Voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

From its infancy and throughout its historical development, social work has always been synonymous with the pursuit of human rights and social justice for the most vulnerable. Human rights and social justice are complex and discursive concepts, however, and their interpretation is seldom uniform. Indeed, historically as at present, contention between problem solving and broader social activism persists in the social work arena. This split is best characterised by those who view social work as technical and apolitical, and those who engage with contextual questions.

Radical perspectives in social work, unlike conservatives, suggest that social issues should be viewed together within social, political, economic and historical contexts. Proponents of radical social work endorse the development of a critical consciousness that allows for the perception of social and political contradictions. Critical analysis considers social problems experienced by the poor to be a product of unresponsive structures and discriminatory systems. The Global definition of social work acknowledges this, and mandates social workers to engage in social action to attain social change for the vulnerable.

Social workers across the globe have been engaging in collective action to defend welfare states for the vulnerable. In South Africa, despite being dubbed the world's protest capital, and being host to extreme inequality and poverty amongst the poor majority, similar actions by social workers have been scant, if undertaken at all. This has raised serious questions regarding the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions within South Africa's social development context.

A qualitative research approach was followed to gain an informed understanding of the opinions of social workers regarding their roles in social protest actions. Descriptive, exploratory and instrumental case study research designs were implemented to elicit invaluable reflections from participants. Snowball and purposive sampling was utilised to recruit 27 participants from four sampling cohorts, who were interviewed via semi-structured online and telephonic interviews. Reflexive thematic analysis was utilised to examine the collected data that is presented under three key themes.

Notwithstanding the progress that social work has achieved to date in South Africa, the study highlights the need for more and far reaching social work interventions for the poor majority. Macro interventions aimed at untangling the systemic and structural sources of social problems are key to attain social transformation in South Africa. For authentic engagement in social activism for social change, the relationship between social work and the state needs to be reconsidered. Further, because of the inevitability of conflict in efforts towards change, social work institutions need to provide clear protection and support systems that promote the legal and ethical mandate for social workers to engage in activism for the poor majority's human rights and social justice.

Key conclusions and implications for practice suggest that, in determining an informed course of action and role of social workers in social protest actions, they must critically and continually engage with the contextual realities of the poor and vulnerable, the discursive concepts of human rights and social justice, and social work ethics.

OPSOMMING

Vanaf die beginstadiums en deur die geskiedkundige ontwikkeling heen, was maatskaplike werk altyd sinoniem met die strewe na menseregte en maatskaplike geregtigheid vir die mees kwesbare mense. Menseregte en maatskaplike ontwikkeling is egter komplekse en diskursiewe konsepte en die interpretasie daarvan is selde uniform. In die verlede, soos tans, is daar inderdaad spanning tussen probleemoplossing en breë aktivisme in die maatskaplikewerkterrein. Hierdie verdeeldheid word die beste uitgebeeld deur dié wat maatskaplike werk as tegnies en apolities beskou, en die wat omgaan met kontekstuele vrae.

Anders as konserwatiewe perspektiewe, stel radikale perspektiewe voor dat maatskaplike kwessies tesame met sosiale, politieke, ekonomiese en historiese kontekste beskou word. Voorstanders van radikale maatskaplike werk onderskryf die ontwikkeling van ŉ kritiese bewussyn, wat ŉ persepsie van maatskaplike en politieke teenstrydighede toelaat. ŉ Kritiese ontleding oorweeg maatskaplike probleme wat deur armes beleef word as die onresponsiewe produk van strukture en diskriminerende sisteme. Die globale definisie van maatskaplike werk erken dit, en gee aan maatskaplike werkers die mandaat om by maatskaplike aksie betrokke te raak om maatskaplike verandering vir kwesbare mense te bewerkstellig.

Maatskaplike werkers oor die wêreld heen is betrokke by kollektiewe aksie om welsynstate vir kwesbare mense te verdedig. In Suid-Afrika, wat as die land met van die meeste protesaksies beskou word, en wat deur uiterste ongelykheid en armoede onder die meerderheid van die land se mense gekenmerk word, is protesaksies deur maatskaplike werkers relatief min en onbeduidend. Dit bring ernstige vrae na vore ten opsigte van die persepsies van maatskaplike werkers oor hulle rolle in maatskaplike protesaksies binne die Suid-Afrikaanse ontwikkelingsgerigte konteks.

ŉ Kwantitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is gevolg om ŉ ingeligte begrip van die opinies van maatskaplike werkers oor hulle rolle in maatskaplike protesaksies te verkry. Beskrywende, verkennende en instrumentele gevallestudie is as navorsingsontwerpe geïmplementeer om waardevolle nadenke van deelnemers te genereer. Sneeubal- en doelbewuste steekproefneming is benut vir die werwing van 27 deelnemers vir vier steekproefkohorte met wie onderhoude deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde aanlynen telefoononderhoude gevoer is. Reflektiewe tematiese ontleding is benut om die versamelde inligting deur middel van drie hooftemas aan te bied.

Nieteenstaande die vordering van maatskaplike werk in Suid-Afrika, het die studie die behoefte vir meer en verrykende maatskaplikewerkintervensie vir die meerderheid arm mense beklemtoon. Makro-intervensies gerig op die ontknoping van sistemiese en strukturele bronne van maatskaplike probleme is die sleutel tot die bereiking van maatskaplike transformasie in Suid-Afrika. Om op ŉ oorspronklike manier by maatskaplike aktivisme vir maatskaplike verandering betrokke te raak, moet die verhouding tussen maatskaplike werk en die staat egter heroorweeg word. Verder, vanweë die onvermydelikheid van konflik in veranderingspogings, moet maatskaplikewerkinstellings duidelike beskerming- en ondersteuningsisteme bied om wetlike en etiese mandate vir maatskaplike werkers in hulle betrokkenheid by aktivisme vir die meerderheid arm mense se menseregte en maatskaplike geregtigheid te bevorder.

Sleutelgevolgtrekkings en implikasies vir die praktyk dui daarop dat, in die bepaling van ŉ ingeligte keuse oor die aksie en rol van maatskaplike werkers in maatskaplike protesaksies, hulle krities en deurlopend met die kontekstuele realiteite van arm en kwesbare mense, die diskursiewe konsepte van menseregte en maatskaplike geregtigheid, en maatskaplikewerketiek moet omgaan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACVV	Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging
ASASWEI	Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CC	Critical consciousness
COS	Charity Organisation Societies
CPB	Civic Protest Barometer
CSDA	Centre for Social Development in Africa
CSW	Concerned Social Workers
DESC	Departmental Ethical Screening Committee (Department of Social Work)
DPhil	Dr of Philosophy in Social Work
DSD	Department of Social Development
GASW	Greek Association of Social Workers
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GOVT	Government Organisation
GSWSEP	Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IAF	International Association of Facilitators
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IRIS	Incident Registration Information System
ISDM	Integrated Service Delivery Model

MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSW	Master of Social Work
NASWSA	National Association of Social Workers South Africa
NCSS	National Coalition of Social Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PPVM	Protest and Public Violence Monitor
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	Research Ethics Committee (Stellenbosch University)
RSWE	Radical Social Work Experts
SABSWA	South African Black Social Workers Association
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SAPS	South African Police Service
SCM	Social Change Model
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SWAN	Social Work Action Network
SWANSA	Social Work Action Network South Africa
SWI	Social workers involved
SWM	Social work managers
SWNI	Social workers not involved
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the introductory chapter to the research study. To aid the reader's comprehension, it details the rationale of the research inquiry together with the related problem statement, research question and objectives. Further, an overview of the research methodology is provided to demonstrate how the scientific inquiry was conducted to address the research question.

1.1. PRELIMINARY STUDY AND RATIONALE

Social work officially originated in the late 19th century as a movement primarily originating within the United States and United Kingdom (Lymbery, 2005; Payne, 2005; Stuart, 2013). This, concurrently, was a period of vast industrial development that, despite the notable technological and scientific developments, increased social problems (Horner, 2012; Lymbery, 2005; Rees, 2001; Stuart, 2013). Against this backdrop, the Charity Organisation Societies (COS) were founded in England in 1869 and pioneered the emergence of social work as a professional occupation (Bosanquet, 1914; Lymbery, 2005; Stuart, 2013). Understood in this way, Parrot (2010) argues that social work is and always has been inseparable from social need, human development, social justice, and the underlying drive to address the deeply embedded imbalances and inequalities in society that this entails.

During the 1880s, there was a growing focus on social action in social work. This was pioneered by the settlement movement growing directly out of the work of Octavia Hill, who was regarded as an English social reformer (cf. Hill, 1901). The settlement movement was a reformist social movement that began in the 1880s and peaked around the 1920s in England and the United States. This resulted in tension between problem solving and activism. Unlike the COS, which had its focus on individual casework supporting the concept of self-help, the settlement movement viewed societal inequalities as causes of poverty (Beckett, 2018; Bilton, 2006; Husock, 1993; Reyes, 2008). Due to this growing focus on social action, social protests, though less documented, were regular occurrences during this time (Noble, 2015). Nevertheless, the settlement movement represent the earliest practice of social work as a form of collective social action, later evolving into community work as a method of social work in a Western context (Lymbery, 2005; Reyes, 2008).

Parallel to various developments of social work as a profession in the Western World, the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (ACVV) officially instituted in 1904 in South Africa was the first formal welfare organisation (Du Toit, 1996; Engelbrecht, 2011). The core business of the ACVV was family care work in the context of poverty alleviation. Interestingly, the ACVV has never, despite political pressures, lost this focus and has never been involved with other social actions that could estrange its volunteer corps and compromise the quality of its service rendering (Engelbrecht, 2011). However, there were other Non-Governmental Organisations such as the Black Sash in South Africa (who did not particularly employ social workers), that were involved in social protest actions against the defamation of human rights in the country (Burton, 2010).

From the second half of the 20th century, both on a global and national scale, radical social work gained popularity, championing critical consciousness. Radical social work was founded on ideas of people like Jane Addams, who originally led the settlement movement in England and the United States. She is recognised as the founder of the social work profession in the United States and in 1931 became the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (Healy, 2008; Lymbery, 2005; Stuart, 2013). Like the settlement movement, radical social work advocated critical consciousness, identifying societal factors such as inequality as causes of poverty, among other things, as opposed to individual shortcomings (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Bloemen, 2015; Ferguson, 2013; Fook, 2002; Ioakimidis, 2016; McKendrick & Webb, 2014).

Paulo Freire, also renowned for his seminal work on critical consciousness, describes this concept as the ability to intervene in reality in order to change it (Freire, 1970). More recent authors like Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) elucidate critical consciousness as an in-depth understanding of the world, allowing for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions. Furthermore, they argue that critical consciousness includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding, and subsequently manifesting in social action (Kina & Goncalves, 2018; Mustakova-Possardt, 2003; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

Social action in social work was specifically promoted in the 1920s by Mary Richmond, a North American social work pioneer (Elizabeth, 2004). Authors that are more recent view social action as a method of social work used for mobilising masses in order to bring about structural and systematic changes or to prevent adverse changes (Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). Social action furthermore is employed by groups and organisations seeking to alter institutional policies or to make changes in the distribution of power (Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). Participation, subsequently manifesting in social protests, is the value most clearly articulated by proponents of social action.

McLeod (2017) contends that, social protests globally vary from covert activities such as petitions, lobbying and various online activities to overt public displays, demonstrations and civil disobedience. In South Africa, various forms of protests typically include mass meetings, toyi-toyi, drafting of memoranda, stay-aways, road blockading, construction of barricades, burning of tyres, looting, destruction of buildings and littering (Alexander, 2010; Gaqa, 2018). These forms of protesting may have underlying meanings that surpass the respective acts in themselves.

Reasons for protests in South Africa often include lack of access to water, sanitation, electricity, housing and employment, all of which are commonly grouped together as service delivery protests (Mottiar & Bond, 2015). More recently, there has been increasing focus on protesting against gender-based violence and xenophobia throughout South Africa. A study by Gaqa (2018) established that, as with the point of departure on forms of protest, reasons for protesting cannot simply be reduced to the notion of service delivery, for example. Other than these so-called service delivery protests rooted in poor governance and other systematic and structural sources, there, for instance, has been a growing global stand against climate change and environmental pollution (Mottiar & Bond, 2015).

In addition, the unpopular history of South Africa's apartheid regime and that of labour relations is fraught with social actions against inequality and unfavourable working conditions respectively. Shokane and Masoga (2019) highlight how social workers like Ellen Kuzwayo and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela championed human rights and made a stand against inequality during the "Struggle". In 2016, South Africa witnessed over 20 000 social workers marching to the Union Buildings, demanding better working conditions and increases in salaries; challenging neoliberal narratives; making a stand against inadequate or poor social service provision; and championing human rights. Similar social protests by social workers across the globe have also been documented in Israel (Shuv-Ami, 2013), Poland (International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2018), Korea (IFSW, 2019a) and Hong Kong (IFSW, 2019b), to mention a few. Jointly, the brief discussion above reveals an intrinsic connection between social protests and social work.

This connection is typically due to neoliberal globalisation and the more recent Covid-19 pandemic, which has widened the gap between the rich and the poor and, inter alia, has seen the retrenchment of the welfare state and privatisation of care (cf. Dominelli, 2002a; Harvey, 2005; Hay, 2002; Midgley, 2014; Ornellas, Engelbrecht & Atamtürk, 2020). Consequentially, a rise in social protest actions in response to the negative effects of neoliberal globalisation has been witnessed, both in global and local arenas, which warrants a comprehensive study on how social work fits into all of this.

The response by the social work profession to the implications of neoliberal global capitalism, led to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) amending the Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014). Ornellas, Spolander and Engelbrecht (2018) highlight a move in this definition from individual to collective approaches regarding social work interventions and an increased emphasis on macro concepts and structural sources of inequality. The new Global definition of social work alludes to the active role of social work in facilitating social change, social development, liberation and empowerment of people (Banks, 2012; Beckett & Maynard, 2012; Healy, 2011; Jones, 2009; Ornellas et al., 2018). In the same vein, generalist international authors such as Engelbrecht (1999), Johnson and Yanca (2007), Kirst-Ashman (2013) and Zastrow (2013) in the previous millennium established the roles of social work specifically as counsellor, broker, expert, leader, manager, advocate, activist and enabler. However, these roles are traditional generalist intervention roles, which may hold different nuances from those implicated by the Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014).

In South Africa, social work, as based on the Global definition of the profession (IFSW, 2014) is operationalised within a social development paradigm. South Africa's developmental approach to social welfare evolved from the country's unique history of inequality and human rights violations due to colonialism and apartheid (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017). A Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) towards social welfare is the basis of developmental social work in a South African context. Thus, in such a developmental social work context, social protest actions should be understood within the ambit of social activism (radical social work and social action), human rights and social justice (Ferguson, 2013; Fook, 2002; Lymbery, 2005; McKendrick & Webb, 2014; Reyes, 2008; Rees, 2001). Hence, the intrinsic and complex link between the social work profession and social protest actions in South Africa is evident.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIM OF THE RESEARCH

Social protests have become a major focus and contentious topic around the world, as well as in South Africa, and on multiple levels of society because of the extremely high incidence of social protest on global and national scales. The publication of a three-volume encyclopedia on social movements is a marker of this growing interest (Ogan, Giglou & d'Haenens, 2013). According to the South African Police Service (Bond, 2010:1), an average of more than 8000 incidents of "gatherings acts" have been recorded annually in South Africa alone since the mid-2000s. This high incidence of social protest has listed South Africa as the "protest capital" of the world (Alexander, 2010:25). Thus, the question which begs to be answered is: if there is such a high incidence of social protests around the world and in South Africa, are social workers involved in light of the intrinsic link between social work and social protest actions? If not, why not? Moreover, what are social workers' opinions regarding their perceived roles in social protest actions?

A plethora of international research studies have documented various aspects of social protests, such as the role of established organisations and movements in protest actions towards resource mobilisation, strategic and tactical choices, lobbying and influence, policy formation and policy influence (Alexander, 2010; McLeod, 2017; Mottiar & Bond, 2015). However, none of these research inquiries have documented or commented on the role of social workers in social protests. To this end, Grodofsky and Makaros (2016), having conducted research in an Israeli context, corroborate the prior established sentiment and forward that the role of social work in social protests is an under researched field globally.

Furthermore, if social workers are involved in a social protest action in whatever form, causing potential harm to their service users, then how does this influence their role in these social protest actions? Indeed, involvement of social workers in social protest actions has raised ethical issues. For instance, the 2016 social protest by social workers in South Africa saw the removal of 90 high-risk children from a youth and childcare centre with the resultant death of a 6-month-old infant. On the one hand, the ethical code for social workers mandates social work professionals to challenge defamation of human rights and to respond by rendering services to those in need owing to social injustice (South African Council for Social Service Professions [SACSSP], 2012). Conversely, social workers are also expected to maintain their professional ethical conduct while respecting the inherent dignity and worth of a person; behave in a trustworthy manner; and to do no harm (SACSSP, 2012). Social work professionals are therefore faced with an apparent ethical dilemma with regard to their involvement – or lack thereof – in social protest actions.

No research in South Africa has articulated the recurring questions raised above and the dilemmas it holds for social workers. It is therefore imperative to investigate the voices of social workers in order to establish how they perceive their roles in social protest actions as they are the ones who operationalise social work in South Africa.

1.2.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the rationale and problem statement provided above, the main research question considered as an essential guide to the study was what the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions in a South African context were.

1.2.2. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the proposed research was to gain an informed understanding of social workers' perceptions regarding their roles in social protest actions.

1.2.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were formulated to explore the overarching research question and the subsequent aim of the research:

- To describe radical social work, critical consciousness and a HRBA to social welfare within South Africa's social development paradigm;
- To conceptualise the elements, nature, reasons and ethics regarding social protest actions and to analyse them within a global and local social work context;
- To examine and synthesise the roles social workers may potentially fulfil in social protest actions on the basis of the implications of:
  - radical social work, critical consciousness and a HRBA within a South African social development paradigm; and
  - the elements, nature, reasons and ethics regarding social protest actions for social workers;
- To empirically investigate the perceptions of social workers with regard to their roles in social protest actions in a South African context;
- To make conclusions and recommendations to frontline social workers, social work managers, social work educators, social work institutions and policy makers regarding the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions.

1.3. THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

The study primarily drew on the conceptualisation of a **social development approach** to social welfare and a human rights-based approach as expounded by both established local and international authors such as Midgley (2014) and Patel (2015), as well as Patel and Ulriksen (2017). Social welfare thinking in South Africa is based on democratic values, social justice, and human rights (Patel, 2015). Developmental social work is designed to promote social inclusion through empowerment of those who are socially and economically excluded from the mainstream of society, and protecting and promoting the rights of populations at risk (Midgley, 2014; Patel, 2015).

Secondly, a **Human Rights Based Approach** (HRBA) is a practical framework that integrates human rights and dignity with the plans and processes of development. Its goals involve the achievement of social justice, a minimum standard of living, equitable access and equal opportunity to services and benefits, as well as a commitment to the realisation of the needs of all South Africans, with emphasis on the needs of the most disadvantaged in the society (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017). This suggests an active approach to development, which recognises that rights are realised through empowerment and the harnessing of intersectoral, holistic projects and programmes whilst acknowledging the impact of social, economic, cultural, civil and political contexts (Lombe, 2013).

Thirdly and fourthly, this research focused on the conceptualisations of **radical social work** and **critical consciousness** of classic authors like Bailey and Brake (1975) and Freire (1970), respectively. Furthermore, the study drew on the comments of more recent scholars like Ioakimidis (2016) and Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015). A radical concept historically refers to political theory and practice that aim to understand the root causes of social problems. The above-mentioned authors identify inequitable structures and discriminatory systems as causes of poverty, which result in various social problems and needs as opposed to individual shortcomings. They contend that true and meaningful social work practice should invoke and nurture critical consciousness and should subsequently undertake action aimed at social change.

Ultimately, the study was grounded on the conceptualisation of **social protests** based on primary international authors like Gamson (1990), Lipsky (1968), Tilly (1993) and more recent local scholars like Alexander, Runciman, Ngwane, Moloto, Mokgele and van Staden (2018), Gaqa (2018), as well as Smith (2015). Protest activities are defined as a mode of political action oriented towards objection to one or more policies or conditions characterised by showmanship or display of an unconventional nature, and undertaken to obtain rewards from political or economic systems while working within the systems (Lipsky, 1968; Tilly, 1993). Gamson's (1990) Strategy of Social Protest internationally represents one of the most comprehensive efforts to identify the characteristics that distinguish successful protest groups from their unsuccessful counterparts. This was used as point of departure, together with Alexander et al. (2018) and Gaqa (2018), who, inter alia, discuss various reasons that underlie social protests in a South African context.

1.4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This section briefly details the research approach, research design, sampling methods, data collection and data analysis employed in this study.

1.4.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research approach was utilised to reach the research objectives. Qualitative research can be regarded as a form of inquiry whereby a researcher interprets what they see, hear and understand regarding a specific subject (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kumar, 2019). This approach is often utilised when a phenomenon has not been comprehensively investigated before (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013). The aim thereof is to establish meaning through scrutinising various participants' accounts and narratives of meaning, experience and perceptions regarding the particular phenomenon or subject (Bryman, 2012; Fouché, 2021; Fouché & Schurink, 2011). Utilisation of a qualitative approach elicited important data as the focus was on the "voices" of social workers and their discourses.

Furthermore, this qualitative study was chiefly deductive in nature. In order to answer the research question, a comprehensive literature study was first conducted, which eventually led to the collection of the empirical data and analysis. The development of the research instrument for the empirical study was thus based on the literature study. However, a movement between deductive and inductive logic of reasoning was considered a possibility, specifically during the empirical study as additional themes might have arisen which would have to be controlled by referring to literature, and may not have been recorded in the literature study. This flexibility, creativity and characteristics of a qualitative study is identified by Teddlie and Tashakkorie (2003), and is encouraged by Bansal and Corley (2011).

1.4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study made use of descriptive and exploratory research designs combined with an instrumental case study design. A descriptive research design, according to Kreuger and Neuman (2006), presents a picture of the specific details of a situation or a social setting and focuses on "how" and "why" questions. This subsequently results in an intensive examination of a specific phenomenon and its respective profound meaning, consequentially yielding thick descriptive accounts of specific variables (Rubin & Babbie, 2005; Fouché, 2021; Fouché & Schurink, 2011).

Exploratory research, on the other hand, is usually conducted when a researcher encounters an issue that is already known and has a description to it, but is prompted to ask why things are the way they are (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011). Furthermore, Kreuger and Neuman (2006) put forward that exploratory research is usually utilised to build on descriptive research, but going further to establish why something occurs, hence the utilisation of the respective research designs.

According to Lawson, Faul and Verbist (2019), case studies can be categorised broadly in two groups. There are those that focus on a person (intrinsic) and those that focus on a phenomenon (instrumental). An instrumental case study is aimed at understanding an overarching problem or issue through characterising a given research study context (Lawson et al., 2019). The description and exploration of the case(s) are carried out by utilising detailed, in-depth data collection methods such as interviews, documents, observations and archival records (Creswell, 2007; Lawson et al., 2019). Themes, problems and patterns relating to respective cases are identified and elucidated as part of the particular description.

The study aimed to establish a comprehensive understanding of the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions. As such, descriptive and exploratory research designs, as well as instrumental case studies, were deemed essential to yielding in-depth information and thick descriptive accounts regarding the mentioned aim of the study.

1.4.3. SAMPLING

Snowball and purposive sampling methods were utilised for this study. Snowball sampling is usually utilised when there is lack of knowledge or information of the sampling frame and limited access to appropriate participants for an intended study (Alston & Bowles, 2003; Rubin & Babbie, 2017). It involves approaching a single participant involved in the matter to be researched to gain information on other similar matters. One participant refers the researcher to other similar participants who share specific characteristics. By so doing, the selected sampling frame consists of people who can extend the sample until the required number of cases is reached (Bryman, 2012; Grinnell & Unrau, 2008; Grinnell & Unrau, 2014). Snowball sampling was regarded as essential for the study, because the chain referral process allows the researcher to reach populations that are difficult to sample when utilising alternate sampling methods.

Purposive sampling involves choosing a specific participant who resembles some features or properties that are of interest for a given study (Silverman, 2005). As such, some scholars view purposive sampling as judgmental because the sample is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher (Rubin & Babbie, 2005; Rubin & Babbie, 2017). The sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population that best serve the purpose of the study (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014; Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2005). Purposive sampling was regarded as appropriate for the study because it helps to save time and money as data is collected from a sample that is most representative of the population that best serves the purpose of the study.

In order to answer the research question, data for this research was collected from **four cohorts**. This consisted of **(i)** social workers who had been involved in social protest actions; **(ii)** social workers who had not been previously involved; **(iii)** social work managers; and **(iv)** radical social work experts who may have been or who had not been previously involved in social protest actions. As the aim of the study was to gain an informed understanding of the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions and to gain a balanced and comprehensive spread of participant perceptions (voices), social workers who had been involved or not involved in social protest actions were therefore part of the sampling to represent a micro perspective on social work.

Social work managers, inter alia, are responsible for the organisational culture, execution and management of various policies that govern social service organisations. As social work managers represent a macro perspective on social work, these managers were also utilised to reflect on those social workers who had and had not been active in social protest actions to aid the comprehensiveness of collected data. The aim of involving social work managers was thus not to reflect on their own involvement in social protest actions, whether they had or had not been involved in such actions. Radical social work experts were expected to be able to offer critical and balanced opinions on the matter to be researched. In addition, they were utilised to reflect on and regulate the insights of those social workers who were involved, those not involved, as well as social work managers who may or may not been involved in social protest actions.

The **first cohort** of social workers was identified from social networks, i.e. “Social Workers for Better Salaries”, a Facebook network group. Purposive sampling was utilised to recruit *eight social workers* who met the following criteria of inclusion.

They had to:

- be a registered social worker with the SACSSP;
- be employed in either a public or private welfare organisation in South Africa;
- have at least two years of work experience;
- previously be involved and/or active in some form of social protest action;
- be proficient in English.

The research instrument for this phase was a semi-structured interview schedule, administered by the researcher. The researcher invited potential participants via an open social media platform (such as Facebook) to make contact via platforms such as Facebook Messenger (to secure anonymity) if they were willing to take part in the research. Participants fitting the criteria of inclusion thus became involved in the research in their personal professional capacity. The researcher did not require permission from their work environments (private or public organisations) because the study required the comments of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions, and did not focus on particular organisations, whether participants worked in private or public organisations. This freed participants (as in the case of all four cohorts) from organisational demands which may have impeded their spontaneous participation and anonymity. Prospective participants were interviewed online and by telephone. Participants could thus reside anywhere in South Africa. The semi-structured interview schedule consisted of closed and open-ended questions with the aim of recording the perceptions (voices) of social workers regarding their involvement in social protest actions, specifically their perceived roles in these actions. See annexure 1 for respective research themes. Participants (as in the case of all four cohorts) were required to sign informed consent forms. See annexure 2 for the informed consent template that was used to confirm the willingness of participants to take part in the research.

The **second cohort** comprised social workers identified as potential participants who were part of the researcher's professional network in the Cape Metropole. Social workers in the Cape Metropole are guided by the same ethical code of the SACSSP and social work macro policies as social workers in the rest of the country therefore the domicile of a participant was not regarded as a limitation to the study. Snowball sampling was utilised to recruit *eight social workers* who met the following criteria of inclusion.

A participant had to be:

- a registered social worker with the SACSSP;
- not previously involved in any form of social protest action;
- employed in a public or a private welfare organisation in the Cape Metropole;
- had to have at least two years of work experience;
- and be proficient in English.

As with participants in cohort one, participants fitting these criteria of inclusion were contacted in their personal professional capacity, but by email and by telephone. The researcher thus did not require permission from the organisations from which participants were recruited. This ensured that interviews did not interfere with the working environment of participants. Prospective participants were interviewed online and by telephone. The researcher began by recruiting and interviewing a participant known from the researcher's professional network, who was willing to participate in the research. After enrolling the first participant, the researcher made use of the snowball sampling method, by asking the first participant to refer additional social workers who met the criteria for inclusion, to contact the researcher if they were willing to participate. As with cohort one, the research instrument for this phase was a semi-structured interview schedule administered by the researcher. See annexures 2 and 3 for the respective informed consent and research themes.

The **third cohort** comprised managers of social service organisations, who may or may not have been involved in any previous social protest action. Lewis, Packard and Souflee (2001) originally defined management in social work as a process of making a plan to achieve a desired social end; organising the people and resources needed to carry out the plan; encouraging the social workers who would be asked to perform the component tasks; and then evaluating the result. Within the context of this research study, a social work manager was regarded as a professional social worker performing the various above-mentioned managerial functions in a social service organisation (private or public). In the same vein, as with cohorts one and two, these participants were contacted in their personal professional capacity, hence the researcher did not require permission from the organisations from which participants were recruited, and it ensured that interviews did not interfere with the work environment of participants. Prospective participants were interviewed online and by telephone. After enrolling the first participant from his professional network, the researcher then made use of the snowball sampling method, as in the case of cohort two, by asking individual participants to request additional social work managers who met the criteria for inclusion to contact the researcher if they were willing to take part in the research. The research instrument for this phase was a semi-structured interview schedule. See annexures 2 and 4 for the respective informed consent and research themes. Snowball sampling was utilised to recruit *eight social work managers* who met the criteria of inclusion.

The participant had to be:

- a registered social worker with the SACSSP;
- a manager (middle or top level) at any private or public social service organisation;
- and have at least two years of work experience managing social workers;
- and be proficient in English.

Participants' previous involvement, whether or not, in social protest actions did not exclude them from the research. Their inclusion was rather determined by their ability to present a macro perception of the role of social workers in social protest actions. Like cohort two, these participants resided in the Cape Metropole and were guided by the same ethical code of the SACSSP and social work macro policies as managers in the rest of the country. The domicile of these participants was not regarded as a limitation to the study.

The **fourth cohort** comprised radical social work experts who may have or may not have been involved in social protest actions. An expert in this context relates to, and was deemed to fit the following criteria:

- being a social work academic;
- having published at least one article (in an international accredited journal) within the ambit of radical social work;
- being an active member occupying a decision-making role in at least one radical social work/social activist organisation or institution;
- having at least 3 years of working experience;

Purposive sampling was utilised to recruit *three radical social work experts*. Participants were identified from practice with potential participants who are part of the researcher's professional network. These participants were invited via email to contact the researcher if they were willing to participate in the research. As with the first three cohorts, participants fitting the respective criteria of inclusion were thus involved in the research in their personal professional capacity, therefore the researcher did not require permission from their work environments (private or public organisations) as the study did not focus on particular organisations, regardless whether the participants worked in private or public organisations. In addition, this freed participants (as in the case of all four cohorts) from organisational demands which may have impeded their spontaneous participation and anonymity. See annexure 2 for the informed consent template that was used to confirm willingness of participants to take part in the research. As with the first three cohorts, the research instrument for this phase was a semi-structured interview conducted online or via telephone by the researcher, which made it possible for participants to reside anywhere in South Africa or internationally (were indicated). See annexure 5 for respective research themes.

Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) suggest that qualitative samples are generally small because there is a point of diminishing return. This implies that more data does not necessarily lead to new information as the study progresses. This is so because a single occurrence of a segment of data is all that is required to ensure that it becomes part of the analysis. Bertaux (1981) suggests that 15 participants in a sample is the smallest acceptable sample size in qualitative research. A sample of 27 participants (case studies) from the four respective cohorts arguably led to data saturation in this research study.

1.4.4. INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The study was qualitative in nature, thus semi-structured interviews with open and close-ended questions were utilised. A semi-structured interview is used to give a detailed idea of the perceptions, experiences, opinions and beliefs of the participants (Adler & Clark, 2015; Ellis, 2016; Greef, 2012). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview is useful as it allows one to understand the complexity of a phenomenon because its flexible nature allows the researcher and interviewee to guide one another (Roulston & Choi, 2018). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews conducted online and via telephone with the participants by the researcher himself, allowed for deep probing, resulting in the elicitation of rich data. Open and closed-ended questions respectively made provision for specific and descriptive responses. See annexures 1, 3, 4 and 5 for the respective research themes. Telephonic interviews were recorded on a reliable audio recorder, whilst built-in features on platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams were used to record online interviews. Recording interviews aided the transcription of the collected data. Data collection was conducted from August to December 2021.

1.4.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a process whereby the researcher inspects, transforms and models collected data with the aim of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and making recommendations. Data analysis was carried out by making use of reflexive thematic content analysis. Reflexive thematic content analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006; 2021), emphasises the examination and recording of data patterns or themes within collected data. Themes refer to patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated with the research question (De Vos et al., 2011). Reflexive thematic content analysis was performed through a process of coding in six phases to create and establish meaningful patterns. The six phases in this research included familiarisation with collected data; generating initial codes; searching for themes among codes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2021). Themes, sub-themes and categories generated from the analysis of all four cohort samples vis-à-vis literature, are presented in an integrated and synthesised manner in the research report.

1.4.6. DATA VERIFICATION

With regard to qualitative studies, the norms of credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and reflexivity should be discussed in order to assess the trustworthiness of the study. Credibility of the proposed research study was ensured by utilising semi-structured interviews with specific open-ended questions and thematic content analysis. The rationale of each of the generated themes, sub-themes and categories was explained and substantiated in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Schurink, Schurink & Fouche, 2021a).

Transferability was ensured by collecting data from four sample cohorts utilising descriptive, exploratory and instrumental case study research designs. This yielded in-depth information and comprehensive descriptive accounts, allowing for broad generalisations of the research findings. Nevertheless, comprehensive generalisation was not part of the main goal of the research since the aim of the research was to gain an understanding of the subject matter (Rubin & Babbie, 2017; Fouché & Schurink, 2011).

Dependability was ensured by concisely articulating and reflecting on the research process utilised in this study, specifically in a separate chapter on the research methodology (Bless et al., 2013). Conformability was ensured by substantiating research findings with a literature control, member checking and compiling a comprehensive reflexivity report (Bless et al., 2013; Shenton, 2004).

1.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent are main ethical considerations. Informed consent was required from all participants. The informed consent letter provided an exposition of the purpose of the study, indicated how data would be collected and the potential benefits of the study to society. Signing the informed consent form also served to show that participants willingly took part in the study. The informed consent form was emailed to recruited participants before the interviews. The form was telephonically discussed with participants, after which they had to email the signed form back to the researcher to indicate their willingness to take part in the research. See annexure 2 for the consent form. Confidentiality was observed by not recording any personal information that could identify the participants. This was done to ensure anonymity of the participants. Data collected from participants was stored on a password-protected computer and backed up with a Microsoft Cloud OneDrive platform.

Ethical clearance for this study (SU project number: 16761) was acquired from the Departmental Ethical Screening Committee of the Department of Social Work (DESC) at the University of Stellenbosch, and from the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC). See annexure 6 for the letter of approval. The study was regarded as a medium-risk study. Participants were envisaged to possibly experience some discomfort when prompted to discuss their involvement or lack thereof in social protest actions. Debriefing and working through an experience after the study was considered a useful way by which harm could be minimised (Stangor, 2015; Strydom, 2011). This was realised through discussing the research study immediately after conducting the interview, as well as rectifying any misperceptions that may have arisen during the investigation. In addition, member checking was consistently performed by means of feedback and validation from participants throughout the interviewing processes.

During the interviews, the researcher restated, paraphrased and summarised participants' responses to determine the accuracy of his understanding. This allowed participants to further comment and reflect on their experiences and views. Member checking not only ensured that findings were authentic, original and reliable, but also served as a way to curb participant's discomfort. In addition, the researcher made arrangements with a qualified external social worker who offered pro-bono debriefing services to the participants who required the services. See annexure 7 for the letter concerning such a private social worker. The interviews were conducted online and by telephone, during time and space determined by participants. This ensured confidentiality and did not intrude or was connected to their identity, specifically with regard to their workplace.

1.6. IMPACT

Despite having the highest inequality rate, and simultaneously being regarded the protest capital of the world, no research in South Africa has been conducted to examine the role of social work in social protest actions and the dilemma it holds for social workers. In the view of the intricate and complex links between social work and social protest actions, this study pertinently gave voice to social workers in order to establish how they perceive their roles in social protest actions as they are the ones who operationalise social work in South Africa. The study therefore contributes to the body of knowledge within radical social work, human rights and social justice in South Africa. It is envisaged that the study will provide new ways of thinking around social protest actions and the potential roles social workers may fulfill in these social actions in order to realise social change and social transformation for those marginalised and oppressed in society.

1.7. CHAPTER LAYOUT

This study consists of the following seven chapters:

Chapter 1 details the rationale of the research inquiry together with the related problem statement, research question and objectives and provides an overview of the research methodology.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of radical social work, critical consciousness and the HRBA to social welfare within South Africa's social development paradigm.

Chapter 3 elaborates on social work and social protest actions.

Chapter 4 synthesises and weaves together various roles social workers may fulfil in social protest actions based on the points of departure discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 5 examines the research methodology employed in the empirical study, while motivating why certain research decisions and procedures were followed.

Chapter 6 discusses the empirical findings related to the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions.

Chapter 7 concludes the study and provides recommendations for future research.

1.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to introduce the study that was conducted to give a voice to social workers with regard to their perceived roles in social protest actions in South Africa. Among other things, the rationale and aim of the study have been clearly articulated. In addition, the main elements of the research process have been identified and substantiated. The following chapter provides an overview of radical social work, critical consciousness and the HRBA to social welfare within South Africa's social development paradigm.

CHAPTER 2: RADICAL SOCIAL WORK, CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (HRBA) WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, social work, based on the Global definition of the profession (IFSW, 2014) is operationalised within a social development paradigm. South Africa's developmental approach to social welfare evolved from the country's unique history of extreme inequality and severe human rights violations due to colonialism and apartheid (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017). Accordingly, developmental social work is designed to promote inclusion through empowerment of those who are socially and economically excluded from the mainstream of society, as well as to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable populations (Midgley, 2014; Patel, 2015). A Human Rights-Based Approach (hereafter HRBA) towards social development and social welfare is the basis of developmental social work in a South African context.

In spite of the formation of a democratic government in 1994 and the adoption of a social development approach to social welfare, South Africa remains a deeply divided country, boasting one of the largest inequality rates in the world (Bollens, 2000; Dixon, 2006; Gray, 2006). Deterioration of social and economic conditions result in an upsurge in insecurity, instability and human rights abuses (Cilliers, 2006). Socio-economic problems have been linked to inequitable structures and oppressive systems (Rosner, 2003). Issues of systemic and structural oppression, which culminate in gross human rights violations, as well as an array of social injustice issues disconcertingly, continue to occupy a marginal place in social work practice, which results in inability to move past rhetorical spaces (Sewpaul, 2005). Hence, proponents of radical social work contend that "true" and meaningful social work practice should invoke and nurture critical consciousness, and should subsequently undertake social action aimed at social change (Dominelli, 2004; Ioakimidis, 2016; Sewpaul, 2016a).

As such, the first objective of this study aimed to describe radical social work, critical consciousness and the HRBA to social development and social welfare within South Africa's developmental paradigm. Exploring the respective above-mentioned concepts is deemed to aid in formulating a theoretical underpinning for this study, which will subsequently help the reader to better comprehend the involvement, or lack thereof, of social workers in social protest actions.

2.2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Over the past 50 years, a substantial amount of publications has contributed to our current comprehension of what social development denotes. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of the mentioned concept, therefore this section seeks only to provide a broad synopsis of social development and its connection to international social work, in order to specifically understand the context within which social work in South Africa operates.

A plethora of scholars have attempted to theorise the concept of social development (cf. Gray, 1996; Midgley, 1993, 2014; Patel, 2005; Schultz, 1959, 1962; Varma, 1990). Schultz (1962) contends that social development implies a commitment to activism and empowerment. Varma (1990), more elaborately suggests that social development involves the incorporation of political, economic and cultural changes as part of deliberate actions to transform society. Gray (1996) regards social development as an institutional, interventionist, macro policy perspective aimed primarily at poverty eradication. For Patel (2005), social development implies a commitment to invest in human capabilities and purposefully redistributing resources on terms that are more equitable in order to achieve social justice. Evidently, these various approaches to social development reflect normative preferences, which, in turn, influence how social development is operationalised in various contexts (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009; Midgley, 1993; Midgley & Pawar, 2017).

Nevertheless, James Midgley's (1995) seminal text on the subject, Social development: The developmental perspective in social welfare, introduced the social development approach to social policy in social work (Gray, 2010). As such, Midgley's conceptualisation of social development is often quoted by scholars and is thus utilised for the purpose of this study. Midgley (1995; 2014) regards social development as a process of planned social change in which economic, social, gender, environmental and other dimensions of a process of development are harmoniously integrated to promote the welfare of the population.

Midgley (1993) traces the “emergence” of the concept of social development to the 1950s. At its infancy, social development primarily focused on community development projects at a local level, both in India and Africa. In the 1960s these activities were augmented by the introduction of social planning at the national level, which, as argued, would complement economic planning (Midgley, 1993). This came about and was promoted by popular development economists like Myrdal (1970) and Seers (1969). According to the aforementioned scholars, the exclusive focus of development policies on economic growth was inadequate. They argued for a broader and more comprehensive approach aimed at continuous improvement in health, education and standards of living, to mention a few (Myrdal, 1970; Seers, 1969). It is plausible that these scholars understood the significance of holistic approaches to development efforts stemming from the interconnectedness of socio-cultural, economic and political influences. It is against this backdrop that social development gained substantial significance within development studies, later resulting in the World Summit on Social Development and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2000, and ultimately evolving into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (Midgley, 2014).

Adoption of the SDG in 2016 saw efforts aimed, inter alia, at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal education, improving health and promoting as well ensuring gender equality and environmental sustainability (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009; Lombard, 2015). Grand and noble as they might seem, MDGs and the respective formulation processes were criticised, notably for not including the voices of the very participants that they sought to assist (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009). Arguably, one can infer underlying neoliberal capitalistic influences which are notoriously known to promote individualism over collectivism, as well as economic growth over human development (Hölscher & Sewpaul, 2006). After all, social development is indeed a macro-economic approach to development (Spergel, 1978).

Notwithstanding this, Harvey (2005:2), an internationally renowned commentator on neoliberalism, refers to this phenomenon as neoliberal globalisation, defining it as “…a theory of political economic practice, 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”. As alluded to in the previous chapter, many scholars have reported the adverse global implications of neoliberal capital advancements, linking it to the widening gap between the rich and the poor; the prioritisation of economic development over matters of human rights and 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 organisations (cf. Harvey, 2005; Hay, 2002; Ife, 2000; Midgley, 1997).

The neoliberal context in which contemporary social work operates has been addressed quite comprehensively in social work literature (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Holscher & Sewpaul, 2006; Rees, 1991), with the consistent argument put forward that social work values and capacity to act from a critical framework are being undermined by contemporary neoliberalist priorities (Allan, Briskman & Pease, 2009). This has primarily taken place through the increasing infiltration of managerialist principles in social work, such as employing efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a yardstick, with a preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards (Engelbrecht, 2015). Lorenz (2005), however, argues that, rather than being a victim of neoliberalism, social work has perhaps at times been a willing participant and uncritical of the role it has played in the conscious or unconscious promotion of neoliberal ideals. Such a critical stance regarding the habitual attachment or detachment of the social work profession with regard to varying presenting realities throughout its historical development is illustrated throughout this chapter.

Nevertheless, social work and social development share commonalities, particularly in terms of theory, values and focus (Gray, O’Brien & Mazibuko, 1996). Both social work and social development recognise that people's interests are of paramount importance and that they have a right to participate in their own development (Gray et al., 1996; Manzanera-Ruiz & Lizárraga, 2017; Midgley, 1995). Power structures and policy makers should therefore be responsive to people's needs, especially when their needs and interests are overlooked for the sake of broader political and economic goals (Gray et al., 1996; Ioakimidis, 2013; Sewpaul, 2005). As such, Manzanera-Ruiz and Lizárraga (2017) suggest that social development relates to the practice of social work at a structural level. In the noble pursuit for human rights and social justice, the impetus of social work therefore rests on untangling systemic and structural influences that impede the realisation of the needs of vulnerable populations (Briskman, 2017; Ferguson, 2016; Ioakimidis, 2016; Patel, 2005).

Furthermore, the link between social work and social development is arguably espoused in the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (2012) (hereafter Global Agenda) which aims to recognise and respond to the “profoundly unjust, unfair and above all unsustainable social, economic and political system of the contemporary world” (Tasse, 2014:283). The Global Agenda’s (2012) commitments are aligned with the call in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to transform the world to a more “just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met” (UN, 2015:4). The Global Agenda (2012) was developed in response to the increased global complexities in which social work operates (Jones, Yuen et al., 2008). Jones and Truell (2012) aver that global challenges in human conditions manifesting as a result of economic recessions, heightened inequality and natural catastrophes, inter alia, have propelled the profession and still does, into searching for global responses which will be illustrated later in this chapter. Whilst understanding that social work is contextually driven, the global importance of the profession and its definition is underpinned by the Global Agenda (Jones & Truell, 2012) and by the recently revised Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014).

The Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014) places great emphasis on the academic and scientific underpinning of the profession, the need for collective solutions and the recognition of macro and structural influences on societal functioning. As an extension of the latter point, it indicates that social work engages people and structures to address life challenges in order to enhance their wellbeing (IFSW, 2014). Thus, Higgs (2015) holds the view that the social work definition of social justice goes beyond an abstract way of constructing what a fair society would look like to include social action aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of those that unfortunately endure social and economic oppression on a daily basis. Among other things, the theme of social justice underpinning the Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014) correlates with the vision of the Global Agenda (2012) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to contribute to a more just society (UN, 2015). However, a just society requires equality of opportunity, but there is unfortunately no guarantee of equal outcomes due to external and internal constraints levied against the oppressed, fuelled by neoliberal globalisation (Isbister, 2001).

