitation here, return to their homes of origin.., but that is what the government is measuring and we must give statistics for that. So what do I do? I kind of manipulate the system."   (Participant H; Organisation C)*

Participant L offered a similar sentiment in their reflections on the TPA expectations for figures on child removals from child protection NGOs:

> *"We don't chase targets. People will say, we haven't reached our target, we have only placed [x] amount of children… that's a positive! Because we been successful at early intervention and prevention phase, we did not meet our target. That's what you're supposed to do, that is a positive… If a child is being removed from a family, there is a reason why this child is removed in the first instance… I said to them, I'm not going to reunify a child if a child is not re-unifiable. Other organisations will chase whatever and place children back within situations, just to reach a target? No! I'm not target driven, I really try to transform this organisation to be impact driven. Even if we have to remove a child. If we have to remove a child, and the assistance was given is of that kind that there is no alternative, then that is my impact - I have put a child in a safe situation. That is impact driven. Instead of saying, oh I'm not going to do it, the next day the child is dead." (Participant K, Organisation E)*

With such rigidity, came the feeling that the TPA facilitated statistics and figures, rather than it did process and quality of work, becoming, as Participant I referred to it, 'the ticking of boxes' and 'the shooting with a shotgun.'

> *"We have to write quarterly reports every 3rd month with specific statistics. They have got their own indicators that's important to them, that to me, it's my way of thinking, is very much ticking the boxes and not the process… Most of the work goes into the process, but they never measure the process, they measures the statistics." (Participant H; Organisation C)*

> *"I sometimes feel that we shoot with a shotgun. And whomever we hit, great stuff. And the other ones just fall out of the bus. And again, then we're ticking boxes and we're not making change… Often to me, if you make a change in one person's life the whole year, at least you've done that… [Or] if you say I've been working the whole year and I'm shooting with a shotgun.. I've hit a few shots and I'm not quite sure if I did hit them, but at least I can tick the box." (Participant H; Organisation C)*

Finally, participants also expressed concerns in terms of the type of work funded by the TPA, particularly in terms of the fact that the TPA seemed to focus predominantly on funding casework rather than macro and community based work, which is dealt with in another theme later in this chapter. Furthermore, participants highlighted how the TPA did not fund management and administration positions, and that this created additional strain for social workers who often had to take on these responsibilities, if funding for these positions could not be found by the NGOs.

> *"That is another huge problem - if you look at the TPA and what is expected of you, they don't fund managers in the NGO sector. I must still do some supervision over the supervisors, and they subsidise me as a supervisor, it's not like in the Department where there's different grades...and you'll get supervisors and managers, the NGOs don't have it, they don't cater for it. We don't receive subsidy for any administration positions." (Participant K, Organisation E)*

The opinions offered in the extracts above in both category A.3.2 and A.3.3 represent the larger share of participants within the sample population, however not all participants held the same viewpoint(s).

Category A.3.4. State TPA holds NGOs to account and is fair
Despite the TPA creating significant strain for NGOs, and this being broadly and widely acknowledged by participants within the study, some participants did offer the conclusion, that regardless, the TPA was in fact a necessary means of holding NGOs to account and were considered to be largely fair in its expectations. For the

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large part, participants who believed the TPA to be reasonable and fair, did so because the TPA was seen as representing what their NGO was already undertaking, rather than restricting service delivery:

"...it's not that they [the department] gives us a contract with their own expectations and what they want out of nowhere… they know the aim of the organisation, and our purpose and our vision and our mission, so they basically build on that with targets, but its still doing what we want to do… they want to see where there money is going" (Participant G; Organisation B)

"They tell you what they need you to do, but it's mostly services that we actually give already. They're not expecting us to go out of our way…" (Participant I; Organisation D)

It is important to reflect here that these participants did not represent organisation's A or E, the two largest child protection NGOs, but rather came from smaller organisations whose TPA was perhaps somewhat more reasonable; this idea was also, in fact, suggested by some participants, who recognised the difference between output expectation level between specialised versus child protection NGOs:

"75% of the post at this office is directly linked to our TPA… so it is like a business. There is pressure in that sense, but we have an easy TPA, if I can call it that. It's easy because we're just doing adoptions… it's different from other NGOs because our service is needed by the clients, so they want the service.. it gives us more job satisfaction" (Participant E; Organisation B)

6.4.4. Theme A: Discussion and Analysis

The findings from Theme A both correlated with, and contradicted, those extrapolated and suggested in literature.

The outsourcing of services to the NGO context, while retaining some level of control over the output of these NGOs, aligns with the neoliberal critique that in many country contexts the introduction of neoliberalism has not always resulted in an outright removal of the state from its responsibilities, nor its control over services rendered (Bond, 2000; Harvey, 2007). In fact, it is argued that the implementation of neoliberalism requires some significant action from the state in certain areas (Davies, 2014); this is supported by empirical findings and concerns raised by participants regarding the dominance of the TPA. As put forward in literature, the role of the state is to create and preserve the appropriate context and institutional framework for neoliberal and market-driven ideals (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberal states are thus required to produce the environment in which neoliberal ideals, such as outsourcing and marketisation, can thrive (Harvey, 2005). Where abdication of responsibility does occur, it has often been slow, and presented under the guise of developmental and community participation dialogue,

grassroots interventions and the prioritisation of human rights, as seen in the case of South Africa through policy documents such as the Non-profit Organisations Act (1997) and GEAR (1996).

The viewpoints of participants regarding an increase in outsourcing of services to NGOs does largely correlate with literature, in that the solution to social problems is presented as being within the market, and that rights-based services which should be offered as political entitlements, are instead regulated through economic and managerial means (Neocosmos, 2002). NGOs expressed further concerns that not only are services being increasingly outsourced to their sector, but that this is largely being done with a corresponding decrease in funding and support, rendering their service as cheap, with limited developmental and impactful interventions. This was recognised as a tenet of the neoliberal marketisation agenda, in that the existence of expensive and well resourced services are predominantly private and accessible to only the wealthy, with poorly resourced and over-capacitated NGO services rendered for vulnerable groups (Fine & Leopold, 1993).

The dominance of finance and funding as a primary challenge within the NGO context, and as underlying much of participant dialogue (here again referring to the commonly used phrase, "but the finances") is evidence of how economic matters have seeped deeply into the heart of the welfare agenda. As presented in the literature study, economics has taken central command in all spheres of interactions through neoliberal reform and has deeply marked the functioning of society and the delivery of social services (Iamamoto, 2009). NGOs being expected to do more, or the majority, of welfare work with less can hold traces of Chomsky's (2009) idea of a virtual parliament, where flights of capital dictate policy developments and undermine democracy - the TPA and its funding enablement (and the defunding of many subsidiary posts raised by participants) is not necessarily undertaken through a democratic process. Thus, although NGOs are deemed to be independent and private organisations, they have little bargaining or negotiating power in how they are funded and the expectations that come with this; the intervention of social work follows the flight of capital, rather than the other way around. Here, the prioritisation of economic means over matters of social justice rings true (Hay, 2002; Ornellas et al., 2015). Decisions are made by economics and profit. As such, neoliberalism ushers in an undisputed primacy of economics over other forms of rationality, and as articulated in literature, complex political, social and human agency constellations are reduced to economic issues; policy makes little sense unless economically sensible, and welfare is reduced to economic welfare (Sewpaul & Hoslcher, 2004).

Along these lines, the limitation of funding and the corresponding poor negotiating power of NGOs renders them, yet again, pawns of the state with little room to determine their own operations. As described by Marshall (1981), social welfare, historically, held some form of autonomy and discretion within the socio-political field, however this has been eroded by the neoliberal economic and contractual constraints imposed on NGO functioning (Ferguson et al., 2005). The concerns raised by participants that the limitation of funding and resources also at times results in them having to screen the urgency of social work enquiries from communities and individuals, and often, turning away service users because they simply do not have the capacity to take on more, correlates with Needham's arguments (2006: 856), that the marketisation of social work, rather than leading to increased service user freedom, often results in individuals being turned away unless they are deemed to be in a critical condition; this was particularly raised as an on-going challenge in Organisation D. Thus, they are "being told that they will not receive a service until they get worse" (Needham, 2006: 856). This does not encourage empowerment or the generation of wellbeing, nor does it allow for the appropriate (and necessary) implementation of preventative services that are often far more financially and socially effective.

6.5. THEME B: THE CONSUMERISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

A second suggested impact of neoliberalism in social work within the NGO context is that of the consumerisation of social work. Here, the understanding in literature, and particularly within the critique of neoliberal tenets at play within the social work profession, is that the principle of individualism is dominating professional practice. As such, the welfare discourse is primarily centered on the individual, with the belief that individuals are responsible for themselves and should thus be self-reliant with regard to their wellbeing. With this, has come an overemphasis on the individual over and above the structural and macro causes of the social challenges individuals may be facing. Social work has become firmly rooted in implementing casework as the primary (at times, only) means of intervention, giving little consideration of group, community and macro means of address, or the barriers and hindrances that may exist in an individual, family or community's environment which prevent them from facilitating their own wellbeing. This definition was offered to participants from the five participating organisations, and their critical reflections led to several defining categories, as outlined in the table below. These are discussed further in this section.

Table 31. Theme B: Sub-Themes and Categories

THEME B. THE CONSUMERISATION OF SOCIAL WORK			
Sub-Theme B.1 **Dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing**			
Category B.1.1.	Category B.1.2.	Category B.1.3.	
Self-reliance is positive and should be promoted	Self-reliance is good but should take into account the environment	State Grants are creating dependency and this is negative	
Sub-Theme B.2 **Overemphasis on individualism (micro work) above addressing structural causes (macro work)**			
Category B.2.1.	*Category B.2.2.*	*Category B.2.3.*	*Category B.2.4.*
Society has changed and individual work is more effective / feasible	Social workers don't have the capacity / time for macro work	Social workers don't have the funding / resources for macro work	The TPA emphasises / funds casework
Category B.2.5.	*Category B.2.6.*	*Category B.2.7.*	
Tradition keeps social workers focused on micro work	Macro work is necessary, but isn't / shouldn't be the role of social workers [only]	Social workers should be connected to the bigger, structural picture	

6.5.1. Sub-Theme B.1: Dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing

Participants were asked to reflect on the above statement and/or opinion in literature and indicate whether or not this was something they had and/or were experiencing in their practice on the ground. They were further asked to broadly reflect on whether it was a statement they largely agreed or disagreed with, and why. This was an incredibly insightful theme, as the viewpoints of participants were often found to correlate with the neoliberal ideal of self-reliance and individualism, and an advocative and radical social work approach was greatly lacking. The opinions of social workers on South Africa's social protection system was, for example, somewhat unexpected.

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Several participants believed that the social grant system in itself, created an attitude of dependency within communities which social workers had to then fight against in their attempt to empower individuals to be self-reliant. This spoke to the larger contradiction within the profession: their belief that individuals, families and communities should take responsibility for their wellbeing, while at the same time advocating for increased funding and support to be better able to render quality services to community members.

Category B.1.1. Self-reliance is positive and should be promoted

In this category, participants largely advocated for the merits of self-reliance and proposed that it should, in fact, be promoted through social work endeavours. Participants related this to empowerment, and believed that enabling an individual to be self-reliant and take responsibility for their own wellbeing was an effective means of intervention. This is articulated in the narrative extracts below.

> *"I think it's more important to empower the client – then they'll have better skills and be better equipped with the knowledge to be able to handle all those challenges that come from the community and all that" (Participant S; Organisation E)*

> *"I think it depends on social worker to social worker, my main focus is to empower the client to help himself; sometimes clients think we must do everything for them. I empower them to help themself, to get the ability to rise above their circumstances, to see it in a different light." (Participant Q; Organisation E)*

> *"I think that is where the victim empowerment...becomes very important, because you have to uplift the individual to help him / herself." (Participant J; Organisation D)*

It is worth reflecting that some participants, such as Participant S, asserted that empowerment toward self-reliance was, in fact, a better intervention than that of addressing the community-based and/or structural causes of social challenges; individuals would then be able to tackle these challenges on their own. This is reiterated in the narrative extract from Participant U below:

> *"In my personal opinion, I think the self-reliance – my goal is not to solve your problems for you but to help you solve your own problems – empowering the clients – I don't think it's good for them to be reliant on the social worker – better for them to be able to handle their own situation" (Participant U; Organisation E)*

This was, however, not the opinion of all participants; others believed that while self-reliance was both necessary and good, the environmental context of individuals needed to be taken into account in order to effectively and sustainably facilitate empowerment.