As such, in adopting a social development approach to social welfare, Murtaza (1995) suggests that social workers have to participate in the processes of social planning, social policy formulation, community development, advocacy and social action, in order to respectively, protect and attain human rights and social justice for the vulnerable. Lombard (2015) maintains that it is through the dual effort of advocacy for the formulation of responsive social and economic policies and the employment of social action, that positive changes are realised for the oppressed populations. The role of advocacy and social action in achieving social change is elaborated on in Chapter 4. Naturally, there exist many ideological views amongst those who suggest that social work and social development should position themselves within political debates and those who solely focus on the profession from a technical perspective (Tasse, 2014). As if not complex enough, in-between the two extreme positions, there are several other views in constant movement in relation to contextual questions.

Nevertheless, social workers referred to in the Global Agenda (2012) and the Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014) are not those employed to maintain the contemporary status quo (Banks, 2012; Beckett & Maynard, 2012; Hare, 2004; Healy, 2011; Jones, 2013; Ornellas et al., 2018). Conversely, the Global Agenda (2012) and Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014) allude to social work practitioners, educators and social development workers who, in the pursuit for social justice, are equipped with relevant expertise, engage in radical struggles and are agents of transformation, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter (Briskman, 2014; Ioakimidis, 2016; Sewpaul, 2014a, 2016a; Tasse, 2014; Turton & Van Breda, 2019). Furthermore, the Global social work statement of ethical principles (International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2018) (hereafter GSWSEP) mandates social workers to challenge discrimination and institutional oppression, unjust policies and practices, and ensure equitable access to resources for the most vulnerable.

Against this broad overview of social development and international social work, South Africa is one of the few countries to have adopted a developmental approach to social welfare in line with the United Nations World Declaration on Social Development (United Nations Development Programme, 1996).

2.3. SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO SOCIAL WELFARE

As indicated in the introduction, South Africa's developmental approach to social welfare evolved from the country's detested history of inequality and gross human rights violations due to colonialism and apartheid (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017). The residual and remedial welfare models inherited from colonialism and apartheid were largely inequitable and intolerant of the majority of the nation's people (Gray, 1996; Patel, 2015; Smith, 2014). The apartheid welfare system was ineffective in addressing mass poverty and inequality, effectively failing to provide the basic needs of the majority of the population (Gray, 1996; Ioakimidis, 2013; Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2014; Turton & Van Breda, 2019). However, de-humanising as they were, the ostracised apartheid policies acknowledged the fundamental role that well-developed and coordinated national socio-economic strategies implemented with absolute political and resource commitment from the state played in addressing social problems (Mazibuko, 1996). The efficacious addressing of the poor white problem of the 1930s clearly illustrates this. Albeit within a policy framework of selectivity and racial discrimination, Mazibuko (1996) accurately points out how this strategy espoused the broad philosophy of social development.

Notwithstanding this, in 1994, South Africa's first democratic government adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in the effort of redressing the social ills of the apartheid regime (Gray, 1996). Embracing social development as an approach towards social welfare signified a deliberate rejection by the government of a neoliberal approach of market reliance and minimal government interference (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015). However, the Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) later replaced the RDP. Uncharacteristic of the RDP, GEAR was embedded in neoliberal capitalism, an antithesis of the philosophy of social development (Terreblanche, 2002). Recently, the government adopted the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), which seems to herald a change of direction and a national effort towards faster and shared growth (RSA, 2006). Despite this, various scholars heavily contest ASGISA.

On the one hand, Seepe (2006) maintains that ASGISA heralds the desperately needed hope for social change as it aims to integrate social and economic development. On the other hand, Lombard's (2015) and Smith's (2014) respective contestations regarding the adoption of GEAR, a heavily neoliberalist macro-economic policy for promoting social development ideals remain relevant. South Africa, as indicated in the introduction, remains a deeply divided country, boasting one of the largest inequality rates in the world (Bollens, 2000; Dixon, 2006; Gray, 2006). It is worth remembering that, as social and economic conditions deteriorate, instability and human rights abuses increase (Cilliers, 2006). Such a state of affairs strays far from the above-mentioned commitments of the Global Agenda (2012) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to transform the world to be more just, equitable and socially inclusive of the needs of the most vulnerable (UN, 2015). Instead, social development's social justice aims, inter alia, include promoting social and economic development; facilitating participation; and promoting human rights of the oppressed and socially excluded populations (Midgley, 2013; Patel, 2005). In itself, social development pursues important social justice ideals. However, when transposed onto a neoliberal capitalist agenda, it is co-opted for the maintenance of the corporatist and capitalist system (Lombard, 2015).

Yet, the then Department for Social Welfare, now Department of Social Development (DSD) introduced a social developmental approach to social welfare through the creation of the recently reviewed 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare (DSD, 2016). The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) provides the national policy framework for the transformation of the two pillars of South African social welfare. The first one is social security, also referred to as social protection, with the second being social welfare services. Social protection primarily consists of publicly funded unconditional cash transfers for older persons; people with disabilities; and children, and these have expanded significantly since the establishment of democracy in 1994 (Patel & Hochfeld, 2012).

The White Paper outlines a social development approach to welfare services, which can be described overall as pro-poor and informed by a human rights orientation (Patel & Hochfeld, 2012). The foundation of this approach is the state's constitutional obligation to address inequality and discrimination regarding access to services, and in meeting the basic needs of previously disadvantaged populations. Thus, the social development approach to welfare is explicitly redistributive and inclusive (Patel & Hochfeld, 2012; Patel & Ulriksen, 2017).

Based on Patel's (2005) seminal work on social welfare in South Africa, developmental welfare is characterised by its rights base; harmonisation of economic and social policy; promotion of participation and partnership in development; and eradication of social division. The DSD's (2013) framework for service delivery attempts to bring clarity to what developmental social services constitute. An emphasis on prevention and early intervention services, inter alia, is perhaps the most articulated feature of the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) (DSD, 2006; Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015).

Accordingly, the distinctive type of social work that has evolved from the social development approach to social welfare has become known as developmental social work (Gray, 2010; Midgley & Conley (2010). Many scholars agree that developmental social work can be regarded as an integrated, holistic approach to social work that recognises and responds to the interconnections between the person and the environment, linking micro and macro practice and utilising strength-based and non-discriminatory models, approaches and interventions and partnerships to promote social and economic inclusion and well-being for the vulnerable (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Gray, 2010; Lombard, 2015; Patel, 2005).

By definition, developmental social work diverges from the residual and remedial service-oriented approach of the apartheid welfare system (Gray, 2010). However, Engelbrecht and Strydom (2015) argue that the reality in practice is that, although the emphasis on prevention and early intervention in social work is determined by government policies and embraced by social workers, the continuing demand of, for example, child protection, in practice, makes this continuum of care merely aspirational. Consequently, the irony is that the demand for casework services excels group and community work methodologies in practice, which have the features of the previous political dispensations' remedial approach to social work (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Gray, 2010; Patel, 2008). Such a social work practice is an antithesis to developmental social work described above.

Despite this, the Government continues to promote ‘‘development’’ while growing ‘‘welfare’’, and this is having a major impact on the role of social work in service delivery. On the one hand, the Government has adopted a ‘‘developmental’’ approach to social service delivery in order to promote the goals of sustainable development in the effort of redressing historical imbalances (DSD, 2006). On the other hand, the

Government’s focus on social security through social grants and pensions has consumed the lion’s share of ‘‘welfare’’ funding. The resulting effect is that there is very little left for ‘‘developmental’’ service delivery. In other words, social development in South Africa means welfare or, more specifically, developmental social welfare, a system in which cash transfers are regarded as an important means of redistribution and poverty alleviation (Lund, 2007). Paradoxically, such a welfare system mirrors that of the apartheid regime that rested on social security spending, which, interestingly, also consumed a high proportion of the welfare budget, and social services (Triegaardt, 2008). Engelbrecht and Strydom (2015) substantiate this assertion, forwarding that social security spending in South Africa may be regarded as one of the largest non-contributory systems in the world.

Lund (2007), however, cautions against critics of social spending, specifically arguing that developmental social welfare as conceived in South Africa requires that social workers learn to understand the economics of welfare and how social security grants formulate the bedrock on which many of the goals of social development are built. Lund (2007) avers that scholars and social workers alike should stop criticising the social security system, as economists tend to do, and to see government spending on social pensions and grants as the basis for the inclusion and mobilisation of poor and vulnerable people. Furthermore, social workers ought to continue to claim their space for therapeutic casework intervention as a means of continuing with the healing so badly needed in South Africa’s fractured and violent society (Lund, 2007). To this end, underpinned by social developmental theory and principles of developmental social work, Van Breda (2018) suggests the adoption of a developmental social casework practice. Such a practice is to be utilised together with the group and community work methods. However, legitimate as such a caution might be, critical analysis and statistical data reveal that “developmental” social welfare, despite its noble goals, has dismally failed to improve the plight of the poor and the promotion of social justice for the most disadvantaged populations, i.e. the estimated 50% living in poverty (Centre for Social Development in Africa [CSDA], 2008; Gray, 2008).

Admittedly, this is not a comprehensive overview of social work together with its professed social developmental approach to social welfare in South Africa. Rather, this section attempted, inter alia, to set the scene and the foundation on which key social work values of social justice and human rights can be assessed in order to better understand the involvement, or lack thereof, of social workers in social protest actions. A holistic overview of social work in South Africa, though beyond the scope of this thesis, would also require an analysis, for instance, of the typology of social work service providers in the country, service recipients, service delivery, management and supervision of social workers, social work education and relevant associations (cf. Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Van Breda, 2018).

Notwithstanding this, social development as a strategy and end goal is an approach to social welfare (developmental social welfare) and social work (developmental social work), which has a clear commitment to human rights and social justice, recognising the link between human rights, social justice and human freedoms (Lombard, 2014).

2.4. HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (HRBA) TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN in 1948 and the official declaration of social work as a human rights profession of the IFSW in 1988, led to an increased and vital body of scholarship on the role of human rights for social work (cf. Healy, 2008; Ife, 2001; Reichert, 2003; Wronka, 1995, 2008). However, what exactly are human rights?

Human rights could be generally defined as those rights that are inherent in our nature, without which we cannot live as human beings (United Nations Center for Human Rights [UNCHR], 1994). Ife (2012:19) explains that, “by human rights we generally mean those rights that belong to all people, regardless of national origin, race, culture, age, sex or any other characteristic”. Human rights are thus universal, applying to everyone, everywhere. Similarly, the Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights (SA) defines human rights as: inherent to all human beings, whatever their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status.

Ife (2012) suggests, however, that human rights must be understood as discursive, meaning that human rights are not static or fixed and cannot be fully defined. Instead, they should be understood as levers for the marginalised groups to struggle for social justice (Lister, 2007). This view is shared by Noyoo (2006), who suggests that human rights may be seen as ideals and enactments and are exercised. Therefore, determining what is meant by human rights is a continuing social process that involves various professionals (Freeman, 2011).

Healy (2008) and Wronka (2008) nonetheless trace the development of human rights back to the UDHR in 1948. The UDHR clearly details specific rights in a series of 30 articles (UN, 1948). Many scholars argue such an understanding of human rights metamorphosed over three generations (Dominelli, 2012; Sewpaul, 2014b; Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014; Wronka, 1995, 2008). The first-generation rights consist of civil and political rights while the second-generation rights encompass economic, social and cultural rights. The third-generation rights concern, inter alia, peace, clean environments and fair trade system rights (Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2008; Sewpaul, 2014b). With respect to this, human rights can be understood as social and political constructions, which means interpreting human rights is a core task for social work (Ife, 2001; Reynaert, Roose & Hermans, 2018).

Indeed, human rights are often seen as vital to all forms of social work practice (Hugman, 2013). This is encapsulated in the Global definition of social work that forwards social work as a practice-based profession that promotes social change underpinned by principles of human rights and social justice. As such, McPherson, Siebert and Siebert (2017) make a plea for a human rights perspective in social work that aids in determining who is disadvantaged and who is not, but also enables the social work community to identify macro influences at work, as well as the need for intervention on the macro-level. Hence, Ife (2001) differentiates between a top-down and a bottom-up approach to human rights in social work, referring to the discursive nature of human rights. Based on this, human rights might have two interpretations in social work (Dean, 2015).

On the one hand, the deductive approach starts from the formal rights of citizens who have a formal status as citizens in the nation (Ife, 2001). Other authors address this function of formal rights with reference to how equality of access to formal rights can guarantee that vulnerable groups are eligible for claiming and using their rights (cf. Weiss-Gal & Gal, 2009). Consequently, social workers can be viewed as frontline human rights workers as they work with the most disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable of populations on a daily basis (Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2008; Sewpaul, 2014).

Dean (2015:21) thus refers to the articulation of “thin needs” through rights, related to what is required for human beings’ bare survival, which “may in part be met through the protections offered by formal or procedural rights, which guarantee equality of access and opportunity”. However, a narrow focus on the legally guaranteed function of formal rights is by no means sufficient, as it entails the risk that rights being seen as a purely individual matter. Conversely, the inductive approach starts from the realities and complexities emerging in everyday social work practice situations of vulnerable populations. Because of this, Dean (2015:21) argues that social workers must ensure that “thick needs” are met through substantive rights, which ensures universal protection related to “what is required for true fulfilment” of the right to human flourishing.

A comprehensive understanding of social needs and human rights embraces the social, political, historical and cultural context that sustains human dignity and flourishing embedded in a citizenship discourse in which the aim of social policy and the welfare state is to promote and guarantee social justice (Dean, 2015). The socio-political function of human rights implies that social work reaches beyond redressing and restoration strategies in individual situations, instead takes up a public mandate to reformulate personal troubles into public issues (Lorenz, 2008, 2016). For social workers, this encompasses attempts to intervene in the systemic and structural aspects of the living conditions of the vulnerable, and to provide as well as mobilise available resources in order to enable everyone to realise the right to human flourishing (Dean, 2015; Lorenz, 2016).

Similar to human rights, social justice as a core value of social work has remained a central focus of the social work mission and purpose since its establishment (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015; IFSW 2012a; Marsh, 2005; Payne, 2005). Although social work has focused on social justice since its inception, the concept and theory of social justice as an ethical value is more recent (Watts & Hodgson, 2019). Naturally, the concept of social justice holds various contested meanings and interpretations despite its universal adoption and acceptance within the social work discipline. Principally, this is because the meaning of any concept is dependent on normative assumptions in which it is explicitly or implicitly couched, which subsequently results in a range of possible interpretations (Pinkerton & Campbell, 2002).

Nevertheless, scholars like Weil (2004) assert that social justice implies a commitment to fairness, grounded in representative and participatory democracy, which is underpinned by the fostering of human rights and distributive justice. For Lombard and Twikirize (2014), social justice encompasses economic and environmental justice. The Social Work Dictionary (as cited in Patel 2015:147) defines social justice as “an ideal condition in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, protection, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits … (and) is also about ensuring that resources are equitably distributed”. The SACSSP’s code of ethics (SACSSP, n.d.: 1) notes that “social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of their client systems”. While they do not clearly define social justice, examples provided of social injustices include: poverty, unemployment and discrimination, and social workers “generally act with, or on behalf of, vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families, groups and communities” (SACSSP, n.d.: 6). What is implicit in all the various descriptions of social justice above is the notion of attaining equality for all, especially for the most vulnerable and oppressed.

American political philosopher John Rawls’ seminal work on social justice theory is often quoted by many scholars and will be utilised for the purpose of this discussion. (Joseph, 2020). It is however beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive explanation of Rawls’s social justice theory. Instead, only his two principles of justice are highlighted here. The first principle is that “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all” (Rawls, 1971:302). According to Shestack (1998:219), these liberties include “political liberty, freedom of speech and assembly, liberty of conscience and thought, freedom of the person (along with the right to hold personal property), and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure”.

The second principle that Rawls indicates deals with distributive justice. He suggests that social and economic inequalities should be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (Rawls, 1971:302). Banerjee (2005:14) explains that, in Rawls’s revised thesis that was published in 2001, he calls the first part of the second principle “the fair equality of opportunity principle”, through which fair access to work and education is guaranteed for all citizens that have equal talent and ability, regardless of their background in terms of socio-economic class. The second part of the second principle is called “the difference principle”, and it accepts some inequalities in social and economic institutions as fair, but require that these inequalities be “to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged” people (Banerjee, 2005:14).

The value of Rawlsian justice for social work is situated in its equality, which implies that every citizen has the same basic civil and political freedoms, while everything else is fairly, though not equally, distributed among all citizens (Banerjee, 2005:14). Rawlsian egalitarian justice is appealing for social work, as it views the redistribution of resources as a moral obligation, thereby linking to the concept of social justice, which is broadly agreed by social workers as referring to “better living conditions and life circumstances for people who are poor, vulnerable, oppressed and marginalised in society” (Banerjee, 2004:9). It is along these lines that Ife (2016) argues that social justice must address structural disadvantage and inequality through empowerment and attention to locally and contextually derived concepts of human need. Thus, social work has a critical role in facilitating the voices of oppressed people to be heard, understood, validated, empowered and acted upon (O’Leary & Tsui, 2020).

Evidently, there cannot be a discussion on human rights without social justice. The link between social justice and human rights is embodied in a rights-based framework for social work practice. The concept of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) has been deconstructed in countless ways. Reviewing the plethora of HRBA interpretations, Broberg and Sano (2018) suggest that a HRBA is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to the promotion and protection of respective rights. As such, there is no single human rights-based approach, but rather a number of variations thereof. In South Africa, a HRBA to social development and social welfare entails the fulfilment of social-economic rights, such as the rights to adequate standards of living, education, employment, health and housing as a precondition for social development (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017).

A HRBA to social development and social welfare moreover dictates that social work, among other helping professions, plays a role in determining a more proactive human rights and social justice thrust in South Africa by focusing on the structural impediments stopping people from living free and fruitful lives such as lack of jobs, access to medical care and education (Noyoo, 2006). Social work needs to go beyond a legalistic understanding because of the entrenched roots of poverty and inequalities in South Africa and engage with structures and socio-political reading of human rights through advocacy and the promotion of partnerships and participation; and agitate for equality of access to resources in order to affirm human rights of service users (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017; Sewpaul, 2016b; Turton & Van Breda, 2019; Vandekinderen, Roose, Raeymaeckers & Hermans, 2019). Furthermore, within a social developmental context, social work practice and its interventions are mandated to mirror, inter alia, the mission statement of the recently reviewed White Paper for Social Welfare (DSD, 2016) of facilitating the development of human capacity and self-reliance within a caring and enabling socio-economic environment (Sewpaul, 2016a).

Thus, the attainment of human rights and social justice relies on human agency. Whether it be advocacy (Bent-Goodley & Hopps, 2017; Polack, 2004), community organising (McAlevey, 2016), resistance (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006), or social movements (Thompson, 2002), people need to be involved. Change will not happen if people do not take concrete actions against systematic and structural problems. As such, prominent social work figures can be seen in action, actively advocating for human rights and engaging in radical struggles for social justice in different contexts (Briskman, 2014; Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2008; Reichert, 2003; Sewpaul, 2014b).

Almost 50 years before the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, Jane Addams, one of the founders of the social work profession, was significantly involved in human rights movements of her time. She was both a local (in the USA) and an international activist, exerting leadership in all three generations of human rights as later codified in the UDHR (Wronka, 2008). Schugurensky (2005) points out how Jane Addams advocated for children's rights, housing, peace, immigrant and progressive education, inter alia. Her leadership in third-generation rights was recognised when she was awarded the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize.

Further, Healy (2008) describes how Eglantyne Jebb from the United Kingdom, pioneered children's rights culminating in the first Declaration of the Rights of the child in 1923, which was adopted by the League of Nations the following year. In Germany, Alice Salomon, considered the founder of social work and social education, and first president of the IASSW, championed women's rights and advocated for peace and disarmament (Lees, 2004). Sattareh Farman Farmaian, founder of social work in Iran, actively worked for the rights of women, families and children (Farman & Munker, 1992). Social work professionals in South Africa like Ellen Khuzwayo, Winnie Mandela, Shirley Gunn, to mention a few, actively opposed the apartheid regime, advocating for its abolishment (Jordan, 2006; Shokane & Masoga, 2019).

Moreover, international social work organisations like the IFSW and the IASSW have since their inception, advocated for human rights. For instance, the IFSW and IASSW joined the anti-apartheid movement and expelled South Africa from their respective memberships and instituted certain conditions and inspections that had to be satisfied in order to retain respective memberships (IFSW, 2006). Because of such advocacy and radical actions aimed at social change over the last five decades, progress in human rights in the country has indeed been attained for families, women, children and people of colour in unprecedented ways (O'Leary & Tsui, 2020).

Despite these stellar examples and illustrations of social work and its intrinsic connection to human rights and social justice, arguments were raised about whether social work is indeed a human rights profession (Ife, 2001; Murdach, 2011). Turton and Van Breda (2019) assert that this was not a debatable issue in South African social work during the Apartheid era. Apartheid in all its expressions was recognised as a crime against humanity because of the systematic attack against a civilian population (Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 1997; Slye, 1999). As indicated earlier, apartheid was largely inequitable and discriminatory by design (Gray, 1996; Ioakimidis, 2013; Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2014; Turton & Van Breda, 2019). However, progress has been made with democracy, for instance, by restoring the dignity of all people, improved education, health services, housing and social security, which are reinforced by the renowned South African Constitution and Bill of Rights (Lombard & Twikirize, 2014). However, the quality of education remains low; and with regard to gender, single-headed households remain the poorest; women continue to earn less than men; and decades of racial discrimination in the workplace have led to a social stratification based on skin colour, with social and economic institutions largely reinforcing these inequalities (RSA, 2011; Lombard & Twikirize, 2014). In other words, apartheid is gone but the unjust social relations it harnessed are still existing (Noyoo, 2006). As suggested by Patel (2015), such a state of affairs necessitates now more than ever the drive for a social developmental welfare approach that is characterised by human rights and social justice orientation.

Radical social work acknowledges this and espouses such an approach in the context of the ubiquitous and increasingly pernicious consequences of global neoliberal capitalism (Dominelli, 2004; Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Reisch, 2013; Sewpaul, 2016b).

2.5. RADICAL SOCIAL WORK, CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Similar to the main concepts of social development, human rights and social justice discussed above, there exist many interpretations regarding what radical social work denotes. Joseph (1975) suggests that radical social work refers to a practice that simultaneously attempts to be of maximum service to people experiencing problems in their daily lives and is informed by commitment to radical social change. Commenting on the definition above, Galper (1980) forwards that such a social work practice is based on understanding the nature of capitalism, racism, imperialism as well as other pejorative theories of human nature. For Sewpaul (2016a), radical social work emphasises the centrality of addressing locally specific issues against broader contextual realities such as global warming, climate change and geopolitical power, which disproportionately and negatively affect the poor. Ioakimidis (2016) forwards that a radical approach to social work aims to understand the root causes of social problems and emphasises social action aimed at social change. Common to all the various interpretations above, is the unanimous view of social problems having structural and systematic roots and the subsequent mission of social work being to agitate for radical social change.

However, Bailey and Brake’s (1975) seminal work, “Radical social work”, is widely regarded and usually referred to by many scholars and will thus be utilised for the purpose of this study. Bailey and Brake (1975) suggest that radical social work is a practice that seeks to understand the position of the oppressed in the context of social and economic structures they live in. Furthermore, perhaps inspired by Freire’s (1970) influential text, “Pedagogy of the oppressed”, they contend that true and meaningful social work practice should invoke and nurture critical consciousness, empower the oppressed and undertake action aimed at social change (Bailey & Brake, 1975). This latter contention will be elaborated in this discussion.

Bailey and Brake (1975) trace the origins of radical social work back to the settlement movement led by Jane Addams in the early 20th century. From the 1950's onwards, radical social work gained local and global momentum, criticising the capitalist system and traditional social work for respectively, unjustly concentrating wealth in the hands of a few at the expense of the masses and adopting a pathologising approach to those in need (Bloemen, 2015). Currently, radical social work continues to gain popularity, challenging global neoliberalism and mainstream social work (Ioakimidis, 2016). Briskman (2017) echoes this and remarks that radical concepts, such as "critical", "structural" and "transformative", slip and slide the Global Agenda (2012) in semi-sustainable ways that fit less controversially in the conservative world order. More significantly, these influences are captured in the revised Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014), which among other things, highlights a move from individual to collective approaches regarding social work interventions and an increased emphasis on macro concepts and structural sources of inequality (Ornellas et al., 2018).

Parallel to the development of radical social work globally, in South Africa, radical social work arguably found its roots in the anti-apartheid movement (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). The impetus of the anti-apartheid movement rested on dismantling the apartheid regime, which as discussed earlier, was largely inequitable and ineffective in addressing the plight of the majority of South African citizens (Gray, 1996; Ioakimidis, 2013; Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2014). Progressive social workers got together and formed organisations such as the Concerned Social Workers (CSW) (Sewpaul, 2006; Triegaardt, 2008). The CSW, among other things, advocated for social justice, equality and resource redistribution to the poor and oppressed (Schmid & Sacco, 2012). Other organisations like the South African Black Social Workers Association (SABSWA) and The Black Sash were also actively involved in social activism, advocating for human rights for all (Burton, 2010; Smith, 2014).

Despite the novel efforts by the different organisations mentioned above, social workers are known to have been complicit with the state, thereby maintaining the status quo (Briskman, 2010; Ioakimidis, 2018; Sewpaul, 2016a). This was evident in everyday practice during the apartheid era (Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2008). Social work professionals worked for agencies that provided racially based, unequal and unresponsive services to the needs of the majority (Ntusi, 1998; Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2008). During apartheid, there was no space within social work agencies to address issues of racism, inequality, oppression, poverty and the extreme violence perpetrated against the vast majority in South Africa (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). Disturbingly, many scholars remark that, despite having a transformed welfare system, social workers currently still persist in such a practice, and make no significant stands against the daily violation of human rights for those previously disadvantaged during apartheid (Lombard, 2015; Patel, 2008; Sewpaul, 2014b; Smith, 2014; Turton & Van Breda, 2019).

Turton and Van Breda (2019) argue that social activism was and, in practice, still is alien to South African social work. Schmid and Sacco (2012) maintain that social activism during apartheid was confined to those social workers who joined organisations such as CSW and SABSWA. These organisations originated to provide social workers with an alternative vehicle for struggle that combined social work and activism (Schmid & Sacco, 2012). However, both these organisations were small and, in the bigger social work context, did not replace the more conservative approach of social workers, who either turned a blind eye to what was happening around them, or for those who deliberately upheld the apartheid state apparatus and the status quo (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). It is possible to infer a dichotomy between social workers as state agents and social activists here.

Briskman (2017) coins this as the dual loyalty conundrum. On the one hand, social workers are expected to be loyal to their employing agencies, with emphasis, inter alia, on technical excellence, impartiality and an apolitical stance in their interventions (Mullaly, 2007). Baines (2007) describes such a practice as mainstream social work (similar to traditional social work). In such a context, performing one's duties implies fulfilling agency obligations rather than challenging the status quo (Banks, 2012). On the other hand, social workers have a responsibility towards, and a mandate to challenge defamation of human rights by advocating for social justice and human rights. However, Turton and Van Breda (2019) contend that, in challenging the status quo there is personal vindication of being part of a movement against injustices, but there is also the personal cost to one's professional standing, manifesting in workplace alienation and lack of professional progress. Furthermore, these ramifications often extend to one's family, at times accompanied with physical threats and loss of life (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). This was and still is the dilemma for social workers.

Nevertheless, proponents of radical social work promote critical consciousness, maintaining the view that social work should not ignore the overwhelming evidence that shows poverty and inequality rooted in inequitable structures and oppressive systems as the central cause for the majority of its service users' problems (Briskman, 2010; Ioakimidis, 2018; Sewpaul, 2013; Turton & Van Breda, 2019). Critical consciousness (CC) is a popular education and social concept developed by the Brazilian pedagogue and educational theorist Paulo Freire. He described the concept as one's ability to intervene in reality in order to change it (Freire, 1970). However, Freire did not provide clear guidance on exactly how to conceptualise CC. Unsurprisingly, contemporary CC scholars have conceptualised the concept in various ways (Diemer, McWhirter, Ozer, & Rapa, 2015; Jemal, 2017). Reviewing the CC literature, Jemal (2017) forwards that scholars have identified different dimensions of CC and use various combinations of one, two, or three dimensions to construct CC. Those scholars who define CC as a unidimensional construct, emphasise critical reflection as a single component, a purely cognitive state that derives from the critical analysis of socio-political inequality (Diemer & Li, 2011; Mustakova-Possardt, 1998; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998). Based on this, the intellectual analysis of the sociopolitical and cultural environment permits the identification of oppression and inquiry about its existence (Freire 2000; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998).

Several scholars conceptualise CC as a two-dimensional construct by drawing a hard distinction between critical reflection, also called sociopolitical analysis and critical action, also called social action (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011). These definitions of CC go beyond a cognitive state to include capacity, ability, skill, or realisation of one's power to conduct a critical analysis of structural oppression and potential actions to challenge inequities within sociopolitical environments (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Getzlaf & Osborne, 2010). Viewed in this way, CC conceptualises the process by which marginalised or oppressed people learn to think critically about inequitable social conditions (critical reflection) and subsequently take action to change them (critical action) (Mustakova-Possardt, 2003; Shin, Smith, Jamie, Welch, Sharma, Vernay & Yee, 2018; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

Few researchers have theorised the three distinct components of CC. These scholars typically describe some combination of critical social analysis; collective social identity, political self-efficacy; and actions aimed at advancing social justice (Hatcher, de Wet, Bonnell, Strange, Phetla, Proynk et al., 2010; Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). Synthesising the various definitions above, it is clear scholars incorporate various combinations of dimensions to define CC, making it less likely that they are assessing the same construct as each other when referencing to CC (Jemal, 2017). To further complicate the conceptualisation of CC, there are definitions that formulate CC as a process rather than an outcome (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). Notwithstanding this, based on the review by Jemal (2017), it seems that critical consciousness, composed of reflection and action, is a fundamental and necessary skill to understand oppression and privilege (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998). For that reason and for the purpose of this discussion, CC will be regarded as a two-dimensional construct, composed of critical reflection and critical action (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011).

The theoretical framework of CC thus has the objective of addressing multi-systemic oppression at its core (Freire, 2000). From a CC perspective, internalised and structural oppression is at the heart of most individual and social dysfunction (Chronister & McWhirter, 2006; Mullaly, 2002; Windsor, Jemal & Benoit, 2014). As such, it is critical that social workers become aware of cultural, political and capitalist ideological hegemony and appreciate how they can use their heightened consciousness and voices to contribute to socio-economic, political and cultural change and development for the vast oppressed majority (Sewpaul, 2016a). It is because of this that social workers are often regarded as the conscience of the communities with whom they work (IFSW, 2012a). Specifically, with South Africa's social developmental approach to social welfare, social workers cannot be detached from the communities they serve and there is sufficient evidence documenting the role of social work in community development (cf. Gray & Russell, 1988; Green & Nieman, 2003; Lombard, 2005; Patel, 2005).

Such is the urgent imperative for social work, to respond to its call as a social justice profession and resist status quo maintenance and oppressive hegemonic discourses (Smith, 2014). According to Smith (2014), CC allows social work to actively engage with various forms of oppression and brutalisation. Noyoo (2006) argues that oppression, as was explicitly expressed by the apartheid system, is not a static concept but a dynamic process. Once integrated into society's institutional order, culture and into peoples' consciousness through socialisation, oppressive tendencies come to permeate and affect almost all relations (Gil, 1998). Thus, social work should take the lead in identifying and rectifying the current oppressive patterns in South Africa, which are not easily discernible because of the existing democratic dispensation (Noyoo, 2006). As indicated before, social work has a role in determining a more proactive human rights and social justice thrust in South Africa by focusing on the structural impediments stopping people from living free and fruitful lives, such as lack of jobs, access to medical care and education (Noyoo, 2006; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2014). It is exceedingly fundamental that social workers are critically reflexive in their practice, employing social action to mobilise service users in standing up against the daily injustices committed against them (Turton & Van Breda, 2019).

The scope of social action is very vast, however, and it is arguably one of the most apt methods of social work practice, especially within a global neoliberal context and its negative consequences, which are most severe for the poor and oppressed. In social work, social action was specifically promoted by Mary Richmond, a North American social work pioneer in the 1920s (Elizabeth, 2004). Primary commenters on social action like Friedlander (1977) describe it as an individual, group or community effort within the framework of social work philosophy and practice that aims to achieve social progress, by modifying social policies, improving social legislation, health and welfare services for service users. More recent authors likewise view social action as a method of social work used for mobilising masses in order to bring about structural changes in the social system or to prevent adverse changes (Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). Participation through for example; conscientisation, facilitation, organisation, advocacy and activism; is the value most clearly articulated by a variety of scholars, subsequently manifesting in social protests actions (Guide to social work, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2015; Zastrow, 2013).

Accordingly, and as discussed earlier, many social workers have been involved in global human rights movements and to this day continue to participate in masses throughout the world. Among other things, social workers have been engaging in direct social activism, demonstrating in defence of welfare states and social services, and advocating against government policies that violate human rights (Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013). Such protests by social workers have been informed, inter alia, by the profession’s policy documents like the code of ethics and mission statements (IFSW, 2012b) and the Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014), which, as mentioned before, emphasises the active role of social workers in protecting human rights and promoting social change (Lane & Pritzker, 2018; Ornellas et al., 2018; UNHCR, 1994).

This was specifically exemplified by Norbert Ferencz, a social worker from Hungary. Ferencz actively participated in a demonstration against a municipal ordinance that classified searching for food in rubbish bins as a misdemeanour (Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013). The police considered his involvement in such a demonstration as a felony punishable by three years in prison. Fortunately, his arrest triggered an international movement of solidarity among social workers. The Social Work Action Network (SWAN) and the European Federation of Social Workers in particular launched a campaign and succeeded in defending Ferencz (SWAN, 2011). It is fundamental to indicate that legal and ethical justification of Ferencz’s actions and support from international organisations stemmed from the mandate to social justice as stipulated in the profession’s policy documents (Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013; Ioakimidis, Cruz Santos & Herrero, 2014)

At the end of 2011, almost a year after the arrest of Ferencz, a similar case was documented in Greece. In an attempt to raise necessary funding for re-capitalisation of the banking sector, the Greek government circulated a decree introducing property tax payable through electricity bills (Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013; Ioakimidis et al., 2014). This tax was flat, taking no considerations to variations in income so much so that those receiving benefits from the government were liable to pay the aforementioned tax (Ioakimidis et al., 2014; Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013). This was clearly unconstitutional and a gross violation of human rights. The decree guaranteed that those who could not afford this property tax would have their electricity cut since it was payable through electric bills. Fortunately, the Greek Association of Social Workers (GASW) vehemently rejected this law, with reference to the global commitment of social work to social justice as stipulated by the profession’s policy documents (GASW, 2012; ISFW, 2012b; Ornellas et al., 2018; UNHCR, 1994).

Frontline social workers linked to the Progressing Social Work Network in Hong Kong have been avid advocates for social justice, actively participating in both the Occupy

Hong Kong Movement in 2011 and much more recently in the Umbrella democracy movement of 2014-15 (IFSW, 2019b). More notably, the Orange Tide movement in Spain is a stellar example of social work in action in defence of social welfare and social services – popularising the mantra, ‘No Cuts! Don’t Shut up!’ (IFSW, 2012c; Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013; Ioakimidis et al., 2014). Despite the Spanish government’s clear programme towards cutting funding for social services, Truell (2014) argues the cuts have not been as drastic as they would have been due to the visibility of the Orange Tide. Like the cases in Greece and Hong Kong, the Orange Tide movement was informed by social workers’ ethical obligations to defend human rights that, inter alia, derive from the Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014). Many more cases have been recorded in Israel (Shuv-Ami, 2013), Poland (IFSW, 2018) and Korea (IFSW, 2019a), to mention a few.

In South Africa, organisations like the Black Sash have always advocated for the upholding of universal human rights. In 2017, for example, the Black Sash challenged the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein to revoke a high court ruling in favour of allowing deductions from social grants to service debt (Black Sash, 2018). The particular ruling had clearly exposed grant beneficiaries to exploitation. Lynette Maart, who is the current national director of the aforementioned organisation, provided strategic leadership for the successful, ‘Hands Off Our Grants’ campaign (Black Sash, 2018; CapeTalk, 2018). More recently, with the advent of the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19), the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) has mandated all nations to implement and adhere to various preventative measures in order to curb the spread of the virus, such as regular hand washing, covering ones’ mouth and nose when coughing and, perhaps more significantly, practicing social distancing.

Quite rightly, the IFSW (2020) highlighted the active role of social work in the fight against the spread of the virus and in supporting communities affected by the virus. Among other things, social workers should ensure the most vulnerable are included in planning and response, organising communication strategies to overcome isolation and ensuring that basic requirements to survival like food and clean water are available in communities (IFSW, 2020). Together with the poor provision of basic needs, which is often at the core of social protests in South Africa, the Covid-19 pandemic came at a time of consistently high unemployment rates as the South African economy is in recession (Daily Maverick, 2020). Against such a context, underpinned by the latest IFSW (2020) decree, the Black Sash again challenged the government to issue more protection for grant beneficiaries who often have to collect their grants at commercial spaces often characterised by overcrowding, an antagonistic of the acclaimed social distancing (Daily Maverick, 2020). In the wake of increased state violence and evictions, many other organisations in South Africa have furthermore tirelessly advocated for the poor and marginalised. (cf. C19 People's Coalition, 2020). Interestingly, both the Black Sash and C19 People's Coalition are humanitarian organisations who do not typically employ social workers. Where then is the voice of social work in South Africa?

Synthesising both individual and collective radical social work interventions discussed above, what, inter alia, connects them is emphasis on the structural and systemic roots of social problems, a collective focus on upholding human rights and social justice through participation (Ioakimidis et al., 2014). Specifically, by employing advocacy and social action, underpinned by social work's various policy documents (Ioakimidis et al.; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2015; Zastrow, 2013).

2.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to describe the HRBA to social development and social welfare, radical social work and CC within South Africa's social development paradigm. Essentially, social development involves the harmonious integration of economic, social and other dimensions of a process of development in order to attain social change. Among other things, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to eradicate poverty, which is arguably most pronounced in Africa. In South Africa, levels of inequality and poverty are amongst the highest in the world. As with colonialism and apartheid eras, inequality and poverty are predominantly located in the marginalised societies and previously disadvantaged populations who continuously endure oppression in different forms, the latest being neoliberal globalisation and the Covid-19 pandemic which has had devastating effects, for example, on economic and welfare systems. The latter is for many South Africans tantamount to life support.

As a global response to the dire effects of neoliberal globalisation, the social work profession, underpinned by the Global Agenda (2012), Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014), code of ethics and mission statements (IFSW, 2012b; SACSSP, 2012); has been on the forefront of human rights advocacy in the pursuit of social justice for the oppressed and marginalised. Despite these and other global efforts and with social work supposedly operationalised based on a developmental approach, issues of structural and systemic oppression in practice continue to receive trivial attention, in South Africa. Radical social work is critical of such a practice maintaining the view that social problems are rooted in inequitable structures and oppressive systems. As such, underpinned, inter alia, by a HRBA to social development and social welfare, the SACSSP's ethical code and the recently reviewed 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare (DSD, 2016), proponents of radical social work promote critical reflection and subsequent critical action in order to attain social justice for service users in South Africa.

The next chapter presents an attempt to conceptualise elements, the nature, reasons and ethics regarding social protest actions and to analyse them within a global and local social work context.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Social protest actions are by no means a new phenomenon. Their eternal recurrence serves a fundamental social function (White, 2019). Social protest actions initiate a period in which old truths are challenged and significant social transformations can occur. Usually, they take place when ordinary people act together to defend threatened collective interests and identities or to promote new ones (Wilson, 1961); and the grievance that unexpectedly triggers protest is the symptom, not the cause, of why people join social protest actions (Nilsen & Cox, 2013; White, 2019). Disturbingly, the role of social work in social protest actions with all its professed promotion of human rights and social justice still remains largely unspecified.

Yet, it is argued that social work, as a form of collective action, is profoundly affected by its contact with and shares many of the characteristics of social movements and social protest actions (Ferguson, 2008; Reisch, 2013; Thompson, 2002). As such, in searching for counter-hegemonic discourses, theories of social movements and social protest processes and structures could provide alternative thinking regarding transformative social change in social work (Smith, 2015). Both the historical and current struggles of South African social movements and social protest actions for social change are arguably important illustrations in challenging the prevailing status quo (Ballard, Habib & Valodia, 2006a; Gibson, 2011; McKinley, 2006) and therefore are deemed to offer important discourses for social work.

The second objective of this study aims to discuss the elements, nature, reasons and ethics regarding social protest actions within global and local social work contexts.

3.2. THEORISING SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

Though the main focus of this thesis is on social protest actions and their connection to social work, a thorough understanding of the subject would not be possible without reviewing social movement literature as well. As matter of fact, social protest actions and social movements are often inaccurately used interchangeably in the literature. Over the years, scholars and experts alike have contributed to and facilitated our understanding of social protest actions. Literature, among other things, explores and attempts to provide insights into the processes behind the formation of social protest actions (Gamson, 1990); the reasons for involvement and participation (Blumer, 1951; Della Porta & Diani, 2009; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Klandermans, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tarrow, 1994), as well as the various ways in which people protest (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Tilly, 1993, 2006; Turner, 1974, 1980).

But, what exactly are social protest actions? How do they differ from social movements? There are abundant definitions of social protests and social movements, all of which depart from different theoretical angles and thus emphasise different aspects of the particular phenomenon. This thesis is no exception. The researcher considers this initial approach to formulating a working definition of social protest actions as provisional, and may well want to amend it in light of further analysis.

Primary commenters on social movements like Tarrow (1989:359; cf. Tilly 2008:13) establish the following:

> I collected information on ‘protest events’, a category which included strikes, demonstrations, petitions, delegations, and violence, but excluded contentious behaviour which revealed no collective claims on other actors. I defined the protest event as a disruptive direct action of collective interest, in which claims were made against some other group, elites or authorities.

Melucci (1996), in the same vein, asserts that social movements are collective actions that express a conflict intended to breach system limits, and are characterised by solidarity, not merely the aggregate of individual actions. McAdam (1982) described social protests as actions staged by what he considered as excluded groups, making rational attempts to mobilise sufficient political leverage to advance collective interests through non-instutionalised means. Similarly, Wilson (1961) conceived social protest as a strategy utilised by relatively powerless groups in order to increase their bargaining ability. Ballard, Habib, & Valodia (2006b) forward that social movements are politically and socially directed collectives, often involving multiple organisations and networks, focused on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located. By the same token, Lipsky (1968) defined social protest as a mode of political action oriented toward objection to one or more policies or conditions, characterised by showmanship or display of an unconventional nature, and undertaken to obtain rewards from political or economic systems while working within the systems. Thus, while social protest actions can refer to local as well as broader social struggles; social movements refer to national and trans-national causes, such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement or Climate change movement to mention a few (Tilly, 2006).

Synthesising the various respective descriptions of social movements and social protests above, this thesis will regard a social protest action as a popular mobilisation in support of a collective grievance(s) in the pursuit for social justice and the attainment of human rights (Alexander et al., 2018). The term, "collective" is explicit in all the respective primary authors mentioned and correlates with social action as a method of social work used for mobilising masses in order to bring about social change or prevent adverse changes (Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). "Grievance" suggests a sense of injustice or of being wronged. "Popular mobilisation" implies something more than mere individual action. Furthermore, "popular" should be taken to mean "of the oppressed and vulnerable people" rather than the well-supported (Alexander et al., 2018:28). The pursuit of social justice and attainment of human rights formulates the stimulus for social protests and the actions that are staged.

The intention of this thesis is to discuss social movements and social protest actions as a frame and an entry point, as indicated, to examine the formation of these collectives; establish the reasons for participation; the strategies they employ and, most importantly, the implications for social workers and the possible roles they may fulfil in various social protest actions within a social development context. As such, an overview of the insights offered by social movements and social protests theories is considered before analysing and discussing their implications for social work and its professionals in South Africa.

3.3. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

By reviewing social movement and social protest literature, one can broadly decipher three distinct major shifts in the attempt to theorise their formation and development. Broadly, these include classical, contemporary and digital age approaches.

Classical approaches, as they were coined, encompassed theories such as collective behaviour, mass society and relative deprivation. These theories departed from the assumption that some structural strain such as unemployment or urbanisation, produced a subjective tension that consequently led to the psychological disposition to engage in contentious behaviour like mobs (McAdam, 1982; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). It is worth pointing out that classical theorists did not conceive social protests in a positive manner. French psychologist, Le Bon, a founding father of collective action studies, for instance, regarded all street protest as a form of deviant behaviour, describing the participants as unconventional and irrational (Klandermans, 1997). Fortunately, the present day social protest action discourse is much less narrow, viewing protesters in more positive and constructive ways. Be that as it may, classical approaches tended to describe social protests as irrational, expressive, violent outbursts of collective action in response to discontent and felt grievances. Protesters as conceptualised by classical approaches were alienated, frustrated and disintegrated individuals affected by economic crises, human rights abuse and unfair distribution of welfare, to mention a few.

Around the 1970s, several new approaches known as contemporary approaches developed. These new theoretical approaches could be broadly categorised as structural and social constructivist. Structural approaches emphasise the influence of the external environment (social and political context) on the emergence and the development of social movements and social protest actions, mainly focusing on two aspects. On the one hand, the role of organisations and informal networks in mobilising individuals and making them available for collective action (also known as resource mobilisation) (McCarthy, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1973, Mottiar & Bond, 2010); and, on the other hand, the specific features of a political system that can explain different action repertoires that enhance or inhibit the development of social protest actions (also known as political process) (McAdam, 1996; Mottiar & Bond, 2010; Tarrow, 1994). These approaches reject grievances and ideology as explanations for the rise and decline of social protest actions. Structural approaches take as their point of departure that grievances are abundant and that the key question in movement participation research is not so much why people are aggrieved, as why aggrieved people participate (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009).

Resource mobilisation theory stresses that the odds to change reality increase, if there is an identified and agreed upon leadership inside the movement, and this leadership has previous political experience (McCarthy & Zald, 1973). This theory discerns between five different types of resources: material, moral, organisational, human and cultural (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Material resources mean time, money and people who need to act for achieving goals. Moral resources refer to identification with the end goals for protest connected to moral and normative values in society. Organisational resources refer to the maximum extraction of the resources. From the perspective of resource mobilisation, people protest because they are able to collectively mobilise resources and feel politically efficacious.

Resource mobilisation theory, however, was criticised for its apparent economic orientation. Resource mobilisation borrows its concepts from the vocabulary of economics and is particularly suited to the depiction of social movements as rational entities weighting the costs and benefits of their action (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Expressions such as “costs and benefits” convey notions of cold calculus applied to social action, which, instead, is often inspired by ideals and passion. While resource mobilisation theorists explain the rise and decline of social movements and social protest actions by features internal to the movements such as the availability of resources and organisational aspects, political process theorists focus on external features like changes or differences in the political and institutional environment of social movements and social protests (Smelser, 1971; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009).

Tarrow (1994:85) describes political opportunity structure as, “consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent or national – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure”. Three ideas are central to the political process approach. A social movement or social protest action first and foremost is a political rather than a psychological phenomenon. Secondly, a social protest action represents a continuous process from its generation to its decline rather than a discrete series of developmental stages. Thirdly, different forms of action (repertoires of contention) are associated with different spatial and temporal locations (Tilly, 1986). McAdam (1996) expands on this by identifying four dimensions of political opportunity on which most authors who employ the term agree: the relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system; the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; the presence or absence of elite allies; and the state’s capacity and propensity for repression.

Changes in political opportunity structure would therefore include shifts in any one or more of the four dimensions mentioned. Political opportunity theorists also point to the formation of protest cycles that begin with an increase in structurally created political opportunities, which are then expanded by movements as they successfully mobilise, offering greater opportunities for the creation of new movements. In this way, political opportunity is not simply given, but is also strongly affected by the actions of collective actors (Ballard et al., 2006a). Protest cycles expand due to heightened mobilisation and rapid innovation as different actors learn from and improve upon existing models of collective action (Castells, 1983; Tarrow, 1994; Zuern, 2001).

Political opportunity approaches consequently offer significant contributions to the study of social movements and social protest actions by highlighting the opportunities for action and suggesting the possible forms those movements will take as they respond to the context in which they organise. In addition, McAdam (1982), while emphasising structural aspects of the environment, also focuses on subjectivity. Cognitive liberation, he argues, results in the utilisation of resources and the viability of collective action, and enables actors to frame their situation as unjust and liable for change (Piven & Cloward, 1977). Indeed, political opportunities and organisation alone do not produce social movements. Mediating between political opportunities and resources are people with their fears and hopes. Based on structural approaches, protesters are rational, instrumental, polity-oriented people who seize opportunities by lobbying and forming coalitions with political elites and undertake well-planned collective action with the goal to solve social problems.

An alternative school of thought, the social-constructivist approaches, concentrate on questions about how individuals and groups perceive and interpret socio-political conditions and focuses on the role of cognitive, affective, and ideational roots of contention. These approaches are broadly organised around three concepts: framing, identity, and emotions (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Social psychologists maintain that people live in a perceived world. They respond to the world as they perceive and interpret it. Scholars such as Touraine (1981) and Melucci (1989) underlined the importance of framing, by focusing on subjective elements such as identity, status and values. Melucci (1985) forwards that the same experiences and behaviour can be viewed in different ways. Thus, meanings depend upon systems of reference. These shared meanings, defined as framing processes (Snow et al., 1986), are central to any understanding of social movement or social protest activity. In this vein, McAdam (1996:5) argues that, “at a minimum, people need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem”. However, the oversight in these theories has been to assume that such collective framings simply appear without investigating their construction.

Notwithstanding this, collective identity theory stresses that psychosocial aspects and beliefs are key to the formation of protests actions (Whittier, 1995). This is achieved through shared beliefs, symbols or language that bring people to cooperate when the political situation allows it (Melluci, 1989). Identity is a combination of emotional, moral and cognitive contexts that an individual shares with a certain group, community or movement (Polletta & Jasper, 2001:284). The group’s identity is expressed by shared values, a common language and customs, agreement on cultural symbols and signs, ceremonies and even identical dress style (Macionis & Plummer, 2012). When this collective identity is solid enough, members of the group may consider protest activity against the powers that be.

Although social movements are a political rather than psychological phenomenon, there evidently is an important interplay between these dimensions in their development (Smith, 2015). The production of shared beliefs and collective identities form the necessary, but not sufficient basis for social movements and social protest actions (Ballard et al., 2006b). Group identification plays a key role in what protesters think, feel and do. Thus, people participate not only in collective action for instrumental reasons but also because they identify with others involved or because they want to express their anger and indignation to a target when they believe that their values have been violated (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009).

It would seem that there appears to be much merit in utilising socio-constructivist approaches together with structural approaches in studying social protest actions (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). One could argue more so in South Africa, with its tyrannical systematic and segregatory history of the majority of the peoples’ nation. In addition, although poverty abounds globally, South Africa has the unfortunate honour of holding the highest record of this rather unpopular accolade. Indeed, social protest actions abounded so much during apartheid and in the present democratic era, that South Africa is considered the, “protest capital” of the world (Alexander, 2010:25). This latter contention will be expanded on throughout this discussion.

Moving along, since the late 1990s, the context of social protest actions has changed significantly. Inseparable processes such as globalisation, the development of the “network society” and the “information society” have given the world a new look (Castells, 1996; Garrett, 2006; Rheingold, 2002). Networks have become the prime mode of organisation and structure of society. Formal organisations have turned into networks of networks, which, in turn, intersect with informal networks rooted in the personal world and more diffuse interpersonal group settings (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Moreover, the rise of new communication technologies such as the internet, e-mail and cell phones, has intensified change and its pace (Castells, 2012; Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005). As societies change so fundamentally, this also affects social protest actions. After all, information and networks are essential elements of mobilisation and, one therefore can assume that such fundamental changes must have a profound impact on the dynamics of contention (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005). Indeed, scholars of social movements argue that recent social and cultural changes have led to a “normalisation” of social protest (Norris, Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2005) and have created a social movement society (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998).

This has posed new challenges to social movement and social protest theory. Are the contemporary structural and social-constructivist approaches still able to describe the changing dynamics of social protest actions? The researcher argues in favour of the latter debate. Bennett (2005) notes that organising successful protest still requires a lot of face-to-face interactions and off-line partnerships. Furthermore, structural and social constructivist approaches in South Africa, as hinted to before, seem to offer more tangible and valid discourses, given the severity of poverty in the country that abounds due to oppressive structures and intolerant systems (Bollens, 2000; Dixon, 2006; Gray, 2006), together with its tyrannical and repressive political history (Sewpaul, 2005; Turton & Van Breda, 2019), which has, among other things, galvanised the majority of the nations’ people into a rebellion of the poor (Alexander, 2010).

Admittedly, although the internet has not completely changed the protest scene, protest groups, particularly those with limited resources, have become more capable of reaching a wider local and international audience (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). Moreover, the internet offers the possibility of organising an online protest; providing a common meeting space; shortening distances and times; and simplifying formalities and agendas (Jost et al., 2018). An important element of the digitalization of protest actions is the potential for exponential growth in interest to be created by a digital object going viral (i.e. being shared by millions of people in a brief period of time). Among other functions, this has an influence on the extent of political pressure that the particular protest action can bring to the fore. A good example of a protest action going viral was the case of George Floyd in America, which popularised the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020.

As a point of departure, contemporary and digital age approaches regarding the formation of social protest actions illustrate that these actions are not impulsive nor are they sudden activities. Social protesting is a process that takes time and organisation to materialise. In South Africa, and for the purpose of this thesis, structural and social constructivist approaches seem to offer valuable discourses for social work and its potential role in social protest actions. Attention will now focus onto the question of why people protest.

3.4. WHY PEOPLE PROTEST?

The question of why people protest has occupied social scientists for a long time. Classical theories suggested that people participated in social protest actions to express grievances that arose because of relative deprivation, frustration or perceived injustice (Berkowitz, 1972; Gurr, 1970; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Gurr (1970) argued that the likelihood of protest and rebellion significantly increases when changing social conditions cause people to experience relative deprivation. Feelings of relative deprivation result from comparing one’s situation with a standard – be it one’s past or someone else’s situation (Folger, 1986). If the comparison results in the conclusion that one is not receiving what one deserves, the person experiences relative deprivation. Runciman (1966) referred to relative deprivation based on personal comparisons as egoistic deprivation, and to relative deprivation based on group comparisons as fraternalistic deprivation. Research suggests that fraternalistic deprivation is particularly important for engagement in social protest actions (Dubé & Guimond, 1986; Major, 1994; Martin, 1986).

However, such a cause and effect analysis seldom aptly elucidates the complexity behind the drives for participation in social protest actions. Indeed, Foster and Matheson (1999) showed that the relation is much more multifaceted. They demonstrate that motivation to take part in protest increases when the group's experience becomes relevant to one's own experience – i.e. when the personal becomes political. People who experience both personal deprivation and group deprivation are the most strongly motivated to take to the streets (Foster & Matheson, 1999). However, empirical studies outside the laboratory have largely failed to uncover a direct and systematic relation between deprivation and protest (cf. Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003). As such, scholars of social movements and social protest action question the effects of grievances on participation in protests and propose that the question to be answered is not so much whether people who engage in protest are aggrieved, but whether aggrieved people engage in protest.

Nonetheless, contemporary scholars, in an attempt to provide alternative explanations regarding participation in social protest actions, are broadly divided between those with a structural focus and those who champion psychosocial theories. On the one hand, much like the formation and development of social protest actions, scholars affiliated with structural approaches suggest that resources, opportunities and efficacy can predict protest participation (Klandermans, 1984; McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Availability of resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) and the presence of political opportunities (McAdam, 1982) are deemed key in protest mobilization. The general argument is that costs, opportunities, and the efficacy of mobilisation explain discrepancies in the occurrence of protest with research focusing on factors such as government openness, state capacity, or the resources and strategies of social movements and social protest actions (cf. Meyer, 2004; Van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). Various studies support the argument that political opportunities and availability of resources play an essential role in determining participation in social protest action (cf. Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003).

Psychosocial theorists, on the other hand, suggest that moral outrage, social identification and group efficacy could explain why people take part in protest actions.

Moral outrage and indignation at perceived injustices is perhaps an obvious motivator for participation in social protest action (Barbalet, 1998; Goodwin & Jasper, 2006; Sturmer & Simon, 2009). Emotions function as accelerators or amplifiers. With regard to protest, “accelerating” means that the motive to enter, stay or leave a social protest action translate into action faster due to emotions, while “amplifying” means that these motives become stronger (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006). There is a dearth of literature with respect to the complex emotional processes that facilitate the channelling of fear and anger into moral outrage and protest however. The scarcity of scholarly research on the role of emotions in social protest actions can be attributed to a reaction to classical approaches that stressed the irrational nature of protest participation and perhaps because of their sheer complexity (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta, 2001). Be that as it may, all demands for change start with discontent. Thus, if we are to understand participation in collective actions, we must understand the working of emotions. The exponential magnitude of inequalities and the racial form that they assume provide fertile ground for anger and discontent, particularly in South Africa. Unfortunately, such an inquiry extends beyond the ambit of this research study.

As touched on earlier, social identification denotes a strong sense of group belonging and shared interests (Drury & Reicher, 2009; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Klandermans, 1997; Smith, Thomas & McGarty, 2015). Various empirical studies illustrate that the more people identify with a group the more they are inclined to protest on behalf of that group (De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Reicher, 1984; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Finally, group efficacy refers to the belief in the likelihood of success of a protest action (Bandura, 1997; Gamson, 1992; Mazzoni, Van Zomeren & Cicognani, 2015). Klandermans (1984, 1997) shows that people are more likely to participate in movement activities when they believe this will help to redress their grievances at affordable costs.

To sum up, structural and psychosocial approaches hold merit individually in their respective attempts to uncover what exactly lies behind participation in social protest actions. However, for the purpose of this research study, an integrated approach was deemed to offer more substantive explanations regarding the involvement or lack thereof, of social workers in social protest actions. Moreover, if South Africa is considered the protest capital of the world, why and what are the majority of the nation’s people protesting for?

3.4.1. PROTESTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has a number of official sources for protest data. These data sources vary notably due to differences in how they collect protest data, their counting rules and scope, as well as variances in the definitions of protest they utilise. Main and often quoted protest data sources include the Municipal IQ, Civic Protest Barometer (CPB), Incident Registration Information System (IRIS) and the Protest and Public Violence Monitor (PPVM). The merits and flaws of the respective data sources are so widespread that they require a thesis of their own (cf. Runciman et al., 2016; Alexander et al., 2018; Lancaster, 2018). It is therefore beyond the scope of this research to inquire into this.

Notwithstanding the above, the most comprehensive sources of protest or crowd gathering data in South Africa arguably is that recorded by the South African Police Service's (SAPS) IRIS and the Institute for Security Studies' PPVM (Lancaster, 2018). Most recently, and in descending order, analysis of the data collected by the respective data sources for the period 2013 to 2017 revealed that most collective action was related to industrial strike action; the police's inability to reduce crime levels; protest regarding municipal services; education-related grievances (basic and tertiary); and protests related to politics and other concerns such as housing, land, transport, xenophobia and corruption (Lancaster, 2018).

The data furthermore showed that protest incidents are frequently organised to express dissatisfaction with more than one grievance issue (Lancaster, 2018). Municipal service delivery protests may, for example, be focused on water and electricity delivery and may raise problems regarding terms of quality or quantity of services, or both. The overall ordering of various types of grievance in descending order illustrate that most grievances do not specifically relate to municipal service delivery as the media or other scholarly publications would have us believe, but rather are an indictment of government services in general (Gaqa, 2018; Khambule, Nomdo & Siswana, 2019; Lancaster, 2018; Ngcamu, 2019). Undeniably, service delivery issues were deemed to be at the heart of discontent during the Mbeki era (1999 - 2008) (Ngwane, 2011). Be that as it may, grossly labelling social protest actions as "service delivery" protests is misleading and anti-democratic (Gibson, 2011). It objectifies vulnerable populations and disregards their agency, projecting them as passive, dependent and expectant of being taken care of (Gibson, 2011; Fakir, 2014).

Beyond basic municipal service delivery, the majority of protests illustrate the daily struggles of ordinary people to access their constitutionally protected socio-economic rights, such as access to jobs, fair wages, safety, decent education, housing and transport. Protests for basic needs can be traced back to the 1980s (Zuern, 2011). More than 25 years since the attainment of democracy, the provision of basic needs is still a prime topical concern for scholars and activists alike. The general delight and relief that accompanied democracy disappeared as quickly as it came. So much so that those who were previously oppressed under Apartheid are arguably more prone to protest now under democracy due to the lack of significant changes that were assumed would be attainable with a more democratic ruling.

It should be no surprise therefore that most South Africans take to the streets due to their inability to attain any reprieve through formal state institutions (Gibson, 2011). In this regard, social protest actions are due to, although not limited to, vulnerable and oppressed peoples' demand for recognition, an outcry for their human rights to dignity and flourishing (Fakir, 2014; Mottiar & Bond, 2012). In South Africa's social developmental paradigm, social protest actions present a rejection of what has been termed an "elite" form of democracy that systematically and structurally excludes oppressed and vulnerable people from realising their human rights and social justice (Gibson, 2011:159). In addition, irrespective of differing reasons behind different protest actions, people share the common plea to be heard and to be taken seriously as citizens (Friedman, 2009).

At this point, if it has not been clear enough, social protest actions are extremely complex in nature. Various plausible interconnected elements and processes are at the core of their formation and the eventual participation of people in these actions. In this vein, there is a need for nuanced inquiry into different forms of social protest and the actions they stage (Lancaster, 2018).

3.5. HOW PEOPLE PROTEST

In an effort to understand the drives behind various forms of protest, Bauman and Briggs (1990), as well as Turner (1982), developed the performance theory. Literature on social protests considers different forms of protest as "repertoires of contention" (cf.

Della Porta & Diani, 1999; Tilly, 1995). Repertoires of contention are embedded in a socio-political context, and each society has different norms and accepted ways of protesting, although there is always potential for manoeuvring and innovation (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001). Tilly (1995:26) describes repertoires as "a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Moreover, forms of protest must also be understood in relation to the subject and objective of the action, the underlying theme it addresses, and the context in which it takes place (Hanna et al., 2016; Tarrow, 1994).

McLeod (2017) suggests that protests often take the form of overt public displays, demonstrations, and civil disobedience, but may also include covert activities such as petitions, boycotts, lobbying, and various online activities. More elaborately, Hanna et al. (2016) compiled a progressive listing of over 200 forms of social protest actions. (cf. Hanna et al., 2016). In addition, the respective authors note that many forms of protest actions are undertaken in combination with other forms. For instance, a street march will normally commence with a rally; participants will normally display banners, placards and signs; and there may be singing and chanting. Thus, there is a high degree of overlap between the forms, and orchestration between them is a strategic part of protest actions (Hanna et al., 2016).

In South Africa, popular forms of protesting include mass meetings, drafting of memoranda, petitions, toyi-toying, processions, stay-aways, election boycotts, blockading of roads, construction of barricades, burning of tyres, looting, destruction of buildings, chasing unpopular individuals out of townships, confrontations with police and forced resignation of elected officials (Alexander, 2010). Mottiar and Bond (2010) reviewed 133 articles and established that certain protest tactics are favoured for specific protest reasons. In the case of protests related to service delivery and political accountability, burning tyres and barricading roads seemed to be the most favoured methods of protest. The burning of tyres stretches back to the apartheid era where those believed to be involved in corruption or informants of the apartheid state were sometimes subject to "necklace" burning (a tyre set alight around the neck) (Ball, 1994). In 1990 it was estimated there had been 428 necklacings since 1985 (Ball, 1994). Protest by workers favoured the method of strike action, marching, demonstrating and picketing. Likewise, student protest utilised tactics of strike and boycott, as well as marching, demonstrating and picketing but also included destroying property and vandalism, as well as intimidation and disruption. The most common methods used in protest relating to highlighting a cause were marching, demonstrating and picketing, including the use of petitions and memoranda. With respect to demanding justice, the preferred protest method was sometimes physical assault of perceived perpetrators and the chasing of perceived perpetrators from their homes. Protest in the form of xenophobic attacks included higher levels of looting, property destruction and vandalism.

Despite the wide-ranging forms that protest can take and based on the above, Hanna et al. (2016) argue that they contribute to only seven functions which are information; fundraising; publicity; mobilisation; solidarity building; political pressure; and direct action. In social protest actions, the forms and functions typically are combined in order to increase the efficacy of the protest in attaining desired end goals. In South Africa, however, protest repertoires are yet to be viewed as complementary to normal channels of political participation (Mottiar & Bond, 2010). This is evident in both the Local Government Turnaround Strategy and the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Coordinated Oversight on Service Delivery, which are both specific government responses to protest in South Africa. The Local Government Turnaround Strategy (2009:19) identifies, “communities engaging in destructive forms of protest including withholding of payment for local taxes and services” as one of the root causes of municipal failure, even though many would consider it a symptom. The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Coordinated Oversight on Service Delivery likewise argues that a lack of municipal community interface is what causes communities to “take to the streets and protest”. The report recommends that the ward committee model be refined to give effect to participatory democracy in communities (Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Coordinated Oversight on Service Delivery, 2010:47).

Be that as it may, protest forms generally follow certain accepted norms, but like any other performance, each repertoire is subject to innovation and improvisation. Thus, the set of forms and each form of protest in itself are not static, but change over time and across socio-cultural and political contexts. There has however been growing concern about social protest actions in South Africa assuming a violent rather than a disruptive nature in the pursuit and attainment of the desired change (Alexander et al., 2018).

3.5.1. VIOLENCE, SECURITY AND STATE RESPONSE TO SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

In principle, social protest actions are non-violent, engaging and beginning as peaceful civil disobedience (Castells, 2012). However, they are bound to be involved in the occupation of public spaces, utilising disruptive tactics as their preferred means to desired end goals (Castells, 2012). Globally, and particularly in South Africa, the reaction of the government to local protest actions has ranged from contrition and negotiation to autocratic obstinacy (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017; Gaqa, 2018; Giliomee, 2020). Arguably, there has been concern that autocratic obstinacy has usually surpassed any form of resolve by the state. The relations between the state and vulnerable populations have been worryingly underlined by vehement and heavy-handed police responses (Beall, Gelb & Hassim, 2005). Desai (2002) and Royeppen (2016) contend that the police and state’s responses to protest today, in many ways alarmingly mirrors the responses to protest during the apartheid era.

Indeed, as the number of protests has grown, there has been an emergence of highly securitised policing. Research by Newham and Faull (2011) has shown that the police in South Africa use paramilitary tactics that disregard human rights, much to the detriment of police and community relations. The state has been responding brutally to both urban and township protests, viciously assaulting, arresting, issuing charges and indiscriminately accusing all protesters as criminals. (Desai, 2002). It, admittedly, would be wrong to view all protesting residents as being non-violent. To this end, Fakir (2014) argues that those who participate in protest actions predictably become violent, but the enacting of violence on the side of the protesters could be viewed as the only way in which they feel they are recognised and heard. In many ways the resolution of the state to protest demands only after severe violent encounters by protesters simultaneously serves to rationalise respective repertoires as, “the only” and effective way to attain desired goals by protesters and the legitimatisation of discriminating use of force by the state. A vicious and violent cycle abounds therefrom.

According to the Regulations of Gatherings Act 205 of 1993, gatherings should be dispersed forcefully only under the most extreme of conditions: where there is no other way of guaranteeing public safety, and when the protestors have been warned to disperse. No protest that is peaceful and unarmed should be dispersed (Duncan &

Paolo, 2015). Critics have argued that the aggressive crowd control methods of the police have, in many instances, provoked peaceful and legitimate protesters into responding with violence (Alexander, 2010; Omar, 2006; Runciman et al., 2016). For instance, the manner in which the police dealt with protesters during the Marikana massacre, #FeesMustFall, and #RhodesMustFall protests, to mention a few, is considered as prime brutality in response to legitimate protest by the state (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017; Khambule et al., 2019). More recently, SAPS officers violently dispersed students who were protesting against the financial exclusion of students at the University of the Witwatersrand (C19 People's Coalition, 2021). Police used rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades. A number of people were injured and their response included the death of a student. This has rightly led to a renewed and much more boisterous call, among other things, to de-fund and demilitarise the police (C19 People's Coalition, 2021).

To add insult to injury, when covering the growth in protest actions, the media has not helped in curtailing violent police responses to protest. Media reports often focus on the reaction of authorities regarding the restoration of order and the safeguarding of public property. The media, and some scholars, have furthermore made simple violent/nonviolent and orderly/disorderly binary distinctions about various protest actions. Not only are such subdivisions reductive, they further lead to biasing audiences against certain social protest actions and presenting a false dichotomy between "good" and "bad" protesters (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017; Alexander et al., 2018). By this, the inaccurate stigmas attached to protesters persist and the poor are stripped of their right to participation.

Communities exercising their constitutional rights to protest as entrenched in Section 17 of the South African Constitution, are denied their right to assemble and associate freely and safely (Nyar & Wray, 2012:31). This means the systematic criminalisation, undermining and delegitimisation of protest by the vulnerable and oppressed populations. Duncan and Paolo (2015) succinctly describe the purpose and effect of this as to prevent legitimate political activity (protected in section 19 of the Constitution); silence legitimate expression (protected in section 16 of the Constitution); prevent the exercise of the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions (protected in section 17 of the Constitution); limit freedom to associate (protected in section 18 of the Constitution);

infringe the human dignity of those affected (protected in section 10 of the Constitution); infringe the freedom and security of the person of those affected (protected in section 12 of the Constitution); invade the privacy of those affected (protected in section 14 of the Constitution); and inhibit the freedom of conscience and belief of those affected (protected in section 15 of the Constitution).

In contrast, given the limiting nature of the mentioned dichotomies for analytical research, Alexander et al. (2017) developed a more nuanced approach to categorising different types of protest actions. They, more specifically, use “order” and “violence” as dividing lines. Because all peaceful protests are orderly and all violent protests are disorderly, it is possible to discern a three-way categorisation: (1) peaceful, (2) disruptive (i.e. disorderly but not violent) and (3) violent (Alexander et al., 2017). Understanding turmoil based on this categorisation is not only sympathetic to protesters and to the history of protest but also better captures the changing dynamics of protests (Alexander et al., 2017). This, further, is alive to the police’s concerns of both preventing disorder and policing violence. Undeniably and as mentioned before, whether one applies a three-way distinction, or the simple binary used by the media, there has been growing turmoil in protest actions. The rise in violent and destructive protests has recently escalated to include structures of society, such as the burning of schools and universities, and the destruction of public infrastructure such as trains, buses, shopping malls and municipal buildings (Khambule et al., 2019). Yet, such violence and pure criminality by marauding gangs who masquerade as protesters should be distinguished from legitimate protests for social change.

Of course, the state police bear the immense responsibility of determining whether force is necessary in a particular situation and, if so, precisely how much is proportional to the threat they face. They are often required to strike this balance in a matter of seconds under complex and hazardous conditions. Be that as it may, they ought to always be mindful of the general principles relating to the use of force and international as well as national human rights law. Police conduct must be constrained within constitutional parameters such as the necessity of proportional responses, and astute police management of crowd expectations (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2020).

In policing violence, the OHCHR (2020) dictates that states must supply law enforcement officials with effective, less-lethal weapons, and train them in their lawful use. Less-lethal weapons include police batons; hand-held chemical irritants; chemical irritants launched at a distance (tear gas); conducted electrical weapons (tasers); kinetic impact projectiles such as rubber bullets, plastic bullets, impact rounds, baton rounds or bean bags; dazzling weapons, for example lasers or light-emitting diodes and water cannons (OHCHR, 2020). However, as indicated before, law enforcement officials use less-lethal weapons improperly in some cases, leading to serious injury or even death of protestors.

Instead, any use of force by state police should comply with the principles of legality, precaution, necessity, proportionality, non-discrimination and accountability (OHCHR, 2020). Law enforcement officials should respect and protect the right of peaceful assembly without discrimination and in accordance with international law (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 21; Human Rights Council resolution 25/38, paras. 3 - 4). The UN moreover has striven to provide law enforcement officials with guidance on the use of force in compliance with international human rights law (cf. Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials; the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials; the UNODC/OHCHR Resource book on the use of force and firearms in law enforcement; and the OHCHR Guidance and Training Package on Human Rights and Law Enforcement).

Above all, government’s response to a specific protest can be (and should be) mediated by public opinion (Dahl, 1973). The responsiveness of government policies to the preferences of citizens is an essential element of most normative and empirical theories of democracy. In practice, however, the policy-attitude relationship is not perfectly linear and government can enact policies that defy popular opinion. Nonetheless, the correlation between public opinion and public policy is considered a moral good and a crucial characteristic of successful democratic governance (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017). This is more so in South Africa with its despicable and oppressive history regarding the majority of the nation’s people.

Considering the increasing inequality in South Africa and the world at large, the pressure for social development, the proliferation of new ICTs that enable seamless organisation and extension of protest reach, it would be naïve to imagine that protests will fade away any time soon. Even though the state and its allies would arguably work to tramp on any action that seems to be a threat to the maintenance of the status quo. How social work fits in this intricate mosaic remains largely unspecified yet immensely critical given its social justice and human rights value base.

3.6. SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS WITHIN A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Globally and locally, the practice of social work has been significantly influenced by the challenges of underdevelopment; lack and abuse of human rights; and the detrimental effects of globalisation and neoliberalism (Dominelli, 2010; Healy, 2008; Kendall, 2008, Ioakimidis, 2021). As alluded to in the previous chapter, the effect of neoliberalism in South Africa and the world at large has been the development of a social work profession that focuses more on survival than actually servicing communities and facilitating social change (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). The language and principles of a neoliberal discourse have gradually displaced the language of participation, equality, relationship and social justice that emerged in the developmental social work approach (Heller, 2000).

To reiterate, South African social work finds itself in two dimensions or practice arenas. On the one hand, there is the neoliberal-influenced professional practice, which is largely undemocratic and authoritarian, unaccountable, aimed at social control, and ineffective with regard to the needs of the disadvantaged majority (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). Social work approaches in this regard have been individualistic, seeking markets as the primary mechanism for meeting the needs of vulnerable populations and state intervention in welfare planning (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). Conversely, although yet to be realised, the social development approach largely represents democratic, participatory, empowering and effective welfare principles aimed at redistribution and is responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged majorities. In this regard, social work offers an approach that is developmental in emphasising both the individual and the collective in the context of an enabling environment (Patel, 1992:152).

However, the dominant social work narrative conforms to neoliberal discourse, and also exalts social change while working towards adaptation to toxic socioeconomic conditions (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). As result, counter-narratives are silenced due to the need for “the logic of narrative coherence” (Reisch, 2013:73). Despite this, social work has always had more radical and critical forerunners, and has linked with social movements and social protest actions such as labour, feminism, socialism and civil rights. As illustrated in the previous chapter, social work provided support for groups that reflected the collective voice of people, empowered them and gave them the opportunity to exercise their agency (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). Conflict, it is argued, is an inevitable part of social change efforts. It is argued that politics and practice are inseparable, and that social work practice and social work education are arenas for ongoing struggle (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). In the context of increasing global and local inequality, as well as the unrelenting structural and systematic oppression which assume subtle forms under the guise of democracy, social workers need and must reassert this heritage today as it epitomises the ethos of social development (Ioakimidis, 2016; Noyoo, 2006; Sewpaul, 2005; Smith, 2015). Social protest actions and social movement approaches are expected to give social work a more radical perspective for social change and thus provide valuable discourse for inclusion into social work literature and practice.

The more radical approach in social work is that of social action. In principle, Smith (2015), as well as the researcher, assert that it is useful to contrast this approach with traditional social work and with social movement and social protest action strategies and approaches (see Table 1). The conservative nature of traditional social work in its status quo maintenance and social control forms (cf. Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004; Ioakimidis, 2016) is strongly contrasted with the nature and processes of social movements and social protest actions. Social action, as a form of macro practice and community work intervention, is more closely aligned to the themes identified in the processes of social movements and social protest actions. See table 1 for a comparison of social movements/social protest actions, social action and traditional social work, followed by a synthesised discussion.

Table 1: Comparison: Social movements/social protest actions, social action and traditional social work

Category	Social movements and social protest actions	Social action	Traditional social work
Formation	Precipitating social conditions	Social issues, disadvantage, injustice,	Needs, institutional shortcomings

		human rights violations	
Principles	Participation, dignity, sacrifice, democracy, discipline, solidarity, fairness, collectively	Social justice, rights-based, participation	Respect, person-centred, self-determination, non-judgemental
Theory, ideology	Marxist, socialist collectivist, Revolutionary change, anti-colonialist, structural class analysis	Socialist-collectivist, human rights and social justice, anti-oppressive practice, Freirean approaches, structural and agency focus	Developmental, institutional reformist, liberal, rational economic, agency above structural focus, eco-systemic, strengths
Structure and organisation	Strong leadership, membership, organised, disciplined, democratic	Organised, democratic, participative, spontaneous	Service provider and client/service user, needs-based
Goals	Radically transformed society, alternative social structures	Social justice and human rights realisation	Adaptation, wellbeing, coping, enhanced social functioning
Strategies for change	Mobilisation, coercive, challenging, insurgence, struggle and resistance, adversarial	Needs-based, conscientisation, mobilisation, conflictual or consensual, cooperative or adversarial	Problem identification, rational planning, institutional change, dialogue, consensual, cooperative
Assumptions about society	Structural oppression, asymmetrical power relations, class struggle, alienation, contradictions in capitalism	Disadvantaged populations, social injustice, inequality and deprivation	Substantive social problems, inequality, disadvantage, deficits and/or strengths, individualist
Programmes and activities	Mobilisation, political education, protest and collective action, alliance formation, emergency responses, legal action	Organisation, liberatory education, conscientisation, collective action, consensus or conflictual	Micro/meso/macro interventions, education, various therapeutic approaches, problem-solving approach, change process
Role of social worker	Participant, member, collaborator, resource, activist	Organiser, facilitator, educator, activist	Therapist, care manager, community worker, development worker, entrepreneur

Social work knowledge constitutive of social change	Revolutionary and radical, critical approaches, transformative approaches	Institutional and societal reformist, transformative, critical, radical, anti-oppressive, anti-racist	Oppressive, domesticating, social control, status-quo maintenance, reformist

(Adapted from Smith, 2015)

In South Africa, social development is concerned with empowerment; non-remedial intervention; participation and networks; and concern with economic development (Gray & Simpson, 1998). Developmental social work, like anti-oppressive practice and structural and empowerment approaches, calls on social workers to engage in social action, which can take many forms. Social action involves all activities relating to social change, including advocacy, mediation, consciousness-raising, empowerment and cooperative development, to mention a few (Gray, Van Rooyen, Rennie & Gaha, 2002). The above-mentioned roles need to be more nuanced, however. This is attempted in Chapter 4. Social capital and collective identity is built through mobilising people and communities ultimately enhance their collective wellbeing by ensuring active and lasting improvements in their life situations. As indicated above, the interminable pursuit for social justice and human rights formulates the stimulus for such a radical approach to social change.

Critical consciousness composed of critical reflection and critical action is fundamental to understanding the structural and systematic oppression that the majority of the nation’s people continuously endure (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011). This, among other things, facilitates the understanding that social transformation and a humane society cannot be built on a sustainable basis in the midst of the significant economic inequality that manifests in a range of social issues, injustices and human rights violations. Inequality enables the very social and political polarisation on which fascist and nativist ideas ferment. As such, Leonard (1997:166) calls for a practice that “enables subjects to express individual resistance to domination and the possibility of participating in collective resistance in the pursuit of claims for welfare”. Creating spaces for resistance and solidarity is key to this (Turton & Van Breda, 2019).

But, for such initiatives to be sustained, reflexive dialogue and critical engagement need to occur on a consistent basis within organisations and social service agencies, without fear of reprisal. In support of people-to-people solidarity, these initiatives need the backing of bodies such as the National Association of Social Workers South Africa (NASWSA), the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI), the National Coalition of Social Services (NCSS), the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), Social Work Action Network South Africa (SWANSA) and other key trade unions that social workers belong to (Sewpaul & Hölscher, 2004).

Unfortunately, as discussed in the previous chapter, examples of purposeful resistance by social workers, and activism in general, have been rare in the South African social work arena. At best, passive resistance has been more commonly practised by, for example, leaving the workplace (Sewpaul & Hölscher, 2004). To be equal, there has been an increase in the frequency of political interference in the roles of social workers in the public sector (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015). Social workers are kept busy with routine activities that leave no time for reflexive practice or engaging communities in reflexive dialogue and resistance politics. Beyond South Africa, Lavalette and Ferguson (2007) discuss the anger and demoralisation of social workers in local authorities in the UK.

Further, because of neoliberalism and managerialism, the rationalisation of resources and downsizing of staff, other than investments in social capital, have become naturalised features of many social work organisations (Chomsky, 1999; Lavalette & Ferguson, 2007). As if that is not enough, these anti progressive practices have been accompanied by incentives for staff who do comply, and with disincentives and threats for those who do not, so much so that ethical resistance politics are losing ground, both in social work practice and in academia (Sewpaul, 2014a). Moreover, given the severity and intensity of psychosocial problems faced by the majority of South Africans together with the urgency with which these cases have to be dealt with, high caseloads and poor resources, it is perhaps little wonder why social workers do not engage in any form of significant activism.

This being so, social work should and must aspire to “greater system destabilising and social change efforts, and not its traditional social control and status-quo-maintaining functions" (Sewpaul, 2013: 23). Such is the need and ethical imperative for radical approaches towards social change in the context and presence of dominant neoliberal global discourses.

3.6.1. SOCIAL WORK ETHICS

Codes of ethics delineate important values and principles for social work practice, both locally and globally. South African social work has both a code of ethics and a code of conduct (South African Council for Social Service Professions' Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers, 2012). Ethics are at the heart of social work practice, providing both a framework and impetus to identify and resist oppressive discourses, as well as create and enact more empowering and socially just alternatives (Rossiter, 2005; Ife, 2012; Banks, 2012). Specifically, and consistent with this thesis's main thrust, the SACSSP's (2012) code of ethics mandates all social work professionals to aspire and subscribe to the values and principles of social justice, respect for people's worth, human rights and dignity.

In cognisance of the above-mentioned values and principles, social workers have an ethical responsibility towards the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice in the profession in which they work and to uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge and mission of the profession (SACSSP, 2012). Further, in practice settings, social workers ought to advocate for sufficient resources for the people they serve and show a commitment to their employers (SACSSP, 2012). Beyond the profession and practice settings, all social workers have an ethical responsibility to the society in which they are committed to social development as well as social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to services and the opportunities they require to meet basic human needs and to develop fully (SACSSP, 2012).

Yet, social workers still are confronted with a range of ethical issues that arise from the multiplicity and contradiction of values and principles that characterise contemporary society (Harrington & Dolgoff, 2008; Holscher & Sewpaul, 2006; Sewpaul & Henrickson, 2019). To reiterate the example highlighted in Chapter 1, a social protest action by social workers in South Africa in 2016, saw the removal of 90 high-risk children from a youth and childcare centre with the resultant death of a 6-month old infant. On the one hand, the SACSSP's ethical code mandates social work professionals to challenge defamation of human rights and to respond by rendering services to those in need due to social injustice (SACSSP, 2012). Conversely, social workers also are expected to maintain their professional ethical conduct while respecting the inherent dignity and worth of a person, to behave in a trustworthy manner, and to do no harm (SACSSP, 2012).

To further compound the ethical predicaments faced by social workers, the positioning of social work between the state and the people creates a range of ethical dilemmas. Although social work in South Africa is operationalised based on social development principles, the dominance of neoliberal capitalism co-opts the profession to the maintenance of the corporatist and capitalist system (Lombard, 2015). With the rising infiltration of managerialist principles in social work, such as employing efficiency and cost-effectiveness as a yardstick, and the preoccupation with procedures, norms and standards, the capacity of social workers to act from a critical framework is heavily undermined (Allan et al., 2009; Engelbrecht, 2015; Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Holscher & Sewpaul, 2006).

Practitioners have to honour commitments to employing organisations, as well as comply with all relevant legal provisions. The goals and objectives of most organisations and social service agencies are not always congruent with the primary mission of the social work profession as espoused in the Global definition of social work, however. Organisational maintenance and survival demands may, for instance, lead to rules that contradict the primary service obligation of social workers (Mullaly, 2007; Sewpaul, 2010). Budgetary considerations may result in service cutbacks that may not necessarily be in the client's best interest. In such situations, social workers are confronted with, and have to resolve critical ethical dilemmas by engaging in an ethical decision-making process based on a reasonably coherent set of ethical principles that can stand up to public scrutiny (SACSSP, 2012; Sewpaul & Henrickson, 2019).

With regard to ethical decision making, Loewenberg and Dolgoff (1988) in their original publication developed a hierarchy of ethical principles [Ethical Principles Screen] to assist practitioners in making decisions when codes of ethics do not directly address an issue or the applicable code of ethics provides conflicting guidance. It is fundamental to indicate that there is no one 'right' hierarchy of ethical principles or even that there should be agreement on a hierarchy, but it may be useful to consider the implications of different priorities (Harrington & Dolgoff, 2008; Loewenberg & Dolgoff, 1988). Table 2, below, presents a rank ordering of ethical principles and ethical obligations according to Loewenberg and Dolgoff (1988). Here, the operating rule is that the satisfaction of a high order obligation takes precedence over the satisfaction of a lower order obligation.

Table 2: Ethical Principles Screen

1. Social workers should make professional decisions that guarantee the basic survival needs of individuals and society. The protection of a human life (both the life of a client and the lives of others) must take precedence over every other obligation. This means protecting human life might include health services, food, shelter, income, etc.
2. Social workers should make practice decisions that foster equality of opportunity and equality of access for all people.
3. Social workers should make practice decisions that foster a person's autonomy, independence, and freedom.
4. Social workers should make practice decisions that are likely to lead to the least harm or repairable harm to people.
5. Social workers should make practice decisions that promote the best possible quality of life for all people.
6. Social workers should make practice decisions that strengthen every person's rights to privacy.
7. Social workers should make practice decisions that permit the speaking of truth and the full disclosure of all relevant information.

(Adapted from Loewenberg & Dolgoff, 1988)

Together with the points of departure regarding human rights and social justice in Chapter 2, these seven principles correspond with the principles of human rights and human dignity, as well as social justice as identified by the IFSW (2014), IASSW (2018) and the White Paper for social welfare (RSA, 1997). Under human rights and human dignity, the IFSW (2014) and IASSW (2018) specifically list self-determination; full involvement in decision making by people using social work services; treating the person as a whole; and promoting empowerment. With the social justice principle, they indicate that social workers should challenge discrimination and unjust policies, while recognising diversity and vying for the equitable distribution of resources (IFSW, 2014; IASSW, 2018; DSD, 2016). Although the hierarchy has been used frequently (See for example, Cournoyer, 2000; Engelbrecht, 1999; Hardina, 2004; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 1993; Linzer, 1999; McAuliffe & Ferman, 2002; Sheafor & Horejsi, 2006), the degree to which social workers accept or agree with this model is unknown. However, while there may be little agreement on the model or the ranking of ethical principles, such a hierarchy can be useful facilitating decision making regarding ethical dilemmas.

Arguably, the lack of an agreed upon model or indeed hierarchy of ethical principles suggests that ethical decisions do, to at least some extent, depend on context (Behnke, 2005). Codes of ethics must therefore be contextualised and situated within a time, location, agency, and purpose (Banks, 1998; Butler, 2002). They should be "living" documents that are constantly evolving (Hugman, 2003). Social workers carry a major responsibility for practicing in an ethical way. Nevertheless, social agencies and professional organisations also have a responsibility for activating review mechanisms and support systems that foster ethical decision making and ethical practice. They are the structures that provide the setting within which individual practitioners function and support systems that tend to encourage or discourage ethical practice. Thus, a critical understanding of ethics is needed to comprehend neoliberalism and formulate resistance to its consequences. Critical voices in social work contend that "true" ethical practice should promote democracy, equity, human rights and social justice within a critique of the existing socio-political, economic, cultural, historical and gendered structures (Thomson, 2006; Mullaly, 2007; Hugman, 2010; Banks, 2012; Ife, 2012).

3.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to discuss the elements, nature, reasons and ethics regarding social protest actions within global and local social work contexts. Far from being reverting and other negative and inaccurate stigmas associated with social protesting and the actions they stage, protest is a valuable and fundamental resource with which the poor and vulnerable populations fight for their constitutionally guaranteed rights and eventual holistic social transformation. Social protest actions are not impromptu; instead they involve complex interconnected processes from their formation to their eventual decline.

Structural, social constructivist and psychosocial approaches offer critical insights. They propose that a combination of resources, political opportunity, framing, identity, emotions and efficacy are behind the formation of, and participation in, social protest actions. How people protest is embedded in and varies with socio-political contexts. Despite the said variations in forms of protest, it is argued they all contribute to the functions of information, funding, publicising, mobilsation, solidarity building, political pressure and direct action. In South Africa, protest actions have ranged from industrial strike actions to struggles for basic socio-economic guaranteed rights such as nourishment, housing, education, which as a whole reveal general dissatisfaction with government services. Instead of constructive dialogue and more transformative approaches, the state has been responding violently and indiscriminately to social protest actions. The improper use of less lethal weapons have led to serious injuries and at times the death of protesters fighting for improved life situations. In turn, protesters have at times unfortunately also mirrored such regressive actions much to the detriment of their already impoverished communities.

Developmental social work calls on social work to engage in critical reflection and social action. This constitutes ethical practice that should, among other things, promote equality, human rights, social justice. Social work must aspire to greater system destabilising and social change efforts with unbridled enthusiasm, and not its renowned traditional social control and status quo maintaining functions. Spaces for solidarity and resistance are key to these efforts and the need for support by social work institutions such as SACSSP, SWANSA, NASWSA, ASASWEI, IFSW cannot be stressed enough.

In the next chapter the roles social workers can potentially fulfil in social protest actions are examined and synthesised.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL WORK ROLES IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Hitherto, this thesis, inter alia, has earnestly attempted to discuss radical social work within South Africa's social development paradigm, and to demonstrate the robust connection between social work and social protest actions. The said efforts have subsequently resulted in the formulation of a theoretical framework from which one might be able to understand and, better yet, discern the possible roles social workers may fulfill in social protest actions. But what exactly do we mean by "roles"? There exists little consensus in available literature about the definitions of roles, the extent of the range of possible roles or their desirability (Henderson & Thomas, 2013). Despite this and quite ironically there is a proliferation of roles that unfortunately are not fully matched by attempts to define and describe the activities associated with them (Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Suppes & Wells, 2003).

Generalist international authors such as Johnson and Yanca (2007), Engelbrecht (1999), Kirst-Ashman (2013) and Zastrow (2013) established the roles of social work in the previous millennium, specifically as counsellor, broker, expert, leader, manager, advocate, activist and enabler. However, these roles are traditional generalist intervention roles, which may hold different nuances from those implicated by the Global social work definition (IFSW, 2014), which alludes to the active role of social work in facilitating social change, social development, liberation and empowerment of people (cf. Banks, 2012; Beckett & Maynard, 2012; Healy, 2011; Ornellas et al., 2018).

As such, the third objective of this study aims to examine and synthesise the roles social workers may potentially fulfil in social protest actions based on the implications of:

- radical social work, critical consciousness and a HRBA to social welfare within a South African social development paradigm; and
- the elements, nature, reasons and ethics regarding social protest actions for social workers.

4.2. ROLE THEORY

In an attempt to answer the question of what is meant by “roles”, role theory is considered to offer important insights. The magnitude of role theory is so broad and complex, however, that it cannot possibly be summarised in a few paragraphs (cf. Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Biddle, 1986). Rather, a concise account of the former mentioned theory is attempted here.

Concepts of role theory can be traced back to the 19th century, although the use of the term “role” only became common in the 1930s (Biddle & Thomas, 1966). As the term role suggests, the theory began life as a theatrical metaphor. Earlier proponents of role theory contended that if performances in the theatre were differentiated and predictable because actors were constrained to perform “parts” for which “scripts” were written, then it seemed reasonable to believe that social behaviours in other contexts were also associated with parts and scripts understood by social actors (Biddle, 1986). By this logic, role theory may be said to concern itself with a triad of concepts, i.e. patterned and characteristic social behaviours (roles); parts or identities that are assumed by social participants (social position); and scripts (expectations) for behaviour that are understood by all and adhered to by performers (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 1968).