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Category B.1.2. Self-reliance is good but should take into account the environment

Participants who fell into this category were less convinced of the notion of empowerment and self-reliance as the silver bullet of interventions; rather, they believed that consideration of the environment and systems within which an individual falls is necessary. As indicated by Participant K,

> *"I think there should be a balance" (Participant J; Organisation D)*

Some expressed opinions that were a little stronger, recognising that without addressing structural causes of deprivation and social challenges, interventions would be largely ineffective.

> *"You try to fix a person, but the environment, they doesn't fix that, and there is where the problem is lying, you have to fix that environment where the person is staying in, for that person to be able to rise above their circumstances." (Participant V, Organisation E)*

> *"How can I deliver services to a family, but there's no jobs, there's poverty, there's poor intellectual abilities... how do I improve a person's intellectual?" (Participant K, Organisation E).*

Category B.1.3. State Grants are creating dependency and this is negative

In discussions regarding the notion of self-reliance, many participants, particularly those who felt that self-reliance was a necessary and positive attribute, raised the actions of government in terms of the delivery and provision of social security grants. Participants felt that this was creating a culture of dependency within communities, and that this was filtering into the expectations that service-users had when interacting with social workers. Reflections from Participants A and D give some insight into this:

> *"There is definitely this discourse on self-reliance. Of course you do not want people to become dependent. People become dependent on child support grants, even though you help them to be a bit more reliant... of course you want people to take responsibility for their actions, but not that 'sorry we can't help you', I think it is, in social work, a developmental perspective that people can make their own decisions, but in certain cases we do make decisions for them, especially when it comes to child protection. But it's a process of development." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

Here, although Participant A is expressing concerns that the provision of grants fosters an attitude of reliance and dependency, they do also recognise that self-reliance does not mean that social workers should not attempt to assist service-users, but rather, as expressed by participants in category B.1.1, this should be done in a manner that fosters an empowerment of individuals to take on their own struggles. The extract from Participant

D below takes this viewpoint slightly further, referring to the provision of grants as jeopardizing what they felt to be the service mandate of social workers:

> *"It is true that their whole strategy is community-based services, we need to get communities to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and development… but the other side of the coin… is that we work according to that, but we are being jeopardised in our efforts by government giving out social grants… giving out food packages or whatever… whenever they feel this now necessary…. which in the end, it feels to me that we are working against each other." (Participant D; Organisation A)*

Flowing from discussions on self-reliance and individual responsibility, participants were taken into the next sub-theme, which focused on micro versus macro work, and an emphasis on individualism over and above collective and structural addresses.

6.5.2. Sub-Theme B.2: Overemphasis on individualism (micro work) above addressing structural causes (macro work)

Discussions within this sub-theme allowed for an in-depth exploration of what participants ultimately felt their role as social workers should be, the nature of intervention they should be implementing (versus what they could or were implementing), and how the funding and contractual challenges explored in Theme A affected their intervention approaches. The viewpoints of participants varied in terms of their understanding of their role as a social worker; some believed that macro-based approaches were incredibly important and should be undertaken by social workers, however others felt that while necessary, macro work should in fact no be their responsibility. Many argued that they simply did not have the time, capacity or funding for approaches beyond casework with individuals and families; others highlighted that the TPA did not support macro approaches. This was a very nuanced and detailed discussion that led to several separate categories.

Category B.2.1. Society has changed and individual work is more effective / feasible
Alongside and/or regardless of their opinion on whether or not macro and community-based approaches were necessary within the social work intervention practice, participants presented several arguments as to why this was not a feasible option for many social welfare NGOs, which included the fact that society itself had changed, and as a result, casework which focused on individual therapeutic interventions was the most effective approach for social workers to take. Participants further indicated that they felt the complications of cases had increased in recent years, and that this lended itself toward a strictly casework approach:

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"I agree with that but I think the reason is because of our society, not because of social work… society [has] become more disorganised, that's why our numbers increased… and more complicated, because the multifunctional families… so now we must focus, if you have 70 cases which even is not so complicated, you can do a lot of community work and group work… but if you have more than 200 and it's all crisis, you don't have time for community work." (Participant F; Organisation B)

"Case work, statutory, is taking preference, because of the increase of the circumstances in the community like poverty, substance abuse… All those things increased a lot in our communities since I started here" (Participant B; Organisation A)

While some participants argued the above as their reason behind adopting a more individual approach to social work intervention, others expressed that they simply did not have the capacity and time for anything beyond the micro casework approach.

Category B.2.2. Social workers don't have the capacity / time for macro work

Many of the participants in the five organisations, while recognising that macro work was an important activity, indicated that they were often unable to undertake community-based projects or initiatives due to time and capacity limitations. This is clearly expressed in the three narrative extracts below:

"It's hard to do community and casework. Cause sometimes we feel like, due to our caseload, we don't get to focus as much as you would need to with your clients… Sometimes, some of these goals we don't reach with our clients due to high caseloads and trying to reach targets… trying to accommodate everyone." (Participant O; Organisation E)

"It [macro work] is something that we should be doing, but if we didn't have such a big caseload, we would. When do we get time? Cause community work needs to be planned, you need to look for funding, you need to find projects…it takes a lot of investment and time, which we don't have." (Participant O; Organisation E)

"Our main focus is casework – mostly because of casework and time – we'd love to do groups, but we don't have the resources or the time to do it." (Participant U; Organisation E)

Other participants from more specialised and smaller NGOs, further raised that it was often difficult for them to undertake more macro focused work, as this would require lobbying and working alongside other larger NGO groups; these groups often indicated, however, that they did not have the capacity for this, or showed little to no interest in taking on the extra requirements of such an approach.

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"It's difficult to get someone on board. We asked other NGOs, let's do something together… no one is really doing, they're just so busy… you can't do that and have a caseload of 70, 80, 100 clients. We are fortunate that our caseload is not that high because we're working short-term." (Participant E; Organisation B)

Some participants raised the lack of social work capacity for community-based intervention, recognising this as a separate activity that should be taken on by social workers solely committed to the macro side of practice. They strongly supported the importance of macro work in this regard, and expressed a desire to have more capacity to undertake this, understanding that it had an impact on other spectrums of intervention within their organisation and communities.

"We do not work on a one-to-one basis only, we have our awareness campaigns, we have our community programmes. I have now appointed a community development worker… but that's not enough, because of the workload and the expectation, and again, the positioning of the service within the holistic approach makes it difficult… Community development, I don't get funding for that. I can also say, sorry it's not my responsibility, but what is the impact on my organisation in terms of this?" (Participant K, Organisation E)

The issue of not having sufficient funding or resources to take on community work as raised by Participant L in the extract above, takes us into the next category.

Category B.2.3. Social workers don't have the funding / resources for macro work

Aside from time and capacity restraints, participants further highlighted funding and resources as a barrier to community work and macro perspectives in intervention. As a result, the individual empowerment approach was considered to be the most feasibly effective option for social workers in practice:

"I can agree to some extent… Because of the lack of resources that we do have, it's difficult to focus on the other problems… with the time restricted and with the overload, we do tend to focus more on the individual and try and then to solve their problems, we try and equip them with the necessary skills to do that." (Participant S; Organisation E)

"I think this is why people are doing it [focusing on the individual] because they are forced, due to limitations on finances not to do it." (Participant K, Organisation E)

Several participants linked this restriction in funding to the fact that the TPA, which funded social work posts alongside specific output figures, largely focused on casework.

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Category B.2.4. The TPA emphasises / funds casework

Participants, when indicating that they didn't have the time, capacity, resources or funding for macro work, often linked this to the funding and output requirements of the TPA. Many argued that the TPA did not necessarily encourage a macro approach or community-based interventions within the social work profession, particularly at the child protection level. Instead, statutory casework was the primary output focus.

> *"Now with the new TPA, it seems that the statutory is more…. the awareness was more focused on, and then the statutory is supposed to be a small part because you don't want to put the children in the system the whole time, but now it seems like it shifted… statutory is the bulk of the things, and the awareness comes afterwards." (Participant B; Organisation A)*

Therefore, as clearly articulated by Participant K below, social workers were simply undertaking the work they were funded for, as opposed to the work they thought was best.

> *"Organisations, I think, they focus on only what they are paid for… you fund us to deliver services to 120 people, so if person number 121 comes to our door, we refer them to Social Development.... I can also say, sorry I'm not going to do it but then I must refer to I don't know who?" (Participant K, Organisation E)*

In addition, participants argued that where additional funding did come in from partners or stakeholders outside of the Department, this would need to go towards other posts and functions within the running of the NGO, as opposed to community interventions:

> *"Look at the TPAs.. mostly they subsidise the salary of the social worker, even not the admin person... very smaller project subsidy, so what on earth do you do with that little money?" (Participant F; Organisation B)*

However some participants argued that the government was, in fact, open to funding community-based projects, but social workers within the NGO context needed to apply for this, and instead tended to remain comfortable with the casework approach.

> *"They [government / the department] are open for it, you must just come and lay a new TPA, so we must also think out of the box.. I cannot blame just them. We have the opportunity to apply for funds and our traditional NGO will go and apply because this is my number of social workers...and I apply for this. So we're stuck in the mud, we get comfort…" (Participant F; Organisation B)*

This leads into the next category, where another argument for why social workers weren't focusing on the macro side of intervention was as a result of being stuck in tradition.

Category B.2.5. Tradition keeps social workers focused on micro work
Much like the earlier statement by Participant F, some felt that social workers were limiting themselves by choosing to remain in their comfort zone, in terms of focusing on casework and statutory intervention. As outlined by Participant F, NGOs "must also think out of the box." Participant F went on to explain that funding was available from the state for alternative types of interventions, if NGOs would follow up on this and be willing to step outside of traditional boundaries:

> "The government is much more open to consider community-focused development because it's a need. But out of tradition, we continue with our cases, which is also a need… Just after 1994, the government wanted to give attention specifically to poverty programmes, so they suggested the protection NGOs have to come in with projects… and that was an extra fund… poverty fund. So all the different regions asked us to suggest that we must have these extra projects in the community… and they come and monitor that extra separate… and you use the community to deliver that programme… unfortunately there was some fraud. It became difficult to evaluate or monitor the funds together with the progress in the programme… they stopped that. And now they wait for someone to come with their own initiative. There's a lot of options, but now we're here and we continue here." (Participant F; Organisation B)

A similar sentiment was echoed by other participants, reflecting particularly on social work training and education traditions, indicating that this too, focuses predominantly on casework rather than the means to address underlying structural causes. Participant F below further recognised that without such training, the community projects that social workers would attempt often made little difference:

> "I think we must go back to… it's a need from the start, when you start with your studies, that they must look more into community services and entrepreneurship, because it's kind of being an entrepreneur for the community… my studies didn't include that. So the project we do is not really making a difference in the society. That's where social workers need to learn about it." (Participant F; Organisation B)

Aside from the above several arguments for why social workers were not undertaking macro and community-based interventions in their practice, participants also held varying opinions on whether social workers should be connected to addressing the structural causes of social challenges. The above participants in the last several categories all recognised the importance and value of macro interventions and the addressing of structural

causes of intervention. However, some participants, while seeing the need for such an approach, raised questions as to whether this was indeed the role of the social worker. These discussions are explored in the category below.

Category B.2.6. Macro work is necessary, but isn't / shouldn't be the role of social workers [only]
While exploring the theme of micro versus macro work, and questioning the overemphasis on individualism rather than addressing the structural causes of social problems, participants were at times a little uncertain as to whether community development at such a level should be their role, or whether this should be taken up by other professions while supported by the casework interventions of the social worker. An exchange between the researcher and Participant V (Organisation E) presented below demonstrates this process of reflection:

> *Researcher: Is that the role of a social worker?*

> *Participant: "I think that would be another profession. For us, we're focused more on the individual person. For a social worker this is better, what I develop in my studies now… is more likely to focus on helping a person rising above their circumstances… but not fixing the environment."*

> *Researcher: Whose responsibility is that?*

> *Participant "I don't know…. [The Role of social work is] rather just to focus on the individual person, because it takes really a lot of your time, to help that person and to guide that person."*

Participant H, who also questioned whose role such work should be, if not the social worker, reiterates this:

> *"Define social work? If social work is advocacy and putting systems in place in communities, I suppose then we're not doing what we're supposed to do. I don't see social work as putting systems in place, restoring communities through advocacy… I'm not sure who must do it though? You've made me think. Who must do it if social workers don't do it? I suppose then community developers...would be an ideal person to do that… you've made me think." (Participant H; Organisation C).*

Participant I went on to reflect that if advocacy and macro intervention was the role of the social worker, which they were undecided about, this would not be something they would want to undertake and would likely have deterred them from becoming a social worker in the first place. Participant I went on further to say that perhaps this was in fact the type of intervention needed in South Africa, and that South African social workers were

undertaking first world social work (in terms of casework interventions) in a context which required a more developmental approach:

"If I thought social work was almost like a politician, putting committees in place, and advocate for equality… I don't think I would do it. That's not the kind of social worker I am. But then the question arises, being a third world country, what do we need? Aren't we busy with first world social work in a third world country? I'm not sure." *(Participant H; Organisation C).*

This reflection was particularly noteworthy to the researcher and highlighted similar questions that it seemed the profession was grappling with at large - was social work ever designed to be an advocacy and macro focused profession? How did one define social work?