Primary role theory authors like Georg Simmel (1920), George Herbert Mead (1934), Jacob Moreno (1934) and Ralph Linton (1936), however differed in the ways they operationalised the previously mentioned role terms. Consequently, whereas some authors use the term role to refer to characteristic behaviours (Biddle, 1979; Burt, 1982), others use it to designate social parts to be played (Winship & Mandel, 1983), and still others offer definitions that focus on scripts for social conduct (Bates & Harvey, 1975; Zurcher, 1983). Evidently, all the previously mentioned and differing points of departure focus our attention on a unique set of phenomena often associated with roles. The net effect thereof is apparent in the plurality of role theories in current related literature (Biddle, 1979; Herbert, 1967; Turner, 1974). Despite this, it is worth pointing out that, although the different conceptualisations of role concepts already mentioned appear substantial, the problem is terminological rather than substantive. Agreement persists among role theorists that the basic concerns of the orientation are with characteristic behaviours, parts to be played, and scripts for behaviour (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 1978).

Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, the concept of role(s) centres on behaviours that are characteristic of person(s) in a given context (Biddle, 1986). The mentioned definition hangs on four intricate terms: behaviour, person, context and characteristicness. Roles are behavioural and only those overt actions or performances that may be observed are considered here. In addition, roles are performed by persons and are normally limited in one way or the other by contextual specification. Moreover, roles consist of those behaviours that are characteristic of a set of persons and a context (Biddle, 1986; Turner & Shosid, 1976; Turner, 1978).

In social work, role theory arguably emerged together with the evolution of social casework (Herbert, 1967). Kadushin (1959), Love and Mayer (1959), and Perlman (1957), discuss the utilisation of role theory in assessing service users' social problems at length, particularly those relating to dysfunction in families. Principally, and in unison with the primary role theorist, Perlman (1957) argues that every person occupies some position in a social category of status and role. His/her status at any time is the combination of his/her age, sex and economic class, to mention a few, and certain expectations regarding responsibilities and privileges accrue to it. His/her social role, Perlman (1957) argues, consists of the major function he/she carries at a given time, with its broadly designated behaviours, responsibilities, and rewards.

In other words, the dominant convention considers "social role" to denote "the behavioural enactment of the part of the status which prescribes how the status should act toward one of the persons with whom status rights and obligations put him/her in contact" (Deutsch & Krauss, 1965:244). However, role theory stretches beyond the casework paradigm to include both meso (group work) and macro (community work) interventions, and specifically on policy, economic and political levels. Typically, these roles are operationalised by means of specific or integrated social work methods on different levels, which fall beyond the ambit of this thesis as the focus of the following discussion is on the meaning and definitions of identified roles within the context of social protest actions.

4.2.1. SUPPOSITIONS

Before examining and synthesising the range of plausible roles that social workers may potentially fulfil in social protest actions, it is essential to premise the following:

- Although stated in the role definition adopted for this thesis, all plausible roles should not be dissociated from the presenting situation or context (Compton & Galaway, 1975; Cormier & Cormier, 1985; Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013),

- Thus, all plausible roles to be discussed will be centred and should be understood within the context and implications of the previous two chapters dealing with the literature (Chapters 2 and 3),

- There may be discernible overlaps between or amongst roles as some roles are usually fulfilled in conjunction with others, which implies that a multitude of roles may be fulfilled simultaneously according to various presenting situations or circumstances (Engelbrecht, 1999);

- It ought to be clear that, to fulfil possible roles; knowledge, skills and a value orientation are necessary (Engelbrecht, 1999);

- Social workers act within roles, and this in itself demands particular behaviours, and the prospect that the social worker will be competent and able to use interactional and analytic skills, which formulate the base from which other relevant skills emerge, is implicit in the actualisation of social work roles (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994);

- Every role performed by the social worker includes cognitive components (thinking and perceptions), affective components (feelings) and social components (action and behaviour), and is always affected by the expectations and responses of others (target and action systems) (Potgieter, 1998);

- It then follows that a social worker’s role perception (vision), view of the role (interpretation) and role obligation (commitment) determines the worker’s role fulfilment (sum total of roles) (Engelbrecht, 1999);

- The social worker’s choice of role should, be a tactical or strategic decision, however;

- Sensitivity and flexibility are key to ensure the social worker adopts roles that will push forward rather than hinder the work with service users (Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Perlman, 1957);

- Some roles that the social worker may fulfil are more direct by nature than others that are non-direct by nature;

- The role fulfilment of social workers should correspond with the global statement of ethical principles and the SACSSP's ethical code (IASSW, 2018; SACSSP, 2012);

- Analogies from other related disciplines are considered key in establishing social protest action roles (Compton & Galaway, 1975);

- The researcher does not assume the range of roles discussed here as exhaustive and may well want to refine and add more upon data collection and further analysis;

- The roles are discussed in no particular order.

4.3. ROLES

The following roles are distinguished and are based on the premises above.

4.3.1. SOCIAL BROKER

The role of broker is popular in non-social work contexts such as real estate and stock markets (Grosser, 1975). It seems that Wilensky and Lebeaux were the first to suggest this for social work practice in 1958 (Grosser, 1975). The familiar stock and real estate broker roles shed light on the social broker role. Real estate agents find out a buyer's needs, wants and financial resources and they scout for an available house that seems right for the buyer (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994). For the same reason, social brokers are responsible for identifying, locating, making referrals and linking service users with required community resources in a timely manner (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Hepworth et al., 2013; Hoffman & Sallee, 1994; Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Zastrow, 2013). However, far from suitable houses and stock portfolios, social brokers deal in broader social issues relating to social justice and attainment of human rights for vulnerable populations (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994).

As a social broker, the objective is to physically connect the service user with the source of help and the physical connection of essential structures of the service system with one another (McPheeters & Ryan, 1971). Serving as a social broker thus requires broad knowledge of community resources as well as knowledge of the operating procedures of respective agencies so that effective connections are possible

(Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hepworth et al., 2013; Suppes & Wells, 2003; Potgieter, 1998). Beyond accessing resource systems, social workers ought to be able to link larger systems or agencies with each other. Here, social workers base their actions on knowledge of the community and its resources, and put people in touch with facilities and services that they are often not aware of or too scared to use (Hepworth & Larsen, 1993). Within the context of social protest action, this might involve linking service users with social work institutions like SWAN SA together with activist institutions like C19 Peoples' Coalition in the monumental efforts of attaining social change for vulnerable and oppressed populations. Change systems must be linked in order to provide adequate and effective services for vulnerable and oppressed populations.

By linking appropriate and relevant institutions together, the social worker brings the component of collective action to the broker role. Through collective "brokerage activity", the notion of collective solutions is introduced, by which relevant interventions are undertaken to affect whole classes of persons rather than a single individual (Grosser, 1975). Social brokering also includes following up on whether service users utilised respective services, discerning their value and applicability to the presenting situation and to evaluate the responsiveness and adequacy of the resources (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Garvin & Seabury, 1984; Suppes & Wells, 2003). Although discussed in detail in the following section, elements of management can be inferred within the social broker role, underlining the fact that roles often overlap (Engelbrecht, 1999).

4.3.2. MANAGER

Similar to the role of social broker, management is popular in non-social work contexts such as in business and corporate entities (Engelbrecht, 2019). Lewis, Packard and Souflee (2001) originally define management in social work as a process of making a plan to achieve a desired social end, organising people and resources needed to carry out the plan, encouraging the social workers who will be asked to perform the component tasks, and then evaluating the result. It then follows that social workers, as managers, should be competent in planning, organising, activating and controlling by means of decision making, co-ordination and communication in accordance with various relevant policies (Engelbrecht, 1999; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019).

Although nuanced differently and as hinted earlier, there are subtle similarities between the respective social broker and manager roles. In fact, distinguished authors on social work management go as far as arguing that all social work interventions involve components of management (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019; Lewis et al., 2007). The dynamism of the role of a manager is evident in a variety of literature, which sometimes distinguishes management components as separate roles (Engelbrecht, 1999; Suppes & Wells, 2003). Therefore, it is possible that all roles may have management components embedded within them.

Influencing the political process in the pursuit of human rights and social justice is a complex endeavour (O'Leary & Tsui, 2020). Effective and efficient management of separate efforts to both sustain and attain the ideals mentioned above is thus extremely crucial. Broadly, social workers as managers in social protest actions may be involved in the collaborative planning, organisation, leading and evaluation of social action strategies with service users towards identified social issues. Admittedly, the managerial components require further elaboration. This, however, goes beyond the ambit of this particular discussion (cf. Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019).

The level and depth of expertise required in becoming a competent social work manager enables the said professionals to be able to influence service users on micro, meso and macro levels. This thesis has consistently argued and demonstrated that social problems prevail because of oppressive systems and unresponsive structures (cf. Briskman, 2017; Ferguson, 2016; Ioakimidis, 2016; Patel, 2005; Sewpaul, 2014b). As such, social workers as managers have ample and relevant knowledge to influence and advocate policy changes and developments for the underprivileged and oppressed populations on a macro level (Suppes & Wells, 2003). The alignment of the manager role with macro level interventions should not be misconstrued as downplaying the need of management on micro-meso levels, though. Other roles such as that of the facilitator and organiser are better tuned to micro-meso level interventions.

4.3.3. ENABLER

Zastrow (2013) succinctly describes the enabler role as concentrated efforts by the social worker to help service users articulate their needs, clarify and identify their problems, explore resolution strategies, select and apply a strategy, and develop their capacities to deal effectively with presenting problems or issues. In other words, the enabler role entails efficiently and effectively helping service users to find ways of altering their environment (Potgieter, 1998). Implicit in this role are the functions of encouraging and facilitating self-sufficient action by service users, which promotes positive interaction between them and their environment (Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Social Work Dictionary, 1995).

Compton and Galaway (1994) suggest that the major distinguishing element of the enabler role is that of ensuring that change occurs because of client efforts with the worker performing a supporting or aiding function. The responsibility of the worker is to facilitate or enable the service user’s accomplishment of a defined change. Furthermore, Hoffman and Sallee (1994) are of the opinion that empathy is crucial in performing the enabler role. Empathy in this context refers to the human capacity to reach out to another, verbally and non-verbally and to be closely in tune with the feelings of another person or groups of persons (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hoffman & Sallee, 1994). Empathy allows understanding the other in the true light of their human dignity and worth.

In a social protest action context, the enabler role involves social workers assisting oppressed and vulnerable populations to become active participants in the pursuit of human rights and social change. This aligns with social development ideals whereby citizens are considered active participants in their own welfare and social change efforts (Midgley, 2014; Patel & Ulriksen, 2017). From a CC perspective, it was established that internalised and structural oppression is at the heart of most individual and social dysfunction (Mullaly, 2002; Windsor et al., 2014). Further CC composed of critical reflection and critical action were argued to be fundamental and necessary in understanding oppression and privilege (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998). Thus, in performing the enabler role, social workers aid service users to think critically about inequitable social conditions (critical reflection) and to subsequently take action to change them (critical action) (Mustakova-Possardt, 2003; Shin et al., 2018; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

4.3.4. FACILITATOR

The role of a facilitator emerged as a separate skill set in the 1980s and has similarities to the traditional chair or secretary roles in a meeting, but goes beyond this to include active participation and guiding a given group towards mutual consensus whilst maintaining a neutral position (Kaner et al., 2014; Straus, 2002; t2012). A facilitator can be thought of as a person who helps a group of people to work together effectively by planning meticulously and steering them to understand and attain their common objectives (Potgieter, 1998).

This thesis established that social protest actions do not take place by chance. Instead, structural (resource mobilisation and political process) and social constructivist approaches offer plausible explanations regarding the formation of these collectives (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Furthermore, structural and psychosocial approaches revealed the complex processes responsible for protest participation. With respect to this, the facilitative role of social work in social protest actions aims to ease and make relevant pursuits manageable. The International Association of Facilitators (IAF), a worldwide professional body established to promote, support and advance the art and practice of professional facilitation, suggests a variety of competencies that are essential in carrying out the facilitator role (Schuman, 2005).

As facilitators, social workers expedite the process of social change by creating collaborative relationships between service users and respective structures (Schuman, 2005). Furthermore, social workers ought to plan appropriate group processes as well as create and sustain participatory environments, stimulate activities, develop and channel resources and ensure access to expertise (Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Hepworth et al., 2013; Suppes & Wells, 2003). In addition, the social worker as a facilitator utilises professional knowledge to model positive professional attitudes and guide service users to appropriate and useful outcomes (Schuman, 2005).

4.3.5. MEDIATOR

Any pursuit for social change is likely to be met with resistance, and the occurrence of conflict is almost always inevitable (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). However, it is essential to intervene and manage conflict in order to keep it from escalating into violence. Chandler (1985) describes mediation as a process that provides a neutral forum in which disputants are encouraged to constructively resolve conflict and find mutually satisfactory resolutions or compromises to presenting issues.

Fortunately, there is burgeoning literature regarding mediation and conflict resolution procedures (cf. Miller & Simons, 1974; Moore, 1986; Smith, 1971; Tedeschi, Schlenker & Bonoma, 1973; Walton, 1969).

Typically, a mediator should remain neutral and abstain from siding with either party involved in a given matter (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013). However, from a radical standpoint, social workers should always be on the side of the vulnerable and oppressed populations as there is overwhelming evidence that shows poverty and inequality, rooted in inequitable structures and oppressive systems, as the central causes for a plethora of social issues (Briskman, 2010; Sewpaul, 2013; Turton & Van Breda, 2019). Notwithstanding this, when serving as a mediator one must listen carefully and draw out facts and feelings from both parties to determine the cause of a breakdown (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hepworth & Larsen, 1993; Hepworth et al., 2013). In this sense, a mediator is facilitative in that she/he manages the interaction between parties and facilitates open communication. After determining the nature of the breakdown, it is possible to plan for remedial action aimed at removing barriers, clarifying possible misunderstandings, and working through negative feelings (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Engelbrecht, 1999; Hepworth et al., 2013).

4.3.6. NEGOTIATOR

It is difficult to imagine attaining lasting social change without involving both the oppressor and the oppressed in respective change efforts. Further, research shows that differences are rarely settled with one side's argument holding sway over another (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1993; Salacuse, 2003; Thompson, 2005; Zartman & Kremenyuk, 2005). Instead, compromises are reached when parties gain insight into the positives of the others' perspectives in order to construct new propositions together (Gee, 2015). In essence, individual parties shape and are shaped by each other's thinking through negotiation. Negotiation is a process aimed at resolving points of difference, whereby two or more parties attempt to settle what each shall give and take, or perform and receive, or to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests in a transaction between them (Folberg & Milne, 1988; Lewicki, Saunders & Barry, 2006).

The study of negotiation has focused on two basic fundamentally different negotiation processes that are distributive and integrative (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1993; Salacuse, 2003; Thompson, 2005; Zartman & Kremenyuk, 2005). The difference in the usage of the two negotiation types depends on the mind-set of the negotiator but also on the situation. Once-off encounters where lasting relationships do not occur are more likely to produce distributive negotiations whereas lasting relationships are more likely to require integrative negotiating (Richard, 1999). Integrative negotiating seems appealing to social work, and it aligns with social development ideals in which economic, social, gender, environmental and other dimensions of a process of development are harmoniously integrated together to promote the welfare of vulnerable and oppressed populations (Midgley, 1995, 2014).

Interactional and analytics skills form the basis of negotiating (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994). Listening to opposing sides and articulating concerns and positions assist the loosening of stalemates or, conversely, the gaining of resources for service users. In addition, clearly making out relevant points known, stating how far one is willing to go, and remaining committed to a stated cause, are further hallmarks of the skilled negotiator (Folberg & Milne, 1988). All this implies and dictates that social workers acquire in-depth knowledge of the presenting situation in order to attain respective outcomes for service users.

4.3.7. ADVOCATE

Advocacy is a concept which social work borrowed from the legal profession (Compton & Galaway, 1994). It is an umbrella term that involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause. The primary objective of the social work advocate is to fight for the rights and dignity of people in need of help (Cox e al., 1979), and work to obtain needed resources by convincing others of their legitimate needs and rights (Engelbrecht, 1999; Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Simons & Aigner, 1985; Suppes & Wells, 2003; Teare & McPheeters, 1970). There are two main types of advocacy, namely case and cause advocacy. The former pertains to advocacy on behalf of individuals and families, whilst the latter refers to advocacy on behalf of a whole group or community (Hepworth et al., 2013; Johnson & Yanca, 2010). The latter is more suited for social workers in social protest actions.

Advocacy in social work is a socio-political activity, and politics arguably concerns itself with how resources are developed and distributed (Mahaffey & Hanks, 1982). As such, social workers need political knowledge and skills to bring about a more equitable redistribution of resources and attainment of human rights for service users (Mahaffey & Hanks, 1982). The obligation to assume this role and the mandate to pursue social change is re-affirmed in the respective social work policy documents and legislation such as the Global Agenda (2012); Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014); White Paper for social welfare (RSA, 1997); and in the SACSSP code of ethics, which includes advocacy in pursuit of the professional mission (SACSSP, 2012).

Cause advocacy can involve different levels of assertive intensity, ranging from discussion, education and testimony to a high level of organisational social action such as campaigns, demonstrations and strikes (Hepworth et al., 2013; Potgieter, 1998; McLeod, 2017). Social workers can testify on behalf of vulnerable populations. Testimonies must therefore be well researched, clearly and succinctly written, and presented orally in a manner that fits a particular audience (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hoffman & Sallee, 1994). This means that one must be able to analyse the social issue to be addressed adequately before delivering respective testimony. In addition, good writing skills are key in developing the skill of testifying as one may be asked to submit a written testimony and respective arguments for one’s position ought to be presented in a convincing manner (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994). Giving testimony calls upon the social work advocate to use all his or her persuasive ability. The testifier must convince the audience of the worthiness and justice of the testifier’s point of view. As such, one’s personal presence and speaking ability, similar to the litigator’s oral skills, are of great importance in effective testifying (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994).

Social workers can also advocate on behalf of vulnerable populations through campaigns. Campaigning is primarily an interactional skill, as the advocate needs to convince the audience that the respective cause is worthwhile (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994). Campaigns involve intense organisational work, as well as the ability to convey a message that can be understood by the public. In order to be persuasive, the social worker ought to conduct thorough research of the social issue that will be addressed before commencing with the campaign. In the same breath as campaigning, demonstrations and strikes are viable options in advocating for service user rights and needs. In any democracy and within a social development context, social workers must put pressure on respective systems and structures in order to change them when they seize to address the needs of vulnerable populations (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994).

4.3.8. ACTIVIST

There is a significantly wide array of literature on activism. Unfortunately, a mosaic of both conflicting and harmonious interpretations of the respective terms abound. Notwithstanding this, the history of the term "activism" arguably traces back to earlier understandings of collective behaviour and political activity (Hoffer, 1951; Merton, 1945; Park & Burgess, 1921). In fact, Goodwin and Jasper (2009) emphasise that sustained activism in the form of collective action over a period evolves into social protests and social movements. As such, earlier understandings of activism tended to focus on creating substantive changes in respective state policies and practices for the benefit of the majority (Tarrow, 1998). By this logic, activism in social work therefore involves direct efforts to promote, impede, direct or intervene in respective social issues experienced by vulnerable and oppressed populations, with the desire to make changes toward a perceived greater good.

Human rights and social justice initiatives inevitably produce partisan situations. The same reasoning that legitimates the role of advocate leads inevitably to the activist role (Grosser, 1975). As such, advocate and activist roles are complementary, and sometimes the terms are used interchangeably (Compton & Galaway, 1989). However, unlike the advocate, the activist utilises more direct strategies toward social change (Corrigan & Leonard, 1978). The activist takes the role of the advocate a step further and focuses on social reform for the good of the greater system (Lombard, 2002).

Social workers as activists seek basic institutional change and are concerned with social justice and human rights. This can be accomplished by employing social action strategies, negotiation and confrontation tactics to change the social environment or improve the social functioning of service users (Zastrow, 1992). Activities of social action in this regard include fact-finding, analysis of service user needs, research, dissemination and interpretation of information, organisation of activities with people and other efforts to mobilise public understanding and support on behalf of some existing or proposed social program (Zastrow, 2013).

Moreover, similar to the advocate, the activist has to be a proficient public speaker and must be able to motivate and inspire people (Potgieter, 1998). This role involves some emotion but should always have a sound and logical base to be effective. The aim is always to bring together social, political and economic leaders at local, provincial or national levels to initiate a process of social change in order to reform respective institutions in the pursuit of social justice and human rights (Du Bois & Miley, 1996).

4.3.9. LOBBYIST

Lobbying typically is a political activity that involves a lawful attempt to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of government officials, most often legislators or members of regulatory agencies (Rodney, 2005). Lobbying is a specifically focused form of advocacy, with the purpose to influence legislation. In social work, lobbying includes voicing the concerns of groups and communities with the goal of influencing and shaping local and national policy (Compton & Galaway, 1994). In democracies where elections are an established practice, social workers habitually elicit partisan support through lobbying political candidates and parties to have them embrace the social work agenda (Gray, Van Rooyen, Rennie & Gaha, 2003; Mendes, 2003; Reisch, 2002). Dominelli (2002b) asserts that these professional groups shape the nature of social work directly in the form of managerial directives or indirectly through budgetary allocations, organisational policies, procedures and regulations, as well as welfare statutes and legislation. In South Africa's social development context where the political environment permits, social workers ought to therefore overcome passivity and adopt lobbying as a practice strategy.

Arguably, this is one of the most effective ways of exerting pressure on politicians and other decision makers in order to have specific issues placed on their agendas (Barber, 1991; O'Brien & Murray, 1997). The political and structural nature of social issues that confront service users on a daily basis requires political solutions (Burke & Ngonyani, 2004; Midgley, 1981; Reisch, 2002). This requires social workers to work closely with service users in order to develop an alternative vision or agenda that addresses their concerns; initiate a debate on such an agenda; and lobby for bipartisan support (Mmatli, 2008). This implies that social workers need to truly understand the vision and mission of social work as encapsulated in the Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014); the Global Agenda (IFSW, 2012) and the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997), and use social work values as reference points while regarding the plight of service users as a moral and ethical challenge (SACSSP, 2012). Furthermore, it ought to be clear that social workers' political involvement has nothing to do with the so-called left or right wings. In other words, the pursuit for human rights and social justice transcends party politics and their respective philosophical orientations.

Within the context of social protest actions, social workers must solicit a support base before lobbying on respective social issues (Rodney, 2005). Unfortunately, social work on its own is relatively powerless to effect significant change in the lived realities of the disadvantaged masses of its service users (Barber, 1991; Midgley, 1981). As such, it is fundamental to get relevant organisations and individuals alike, who can support the social work cause. Further, it is considered good practice to invite decision makers to make on-site inspections, if appropriate, of respective social issues that require addressing. Moreover, involving the media is sometimes a powerful persuader as the more publicity respective social issues receive, the more the pressure on decision makers to address them. In addition, petitions can be effective in demonstrating popular support for respective social issues that service users wish to address. Lastly but certainly not the least, social workers can lobby of on behalf of service users through face-to-face meetings in which they succinctly provide an agenda, methods, and a list of possible outcomes with regard to respective social issues.

4.3.10. COUNSELLOR

Within respective social work literature, the counsellor and therapist roles are often used interchangeably and as separate roles all together (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Engelbrecht, 1999; Potgieter, 1998). On inquiry, however, a critical review of the historical development, philosophical and theoretical understandings, as well as the current practice base, demonstrates intricate parallels between the respective concepts (cf. Gilliland & James, 2003; Richards, 2008). Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that, "counselling" is a label applied to widespread activities carried out by non-social workers such as psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, therapists, clergy, lay people, trained volunteers and others (Noble, 2019). Hence, it is fundamental to establish what counselling in social work pertains to, particularly in the context of social protest actions.

Akin to social work, counselling is not a single way of working. Instead, it includes several major schools of thought and practice, with differing theoretical underpinnings

(Noble, 2019). A plethora of approaches to the practice of counselling abounds in the respective literature (cf. Corey, 1997; Davies & Neale, 1996; Egan, 1990; Heron, 1997; Jacobs 1995; Lago & Thompson, 1996; McLeod, 1998). Given the plurality of possible counselling approaches, the provision of counselling as a generic term can be misleading. However, a comprehensive analysis of the concept stretches beyond the bounds of this discussion. For the purpose of this thesis, counselling is regarded as a principled relationship that is characterised by the application of one or more psychological theories and a recognised set of communication skills modified by experience, intuition and other interpersonal factors, to service the intimate concerns, problems or aspirations of users (Feltham, 1995). In addition, it should be understood the predominant counselling ethos in this regard to be that of facilitation rather than that of advice giving or coercion (Seden, 2005).

In the role of counsellor, the social worker helps service users to express their needs; clarify their problems; explore strategies for resolution; and apply intervention strategies to develop and expand client capacities to deal with their problems more effectively (Potgieter, 1998; Sheafor, Horesji & Horesji, 1992). A key function of this role thus is to empower service users by affirming their personal strengths and their capacities to deal with their problems more effectively. In order to carry out this role, the social worker should have broad and comprehensive knowledge of human behaviour and a thorough understanding of how the social environment impacts people (Sheafor et al., 1992). Furthermore, relationship-building skills are essential for quality counselling practice, especially when people who need social work services are anxious, angry, distressed or upset because of their lived realities (Seden, 2005).

Practical counselling skills are relevant to all social work whatever the practice context (Seden, 2005). Such skills are documented well in respective literature across a range of approaches to counselling (cf. Brandell, 2014; Miller, 2012; Riggall, 2012; Seden, 2005). Seden (2005) emphasises that social workers need counselling skills for competent communication and skilful engagement with service users. Counselling skills and other interpersonal skills help significantly when trying to negotiate the complexity of working in large groups and community settings (Seden, 2005).

Social work counsellors need to be competent in a range of skills. Perhaps the most important are good communication skills (Seden, 2005). Communication is a critical social work skill, employed in the shared understanding of thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and aspirations and in the process of facilitating goal attainment and change. Counsellors need to be able to listen effectively and give their full attention to the service users (Egan, 1986; Miller, 2012; Shulman, 1984). They further need to be aware of body language and other non-verbal communication cues (Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Hepworth et al., 2013). Arguably, service users will often communicate non-verbally rather than verbally, so this is an important area of skill. Moreover, questioning is another important skill for counsellors. Counsellors use open-ended and close-ended questions both to improve their understanding and as an active way to help uncover the service users' feelings and emotions (Miller, 2012). In addition, counsellors use reflection to show that they have heard the service user, and to validate the service users' feelings and words (Noble, 2019). Counsellors also ought to be empathetic. Empathy means that the counsellor understands how the service users feel and can therefore ask appropriate questions and lead the client to positive conclusions (Miller, 2012; Seden, 2005).

As previously discussed, due to oppressive ideologies, discriminatory systems and unresponsive structures, South Africa is a fractured and violent society (Lund, 2007). Social protest actions for a range of basic human rights and social justice have thus been rampant. They unfortunately have often spun from disruption to extreme violence, much to the detriment of the protesters. Many injuries have been recorded and, in some cases, the unfortunate loss of life, which has amplified trauma and other psycho-social problems characteristic of impoverished communities (Ngcamu, 2019; Ngwane, 2011). In such a context, social workers ought to claim their space for therapeutic case-, group- and community work interventions as a means of continuing the healing that is so badly needed in South Africa's fractured and violent society (Lund, 2007). Furthermore, relevant decision makers ought to be included in these processes in an effort to find more amenable interventions with respect to identified social problems. As highlighted before, it is hard to imagine lasting social change without involving both the oppressor and the oppressed in efforts towards social change.

4.3.11. EMPOWERER

Inherent in the role of an empowerer is the notion of empowerment. Over time, and much like the concept of counselling, the term empowerment has been liberally applied by academics and aid workers including those in social services, social psychology, public health, adult literacy; and community development (Simon, 1994). Currently, the term is even more in vogue and has been co-opted into politics and business arenas. Empowerment has thus become an overused buzzword, and its application has tended to be ideological and superficial to the point of being meaningless and unhelpful (Oxaal & Baden, 1997). The infatuation with, and perhaps ludicrous use of, the concept of empowerment is evident in the 1997 publication of a "self-empowerment" book for dogs (Wise, 2005). Hence, it is critical to investigate empowerment's earlier understandings in order to be able to discern its function in social protest actions.

Arguably, the concept of empowerment was introduced into social work through the 1976 publication of the "Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities" by Barbara Solomon (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Wise, 2005). Solomon (1976) described empowerment as the process by which oppressed people increase power on personal, interpersonal, political, and economic levels in order to take action to gain more control over the conditions of their lives and overcome the domination to which they are subject. The primary conceptions of empowerment in social work were thus emancipatory in nature, and it was considered essential as a tool for attaining social transformation (Solomon, 1976). Apart from Barbara Solomon's insights, Freire's works on critical consciousness, which were previously discussed at length, are considered intricate to empowerment. According to Freire (1970), the development of critical consciousness is the most significant experience in gaining empowerment (Carroll & Minkler, 2000).

In practice, empowerment is extremely complex as it encompasses values, ideology, methods and outcomes, and because each individual has more or less power in different circumstances, in the same culture, and at different times (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Nevertheless, there exists substantial consensus that empowerment flows from many sources (Simon, 1994). A number of common themes can be identified in respective literature. Firstly, empowerment refers to both processes and outcomes.

As a process, empowerment is associated with situations in which individuals and groups are moving from relative powerlessness to increased power, such as collective action for human rights and social justice (Miley & DuBois, 1999; Staples, 1990; Zimmerman, 1995). The outcome dimension concerns consequences of the process and is defined as end products whereby a measure of power is achieved (Miley & DuBois, 1999; Staples, 1990; Zimmerman, 1995).

Secondly, empowerment is operative at both the personal and collective levels. Personal empowerment relates to the way people think about themselves as well as the knowledge, capacities, skills, and mastery that they actually possess. Personal empowerment is associated with increased levels of self-esteem, assertiveness, self-determination, social responsibility, critical consciousness, participatory competencies and hope (cf. Freire, 1970; Moreau, 1990; Rubenstein & Lawler, 1990; Zimmerman, 1995). On the other hand, collective empowerment refers to processes by which individuals join together to break their solitude and silence; to support and help one another; to learn together; and to develop skills for collective action (Cox, 1991; Petterman, 2002; Staples, 1990). Collective empowerment entails people getting organised around common interests and taking joint action to achieve shared goals and objectives, both by drawing on internal resources within the community and by influencing external institutions and organisations (Gutierrez et al., 1998; Zimmerman, 1995).

Thirdly, empowerment assumes that even when people are in situations of relative powerlessness, they have capacities, skills, qualifications, and assets that can serve as resources for individual or collective change (Cowger, 1994; Saleebey, 1992; Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). This way of thinking is espoused in the strengths perspective, which takes an ecological systems approach to problem solving, considering social, political and cultural, as well as individual accounts of human predicaments and possibilities, focusing not on deficits but on the resourcefulness of others (Saleebey, 1992). This belief provides service users and workers with a powerful antidote to feelings of alienation, oppression, discrimination and isolation (Saleebey, 1992). What then are the implications of these agreed-upon dimensions of empowerment for social workers and their involvement or lack thereof, in social protest actions?

The role of an empowerer is fundamental for a number of reasons. Impoverished communities and individuals tend to internalise negative valuations of themselves that have accrued over time through experiences of oppression and disadvantage, and manifesting into a culture of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1972). Noyoo (2006) furthermore remarks that oppression, as was explicitly expressed in South Africa and on societal level by the apartheid system, is not a static concept but a dynamic process. Once integrated into society's institutional order, culture and into peoples' consciousness through socialisation, oppressive tendencies come to permeate and affect almost all relations (Gil, 1998). Thus, on a grassroots level, social workers ought to conduct community interventions aimed at redressing misconceptions held by oppressed populations for them to reframe their lived realities. This is especially important under the existing democratic dispensation, which arguably masks current oppressive systems and inequitable structures in South Africa (Noyoo, 2006).

Further, these interventions for facilitating the development of human capacity and self-reliance should draw on both inherent capacities and skills of service users as well as existing community resources in order to attain personal and collective empowerment, as underpinned by the mission statement of the recently reviewed White Paper for Social Welfare (DSD, 2016). Participation in development efforts and human agency is held as one of the basic tenets of a social development approach in South Africa (Patel & Ulriksen, 2017). In addition, social workers ought to employ social action and facilitate community organisation regarding identified social issues and mobilise them to fight for respective human rights and attain social justice.

4.3.12. RESEARCHER

To be enquiring and critical is essential in the repertoire of social work practice skills in order to challenge oppression and the discriminatory contexts of the lives of service users (Everitt, 1998). While there is not an all-encompassing definition of research, it typically pertains to a scientific inquiry conducted in an attempt to explore, describe, explain and predict phenomena (Strydom, Fouché & Roestenburg, 2021). A researcher's task therefore includes questioning, generating new information, testing values and theoretical assumptions while prepared to engage in debate with those who may interpret given information or evidence differently (Engelbrecht, 1999; Potgieter, 1998).

In the role of researcher or social investigator, according Sinfield (1969), social workers have the ethical mandate to identify and reveal the harmful effects of structures and policies experienced by service users. Within the context of social protest actions, research should therefore be viewed as a professional activity in which practitioners engage critically with respective social issues in order to contribute to policy and practice with the view to reduce inequalities in society and ameliorate their effects on service users (Everitt, 1998). There is an abundance of research literature for social workers undertaking critical research and reading published research critically (cf. Broad & Fletcher, 1993; Everitt et al., 1992; Hart & Bond, 1995). Scrutiny of policy and practice does not exclude the practice of social workers themselves (Sheedy, 2013). In fact, power is exercised through all practices, including research, and to be research-minded is to be constantly alert to the ways in which our talk, our assessments, our inspections and our behaviours affect others (Everitt et al., 1992). Notwithstanding this, the researcher role assumes the availability of relevant knowledge, and requires an eagerness on the side of the social worker to engage in continuing education and research.

4.3.13. EDUCATOR

Although discussed separately, the activities of the researcher and educator are complementary in practice. Social workers as researchers and educators see the same value in engaging in inquisitiveness and questioning assumptions, beliefs, decisions and actions critically in order to be fully informed about what is going on and how to intervene effectively in a positive and influential way. There is substantial agreement among South African social work practitioners and educators that social change begins with education, and the need to constantly reposition the social work discipline to respond appropriately and effectively to changing local and global contexts (Drower, 2002; Gray, 1998; Gray et al., 1996; Lombard, 2002; Lombard, 2015; McKendrick, 1998; Noyoo, 2001; Sewpaul, 1997; Weyers, 2002). Furthermore, international educational and professional organisations reiterate this notion continuously (Hare, 2004; IASSW, 2002; IFSW, 2014).

Within the ambit of social protest actions, the social work educator is involved in empowering service users by providing relevant information; clarifying perceptions; giving advice; and identifying and modelling alternative behaviour patterns that sustain and promote the attainment of identified intervention goals (Engelbrecht, 1999; Suppes & Wells, 2003). Critical pedagogy is suited for emancipatory social work and the commitment to attaining human rights and social justice. Ife (2012) explains that, in critical pedagogy, knowledge is not natural but is contextualised, and that teacher and student together construct and reconstruct knowledge. Ife (2012) compares this dialogue with the process of dialogical praxis. The idea of Freire's (1998) "praxis" is that theory and practice, or "learning and doing", cannot be separated; it is about both knowledge and action (Ife, 2012:216). Because human rights are embedded in a praxis orientation, social work can contribute to a more just society by developing "practice skills" and "theoretical understanding" at the same time, as they effectively form part of the same process (Ife, 2012:216). By incorporating a critical stance in interventions, social workers and service users are therefore able to question, analyse and take action against oppressive structures and intolerant systems in society (Sheedy, 2013). Critical social work does not imply one method, but rather a set of principles for a practice based on questioning and analysing society and social service delivery from a "position of opposition to what undermines, disenfranchises, deprives and oppresses people" (Sheedy, 2013:90).

4.3.14. LEADER

Numerous calls for social work and its professionals to lead a collective agenda that advances social change reverberates across the global and national academic plain (cf. Bent-Goodley, 2015; Ferguson, 2016; Ioakimidis, 2013; Lombard, 2015; Sewpaul & Henrickson, 2019; Smith, 2015). However, precisely what or how such leading should be implemented remains vague. Traditionally, leadership in social work denotes the ability of a practitioner to influence and guide service users in respective interventions towards the attainment of contracted goals (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Engelbrecht, 1999; Potgieter, 1998). Unlike the conventional hierarchical and individualistic banking model, leadership in a social work context is a collaborative process between the social worker and the service user. However, the role of social workers as leaders in social protest actions may require further nuancing.

In attempt to provide clarity, the researcher argues and considers the Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership development to offer useful insights for social work leaders in social protest actions. Originally developed as a means to explore college students' ability to mobilise one another toward common goals, the SCM approaches leadership as a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change (Higher Education Research Institute [HERI], 1996). The key assumption in the SCM is that effective leadership is ultimately about positive social change on behalf of others and society (HERI, 1996; Komives, Wagner & Associates, 2017). The model examines leadership development based on specific values that are constituted within three broad spheres. On the individual level, consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment are considered important values. Group values are collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility. On a community or societal level, citizenship in the form active engagement with others toward community goals is regarded invaluable (Komives et al., 2017; Skendall et al., 2017).

Although a comprehensive discussion of these spheres and respective values cannot be offered here (cf. HERI, 1996; Komives et al., 2017), the SCM demonstrates that leadership is not simply contingent on one monolithic leader's actions; instead, leadership is a process that involves social relations and interpersonal collaboration. Further, the SCM can be considered as a transformational leadership model that involves self-awareness, group processes, and an orientation toward community to enact social change in one's environment (Skendall et al., 2017). At this point, if not clear enough, inextricable parallels between the SCM and previously discussed structural, social constructivist and psychosocial approaches that respectively attempt to explain the reasons for joining and participating in social protest actions abound.

Transformational leadership is consistent with the main tenets of the SCM and the mission of social work to attain social change. Transformational leadership, as originally conceptualised by Burns (1978), is a style of leadership that puts the values of citizenship and the public interest into practice. Burns (1978) argued that leadership is not to come from the top, but from the grassroots level, by those closest to the world's problems. Leadership scholars agree that transformation leadership centres on leaders influencing a collective agenda that advances social change (Boal & Bryson, 1988; Burns, 2003; Western, 2019; Yukl, 1989). Arguably, the goal of social change brought by transformational leaders is largely determined by the shared goals of the leader and follower, which is mediated through trust (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Podsakoff et al., 1990).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggested a direct relationship between transformational leadership and trust, since effective transformational leaders earn the trust of followers. This assertion is consistent with results from other empirical investigations of transformational leadership and trust (cf. Boal & Bryson, 1988; Burns, 1978; Denhardt & Campbell, 2006; Grant, 2012; Northouse, 2004; Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Tonkin, 2013; Yukl, 1989). In addition, a number of leadership scholars have also argued that altruism is an integral part of transformational leadership, not only because it is other-directed, but also because its ethical foundations demand that leaders subvert their own private interests (Avolio & Locke, 2002; Grant, 2012; Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Sosik, Jung & Dinger, 2009). The implications therefore are that followers will join leaders in social change efforts when they believe the leader represents shared values and operates with integrity, and the leader considers the follower's development as the end goal, thus being prosocial (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Ford, Harding & Learmonth, 2008; Malakyan, 2014).

What does all of this mean for social work leaders in a social protest action context? Transformational leadership implies that social workers facilitate for service users' critical consciousness by assisting them to frame their lived realities and their subsequent beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions accurately. This then empowers them to take actions that are consistent with the renewal of their minds and convictions. Furthermore, together with the development of critical consciousness, social workers ought to inspire and motivate service users towards collective efforts in the pursuit of human rights. Moreover, by using core interpersonal skills, communication skills, and coalition-building skills, social workers ought to bring interdisciplinary leaders together to confront the human rights and social justice issues experienced by service users. In addition, on responding to growing violence in social protest actions, transformational leadership entails that social workers should facilitate civility in controversy that enables respect and willingness to hear the others' views on respective social issues.

4.3.15. AGITATOR

As with social protest actions, the agitator role is extremely contentious. There is a clear divide in the literature between those who tolerate and those who disregard the aforementioned role altogether. The said tensions stretch all the way back to ancient

Greece where demagogues (earlier connotations for an agitator) were considered political leaders who gained popularity by arousing the common people against elites through oratory abilities and rhetoric that tended to drown out reasoned deliberation and encouraged fanatical popularity (Larson, 1964). Although fascinating for the historian, the development of the concept of the demagogue from classical to post-modern understandings is rather too comprehensive to discuss here (cf. Patapan, 2019).

Clement Attlee (Dickens, 2017) suggested an alternative and more social work-oriented conception of an agitator. According to Attlee (1920), the greatest obstacle to all social reform was not so much the opposition of stakes, but the apathy of the general public. As such, the role of an agitator was to continuously stir up and publicise social ills forced on the poor majority (Atlee, 1920). Later on, Bailey and Brake (1975) emphasised the role of the agitator in social protests, attributing much of the success of respective protests and movements to the ability of social workers to garner sustained collective action towards particular social issues. Furthermore, Reisch (2002) observes that social work efforts have been most effective when social workers have entered politics with purpose, conviction, perseverance and even with relish. More recent authors like Battilana and Kimsey (2017) affirm these assertions, highlighting the various forms agitation can assume such as demonstrations, shouting slogans and critical education, to mention a few. Additionally, unlike in the classical understanding of the demagogue, agitators in this context publicise social issues by appealing to reason, fairness and emotion (Battilana & Kimsey, 2017). Hence, agitators must fully comprehend and respect the mental models of the respective stakeholders that include allies, detractors and fence sitters, to mention a few (Battilana & Kimsey, 2017). Clearly, far from the violent nature associated with the agitator, the role requires critical analysis of the various issues, empathy, rectitude and courage to tell the truth in politicised spaces.

The socio-political function of human rights further reinforces the requirement of social workers assuming the agitator role in social protest actions. As discussed previously, social workers must ensure that “thick needs” are met through substantive rights that allow true fulfilment of right human flourishing (Dean, 2015). This means that social work reaches beyond redressing and restoration strategies in individual situations. Instead, it takes up a public mandate to reformulate personal troubles into public issues (Lorenz, 2016). Examples of social workers assuming the agitator role are abundant. These include collective actions of Greek social workers opposing the government's instructions to implement unfair legislation (Ioakimidis, 2013); the case of Nobert Ferencz, a Hungarian social worker who demonstrated against a municipal ordinance that classified searching for food in rubbish bins as a misdemeanour (Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013); the Orange Tide movement in Spain with the popular mantra, 'No Cuts! Don't Shut up!' to social welfare budgets (IFSW, 2012c; Ioakimidis & Teloni, 2013), and many more.

In addition, the role of social workers as agitators in social protest actions ought to be given support and backed by relevant social work institutions. Globally, a variety of social work demonstrations, as in the examples above, have had success in part because of support from various institutions. Further, international social work organisations such as the IFSW, SWAN and IASSW should reinforce efforts of national social work governing bodies in support of people-to-people solidarity. In South Africa, key institutions such as NASWSA, ASASWEI, NCSS, SACSSP, SWANSA and other key trade unions to which social workers belong to must substantiate relevant change efforts by social workers in social protest actions (Sewpaul & Hölscher, 2004).

4.3.16. MOBILISER

The social work profession on its own, as indicated before, arguably is relatively powerless to effect significant change in the lived realities of the vast majority of its service users (Barber, 1991; Midgley, 1981). As such, assembling and energising existing groups, resources, organisations and structures or creating new ones altogether, and bringing them to address existing social problems is key (Compton & Galaway, 1994). The emphasis in mobilisation is the involvement of service users themselves in determining and meeting their own needs. Social action is regarded as the most apt method of mobilising service users (Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). Participation through, for example, conscientisation, facilitation, organisation, advocacy and activism, is the value most clearly articulated by a variety of scholars, subsequently manifesting in social protests (cf. Guide to social work, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Sewpaul, 2016a; Smith, 2015; Zastrow, 2013). The role of mobiliser reflects many characteristics of other roles such as the enabler, the educator, leader, advocate and facilitator, which underlines the fact that roles often overlap and are utilised to supplement each other.

4.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter presents an attempt to scrutinise and weave together the various roles social workers may potentially fulfil in social protest actions. Roles in this regard are identified as behaviours that are characteristic of a person in a given context. Although operationalised in and governed by, for example, the same social development principles; social work definition; human rights approach; and ethical codes, both radical social work and social protest action contexts are markedly different from that of traditional social work. The active role of social work in facilitating social change is consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of radical social work and social protest actions. Thus, even though familiar, and as this thesis demonstrates, the provisions and activities associated with the different radical social work intervention roles within a social protest action context are more attuned to greater system and structural destabilising efforts than traditional generalist social work interventions.

Although discussed separately, the various roles social workers may potentially fulfil in social protest actions are interlinked in practice. Some roles are more direct in nature than others. Furthermore, the accurate execution of these roles oblige the social worker to have ample knowledge and an appropriate skill set. Among other things, this implies that a social worker’s role fulfilment should be a tactical decision mediated by sensitivity and flexibility. The prospect of competency in the execution of respective roles by social work practitioners is further reinforced by the fact that each role includes cognitive, affective as well as social components.

The following chapter relates to the empirical investigation of social workers’ perceptions on their perceived roles in social protest actions within a South African context.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

At the inception of this research inquiry (Chapter 1), several pertinent questions were raised owing to the intrinsic and strong connection between social work and social protest actions. Primarily, this study sought to understand the perceptions of social workers of their roles in social protest actions within South Africa's social development context. Addressing the particular overarching research question credibly required a robust scientific approach. Scientific research allows for a thorough exploration of a phenomenon or question to facilitate knowledge development and evidence-informed responses reliably (Babbie, 2016). Exploring a research question in a manner that is rigorous, requires an undertaking of scientific research procedures based on a specific research paradigm, research approach and research methodology (Sefotho, 2021).

Originally, the researcher established a specific systematic research procedure (Chapter 1) which was expected to address the particular research question convincingly. In order to explore the said research question, the fourth objective of this study centred on empirically investigating the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions in a South African context. This chapter aims to simultaneously elaborate and reflect on the overall research process, together with decisions that were followed to address the particular research question and objective comprehensively. Chiefly, the impetus for such an inquisition rests on the understanding that decisions and assumptions on which a research study are based, require scrutiny in order to better comprehend the breadth and depth of the research process and the trustworthiness of the presented findings (Chapter 6) (Babbie, 2016; Neuman, 2014).

5.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Social science research is largely concerned with exploring, describing and explaining social phenomena concerning human behaviour for the benefit and well-being of society (Sefotho, 2021; Sufian, 1998). The effectiveness and efficiency of such research inquiries rely on philosophical validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Uddin & Hamiduzzaman, 2009). A recurrent notion in this study is that there is no uniformity in how various authors discuss this aspect of social science research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Sefotho, 2021).

Some authors refer to traditions and theoretical underpinnings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011) theoretical traditions and orientations (Patton, 2015), others to paradigms and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks (Creswell, 2013), or epistemology and theoretical perspectives (Crottty, 1998). Clearly, each scholar makes sense of, and articulates underlying philosophical influences in their own way. Reviewing related literature, Sefotho (2021) cautions and asserts that researchers should not be caught up in the numerous and often perplexing concepts, as much as the meanings at different conceptual levels. Further, what is perhaps crucial is that the choice of philosophical orientation should be able to answer the overarching research question compellingly.

Philosophy is the study of how knowledge, reality and our existence as human beings evoke questions about who we are, what we know and how we experience the world around us (Sefotho, 2021). Philosophy, otherwise a school of thought, can be considered as a lens through which we interpret and perceive what is around us, which in turn, brings about a paradigm (Sefotho, 2021). Unsurprisingly, the concept of a paradigm is contested and described in many ways by various authors and in different contexts (Bertram & Christiansen, 2020).

Notwithstanding the extensive variety of descriptions, Kuhn (1970) originally conceptualised a paradigm as a certain way of doing something. Based on this, a research paradigm can be considered to outline a researcher’s philosophical orientation, inform the way the researcher views the world, and influence the researcher’s thinking about the research topic (Shah, Shah & Khaskhelly, 2018). Furthermore, and as demonstrated throughout this discussion, the research paradigm adopted for a study directs the researcher’s investigation, which includes the data collection and analysis procedures, as well as interpretation of the data (Kamal, 2019). Succinctly put, philosophy denotes a worldview whilst a paradigm is the framework through which we make sense of that world (Sefotho, 2021).

The philosophical dimensions that guide social science research include ontology, epistemology and axiology (Neuman, 2014; Ravenek & Rudman, 2013). These interacting dimensions are expounded below and accumulatively formulate an overall research paradigm that ultimately informed the selected research approach and research methodology employed in this study. (See sections 5.3 and 5.4 respectively).

5.2.1. ONTOLOGY

Table 3 provides an overview of ontology. In addition, the shaded text indicates the chosen paradigm for this research study.

Table 3: Definitions of ontology with related perceptions

Research Dimension: Ontology		
Definition	One's view of the nature of reality.	
Perceptions		
Objectivism	**Interpretivism**	**Pragmatism**
The belief that there is an external reality that can be studied objectively and is free of value.	Reality is subjective and socially constructed.	A combination of objective and subjective ways of knowing. Reality is viewed as multifaceted and ever changing.

(Adapted from Sefotho, 2021)

As illustrated above, the ontological dimension of social research refers to the study of the nature of reality. Sefotho (2021) maintains that context is significant for ontological descriptions, and researchers should therefore express a professional stance in relation to how they interpret reality in their particular profession. Ontological perceptions include objectivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. The selected ontological orientation for this study is that of interpretivism.

Interpretivism holds the assumption that reality should be interpreted through the meaning that research participants give to their lifeworld (Bless et al., 2013; Sefotho, 2021). Interpretivists maintain that human beings are always engaged in the process of making sense of their world and they continuously interpret, create, give meaning to, define, justify and rationalise their daily actions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In other words, from an interpretive point of view, reality is co-constructed by both the researcher and research participants.

The researcher undertook an inquiry to understand the perceptions of social workers of their roles in social protest actions in a South African context. As such, it was invaluable to elicit respective participants' stories (voices) as they are the ones who operationalise social work in South Africa. Further, although social work is of global importance, it is contextually driven. Social work in South Africa is practised on the basis of social development principles. Thus, the findings from this research study should be interpreted based on patterned meanings that social workers attach to their profession within a social development paradigm.

5.2.2. EPISTEMOLOGY

Table 4 provides an overview of epistemology. Shaded text indicates the chosen paradigm for this study.

Table 4: Definitions of epistemology with related perceptions

Research Dimension: Epistemology		
Definition	One's position on how knowledge is generated and understood	
Perceptions		
Positivism	**Post - positivism**	**Constructivism**
Scientific knowledge is only developed through the accumulation of verified facts.	Scientific knowledge can only be approximated. Emphasis is on the discovery and verification of data.	Scientific knowledge is accumulated through series of constructive processes. Reality is best known by those who experience it personally.

(Adapted from Sefotho, 2021)

In tune with table 4 above, epistemology refers to the study of knowledge of reality as understood in various professions (Sefotho, 2021). It is vitally important for researchers to state their epistemological stances to demonstrate theories and beliefs they hold about knowledge in general, together with knowledge of reality (Sefotho, 2021). This characterises how the researchers conduct their research and acquire knowledge for the benefit and well-being of society (Bless et al., 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Epistemological frameworks lie on a continuum: positivism - post positivism - constructivism (Sefotho, 2021). The selected epistemological orientation for this study is that of constructivism. Within this particular orientation, reality is considered and understood to be a product of a successive constructive processes, and that only a narrative truth exists (Bless et al., 2013). Subjective views and data from participants are viewed as acceptable knowledge contributing towards a deeper understanding of the research problem and sufficient to answer a research question (Ravenek & Rudman, 2013). Denzin (2017) argues that constructivists have a humanistic and social justice commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual.

To reiterate, this research study was geared towards understanding how social work professionals understand their perceived roles in social protest actions. Social workers operationalise developmental social work in South Africa and therefore were considered important in addressing the research question. Like the point of departure in the previous section on ontology (view of reality), the findings from this research study should be interpreted on the basis of patterned meanings that social workers attach to their profession within a social development context.

5.2.3. AXIOLOGY

Table 5 provides an overview of axiology. Once again, the shaded text indicates the chosen paradigm for this research study.

Table 5: Definitions of axiology with related perceptions

Research Dimension: Axiology		
Definition	The study of values that underpin a researcher's beliefs, perceptions, and decisions.	
Perceptions		
Objectivism	**Interpretivism**	**Pragmatism**
Views science as value free	Value-rich research perspective	Value embedded in the researcher and research

(Adapted from Schegloff, 1997; Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005)

As demonstrated in table 5, axiology is regarded as the study of values (Schroeder, 2016). Chaturvedi (2014) describes it as the science of human values that enables the identification of internal value systems that influence perceptions, decisions and actions, to clearly understand why we do what we do. Axiology specifically focuses on how the values, emotions, expectations and assumptions of the researcher influence the research design and process (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2018; Sefotho, 2021). It also reflects on the researchers' actions during and after the completion of the research study.

Axiological perceptions include objectivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Schegloff, 1997; Oliver et al., 2005). The selected axiological orientation for this study is that of interpretivism. With this particular orientation, a value-rich research perspective allows the researcher to pursue methods and procedures that allow the study to elicit an in-depth understanding of the data collected. This involves both deductive and inductive reasoning (see point 5.4.2), as well as self-reflexivity (see annexure 8) to ensure that the data gathered by the researcher remains true to the participants' answers (Oliphant & Bennett, 2020; Schurink et al., 2021a).

In order to capture the participants' invaluable wealth of information, the researcher initially conducted a comprehensive literature study (Chapters 2 - 4). This led to the development of an interview schedule (See annexures 1, 3, 4 & 5) which was utilised as a guide during the data collection process. The extensiveness and richness of the collected data is demonstrated by the numerous direct narratives and extracts from the participants' voices in the following chapter (Chapter 6). Further, the study on social work and social protest actions is inherently contentious. As such, and consistent with the ontological and epistemological stances of interpretivism and constructivism respectively, it is imperative that the researcher reflect on how his background and personal qualities, among other things, influenced the research process. In addition, the researcher ought to examine his actions during and after the completion of the research study. This allows the reviewer, and indeed the reader, to ascertain the extent of the researcher's involvement in the research process and the overall trustworthiness of the collected data. These respective reflective attributes are concisely accounted for in the investigators' reflexivity report (See annexure 8).

Summarily, the researcher selected the ontological stance of interpretivism that was congruent with the epistemological orientation of constructivism, which then determined the axiological position of interpretivism. The respective interactive philosophical dimensions formulate the research paradigm adopted for this research study. In other words, in order to best address the inquiry on the perceptions of social workers of their roles in social protest actions, the investigator had to be immersed the participants' context (ontology), and engage in ongoing discourses on the subject matter (epistemology), whilst acknowledging his own influence in the research process (axiology). The adopted research paradigm thus guided the researcher's decision-making process, which informed the selected research approach and research methodology employed in this study.

5.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

Fouché (2021) maintains that a research approach (often used interchangeably with paradigm) relates to the broad distinction between quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods. Each individual research approach is essentially determined by the chosen research paradigm, which, in itself, is based on the relevant interrelated and interactive ontological, epistemological and axiological philosophical dimensions (Fouché, 2021; Sefotho, 2021). It goes without saying that each research approach has its own unique purpose, strategies of inquiry, sampling procedures, methods of collecting and analysing data, as well as criteria for verifying findings (Fouché, 2021).

As established in the Chapter 1, this was a qualitative research study. Qualitative research is regarded as a form of inquiry whereby researchers interpret what they see, hear and understand regarding a specific subject (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kumar, 2019). The main focus in a study of this nature is to determine what participants think and feel about a particular phenomenon or issue (Bless et al., 2013; Leedy & Ormord, 2019). Arguably, language provides a substantially sensitive and meaningful way of recording various human experiences (Sefotho, 2021). In such scenarios, words and sentences are used to qualify and record information about the particular phenomenon or issue. In other words, in qualitative inquiries, reality is interpreted from the respondents' frame of reference (or voices) (Sefotho, 2021). As such, the researcher deemed a qualitative approach as suitable research method to establish what social workers regarded to be their roles in social protest actions. The rationale for this decision is substantiated in the next sections.

As extension of the latter point, Kumar (2019), together with Creswell and Poth (2018), add and emphasise that qualitative research inquiries are context specific. This finds form in the understanding that reality as perceived by research participants cannot be dissociated from their social settings. It then implies that researchers ought to "position themselves" in their study in order to truly comprehend the research matter (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on this, researchers can be considered the main research instrument as, inter alia, data collection depends on their personal involvement in the participants' context (Kumar, 2019). Moreover, the researcher endeavours in a thorough analysis of the data that are collected with the intention of constructing interpretive narratives (voices) that capture the substance, form and the essence of the research matter.

In line with the contextual and subjective attributes of qualitative research discussed above, this study was firmly rooted in the broader understanding of a social work that is practised in a South African social development context (See Chapter 2). More specifically, the organisational contexts, whether public or private, allowed for elicitation of rich, both in extent and depth, narratives regarding what social work professionals deemed to be their roles in social protest actions (See Chapter 6). In order to capture the said narratives justly, the researcher was immersed in the collection and analysis of the data thereof, as well as the overall research process. A comprehensive account of the said investigator's involvement in the research process and the overall trustworthiness of the collected data are presented in annexure 8 and section 5.4.7.1, respectively.

A final telling characteristic of qualitative research, which incidentally is pertinent to this study, regards the reasoning employed throughout the research process (Maree, 2016). Babbie (2016) and Fouché (2021) differentiate between inductive and deductive reasoning. They state that the former refers to reasoning that moves from the particular to the general after collected data has been analysed, to establish the existence or lack thereof, of patterned meaning between respective research variables (Babbie, 2016; Fouché, 2021). The latter refers to reasoning that moves from the general to the specific that may inform theory (Babbie, 2016; Fouché, 2021). In layman's terms, inductive reasoning employs "bottom-up" logic whilst deductive reasoning assumes "top-down" logic.

As indicated in Chapter 1, this research study was chiefly deductive in nature. However, a movement between deductive and inductive reasoning was maintained in order to regulate new insights from literature. This is specifically evident in the literature control of the empirical study. An expansive literature study (Chapters 2 - 4) was conducted to identify research gaps and gain an understanding of contemporary issues in social work and social action to credibly capture and determine voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions. The development of the research instrument (interview schedule) for the empirical study was thus based on the literature study (See annexures 1, 3, 4, 5). Existing research was further incorporated in the analysis and discussion of the findings to interpret the data and make reductive conclusions therefrom (See Chapter 7).

Briefly, a qualitative research approach can be regarded as an interpretative and constructive approach that is holistic in nature and is geared towards understanding reality as experienced by participants in their respective contexts. In its broadest sense, it refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions (Fouché, 2021). Therefore, the qualitative research approach was deemed to be the most appropriate approach to capture the voices of social workers to answer the research question. The following section clearly outlines and qualifies the systematic research methods that were followed to answer the research question.

5.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Most authors hold the view that a research methodology denotes a philosophical and scientifically informed way of systematically solving a research problem (Bless et al., 2013; Fouché, 2021; Sefotho, 2021). It is fundamental for researchers to elaborate and reflect on the methodological decisions made during the research process. This, inter alia, allows for the substantiation and trustworthiness of the overall research study (Sefotho, 2021). Despite holding similar views on the essence of a research methodology, research scholars perceive the research process in a disorienting number of ways. Fouché (2021) points out that this is mainly embedded in the fact that different authors utilise numerous terms for similar aspects of the research process. Albeit a terminological jungle, these seemingly varying texts arguably demonstrate the following elements: focusing (framing), planning (designing), implementing (collecting), analysing (interpreting) and reporting (disseminating), which should comprehensively answer the research question or solve the problem (Fouché, 2021).

Bless et al., (2013) outline and concisely characterise the stages that best reflect a qualitative research process. Their interpretation of the said research process exhibits and reflects the main methodological elements espoused by Fouché (2021). The respective stages are therefore presented below.

5.4.1. SELECTION AND FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Bless et al., (2013) maintain that a qualitative research process commences with the identification of a researchable problem that should be relevant to the particular field of study. This is attainable through observing reality, reviewing theory, previous research, practical concerns, personal interest and, at times, via contractual research (Bless et al., 2013; Fouché, 2021). It is worth mentioning that a literature review at this stage is aimed at the formulation of a defensible rationale of the study; determining a research approach; and highlighting relevant knowledge gaps that merit investigation (Doody & Bailey, 2016). Bryant and Charmaz (2019) add that this must be done while also confirming how the phenomenon has been researched up until that particular point to ensure sensitivity to conceptual and methodological pitfalls. In essence, a well-articulated research problem should demonstrate and relate to timeliness, practical problems, a wider population, fill in research gaps, permit generalisation to broader principles of interaction or general theory, or enhance our understanding of a particular situation (Fouché, 2021).

My final undergraduate year coincided with the popular #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall and social workers' protests in South Africa in 2016. Although I was not involved in these protests, mainly owing to my international status as a student and the related fear of jeopardising four years of hard and honest work, I observed and noted how what started as an institutional issue quickly escalated to a national and global matter. At the latter stages of my Master's programme the following year, Zimbabwe, my birthplace, witnessed nationwide protests that saw the removal of the then president to a new one. Although not entirely driven to pursue research in this regard, I contemplated the idea. Contemplation evolved to intention, and I decided to pursue my doctoral research in social work and social protest actions.

I conducted a preliminary literature study that served to reinforce and ignite my true intent to understand the afore-mentioned research focus comprehensively. The intrinsic link between social work and social protest actions, coupled with the lack of extensive social work literature in this regard, was astounding. Despite being listed as the "protest capital", no research in South Africa articulated the implications of social protest actions for social work. Thus, the selection and formulation of the research problem was stimulated by observing reality, reviewing theory, practical concerns and, to some extent, personal interest.

5.4.2. REVIEWING LITERATURE

A literature review, according to Snyder (2019), is an appraisal of the existing scholarship on a research matter that helps researchers to see how other scholars have investigated the research area that is of interest to them. This includes how the research focus is theorised and conceptualised; the empirical discoveries; methodologies utilised; and to what effect (Snyder, 2019). In other words, a review of literature allows for the synthesis of existing scholarship on a given topic, uncovers knowledge gaps, and facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the aim of the research (Fouché, 2021; Schurink, Roestenburg & Fouché, 2021b).

Fouché (2021) adds that a literature review undertaken at the beginning of a study (deductive) offers guiding principles that may assist in the structuring of the data collection process. While the literature review carried out towards the end of the study (inductive) explains the data and provides evidence of the findings in relation to the existing body of knowledge. Further, the reviewing of literature presupposes an analysis of existing and collated scholarship on a research matter. This necessitates a clearly defined strategy that will set the parameters of the literature search. Schurink et al. (2021b) suggest that an effective way of locating literature resources begins with the identification of key words that convey the main ideas or concepts in the research question. A library search for relevant literature can then be conducted by selecting and searching for various combinations of keywords. Alternatively, one can begin with a core book or article that is relevant to the research topic. General search engines such as Google scholar, Science direct and Highwire Press are also useful for starting a literature review (Schurink et al., 2021b). From there, it is possible to find reference lists for more scholarly material on the topic.

Finally, a wide and comprehensive literature review is fundamental in social research. A critical review of available literature should be characterised by an informed discussion of the key issues relating to the research question. Arguably, the two common forms of literature reviews include narrative and systematic reviews (Coughlan, Cronin & Ryan, 2007). The narrative literature review is the more traditional way of conducting and analysing relevant literature. The aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of what already exists and provide a narrative of the argument being presented. This kind of review is conducted by searching for articles that have relevance to your research. The biggest challenge in conducting a narrative review is determining whether sufficient sources are obtained (Rubin & Babbie, 2014). The above-mentioned authors suggest that sufficient literature has been reviewed when one can readily identify references cited in the most recently published articles. To sum up, reviewing literature is a continual process that should reflect the purpose of the review, literature sources utilised and the reviewing techniques employed during the process (Bless et al., 2013).

According to Mouton (2011), a literature review in social science research should be topical rather than dated. As some seminal studies, although older, were thought to be of value, the literature review for this study included the work of various local and international scholars such as Alexander et al. (2018); Bailey and Brake (1975); Freire (1970); Gamson (1990); Gaqa (2018); Ioakimidis (2016); Lipsky (1968); Midgley (2014); Patel (2015); Patel and Ulriksen (2017); Smith (2015); Tilly (1993); and Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015).

The literature review was based on the identified objectives of this study and organised thematically. This facilitated the understanding of central issues that had to be addressed, which allowed for the discovery of gaps and topics that otherwise were not explored before. The seminal work of primary authors acted as a starting point for the literature review. Then the search was extended to include current interpretations and views on respective themes and sub-themes. Search engines such as Google scholar, peer reviewed articles, books and university repositories that had relevant master's and doctoral studies conducted in a South African context were utilised to understand the research matter comprehensively. Whilst doing this, the full details of all sources together with brief summaries of the contents of the sources, were organised in various folders that housed respective themes and sub-themes. The literature search process and filing system encouraged the researcher to read intently, while looking for patterns and gaps in the literature.

The preliminary literature review conducted at the beginning of this research study (Chapter 1) demonstrated the complex link between social work and social protest actions. This formed the initial rationale for this research inquiry. Further assessment of available literature uncovered significant knowledge gaps that were concisely formulated into a problem statement. Despite being identified as “protest capital” and in light of the intrinsic link between social work and social protest actions, no South African scholarship commenting on the position of social work in social protest actions or the involvement or lack thereof of social work professionals in these protest actions together with the associated dilemmas, and indeed their opinions on the research matter, could be found.

As the main research question guiding the inquiry centred on understanding perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions in a South African context for comprehensive understanding and addressing the research question, different objectives were formulated to facilitate understanding and these were translated into literature chapters (Chapters 2 - 4). Chapter 2 comprised an overview of radical social work, critical consciousness and the HRBA to social welfare in South Africa’s social development paradigm. The main conclusions revealed the disproportionate levels of inequality and poverty amongst the majority of South Africans that form the mandate for the social work pursuit of human rights and social justice. The review illustrated the perpetual nature of structural and systemic oppression that is an anti-thesis of developmental social work. Consistent with social work legislation and policies, the active role of social work in attaining social change was clearly determined.

Chapter 3 elaborated on social work and social protest actions. Here, the principal points of departure addressed the misconceptions usually attached to social protest actions and clearly demonstrated the invaluableness of protest as a resource or vehicle for the marginalised and vulnerable to realise their constitutionally guaranteed human rights and eventual social change. Moreover, the literature analysis revealed the extent of resources, political opportunity, framing, identity, emotions and efficacy in the formation of and participation in social protest action. It went on to establish how socio-political contexts determine how people protest together with the functions of protesting. Chapter 4 synthesised and weaved together various roles that social workers may fulfil in social protest actions as based on the points of departure in Chapters 2 and 3. Radical social work intervention roles where shown to be attuned to the pursuit of social justice and social change. In addition, the accurate execution of these roles oblige the social worker to have ample knowledge and an appropriate set of skills, which implies that a social worker's role fulfilment should be a tactical decision mediated by sensitivity and flexibility.

Synthesising this brief but concise discussion, the literature review was pertinent in facilitating comprehensive understanding of the research question. Via deductive reasoning, the literature review informed the development of the interview schedule that guided the collection of data and its interpretation. The literature review is a prominent feature of this study's framework and a strength of the interview schedule that elicited findings that contributed to the body of knowledge in South Africa on social work and social protest actions.

5.4.3. DEVELOPING A RESEARCH METHOD

Developing a research method entails the selection of a specific research design and sampling method (Bless et al., 2013). For the purpose of this thesis and overall coherence, the discussion on the sampling method is incorporated with the section on sampling (See section 5.4.5). Nevertheless, the motivation for the selection of a particular research design ought to be tailored to the nature of the research question and aim of the study, together with the skills and resources available to the researcher. Definitions of research designs are not clear across research literature, but, for the purpose of this thesis, a research design refers to a set of logical arrangements from which prospective researchers can select one or more suitable options for a specific object (Bless et al., 2013). It does not refer to all the decisions the researcher makes in planning the study. The function of the research design is to ensure the collection of data that should enable one to answer the research question as clearly as possible (Bless et al., 2013; De Vaus, 2001).

This research inquiry utilised descriptive, exploratory and instrumental case study research designs. A descriptive research design presents a picture of the specific details of a situation or a social setting and focuses on "how" and "why" questions (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006). This permits for an intensive examination of a specific phenomenon and its specific profound meaning which consequentially yields thick descriptive accounts of variables (Rubin & Babbie, 2007; Fouché, 2021; Fouché & Schurink, 2011). Exploratory research, on the other hand, is usually conducted when a researcher encounters an issue that is already known and has a description to it, but is prompted to ask why things are the way they are (Bless et al., 2013; De Vos et al., 2011). Lawson et al. (2019) assert that case studies can be categorised broadly in two groups: those that focus on a person (intrinsic) and those that focus on a phenomenon (instrumental). An instrumental case study is aimed at understanding an overarching problem or issue through characterising a given research study context because of its relevance to the research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lawson et al., 2019; Yin, 2014).

This research inquiry undertook to establish a comprehensive understanding of the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions. In order to accomplish this, data was collected from four sampling cohorts, i.e. (i) social workers involved; (ii) social workers not involved; (iii) social work managers; and (iv) radical social work experts, both of whom may have been or who had not been involved in social protest actions. The section on sampling (section 5.4.5) elaborates the rationale for the integration of the respective cohorts in the study. Nevertheless, the respective cohorts can arguably be considered as unique instrumental cases. Each cohort presented a distinctive focus on the research study which enabled the researcher to answer the research question expansively (See chapter 6), hence the utilisation of instrumental cases. The descriptive design allowed participants to contextualise their involvement or lack thereof in social protest actions, whilst the exploratory design established the reasons behind either taking part or not participating in any social protest actions. Essentially, the instrumental case study design, with the purpose of describing and exploring social work and social protest actions, allowed the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions using verbal narratives from interviews.

5.4.4. DEVELOPING A DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

After a specific research method is established, the next logical step relates to the identification and selection of suitable method(s) for collecting data (Bless et al., 2013). Interviews and focus groups are the most commonly used tools for data collection (Fielding, 2008; Geyer, 2021; Gubrium et al., 2012). An interview can be regarded as a method of acquiring rich, detailed and in-depth information about the experiences and views of participants on a research matter, with the researcher as the main data-collecting instrument (Turner, 2010). Interviewing can be performed directly, telephonically or online (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Key considerations when deciding on the most appropriate form include the research topic, research questions, the purpose of the study, research design and study population, as well as unprecedented situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Because of the internet, one can conduct online interviews which typically are verbal interviews with a video component that is more like face-to-face interviews (Hesse-Biber, 2017; Salmons, 2015). Telephonic interviews share the same qualities as online interviews, apart from the fact that the researcher and participants cannot see each other. Notwithstanding this, both online and telephonic interviews are desirable because one can bypass travelling time and related costs (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2017; Salmons, 2015). Further, the different modes of interviewing allow participants to determine where and when they can comfortably participate in the research.

In this study, data was collected via a combination of semi-structured telephonic and online interviews by using an interview schedule. Data collection commenced from the second half of 2021. This was a period in which the corona virus pandemic continuously ravaged South Africa and wreaked havoc across the globe. In-line with social distancing and general health precautionary measures, face-to-face interviews were discouraged. As such, data was collected via telephones and online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Interview guides (See annexures 1, 3, 4 & 5) with predetermined questions directed the semi-structured interviews conducted with separate participants. In true alignment with qualitative inquiries, flexibility was maintained in terms of follow-up questions and, at times, with the sequence in which questions were asked based on how each separate interview progressed. This allowed the interviews to flow organically yet still maintaining the essence of the interview guide. Further, the flexibility adopted by the researcher helped the participants to be at ease and thus talk freely in their own voice to genuinely express their opinions on the research matter.

Holistically, the interview and the interview guide included introductory remarks, a body and closing annotations (Padgett, 2017). The introductory remarks served to establish rapport with participants, the description of the research project context and the addressing of administrative tasks such as signing consent forms. Warm up questions in the form of biographic inquiries were used to cement rapport building with participants (Roulston & Choi, 2018). The body consisted the core component of the interview schedule. Here, several central questions relating to the main research matter were explored comprehensively. Closing annotations consisted of cooling down questions which served as member checking, allowed for debriefing and the expression of gratitude to participants for their time and insights on the research matter (Aurini et al., 2016; Padgett, 2017; Rubin & Barbie, 2017).

More specifically, member checking was completed throughout the duration of all interviews by restating and paraphrasing the participants' narratives in order to determine their accuracy. Furthermore, at the end of each interview, participants were prompted to provide an overall reflection regarding their involvement or lack thereof in social protest actions to further determine the correctness and overall coherence of the collected data. Although discussed more comprehensively under ethical considerations (section 5.5), it is important to note that even though this research study was classified as medium risk and participants were envisaged to experience some discomfort in discussing their involvement or lack thereof in social protest actions, debriefing turned out to be unnecessary. None of the participants exhibited any signs of distress during or after interviews. Furthermore, none of the participants indicated need for external debriefing services as had been anticipated prior to data collection.

5.4.5. SAMPLING

As discussed earlier, qualitative research is aimed at understanding a phenomenon or issue by eliciting participants' accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions (Fouché, 2021). The researcher therefore has to select a sample of participants that display characteristics associated with the phenomenon under investigation. In other words, sampling is based on a well-defined population that must be determined by the aim of the research study (Bless et al., 2013). This implies that the quality of the research study is directly related to sampling procedures, the adequacy of selected techniques together with the professionalism of implementation, and the appropriacy of the sample size (Bless et al., 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This research study utilised snowball and purposive sampling methods. Snowball sampling is commonly and particularly utilised to identify participants who are not listed or are difficult to find (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015; Rubin & Barbie, 2017). It is a way of understanding and making use of networks among key people in relation to the focus of a study (Morris, 2006; Shaw & Holland, 2014). Purposive sampling, on the other hand, is based on the researcher's judgement regarding who may provide the best perspective (information rich) on the research matter, and intentionally invite those perspectives into the study (Staller, 2021). Here, the working assumption is that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select the sample from which the most can be gleaned (Staller, 2021). How one determines saturation is not as clear-cut, however.

Notwithstanding the surplus and varying opinions concerning sample sizes (See, for example, Staller, 2021), Guetterman (2015) maintains that the qualitative researcher's intent is to explain, describe and interpret. Qualitative sampling therefore is arguably a matter of information richness as opposed to representative opinions (Guetterman, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To this end, Bless et al. (2013) suggest sampling until a point of saturation (informational redundancy) is reached. In other words, the researcher collects data up to the point at which no new insights are forthcoming (Staller, 2021).

In order to address the research question comprehensively, data for this study was collected from **four** sampling cohorts. This, as highlighted in Chapter 1, consisted of **(i)** social workers who had been involved; **(ii)** social workers who had not been involved; **(iii)** social work managers; and **(iv)** radical social work experts, both of whom may have been or had not been involved in social protest actions.

The **first cohort** included social workers who had been involved in social protest actions. These participants were identified from social networks, i.e. "Social workers for Better Salaries" and Social Work Action Network South Africa (SWANSA), which are Facebook and WhatsApp groups, respectively. Although the researcher eventually managed to recruit the respective participants, the recruitment process was far from seamless. No participants were forthcoming from the SWANSA WhatsApp platform, despite the essence of the collective being for social activism for human rights and social justice. Plausibly, social workers previously involved in social protest actions did not readily want to come forward and share their experiences and opinions due to the much-documented personal and professional ramifications associated with taking part in social protest actions. In spite of contexts, the researcher's reflexivity report (see annexure 8) attempts to illustrate some of the particular cautions attached to participation in social protest actions, let alone taking part in a study in which one has to narrate and discuss involvement in specific social actions.

Be that as it may, purposive sampling was utilised to recruit *eight participants* who had to be registered social workers with the SACSSP; were employed in either public or private South African welfare organisations; had a minimum of two years working experience; had previously been involved or active in a social protest action; and was proficient in English. The aim of the study was to gain informed understanding of the perceived roles social workers may fulfil in social protest actions. To attain this aim, social workers who had been involved in social protest actions were part of the sampling to represent a micro perspective on social work.

Participants were invited by the researcher via an open social media platform such as Facebook to contact the researcher via platforms such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp (to ensure anonymity) if they were willing to take part in the research. The researcher then contacted the participants via email and mutually scheduled interviews for data collection. See annexure 1 for respective interview themes. In addition, participants (as in the case of all **four** cohorts) were requested to provide informed consent. See annexure 2 for the informed consent template that was used to confirm willingness of participants to take part in the research. Data saturation was reached by the eighth interview. As indicated above, data saturation in this regard refers to informational redundancy. By the eighth interview, no new insights regarding the research matter were forthcoming. The researcher thus decided that the narratives of the eight participants were comprehensive enough to establish involvement of social workers, together with their perceived roles in social protest actions. The eight participants shared in-depth information regarding participation in social protest actions discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

The **second cohort** comprised social workers who had not been involved in social protest actions. Snowball sampling was utilised to recruit *eight participants* who formed part of the researchers' professional network in the Cape Metropole. Participants in this cohort shared similar inclusion criteria to those in the first cohort The only difference was that participants in the second cohort should not have been involved in any kind of social protest action. Unlike the first cohort, recruiting participants who had not been involved in social protest actions was manageable. The researcher had built and succeeded in maintaining contact with a substantial number of social work professionals over the years. Not being involved in social protest actions also comes with a degree of ease with regard to victimisation and related fears.

Nevertheless, the researcher approached the first participant who then approached additional participants to contact the researcher via email. Both the researcher and the participants then scheduled separate interviews for data collection. See annexures 2 and 3 for the respective informed consent and research themes. As with cohort 1, data saturation was reached by the eighth interview as no new insights regarding the research matter were forthcoming. The researcher thus decided that the narratives of the *eight participants* were comprehensive enough to address the research question. The respective participants shared rich and extensive information regarding the lack of participation in social protest actions. This is discussed in Chapter 6.

The **third cohort** comprised social work managers who may or may not have been involved in social protest action. Snowball sampling was utilised to recruit *eight participants* who had to be registered with the SACSSP, occupied a middle or top managerial position at any private or public social service organisation, had a minimum of two years of work experience and were proficient in English. Social work managers are responsible for organisational culture and the execution and management of various policies that govern social service organisations. As such, social work managers represent a macro perspective on social work. These managers were utilised to reflect, on those social workers who had and had not been active in social protest actions, thereby aiding comprehensiveness to the collected data.

Recruiting participants to this cohort was by far the most manageable. During the data collection period, the researcher assisted and facilitated the presentation of a short course to social service managers. The researcher embraced this opportunity to build rapport with those managers who were willing to take part in the research study. As with cohort 2, the investigator approached the first participant who then approached additional participants to contact the researcher via email. Both the researcher and the participants then scheduled separate interviews for data collection. See annexures 2 and 4 for the respective informed consent and research themes.

Unlike with cohorts 1 and 2, the researcher reached data saturation by the sixth interview as no new insights were forthcoming. Despite this and for the sake of uniformity, the researcher decided to interview two more participants to equal the tally of eight participants recorded for cohorts 1 and 2. Participants in this cohort shared interesting and substantial views and opinions regarding the involvement and lack thereof of social work professionals in social protest actions. This consequentially aided the concreteness of the data that was collected and the overall relevance of this research study, as illustrated in Chapter 6.

The **fourth cohort** involved radical social work experts who may or may not have been involved in previous social protest actions. Purposive sampling was utilised to recruit *three participants* who had to be social work academics, published at least one international article within the ambit of radical social work and, as an active member occupying a decision-making role in at least one radical social work/social activist organisation or institution, and having at least three years of working experience. Radical social work experts were considered to have expansive and invaluable knowledge as well as experience in social action in social work. Their involvement in the study was aimed at offering critical and balanced opinions on the research matter. In addition, they were utilised to reflect on, and regulate the insights of the social workers involved, those not involved, as well as social managers who may or may not been involved in social protest actions.

The researcher initially intended to collect data from the first three cohorts only. However, after deliberation with the researchers' supervisor and for the reasons mentioned earlier, it was decided to add a fourth cohort. During the completion of this doctoral thesis, the researcher worked as a junior lecturer and had contact with various social work academics. Recruiting participants for this cohort therefore was as manageable as with the previous cohort. Respective participants were approached by the researcher to contact the researcher via email (to secure anonymity) if they were willing to participate in the research. The researcher then contacted the participants to schedule interviews for data collection. See annexures 2 and 5 for respective informed consent and research themes. Two of these participants were locally renowned academics and one was internationally renowned. Involvement of an international academic was propelled by the understanding that local problems and social issues have global implications and vice versa. Here, the question of saturation was not as paramount as the invaluable and expansive insights from the respective participants. Thus, the combination of three locally and internationally renowned radical social work experts was deemed sufficient as they shared comprehensive insights regarding the research question (See Chapter 6).

The **research instrument** for all four cohorts was a semi-structured interview schedule conducted by the researcher. Initially, the investigator composed an interview schedule based on the preliminary study for getting ethical clearance for the research inquiry. The interview schedule was then concisely refined on completion of the literature review. Although the interview questions inherently remained the same, they were reformulated to be comprehensible to participants and simultaneously allow for the thorough examination of the research question and collection of rich and expansive data. As this research study was aimed at gaining informed understanding of social workers' perceptions of their roles in social protest actions they were required to describe how they understood social protest actions; discuss their involvement or lack thereof in social protest actions; and to deliberate on their opinions regarding their roles in these actions (See annexures 1, 3, 4 & 5).

Participants fitting the respective criteria of inclusion in each of the four cohorts were involved in the research in their personal professional capacity. Therefore, the researcher did not require permission from their work environments (private or public organisations); the study concerned the voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions and did not focus on particular organisations, regardless whether the participants worked in private or public organisations. In addition, this freed participants (as in the case of all four cohorts) from organisational demands that may have impeded their spontaneous participation and anonymity. The respective participants were interviewed online via platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and by telephone. A total of 27 participants were interviewed for this study, which produced extensive and comprehensive narratives regarding the opinions of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions.

5.4.6. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This section serves to discuss and reflect on the steps followed during the collection of data and the subsequent analysis thereof. Although discussed separately, it is worth mentioning that, in qualitative research, data collection and analysis often occur simultaneously or as altering processes in a cyclic fashion (Bless et al., 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Further, as established earlier in this chapter, the research paradigm adopted for a study guides and informs data collection and analysis procedures (Kamal, 2019). Effectively, the respective ontological and epistemological stances of interpretivism and constructivism, give voice to research participants and the stories they share about their practice as well as their lived experiences, which they construct based on their context.

To recap, the overarching purpose of this research study was to gain understanding of and ascertain the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions. Social workers operationalise developmental social work in South Africa and their perceptions were therefore considered as imperative in addressing the research aim. Hence, the collected data epitomise the opinions of social workers regarding their perceived roles in social protest actions in a social development paradigm.

5.4.6.1. DATA COLLECTION

The process of data collection began by seeking and receiving ethical clearance (SU project number: 16761) from the Departmental Ethical Screening Committee of the Department of Social Work (DESC) at the University of Stellenbosch, and from the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC). See appendix 6 for the approval letter. The actual interviewing of respective participants was conducted from August to December 2021. As mentioned in section 5.4.5, data was collected from four different but interrelated cohorts. Since the respective cohorts were distinct in their focus, interviews were conducted on the basis of the availability of the respective participants. The interviewing of radical social work experts was conducted last as their inclusion did not form part of the initial sample. In part, this demonstrates the flexibility of qualitative inquiries (Fouché, 2021).

As indicated in section 5.4.4 (on developing a data collection instrument) data was collected via a combination of online and telephonic semi-structured interviews together with the respective interview schedules. Twenty-four of the total of 27 interviews were conducted online via Zoom or Microsoft teams, and three via telephone. Each interview took 40 minutes. During the interviews, the researcher restated, paraphrased and summarised participants' responses to determine the accuracy of the data as part of member checking. This allowed participants to add to comments and reflect on their experiences and views. This member checking not only ensured that findings were authentic, original and reliable, but also served as a way of curbing participants' discomfort.

With the permission of the participants, all interviews were recorded via inbuilt programmes in the case of online interviews, and via audio recorder in the case of telephonic interviews. This paved way for the transcription of the respective interviews which were stored on a password protected computer and backed up with a Microsoft Cloud OneDrive platform. The researcher transcribed all interviews immediately after each session in order to ensure and maintain the essence of the collected data. A denaturalism approach was adopted during the transcription process. Denaturalism emphasises the essence of a participant's views and opinions (Cameron, 2001). Denaturalised transcriptions suggest that speech contains meanings and perceptions that inform the construction of reality (Cameron, 2001). The researcher transcribed the collected data manually. In line with denaturalism, pauses, stutters, silence, involuntary actions and repetition of words that seemed habitual were removed during the transcription process, but the researcher corrected grammar to pave the way for a clear understanding of the information collected from participants. Note, however, that this was done with substantial caution to avoid altering the meanings and interpretations of the participants' accounts regarding their perceived roles in social protest actions. See annexure 9 for an example of a transcribed interview script.

5.4.6.2. DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative studies, data analysis involves the process of breaking large volumes of data into smaller units and making connections among the various elements, thereby providing the basis for new knowledge (Bless et al., 2013; Gray, 2018). Reflexive thematic analysis was utilised to examine the data collected in this study. Generally, thematic analysis denotes a way of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There is no singular thematic analysis approach, though, but rather a collection, at times, of conflicting and divergent approaches, both in procedure and underlying philosophy (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Arguably, the various thematic analysis approaches can be clustered into 'coding reliability', 'codebook' and 'reflexive' variations (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

As indicated, this study employed reflexive thematic analysis to examine the collected data. Reflexive thematic analysis captures approaches that embrace qualitative research values and emphasise the importance of the researcher's subjectivity as analytic resource, and their reflexive engagement with theory, data and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Further, reflexive thematic analysis is suited for critical (e.g. constructionist) framings of language, data and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In addition, it can be utilised for either deductive or inductive analytic processes (recognising this be can be a continuum, rather than a dichotomy).

Finally, because thematic analysis generally is a flexible method, the researcher has to be explicitly clear about what, why and how the analysis is conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2021). With this in mind, the researcher followed the six-phase process of data engagement, coding and theme development as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2021). The respective phases are elaborated below:

i. Data familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes

This initial phase denotes a comprehensive understanding of the depth and breadth of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2021). It requires the researcher to be immersed, actively and continually reading the entirety of the collected data in search of patterned meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The process of data transcription is seen as an excellent way for becoming acquainted with the data set (Oliver et al., 2005). As indicated, 27 interviews were conducted and transcribed manually utilising a denaturalised approach. Although taxing, the transcription process was fundamental to becoming acquainted with all the respective aspects of the data. During the transcription process, the researcher penned brief commentaries on each respective participant. Generally, these notes indicated the awareness each participant demonstrated with regard to the research matter, as well as stimulating opinions on respective sections of the interview schedule. This made the retrieval and use of illustrative narratives manageable. The respective transcriptions were stored in line with the focus of each cohort. However, it is fundamental and pertinent to note that the aim was not to compare voices from the different cohorts, but to analyse and ultimately present it in an integrated manner, in order to synthesise the empirical study. Although the data set was examined holistically, this facilitated the initial systematic analysis of the essence of each cohort in relation to the research question.

ii. Systematic data coding

This phase involves the production of initial codes from the data set. In his seminal work, Boyatzis (1998) described a code as the most basic segment of raw data that can be assessed in a meaningful way with regard to the research matter. The coding process in reflexive thematic analysis is integral to theme development. This process involves immersion in the data, reading, reflecting, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating and returning (Braun & Clarke, 2021). It is not a mechanical process; instead, it requires "headspace" and time to facilitate the development of nuanced analysis (Gough & Lyons, 2016).

Having made notes during the initial reading of the complete data set, the researcher read the 27 transcripts again, cross-checked initial impressions as well as adding codes that were illustrative in relation to the interview schedule. The data in all respective transcripts was coded inclusively to retain context (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Bryman, 2012). This was done with the understanding that transcription can powerfully affect the way participants are understood, the information they share, and the conclusions that are made (Poland, 2002).

iii. Generating initial themes from coded and collated data

Braun & Clarke (2006, 2021) suggest this phase re-focuses the analysis at the broader level of themes. It entails sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Some initial codes may go on to form main themes, whilst others may form sub-themes. Bless et al. (2013) suggest that each code should be clearly defined. The respective code definition should include a title and a description of the data related to the respective code. Finally, unlike a code that captures one facet of the data, themes, as central organising concepts, retain several aspects of the data in relation to the research question, and represent a level of patterned meaning within the data set (Schurink et al., 2021a).

After generating initial codes, the different codes were grouped into potential themes for an in-depth analysis. All codes were labelled and briefly described. For instance, the researcher identified and labelled a code, "social protest action". The description of the particular code indicated the varied views on the subject housed under the code. Having done this for all identified codes, the researcher then began identifying patterned meanings with respect to the codes that were identified, which were then housed under respective themes. For instance, the theme, “social work and social protest actions” indicated the varied views on what a social protest actions denote, whether or not social workers should be involved in social action, forms of social protest and the motivation for involvement or lack thereof, in these actions. See annexure 9 for an illustration of the raw data gathered during an interview.

iv. Developing and reviewing themes

Developing and reviewing themes occurs on two distinct but interconnected levels (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first level involves reviewing coded data extracts in order to ascertain whether they form coherent and patterned meaning. The second level involves a similar process to the first, but in relation to the data set in its entirety. At this level, the researcher considers the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set, and establishes whether the potential thematic map comprehensively reflects the meanings evident in the data set. Here the researcher read through the initially identified themes together with the respective coded data extracts to establish whether or not they accurately represented the data set in an intelligible manner. Additional codes not initially identified were added for further analysis.

v. Refining, defining and naming themes

This phase denotes the identification of the “essence” of each theme (as well as the overall collection of themes), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This implies that the researcher needs to conduct and write a detailed analysis for each theme. The respective data analysis should demonstrate the core of each theme in relation to the respective data. The researcher also ought to consider how the respective themes fit into the broader overall narrative in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this phase, the researcher established the overarching themes in relation to the collected data. The respective themes together with related sub-themes, categories and data extracts where all plotted on a thematic map in order to ascertain whether they demonstrated a coherent overall narrative in line with the aim of the study. Chapter 6 elaborates this in more detail.

vi. Writing the report

This phase involves the final analysis and write-up of the report. Chapter 6 provides a comprehensive analysis of the data in relation to the research question. Among other things, the assumptions underpinning each theme and the subsequent implications thereof; the conditions giving rise to respective themes; and the overall story that the various themes reveal about the research matter are all accounted for. Ample evidence of the themes is provided together with relevant literature to support or contend the data, making an argument in relation to the research question.

5.4.7. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The interpretation of results encompasses bringing order and meaning to collected data (Bless et al., 2013). During this process, the researcher distinguishes between conceptual terms, either to arrive at new theoretical considerations or to revise existing theory. Further, categories that emerge from the examination of collected data are interrogated to highlight exceptions, contradictions, or disconfirmations, leading to new knowledge (Schurink et al., 2021a). In other words, the researcher studies the results of the data analysis in order to gain an overview of the extent to which the research question is answered.