Other participants indicated that they simple could not address the larger macro and structural causes of social problems, mentioning unemployment and poverty as major structural drivers of child protection and social work-related interventions. How could they possibly begin to address such large challenges? They linked their own financial limitations to their inability to address those of the wider community.

"If you look at poverty, social work cannot address poverty alone, it's not our work to create jobs, we don't have money to give people, so how do we?" (Participant A; Organisation A).

However, other participants had differing opinions, and held strongly to the importance of the macro approach within the social work tradition. These participants advocated that social workers should be connected to the bigger picture.

Category B.2.7. Social workers should be connected to the bigger, structural picture
Many participants argued the importance of macro approaches in social work intervention, and displayed an understanding of the interconnections between individual challenges and structural causes:

"We must address it [macro challenges] as well, cause it's like a chain, one thing falls into another. Support is important as well, clients don't have the necessary support to rise" (Participant Q; Organisation E)

"We will always need to do both [micro and macro]. What's gonna help if we just help the girl that's pregnant? It's a whole community." (Participant E; Organisation B)

"Everything is a network, you work with the ecosystem. So it will never be ideal for a social worker to focus on one aspect, just the individual." (Participant Q; Organisation E)

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Further still, participants recognised that such an approach and viewpoint was often challenging for the profession and that instead, a problem-focused discourse and understanding had taken dominance.

"I think, for me, I always tell people you have to see the bigger picture, we can't work in boxes – from myself, I think social workers struggle with that, I even think social workers struggle with a strengths-based approach, because you're so focused on problems…. They [social workers] get so bugged in their own things. I don't think it's that they can't see it – but they get tunnel vision." (Participant A; Organisation A).

In advocating for the need to view and address challenges from a macro perspective, participants referred to this rendering truly sustainable change over and above simply ticking boxes, that was raised earlier in discussion as limiting the human-centred process of social work intervention. This was deemed as requiring a macro understanding of why things were the way they were, in order to then effectively, and sustainably, address them:

"I don't believe in ticking boxes, I believe in sustainable change. People must get some insight in why are things happening like they are and that will help them to understand social issues better and then we will get more sustainable change." (Participant H; Organisation C).

Some participants indicated that connecting social workers with the bigger picture of social policy and advocative social work was in fact the role of the supervisor, rather than to be expected from junior and more frontline social workers who were predominantly focused on casework tasks. The supervisor was responsible for ensuring that they connected the output of the NGOs, and the experiences and practice decisions of the social workers they supervised, to macro understandings:

"...that's why you have to be involved in things outside, national structures and processes, to see the bigger picture – that's where the supervisor comes in, we as a head office in my job, is to take the bigger picture – global issues, recession." (Participant A; Organisation A).

Other participants referred to existing community-based projects and praised these approaches, highlighting that more interventions of this nature were needed, but sufficiently limited in the current NGO context:

"What they did there is what every society needs… They have a crèche, soup kitchen, a clinic, an IT shop, children and students to come and learn at the computer lab… it's kind of entrepreneuring but also give an option to do homework… they have an HIV clinic… then they are in the middle of the community, so in the beginning it was not nice for the community… the community people work in the crèche, they have cluster foster homes in the community… there is day-care… they get inter-country funds, funds in the community as well… their first

student already graduated… that's what our communities need… They started community work, at the end they do end with individual child protection as well, but their community part is much bigger and that already have an impact on the society in that community…The sadness is, our society needs specific projects." (Participant E; Organisation B)

6.5.3. Theme B: Discussion and Analysis

The fractions within social work between the micro and macro divide have been age-old debates within the profession, and only heightened further by the individualism concept ushered in through capitalist and neoliberal ideals. Thus, the evidence from the empirical results that participants lean more readily toward the micro and casework empowerment approach was largely unsurprising. The profession has been critiqued for several years now for over emphasising individualism and self-reliance in its intervention approaches. In fact, so much so, that, as raised in the literature, the profession "has often been seen to be poised between two points on a continuum with community work/social change on one end and therapeutic work with individuals, families or groups on the other' (Staniforth, Fouche & O'Brien, 2011: 193). This debate pertains to the evolution of social work from the 19th century to the 1970s as put forward by Sewpaul and Holscher (2004), as presented in the literature study, whereby social work seems caught between diagnostic versus functional approaches, and an attempt to integrate person-in-situation understandings versus taking this further to structural explanations and the address of patterns of exploitation and oppression that stems from power constellations on society. Here, interventions struggle between the casework method that is often largely diagnostic, versus true empowerment that involves conscientisation, social advocacy and political action.

This is more recently evident in the critique of the 2012 international definition of social work, as discussed earlier in literature. The newer 2014 definition, while recognising the importance of micro and casework interventions, renders a call to social work to move closer toward collective understandings and to take up a critical stance that recognises, understands and addresses the underlying structural causes of many of the social problems faced by communities (IFSW, 2014; Ornellas et al., 2016). However, as discussed in literature, the concept of individualism is so deeply ingrained within the makeup of not only social work, but also society at large, that to be conscious of, and actively move away from this neoliberal logic, is challenging and somewhat foreign. As proposed by Harvey, the neoliberal discourse has become so deeply ingrained in how we view, interpret and understand the world (Harvey, 2007) that to question it, would be to question the seemingly natural order of

things. This has largely come about through the "hegemonic mode of discourse" (Harvey, 2007:23) and a philosophical constructivism out of which neoliberal ideas have been channelled into everyday life.

The viewpoints by many participants that self-reliance was a positive concept strongly correlates with the individualism sway, which has often been cloaked as a means of empowerment and freedom through self-autonomy, while overlooking the structural and material limitations that capitalist and neoliberal economics have set in place. Meaning is constructed through the neoliberal co-opting of individualism, freedom and choice. Yet, as raised often in the literature chapters, it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps" (Martin Luther King Jr, 1963). However, what was evident in much of the discussion with participants, is that this emphasis of self-reliance does not come from a place of disregard for individuals and communities experiencing very real social challenges; rather, social workers appear to be overwhelmed, and to render empowerment to service-users through equipping them with the skills and means necessary to be self-reliant, seems to be both the kindest and most feasible means of intervention the social worker can offer. This corresponds with findings in literature (Harris, 2014; Pratt, 2006; Sewpaul, 2007), where it is noted that, from the outset, the welfare discourse of self-reliance does not necessarily sound like a negative encouragement and instead is viewed as empowering language. However, if examined more closely, self-reliance holds deviant motivations of state abdication and the allocation of blame onto the individual for social problems that are by and large as a result of structural and policy-based failures (Ornellas et al., 2016). This is evident, for example, where participant narratives chastised the delivery of social grants as deepening a culture of dependency; this correlated strongly with neoliberal thinking and raised worrying reflections as to just how deep the neoliberal agenda had seeped into the NGO and welfare context, where a helping welfare profession stepped out so strongly against an RDP-motivated security grant provision. This correlates concernedly closely with the literature study, in terms particularly of Pratt's (2006) public burden theory of the welfare state, aligning with thinking that it is the high levels of public welfare expenditure that lead to economic downturns, rather than considering how this may strengthen society in the longer-term. Welfare and safety nets are considered to create a sense of dependency, poor work ethic and laziness (Ornellas et al., 2016; Sewpaul & Hoscher, 2004).

The idea of self-reliance advocated for by social workers in the NGO environment, despite perhaps stemming from genuine and compassionate roots, is in fact furthering the neoliberal myth that certain sectors, communities, families or individuals failed because they were not competitive enough within the marketplace, which aligns with McDonald's thinking on the good citizen as being one who can compete within a market-driven society. If

individuals failed, it was through their own doing, their own dependency or their unwillingness to work harder. "Systemic problems were masked under a blizzard of ideological pronouncements and a plethora of localized crises" (Sewpaul & Hoschler, 2004: 15). Here, the concerns of Pratt (2006) are relevant: has individual self-reliance and moral responsibility become preferable to a culture of decency?

Returning again to the micro versus macro divide, the arguments by some participants that the empowerment and casework approach was the more effective and preferred form of intervention for many participants is recognised in literature (Buchbinder et al., 2004; Harris, 2014; Ornellas, et al., 2016), when reviewing the casework versus community work argument. As indicated by Buchbinder et al. (2004), the therapeutic worker does have a role to play in bringing about social justice through individual change, arguing against those who believe that the therapeutic approach is a sell-out from the original definition of social work (Staniforth et al., 2011). Questions regarding the role of social work, and how it was defined, were also of important consideration. Was social work supposed to be intervening at this level? Was advocacy and the role of the political watchdog the function of the welfare NGO?

However, that being said, what is raised in the neoliberal critique of the literature study (Sewpaul & Hoslcher, 2004; Smith, 2014) is the role of the social worker in maintaining the status quo, and the concern that a purely, or over-emphasised, casework approach is enabling this. In this sense, it reiterates the role of social work during the colonial and apartheid eras (Smith, 2014), and the role of social work in a capitalist society that promotes accumulation of the elite by dispossession of the poor: social work is just there to mitigate the negative outcomes of market failure and to keep the unhappy at bay. This ties in with the neoliberal commitment to the value of inequality as being necessary for the maximisation of economic growth and outputs (Bond, 2000; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004); thus structural address would threaten the functioning of this system, but therapeutic and individual interventions would offer some models of social justice alongside market freedoms, mitigating any negative outcomes that may threaten the comfort of the upper classes. It is concerning that the critique offered to the social work profession of apartheid may still stand for many NGO environments today, in that social workers were seen as papering over cracks and offering Band-Aids rather than addressing genuine social problems; in this sense, social workers then, much like today, seemed to promote economic policy and relations of power over matters of social justice (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004; Smith, 2014).

Yet, the researcher must strongly emphasise that it is, in her opinion, the neoliberal environment created and proposed by the state, the market and the wealthy that has generated this self-help and individualised culture and that to criticise how this may have filtered its way into social work training and/or NGO practice, is not to criticise the incredibly hardworking and selfless social workers themselves. Many believed, and strongly advocated for, the need for social workers to be connected to the macro picture of environmental causes and structural address, and relayed that it was simply not within their capacity or financial ability to do so. NGOs seemed to, in fact, be largely restricted from taking on the very intervention approach that it was criticised for failing to address, and to adopt a similar approach here would also be a failure on the part of the researcher to recognise underlying structural causes. The NGO environment is held back by oversaturation of complex caseloads and backlogs, statutory work and court proceedings, reporting and output monitoring, fundraising and ensuring cost-efficiency (as so far as to assess whether or not interventions would be telephonic or through home visits dependent on petrol availability!).

6.6. THEME C: THE MANAGERIALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

A third suggested impact of neoliberalism in social work within the NGO context is that of the managerialisation of social work. This is unpacked in literature as pertaining to a growing business and management agenda within the realm of social welfare and social work, which is particularly being thrust upon the NGO sector. With the expectation for NGOs to run as private operations, as outlined in earlier themes, a business knowledge of outputs, norms, procedures, standards and cost-efficiency is becoming increasingly evident in the functioning and running of welfare organisations and often limiting the intervention work of these groups and the social work profession at large. Outputs, statistics and the ticking of boxes, are emphasised over and above the quality and process of interventions, and a prevalence of top-down management, particularly by non-social workers is at play within the NGO environment. This, in turn, is infiltrating the nature and role of supervision, as also shifting from one of human agency and quality, to a management and monitoring of work output to meet TPA and funding requirements. These discussions and reflections are presented in the table below as existing sub-themes and categories within Theme C and will be discussed in more detail through the presentation of participant narratives and dialogue extracts below.