As mentioned, this research study was chiefly deductive. However, a movement between deductive and inductive reasoning was employed as new insights that had to be controlled by literature were gained during data collection. Notwithstanding this, an expansive literature study (Chapters 2 to 4) was conducted to identify research gaps and gain an understanding of contemporary issues in social work and social action. A reflexive thematic analysis was then employed to examine collected data. The blend of a literature review and the empirical study formed the basis for interpreting results in line with descriptive and explorative research. Moreover, the epistemological stance of constructivism informed the interpretation of results. The invaluable narratives from the research participants are presented under three key themes, together with their respective sub-themes and categories in Chapter 6.

The interpretation of results also warrants an inspection of the extent to which the answers can be trusted (Schurink et al., 2021a). To have any effect on either practice or theory, research studies must present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, practitioners, and other researchers (Bless et al., 2013). The applied nature of social science inquiry thus makes it imperative that researchers and others have confidence in the conduct of the investigation and in the results of any particular study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed two primary criteria for assessing a qualitative study: trustworthiness and authenticity. The latter has not been influential and its emphasis on the wider impact of research is controversial so it is not discussed here.

5.4.7.1. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness is employed to evaluate the rigour of a qualitative inquiry based on credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. These are described in more detail below:

i. Credibility

Credibility seeks to convince that findings depict the truth of the reality under study. Studies with high credibility convincingly demonstrate the appropriateness and overall internal logic of the research questions, study design, data collection methods and the approach to data analysis utilised (Bless et al., 2013). It includes submitting research findings to participants in order to confirm that the investigator understood their social world correctly (member checking or validation) (Schurink et al., 2021a).

This chapter earnestly elaborates and critically reflects on how the research question, which centred on understanding the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions was developed through a combination of observing reality, reviewing theory, practical concerns and, to some extent, personal interest. The nature of the research question warranted the utilisation of descriptive, exploratory and instrumental case study research designs in order to gather comprehensive data. This determined the combined use of semi-structured interviews and interview schedules to collect data that was examined reflexively. The rationale for the generated themes, sub-themes and categories was explained and substantiated in depth. Lastly, by means of member checking, the researcher ascertained and confirmed the narratives of respective participants, some of which are utilised as evidence in the form of direct quotes in Chapter 6.

ii. Dependability

Dependability stresses that the researcher thoroughly describes and precisely follows a clear and thoughtful research strategy (method/process). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that researchers should adopt an ‘auditing’ approach in order to establish the merit of research in terms of trustworthiness. Accompanied by terse examples, the researcher must illustrate how each step of the research process was completed (Bless et al., 2013). The researcher must show that each step has been completed thoroughly and carefully. Hitherto, this chapter has comprehensively established the interpretive and constructive research paradigms that directed this research inquiry. In line with the particular research paradigm, the qualitative approach that was utilised has been eloquently substantiated. The researcher subsequently expounded the framing, designing, collecting, interpreting and, as discussed later, the disseminating elements of the research process that were followed to address and establish the opinions of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions.

iii. Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which results apply to other, similar situations. It requires the researcher to provide detailed descriptions of the context in which the data was collected; about the researcher as person; and about the researcher’s relationship with the participants. This information allows other researchers to compare and assess similarities between the given situation and other settings or contexts, that is, on the transferability of the findings (Bless et al., 2013). In this research inquiry, transferability was ensured by establishing the rationale of collecting data from four sample cohorts utilising descriptive, exploratory and instrumental case study research designs. This yielded in-depth and comprehensive descriptive accounts in relation to the research question, which allows for comparisons should there be a need to transfer findings to similar contexts. However, Schurink et al., (2021a) caution that it is against the nature of contextualised qualitative research inquiries to generalise findings. Notwithstanding this, the section on reflexivity details the researcher’s involvement in and influence on the study (See section 5.5 and annexure 8).

iv. Confirmability

Confirmability recognises that while complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can show that he or she has not knowingly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations to influence the research (Schurink et al., 2021a). It requires that other researchers should be able to obtain similar findings by following a similar research process in a similar context. The researcher is expected to present a critical evaluation of the methodology that is used (Bless et al., 2013). To ensure confirmability, the researcher critically evaluated the various research steps that were followed to address the research question. Among other things, the researcher substantiated the research findings with a literature control, member checking during the data collection process and, as will be demonstrated, by compiling a comprehensive reflexivity report (See annexure 8). In addition, the researcher's supervisor, a globally and locally acclaimed scholar, functioned as a reviewer to ensure that the research process was transparent and relevant to attain the research aim.

5.4.8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher draws conclusions and makes considered recommendations based on the interpreted results. Typically, conclusions and recommendations are directed towards social policy, practitioners, educators and further research (Bless et al., 2013). As discussed in the introductory sections of this chapter, an expansive literature review was conducted in an attempt to credibly capture the voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions (Chapters 2 - 4). This resulted in the development of an interview schedule for the empirical study. A movement between deductive and inductive reasoning was employed in analysing and discussing the findings to interpret the data. The researcher was therefore able to make reductive conclusions together with recommendations informed by evidence (See Chapter 7).

5.4.9. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Ultimately, the research findings of a study must be shared with others. At its core, the main purpose of dissemination is to make a difference to practice, to improve service delivery, or to advance impact (Fouché & Chubb, 2021). This may take the form of a report, a seminar or a conference presentation, a book or a peer-reviewed journal article. A research report that contains the essence of an investigation is a scientific document that often has to conform to a prescribed style and format required by academic institutions or funding bodies (Fouché & Chubb, 2021). The research report may be in the form of a thesis/ dissertation submitted to a university to obtain a degree. This thesis will be published for academic or professional purposes. Furthermore, topical sections from the study will be disseminated via conference presentations, book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles. During the time of the compilation this thesis, the researcher has presented respective topical sections of the study at the 2020 International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) conference, as well as at the 2021 Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) conference.

In summary, the methodological decisions taken in this research study are critiqued and clearly illustrate the framing, designing, collecting, interpreting and disseminating elements of the research process. It is thus possible to establish the rigour and trustworthiness of the overall research study that should be conducted ethically.

5.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics place an emphasis on the humane and sensitive treatment of research participants who may find themselves at varying degrees of risk during a study (Bless et al., 2013). However, research ethics stretch beyond observing and upholding the human rights of participants. They also designate that research knowledge and skills are utilised to contribute to societies and the lives of people (Sefotho, 2021). Overall, research ethics are designed to ensure that research takes place according to the highest moral standards, and that science does not harm people or communities, either intentionally or inadvertently (Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021).

The main ethical considerations in social research include obtaining informed consent and voluntary participation; privacy, anonymity and confidentiality; and protection from harm. These are described and considered in more detail below:

5.5.1. INFORMED CONSENT AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Leary (2012) asserts that the protection of participants' rights in research is of paramount importance. Participants have the right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation, and the fact that they have the right to decline to participate or to discontinue their participation at any time during the process, if they choose to do so (Bless et al., 2013; Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). Before respective interview sessions, the researcher emailed informed consent forms to recruited participants. These forms were discussed telephonically with the participants, after which they had to return the signed form indicating their willingness to take part in the research with the researcher. The respective discussions revolved around what the research study entailed and what was required of participants in terms of participation. The researcher reiterated individual discussions at the beginning of each interview, reminding participants of their right to decline answering particular questions and overall participation in the study.

5.5.2. PRIVACY, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The respective concepts of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are synonymous except for minor nuanced differences. Privacy refers to the physical setting in which data is collected (Morse, 2012). Ideally, this space should accord participants the freedom to take part in the study with confidence and ensure that confidential information is not leaked (Leary, 2012). During the data collection process, participants were given a chance to decide the mode of interviewing, whether online or by telephone. Most of the participants preferred to have the interviews during office hours in their private offices were no one could listen or hear them. A handful of the participants chose to be interviewed after office hours at their homes where they felt there was much more privacy and they were comfortable to participate freely. The researcher responded to these efforts by conducting all interviews in a secure and private office during and after office hours. Whether during or after office hours, the researcher experienced the interview process positively as participants spoke at length about their involvement or lack of involvement in social protest actions. The same was true for all participants who indicated how respective interviews had facilitated an informed and alternative view regarding social work and social protest actions.

Confidentiality is regarded as an extension of privacy. It implies the collection and analysis, as well as the storing and reporting of data in such a way that the data cannot be traced back to the person who provided the information (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Anonymity refers to not being asked to provide personal information that would enable others to recognise the participant. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained first, by only collecting biographical information such as participants' social work qualifications and the extent of their working experience in order to contextualise the study. These efforts were extended by ascribing pseudonyms to participants during the transcription and presentation of collected data. All collected data and accompanying transcriptions were stored on a password-protected computer and backed up on the Microsoft Cloud OneDrive platform. Fortunately, the researcher did not experience any challenges in this regard.

5.5.3. PROTECTION FROM HARM

Doing no harm in research denotes awareness of any potential harm or distress that participants may experience during a study (Bless et al., 2013; Dooly, Moore & Vallejo, 2017). Harm may present as physical, psychological and social abuse, or even legal jeopardy (Maree, 2020; Padgett, 2017). White and McBurney (2013) add, however, that the risk of harm in behavioural research cannot be avoided entirely because any new situation is stressful and could be harmful. As such, participants ought to be adequately informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation. Whenever a study carries more than minimal risk, it is good practice to work through participants' experiences, answer questions, address misconceptions and manage any potential harmful aftereffects (Stangor, 2015). Participants can be given an option to approach a counsellor made available specifically for that purpose (Bless et al., 2013). The contentious nature of this research inquiry rendered it a medium-risk study. Participants were therefore expected to experience some discomfort as they were prompted to report on their involvement, or lack thereof, in social protest actions. To curb and address any potential distress, the researcher arranged for pro bono debriefing services from a qualified social worker. Refer to appendix 7 for the relevant letter. However, during data collection, none of the participants exhibited or indeed indicated experiencing any emotional distress during the respective interviews. Participants in fact remarked on how thought provoking the interview sessions had been. There was thus no need for the debriefing services that had been accounted for.

5.6. REFLEXIVITY

Revisiting the notion of trustworthiness and rigor of research studies, several scholars recommend the completion of self-reflexivity journals (Berger, 2015; Koopman, Watling & LaDonna, 2020; Longhofer & Floersch, 2012; Oliphant & Bennett, 2020; Probst & Berenson, 2014). The axiological orientation of this study focuses on how the values, emotions, expectations and assumptions of the researcher influence the research process (Sefotho, 2021). The said focus extends to include reflection on the researchers' actions during and after the completion of the research study. Moreover, and consistent with the constructivist orientation of this study, unfolding reflexivity is generally valued by qualitative researchers (Charmaz, 2014; Probst, 2015). However, the application of reflection in the research process requires a clear concept and methodology (Jungmeister, 2016). In other words, how does one meaningfully define reflection and what should a practical reflection process look like?

Scholars usually reference the seminal and fundamental texts on reflection by Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). Dewey (1933) originally described reflection as the continual re-evaluation of personal beliefs, assumptions and ideas in light of experience and the generation of alternative interpretations of those experiences. Schön (1983) provided yet another level of thinking in writing about reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former referred to the ability to think-while-doing and the latter to the ability to think about one's practice, after the fact, in an effort to evaluate this practice. Schön (1983) emphasised that the two are not wholly distinct, that is, one reflects on action, which informs thinking-in-action.

Synthesising these respective texts, in the broadest sense, reflection implies asking questions and receiving answers to the questions. This thesis more specifically sees reflexivity as intentional self-awareness of the reciprocal influence of the researcher-context and the researcher-participant relationship in the research process (Gilgun, 2006). Reflexivity in this regard implies a means by which the researcher's background, experiences, emotions, values and biases are viewed as important contributions to the process of co-constructing knowledge (Longhofer & Floersch, 2012; Probst, 2015).

Based on Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti's (2016) guiding questions for researchers in completing biographical reflexive journaling, appendix 8, which is completed in the first person, details my involvement, as the primary researcher, and influence on the research process.

5.7. LIMITATIONS

Limitations in a research study illuminate the researcher's awareness. Several scholars maintain that limitations are inevitable in spite of meticulous planning for any research study (Bless et al., 2013; Fouché, 2021; Merriam & Tisdale, 2016; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Limits of any study are important elements of the research process. Thus, the researcher needs to be aware of, recognise, acknowledge and present these concisely. In this study, the researcher can identify four potential limitations.

First and foremost, the research topic on social work and social protest actions is politically and, to an extent, personally informed. Thus, this thesis may have different contextual and conceptual meanings for different readers depending on their political and personal affiliations. This may therefore result in some readers wanting to see specific content in the literature study, as well as precise deductions, conclusions and recommendations from the empirical study. In part, this accounts for the extensiveness of this thesis, as the researcher earnestly attempted to contextualise social protest actions and social work within the ambit of social activism for human rights and social justice within a South African social development paradigm.

Secondly, face-to-face interviews were discouraged because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, researchers were urged to utilise online and telephonic platforms to conduct their empirical studies. As discussed in section 5.4.4., data collection was conducted online and by telephone. The majority of the interviews were conducted online. A poor network signal interrupted the general flow of some interviews, despite the researcher's communication and interviewing skills. With telephonic interviews, rapport was difficult to achieve as the researcher and participants could not see one another. However, member checking was used to ensure that collected data were valid and reliable.

The third limitation relates to the subjective nature associated with instrumental case studies. These studies are often critiqued for lack of objectivity and rigour. However, objectivity is not always the primary aim, especially in case studies geared towards attaining an in-depth understanding of particular issues within their contexts (Farquhar, 2012). Since this research inquiry centred on the opinions of social work practitioners, increased subjectivity was justified. The entirety of this chapter has earnestly examined the systematic research process followed in addressing the research question. Section 5.4.7.1 elaborates specifically on how trustworthiness of this research study can be assessed.

Fourth, and finally, generalisation of the findings is not possible with a qualitative study due to the small sample size and the specific study context (Farquhar, 2012; Yin, 2014). The criteria for inclusion ensured that only data-rich participants were included in the study, however, saturation still occurred with all cohorts of participants, which is encouraged by Bless et al. (2013) and Staller (2021). In this study, saturation was reached with 27 participants, and the researcher felt that the addition of participants outside this number would not yield different results.

5.8. CONCLUSION

Fundamentally, this chapter has analysed and reflected on the 3-year research process employed in this study. The interpretive and constructive paradigms that informed the qualitative research approach were clearly elaborated. Among other things, the emphasis on understanding the meanings that participants attach to respective phenomena, and the immersion in the participants' context on the part of the researcher that this entails, was extensively substantiated. Further, the systematic research process employed in the study was critically examined and reflected on. The respective analyses served to demonstrate the rigour and trustworthiness of the study in its entirety. In addition, the findings of this study and the involvement of the researcher and respective limitations were critically reviewed to facilitate reading the findings of study confidently.

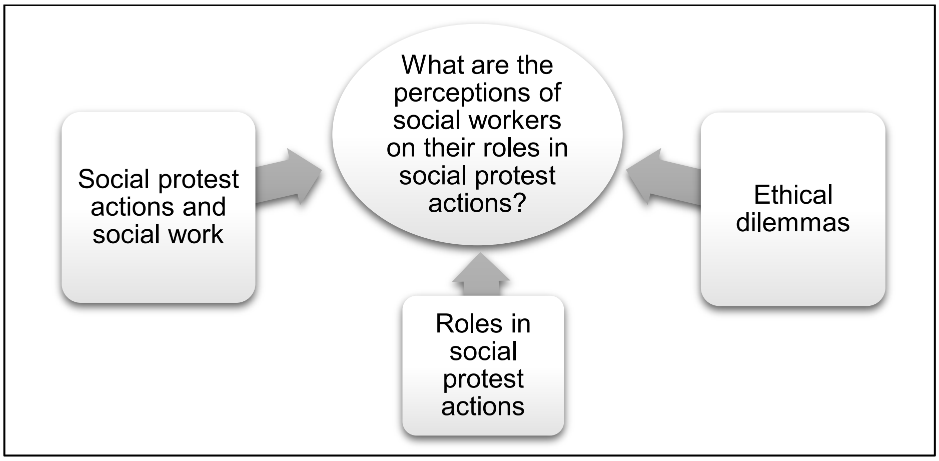
Overall, the discussion demonstrates how this research study was conducted according to the highest scientific and moral standards. The findings from the empirical investigation are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reported the effort directed at the fourth objective of this study, which centred on empirically investigating the perceptions of social workers regarding their roles in social protest actions in a South African context. It initiated the overall and specific review of the research process employed in the inquiry. Of sheer importance and relevance to this chapter, it discussed the interview schedule which itself is embedded in a comprehensive literature study that provided a framework for capturing the voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions. As established, data was collected from four sampled cohorts during 27 semi-structured interviews. It bears repeating that the aim of incorporating four sampling cohorts was not to compare voices from the respective cohorts, but to analyse and ultimately present them in a synthesised discussion. Furthermore, and consistent with the chosen research paradigm, it elaborated on the qualitative approach of this study which was founded on meaning driven by participants. Reflexive thematic analysis was utilised to examine collected data. The empirical findings are presented and analysed under three main themes determined by the literature review that provided a framework for exploring the participants' narratives. Although comprehensively unpacked later in this chapter, the respective themes identified in relation to the main research question are graphically depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Empirical themes in the semi-structured interview schedule


What are the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions?
Social protest actions and social work
Ethical dilemmas
Roles in social protest actions

In order to obtain a clear picture of the sampled population, an overview of the biographic details of participants is presented and discussed first. This also provides context for interpreting the participants' voices and findings from the study in the discussion that follows after.

6.2. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants were asked to indicate their highest academic qualification, work experience, their work environment and research focus. These biographic particulars, together with the criteria for inclusion, created the profile of the participants for all four cohorts, which contextualises the interpretation of the narratives and findings. Table 6 presents an overview of the profile of participants in this study.

Table 6. Overview of the profile of research participants

PARTICIPANTS	ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	WORK EXPERIENCE	WORK ENVIRONMENT
Social workers involved (SWI) 8	Bachelor of social work (BSW) 5 Master of social work (MSW) 3	3 - 21 years	Government organisation (GOVT) 4 Non-governmental organisation (NGO) 4
Social workers not involved (SWNI) 8	BSW 5 MSW 3	2 - 5 years	GOVT 1 NGO 7
Social work managers (SWM) 8	BSW 7 MSW 1	8 - 25 years	NGO 8
			RESEARCH AMBIT
Radical social work experts (RSWE) 3	Dr. of Philosophy in social work (DPhil) 3	6 - 15 years	International and comparative social work; socio-economic policy in social work; social justice and human rights in social work

6.2.1. SAMPLING COHORTS

Although discussed at length in the previous chapter, the inclusion of four sampling cohorts was predicated on gaining a balanced and comprehensive spread of participants' voices regarding the research question. As such, social workers who had been involved or not involved in social protest actions were part of the sampling to represent a micro perspective on social work. Social work managers were part of the sampling cohort because they are responsible for the management of social service organisations and thus represent a macro perspective on social work. RSWE offered critical and balanced opinions on the research matter and they were utilised to reflect on and regulate the insights of SWI, SWNI, as well as SWM who may or may not have been involved in social protest actions. As the analysis will demonstrate, the voices from the four cohorts were broadly similar, with a consistent argument for the involvement of social workers in social protest actions, albeit nuanced differently depending on the sampling cohort.

6.2.2. SOCIAL WORK QUALIFICATION

Participants were asked to indicate their highest social work qualification. This was underlined by the importance of social work education and the facilitation of critical consciousness (IASSW, 2002; Lombard, 2015; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015; Weyers, 2002). The inherently contentious and complex nature of the study on social protest actions and social work also endorsed the particular inquiry. As such, the academic qualifications of participants were expected to facilitate intelligible voices regarding the aim of the study. The majority of the participants held a BSW degree, with a handful having MSW and DPhil qualifications. The data analysis did not reveal significant variance in the essence of the voices of participants despite their varied academic qualifications.

6.2.3. WORK EXPERIENCE

Research participants had to indicate the duration of their work experience. The average work experience ranged from two to twenty-five years. The difference in years of experience among social workers strengthened the study in terms of gaining a wide range of perspectives regarding social action in the attainment of human rights and social justice. However, whether one had been in the field for two or twenty-five years had no bearing on the crux of their unique voices regarding social work and social protest actions.

6.2.4. WORK ENVIRONMENT

The researcher asked participants to indicate the type of their work environments. This followed the understanding that the typology of social work in South Africa is mainly demarcated between GOVT and NGO sectors (cf. Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Van Breda, 2018). Despite the particular sector, all social workers in South Africa subscribe to similar social work policies and legislation and are all governed by the same ethical code. Most of the participants worked in NGOs and a minority in GOVT. Although the participants' work environments did not influence their participation in the study, it certainly revealed substantial narratives concerning the involvement, or lack thereof, of social workers in social protest actions. This is demonstrated throughout data analysis. Ultimately, participants employed in public or private organisations were involved to aid the study's comprehensiveness.

6.2.5. RESEARCH FOCUS

This research study centred on social action in the pursuit of human rights and social justice in social work. The research ambit of RSWE was considered and established to add to the essence of discussions regarding the research aim. The inclusion of national and international experts was propelled by the understanding that local problems and social issues have global implications and vice versa. In addition, their respective research foci allowed for critical and balanced opinions regarding the research aim as will be demonstrated throughout the discussion that follows.

Collectively, the respective biographic particulars aided the interpretation of the participants' narratives and provided an analytical framework for the research findings. The next section presents a concise analysis of the participants' voices regarding their perceived roles in social protest actions.

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

This section presents an integrated analysis of the data derived from the four sampling cohorts. In line with the specific mode of analysis (reflexive thematic analysis) employed in this study, the data is presented by means of identified themes, sub-themes, and categories emanating from the semi-structured interviews. The findings are clustered according to analogous patterns and associations emerging from the literature review, together with the empirical study. It is worth repeating that empirical findings from the four cohorts are presented in an integrated manner in order to demonstrate the different voices on different aspects of the study. The combined voices also serve to provide a coherent and logical flow regarding the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions. Table 7 presents an overview of the themes, sub-themes and categories identified in this study.

Table 7. Overview of identified themes, sub-themes and categories

THEMES	**SUB-THEMES**	**CATEGORIES**
1. SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS AND SOCIAL WORK	1.1. Perception of a social protest action	*1.1.1. Group of people with a common issue they are not happy about and want to be addressed* *1.1.2. Civil disobedience, destruction, violent demonstration* *1.1.3. Taking a strong action against something or for something and expressing it to the public*
	1.2. Should social workers be involved in social protest actions?	*1.2.1. Social workers should be involved* *1.2.2. Ambivalent towards involvement*
	1.3. What protest actions should social workers be involved in?	*1.3.1 Any issue that translates into social injustice or violation of human rights* *Specific issues* *a. Gender-based violence* *b. Child protection* *c. Resources*
	1.4. What protest actions should social workers not get involved in?	*1.4.1. Any actions that contradict the SA constitution, Bill of rights, SACSSP code of ethics* *1.4.2. Ambivalent actions* *a. Service delivery*
	1.5. How should social workers be involved in social protest actions?	*1.5.1. Covert* *1.5.2. Overt*

	1.6. What social protest actions have you been part of and in what capacity?	*1.6.1. Personal* *1.6.2. Professional*
	1.7. Influences behind social workers' involvement in social protest actions	*1.7.1. Field of practice* *1.7.2. Employing organisation* *1.7.3. Social work mandate* *1.7.4. Personal affiliation* *1.7.5. Higher education*
	1.8. Influences informing social workers' non-involvement in social protest actions	*1.8.1. Dominance of neoliberal capitalism* *1.8.2. Reliance on state funding and donations* *1.8.3. The perceived "image" of social work* *1.8.4. Hopelessness* *1.8.5. Threats and fear of personal and professional harm* *1.8.6. A disjointed social work fraternity*
2. ROLES IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS	2.1. Perception of a role	*2.1.1. The part or one's responsibility in a given context*
	2.2. Roles and their fulfilment	*2.2.1. Mobiliser* *2.2.2. Organiser* *2.2.3. Counsellor* *2.2.4. Social broker* *2.2.5. Lobby* *2.2.6. Leader* *2.2.7. Advocate* *2.2.8. Educator* *2.2.9. Empowerer* *2.2.10. Activist*
3. ETHICAL DILEMMAS	3.1. Competing loyalties	*3.1.1. Social worker vs state*
	3.2. Value conflict	*3.2.1. Social worker vs profession*

		3.2.2. Social worker vs organisation *3.2.3. The client vs "greater good"*

6.3.1. THEME 1: SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS AND SOCIAL WORK

The aim of this research inquiry was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of social workers with regard to their roles in social protest actions. To achieve this, the researcher deemed it critical to first establish the opinions of participants about various aspects of social protest actions in order to decipher specific roles, if any, that social workers could fulfil in the said social actions. Generally, participants were asked to deliberate on their perception of social protest actions, the involvement of social workers in these actions, social actions that social work can facilitate or not facilitate, how these social actions can be facilitated, as well as the influences behind participation, or lack thereof, in the said social actions. The participants' voices and analysis follow below.

6.3.1.1. Sub-theme 1.1: Perception of a social protest action

Participants were asked to establish their understanding of a social protest action. Their voices are discussed below.

Category 1.1.1. Group of people with a common issue about which they are not happy and want to be addressed

Most participants viewed and understood a social protest action as a collective of people driven by similar interests that they want to be addressed. Below are some of the participants' voices.

> *SWI-P7. "It is normally a group of people protesting towards a common goal. They are voicing their opinion on matters that they are not happy with and want to be addressed."*
>
> *SWNI-P3. "I think it is when a large group of people, men, women of all races come and march together in solidarity to make a point or bring attention to a cause for the higher ups."*
>
> *RSWE-P1. "We are talking about a group of individuals that have decided to come together due to certain reasons that are unsatisfactory to them...And they are bringing their grievances to whom they regard as power holders, as those individuals that can make decisions to change the situation that they are protesting about."*

Based on these voices, social protest actions involve collective action, which is vastly different from mere individual action (Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). Further, these collectives seem to come together in solidarity due to issues common to all those who take part in these actions. Although expansively discussed in the following segment, discontent among participants is considered a significant driving factor with regard to involvement in social protest actions (McAdam, 1996; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Lastly, identified issues which form the core of these social actions are directed towards decision makers who hold the power and authority to effect desired changes. So what to make of all this?

To start, the enduring negative impression of social protest actions as uncoordinated chaotic collectives is far from accurate. Instead, the actions are contemplated long before we see their manifestation (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Further, they are focused on publicising specific issues that cause discontent and are aimed at putting pressure to those who hold the reigns to effect the desired change (Hanna et al., 2016). Without pre-empting the crucial discussion on potential roles that social workers can fulfil in social protest actions, one can decipher important leadership, advocacy and organisation roles if social work practitioners are to be involved in social protest actions. Notwithstanding this, the prevalent perception of a social protest action as involving a group of people with a common issue that they are not happy about and want to be addressed confirms the working understanding of the said phenomenon adopted in this study (Alexander et al., 2018).

Category 1.1.2. Civil disobedience, destruction, violent demonstration

A handful of the participants perceived social protest actions as chaotic rebellions, characterised by violent and destructive actions. These are some of their voices.

> *SWNI-P1. "For me, what I've seen or heard of protest is people that are trying to fight for a right or something that they feel is owed to them. But often in a very brutal way, very in your face... I'm not saying that there aren't more peaceful protests. But when I think in South Africa of protests, I immediately think, scared, people are going to get hurt, what's going to be burned down? How many buildings are we going to lose?"*

> *SWM-P4. "First thing that jumps to mind is violence or violent action. And if I may explain to you my thoughts around it. These days to be nice to the government in begging and asking, it doesn't work. The only way you get attention is if you burn a few cars, and you cost the country a couple of million rand, then everybody starts listening."*

> *RSWE-P2. "A move of final resort. An act of desperation of some sort. It is a civil disobedience. People actively disobeying what is considered to be the "norm" of society and disrupting that system to say it's not working. So that includes violence, chaos and disruption which happens often but not always. It's a way of showing that the system is broken."*

These voices provoke fundamental and valuable discussions. They arguably illustrate the other and often falsely sensationalised side of social protest actions, one of which is dominated by violent and destructive actions by protesters and brought to order by the state (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017; Gaqa, 2018; Giliomee, 2020). However, it is common understanding that there are two sides to any story. One ought to consider both sides before forming an opinion. So the questions that beg to be answered here include, but are not limited to whether violent and destructive actions are accurate depictions of social protest actions in general and in South Africa?; to what propels such violent and destructive actions on the side of protesters?; and what drives negative connotations associated with social protests and protesters alike?

This thesis vigorously rejects the notion of social protest actions being principally violent and destructive as reported in the media and other broadcasts (Castells, 2012). Yes, they occasionally get out of hand and result in the occasional looting or the destruction of valuable infrastructure, but that arguably is the exception and not the norm. Even then, the occasional violence and pure criminality during social protest actions can be attributed to marauding gangs who masquerade as protesters in the struggle for social change. Further, the aggressive crowd control methods exercised by the police arguably provoke peaceful and legitimate protesters to respond with violence (Alexander, 2010; Fakir, 2014; Omar, 2006; Runciman et al., 2016).

The media and some scholars seem to assume a unidimensional perspective when it comes to social protest actions and the actions they stage. Among other things, and debatably, only the violent and destructive actions seem to be "newsworthy". The factors leading to these actions do not receive due attention and peaceful protest actions rarely receive coverage, if at all. Although irrevocably flawed in its operationalisation, this represents the fundamental power and influence of the media in setting the scene for particular narratives for the general population. Social workers may well consider utilising such platforms in the struggle for human rights and social justice, as will be discussed later. Nonetheless, this thesis argues that social protest actions challenge the status quo (White, 2019) and the myopic arrogance displayed by the state is geared towards presenting a false sense of order and security associated with conservatism. For the state, which of late has become flawed through poor governance and ripe corruption, it would seem more amenable to quash and mislabel the poor as criminals than address their legitimate social issues (Desai, 2002).

It is conceivable that violent and destructive actions by protesters result from lack of reponse from the state that only reacts to demands after severe encounters (Fakir, 2014). As reported by participant *SWM-P4,* costs and being a liability to the government and its operations are all that seem to propel the state to finding solutions. The direct impact is the rationalising of violent conduct by both protesters and state. It sets the wrong trend. It normalises violent conduct. Indeed, the rise in violent and destructive protests has recently escalated to include a variety of structures of society, including the burning of schools and universities, and the destruction and looting of public infrastructure such as trains, buses, shopping malls and municipal buildings (Khambule et al., 2019). It is this violence that, in part, influences the non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions, as illustrated later in this analysis.

When we examine violence in social protest actions, all of the above points need to be taken into account. Is violent conduct and destruction justifiable? Absolutely not. Violent actions and destruction without a doubt are criminal. So if social workers are to be involved in social protest actions, their role in curtailing violence and destructive behaviour has to be clear. The discussion on social work roles elaborates on these respective sentiments.

Category 1.1.3. Taking strong action against something or for something and expressing it to the public

One of the participants pointed out their understanding of a social protest action as taking a stand for or against an issue and expressing it to the public.

> *SWM-P1. I think I would say that is taking a strong action against something. Feeling strongly about something and trying to find a way to express it, and make it known to the world. I don't know if it's for something as well.*

Whilst this is categorically correct, this voice does not demonstrate the element of collective action assumed in social protest actions and adopted in this thesis. Further, it does not correlate with social action as a method of social work used for mobilising masses in the struggle for human rights and social justice (Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013).

To sum up; the main consensus regarding the participants' perceptions of social protest actions revolved around collective action aimed at power holders concerning specific issues that cause discontent. Social protest actions were perceived equally as violent and destructive actions.

6.3.1.2. Sub-theme 1.2: Should social workers be involved in social protest actions?

After establishing the sentiments of participants regarding what social protest actions denote, they had to indicate whether social workers should be involved in such actions. Their opinions are discussed next.

Category 1.2.1. Social workers should be involved

The majority of the participants indicated that social workers should indeed be involved in social protest actions. Their voices are presented below.

> *SWI-P7. I do think that social workers can play a role in social protesting. Because we are human rights activists.*
>
> *SWNI-P3. I think yes. Social workers should be involved. But I think they should be involved in the organising and administration and follow up. So after the "hoo haa" who's going to follow up with government and with the people that are important and making the decisions? That can be a social worker, as an advocate for the people's cause. But I don't think it is a good use of time, while you've got clients that need you, to physically be there.*
>
> *SWM-P4. I think yes because we sitting close to the fire. I think social workers in a certain way we should because we actually see social problems first hand. I think we can get involved but not in the streets. It has to be on an executive level wherein actual decision making takes place.*

Consistent with the main thrust of this thesis, the consensus among participants was that social workers should be involved in social protest actions. Chief among the reasons was that social workers are human rights activists because they work with those oppressed and underprivileged in society. This coincides with the new Global definition of social work that alludes to the active role of social work in facilitating social change and empowerment of people (Banks, 2012; Beckett & Maynard, 2012; Healy, 2011; Jones, 2009; Ornellas et al., 2018). Furthermore, the GSWSEP and the SACSSP's ethical code mandates social workers to challenge discrimination and institutional oppression and unjust policies and practices, and ensure equitable access to resources for the most vulnerable (IASSW, 2018; SACSSP, 2012). However, involvement in social actions by social workers is not as straightforward as social work policies and legislation mandate.

Indeed, as illustrated by the voices of *SWNI-P3 & SWM-P4*, participants indicated that social workers should be involved in social protest actions but with caveats. Respective participants unambiguously indicated that social workers should not be physically involved in social protest actions. Instead, they pointed out that social work professionals should concern themselves with the "behind the scenes" aspects of social protest actions. The explicit reasons for this included that it is not an efficient and effective use of time to be present in social protest actions whilst there are mounting caseloads to attend to. Social change furthermore was assumed to be attained at a decision-making level. Although there is considerable truth to these statements, further analysis of the participants' narratives revealed implicit connotations behind their respective opinions.

Implicit in the respective voices above and a recurring sentiment from here on concerned professionalism and the "image" of social work. With the enduring negative connotations attached to social protest actions and protesters alike, it may not be surprising that physical involvement in social protest actions was purported to estrange the profession from its service users. Irony has seldom been more perverse! Be that as it may, it will be unfair to leave these speculations unqualified. The following section, as the rest of this analysis, elaborates this further.

Category 1.2.2. Ambivalent towards involvement

A handful of the participants were ambivalent about the involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Below are some of their voices.

> *SWNI-P5. Yes and no. I believe that we do have a critical role maybe in arranging them or educating them, saying this is what the social protest is for. Maybe being behind the scenes and almost facilitating the social protests but not being the face of it as it could lead to people thinking that we are biased or we are not for everyone. I think it is difficult for social workers because if we do get involved in a social protest then we lose our objectivity and we are not going to be relatable to all people.*

> *SWM-P5. That's a difficult one. As a social worker, you are seen as someone who needs to be professional at all times. So this professionalism is seen as you not going out of line if I can say. And you cannot be classified as someone who wants to be involved in protests. But if you want to be involved, you can in an advocacy manner within the profession. But as social worker yourself to be involved in protest directly means that you are putting the social work profession in the wrong light, you will shame them if I can put it like that.*

> *RSWE-P2. So I have quite a complex opinion when it comes to this. My simple answer in terms what I feel my role as a social worker, is that yes we should be involved. But it is a lot more complex than that.*

Whilst the voices above inherently agree about the involvement of social workers in social protest actions, participants evidently had reservations. Unlike in the previous section, participants here explicitly pointed out the need to maintain professionalism. This demonstrates the sheer breadth and extent of mainstream social work, which is largely conservative, and places an emphasis on technical excellence, impartiality and an apolitical stance in social work interventions (Baines, 2007; Banks, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). It goes further and deeper than this, though.

As already established, the enduring negative connotations attached to social protest actions automatically labels anyone taking part in particular social actions as unprofessional or, even worse, a criminal. The ambivalence of different participants regarding the involvement of social workers in social protest actions is contingent on a host of other reasons, some of which are intricately linked to the notion of professionalism synonymous with mainstream social work (Baines, 2007). For instance, the dominance of neoliberalism in social work and the reliance on state funding places social workers in a complex bind regarding the extent of their activism. This will be comprehensively explored. Further, as part of this professionalism, social workers are expected to be loyal to their employing agencies. These agencies may not necessarily encourage activism due to reasons to be considered as this discussion unfolds. This illustrates the complexity and contentious nature of social work and its involvement in social protest actions.

To conclude, participants agreed that social workers should be involved in social protest actions, but with specific caveats. Social workers seem to be caught between a rock and hard place regarding their involvement in social protest actions in the struggle for human rights and social justice.

6.3.1.3. Sub-theme 1.3: What protest actions should social workers be involved in?

At this point, the perceptions and opinions of social workers regarding what social protest actions denote and their involvement in these actions were established. Participants were asked to deliberate over the social actions in which social workers should be involved.

Category 1.3.1 Any issue that translates into social injustice or violation of human rights

Almost all of the participants indicated that social workers should be involved in social actions driven by human rights violations or the denial of social justice.

> *SWI-P1. I think in general, social workers could facilitate most of the social protest actions that aim to publicise social issues and seek change. Like gender based violence and child abuse. We could be involved in most of them actually.*
>
> *SWNI-P6. Remember we stand for social justice, we stand for equal rights to ensure that the community is taken care of, and is empowered. So I cannot really say this one and not get involved in the other one. I think any social issue that is rising out of abuse of human rights we can get involved in.*
>
> *SWM-P1. I think anything that benefits the whole community, anything that builds up, communities, anything that makes life better and more liveable, if I can call it that.*

It is possible that the wide range of social issues that confront the poor and vulnerable influenced the voices quoted above to echo the involvement of social workers in social protest actions that are driven by the violation of human rights and social injustice. Indeed, South Africa dishonourably boasts one of the largest rates of inequality in the world (Bollens, 2000; Dixon, 2006; Gray, 2006). The majority of South Africans continue to live in poverty (CSDA, 2008). It is known that the trajectory of human rights abuse escalates as social and economic conditions deteriorate (Cilliers, 2006). To recall, human rights generally refer to rights that are inherent to our nature, without which we cannot live as human beings (UNCHR, 1994). The renowned South African Constitution and Bill of Rights details a series of human rights that, if violated, oblige social work intervention (Lombard & Twikirize, 2014). However, a focus on the legally guaranteed function of human rights is narrow. Instead, the reading and interpretation of human rights must be done vis-à-vis contextual realities. The following segment elaborates this.

Interestingly however, the majority of participants indicated specific social issues that social workers could be involved in and should engage in. The respective issues and a brief commentary follows.

Specific issues

a. Gender-based violence

> *SWM-P6. So I think issues around child abuse and gender based violence. Like I said, this the field I work in and therefore I have an informed opinion about the nature of these issues and how they impact the people affected.*

b. Child protection

> *SWNI-P4. My work revolves around children and their education, so naturally I feel social workers should facilitate social actions that enable every child to grow and develop to their full potential.*

c. Resources

> *SWI-P3. These laws and policies are beautiful on face value but they are however disconnected from reality on the ground. More often there are no resources to implement these policies.*

Without uncharacteristically attributing any degree of importance to one issue over the other, the participants in this study interestingly pointed out the respective issues highlighted above as pressing issues for social workers to be involved in. Although the actual nature, or indeed extensiveness, of the respective issues and their impact have the making of an interesting, and no doubt necessary discussion, they range beyond the focus of this study. What is noteworthy and perhaps indicative is that one's sphere of practice arguably determines the social actions one is most likely to embrace. For obvious reasons, but worth reiterating, given the plethora of social issues, it appears rational that social workers should be involved in social actions that align with their expertise. Further, it has been determined that social protest actions are contemplated. Thus, if respective social actions are to attain their intended change, it is arguably invaluable to have informed opinions that bolster the merit of the relevant social issues and the transformation they intend. The discussion on roles in social protest actions further focuses on this narrative.

To sum up, social workers should be involved in social actions that aim to address social issues that manifest because of the violation of human rights and social injustice. In addition, in the struggle for social change, one's expertise could be instrumental in the provision of informed opinions and evidence informed recommendations.

6.3.1.4. Sub-theme 1.4: What protest actions should social workers not get involved in?

Although separated for analytical purposes, the discussion here fundamentally extends of the previous segment. Indeed, it presents interesting and vital discussion narratives regarding social actions that social workers should be involved or not involved in. Nevertheless, at this point participants were asked specifically to indicate social actions that social workers should not be involved in, if any.

Category 1.4.1. Any actions that contradict the SA constitution, Bill of rights, SACSSP code of ethics

The majority of the participants indicated that social workers should not be involved in any social actions that contravened the stipulations of the South African constitution, the Bill of rights and the SACSSP's code of ethics. Their voices are presented below.

> *SWNI-P1. "Like I said, anything that's going against any human rights, anything against our Constitution, anything against the Bill of Rights. If you can see it's directly contradicting what is said in our SACSSP code of ethics, then that should be a big red no, we're not going to take part in something like that.*
>
> *SWM-P8. But in terms of violence and people getting hurt, I don't think it's good for social workers to be seen as part of that.*

Participants naturally were unanimously opposed to violent actions or indeed any actions that disregarded the state's or the profession's constitution and legislation (SACSSP, 2012). This, in part, underscores the essence of policies and their centrality in deterring or perpetuating whether it be particular actions or social issues.

A handful of participants identified specific social actions from which social workers should supposedly distance themselves. Their sentiments are discussed next.

Ambivalent actions

a. Service delivery

> *SWI-P5. If a protest that involves for example the issue of electricity, yes it is a social issue, but how is our involvement going to change this? I do not think we should leave for example your child protection case and join that protest. That is not an issue that I can be involved in.*
>
> *SWNI-P7. It is difficult to pin point one issue over the other because social work is really broad. But not for bread and petrol prices. I mean its economic and whatever.*
>
> *SWM-P7. "would not be involved in price hikes or say now electricity or water issues.*

Broadly, the comments above identified service delivery issues as actions that social workers should avoid. As alluded to earlier, this raises a fundamental discussion concerning what constitutes human rights violations and what social injustice entails. Ife's (2001) deductive and inductive approach to human rights in social work offers valuable insights in this regard.

The deductive approach refers to the legally guaranteed function of human rights related to what is required for a human being's survival (Dean, 2015). This comprises all three generations of human rights, which include but are not limited to access to safe housing, access to clean water and sanitation, non-discriminatory practices, non-violence, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, to mention a few (Dominelli, 2012; Sewpaul, 2014b; Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014; Wronka, 2008). Conversely, the inductive approach refers to substantive rights related to what is required for true fulfilment and human flourishing (Dean, 2015). So what does this all mean with respect to the voices quoted above?

It implies that, if there is ever a violation in any of the three generations of human rights that are constitutionally guaranteed, then social workers should be involved. Further, it suggests that if bread, petrol or electricity prices where to go up, leading to a socialist mandate, then social workers as human rights activists should intervene. Admittedly, price hikes are not constitutional violations per se, or indeed a violation of a person's human rights. Yet, if costs of commodities or services go up, and they do not align, for example, with an increase in social grants, it becomes a social issue. In that case, if social workers subscribe to the Global definition of social work among other social work policies, they should be involved in resolving such issues.

Key points of departure here are that social workers should not be involved or indeed facilitate any violent actions or actions that disregard the SA constitution and the profession's legislation (SACSSP, 2012). In addition, a comprehensive understanding of human rights and social justice should not be dissociated from the social, economic, political, historical and cultural contexts that sustain human dignity and flourishing (Dean, 2015).

6.3.1.5. Sub-theme 1.5: How should social workers be involved in social protest actions?

After ascertaining social actions that social workers should be involved or not involved in, participants had to indicate the ways in which the said practitioners could participate in respective social actions. Their opinions are discussed below.

Category 1.5.1. Covert

Most participants were attuned to the covert involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWI-P1. You could do this through social media. For example, through an informed Facebook post. I can remember the Black Lives Matter movement went viral because of social media.*
>
> *SWI-P2. So we went back to the office, stopped answering phones and put up a sign outside the door that said we were out for training.*
>
> *SWI-P3. In 2020 I wrote an open letter about the state of gender based violence in South Africa, the impact of the lockdown, and government actions needed.*
>
> *SWM-P1. What we also try to do, which is something that I actively encourage my social workers, is to talk about child abuse, to talk about children's rights, gender based violence, wherever they go, wherever the opportunity comes, to make people aware of, I almost want to say the other side of it.*
>
> *SWM-P4. I think our protests should be more on different platforms, like case work meetings with police, on the radio, on the news, pamphlets, in government itself.*

As illustrated above, most participants were broadly oriented towards minimal to non-confrontational ways of participating in social protest actions. This was consistent with their sentiments regarding the involvement of social workers in social protest actions discussed at the beginning of this analysis. The complex reasons for the respective sentiments were thoroughly discussed and are regarded redundant here. Instead, this segment unpacks the various covert activities above as pointed out by participants.

Social media, in other words, digital activism (Hanna et al., 2016) can be a useful tool in the struggle for social change; more so in the 21st century with the internet having become central to daily living (Castells, 2012; Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005). Social media platforms like Facebook present social workers with a platform to publicise a range of social issues to the wider public with little to no effort. Among other things, this has the potential to put and increase pressure on power holders to consider and address presenting social issues (Jost et al., 2018). However, the precise impact of social media in social protest actions in the South African context remains debatable. Data and Wi-Fi services required to access and participate via social media is expensive for the majority of South Africans. Social work practitioners who usually have to make do with less to no resources, are not better positioned either (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015). This may explain why most social protest actions in South Africa are largely physical.

A contrast of digital activism involves civil disobedience in the form of strike action. Usually, this involves the complete withdrawal of labour by workers (Hanna et al., 2016; McLeod, 2017). Strike action, which can be direct or indirect, as in the case of *SWI-P2,* above, is typically linked to the improvement of various aspects of working conditions. Social workers in South Africa work under deplorable conditions (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015), but unlike in other professions, strike actions by social workers are not common. In addition to the reasons already discussed which focus on professionalism and the enduring image of social work, social workers are confronted by complex dilemmas regarding striking actions. They have to make challenging choices between delivering continuous rudimentary interventions or engage in activism for broader social change. This line of thought is expanded on later in the analysis.

Notwithstanding this, participants mentioned the writing and publication of formal statements in the form of open letters as a viable means of social protesting (Alexander, 2010; Hanna et al., 2016; McLeod, 2017). This forms part of advocacy, which is usually intended to create pressure through the power of informed and concise arguments to influence law, legal enforcement and compliance in relation to a social cause. Given the wealth of data that frontline social workers have at their disposal regarding the cascading series of social issues and their adverse impact on the vulnerable, formal statements arguably present as a viable means of social protesting. Teach-ins or informal meetings and broadcasting as illustrated by *SWM-P1 and SWM-P4* respectively, are forms of advocacy which are best suited for raising public awareness about specific issues and how they affect those who ought to be accorded a voice in South Africa (Alexander, 2010; Hanna et al., 2016; McLeod, 2017).

To sum up, the broad consensus among participants was in favour of various forms of covert involvement by social workers in social protest actions.

Category 1.5.2. Overt

A handful of participants indicated the overt involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWI-P1. Every year at child welfare for child protection week, we stood with banners with the inscription, "No to child abuse" on the main road.*
>
> *SWM-P1. I know social workers who during their time would march along with the other people in the streets with their placards.*
>
> *RSWE-P1. Social workers can be involved in marches and rallies in non-violent ways.*

In stark contrast to the former segment, overt actions were not popular among participants. This comes as no surprise considering the respective sentiments regarding the caveated involvement of social workers in social protest actions discussed earlier. Nevertheless, participants indicated the use of banners as a viable means of social protesting. Banners are large signs that usually carry a protest message. Several protesters usually carry these but they can also be displayed on buildings or vehicles (Alexander, 2010; Hanna et al., 2016; McLeod, 2017). Banners or placards are usually used in conjunction with street marches and rallies (Hanna et al., 2016). Rallies typically precede street marches, but both are forms of mass demonstration that are aimed at distributing information to the wider public with the intention of raising awareness about a social issue that is the subject of the protest. Further, both are geared towards garnering publicity (media attention) through staged actions that subsequently apply pressure on authorities and decision makers regarding particular issues (Hanna et al., 2016; McLeod, 2017).

The use of banners in rallies together with street marches is popular in South Africa (Alexander, 2010; Mottiar & Bond, 2010). Among other reasons, they stretch back to the Apartheid struggle and remain fundamental means for the most vulnerable to voice their dissatisfaction with the status quo. Despite their merits and raw potential to attain intended social change, the operationalisation of banners, rallies and street marches by South African social workers beyond rudimentary activism and advocacy, remains rather tricky and less straightforward. The analytical segments below provide a more concise account of the respective complexities.

As a point of departure, social workers can participate in social protest actions via various forms of covert and overt activities. Notwithstanding covert actions, the overt involvement by social workers in social protest actions is rather difficult and contentious. The next segment as the rest of the analysis attempts to bring light to respective complexities.

6.3.1.6. Sub-theme 1.6: What social protest action have you been part of and in what capacity?

At this point, participants (SWI) who had previously been involved in a social protest action where asked to discuss the specific action they had been involved in and the capacity they had assumed during the particular protest. Their opinions are examined next.

Category 1.6.1. Personal

At least half of the participants indicated that they had been involved in particular social actions in their personal capacity. Their voices are recorded and examined below.

> *SWI-P1. That is a difficult question. So why personal and not as a social worker? I guess it was out of my own volition and not necessarily that of the agency. I think it was also slightly because I am exposed to gender based violence daily and that made me want to be involved.*

> *SWI-P4. It was a service delivery social protest action in my community. It was in terms of electricity cut offs and things like that. I was in my personal capacity and I empathised with the cause so I joined the protest.*

It is significant that one's employing organisation appears to have a bearing on protest participation, as illustrated by *SWI-P1.* This raises vital questions. If indeed all social workers and social service organisations subscribe to the professions' policies and legislation that, among other things, stress the active involvement of social work in the empowerment and liberation of the vulnerable, then how does activism not form part of the respective organisation's mandate? The complexities that come with the positioning of social work between the state and the people might offer some illumination to this conundrum. Plausibly, most, if not all protest actions are directed towards the state, which places social service organisations and social workers alike in a precarious position. Although discussed later, a conflict of interest can be inferred here. Further, because most social service organisations rely on government funding and donations, associating with protest actions that are mistaken for chaotic insurrections might well deter and cut off this essential source of income, which is crucial to their survival and the services they offer. Poignantly, for those who comprehend the social work mandate, personal involvement in social actions frees them of all these afflictions.

Personal involvement, as in the case of both *SWI-P1* & *SWI-P4,* was also predicated on identity. Identity is this context is a combination of emotional, moral and cognitive relations that one has with a group, community or movement (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Among other things, a group's identity is expressed in shared values, common language and customs (Macionis & Plummer, 2012). As the literature appraisal revealed and specifically exemplified here, when this collective identity is solid, members of the group may consider participation in protest (Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

To sum up, the complexities that come with the positioning of social work between the state and the people, together with group identity, provide valuable insights into the personal involvement of social workers in their respective social actions.

Category 1.6.2. Professional

At least half of the participants indicated they had been involved in social actions in their professional capacity. Their voices follow below.

> *SWI-P2. In terms of my professional involvement. Every year, for child protection week, we stood with banners with the inscription, 'No to child abuse' on the main road and we went and educated kids. It was done through the agency, during working hours, with agency resources and colleagues to make the posters and the programme.*
>
> *SWI-P5. In my social worker capacity, I was involved in the social worker's march to the Union building in Pretoria back in 2016. Obviously it was about me standing up for my profession, seeking respect for the profession that I so love.*

These voices have the makings for an interesting discussion. This is why. The professional involvement of social workers in social actions, as in the case of *SWI-P2,* appear laudable on face value. However, further analysis shows “activism” of such a nature as rudimentary, arguably an expression of the neoliberal tenet of managerialism, wherein there is a preoccupation with norms and standards (Engelbrecht, 2015; Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Holscher & Sewpaul, 2006; Lavalette & Ferguson, 2007). In other words, child protection week observed but once a year is arguably a check box activity for respective organisations. The fact of the matter is that the demand for child protection services in South Africa necessitates ongoing activism and far-reaching interventions (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015).

However, as established earlier, employing agencies have a bearing on protest participation. In the case of *SWI-P1,* professional involvement was possible because the action was spearheaded by the agency. In addition, albeit only for a week, the protest action was driven by agency resources in the form of time, money and people. This corroborates the resource mobilisation perspective that suggests people protest because they are able to collectively mobilise resources and feel politically efficacious (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004).

It seems that group identity established as driving personal involvement in social actions extends to the professional sphere, as demonstrated by *SWI-P5.* It bears reiteration that the production of shared beliefs and collective identities form a necessary but not sufficient basis for protest participation (Ballard et al., 2006b). People participate in collective action because they identify with others involved and feel driven to express their indignation when they believe that their values have been violated (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009).

As a point of departure, the personal and professional involvement of social workers in social protest actions is predicated on the positioning of social work between the state and the people, employing agencies and group identification. These and other factors that follow may well have a bearing on the overall participation of social workers in social protest actions. The next segment comprehensively examines the respective contemplations.

6.3.1.7. Sub-theme 1.7: Influences behind social workers’ involvement in social protest actions

Leading to this point, participants unwittingly and explicitly referred to various factors behind the involvement and non-involvement of social work practitioners in social protest actions. Participants had to discuss the motivation for participation in social protest actions. The various factors and voices are deliberated next.

Category 1.7.1. Field of practice

Participants indicated field of practice as a determinant for one’s participation in social protest actions. Their voices and analysis follow.

> *SWNI-P1. I think it's a lot about the field that you are in, as a social worker yourself. So like I said, I work with kids and I don't want anything bad to happen to them, I want to stand up for them, I want to protect them.*
>
> *SWNI-P6. With involvement, in most cases it will be because we are designated into whatever focus, for instance I am a child protection social worker. So if anything has to do with children, this is what I stand for, this is what I do on a daily basis.*

Social work services, like social issues, span across a broad and extensive spectrum (cf. Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; van Breda, 2018). Typically, social service organisations and the interventions they offer are tailored to a specific focus. As discussed earlier, this facilitates the attainment of ample expertise regarding the particular designation. This equips practitioners with the knowledge and skills to make credible and valid accounts of social issues and their impact on a vulnerable majority in South Africa. Accounts, which, as alluded to earlier, are key to advocacy for social change. Beyond the field of practice, employing organisations, as identified earlier, influence involvement in social protest actions.

Category 1.7.2. Employing organisation

Participants specified employing organisations as having a telling influence on involvement in protest actions. Below are their voices.

> *SWM-P7. I think involvement comes down to feeling strongly about a matter and that motivates you. Especially if your organisation allows and encourages you to do so.”*
>
> *RSWE-P2. For some social workers, it is influenced by the NGO’s mandate. It forms part of their job description.*

As a social work professional, you are liable and expected to adhere to your employers’ rules and regulations (SACSSP, 2012). As expected, when social agencies are on the forefront of human rights and social justice initiatives, those employed are inclined to do so as well. Typically, this may well double as an influence for non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Especially when one considers the opinion that social activism was and, in practice, still is alien to South African social work (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). The complex reasons for this are discussed later. What is clear is that all social work organisations are mandated to seek social change and attain the full scope of human rights and social justice for the majority of South Africans who live in poverty (CSDA, 2008; Gray, 2008). Indeed, participants spoke to this, as illustrated in the next segment.

Category 1.7.3. Social work mandate

Almost all participants indicated the involvement, albeit caveated, of social workers in social protest actions as a social work mandate. Their voices follow below.

> *SWNI-P7. For those who do take part and participate with their community members, I think it has to do with the values of social work and what is enshrined in the Bill of Rights.*
>
> *RSWE-P1. The Global definition of social work primarily mandates us to be agents of social change, hence our involvement in various social actions.*

Chiefly, the Global definition of social work alludes to the active role of social work in facilitating social change, social development, liberation and empowerment of people (Banks, 2012; Beckett & Maynard, 2012; Healy, 2011; Jones, 2009; Ornellas et al., 2018). The values and principles of human rights and social justice are at the core of this understanding and ultimately form the impetus for facilitation and involvement in social protest actions (IFSW, 2014). Consequently, the SACSSP's ethical code obligates social workers to engage continuously in activism for social change (SACSSP, 2012). Yet, as established earlier, it is not as straightforward for social workers as stipulated in respective policies and legislation. What is distinct, is the personal motivation for social transformation as illustrated in the discussion that follows.

Category 1.7.4. Personal affiliation

The majority of the participants either implicitly or explicitly referred to a personal motivation behind involvement in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWNI-P1. I think it is also just who you are as a person. So I'm a lady and I identify as lady. So obviously for me gender based violence walk, or wearing black on Fridays, I am there.*

> *SWM-P8. I think it can also be the amount of cases that we get, the reports we get, we see these things first hand. We are also just people and it becomes an emotional thing. Seeing children get raped and abused is unbearable. I think that motivates you to make it better for the kids out there.*
>
> *RSWE-P2. There is a personal motivation to participation in social actions. It is people working and living in communities where particular problems are rife and they want some change.*

Social protest actions are inherently political and contentious in nature. Yet, there exists an important interplay between political and psychological dimensions in their development (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006). Arguably, the blinding and perpetual social issues that social workers contend with on a daily basis cumulatively result in moral outrage against the plethora of injustices levied on a poor majority (CSDA, 2008; Goodwin & Jasper, 2006; Gray, 2008; Sturmer & Simon, 2009). Despite the dearth of research on the influence of emotions, they function as accelerators or amplifiers for protest participation. Acceleration implies the motive to enter or stay in a social protest action translates to prompt action, whilst amplification reinforces respective motives (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006). One's critical consciousness may well be an accelerator for protest participation. The next segment elaborates on this.

Category 1.7.5. Higher education

All radical social work experts underlined the influence of one's education on protest participation. Their voices and discussion follow below.

> *RSWE-P1. Your higher education background also determines whether or not you will be inclined to get involved in social protests. The core knowledge focus of your bachelors influences your critical thinking in terms of the profession and its interventions.*
>
> *RSWE-P2. For some social workers there is a lack of a framework or an understanding of what social protest actions entail and I do not think a lot of social workers actually know how to go about protest. It almost goes back to social work education.*

Arguably, social work education forms the foundation for social change efforts (Drower, 2002; IASSW, 2002; IFSW, 2014; Lombard, 2002; Lombard, 2015; Weyers, 2002). Education facilitates critical consciousness which itself paves the way for an in-depth understanding of the world. Critical consciousness in this context refers to a two-dimensional construct composed of critical reflection and critical action (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011).

Critical reflection allows for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions, among other things (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). For instance, critical reflection enables one to understand that oppression, as explicitly expressed by the apartheid system, is not a static concept but a dynamic process (Noyoo, 2001). Once integrated into society's institutional order, culture and into peoples' consciousness through socialisation, oppressive tendencies come to permeate and affect almost all relations. This underlines the key importance of critical reflection, especially under the existing democratic dispensation that arguably masks current oppressive systems and inequitable structures in South Africa (Noyoo, 2006). Critical action denotes human agency, which is instrumental to the attainment of human rights and social justice. It takes into account potential actions to challenge inequalities within sociopolitical environments (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Getzlaf & Osborne, 2010). Although comprehensively discussed under the theme of roles, critical action includes but is not limited to advocacy, community organising and resistance (Bent-Goodley & Hopps, 2017; Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; McAlevey, 2016; Polack, 2004).

To sum up, various identifiable and interconnected factors are key to participation in protest. Some of them seem obvious whilst others are deceptively simple, and may well double as obstacles to involvement in social protest actions. The next segment offers a comprehensive discussion in this regard.

6.3.1.8. Sub-theme 1.8: Influences behind social workers' non-involvement in social protest actions

Participants were asked to discuss the non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Their opinions follow below.

Category 1.8.1. Dominance of neoliberal capitalism

Participants, notably managers and radical social work experts, indicated the dominance of neoliberal capitalism as a hindrance to involvement in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWM-P1. All they give us are more forms, documents, registers and papers that we have to complete for them to keep track of all these children.*

> *SWM-P4. Government has become a very statistical beast. You know, it's all about numbers. They don't really understand the seriousness of social problems and social work. People and their problems are not just figures.*

> *RSWE-P1. The social development framework in South Africa is transposed on a neoliberal and capitalist system which keeps us from issues of social justice and human rights.*

Evidently, neoliberalism persists in social work. In South Africa, the social development framework is principally operationalised within a neoliberal and capitalist framework (Lombard, 2015). Yet, the values and principles of social justice and human rights are somehow intelligently weaved and integrated in the so-called "social development" framework. In social work, neoliberalism manifests as administration and management wherein there is a pre-occupation with procedures, norms and standards (Engelbrecht, 2015). An apt example denotes the service level agreements between social service agencies and DSD where the former are expected to submit periodical statistics related to the number of cases worked on, and group and community interventions conducted.

Even worse, efficiency and cost-effectiveness with a fixation on statistics are regarded as a gold standard for social work interventions (Chibaya, 2018; Engelbrecht, 2015; Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006; Holscher & Sewpaul, 2006). Arguably, these and other contemporary neoliberalist priorities undermine the social work values and principles of social justice and human rights, together with the capacity to think and act from a critical framework (Allan et al., 2009). In itself, social development pursues important social justice and human rights ideals. However, when transposed onto a neoliberal capitalist agenda, it becomes co-opted for the maintenance of the corporatist and capitalist system (Lombard, 2015). Yet, observing respective administrative and managerial principles still is key to acquiring and ensuring funding for most of these social service organisations. The next segment elucidates this further.

Category 1.8.2. Reliance on state funding and donations

Participants, again notably social work managers, pointed out that the reliance on state funding and donations for financing social services influences social workers' non-involvement in social protest actions. Their voices are discussed below.

> *SWM-P1. It's politically connected because in the end, the money comes from the government. Whatever their political views are, that is where the money goes.*
>
> *SWM-P4. But also, realistically we need money to be able to do that. So we can't be stupid and mess it up even more.*

> *SWM-P5. Or maybe we are scared of losing more funds because our donors might not see us as professionals who go the extra mile working with the clients.*

As previously established, the South African social development framework is principally capitalist (Lombard, 2015). Both DSD and NGOs are subsidised by the state, as well as donors. The preconditions to securing and guaranteeing funding, which itself continues to shrink and become scarce (Lavalette & Ferguson, 2007), are to observe the discussed administrative and managerial principles. That in itself keeps social work from engaging in critical issues (Allan, Briskman & Pease, 2009). Further, engaging in social action against those who finance you might well do more harm than good for a cause, despite how noble it might be (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). So, when juxtaposed, the enduring images as well as connotations of social work and social protest actions respectively are like mixing water and oil. The next segment elucidates this metaphor.

Category 1.8.3. The perceived "image" of social work

Participants highlighted the prominent perception of social work as influencing the non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWNI-P5. I think social workers do not get involved in social protests because participation will affect the image of social work. It is difficult for social workers because if we do get involved in a social protest then we lose our objectivity and we are not going to be relatable to all people.*
>
> *SWM-P5. We never as an NGO take it upon ourselves to protest or make banners because we don't want the limelight on us.*
>
> *RSWE-P3. There is a great number of practitioners who consider social work as a technical activity. These practitioners understand their practice as a technical or even technocratic. They don't engage with contextual questions.*

Much like the divide between the COS and the settlement movement in the 1800s, the voices above arguably represent the enduring perception of social work. Like the COS, traditional or mainstream social work is problem-oriented, emphasising objectivity, technical excellence and an apolitical stance in its interventions (Baines, 2007; Mullaly, 2007). Like the settlement movement, radical social work emphasises the centrality of addressing social issues against broader contextual realities (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Ioakimidis, 2016; Sewpaul, 2016a). Indeed, the Global definition of social work acknowledges that social problems are a product of systemic and structural inequalities (Banks, 2012; Beckett & Maynard, 2012; Healy, 2011; Jones, 2009; Ornellas et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the conservative approach that largely dominates the social work arena presents challenges for those who dare to challenge the status quo. This is aggravated by the chaotic, destructive, violent and other derogatory connotations attached to social protest actions. For many social workers, this conceivably creates a lingering state of hopelessness regarding participation in social protest actions. The next segment focuses on this.

Category 1.8.4. Hopelessness

Participants, notably social workers not involved and managers, indicated hopelessness as influencing non-involvement in social protest actions. Their voices and analysis follow below.

> *SWNI-P1. I think I'm going to say a very cliché answer but time and caseloads. I think that we are so full. I don't know if saturated is the right word. So I think social workers are so tired.*
>
> *SWNI- P3. I think a lot of social workers just think it's not going to reap any kind of change potentially, like it might or might not. So why waste your time?*
>
> *SMW-P8. "If we look in general at how people protest, how they ask for things, how there are obvious lack of resources but nothing is done. That's like a demotivation for you not to put yourself out there. Especially if you are going to be criticised as a social worker or professional person practising out there.*

Together with the host of reasons discussed, social workers in South Africa contend with extraordinarily high caseloads combined with minimal resources (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015; Sewpaul, 2013). These and other untenable work conditions are responsible for the simultaneous burnout and brain drain of social workers in South Africa (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019). The indifference shown by the state in the handling of and response to social protest actions serves to exacerbate an already grim reality for social workers. What is worse and chilling, is that involvement in social protest actions comes with personal and professional threats of harm. Admittedly, such a state of affairs presents as hopeless and may well influence the non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Unremarkably, this corroborates the argument regarding the efficacy of social protest actions (Klandermans, 1997).

Category 1.8.5. Threats and fear of personal and professional harm

The majority of the participants indicated that threats and associated fears of personal and professional harm influence the non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWNI-P3. I think a fear of losing your job. I think a lot of people don't want to show their face or protest for fear of jeopardising relationships with people who are important in the sector, and their own livelihood.*
>
> *SWNI-P7. I think social workers also fear being victimised either at work or personally. You hear about all these terrible stories about people who in their activism for clients, have been fired from their jobs or even getting gunned down.*
>
> *SWM-P6. I think social workers do not get involved in social protests because of fear. Fear of being trampled to death, or fear of being shot by police.*

The fact of the matter is that social protests are directly linked to politics and conflict of interest which causes discomfort (Tarrow, 1994) and is inevitable in social change efforts (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). Social protest actions have the potential to unhinge the status quo and therefore present a threat to the conservative world order (White, 2019). To retain the norm, those who engage in activism and advocacy are at times threatened by the lack of professional progress or are altogether dismal (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). Further, the coercion at times sickeningly extends to include families of social work practitioners (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). The handling and violent nature that social protest actions in South Africa have at times assumed augment the professed fear of personal harm (Bohler-Muller et al., 2017; Gaqa, 2018; Giliomee, 2020). When contrasted with the lack or absence of distinguishable protection for those from South African social work institutions who do take part in activism for social justice and human rights, it is perhaps no wonder social workers do not get involved in social protest actions. Especially when social work practitioners themselves are not united.

Category 1.8.6. A disjointed social work fraternity

A fair number of participants indicated a lack of unity in the social work fraternity as influencing non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWI-P2. If all social workers could stand together, whether you work for the Department of Social Development, NGOs or an NPO, everybody gets paid the same and we have equitable working conditions, I think it will be make a big difference.*
>
> *SWM-P4. There are also apparent discrepancies in our profession. We are not truly united so this might have a bearing. I mean we are not all paid the same, so not everyone really feels the need to go the extra mile and fight for people's rights.*
>
> *SWM-P8. I know our NGOs work very hard, and we have limited resources. And the government social workers, as I've seen, as I've heard, do not deliver as we do.*

It seems that, owing to incomparable work conditions and perceived discrepancies in work performance, there is a divide between social workers employed in NGOs and the DSD. The validity of such discrepancies and performances together with the extent of the purported divide amongst social workers stretch beyond the limit of this thesis. What is evident and reinforced here is the influence of group identification on participation in social protest actions (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). To sum up, despite the clear mandate to engage in activism for human rights and social justice, several interrelated factors present as obstacles to social workers' involvement in social protest actions.

Overall, the analysis revealed the intricacy of social protest actions and social work. It established differing but fundamental views about social work and social protest actions. Mainly, the prevailing understanding of a social protest action involved collective action aimed at decision makers regarding specific issues causing discontent. In the same breath, social protest actions were also conceived as violent and destructive actions. Despite their respective views, unanimity abounded regarding the involvement of social workers in social protest actions. Albeit with caveats, social workers were found to engage in social actions that aim to address social issues that manifest as a result of the violation of human rights and social justice. Conversely, social workers should not be involved in violent and destructive social actions. Consistent with the caveated involvement of social workers in social protest actions, covert activities were preferred to overt participation. Moreover, participation in social protest actions further centred on personal and professional involvement. The diverging and converging reasons for the involvement and non-involvement of social workers in activism for human rights and social justice encapsulated the complexity of social work and social protest actions.

6.3.2. THEME 2: ROLES IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

After ascertaining the intriguing views about the respective aspects of social protest actions discussed above, participants had to discuss their perception of a role. Subsequently, the researcher probed participants to identify and explain roles that social workers could fulfil in social protest actions. Before examining the participants' voices on their perceived roles, it is worth reiterating the following. All respective roles centre on and should be understood within the ambit of social work and social protest actions as established in this thesis. The participants' voices and analysis follow below.

6.3.2.1. Sub-theme 2.1: Perception of a role

The researcher asked participants to describe a role. Their opinions and voices are discussed below.

Category 2.1.1. The part or one's responsibility in a given context

All participants equally defined a role as a part one plays or one's responsibility in a given context. Their voices follow below.

> *SWI-P1. The way you act, your responsibility in a specific setting. I think you can take on many different roles depending on what you put on yourself.*
>
> *SWNI-P3. Okay, so the role to me implies the part I'm playing or the contribution I'm making.*
>
> *SWMP1. Specifically, the responsibility that comes with your role, whatever that role might be.*

As observed in this thesis, roles resoundingly denote behaviours that are characteristic of a person and a context (Biddle, 1986; Perlman, 1957; Turner & Shosid, 1976; Turner, 1978). The next segment elaborates on the range of roles social workers can fulfil in social protest actions.

6.3.2.2. Sub-theme 2.2: Roles and their fulfilment

The researcher asked participants to deliberate on the roles social workers could fulfil in social protest actions. Before analysing and synthesising respective roles, it is perhaps important to note the following. Firstly, there may be discernible overlaps between roles as some roles are usually fulfilled in conjunction with others (Engelbrecht, 1999). Secondly, the range of roles discussed here may not be exhaustive. There may well be other roles fitting for social workers in social protest actions not identified by participants. Notwithstanding this, their opinions and voices are discussed next.

Category 2.2.1. Mobiliser

A mobiliser was identified as a potential role social workers could fulfil in social protest actions. The participants' voices follow below.

> *SWI-P2. I think it should be centered around awareness and preparing the community about the protest you are going to be doing. I think we take for granted that everybody is going to know about a protest. I think we can use social media to create Facebook groups to reach as much people as we can.*
>
> *SWM-P1. What we also try to do, which is something that I actively encourage with my social workers is to talk about child abuse, to talk about children's rights, gender based violence, all those things, wherever they go, wherever the opportunity comes, to make people aware of, I almost want to say the other side of it.*
>
> *RSWE-P1. We should mobilise the social protest actions and make people aware of respective issues by distributing posters, flyers and banners"*

Earlier, it was established that social protest actions, inter alia, involve collective action in solidarity with issues common to all those who participate in these actions (Alexander et al., 2018; Mahida, 2017; Rothman, 2007; Zastrow, 2013). Human rights and social justice issues arguably present the greatest crisis of our time. The vast extent of human rights violations in South Africa and the world at large arguably stretches beyond the social work mandate into a humanitarian one (Barber, 1991; Midgley, 1981). Social workers therefore need to raise awareness of the social injustices and violations of human rights levied on the vulnerable. This may well extend beyond social work to include existing activist groups and organisations, resources and structures, and bringing them together to address respective issues (Compton & Galaway, 1994). Digital activism, the distribution of flyers, posters and banners could be instrumental in raising awareness and soliciting collective action to attain intended social change (Hanna et al., 2016).

As will be illustrated throughout this discussion, the role of mobiliser reflects many characteristics of other roles such as educator, leader, advocate and social broker, which underlines the fact that roles often overlap and complement each other

(Engelbrecht, 1999). Apart from mobilisation, social workers may assume an organiser role in social protest actions. The next segment elaborates on this.

Category 2.2.2. Organiser

Participants indicated that social workers could take on the role of an organiser in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWNI-P1. You can organise it. And as the organiser, you are doing the administration and the coordination. Were we are meeting? Who are we inviting?*
>
> *SWNI-P3. When organising I think it involves ensuring the protest is well thought and planned out, ensuring memorandums are articulating demands clearly, administration and logistics of the protest.*

Although not explicitly identified in the literature review, mainly owing to the lack of consensus regarding role definitions (Henderson & Thomas, 2013), the organiser is a crucial role in social protest actions. Here is why. Social protest actions are contemplated long before we see their physical manifestation (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Further, social protest actions involve the coordination of collective action that, as discussed, is usually directed at power holders and decision makers who can effect desired change. For these actions to gain publicity and realise political pressure, they should be thought through strategically (Hanna et al., 2016; McLeod, 2017). This includes, but is not limited to, crafting memorandums and other documents that detail desired changes. Overt actions like rallies and street marches require organisation so that they remain within the ambit of activism for human rights and social justice (McLeod, 2017, SACSSP, 2012). This is especially important in South Africa where protest actions occasionally deviate from peaceful demonstrations to assume violent and destructive forms (Desai, 2002). In such scenarios, social work counsellors are indispensable. The next segment expounds this further.

Category 2.2.3. Counsellor

Being a counsellor was identified as a potential role that social workers could fulfil in social protest actions. The voices of the participants follow below.

> *SWI-P2. As a counsellor, I think firstly it has to be someone with formal training in counselling and debriefing. Talking about something is not necessarily debriefing. It has to be someone who can pick up stressors and be able to work through them or refer to a psychologist if need be.*

Conventionally, any pursuit of social change is likely to meet resistance, and the occurrence of conflict is usually inevitable (Hoffman & Sallee, 1994; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004). Unfortunately, protest actions in South Africa have recently assumed destructive and violent forms, much to the detriment of protesters. Many injuries have been recorded and, in some cases, unfortunate loss of life, which has amplified trauma and other psychosocial problems characteristic of impoverished communities (Lund, 2007; Ngcamu, 2019; Ngwane, 2011). This evidently necessitates counselling.

Social work counsellors need to be competent in a range of skills. Perhaps the most important are communication skills (Seden, 2005). Communication is key in the shared understanding of thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and aspirations. Counsellors need to be able to listen effectively and give their full attention to service users (Egan, 1986; Miller, 2012; Shulman, 1984). In the role of counsellor, social workers help service users to express their needs, clarify their problems, explore resolution strategies, and apply intervention strategies (Potgieter, 1998; Sheafor, Horesji & Horesji, 1992). Furthermore, relationship-building skills are crucial for quality counselling practice, particularly when people who need social work services are anxious, angry, distressed or upset because of their lived realities (Seden, 2005). Referring and linking people with resources is key to counselling and overall social change (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hepworth et al., 2013; Suppes & Wells, 2003). The next segment elucidates this further.

Category 2.2.4. Social broker

Participants indicated that social workers could fulfil the role of social broker in social protest actions. Their voices follow below.

> *SWI-P5. You play a role of broker by linking people with resources. As I said earlier, the people are here protesting, blocking roads, but there is no one to listen to them. So you link them with resources, direct them to proper channels that will help in resolving their grievances.*
>
> *SWNIP6. We should facilitate the protest itself by bring the resources or the system together, the community and the government in this case. Because we are always protesting against the government. Me as a social worker, I know who to talk to, I know who to invite during these talks...*
>
> *SWM-P6. I will either go to people who I know are supposed to be helping or I will phone around until I can find somebody who can help or knows somebody who can. So it is a lot of networking to connect the services to the community.*

The essence of mobilisation and organisation roles in facilitating collective action was established in the preceding analysis. The role of social broker takes this further. Social workers as social brokers are responsible for identifying, locating, making referrals and linking service users with resources instrumental to social change (Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Hepworth et al., 2013; Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Zastrow, 2013). Social brokering further entails the linking of essential structures of the service system with one another (McPheeters & Ryan, 1971). This might involve linking service users with local, provincial and national municipalities and social work institutions like SWAN SA, together with activist organisations like the C19 Peoples' Coalition in their efforts to attain social change. Serving as a social broker thus requires broad knowledge of communities, organisations and institutional resources, as well as awareness of the operating procedures of respective structures to realise effective connections (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hepworth et al., 2013; Suppes & Wells, 2003; Potgieter, 1998). Apart from social brokering, social workers can assume a lobbying role in social protest actions. The next segment offers a concise discussion in this regard.

Category 2.2.5. Lobby

Lobbying was identified as a potential role social workers could fulfil in social protest actions. One of these voices follows below.

> *SWI-P4. We should also lobby for changes at a social developmental level. We attend a lot of stakeholder meetings. We meet with different people, whether it is business people, whether it's government officials. So we should advocate for various human rights issues during these meetings*

The political and structural nature of social issues that confront service users require political solutions that necessitate lobbying (Burke & Ngonyani, 2004; Lorenz, 2008; Reisch, 2002). Lobbying typically is a political activity that involves lawfully attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of government officials and members of regulatory agencies (Rodney, 2005). It is a specific form of advocacy that is intended to influence decision making and legislation. In the context of social protest actions, lobbying includes voicing the concerns of the oppressed and vulnerable with the goal of influencing and shaping local and national policy (Compton & Galaway, 1994). Social workers can lobby on behalf of the vulnerable through face-to-face meetings in which they succinctly provide an agenda, methods, and possible outcomes with regard to respective social issues.

Moreover, in a democratic country like South Africa, where elections are an established practice, social workers could elicit partisan support through lobbying political candidates and parties to have them embrace the social work agenda (Gray, Van Rooyen, Rennie & Gaha, 2003; Mendes, 2003; Reisch, 2002). This finds form in the understanding that respective professional groups directly shape the nature of social work in the form of managerial directives, budgetary allocations, organisational policies, procedures and regulations, as well as welfare statutes and legislation (Dominelli, 2002b). However, it should be fervently stressed and clear that the political involvement of social workers has nothing to do with the so-called left or right wings. Instead, the pursuit of human rights and social justice stretches across the political spectrum, and transcends party politics and their respective philosophical orientations. Apart from lobbying, leadership was identified as a potential role social workers could assume in social protest actions.

Category 2.2.6. Leader

Participants indicated that social workers could fulfil a leadership role in social protest actions. Their voices follow.

> *SWNI-P7. I think we can help community members with how they can go about protesting in a way that is not counterproductive. Like with the violence, there is no point in destroying the same building and vehicles we are going to need tomorrow.*
>
> *SWM- P8. In leading, particularly before the protest. You need to remind everyone as to why we are protesting, how we are going to do it, like the boundaries and the guidelines.*
>
> *RSWE-P1. We should be leading these marches that they remain within the ambits of the constitution and policies. That they do not result in the destruction and vandalism of important infrastructure.*

Leadership in social work traditionally designates the ability of a practitioner to influence and guide services users in respective interventions towards goal attainment (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Engelbrecht, 1999; Potgieter, 1998). In social protest actions, social workers should arguably take on a transformational leadership role centered on influencing a collective agenda that advances social change efforts (Boal & Bryson, 1988; Burns, 2003; Western, 2019; Yukl, 1989). Among other things,

transformational leadership implies that social workers facilitate service user's critical consciousness (HERI, 1996; Komives et al., 2017). This includes, but is not limited to, assisting service users to accurately frame their lived realities and their subsequent beliefs, values, emotions and attitudes. As illustrated by the voices above, it extends to include deliberation over actions that promote other than hinder intended social change. Indeed, on the rear end of growing violence and destructive actions, social workers should utilise their interpersonal, communication and coalition-building skills to facilitate for civility in controversy. Beyond leadership, social workers can be advocates in social protest actions.

Category 2.2.7. Advocate

Participants indicated that social workers could fulfil the role of an advocate in social protest actions. Their voices and discussion follow below.

> *SWI-P5. I think also being an advocate by speaking up for people during policy formulations, budgetary meetings and so forth.*
>
> *SWNI-P3. With advocacy, I think you acting on behalf of someone. I'm just thinking of people who join the protest but maybe they are not very good in communicating their grievances. The advocate will then be someone who will act on their behalf to bring their point across.*
>
> *SWM-P4. Advocacy stands out, to give a voice to those who don't have a voice, or do not know how to get the message through.*

Advocacy is an umbrella term that involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause. The primary objective of the social work advocate is to fight for the rights and dignity of people in need of help (Cox et al., 1979), and work to obtain needed resources by convincing others of their legitimate needs and rights (Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Suppes & Wells, 2003). The obligation to assume this role and mandate to pursue social change is affirmed in social work policy documents and legislation such as the Global Agenda (2012), Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014), White Paper for social welfare (RSA, 1997) and in the SACSSP code of ethics (SACSSP, 2012).

However, the South African constitution together with respective social work legislation and policies are symbolic and fundamental milestones but the lives of the poor majority remain unchanged. Inequality, which fuels racism, discrimination and a host of other social issues, remains exceptionally high (CSDA, 2008). Thus, as accurately identified by participants in this study, social workers ought to be advocates for the poor majority in social protest actions. Advocacy can involve different levels of assertive intensity, ranging from discussion, education, testimony in the form of evidence, informed social work reports (Compton & Galaway, 1994; Hoffman & Sallee, 1994) to a high level of organisational social action such as rallies and street marches (Alexander, 2010, Hanna et al., 2016; Hepworth et al., 2013; Potgieter, 1998; McLeod, 2017).

To reiterate, the attainment of human rights and social justice relies on human agency. Change will not happen if people do not take concrete actions against systemic and structural sources of social problems. Indeed, throughout social works' history and development, social workers like Alice Salomon, Eglantyne Jebb, Ellen Khuzwayo, Jane Addams, Winnie Mandela and Shirley Gunn were all avid advocates for the full spectrum of human rights and social justice for the oppressed (Jordan, 2006; Healy, 2008; Lees, 2004; Schugurensky, 2005; Shokane & Masoga, 2019). Beyond advocacy, social workers could be educators in social protest actions.

Category 2.2.8. Educator

The role of educator was identified as a role social workers could take in social protest actions. The participants' voices and analysis follow below.

> *SWNI-P6. We should be educating the community on how to get your voice across, how to be heard. Like I said earlier, protests in South Africa are always violent. So now it's educating people that they can actually protest without being violent.*
>
> *SWM-P5. Educating the people on protesting in a humane manner. I talking now constructive ways of bring up problems to the council and not the pointless violent insurrections.*
>
> *RSWE-P1. We should be educating community members on the implications of recklessness and how that affects us in return, the complexities of who will pay for destroyed buildings, how this worsens than resolve respective issues.*

Social change arguably begins with education (Drower, 2002; Lombard, 2002; Lombard, 2015; Weyers, 2002) and at the core of education, is the development of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Within the ambit of social protest actions, the social work educator is consequently involved in empowering service users by providing them with relevant information, clarifying perceptions, identifying and modelling alternative behaviour patterns that sustain and promote the attainment of human rights and social justice (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004; Suppes & Wells, 2003).

As illustrated by the voices above, this might involve teaching and engaging in constructive means of protest as opposed to violent and destructive actions. It is because of this that social workers are often regarded as the conscience of the communities in which they work (IFSW, 2012a). Collectively, the roles of education, counselling, brokering, mobilising and leading result in the empowerment of service users in social protest actions.

Category 2.2.9. Empower

Participants indicated that social workers could fulfil the role of empowerment in social protest actions. Their voices and discussion follow below.

> *SWNI-P4. When people are struggling, they sometimes don't know what they need to take the matter forward or to make their life a bit easier. Sometimes it's because they've never been exposed to a specific service.*
>
> *SWM-P6. I think we have to do empowerment work because most of the communities we work in do not always know how to voice their frustrations, or problems they face every day. This is at times because of people making them feel less than they are.*

As illustrated above, empowerment is operative at both the personal and collective levels. Personal empowerment relates to the way people think about themselves as well as the knowledge, capacities and skills they possess (Cox, 1991; Petterman, 2002; Staples, 1990). Collective empowerment, on the other hand, refers to processes by which individuals join together to break their solitude and silence to support and help one another and develop skills for collective action (Cox, 1991; Petterman, 2002; Staples, 1990). Owing to several oppressive ideologies, discriminatory systems and unresponsive structures, South Africa is a fractured and violent society (Lund, 2007).

Impoverished communities and individuals internalise negative valuations of themselves that have accrued over time through experiences of oppression and disadvantage, manifesting in a culture of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1972). With this understanding, social workers ought to engage in continuous critical education aimed at redressing misconceptions held by oppressed populations for them to reframe their lived realities. This is especially important under the existing democratic dispensation that arguably masks current oppressive systems and inequitable structures in South Africa (Noyoo, 2006). Thus, social workers should take up a mandate to reformulate personal troubles into public issues (Lorenz, 2016). Indeed, participants underlined the essence of activism in social protest actions.

Category 2.2.10. Activist

Being an activist was identified as a potential role social workers could fulfil in social protest actions. The participants' voices and analysis follow below.

> *SWM-P8. Our role is to be activists, to go out there by show of protest because we want resources to be available for these people. We are kind of like spokespersons for those that cannot express themselves.*
>
> *RWSE-P2. During the protest we must create awareness to the public and the government in the form of evidence informed social work reports.*

In many ways, the activist resembles the advocate role. Indeed, the above-mentioned roles are complementary, and are sometimes used interchangeably (Compton & Galaway, 1989). Unlike the advocate however, the activist employs more direct strategies towards social change (Corrigan & Leonard, 1978). This includes social action, negotiation and confrontation (Zastrow, 1992). Moreover, similar to the advocate, the activist must be a proficient public speaker and be able to motivate and inspire people (Potgieter, 1998). Reisch (2002) observes that social work efforts have been most effective when social workers have engaged in activism with purpose, conviction, perseverance and relish. As with advocacy, the obligation to engage in activism in the pursuit of social change is entrenched in social work policies and legislation such as the Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014), and the SACSSP code of ethics (SACSSP, 2012).

Broadly, the analysis established that roles refer to behaviours characteristic of a person in a given context. Further, there exists a range of possible roles that social workers may fulfil in social protest actions. Although analysed individually, the respective roles intertwine and complement each in practice. Despite the nature of respective roles, their accurate performance relies on sufficient knowledge and an apt skill set. Notwithstanding the distinctness of potential roles social workers may fulfil in social protest actions, their involvement in these actions remains a dilemma.

6.3.3. THEME 3: ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Due to the contentious and complex nature of social work and social protest actions, the analysis of the participants' voices hinted of, and revealed several ethical dilemmas for social workers regarding their activism for social justice and human rights for the vulnerable. Respective factors influencing the involvement and non-involvement of social workers in social protest actions underlined the predicaments social workers face regarding their participation in social actions. This segment therefore offers a concise discussion concerning the ethical dilemmas that confront social workers regarding their participation, or lack thereof, in social protest actions. Chiefly, the respective ethical dilemmas encompass competing loyalties and value conflicts.

6.3.3.1. Sub-theme 3.1: Competing loyalties

Participants implicitly suggested the existence of a dual loyalty conundrum regarding social workers' participation or lack of, in social protest actions. Their opinions are discussed below.

Category 3.1.1. Social worker vs state

Participants referred to the existence of a conflict of interest between social workers and the state regarding participation in social protest actions. Their voices and analysis follow below.

> *SWNI-P3. If say you are protesting against the government and you work for DSD who is the government. That's kind of a conflict of interest in some regard. So, they can put pressure from the top to say, your social workers marched against us, we want them out.*
>
> *SWM-P1. And for me what's difficult at times is to not get involved in politics, because a lot of what we want as social workers for the communities, somehow links to politics. You might not personally promote any political views. But in the end, we also know that politics control what's going to happen.*
>
> *RSWE-P2. Often social protest actions are typically aimed against the government. So the problem is that for social work to be so tied to government in terms of funding, in terms of agenda, in terms of policies etc; for them to then also be a watchdog and protest is very tricky.*

As established, in South Africa, the typology of social work is mainly demarcated between GOVT and NGO sectors (cf. Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Van Breda, 2018). Despite the respective sectors, all social workers in South Africa subscribe to similar social work policies and legislation and all subscribe to the same ethical code. However, although social workers in the government can protest within the structure, it arguably is not always accurate. To be employed by the government suggests alignment with the particular government's socio-economic policies. The dominant neoliberal and capitalist framework within which social development operates in South Africa was identified earlier (Lombard, 2015). Respective contemporary neoliberalist priorities were shown to undermine social work values and principles of social justice and human rights, together with the capacity to think and act from a critical framework (Allan et al., 2009). Despite this revelation, it remains contradictory for social workers employed by government and working towards a government agenda that is neoliberal, to engage in social protest against it.

Those employed in the NGO sector fare no better. Ideally, NGOs should be able to engage in in broader activism for human rights and social justice in a manner not tied to a political agenda or government. However, the NGO sector is arguably conservative. Among other things, reliance on state funding, which is predicated on observing respective neoliberal priorities, co-opts it to maintain the status quo (Lombard, 2015). Debatably, this creates two social work factions, the conservative and the radical. The former, as identified by participants, is the dominant perspective of social work in which the emphasis, inter alia, is on technical excellence and maintaining an apolitical stance (Baines, 2007; Mullaly, 2007). The latter are construed as falling out of the "norm". Threats of personal and professional harm abound for those branded as radical in a conservative framework (Turton & Van Breda, 2019).

There lie the predicaments concerning participation in social protest actions despite the ethical prerogative to do so (IASSW, 2018; IFSW, 2014; SACSSP, 2012). The complexities regarding social workers' involvement in social protest actions are compounded by value conflicts on different value dimensions. The next segment elaborates this further.

6.3.3.2. Sub-theme 3.2: Value conflict

Owing to colonialism and apartheid, the values and principles of social justice and human rights are at the core of the South African constitution, the Bill of Rights and the SACSSP's code of ethics (SACSSP, 2012; The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Yet, and as illustrated in this analysis, social justice and human rights are complex concepts and their interpretation is seldom uniform. Despite this, in cognisance of the previously mentioned values and principles, social workers have various ethical responsibilities to society, the profession, practice settings and to client systems (SACSSP, 2012). However, the respective ethical responsibilities discussed below are littered with conflicts in which to obey one almost certainly results in transgressing the other.

Category 3.2.1. *Social worker vs profession*

Participants alluded to a conflict between their own values and that of the social work profession regarding participation in social protest actions. Their voices and discussion follow below.

> *SWI-P1. Maybe there is a protest which I do not agree with as a person and then I do not know if I should be forced to be involved just because I am a social worker.*

Earlier, it was established that participation in social protest actions, both in terms of influence and capacity, to some extent, is contingent on personal affiliation (Macionis & Plummer, 2012; Polletta & Jasper, 2001, Smith, 2015). As illustrated by *SWI-P1,* above, there are instances when one's personal values might clash with those of the social work profession. Although the ethical mandate to serve and enhance the well-being and human needs of all people takes precedence over the social worker's personal value system, this inevitably creates conflict regarding one's moral imperatives and their involvement in social protest actions (SACSSP, 2012). Beyond the social worker and profession dichotomy, dilemmas abound between social work professionals and their employing organisations.

Category 3.2.2. *Social worker vs organisation*

Participants suggested the existence of a dilemma between social workers and their employing organisations regarding participation in social protest actions. Their voices and an analysis follow below.

> *SWNI-P7. I think different organisations hold different values and they may not allow social workers to participate in social protests regardless of their preference.*

> *SWM-P4. You see, the thing is with our organisation we are apolitical, we do not belong to a union. So that influences participation in protest actions.*

> *RSWE-P1. The challenges arise when we consider the question of who employs us, the question of what is expected of us by our employers.*

As discussed earlier, the voices quoted above reiterate the influence of one's employing organisation regarding involvement in social protest actions. In the same breath, social workers are mandated to advocate and ensure that all people have equal access to resources, employment, services and opportunities to meet their basic needs and develop fully, whilst honouring and showing commitment to their employers (SACSSP, 2012). However, the conservative strain that dominates both GOVT and NGOs is not always congruent with the primary mission of social work as espoused in the Global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014; Mullaly, 2007; Sewpaul, 2010). Among other things, in a bid to maintain funding, social service agencies find themselves preoccupied with statistics and ticking boxes (Allan et al., 2009).