Table 32. Theme C: Sub-Themes and Categories

THEME C. THE MANAGERIALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK			
Sub-Theme C.1 **Social work and NGOs are becoming increasingly expected to act like a business**			
Category C.1.1.			
Yes, NGOs feel they are increasingly expected to run like businesses			
Sub-Theme C.2 **Efficiency and cost-effectiveness employed as the yardstick**			
Category C.2.1			
Work is limited by what is cost-effective			
Sub-Theme C.3 **Preoccupation with procedures, norms, standards, and the predominance of management knowledge**			
Category C.3.1	*Category C.3.2*	*Category C.3.3*	*Category C.3.4*
Outputs are more important than quality of work and emphasis on ticking boxes	Prevalence / Dominance of top-down management	Management are not social workers and don't understand	Supervision has become about management

6.5.1. Sub-Theme C.1: Social work and NGOs are becoming increasingly expected to act like a business

There was only one category that emerged from this sub-theme, and that was the agreement of participants regarding the fact that NGOs were increasingly expected to act as business, whether this is a positive or negative intention.

Category C.1.1. Yes, NGOs feel they are increasingly expected to run like businesses

In this category, participants largely agreed with the notion that there was a growing business discourse and expectation within the NGO sector. They emphasised that this agenda was taking preference to the human-agency of their work and at times, preventing social workers from being truly effective in their service rendering

and interventions; this was often linked back to the expectations of the TPA in terms of output compliance, a preoccupation with statistics and figures, and the time-intensity requirements of reporting for the Department. This pressure has led to participants feeling they cannot focus too much time and energy into one particular case or family, as they need to ensure they are meeting the sufficient numbers required by the TPA, in order to procure/retain funding:

"I think it's becoming more like a business rather than actually focusing on the client's needs, because you have to have certain amounts of stuff you have to do, and you have to comply with that… it's a bad thing, because sometimes you have to rush through things…. such a lot of cases, you don't have actually time to get stuck on a case because you have to move onto the next one for the TPA to get funded for the organisation." (Participant V; Organisation E)

Largely, the expectation for NGOs to run as business seemed to come from financial constraints and motivations. Many, if not all, labelled this as having a negative impact:

"It's been said in the last few years that we need to manage the welfare organisations as a business, obviously because money is getting less, and we need to start generating money to be sustainable which is obviously becoming an increasing problem" (Participant D; Organisation A)

"That [expectation to run as a business] we are suffering from. We have to run like a business… financial needs. We now have to stop them from doing that, it doesn't concern you as a social worker, but now you're playing more of a management role." (Participant I; Organisation D)

However, other participants acknowledged that while predominantly true, NGOs were still attempting to not let this dictate their practice and remain true instead to the commitments and obligations of guiding policy documents such as the Children's Act, as described below:

"It's true because they [NGOs] must keep their doors open… but I don't think that's the main course of the organisations I work with… I think still the main course of the NGOs in child protection is all about the Children's Act…" (Participant G; Organisation B)

The expectation for a business agenda led into the second sub-theme of the interview schedule, in terms of the use of cost-effectiveness and efficiency as the yardsticks for measuring NGO outputs and impacts.

6.5.2. Sub-Theme C.2: Efficiency and cost-effectiveness employed as the yardstick

Here again, only one predominant category emerged from discussions with the sample population of participants, and this was that, within the increasingly business-oriented environment deployed in the NGO sector, work was limited by what was deemed to be cost-effective and efficient. This was almost entirely undisputed by participants interviewed.

Category C.2.1. Work is limited by what is cost effective

As has been raised before, funding and finance were at the heart of much of the discussion and dialogue of participants in the empirical study. It would seem fitting, therefore, that participants further acknowledged how their work was largely limited by what was considered to be cost effective and efficient, within an environment of limited funding. So much so, that participants even outlined having to reconsider the value of a home-visits against the availability of petrol and the cost-efficiency of various intervention methods:

> *"...at the end of the day, there's always a budget...you need to always wonder, what am I going to do next? Because if I take the car, its petrol. If I need to be wherever, I need to drive with the work's car, its petrol, what is the cost? You always need to have a budget in mind in doing these things… Even if you go into communities… you get questioned, why were you there? Why do you drive so many kilometres? And it discourages you because you're doing your work… And that can have a big impact on your work, you feel so discouraged, you think, ag fine, let me just do whatever I can do, you don't do the extra, you do what you are told to do." (Participant B; Organisation A)*

As raised by the participant above, this notion of cost-efficiency negatively affects their work, as they feel they have to continuously justify their use of resources and present the impact of the intervention methods they choose, which is significantly discouraging and inhibits social workers from attempting broader initiatives. The above narrative is extremely concerning.

Participant H below reiterates this:

> *"Definitely, if you think about statistics… always the question… are you doing it in the most cost effective manner? If you see these people in groups, is it more cost effective than seeing them individually? My question is again, is there sustainable change and where does sustainable change happen?" (Participant H; Organisation C)*

These narratives seem to correspond with the earlier presented arguments of participants, regarding their inaction in terms of community and macro interventions, as a result of limited funding. Below, for example,

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Participant T refers to the lack of group work interventions due to their being insufficient financing to effectively do so; thus casework remains the dominant intervention method simply, at times, because it is more economically feasible:

> *"[Cost efficiency] especially comes into play when we're doing groups with our children - office doesn't have any money to really contribute to that." (Participant S; Organisation E)*

Finally some participants linked this back to the TPA and to external funders, as well as the management and board level, requiring the evidence of funding spent, which channels its way down to the frontline social worker. This lack of understanding from funders and management regarding social work process and impact is raised in further detail in the third sub-theme of this study. Interestingly enough, the participant below somewhat agreed with the need for a level of accountability in terms of reporting how funding was used and ensuring service rendering is done in a cost effective manner:

> *"They don't ask about the impact, or how many people changed - they need to see - which is right - that money was used effectively or responsibly" (Participant D; Organisation A)*

This emphasis on cost effectiveness follows into a correlating preoccupation with procedures, norms, standards and the predominance of a management knowledge and agenda, as discussed in the sub-theme below.

6.5.3. Sub-Theme C.3: Preoccupation with procedures, norms, standards, and the predominance of management knowledge

There were four categories that emerged from reflections on whether there was a growing preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards in the social work NGO environment, as well as prevalence of management knowledge. These emerging categories largely supported the above assumption, acknowledging that outputs were considered more important than the quality of interventions and that there was an emphasis on ticking boxes, rather than process. In terms of management, participants referred to an increasing prevalence of top-down management strategies in their working environment, and often, by managers who were not social workers and therefore held little understand of the nature and long-term impact of social work practice, nor what was required for effective interventions. Finally, supervision was raised as an area of social work that was being particularly affected by the management agenda.

Category C.3.1. Outputs are more important than quality of work and emphasis on ticking boxes

Alongside an emphasis on cost efficiency and effectiveness in the work of social workers came recognition by participants of a growing preoccupation with outputs and the ticking boxes, rather than truly evaluating or reporting on the impact, process and affectivity of social work interventions. This preoccupation and expectation was often attributed to management by frontline social workers; social work managers attributed this to expectations of higher management such as the board, or by funders and the state through the TPA. Achievement is regarded by numbers and figures rather than qualitative impact. This preoccupation was deemed as restricting effective interventions with service-users:

> *"There are so many policies and papers and procedures and legislation that you have to deal with. Everyday…. The amount of paperwork, the number of Acts and pieces of legislation that social workers have to know. They are filling in more forms than getting to the service user and the communities. … It has definitely grown and increased from when I started." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

> *"Sometimes in crisis, we tend to just rush to see if the client is safe, but with procedure comes doing the necessary assessments and steps, so we are restricted by that." (Participant S; Organisation E)*

As evidenced in the narrative of Participant J below, often-existing procedures and norms felt more like hindrances and barriers rather than supportive mechanisms to ensure best practice:

> *"Somehow you just have to follow the rules and be there for your client, so there is a clash there. It does affect the work…" (Participant I; Organisation D)*

In turn, the minimum norms and standards laid out predominantly by the TPA, as well as other guiding policy documents within South African legislation were also depicted as placing pressure on NGOs, particularly in a context of limited funding:

> *"There is a lot of emphasis.. Based on minimum norms and standards. I've just experienced that now when they came to do the registration of the substance unit. There's the minimum norms and standards, but in practice that doesn't always work because of the lack of funding and the organisation can't always meet… although it's the minimum… the minimum norms and standards can sometimes be quite high." (Participant J; Organisation D)*

However, it was further recognised that such business-orientated emphases were not only impacting the work of social workers, but in fact the mental health and wellbeing of social workers themselves:

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"Every month, the management team is focused on, what did we achieve… it's like you say, it's more like a business than it is to us also being human beings, getting overworked, there's very little support in overall to debrief… just have to constantly focus on what should be done, what should be done now." (Participant S; Organisation E)

Participants articulated this reducing their complex and human-oriented practice to one of ticking boxes, in the hope that some action somewhere, through the large scope of outputs and procedures, would have an impact on community members:

"I sometimes feel that we shoot with a shotgun. And whomever we hit, great stuff. And the other ones just fall out of the bus. And again, then we're ticking boxes and we're not making change… Often to me, if you make a change in one person's life the whole year, at least you've done that… [Or] if you say I've been working the whole year and I'm shooting with a shotgun.. I've hit a few shots and I'm not quite sure if I did hit them, but at least I can tick the box." (Participant H; Organisation C)

"It becomes like ticking boxes and you forget about the human factor" (Participant C; Organisation A)

The expectation for social workers and NGOs to align with established procedures, norms and standards that didn't take into account qualitative need or impact, was often attributed to the prevalence of a top-down management culture.

Category C.3.2. Prevalence / Dominance of top-down management

Participants raised challenges they were experiencing with regard to management; these views came from both frontline social workers, as well as social work managers themselves, when referring to head office and the governing board; it appeared that a top-down management approach funnelled its way down the NGO environment, placing pressure on the social work manager, which would in turn lead to pressure on the frontline worker. The extracts of participants I and S articulate this below, with Participant S defining what top-down management meant to her, in terms of her experience within her NGO environment:

"You find yourself getting caught in the middle" (Participant I; Organisation D)

"It means that us as employees doesn't really have an input on how everything should be done. We are the fieldworkers, we go out and do the work. I think it should be more an interactive management, then a straight top-down type of management." (Participant S; Organisation E)

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Management was further explored by reflections on who it was that was managing social workers, and how this generated challenging managerial experiences.

Category C.3.3. Management are not social workers and don't understand
The challenges of a top-down management approach were also often attributed to the fact that much of higher management positions in NGOs, as well as the governing body, were taken up by individuals from professions outside of social work, who demonstrated little understanding of what the social worker does, how their impact should be measured, and why a focus on norms, procedures and cost-efficiency were inhibiting:

> *"The conflict comes in because the management, the upper management, they're not always social workers… there's not always that understanding, they want to take over the role and that is where the conflict comes in." (Participant J; Organisation D)*

> *"Once again your management board not having a clue, that they've got a social worker who's got a degree and they don't respect that… We've got management that is not really very on-the-ground, understanding what the impact is of the work that we are doing..." (Participant C; Organisation A)*

Participant C also indicated that they believed the above argument to be the reason that social workers were not being properly compensated in terms of salary payments within NGO environments, outside of TPA subsidies.

Participants further expressed a feeling of under appreciation by the management team and board, as a result of their not being on-the-ground or properly understanding the level, scope and intensity of work being undertaken by the frontline social workers on a daily basis, particularly within such a resource-dry context:

> *"Your other challenge is you management board who don't realise the functions we have on the ground level, so to them it's about what do you really do, because you don't see what we do, our work is not something that you can see, people don't come back and say we've done well… they only give the negative side of social work." (Participant C; Organisation A)*

Finally, participants connected their challenges of management with that of supervision, indicating that not only were managers not social workers, but for some, even the supervision role was being undertaken by a non-social worker, who was also their manager and therefore remained preoccupied with management tasks rather than effective and human-centred supervision.

"The person who is supervising you is actually the manager of the place… doesn't have any background of social work, so there is a clash there." (Participant I; Organisation D)

This ties into the final category of this sub-theme: supervision has become less about supervision, and more about management.

Category C.3.4. Supervision has become more about management
In this category, participants raised significant challenges with regard to supervision, with rather, a complete lack thereof. This was most ardent in Organisation E, but was raised in every organisation interviewed in the empirical study that there is an increasing prevalence of a management knowledge and agenda within the NGO social work context.

"In a lot of organisations there is no supervision, really, that is the sad truth. If we work strengths-based with clients, how can we not work strengths-based with our own staff?" (Participant A; Organisation A).

"Here you get it [supervision] once a month when it's necessary. You go if you have a problem, that's when you get supervision, when things get too much, and sometimes it's too late because we as social workers burn out. (Participant Q; Organisation E)

For some, this lack of supervision was primarily due to a lack of resources and funding for supervisory posts. Organisation E, for example, had one supervision position that stretched across three office branches and over fifteen social workers. Thus, although there was a noted attempt to keep management and supervision functions separate, there simply was not capacity for the supervisor to undertake effective and meaningful supervision practices:

Our supervisor, she only concentrates on social work services, she's not involved in the management at all, that's my responsibility. But again, I think our worst performance, if we must be tested today, would be on supervision. Because we don't have the people to do it, one supervisor for fifteen… and then stuff just gets added, so it takes me out of assisting her to do it." (Participant K, Organisation E)

This concern was expressed by social work managers and supervisors alike, where it was acknowledge that there simply wasn't sufficient time or capacity to undertake effective supervision and support for frontline workers, or they felt forced into such actions by overseeing management:

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"We're not getting to take care of the staff anymore because there is too much red-tape, there's too much paperwork… you take less care of the human factor… and from top structure, you are being enforced to be like that in a management position" (Participant C; Organisation A)

"It's because of this load, this casework, there's too much… there isn't really time for supervision" (Participant V; Organisation E)

For others, however, even within Organisation E, this was not the case and where supervision did exist, it had become about management activities, reviewing outputs, procedures, norms, standards and cost-efficiency measures rather than allowing a space for debrief or therapeutic support for social workers:

*"Well I definitely think the literature is very accurate there, **our supervisor has taken on a management role as well and forgotten about the supervisor part.**" (Participant U; Organisation E)*

Whether this was due to resource or time constraints, this was seen as greatly affecting the mental health and capacity of social workers to continue with their often complex and emotionally taxing work:

"You would have a difficult case...and we don't have a debriefing place… you don't have a debriefing platform. There's no time." (Participant O; Organisation E)

"They focus more on work work work… not on how you are doing, and our mental health is at risk. If you don't focus on the person doing the job, and you focus on the job that is done, you won't get the maximum results that you want, because you don't focus on the individual. Because it's the individual doing the work. I can't carry out my work if I'm depressed...and I have nowhere to debrief, so how am I supposed to carry out certain interventions with certain clients? It becomes a bit tricky." (Participant O; Organisation E)

Many participants referred to the use of peer-supervision and support as helping them to address difficult cases or experiences:

Luckily we have a great team here at the office, you can talk to a colleague, that helps." (Participant Q; Organisation E)

6.5.4. Theme C: Discussion and Analysis

The sub-themes and categories that emerged from Theme C point to much of the findings, assumptions and neoliberal critiques within literature, as well as highlighting a few additional others. Much like the global social work trends presented in Chapter Three and proposed within the South African context in Chapter Four,

participant discussions are evidence of an emerging social work business discourse, and as articulated by Harris (2003:5), a management-based colonisation of the public sector through neoliberal influence. The concerns raised match those discussed in Chapter Four – the newly-emerged developmental social work agenda has been hijacked by neoliberal tenets, and as such, has led to a partial-transition that has limited the developmental evolution of social work; it has been "co-opted for the maintenance of the corporations and capitalist system" (Smith, 2014:322).

The targeting of neoliberal policy outside of the market and economics, to bring into the market, other areas of societal life and functioning, has rendered the NGO near-powerless to either reinvent itself in a market-like way so as to procure funding and meet the target requirements of subsidiary contracts, thereby reducing the impact of its work to that of "shooting with a shotgun" as outlined by one participant, or to close its doors and render no impact at all. This correlates with literature (See Davies, 2014; Harris, 2014) which suggests that the neoliberal targeting of areas such as universities, trade unions, public administration, civil society actors and welfare, aims to meet one of three objectives: a) to bring these institutions and activities into the market for commodification, b) to reinvent them in a market-like way or, c) to neutralize/disband them so as to mitigate any threat to the neoliberal advancement (Davies, 2014). Within this space, managerialism is a significant tool in ushering in this neoliberal market and profit-orientated agenda. This leads one back to Engelbrecht's (2015) comparison of the values, targets, accountability means, beneficiaries, funding sources, legal considerations, strategies and ultimate goal of neoliberal management versus social work management and supervision. A shifting from a civil society management model to that of a neoliberal, cost-effectiveness and efficiency driven model, is somewhat evident in the discourse of participants in this theme; further still, the experiences and challenges laid out by participants in this theme correlate glaringly (and concerningly) with the assumptions of Harris (2014) and the stipulations of Sewpaul and Holscher (2004) in their extrapolation of the impact of neoliberal managerialism on social work:

Harris (2014):

- *Commodification* involves identifying discrete problem categories and a menu of service options in order to quantify and cost service outputs. This often reduces social work to a series of one-off transactions, depriving it of meaningful working relationships with and commitments to service users;

- *Reducing funding* to produce efficiency gains exerts downward pressure on costs by imitating the pressure towards falling profits in capitalist markets;

- *Exerting greater control over professional space*, for example through the use of 'dashboards' as a means of heightening surveillance of the work of individual social workers and groups of social workers.

Sewpaul and Holscher (2004):

- Tunnel vision: an emphasis on phenomena that are quantified in the performance management system at the expense of unquantified aspects of performance; and,

- Gaming: minimising the apparent scope for performance improvement to avoid increased expectations and higher targets in the future.

The NGO context has thus become one of business plans, competition, efficiency, performance audits, and cost-effective measurements, in order to retain sponsorship and support (Spolander et al., 2014). Further still, the infiltration of non-social workers into social work and NGO management posts, with little understanding of the function and role of social work, implies that management knowledge, rather than social work knowledge will be relied upon to make critical decisions. As outlined by Engelbrecht (2015), the employment of non-social workers to manage and supervise professional social workers, in many cases, is thus a result of neoliberal and managerial tenets, rather than of incompetence or a scarcity of senior and competent social workers. This could potentially have certain negative effects, in that a management knowledge-base may view the social work NGO service-user as a rational actor selecting social work services as one would commercial products, rather than being as response to stressful conditions with little to no alternative if one does have the financing to contract private services (Harris, 2014). This is not an accurate portrayal of the social welfare context, particularly within South Africa, that is still very much reeling from the structural injustices of the apartheid era. Thus, alongside this, the everyday complexity of social work is sidelined by neoliberalism's notion of rational, self-interested consumers making choices (Harris, 2014). Although exact experiences of this were not raised in concrete terms in the empirical study, the complexity of social work being overlooked or poorly understood by management was, and this could possibly lead to other such concerns.

The preoccupation with norms, procedures, standards and cost-efficiency, which comes hand-in-hand with the prevalence of a management knowledge and agenda, thereby minimises the human element of social work intervention and process (Harris & Unwin, 2009; Harris, 2014). This minimisation as raised by participants, and

particularly the ticking of boxes which they felt replaced the human element echoes literature to a near exact. As outlined by Clarke (2004:129), "[P]erformance" is a particular development within this framing of organizational control." Thus, performance indicators are developed to reflect organizational objectives, targets are set, and progress is monitored in relation to these identified performance indicators (Harris & Unwin, 2009). Such business principles minimize the human element of social work practice to the 'ticking of boxes' and completion of tasks' in a manner that is considered the most efficient use of time, resources and finances.

6.7. THEME D: THE DEPROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

An additional suggested impact of neoliberalism in social work within the NGO context, and the final theme for this study, is that of the deprofessionalisation of social work. This theme is greatly interlinked with the previous three, and serves as an almost culmination of the impact of other neoliberal tenets. The profession is, within the neoliberal context, considered to be undergoing a deprofessionalisation, in terms of the reduction in professional discretion, a deskilling of social work, a diminishing of the professional identity and other professional groups and sub-professions taking on the complex and academically rigorous role of the social worker. This theme is explored through three sub-themes, and two to three additional categories within each sub-theme which outline the views of participants on if, and how, they believe social work is being deskilled, diminished, and deprofessionalised. The sub-themes and categories are presented in the table below and are discussed further in this section.

Table 33. Theme D: Sub-Themes and Categories

THEME D. THE DEPROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK		
Sub-Theme D.1. Reducing professional discretion and deskilling of social work		
Category D.1.1.		Category D.1.2.
Profession is becoming "cheaper" and therefore poorer in skill		Limitation and Pressure of the TPA is causing a deskilling of social work
Sub-Theme D.2. Deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity		
Category D.2.1.	Category D.2.2.	Category D.2.3.

Identity of profession is poor	The attitude of social workers is the reason the profession isn't respected	There is a brain-drain of social workers
Sub-Theme D.3. Social work tasks are being taken up by other professions and groups		
Category D.3.1.		*Category D.3.2.*
Sub-professions are causing confusion and deskilling		Sub-professions are supportive and ease the workload, but clear boundaries and training are required

6.7.1. Sub-Theme D.1: Reducing professional discretion and deskilling of social work

Participants were asked to reflect on the above statement and/or opinion in literature and indicate whether or not this was something they had and/or were experiencing in their practice on the ground. They were further asked to broadly reflect on whether it was a statement they largely agreed or disagreed with, and why. Participants indicated that they felt the profession was being cheapened through several of the challenges identified in earlier themes, and that the limitations and pressure of the TPA was essentially resulting in a deskilling of social work.

Category D.1.1. Profession is becoming "cheaper" and therefore poorer in skill

When asked whether participants felt there was a reducing of professional discretion and a deskilling of social work, there was a near unilateral agreement that this was taking place through a cheapening of the profession. This cheapening was seen as stemming from several challenges that were highlighted in earlier themes, in terms of a decrease in funding and resources, management by non-social work professionals, a poor respect for the output of NGOs within the social welfare field, and insufficient training, which was often linked to an urgency to output high figures of registered social workers over and above quality. This is articulated, for example, in the extracts from Participant K below:

> *"I strongly agree. I want to take it a step further to say the quality of training at universities is a huge problem for me. I receive social workers here who can't even write a letter… I think there is a huge gap, that the universities are failing the social workers" (Participant K, Organisation E)*

"I'll give you my interpretation of that… It has become a cheap profession… It's not only social work, it's all the professions where government is involved… they give bursaries to these students.. they will walk around and they will just put down all the names of all the unemployed youth…" (Participant K, Organisation E)

The limitation of sufficient funding was further recognised as leading to a cheapening of the profession and a diminishing of skill, as many social work professionals were leaving the NGO field to find better paying positions:

"If you are doing this job for the money, you can leave it tomorrow… we don't have pension and we don't have medical aid… so it's hard for a young social worker… Our income is not as high as other professionals, so in that way I would say we need more respect or acknowledgement" (Participant E; Organisation B)

"We're the cheaper option" (Participant H; Organisation C)

This was particularly concerning as many participants felt that without NGO social work service delivery, the output of the profession would be greatly reduced and deskilled if left to the Department:

"Taking away the funding means for me deskilling social work and that for me is really my deep concern… we as the NGOs have upped the standard of social work. The department is nowhere, they're falling apart, whereas in previous years the department actually set the standard… We [NGOs] are setting the standard of social work." (Participant D; Organisation A)

As a result, Participant D iterated that with the defunding of NGO social work positions and subsidiaries, the profession was largely being deskilled:

"My concern is if they are cutting our subsidies…. what's going to happen then to our profession? It's going down the drain." (Participant D; Organisation A)

Flowing from these discussions, participants further acknowledged that they believed the expectations, pressure and limitations of the TPA was aiding this deskilling process.

Category D.1.2. Limitation and pressure of the TPA is causing a deskilling of social work

As discussed in earlier themes, the TPA has been recognised by participants as creating significant pressure and stress on managers and supervisors, and in turn, social workers within NGOs, as turning the work of social workers into business-orientated outputs and statistics, rather than human-centered interventions, and as limiting the type of intervention work social workers could undertake to predominantly micro, casework and statutory

functions. This was, some participants believed, a form of deskilling, in that it was reducing what social workers were capable of doing:

> *"I do feel that the name of the profession has gone down, we known as just taking your children; our role has been misunderstood, because of the pressure that is put on us by management and supervisors; we are not doing what social workers should be doing anymore; we should be focusing more on the people; but the direction that we get is more numbers and TPA, instead of trying to work with children and parents, we just have to go to court – more about technical things instead of social work." (Participant U; Organisation E)*

> *"It [the TPA] deskills us as social workers and what we are capable of. Cause sometimes I can't reach my full potential, cause I love group work and I love working in the community but I don't have time." (Participant O; Organisation E)*

6.7.2. Sub-Theme D.2: Deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity

The second sub-theme to emerge in this theme was that of the diminishing of professional identity, which was in turn resulting in a deprofessionalisation of social work. Here, participants shared their views on the identity of social work, both in the past and as it is now, and whether they felt strong in this identity both within the profession and in the opinions of and their interactions with other professional groups in the service sector. Many identified that the identity of the profession was incredibly poor, and that this had been this way for a long time; the profession was not highly respected. This was seen as a result of both other professions as well as the internal attitudes, actions and projections of social workers themselves. The reduction of professional identity was, in the opinion of participants, resulting in a brain drain of social workers and a thus corresponding deprofessionalisation and continuing deskilling, as highlighted in the sub-theme above.