Further, with the enduring discontent that is fuelled by inequality that grips South Africa, social workers must adhere to the code of ethics whilst, as illustrated by the voices above, possibly working for institutions that do not support particular values. In other words, social workers may find themselves balancing clients' needs with their work environment and their ability to promote social justice. Thus, it is conceivable that social workers may feel conflicted about their ethical obligation to advocate for change, as doing so may jeopardise their professional progress (Turton & Van Breda, 2019). Beside this, social workers are also confronted with complexities regarding serving clients and social activism for social change.

Category 3.2.2. *The client vs 'greater good'*

Participants alluded to a dilemma regarding being of service to clients and engaging in the broader activism for social justice and human rights. Their voices and a discussion follow below.

> *SWI-P1. I remember during the GBV protests, we spoke to our boss and who told us that we had a right to go to the protest if we wanted to. But at the same time, she reminded us that we would be doing a disservice to the people we were supposed to be working with on the day."*

> *SWNI-P3. I don't know, it is so difficult for me to answer because technically, it would be great if social workers got involved in social protest actions. But I am just thinking of the practicalities. While they are protesting, who is doing the work?*

This analysis revealed and established that social workers should be involved in social protest actions. The conviction to engage in the broader activism for social change rests on the attainment of social justice and human rights for the most vulnerable. It is both a moral and legal mandate for social workers to engage in social actions that seek to ensure basic human needs for survival (SACSSP, 2012). However, social workers in South Africa contend with minimal resources and high caseloads for which they are equally obligated to deliver intervention (SACSSP, 2012; Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015; Sewpaul, 2013). There lies the dilemma for social workers in South Africa. To either “help” clients, arguably by delivering rudimentary interventions that, at best, serve to contain present social issues, or to address social problems against contextual realities by engaging in the broader activism for social change (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Ioakimidis, 2016; SACSSP, 2012; Sewpaul, 2016a).

The multitude of ethical dilemmas discussed above imply that social workers have to engage in ethical decision making based on a sound and justifiable set of ethical principles (SACSSP, 2012; Sewpaul & Henrickson, 2019). Notwithstanding the criticism against Loewenberg and Dolgoff’s (1988) ethical principles screen, their suggested hierarchy of ethical principles may well be instrumental in resolving ethical dilemmas that confront social workers and their involvement in social protest actions.

Overall, whilst the ethical mandate to engage in social actions is as clear as day, participation in these actions is evidently challenging for social workers. They constantly have to contend with potentially protesting against the “hand that feeds them” which is perhaps not really feasible. Beyond that, social workers have to resolve several value conflicts regarding their activism for social justice and human rights. Arguably, the deceptively simple question regarding who does the work whilst social workers are protesting best encapsulates the dilemmas that confront social work practitioners’ involvement, or lack thereof, in social protest actions.

6.4. CONCLUSION

The focus in this and the previous chapter was on the empirical investigation of the perceptions of social workers regarding their roles in social protest actions in a South African context. To reiterate, the inquiry was propelled by the absence of research in this regard despite the intrinsic and evident link between social work and social protest actions. The combination of a qualitative approach and reflexive thematic analysis employed in this study successfully elicited invaluable accounts of meaning and the experiences of social workers with regard to their perceived roles in social protest actions. The participants' voices were concisely presented and comprehensively analysed under three main themes. Broadly, the analysis demonstrated the crucial yet complex role of social work in social protest actions. The following and final chapter offers concise conclusions and recommendations regarding the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations regarding social workers' perceived roles in social protest actions. To recollect, **Chapter 1** established the intrinsic link between social work and social protest actions in the attainment of social justice and human rights for the most vulnerable. The extraordinarily high incidence of social protest actions in South Africa, coupled with dearth of research on the roles and ethical dilemmas that confront social workers in social actions, further formed the impetus of this research inquiry. Hence, this study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of social workers' perceptions of their roles in social protest actions, as they are the ones who operationalise social work in South Africa.

In cognisance of this aim, several objectives presented as respective chapters were formulated and rendered essential for better understanding of the perceptions of social workers of their roles in social protest actions. **Chapter 2** explored the first objective of this study, which centred on describing radical social work, critical consciousness and a HRBA to social welfare within South Africa's social development paradigm. The main points of departure established the inherently neoliberal capitalist framework onto which social development in South Africa is operationalised. Further, it illustrated the disproportionate levels of inequality and poverty amongst the majority of South Africans that form the mandate for social work's pursuit of human rights and social justice. Moreover, despite ample evidence, issues of structural and systemic oppression that were established received trifling attention in social work practice. In such a context and underpinned by the Global Agenda, the Global social work definition, the code of ethics and mission statements, critical reflection and critical action were deemed of crucial importance in the pursuit for social change.

Chapter 3 aimed to conceptualise the elements, nature, reasons and ethics involved in social protest actions, and examine them within global and local social work contexts. Here, the principal points of departure demonstrated the complexity of social protest actions. The extent of resources, political opportunity, identity, emotions and efficacy in the formation of and participation in social protest actions were discussed. Furthermore, the power of protest as a resource for the marginalised and vulnerable to realise their constitutionally guaranteed human rights and broader social change was comprehensively established. Chapter 3 concluded with a review regarding the host of ethical dilemmas associated with participation, or lack thereof, in social protest actions of social workers.

Chapter 4 explored the third objective of the study. The aim was to examine and synthesise the roles social workers could potentially fulfil in social protest actions as based on the implications of Chapters 2 and 3. Roles were identified as behaviours that are characteristic of a person in a given context. Consistent with the active role of social work in facilitating social change, several intertwined roles were discussed and deemed fitting for better system and structural destabilising efforts. In addition, it was established that the accurate execution of respective roles obliges social workers to have adequate knowledge and an appropriate set of skills. Collectively, Chapters 2 to 4, which constitute the literature review, and the framework for the interview schedule, were fundamental in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of social workers regarding their roles in social protest actions.

Chapters 5 and **6** explored the fourth objective of the study, which focused on an empirical investigation of the voices of social workers commenting on their perceived roles in social protest actions in a South African context. **Chapter 5** first demonstrated the rigour and trustworthiness of the entirety of this research study by reviewing and examining the research paradigm, research approach, and the step-by-step research process followed by the researcher. **Chapter 6** concisely examined the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions. The findings, which were controlled with support in the literature, were presented under three key themes. Generally, the analysis demonstrated the vital yet complex role of social work in social protest actions.

Henceforth, this chapter serves to address the fifth and final objective of the study by means of synthesised conclusions and recommendations to frontline social workers, social work managers, social work educators, social work institutions and policy makers regarding the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions.

7.2. SYNTHESISED CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned above, the previous chapter presented a thorough analysis of the research findings, which were confirmed with the literature review regarding the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions. The research findings were meticulously analysed under three key themes, which were further divided into respective sub-themes and categories. The following sections now present synthesised conclusions of the research findings, mirroring the three key themes identified in the previous chapter. This finds form in the understanding that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, to accurately and comprehensively understand the respective deductions, one must have a complete picture of the research findings. To recall, the three key themes are social work and social protest actions; roles in social protest actions; and ethical dilemmas.

7.2.1. SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

Social protest actions can be regarded as collectives of dissatisfied people who come together in order to attain social change by drawing attention to, and seeking resolve of social injustices and human rights violations. This, of course, does not imply the complete absence of destructive and violent actions that can arguably be attributed to those pretending to be part of legitimate collectives. Social protest actions exhibiting what generally can be labelled as criminal activities continue to receive unprecedented publicity, thereby fuelling unsympathetic narratives towards protesters struggling for their human rights and social justice. The net effect thereof is to deprive the poor majority and social workers alike from engaging in what arguably is the most vital resource at their disposal in the struggle for social change.

Despite evidently acknowledging social action and its role in attaining social change as suggested by the Global definition of social work and mandated by the SACSSP's ethical code, social workers remain apprehensive about their involvement in social protest actions. They are rendered so wary that they position their involvement in social protest actions far from the public eye to be more "behind the scenes". This was further demonstrated by the preference for covert over overt social change activities. In other words, consistent with the caveated involvement of social workers in social protest actions, activities such as digital activism, strike action, teach-ins and compiling open letters were favoured over rallying and carrying banners and placards in street marches. This, perhaps in part, underlines the enduring negative connotations attached to social protest actions and the inclination of social workers to refrain from fully embracing social action. However, this is but the tip of the iceberg.

The prudent stance regarding participation in social protest actions of social workers is much more complex. The neoliberal context within which social work operates was established to present a host of challenges for social workers to engage in meaningful activism. The infiltration of inherently business administration and management principles which are crucial to soliciting funding keep social workers from engaging in critical issues and critical action altogether. Due to this, efforts towards social change fail to move past rhetoric. While laudable for commerce and corporates, the obsession with quantitative statistics in social work interventions is profoundly misplaced. People and social issues are far more intricate than mere figures and trends could ever represent. Yet, social work practitioners still are expected to meet monthly deliverables with minimal resources.

Furthermore, because of the overly conservative nature of social work, activism and social change efforts that inevitably create conflict are quashed with the threat of professional and personal harm. Social workers are justifiably cautious about their professional standing and the safety of their loved ones. This is especially distinct considering that there is no reasonable protection from social work institutions for those who engage in efforts to promote social change. For social workers, who themselves are not united because of the professed discrepancies in work performance and remuneration between DSD and NGO sectors, engaging in social actions is rather hopeless.

Inherently linked to the complexities discussed above, there appeared to be a distinction between personal and professional involvement in social protest actions, despite all professionals registered with SACSSP being mandated to engage in social action to attain social change for the most vulnerable. So what could be done? Arguably, personal involvement in activism most likely relinquishes one of the professional encumbrances. For social workers who comprehend the structural and systemic roots of social issues and have over time gained ample expertise in addressing issues, personal engagement in social actions for social change seems more feasible. Such is the sombre reality for social workers and social service agencies that, due to the proliferation of neoliberal ideals, are best fit for problem solving.

However, in light of the overwhelming evidence that point to oppressive systems and inequitable structural sources of social problems, social workers should not give in to maintaining the status quo. They say history is unforgiving and historical mistakes cannot be undone. Once upon a time, social work in South Africa was co-opted into maintaining an Apartheid system that was inequitable and intolerant of the majority of the nation’s people. The cascading effects of the inherently de-humanising apartheid policies are still felt and largely observable in the current democratic dispensation. Although valiant efforts towards social change have been instituted through, for example, the codification of a renowned South Africa constitution and the introduction of the White Paper for Social Welfare, the vulnerable majority continue to live in poverty. Notwithstanding the complexities that come with activism, social workers should engage in radical struggles for human rights and social justice, which should embrace the social, political, historical and cultural contexts that sustain human dignity and flourishing.

7.2.2. ROLES IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

This thesis was geared towards comprehensively understanding the perceptions of social workers with regard to their roles in social protest actions. To best approach this, the intricacy of social work and social protest actions are illustrated throughout this research inquiry. Indeed, several deductions are presented in the previous section regarding various aspects of social work and social protest actions. Consequently, a range of roles were identified and established for social workers engaging in social action to achieve social change.

First and foremost, roles were determined to be behaviours that are characteristic of a person in a given context. In the context of social action, social workers can perform several intertwined roles. Much like the covert and overt forms that social protest actions can assume, some roles are inherently direct whilst others are indirect. Regardless of the form, accurately executing these roles is contingent on sufficient knowledge and an ample skill set.

It was established that social protest actions are contemplated before we see their physical manifestation. As such, meticulous **organising** was recognised as vital. The undertakings of this role range from determining the purpose and intended resolution of the social action; the strategies to be employed; places and routes to take; and the people to invite. Since social action involves collectives of dissatisfied people, **leading** was deemed indispensable. In a democratic South Africa, all people are allowed to gather and freedom of speech is accorded to everyone. These liberties should of course not infringe on the rights of other people. They most certainly do not condone destructive and violent actions. So leading in social protest actions entails influencing and guiding collectives that they successfully achieve their intended purpose. Furthermore, with the detrimental relations between the police and communities which are underlined by violence and the need to maintain order, social workers as transformative leaders were designated to facilitate civility during social protests actions.

Whilst conflict is inevitable in efforts for social change, violent and destructive actions between the state and the people have been on the rise. A **counsellor** role was determined to be fundamental in social action. In a dutiful bid to contain destructive and violent demonstrations, the police have at times employed indiscriminate aggressive crowd control measures. These have resulted in many injuries and unfortunate deaths, augmenting psychosocial problems rampant amongst the poor majority. South Africa is a fractured and violent society. Notwithstanding the victim-aggressor debate, life is unparalleled and should be held in the highest regard. Social workers as counsellors should thus facilitate comprehensive therapeutic services as a means to provide healing and facilitate broader social cohesion.

Solidarity building is essential for achieving social change. The role of **social broker** was established as key in this regard. At grassroots level, this was established as connecting collectives with institutions and resources instrumental to intended social change. It also extends to ensuring that social actions are directed to structures that hold authority to effect intended change. On a macro level, social brokering was determined to involve linking service systems and structures. To bridge micro-macro interventions; social workers need extensive knowledge of change systems and their operating procedures.

Social change requires constant and valiant efforts. **Advocacy** and **activism** were thus established as key roles in social actions. Both these roles are referred to and promoted in the Global definition of social work and the SACSSP’s ethical code. Advocacy and activism for human rights and social justice form the essence of social workers' involvement in social protest actions. Social workers were acknowledged to have a wealth of information regarding various social issues and their effects on a poor majority, as they are the ones who operationalise social work in South Africa. This equips them with undeniable merit in their advocacy efforts, whether it be via covert activities such as **lobbying** in stakeholder meetings; providing testimony in court; digital activism; broadcasting on radio and television; or overt activities such as rallies and street marches. Efforts for change are typically met with resistance, which necessitates activism. Unlike advocacy, activism employs direct action. The activist solicits publicity and persuades collective action, which consequently results in direct action or political pressure key to attaining social change.

An **educator** role was determined to be indispensable in social protest actions. Social workers as educators facilitate the development and attainment of critical consciousness. Critical reflection and critical action are key to identifying and eradicating pejorative systems and unresponsive structures. With violent and destructive actions escalating, education is vital in identifying and modelling constructive ways of seeking resolutions for issues causing discontent. Ultimately, critical reflection and critical action is crucial in **empowering** the poor majority to accurately reframe their lived realities and actively engage in social change efforts in order to attain their human rights and social justice.

7.2.3. ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The clear sanction for social workers to engage in social and political action that seeks to attain equality for the most vulnerable is alluded to, and codified in the Global definition of social work and the SACSSPs ethical code. It is the pursuit of social justice and human rights that forms the core for the social worker's involvement in social actions. Indeed, a range of roles that social workers can potentially fulfil in these actions were determined. Yet, to engage in socio-political action and perform the aforementioned roles still remains elusive for social workers

Conflicts in interest and value dimensions present complex challenges for social workers and their involvement in social actions for human rights and social justice. Poverty rooted in poor governance and discriminatory and oppressive systems, remains high and continues to sour amongst the poor, effectively violating their human rights and denying them social justice. It was determined that social protest actions are usually directed at the government, with its heavy neoliberal social development policy. For social workers employed by the government, the practicability of engaging in social actions is questionable as it entails disregarding their employer's edicts. This unwittingly raises serious considerations regarding the extent to which the global social work definition, together with the mandate to engage in socio-political action, applies to social workers employed by the government.

The neoliberal strain characteristic of the government is equally heavy in the NGO sector. The reliance on the state for funding centred on observing managerial and administrative principles best suited for business co-opts employing organisations and social workers alike to the provision of rudimentary social interventions. Social workers therefore constantly contend with balancing the needs of the poor with their work environments, and their mandate to promote social change. Threats of personal and professional harm to those who engage in activism for human rights and social justice further compound matters for social workers. Ultimately, social workers find themselves at crossroads, having to deliver services that best serve to contain social problems whilst mandated to engage in social action for social change.

Whilst the question of feasibility has several amenable solutions, as will be illustrated in the recommendations, value conflicts are much more complex. Social workers have to engage in ethical decision making pertaining to their engagement in socio-political actions. This thesis considered the ethical principles screen to assist in this process when the ethical code presents conflicting directives. However, whether one considers models or hierarchies of ethical principles, ethical decisions depend on context. Ethical codes should therefore be illustrative of time, location, agency and purpose in order to facilitate activism for social change by social workers.

7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the deductive conclusions above, the researcher recommends the following practice and policy considerations to frontline social workers, social work managers, social work educators, social work institutions and policy makers.

7.3.1. FRONTLINE SOCIAL WORKERS

- Although the range of roles discussed parallel traditional social work intervention roles, they hold different nuances in social action contexts. This primarily warrants social workers to be well acquainted with social work knowledge constitutive of social change. Broadly, this includes theories, ideologies and principles of radical social work, human rights and social justice.

- The appropriate execution of respective roles requires social work practitioners to be cognisant of role theory as expounded by primary authors in social work. Among other things, this implies that all social work practitioners must be familiar with the knowledge, skills and value orientation of respective roles.
- Social work ethics are the at core of all social work practice. The performance of respective roles must thus cohere with ethically sound principles that can stand up to public scrutiny. This suggests that social workers have to take part in ethical decision making by reflexively engaging with the SACSSP's ethical code. In addition, social work practitioners may consider models and hierarchies of ethical principles to compliment the SACSSP's ethical code in determining ethically sound decisions.

7.3.2. SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS

- Social work managers are responsible for the administration and management of social service organisations, and are in contact with key stakeholders. In the view of neoliberal ideals that serve to curtail critical thinking and critical action, they ought to vehemently repudiate the implementation of policies and directives that hinder social activism, and are dissociated from contextual realities.

7.3.3. SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS

- The education and training curriculum of social work needs to be earnestly reconsidered in terms of micro and macro social work interventions, and its permit for critical knowledge development regarding the addressing of systemic and structural causes of social problems.
- Social action in social work interventions is inextricably complex; social work educators should thus ensure undergraduate curriculums cover theories and application of radical social work, human rights, social justice and social work ethics. The researcher considers this essential to demystify the apprehension towards radical perspectives in social work.

- Although references to roles and the role theory are covered in generic social work undergraduate training, specific emphasis is needed in training of role fulfilment, in order for undergraduate students and practitioners alike, to understand how to operationalise radical social work, human rights, social justice and social work ethics in practice.
- Social work educators should be involved in the continuous research, writing and publishing of critical issues relating to human rights and social justice for the poor.
- Social work educators play a decisive role in promoting or inhibiting human rights education in social work. They should stimulate students with critical engagements regarding implications and effects of social issues and policies on the vulnerable.
- Human rights education should follow a participatory approach. Academic institutions should consider the formation and promotion of social work student organisations wherein they engage in critical colloquiums relating to activism and broader social change.

7.3.4. SOCIAL WORK INSTITUTIONS

- DSD and SACSSP need to review policies and legislation on developmental social work and be more critical to neoliberal influences in social work interventions.
- The link between social work and the state needs to be reconsidered and redefined to facilitate for authentic social activism for broader social change.
- Tensions between DSD and NGOs rooted in work and remuneration discrepancies present a barrier to collective action which is key to social change efforts. This split needs to be reviewed and appropriate reforms that foster cohesion amongst social workers must be implemented.
- Despite tensions between problem solving and social activism, they both have a place in South Africa but to comprehensively serve the two from one hand is not feasible. The prerogatives for DSD and NGOs therefore need to be reconsidered and clarified to best serve this.

- In the view of the debilitating link between social work and the state regarding authentic activism, and the tensions between DSD and NGOs, it is worth considering the formation and sustenance of independent social work agencies responsible for social activism in the valiant efforts to attain human rights and social justice for the most vulnerable.
- Socio-political action for social change involves conflict of interest and contentious outputs that call for comprehensive protection from the SACSSP for those engaging in social activism.
- Protection from the SACSSP should be complemented and bolstered by the formation and implementation of social work unions that focus specifically on social activism and its contentions.
- Engaging and participating in social protest actions is littered with ethical dilemmas. Thus, social work institutions have a responsibility for activating review mechanisms and support systems that foster ethical decision making and ethical practice.
- The ethical code of the SACSSP should address the role of social workers more explicitly in social protest actions. Social work organisations (DSD included), should be more explicit in their Human Resources policies about the roles of social workers in social protest actions owing to the uniqueness of the social work profession, as expounded in this thesis. Thus, both DSD and NGOs, should be more specific about expectations and/or limitations of social workers' involvement in social activism for human rights and social justice.

7.3.5. POLICY MAKERS

- Social work representatives need to be involved in the formulation of policies and decisions that have a bearing on the social work profession and the issues it deals with. Further, policy formulators should actively endeavour to formulate a stance towards the involvement, specifically the roles, of social workers in social protest actions.
- The extended focus on statistics and numerical outputs in soliciting funding relegates practitioners to the provision of rudimentary social work interventions.

Reformed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that strike a balance between quantitative and qualitative processes and outputs need to be considered seriously.

- A space for social workers should be developed in the form of a forum, where practitioners can critically and reflexively deconstruct issues of human rights and social justice, social activism and its challenges, role fulfilment and ethical decision making. Linkages with current forums, such as SWAN SA should be actively investigated, promoted and mandated for social work organisations, training institutions and policy makers alike.

7.4. FUTURE RESEARCH

This research endeavour regarding the roles of social workers in social protest actions within South Africa's social development paradigm is expressly and arguably novel. Further research in the following areas is thus deemed critical:

- Human rights and social justice are discursive, contextual and ultimately complex concepts which require further nuancing within a South Africa context;
- The intricacy of social activism and social work requires further research that is locally relevant and devoid of Western influences;
- There is need for research and development of a social action framework that guides social workers in their social activism for social change; and
- The engagement and participation in social protest actions by social workers requires ethical decision making which necessitates further inquiry and the prospect of developing a social activism ethical framework.

7.5. MAIN CONCLUSION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher acknowledges the inherently and, frankly unsettling critical nature this thesis assumed from its onset. The breadth and scope of the discussions have been expressly contentious. However, the critical analytic discourse that this research assumed should not be misconstrued as undermining the progress social work has achieved in South Africa to date. It unequivocally acknowledges and applauds the constant and at times, contested provision of social services by both DSD and NGOs. The simple and profound truth is it matters.

What is also genuine is the unrelenting inequality and extreme poverty amongst the poor majority. Consequently, they are continually denied their human rights and overall social justice. Informed by radical theories, the structural and systemic nature of social problems solicit social action to attain social change for the vulnerable. This is indeed a legal and ethical mandate for social workers in South Africa. But to authentically engage in social activism for social change in a way not tied to political agendas or indeed organisational constraints, several considerations and reforms have to be made. The affiliation of social work and the state needs to be redefined to allow for genuine human rights and social justice activism. To navigate safety and ethical predicaments, social work institutions should respectively, provide clear protection and support systems that foster ethical practice.

Over and above, there is arguably no definitive formula or indeed a recipe for engaging and participating in social actions by social workers. Further, to echo a comment of a participant in this research: while social workers engage in social protest actions, who is doing the work? In determining an informed course of action and role, social work practitioners must thus critically and continually engage with the contextual realities of the poor and vulnerable, the discursive concepts of human rights and social justice, and social work ethics.

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ANNEXURE 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH SOCIAL WORKERS INVOLVED IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

1. Biographical information

1.1. Social work education (qualification)?

1.2. Years of experience as a social worker?

1.3. Type of work environment?

2. Social protest actions

2.1. What does a social protest action mean to you?

2.2. Should social work professionals be involved in social protest actions? Motivate.

2.3. What form of protest actions should social workers facilitate/not facilitate? Motivate.

2.4. In what capacity (professional/personal) were you involved in a social protest action? Motivate.

2.5. What influenced your involvement in the respective social protest action? Motivate.

3. Roles in social protest actions

3.1. What does the term, “role” mean to you?

3.2. What are the respective roles that social workers should fulfil in a social protest action? Motivate.

3.3. How should the respective roles be fulfilled by social workers? Motivate.

4. Concluding remarks

4.1. What are your general reflections on social work and social protest actions?

ANNEXURE 2: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Consent for social workers to participate in the research on the voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions.

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Nyasha H Chibaya from the Department of Social Work at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because you are a social worker and are deemed eligible to participate in the study. You will take part in this research in your personal professional capacity, therefore not representing your organization.

1. Purpose of study

Social work is and has always been inseparable from social need, social justice and human development, and the underlying drive to address deeply embedded imbalances and inequalities in society that this entails. Over the last decade, there has been growing focus on protests against service delivery, gender-based violence and xenophobia throughout South Africa. Many more protests have been documented across the world. In light of this, the question which begs to be answered is: if there is such a high incidence of social protests around the world and in South Africa, are social workers involved indeed in light of the intrinsic link between social work, social justice and social protest actions? If not, why not? Moreover, what are social workers' opinions regarding their perceived roles in social protest actions?

2. What will be asked of me?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer a series of questions regarding involvement or lack thereof, of social work professionals in social protest actions. Each interview is estimated to take about 30 minutes. However, this may vary depending on your level of participation. Interviews will be conducted online or via telephone and at a time agreed upon by you and the researcher.

3. Possible risks and discomforts

The research is deemed to be medium risk in terms of ethical considerations. You may therefore experience some discomfort during the interview as you will be prompted to discuss your involvement or lack thereof, in social protest actions. Should the need arise, the researcher will make use of an external qualified social worker to offer you pro-bono debriefing services. The designated social worker’s details follow: Mrs. Hoffman-van-Rooyen, 0845499152/ 0748884088. All interviews are regarded as confidential. Your personal details will therefore not be included in the research.

4. Possible benefits to participants and/or to the society

You will benefit indirectly from your participation in the research study. You will be presented with an opportunity to voice your opinions on the research subject. Some of the potential benefits to society envisaged from carrying out this research include the ability to define social protest actions within the ambit of social work. Furthermore, conducting this research will yield important information, which could be utilised to guide policy makers, educators and frontline social workers regarding the involvement or lack thereof, of social workers in social protest actions.

5. Payment for participation

All costs regarding the conducting of research interviews will be handled by the researcher, hence you will incur no expenses. You will not receive remuneration from the researcher for your participation in the research study.

6. Protection of your information, confidentiality and identity

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. Data collected will be stored on a password protected computer and will be backed up with a Microsoft Cloud OneDrive platform. Hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home.

You will not be identified in the final research report. Interviews will be audio-recorded solely to facilitate the data capturing process and the subsequent data transcriptions. The researcher will make use of the prior mentioned technology with your permission. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings and they will not be used for educational purposes. The recordings will be erased upon complete transcription from audio to a word document.

7. Participation and withdrawal

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. 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 study if you begin to display severe discomfort in answering the respective research questions.

8. Researchers contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Nyasha Chibaya at 0785401031 or via email at 17682185@sun.ac.za and/or the supervisor, Prof. L. K. Engelbrecht, at lke@sun.ac.za or by telephone 0210802073.

9. Rights of research participants

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 participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant, I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.
- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I __________________________________ *(name of participant)* agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by __________________ *(name of principal investigator).*

______________________________ ____________________

Signature of Participant Date

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this “Consent Form” is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition, I would like to select the following option:

____ ________________________

Signature of Principal Investigator **Date**

ANNEXURE 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH SOCIAL WORKERS NOT INVOLVED IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

1. Biographical information

1.1. Social work education (qualification)?

1.2. Years of experience as a social worker?

1.3. Type of work environment?

2. Social protest actions

2.1. What does a social protest action mean to you?

2.2. Should social work professionals be involved in social protest actions? Motivate.

2.3. What form of protest actions should social workers facilitate/not facilitate? Motivate.

2.4. What influences social workers' involvement/non-involvement in social protest actions? Motivate.

3. Role in social protest action

3.1. What does the term "role" mean to you?

3.2. What are the respective roles social workers may fulfil or should not fulfill in a social protest action? Motivate.

3.3. How should the respective roles be fulfilled or not fulfilled? Motivate.

4. Concluding remarks

4.1. What are your general reflections on social work and social protest actions?

ANNEXURE 4: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH SOCIAL WORKER MANAGERS, EITHER INVOLVED OR NOT INVOLVED IN SOCIAL PROTEST ACTIONS

1. Biographical information

1.1. Social work education (qualification)?

1.2. Years of experience as a social worker?

1.3. Type of work environment?

2. Social protest action

2.1. What does a social protest action mean to you?

2.2. Should social work professionals be involved in social protest actions? Motivate.

2.3. What form of protest actions should social workers facilitate/not facilitate? Motivate.

2.4. What influences social workers' involvement/non-involvement in social protest actions? Motivate.

3. Role in social protest action

3.1. What does the term "role" mean to you?

3.2. What are the respective roles social workers may fulfil or should not fulfill in a social protest action? Motivate.

3.3. How should the respective roles be fulfilled or not fulfilled? Motivate.

4. Concluding remarks

4.1. What are your general reflections on social work and social protest actions?

ANNEXURE 5: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH RADICAL SOCIAL WORK EXPERTS

1. Biographical information

1.1. Social work education (qualification)?

1.2. Teaching and research focus?

1.3. Years of experience as a social work academic?

2. Social protest action and social work

2.1. What does a social protest action mean to you?

2.2. Should social work professionals be involved in social protest actions? Motivate.

2.3. What form of protest actions should social workers facilitate/not facilitate? Motivate.

2.4. What influences social workers' involvement/non-involvement in social protest actions? Motivate.

3. Role in social protest action

3.1. What are the respective roles social workers may fulfil or should not fulfill in a social protest action? Motivate.

3.3. How should the respective roles be fulfilled or not fulfilled? Motivate.

4. Remarks and recommendations

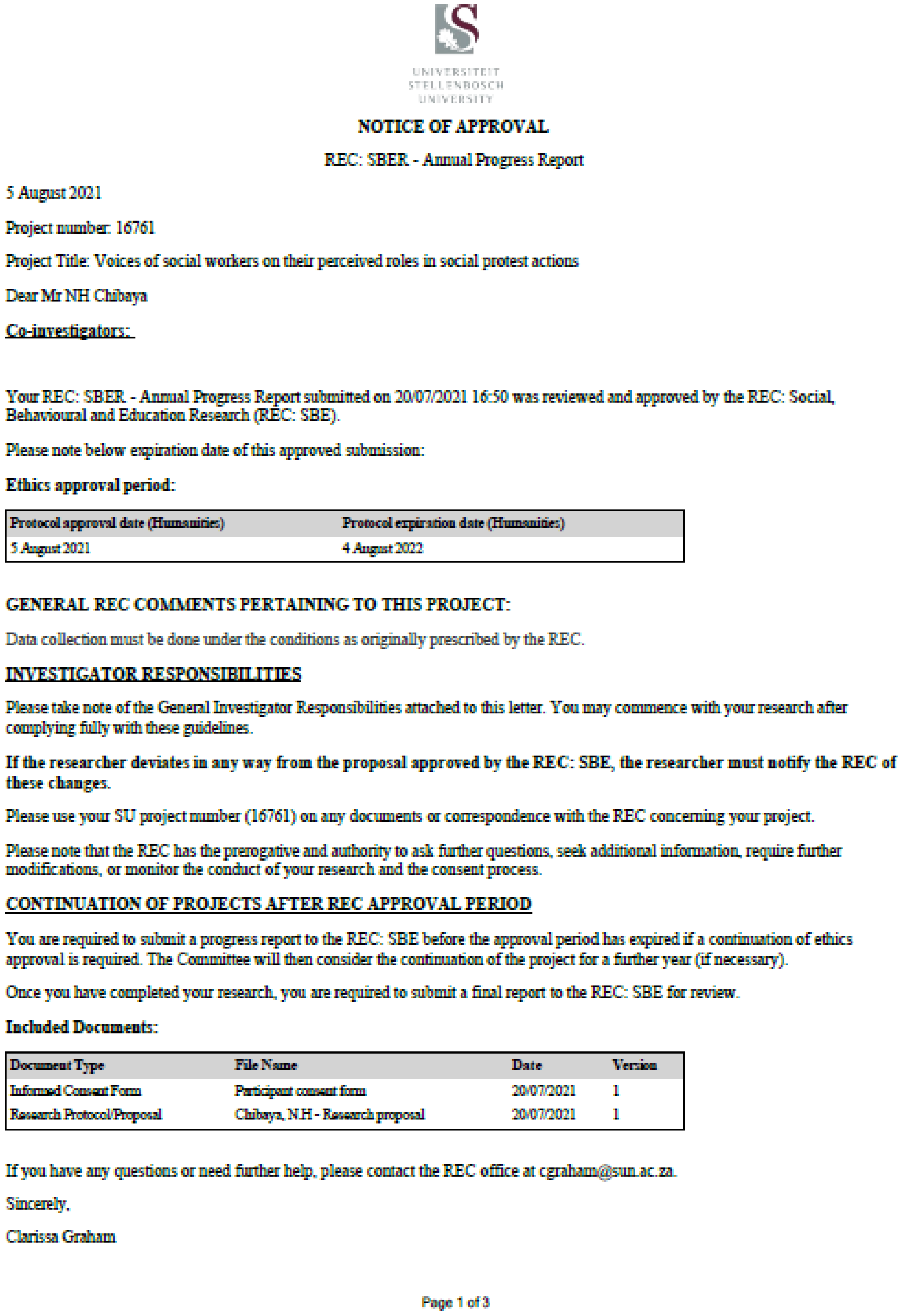
4.1. Based on the respective discussions and in light of the intrinsic connection between social work and social protest actions:

- in what ways can social work and social workers truly engage with social protest actions?

- how can social work and social workers navigate the dilemma regarding involvement or lack thereof, in social protest actions?

- what are the feasible measures that may or may not be put in place to facilitate the active involvement of social work and social workers in social protest actions.

ANNEXURE 6: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: SBER - Annual Progress Report

5 August 2021

Project number: 16761

Project Title: Voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions

Dear Mr NH Chibaya

Co-investigators:

Your REC: SBER - Annual Progress Report submitted on 20/07/2021 16:50 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
5 August 2021	4 August 2022

GENERAL REC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS PROJECT:

Data collection must be done under the conditions as originally prescribed by the REC.

INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (16761) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

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.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Informed Consent Form	Participant consent form	20/07/2021	1
Research Protocol/Proposal	Chibaya, N.H - Research proposal	20/07/2021	1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

Page 1 of 3

ANNEXURE 7: DEBRIEF LETTER

Elmari
HOFFMAN-VAN ROOYEN
[illegible]
T 074 888 4088
M 084 549 9152
F 086 638 4443

Practice number: 0020974

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24 September 2019

To whom it may concern

Doctoral study: N.H. CHIBAYA

Herewith I, Elmari Hoffman-Van Rooyen, confirm that I will be available to offer debriefing services to participants in connection to the research carried out by Mr. N.H. Chibaya on the roles of social workers in social protest actions.

My involvement in the proposed research study was explained to me by Mr. Chibaya and all questions regarding my involvement were sufficiently answered.

Kind regards

Elmari Hoffman- Van Rooyen

ANNEXURE 8: REFLEXIVITY REPORT

Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti (2016) offer the following questions for the researchers to explore in undertaking biographical reflexive journaling:

a. What personal experience do I have with my research topic?

My research topic centred on understanding the voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions. I hold a MSW degree. This minimally explains my focus on the opinions of social workers. Although having no active experience in any kind of social protest action, I witnessed the said phenomenon for the first time during my under-graduate study at Stellenbosch University in 2015. This was a time where nationwide protests broke out in retaliation to increases in University fees. In Stellenbosch, these respective protests were coupled with demonstrations against the University's language policy #OpenStellenbosch.

These respective social actions appeared barbaric and were at times violent. The surrounding narrative, which was one sided, presenting protesters in a negative light, was enough to deter me from joining any of these actions, let alone understanding what was actually going on. Yet, as a Zimbabwean international, who did not speak or understand Afrikaans, I was particularly affected by both the attempted increase in University tuition as well as the, arguably, inconsiderate use of Afrikaans as the modus operandi. I say inconsiderate because, despite raising concerns about the challenges that came about with primarily using Afrikaans during lectures and in residential spaces, the powers that would be turned a deaf ear or, at least, did not actively attempt to address this grievance.

During my Master's programme in 2017, Zimbabwe, my birth and residential country, witnessed a successful nationwide protest against the then president. Although I was in Stellenbosch at the time, this was a personal moment of victory. To paint a vivid picture, since my birth in 1992, I had only ever known one president in a supposed democratic country. In light of all this, and as an avid researcher at heart, I suppose I have always had a latent desire to understand social action especially in social work and its pursuit for social change and transformation.

b. How did I come to study the specific topic in the field?

In part, my close and intimate observation of reality warranted my initial interest in social action and social work. In 2018, I saw an opportunity to carry out a funded doctoral study. I applied and successfully got admitted in the programme. In this application, I had to complete a tentative proposal. Since I was already interested in social action in social work, I preliminarily reviewed respective literature. I was astounded at the extensive scholarly publications on radical social work, human rights and social justice. This was coupled with the fact that, my BSW curriculum never actively covered this branch of social work. At best, I recall meagre references to social action throughout the said period. Despite my initial hesitation which came about as a result of, at the time, minimally understanding the contentious nature of such an inquiry, I dared to, and went on to pursue the said research topic. Thus, a combination of observing reality, reviewing theory and personal interest led me to study the specific topic in the field.

c. What is my relationship to the topic being investigated?

Personally and as a researcher, I have an avid curiosity to understand the complex and intricate workings of how people decide to join one another and collectively decide and pursue respective transformations. As a social worker, I have always been in contact, and have worked with those in extreme need. Because of this and among other things, I have 1st hand experience and precisely understand the dire impact of poverty on ones' livelihood. This is my 4th and final year, pursuing this study. Whilst sincerely carrying out the investigation, I have inevitably become inseparable from the respective topic.

d. How did I gain access to the field?

In order to comprehensively address the research question, I collected data from 4 sampling cohorts. That is social workers who had been involved, those who had not previously been involved, social work managers and radical social work experts who may have or not have been involved in social protest actions. I managed to recruit social workers who had been involved in social protest actions on a social network, Facebook. In particular, pages like Social Workers for Better salaries, Social Work in Action and South African Social Work, provided willing participants who took part in the study. During my under- and post-graduate tenures, I managed to solicit a professional network of social work practitioners. I taped into the said network to recruit those professionals who had not been previously involved in any kind of social action. In 2021, I co-presented a supervision workshop with my supervisor with social work managers. I then utilised this opportunity to recruit managers who were willing to take part in the research if they met the inclusion criteria. Finally, my doctoral study has exposed me to various renowned scholars and academics alike. I therefore utilised this privilege to recruit local and international radical social work experts.

e. How does my own position (age, gender, class, ethnicity, political orientation) influence interaction in the field and the data collection process?

I am 29-year-old African male from Zimbabwe. In terms of low, middle and high class, I fit with the middle class. I have never been interested in political orientations, especially here in South Africa where I do not share any kind of history or nationalist passion to position me towards a particular party/wing. Plausibly, the respective variables enabled me to distance myself yet confidently recruit and engage in insightful interviews with the respective participants who took part in this research study. I was able to maintain ample objectivity and a measured curiosity to understand the opinions and meanings participants associated with the research question.

f. What is my interpretation perspective?

My research was a qualitative inquiry which was chiefly deductive although a movement between deductive and inductive reasoning was employed as new insights were attained during data collection, which had to be controlled by literature. I had to conduct a literature study, which enabled me to comprehensively understand the research topic. After that, I developed an interview schedule which was based on the literature, to guide me in the data collection process. I then employed reflexive thematic analysis to examine the collected data. The combination of the literature review and the empirical study thus formed the basis of interpreting the results in accordance with descriptive and explorative research. In addition, and consistent with constructivism, the narratives of research participants where utilised to substantiate the interpretation of the results.

g. My overall reflection on the research topic, methodology, research process, findings, conclusions and recommendations

Looking back and despite my initial hesitancy, I feel delighted that I took on the mantle to inquire on the perceived roles of social workers in social protest actions within South Africa's social development paradigm. The inherent critical nature of the research inquiry challenged reality as I had known it, and prompted new ways of thinking alltogether. Due to the contentious nature of the research study, I had to engage in what felt like endless reading and reviewing of relevant literature. But it was not all in vain. In fact, the literature review is a prominent feature of this study's framework and a strength of the interview schedule.

In true qualitative fashion, I utilised the interview schedule to collect data from 27 participants from four sampling cohorts. Participants, who at one point proved difficult to recruit, were interviewed via online and telephonic semi-structured interviews. I then engaged in frankly long and tedious hours of transcribing participant interviews. Whilst I had a theoretical understanding of reflexive thematic analysis, applying it was simply challenging and frustrating. I continuously read and re-read the participant transcripts in search for patterned meaning, explicit and implicit connotations and the overall story.

Unlike the challenges of recruiting participants and the frustratingly long hours of transcribing interviews, the research findings, which were controlled by literature, were a joy to behold. At least in the sense of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of social workers on their roles in social protest actions. Depending on whether one chooses to see the glass as half empty or half full, the conclusions and recommendations are indicative of the complexity of social activism and considerations that should be implemented to address this.

ANNEXURE 9: EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT TRANSCRIPT

Participant 5

Researcher: Social work education (qualification)?

Participant: Bachelor of Social Work.

Researcher: Years of experience as a social worker?

Participant: 13 years.

Researcher: Type of work environment?

Participant: Government (DSD).

Researcher: What does a social protest action mean to you?

Participant: I would say it means a group of people who dissatisfied and coming together to find some resolve to their grievances. I have witnessed a lot service delivery protests in the townships about electricity, water, employment, whatever services they are. They sometimes get violent, but others are peaceful.

Researcher: Should social work professionals be involved in social protest actions? Motivate.

Participant: I think as social workers, we need to understand what the cause is, before we get involved. As social workers, I think we need to be involved firstly, in the sense that we don't join them to protest, but to give information, to guide them. Because when they protest, some of them don't know the proper channels where they can get assistance with whatever issue. So blocking roads, obviously somebody will respond. So I think we can be involved in a sense of guiding them of the proper channels. There several policies that have been formulated by the GOVT, but when it comes to implementation of those policies, there is no follow up to ascertain whether it is indeed working or not. I think social workers should be involved in making sure that whatever policy that was formulated to address a social issue, is implemented correctly. I believe we need to be involved to advise the protesters on proper channels of reporting whatever issue.

Also as professionals as well, if we are rendering a service based on a certain policy, and we see that it is not making the impact that it supposed to be making or maybe the government is focusing with the numbers, then we can protest to protect the people we are servicing. Protest against the policy formulators, against our own government to say, this policy was formulated to address this issue. But now, because we are forced to be working on a certain number to be delivered in quantity, rather than quantity, there is no impact on the on the service we are delivering. So we can stand and protest to say, let it not just be about numbers, we want to see through change in our people. Because really, there's no real social development, it seems it is just another charity initiative because they are here today, then come back again. We don't really empower them that when we go back to their communities there is evident change and they don't get to experience the issue that they were dealing prior to intervention.

Researcher: What form of protest actions should social workers facilitate/not facilitate? Motivate.

Participant: So, my thinking is that we should not be involved in any type of protest because our involvement should result in evident change. If a protest that involves for example the issue of electricity, yes it is a social issue, but how is our involvement going to change? I do not think we should leave for example your child protection case and join that protest. That is not an issue that I can be involved in. I think it is just a matter of people are directing their issues in the relevant offices, but we cannot say now, we are joining them in their protests. However, I feel there are other protests that we should get involved in, even if they are community mobilised and we did not initiate them. But when people are marching or protesting against a certain issue, like issues of your domestic violence, and all of that. But I think it's important we understand the mandate, then I think we should get involved in such protests, because we also dealing with the same issue and want to see change in the people. So I believe that the social protests in issues like domestic violence, they are creating awareness, and they are saying somebody must act, somebody must do better.

Researcher: Are there other forms of protest you think social workers should facilitate?

Participant: I think issues like child abuse and homelessness are important and require some resolve.

Researcher: What protest action have you been part of and in what capacity (professional/personal) were you involved in this social protest action? Motivate.

Participant: In my social worker and personal capacity, I was involved in the social worker's march to the Union building in Pretoria back in 2016. There obviously it was about me standing up for my profession, seeking respect for the profession that I so love. Because in the world we are living in, we judge each other by the salaries we receive. The work you are doing might be of value but if it does not translate into monetary value then you are thinking, "ah, this profession". They must give value to our profession, we're doing a lot as social workers. We are over worked; the workload is too much. That is why we cannot even see the results that we desire. The ratio of a social worker to caseload is simply ridiculous.

I have also been involved in a march about raising awareness against child abuse. There was a child that was killed in the township that we are servicing. We went to court and marched, representing our support for children and the family. It was on a professional capacity as well as on a personal level because the community I work with, it's a community that I live in. But I think it was more on the professional side because I didn't wake up in my house and go there. I was at work and we went to court.

Researcher: What does the term, "role" mean to you?

Participant: It means my involvement in a situation, what is my part to play.

Researcher: What are the respective roles social workers may fulfil or should not fulfill in a social protest action? Motivate.

Participant: Education as I alluded earlier. You play a role of broker by linking people with resources. As I said earlier, the people are here protesting, blocking roads, but there is no one to listen to them. So you link them with resources, direct them to proper channels that will help in resolving their grievances. I think also being an advocate by speaking up for people during policy formulations, budgetary meetings and so forth. We need to empower these people with the right information or more amenable ways to get the issues they struggling with to be addressed. You find some of the people protest because they are confused and do not know any better.

Researcher: What are your general reflections on social work and social protest actions?

Participant: I think if we can separate social work from the state it would go a long way. If we could separate social work from specific political parties and ideologies, it would relive the profession from complying with the demands of the government that at times not best suited for the people we render services to. You see at times you are limited to protest against the government because there is a conflict of interest. But I do think social work has a substantial role in social protest actions. The essence of our profession is to realise and attain human rights for the people we work with.

ANNEXURE 10: EDITOR'S LETTER

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This is to confirm that I have edited the dissertation by

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titled

Voices of social workers on their perceived roles in social protest actions

and have made suggestions to be implemented by the candidate.

H M Honey

(28/07/2022)