Category D.2.1. Identity of profession is poor

Many participants viewed the identity of the profession as being extremely poor, and that other professional groups did either not understand or respect the significant and complex role of social work in society; this was largely attributed to a lack of awareness of what it is that social work actually does. Social workers attached this poor identity and lack of respect to other professionals they worked with such as lawyers, medical professionals, magistrates and even internal management, although some, such as Participant A, did stipulate that it is better than what it used to be:

"There is an element of that in [my organisation]… the perception of social work is 'you work with the poor people', it's not that you're a professional person. And sometimes if you stand on it, then people feel threatened. It's better than what it is, and it's often professional opinions." (Participant A; Organisation A).

"Even at court – a magistrate will disregard what you have said or your recommendation… sometimes they make you feel so small as a professional person… even at work, management, sometimes make you feel so small… We didn't even want to go to a management meeting because we were always questioned. It was horrible. It's like you don't matter." (Participant B; Organisation A)

Participants also indicated a sense of shaming from others when they introduced themselves as social work professionals, reiterating the idea of it being a cheap and poorly qualified profession:

"...the "ay sistoeg… there's a lot of shaming" (Participant H; Organisation C)

"And for me it is still that the place of social work, even within [my organisation] is not what it should be - - and I'm always in a struggle to make people understand that you are just as professional as a lawyer or an engineer." (Participant A; Organisation A).

While many attributed this poor identity to the lack of awareness of other groups, some believed that it was the attitude and actions of social workers themselves that reiterated this idea of the profession being cheap and less qualified.

Category D.2.2. The attitude of social workers is the reason the profession isn't respected
Participants, in the discussion regarding professional identity, argued that this idea of social work being less qualified or important or capable than other professional groups was at times propelled and confirmed further by social workers themselves, who against this existing backdrop, failed or declined to exert themselves professionally:

I also think perhaps we're selling social work wrong. It's almost kind of this poor cloak that is hung about, especially in the NGOs… Sometimes social workers don't look professional." (Participant A; Organisation A)

"It is because of our own doing. Why must we feel inferior towards a lawyer? Why? But you do. But it's because of your own doing." (Participant K, Organisation E)

Others still, argued that social workers had begun to accept this version of themselves and did little to fight against it; this was deemed necessary from upcoming social workers to challenge existing perceptions of the profession:

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> *"We need more social workers that are more driven and more dynamic… we need a few social workers that are not just accepting everything." (Participant E; Organisation B)*

Finally, the lack of awareness from other professionals and groups regarding what it was that social work undertook on a day-to-day basis was viewed as being partly the doing of social workers selling themselves short, and partly related to the confidential nature of social work practice – how is the profession supposed to show its work?

> *"I don't know if we are partly to blame ourselves for looking like 'ons wil nou doodgaan.' How can we make social work more attractive? And because of confidentiality, you can't really show, especially when you do a lot of casework and one-on-one, how do I show what I am doing? People can't just walk in and see what you're doing." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

Category D.2.3. There is a brain drain of social workers

The deprofessionalisation of work was further evidenced by a brain drain of social work professionals leaving the social work field for other posts because of the increased pressure and expectations on social workers from the TPA, funders and management, in what is deemed by some participants as an environment of increasing red tape and reduced professional discretion:

> *"There's a concern of people [social workers] leaving the field because there's just too much red tape" (Participant C; Organisation A)*

Further still, the poor identity and seeing respect for the profession, alongside the TPA pressures, was creating an environment where social workers felt the need to seek alternative opportunities, as was clearly indicated by Participant P below:

> *"It's not a respected profession. Social workers are not respected… I think it's the image that people have of social workers… People think we are the fixers of everything… when you can't reach that target at that time that they want you to, then all of a sudden you're not doing your work, but they don't know what's going on behind the scenes… and hence, some social workers want to get out of the field. I'm to follow soon very soon." (Participant O; Organisation E)*

6.7.3. Sub-Theme D.3: Social work tasks are being taken up by other professions and groups

The final sub-theme in Theme D pertained to the tasks and role of social work being taken up by other professional or sub-professional groups, and that this was, in itself, a form of deprofessionalisation. The uptake

of social management positions within NGOs by non-social workers has been discussed in other themes where it felt more fitting and appropriate to the context of the emerging categories. Thus, in this sub-theme, the primary focus was on that of sub-professions such as social auxiliary workers and community development workers, and whether these newly development sub-groups within the SACSSP were deemed as supportive and positive, or as creating a sense of identity confusion and a deskilling of the social work profession. There were two clear opinions which emerged in these discussions: the first being that sub-professions were causing a confusion and deskilling; and the second whereby sub-professions were seen as valuable and supportive to social workers, but a recognition for clear boundaries and more appropriate training was raised.

Category D.3.1. Sub-professions are causing confusion and deskilling

A large portion of the sample population expressed challenges and difficulties in terms of the South African policy-based introduction of sub-professions within the social work field such as social auxiliary workers (SAWs) and community development workers (CDWs). The reasons for this were varied. Some felt that SAWs and CDWs were simply cheaper options for social work, that required less training, less funding investment, were paid a lower salary and therefore less subsidiary impact for the state, despite the limitations of these sub-professions. This was seen as an outright deprofessionalisation of social work, and a disrespect to the qualification of the profession and the complexity of its work:

> *"One of the reasons [government is giving more SAW posts], to be cost effective… If we could choose between a social work post or a SAW post, we would perhaps rather take a SW post, but the others are cheaper. That's also a deprofessionalisation of social work, because in your NGOs, often the board would go for the cheaper option…" (Participant A; Organisation A).*

> *"Everywhere you go, they won't give you social work posts from the department, they will give you social auxiliary worker posts, but when you're a designated child protection organisation, there is actually no work for a SAW, there's limits to what they can do." (Participant A; Organisation A).*

Many argued that the poor training of these sub-professions in fact added to the workload of social workers rather than support it, and from poor training, these sub-professions also added to the poor identity of social work:

> *"I've been to meetings where people are introduced as the social worker of this area, but then I know this person is not a social worker, he's a social auxiliary worker… and then when he doesn't do the work properly, the whole*

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profession will… and it's not because of the fact that he doesn't do his job, it's because he doesn't have the knowledge" (Participant H; Organisation C)

"In my case it adds onto the work. Cause we have an auxiliary who is not very clued up… She might start the intervention but I need to redo what she does, which sits me back." (Participant O; Organisation E)

Some acknowledged that it was a blurring of professional lines and boundaries, thereby caused confusion within the NGO context, as well as for other professional groups and the service users themselves:

"Yes, yes, yes, I've experienced that right here… There are really no boundaries as to how far this person can go. Everybody thinks they have the right to say this to the client… There are no boundaries. Nobody actually follows what their work description says. It gets frustrating… house mothers and everybody else… you need to remind everyone what you are all the time." (Participant I; Organisation D)

"You don't always get that professionalism. Social work used to be seen as a highly professional work, but now these days you have the social auxiliary workers, the community workers, the child and youth care workers… it's very confusing." (Participant J; Organisation D)

Others expressed concerns that the training of CDWs, for example, was simply insufficient for the social work field and thus does not render a very supportive service for the profession in this regard:

"Some of the community development workers, we just don't appoint them, we'd rather appoint a SAW, because at least she registers at the council, there's some kind of protection for the client and they receive supervision. Their [CDWs] is horrific. … In the current climate of where social work is taking place, you cannot enter with a one year training behind you." (Participant A; Organisation A).

However, this was not the opinion of all participants in the study, and many believed SAWs and CDWs to be incredibly helpful for social workers.

Category D.3.2. Sub-professions are supportive and ease the workload, but clear boundaries and training are required

A selection of participants did not agree with, or echo the sentiments of participants in the first category, but rather proposed that SAWs and CDWs were in fact helpful and supportive for the social worker.

"Yes, let there be auxiliaries, community [workers], then we get more time to focus... she [SAW] is that help to you. I think it's helpful." (Participant B; Organisation A)

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"The role of the SAW, to me, is very important because they can do the follow-ups." (Participant H; Organisation C)

"SAWs – benefit us a lot – because they take off of our workload; it causes less confusion, because they have a specific role that they do; it betters the situation in the organisation by having this divide" (Participant U; Organisation E)

However, these participants did acknowledge that clear boundaries and training differences between these sub-professions and that of social work were needed to avoid any confusion or deprofessionalisation. This was often explained using the example of doctors and nurses, or other assistant professions.

"It must be very clear that a social worker and a social auxiliary worker is not the same. Yes, I also feel that you can't say that the dentist assistant is a dentist. You don't go for your root canal to the dentist assistant. It is important that there is a difference… But there's an enormous lot of work that can be done by a SAW." (Participant H; Organisation C)

6.7.4. Theme D: Discussion and Analysis

The poor, and often confusing, identity that exists within the profession has been recognised in literature (Engelbrecht, 2011; 2015) as being a result of neoliberal infiltration, particularly at the time of the developmental shift of post-apartheid; as expressed in Chapter Four of the literature study, South African social work had very little time to cement itself in the new developmental agenda, before much of this was co-opted by underlying neoliberal principles. As such, it can be said that social work has never fully evolved from its apartheid-past, and that it stands at a crossroads between development and neoliberalism, unsure of which path certain actions and principles will take it down. It reiterates the confusion of the social work identity during the apartheid era, where as put forward by Pietersen (1991: 22), social work was both "a response to working class political pressure", as well as "a means of defusing the demand for further class-based and/or more revolutionary political action."

This can also be linked back to the earlier theme of micro versus macro and the uncertainty regarding the role of social work in this regard. It can be suggested, therefore, that perhaps the poor identity of the profession is also largely attributed to its anxiety and uneasiness of its own role in post-apartheid South African society. The output of legislation and policy documents such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (Republic of South Africa, 1997a) do not necessarily always correspond with the output and expectation of the TPA and this can create frustration, not only for the profession itself, but also for the understanding and awareness of other professional groups as

to what exactly it is what social work does and is responsible for. As iterated in the literature study, this is also largely connected to the professions' continuing grapple with its identity and place within not only the broader welfare landscape, but within the functioning of society as a whole (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004).

The researcher will argue that the infiltration of neoliberalism has severely distorted the social work identity. One the on hand, the profession is recognised in policy as being rooted in social justice and a means of holding the government to account regarding its service commitment to citizens, particularly within NGOs. However, on the other hand, there remains an underlying commitment to social control and maintenance of the status quo, whether consciously or unconsciously, stemming from its darker past and recent neoliberal infiltrations. It can be said that the profession is thus vulnerable to political agendas and practitioners are thereby often in a state of identity confusion set against the swaying political and economic tides. This is supported by Carey (2008) who expressed concerns that the profession has become a living embodiment of state structures and agendas, and that the political framework has penetrated care services at both a conscious and unconscious level.

The poor identity of the profession is also an age-old experience, as offered by Lymbery (2001) who contends that the contribution of social work to society has always been contested and that more recently, economic policy practices such as that of neoliberalism is leading to a public devaluing of social work and social services. The ushering in of sub-professions may indeed be a useful and helpful tool, but the researcher will suggest that this cannot be the case in a context where the social work identity and role is already so contested and unsure. As outlined by Engelbrecht (2015), social workers are now expected to share their role with other professions and sub-professions and this has perhaps not been clearly defined or demarcated.

6.8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In closing the empirical chapter of the study, the researcher reflects again on the objective of this qualitative review as offered earlier in this text:

> *"This is the heart of the researcher's larger exploration - definitively unpacking the impact of neoliberalism on grassroots social work practice, outside of the academic periphery of critical reflection." (Researcher, pg. 68).*

To reflect on critical opinions and reflections within literature and the social work academic periphery is insufficient without holding these findings against real-life practices. Thus, opinions articulated by academics in literature needs to be offered to social workers on the ground, who are negotiating the complexities of these neoliberal

impacts on a day-to-day basis, in order that we may learn from and reflect on their views, understandings and experiences. This chapter has been purposefully saturated with participant narrative and dialogue largely untouched outside of separate discussions and analyses in order to offer it up as holding the same weight and value as that of the literature review in earlier chapters. Although much of the findings do correlate with the assumptions of literature, they have often been offered in a fresh light and allowed for a more hands-on understanding of the very real challenges social workers within NGOs are grappling with, outside of an academic analysis. The chapter that follows will offer concluding remarks for each theme, as well as key findings, followed by recommendations for on-ground practice, policy and future research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gain an awareness of, and understanding into social worker's reflections on implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in South African Non-governmental Organisations. The study was made up of several research questions, including:

- What are the global tenets of neoliberalism?
- How do these global tenets influence the profession of social work and its practice?
- How do these tenets reveal themselves in the South African policy development, social work and social service rendering context?
- How do these tenets influence the (a) day-to-day practice of frontline social workers? and (b) the day-to-day managerial practices of social work managers?

These questions were answered through the achievement of several key objectives, reached through the development of several literature and empirical chapters:

- Conceptualise neoliberalism as a global economic philosophy, by:
  - Tracing the historical emergence of neoliberalism as a global phenomenon;
  - Identifying neoliberal tenets within the context of political, economic and social life.

This objective was achieved in **Chapter Two** of the study, whereby neoliberalism as a global phenomenon was explored, tracing its birthing throughout history and its key tenets serving as the soldiers of its hegemonic march.

- Conceptualise the impact of neoliberalism on social work, by:
  - Conceptualising the specific neoliberal tenets at work within social work;
  - Examining the implications of these tenets for social work on a global scale.

This objective was achieved through the development of **Chapter Three** of this study, which looked the social work profession at large, its underlying principles and commitments, and how these were being impacted by the neoliberal global agenda. The specific neoliberal tenets at play within social work were identified and explored in

this chapter, and formed the basis for the interview questionnaire and the Themes and Sub-Themes of the empirical study, in terms of marketisation, consumerisation, managerialisation and deprofessionalisation.

- Critically analyse the influence of the identified global neoliberal tenets on South African NGOs, through reflecting on:
  - Current South African social welfare policies;
  - The day-to-day frontline services of social workers; and the management practices of social workers.

This objective was achieved in **Chapter Four** of this study, whereby the infiltration of neoliberalism into post-apartheid South Africa is detailed, alongside the mapping of the history of South African social work and socioeconomic policy shifts from colonial, to apartheid, to developmental and to neoliberal eras and trends.

- Empirically investigate the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in NGOs, through the reflections of frontline social workers and managers.

After an exposition of the study methodology and research approach undertaken in **Chapter Five**, the above objective was achieved in the previous empirical **Chapter Six** of the study, where the case studies of the NGO sample population group were presented, and the findings from interviews with 24 social work managers (10) and frontline social workers (14) are extrapolated, discussed and analysed against literature. This chapter, **Chapter Seven**, will meet the final objective of the study and thus enable its conclusion:

- Present conclusions and recommendations for NGOs regarding the management of perceived neoliberal tenets and its implications for social work.

7.2. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions will be structured according to the themes of the empirical study, as they represent the primary tenets of neoliberalism within social work, and thus equally the overarching findings of the literature chapters.

7.2.1. The Marketisation of Social Work

In this overarching theme, the exploration of the marketisation of social work within the NGO context was undertaken, reflecting on the sub-themes of previously state-provided services being outsourced to the private sector and NGOs; the growing expectation for NGOs to rely less on government funding and support and

to function more as private operations in procuring their own funding; and the dominance of contractual relationships, in terms predominantly of the TPA between the state and the NGO service provider. The views of social workers differed in many respects, and some findings were relatively surprising, in terms particularly of this expectation for NGOs to act as private operations stemming not only from the state, but also from within the NGO context itself. Some participants, particularly managers, felt that the NGO should in fact function independently in procuring its own funding instead of expecting handouts, as it were.

In terms of the outsourcing of services to NGOs, which served as the first sub-theme, findings suggested a three varied opinions: one where NGOs actually believed the state to be taking back services, in terms of decreasing subsidiary posts and funding and insinuating (and to some, directly stating) that NGOs should shift more toward preventative and community-based functions, while the state took on the statutory levels of intervention; this was viewed as negative by many participants, and for them, demonstrated a lack of awareness and understanding of how NGOs functioned, and particularly the low cost at which they did so. The second opinion was that NGOs had always been rendering the large majority of social work and welfare services, and that the case of outsourcing to NGOs was not necessarily something new; rather, TPA agreements and expectations for funding was where changes and shifts were taking place. Finally, the third opinion agreed with the statement offered in the sub-theme, which stemmed from literature, in that NGOs were expected to do more; in this regard, participants felt that services were indeed being increasingly outsourced to them and that at the same time, this was done so with less support and less funding from government departments. The variation of these three opinions can perhaps be attributed to the differing NGO contexts of the sample population group, as well as varying provincial TPA and funding experiences.

Within the second sub-theme, which focused on the growing expectation for NGOs to act as private operations and procure their own funding, as outlined above, some agreed to this being a (negative) pressure from the state, while others deemed it necessary and fair. Further discussions in this category related to the financial struggle of NGOs, as they felt they were being expected to render a large majority of services within an increasingly financially baron environment. NGOs expressed deep financial struggles and challenges, which was largely limiting their ability to render quality services to individuals and communities.

The third sub-theme looked at the dominance of contractual relationships, and here the Terms of Payment Agreement (TPA) between the NGO and state, in contractual exchange for social work post subsidiaries, held

centre-stage in the majority of discussions. While some found the expectations of the TPA to be fair in holding NGOs to account and largely in-line with the work they were already undertaking, others felt the TPA was creating a negative work environment, dominating NGO activities with expected outputs, targets, and high levels of reporting against a backdrop of already high caseloads and limited resources. Furthermore, the TPA was labelled as greatly restricting the work of NGOs, inhibiting the process of social work intervention and narrowing down complex human interventions to the ticking of boxes and inflexible definitions of successful and impactful interventions.

The above findings both correlated with, and contradicted literature, in terms of supporting much of the neoliberal critique regarding the dominance and impact of economic prioritisation, the increased load on NGOs for social service delivery, and a stepping back of the state from welfare provision and funding support, while at the same time retaining some control over NGO activities through contractual agreements. Some findings were relatively new and fell outside of statements made in literature, in terms of participants believing in some cases that the state was taking back services from the NGO sector, and that NGOs should be acting as private operations, decreasing their dependence on the state and procuring their own funding.

7.2.2. The Consumerisation of Social Work

This theme looked at the consumerisation of social work, and primarily, aspects of individualism, collectivism, self-reliance and the underlying structural causes of social problems that warrant social work intervention(s). In this theme, two sub-themes emerged, in terms of the first which reflected on the existence of a dominant welfare discourse which promotes self-reliance and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing; and the second, which explored the overemphasis on individualism and micro social work over and above addressing structural causes at the macro level. While much of participant discourses largely supported the primary messages or assumptions of these two sub-themes, there were also some strong narratives that advocated for self-reliance and independence of individuals and communities, and even raised social security grants as fostering a culture of dependency that worked against the social work agenda. Questions were also raised as to the role and definition of social work, and whether macro and structural addresses were something the profession was supposed to be taking on.

Within the first sub-theme, the concept of self-reliance and its dominance within the professional practice context and discourse was explored; here, the findings were largely swayed to the side of promoting self-

reliance as a positive intervention goal and approach, with some indicating there should be a balance between expecting individuals, families and communities to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, while also considering the environment in which these individuals fall and the limitations it may hold. Others criticised the state provision of social security grants as facilitating or encouraging the culture of dependency and working against the self-reliant and empowerment approach that social workers in the NGO context were attempting to develop in their communities.

In the second sub-theme, individualism versus structuralism, micro versus macro, and casework versus community work were unpacked, with regard to social workers in NGOs over emphasising one above the other. Here, opinions of participants showed significant variations. The large majority of the sample population recognised that macro and community-based work, and structural address, was not taking place within the NGO welfare context and gave differing reasons and arguments as to why this was the case. Some raised the changing of society and social problems as lending itself greater toward casework approaches, others indicated insufficient time, capacity, resources or funding to undertake macro interventions. In discussing funding and resource limitations, the TPA was again raised, in terms of its predominant focus on casework in its output expectations and funding restraints. Finally, participants also referred to tradition as keeping social workers and NGOs rooted in intervention approaches they were comfortable with, particularly more established NGOs which came from philanthropic and religious backgrounds. In reviewing the undertaking of macro and structural address, participants also raised questions as to whether this was indeed the role of the social worker or if another profession should instead be taking this on; others argued that social workers should be connected to the bigger picture and that in fact, NGOs were being expected to take on more developmental work in recent years, particularly with the falling of boundaries between state versus NGO service rendering in 1994.

7.2.3. The Managerialisation of Social Work
Theme C dealt with the managerialisation of social work as a neoliberal consequence within the NGO sector of South Africa. Sub-themes that emerged were linked to earlier discussions around NGOs being expected to act as private operations, and as such, to run as businesses within a management and output knowledge base and framework. Cost-effectiveness and efficiency were seen as the yardsticks for measuring NGO activities and interventions, with work being largely limited by what was deemed most cost-effective; a preoccupation with norms, procedures, standards and a management agenda was identified as hindering not only the work of social workers with individuals, groups and communities, but also as affecting the mental health

and wellbeing of social workers themselves. The take-up of management positions by other professions, and the severe lack of sufficient and quality-based supervision, were primary challenges raised.

The first sub-theme, which looked at social work and NGOs being increasingly expected to act as businesses was strongly acknowledged by the participant sample group, and was recognised as having negative consequences for social work intervention, with a focus on reporting and output, rather than process and quality service delivery. ***The second sub-theme reflected on how the first consequentially led to the second, whereby within a management framework, cost-effectiveness and measures of the efficiency of work were the yardsticks***, and that the intervention activities of social workers in NGOs were inhibited by what was deemed cost-effective; this was also linked to earlier theme discussions, in terms of cost-effectiveness dictating the type of interventions social workers could undertake, with group, community and more macro-based initiatives considered too expensive and inefficient in terms of the statistics and reporting expected by NGOs.

The third sub-theme explored the previous two in more detail, reflecting on the preoccupation within the NGO sector (and its management and funders, including the state) with procedures, norms, standards and the predominance of a management knowledge and agenda. Here, participants stressed that outputs were considered to be more important than the quality of work, and that there was an emphasis on ticking boxes, in the hope it would make some meaningful impact, rather than truly having the resources, time and flexibility to render sustainability effective work that may take a longer period of time to yield reportable impact. This preoccupation and expectation was delivered through the dominance of a top-down management, who were largely non-social workers; this particularly concerned participants and for them, was the primary reason behind clashes between management and workers. Non-social work managers simply did not understand the workload or intervention nature of social work and cast over expectations that negatively impacted on service rendering, rather than acting as a supportive mechanism or an insurance of best practice. Beyond this, supervision had been largely displaced by management roles and activities, and participants experienced significant concerns as to the lack of meaningful supervision and debrief, which was affecting not only the quality of intervention delivered to the service-user, but also the mental health and wellbeing of social workers themselves. This was acknowledged by social work managers alike, with the argument that there was often very little time or capacity to effectively implement human-centred supervision with frontline social workers and that pressure from higher management structures greatly inhibited this.

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7.2.4. The Deprofessionalisation of Social Work

In this final theme, the role, identity and skill of the profession was reflected upon in terms of an emerging neoliberal impact(s), which was resulting in the deprofessionalisation of social work. Three sub-themes were explored, including the reduction of professional discretion and a deskilling of social work; the diminishing of professional identity and a brain drain of social workers; and the fact that social work tasks were being taken by other professionals and groups and that this was further aiding a deprofessionalisation.

The first sub-theme looked at the existing professional discretion and skill of social work and whether both were being significantly reduced through various factors related to neoliberal ideals and shifts. Here, participants recognised the profession to be one that is increasingly viewed, and treated as cheap (or the cheaper alternative) and that as a result, was diminishing in its skill base, autonomy and capacity. This was attributed to several factors, including the lack of sufficient finances and resources, and the defunding of social work posts, as well as the increased pressure and red tape of the TPA. The limitations of the TPA in terms of the nature, type and scope of social work services rendered was a second category which emerged as aiding the deskilling of the profession, particularly in terms of participants feeling they were restricted by TPA outputs and could not render their full capacity or qualifications, especially with regard to more macro interventions.

The second sub-theme reflected on the professional identity of social work. In these discussions, many participants felt that the identity of social work was particularly poor; this was attributed to both the views, understandings and awareness of other professional groups, as well as the acceptance of such definitions by social workers themselves, who in return, did not advocate for their professionalism or qualified discretion and authority. As a result of poor identity, as well as high stress, pressures and red tape through management and TPA expectations, there was a brain drain of social workers identified, whereby many were leaving the field to find alternative employment and professional opportunities.

The third, and final sub-theme centered on discussions around the ushering in of sub-professions within the social work field such as social auxiliary workers (SAWs) and community development workers (CDWs). Here, two differing viewpoints were offered: one where participants strongly advocated for the significance of SAWs and CDWs as supporting professions, although indicating that clear boundaries were required to avoid any confusion. Others, however, felt that the introduction of these sub-professions was a form of the deskilling of social work, engendering a disrespect of the professional qualification and work complexity, as well as creating

confusion amongst other professionals and the service-user group. Many felt the training of these sub-professions was low and that this often aided to the workload of social workers rather than supporting it. Further still, these sub-professions were deemed by some as a cost-saving exercise, and a means of offering a cheaper alternative for social work.

7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above conclusions, the researcher wishes to make the following practice and policy recommendations under each of the primary themes:

7.3.1. The Marketisation of Social Work

- The relationship between NGOs and the State needs to be more clearly defined, and allow for a negotiating power from NGOs through democratic participation in the establishment of TPAs and expected outputs, definitions and mechanisms of measurement;

- With regard to the above, the value and importance of NGOs in social welfare service delivery needs to be firmly acknowledged; this should be demonstrated through the scoping of additional funding, resourcing and support for NGOs, in recognition of their valuable contribution to the social work profession in South Africa;

- Toward this end, it is highly recommend that a full review of the costing of NGO service delivery, and a value estimate and business case of NGO service rendering be undertaken by the Department;

- The defunding of social work posts within the NGO sector is strongly discouraged without full investigation into the implications thereof for social work and the communities it serves;

- The split of work between the Department and the NGO needs to be re-explored and re-negotiated, with vital input from NGOs in terms of the challenges they are experiencing with workload, the resources needed, and the equal saying power of prominent NGO groups such as those explored in this study;

- The measuring of qualitative process over and above purely output needs to be restored to the TPA and its monitoring, with a lesser focus on numbers and output figures. New monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to be introduced and/or developed to evaluate the quality, process and sustainable impact of NGO interventions - this does not necessarily need to replace the quantitative approach of current TPAs, but can be implemented to co-exist and support one another.

7.3.2. The Consumerisation of Social Work

- The education and training curriculum of social work needs to be reconsidered, in terms of its practical training in micro versus macro interventions, and its allowance for an effective and impactful knowledge development around addressing underlying structural causes of social problems. Alternative means of addressing complex human problems through truly authentic and meaningful macro interventions need to be imparted from early stages of social work training;

- Further linkages between social work and social security may need to be explored, to challenge existing opinions that social grants create dependency, rather than mitigate against severe poverty and material disempowerment;

- The TPA should hold an equal split between funding and output measures with regard to micro and macro interventions. This should provide NGOs with the capacity, resources and means to render both intervention types - in particular, resource limitations such as petrol, transportation and petty cash for group and community events should be considered;

- Policy and legislation on developmental social work needs to be far more critical and aware of neoliberal influences and contradictions, and a clear demarcation and defining of social development needs to not only be established but also practised.

7.3.3. The Managerialisation of Social Work

- TPAs need to fund social work managerial positions that are taken up by social workers themselves. These should resemble similar gradings to that of the Department. If this is not feasible, mandatory training in the role, identity and functioning of social work should be undertaken by all managerial professionals within the social work NGO context;

- The social work managerial post needs to be funded separate to that of the Supervision post, and the activities of both need to be entirely separated. Stipulated norms in terms of the recommended number of social workers per supervisor need to be strictly adhered to. Furthermore, if this is equally not feasible, the outsourcing of seasoned and experienced social workers for supervision rounds within various organisations needs to be considered, to ensure that all social workers are receiving monthly supervision, at the very least, that is meaningful and human-centered. This is however less desirable than the insourcing of social work supervisors;

- Supervision should be therapeutic in its orientation, and not be concerned with performance measurements or work outputs - where this is necessary, this should only be taken up by social work managers;
- Funding for administrative posts need to be considered to release the burden of reporting and statistic review from frontline social workers and social work supervisors, and to support social managers in this task.

7.3.4. The Deprofessionalisation of Social Work

- The entrance level and pass requirements for the social degree should be raised in order to set the bar for a highly qualified and respected profession from its training stages;
- The subsidiary wage for social workers within NGOs needs to be raised to match that of the Department, if the value of NGOs and social workers is to be truly acknowledged. There is absolutely no argument that could justify NGO social workers as receiving any less than that of Departmental social workers and this form of inequality needs to come to an abrupt halt;
- The introduction of sub-professions does not need to be too heavily criticised, but the concerns and challenges of social workers regarding the deskilling of the profession, blurring of professional boundaries and creation of confusion does need to be recognised and addressed. Clearer boundaries need to be demarcated;
- SAWs and CDWs need to be strictly utilised as supporting professions and cannot, and should not, be used as a cost-saving strategy for cheaper social work professionals – this deeply undermines the complexity and value of social work practice.

7.4. FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher does not view this study as wholly exhaustive or complete, but believes that further research has been sparked from its findings and should be considered. This research study recommends additional research into the following areas be undertaken:

- This study has been relatively critical of the Department of Social Development (DSD), its outputs and its motivations. The researcher recognises that just as the findings of literature needed to be explored against the views of social workers within the NGO context, so the conclusions of this study regarding the Department need to be confirmed, and argued against or contextualised. The researcher recommends

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that research be undertaken into the views and opinions of Departmental social workers on some of the findings from this study and that findings are correlated with those of this study to identify parallel themes and patterns;

- The mechanism which are used to determine the output figures of the Terms of Payment Agreement between the Department and the NGO require , further research and evaluation. How are these outputs determined? Against what are they measured? How often are they reconsidered? To what extents are these determinations democratic and inclusive? Where is the place for structural address and macro interventions? Such a study should implement empirical investigations from both the Department of Social Development, the NGO sector and the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation. Furthermore, the correlations between these outputs and the impact of social grants should also be reviewed, extrapolated and disseminated;

- Research into the managerial functions and needs of the NGO sector and the social work profession should be undertaken to determine a wholly separate social work managerial position, that is not defined by neoliberal or business standards, nor feeds off of existing supervision definitions, and which should remain separate;

- Questions raised by participants regarding the role of social work within NGOs in terms of macro, advocative and structural address activities requires further exploration within the context of NGO functionality, challenges and limitations as explored in this study. This needs to go beyond an academic review, to empirically consider: what is the role of social work in South Africa? What are its primary areas of address? Why is casework dominating a developmental profession? How can this be adequately addressed in practice, policy and training?

7.5. FINAL REMARKS

In offering a final conclusion for this study, the researcher would like to pause and acknowledge the deeply critical discourse that this study undertook with regard to the social work profession and the South African neoliberal contradiction. The researcher does not wish for this to undermine or overtake the incredibly valuable work the social work profession continues to do within the country on a day-to-day basis, nor the significant shifts and transitions that were seen in South Africa with the dismantling of apartheid and the formation of formative policy documents such as the RDP and the White Paper for Social Welfare, alongside an expansive and commendable social protection system that continues to be held to this day, despite neoliberal jabs and advancements. Rather,

the researcher wishes to propose that the very undertaking of this research re-emphasises the recognised value of social work and the potential of a redistributive and truly remarkable South Africa. It is only through an honest account of past and present contradictions, discourses and underlying meanings, that an authentic interpretation of present day and an impactful mapping of future endeavours can be achieved. At the heart of the study is a warning; a cautioning to the profession to be aware of often hidden neoliberal impacts and to stand it's ground in an increasingly volatile neoliberal world. The researcher echoes this call:

> *"A more collective social work, with renewed recognition of social justice, cohesion, development... may have implications for current models of social work. Uncritical perspectives of social capital, strengths perspectives and even core concepts such as social justice, may be influenced or have close links to neoliberal concepts such as self-help or lack the structural perspectives that restrain personal and social development… unless social work is able to correctly identify the nature and causes of social distress, it will be unable to recommend and support appropriate interventions. What does this mean for social work and how we are trained? We believe that these are critical questions which need to be developed and debated by the social work fraternity" (Ornellas et al., 2016: 14-15).*

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL WORKERS' REFLECTIONS ON IMPLICATIONS OF NEOLIBERAL TENETS FOR SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Researcher: A Ornellas

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1. IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS OF PARTICIPANT

1.1. Type of service provider

Faith-orientated organisation	Child and Family Welfare	Health	Social Development/ Advocacy	Other

1.2. Position in the organisation

Front-line Social Worker	Social Work Manager

1.3. Years of experience as a social worker: _____

1.4. Years of experience as a manager (if applicable) : _____

1.5. Can you please clarify the core business of your NGO?

1.6. Can you please tell me a little more about your core performance areas of your job description?

1.7. What are the current challenges you are experiencing with regard to the above?

2. THE MARKETISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

The marketisation of social work includes:

- Previously state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs.
- Growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations.
- Dominance of contractual relationships

Can you reflect on the above statements and give me examples of if/how you have experienced these in your day-to-day practice, as well as your engagement with policy?

3. THE CONSUMERISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

The consumerisation of social work includes:

- Dominant welfare discourse, which promotes self-reliance, and the importance of individuals, families and communities taking responsibility for their own wellbeing.
- Overemphasis on individualism and self-reliance, above structural causes
- Service-users are consumers

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Can you reflect on the above statements and give me examples of if/how you have experienced these in your day-to-day practice, as well as your engagement with policy?

4. THE MANAGERIALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

The managerialisation of social work includes:

- Social work and NGOs are becoming increasingly expected to act like businesses
- Efficiency and cost-effectiveness employed as the yardstick
- Preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards, and the predominance of management knowledge
- New Public Management

Can you reflect on the above statements and give me examples of if/how you have experienced these in your day-to-day practice, as well as your engagement with policy?

5. THE DEPROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK

The deprofessionalisation of social work includes:

- Reducing professional discretion and deskilling social work
- Deprofessionalisation and diminishing of professional identity
- Social work tasks are being taken up by other professions and groups

Can you reflect on the above statements and give me examples of if/how you have experienced these in your day-to-day practice, as well as your engagement with policy?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Appendix B: Consent Form

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

_____

SOCIAL WORKERS' REFLECTIONS ON PERCEIVED IMPLICATIONS OF NEOLIBERAL TENETS FOR SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by A. Ornellas, a doctoral student from the Social Work Department at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will become part of a research report. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a frontline social worker/social work manager within one of the five selected South African social welfare non-governmental organisations.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in non-governmental organisations, through the reflections of frontline social workers and managers.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

A semi-structured interview will be utilized to gather information confidentially. You need not indicate your name or any particulars on the interview schedule.

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3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Any uncertainties on any of the aspects of the schedule you may experience during the interview can be discussed and clarified at any time.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND / OR TO SOCIETY

The results of this study will allow insight into the perceived implications of neoliberal tenets for social work in non-governmental organisations, through the reflections of frontline social workers and managers. This information could be used by welfare organisations for further planning in service delivery and policy development.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No payment in any form will be received for participating in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding where each questionnaire is numbered. All questionnaires will be managed, analysed and processed by the researcher and will be kept in a code-word protected folder on a computer.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so, e.g. should you influence other participants in the completion of their questionnaires.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT-RESEARCHER

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Professor LK Engelbrecht (Supervisor),

Department of Social Work,

University of Stellenbosch,

Tel. 021-808 2070,

E-Mail: lke@sun.ac.za

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me the participant by _____ in English and the participant is in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to him / her. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his / her satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant_____

Date_____

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____[name of subject/participant]. [He / She] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

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Signature of Investigator_____

Date _____

Appendix C: Ethical Approval

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jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

Approval Notice
New Application

15-May-2017
Ornellas, Abigail A

Proposal #: SU-HSD-004706

Title: **Social Worker's Reflections on Implications of Neoliberal Tenets for Social Work in South African Non-Governmental Organisations.**

Dear Miss Abigail Ornellas,

Your **New Application** received on **20-Apr-2017**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **15-May-2017** -**14-May-2020**

General comments:
The researcher is reminded that institutional permission should be obtained from the organisations as stipulated in the application form. The researcher should keep these permission letters on record, for auditing purposes.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**SU-HSD-004706**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

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Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:
DESC Report
DESC Report 1
REC: Humanities New Application

Sincerely, Clarissa Graham
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1.Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2.Participant Enrolment. You may not recruit or enrol participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3.Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4.Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period.** Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrolment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5.Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6.Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to
the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7.Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8.Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluat