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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

*Making a difference: Female Social Workers'
Lives and Identities - A Biographical Study*

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
June 2012

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the motivations of female social workers in their decision to embark on the study of and work in the profession. The thesis also offers some recommendations for the education of social workers.

The historical emergence of social work as a profession and the role women have played in shaping the profession and building traditions, in the United Kingdom, are explored. The biographies of some significant women, the 'early pioneers' of social work, are reviewed (albeit succinctly) to ascertain their motivation to help and make a difference in the lives of other people. The hypothesis that women are socialised into a caring role by the patriarchal structures of society is discussed as a possible explanation as to why the social work profession consists predominantly of women.

A small-scale research project, which utilises a mixed-method approach from a feminist standpoint and an auto/biographical paradigm, investigates the biographies and motivational factors of female social work students and women social workers. In an endeavour to find some tradition-building factors which might predict women's engagement with social work, the socio-economic and demographical data from the early pioneers and the research project's cohorts are taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the categories of 'social justice fighter' (Adams *et al.* 2002; Thompson 2002), and 'wounded helper' (Brandon 1976; Charon 2006; Frank 1995) are introduced with the intention to ascertain whether there are common factors which influence women's wish to help others and their choice to become social workers.

The preliminary findings of the thesis suggest that financial gain is not the main stimulus for women becoming social workers, but that altruistic motives and the idea of social justice influences their career choice. The research findings further suggest that life experiences (positive as well as negative) influence the decision to become a social worker. The findings in the thesis are compared and discussed with similar studies in the field (Parker and Merrylees 2002, Redmond *et al.* 2008, Stevens *et al.* 2012).

Summarising, the thesis proposes recommendations for social work education and the curriculum:

- a thorough selection process that investigates the personality, moral values and the motivation of social work entrants by using biographical interviews and narratives;
- reflective and analytical processes are required to be an integral part of the curriculum, thus facilitating students to address any latent emotional and/or traumatic life experience which otherwise might lead to detrimental transference in the social work interaction with clients;
- a deconstruction of gender issues and perceptions as part of the curriculum thereby encouraging more men to enter social work as students, lecturers and professionals;
- a pro-active promotion of a more positive image of social workers should be on the curriculum with the aim of altering public perception of the social work profession.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, FRANCISCA CHRISTINA VEALE

declare that the thesis entitled

Making a difference: Female Social Workers' Lives and Identities - A Biographical Study

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission,

Signed:

Date: 13th June 2012

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Michael Erben, who always has been supportive and believed in me.

Thank you to Mel Hughes and Jonathan Parker from the University of Bournemouth to enable me to recruit some of the participants for my research from their student cohorts. Above all, a big thanks to all the students and qualified social workers, who took the time and interest in participating in my research.

I am very grateful to my dear friend Monika Cox, who took the time and interest to proof-read as I went along with writing chapter after chapter over the past two and a half years. This, hopefully, made the final overall proof-read of the thesis much more digestible for Lindsey Howell. Thank you to Liz Hayman at Weymouth College Library in assisting me to locate and loan books from other libraries.

During the course of writing the thesis, I lost my beloved Greyhound-Saluki cross dog, 'Boy George'. However, I found and rescued a new four-legged companion to provide me with breaks away from the computer. He is a retired ex-racing Greyhound, whose racing name 'Charity Blueboy' is so fitting with my thesis.

In memory of my grandparents

Hugo Petzold and Irma Petzold-Heinz

who had a significant impact on my educational

and moral development.

They made a difference to my life.

The Star Thrower (Making a difference)

There was a man who was walking along a sandy beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up on the shore. He noticed a boy picking the starfish one by one and throwing them back into the ocean. The man observed the boy for a few minutes and then asked what he was doing. The boy replied that he was returning the starfish to the sea, otherwise they would die.

The man asked how saving a few, when so many were doomed, would make any difference whatsoever? The boy picked up a starfish and threw it back into the ocean and said "Made a difference to that one ..."

The man left the boy and went home, deep in thought of what the boy had said. He soon returned to the beach and spent the rest of the day helping the boy throw starfish in to the sea . . . * (Loren Eiseley, 1979)



Chapter 1

Making a difference

"If we could see the whole fabric of our lives spread out
What a wonderful weaving it might show;
Many a thread that we thought lost would re-appear
And form strange patterns of cause and effect.
But God holds the spindle and until He cuts the thread
We go on adding a bit each day."
(Theresa G. Lesem, cited Solomon 1946:v)

1.1. Introduction

The metaphor 'fabric of life' as used by Lesem, encompasses for me not only auto/biography research and writing, but reminds me that there is a kaleidoscope of individual lives when researching the lives of others. Some lives are woven with a different and some with a similar thread. Thus, each fabric of life creates unique patterns, some of which we can recognise in others. Moreover, Solomon (1946) raised the question of where biographies begin and how much a person's memory alters the pattern or texture of what they remember, or how they view their lives. This presents the question as to whether we remember the moments or people that inspired us:

Does the life story of an individual have its origin in the distant past and [...]? Do we start our pilgrimage conditioned by patterns already ingrained and [...]? Is memory to be trusted, or has time, in passing, so obliterated the poignancy of experiences which distressed us or enhanced our joy that we are unable to record them in true proportion? Do we remember clearly those moments when inspiration was born through contact with rich minds; those in which courage was instilled and new insight kindled? (Solomon 1946:3)

The following work sets out to explore the kaleidoscope of female social workers' identities, biographies, life experiences, life journeys and their 'fabric of life'. Moreover, I wondered what the individual's inspirations or motivations were, and how these influenced each woman's decision to become a social worker. The starting point is my autobiographical journey as a social worker, through the examination of my motivations, my family background and environmental influences, because I have become aware that there are similarities with other women social workers. This became more apparent through my work with social work students which inspired and motivated me to research why women in particular want to study and engage in social work.

Indeed, I raise questions as to why social work appears to be a gendered profession and further pertinent investigation is undertaken in the context of my thesis. Accordingly, I employ feminist grounded theory, because, as Greene and Hogan (2005:6) highlighted, 'researching women's experiences has been blatantly disregarded by the social sciences in the past'. They asserted that one of the first goals of feminist researchers has to be 'to find a central place for women's accounts of their own experience of their lives' (Greene and Hogan 2005:6). Consequently, I explore women's involvement in the emergence of social work as a profession through the rehearsal of the literature and the review of biographies of 'remarkable women' who made a difference in people's lives. I argue, that these women can be seen as the 'early pioneers' of social work and founding mothers of social work education.

Women's contributions have often been neglected, remaining largely 'invisible to historians', according to Gray (2009:3). Therefore, I set out not only to research the well-known pioneers such as Florence Nightingale, but also to explore the biographies of some less well-known women. The biographies of seventeen British and two American women who lived and worked in a period over four centuries are examined in a condensed manner. The purpose of the review of these women's biographies is to evaluate the motivational influences which may have inspired them to engage in early social work-like activities that made a difference in other people's lives. I investigate as to whether their motivations correspond, or not, to my proposed categories of 'social justice fighter' (Adams *et al.* 2002; Thompson 2002), and/or 'wounded helper' (Brandon 1976; Charon 2006; Frank 1995), which are used for the research project with social workers today. The findings from the early pioneers of social work are compared to findings from my small-scale qualitative research project with social work students and recently qualified social workers. Thus, I evaluate *if*, *how*, or *why* social workers today want to 'make a difference' in people's lives and as to whether their motivations are determined by the paradigms of 'social justice fighters' and/or 'wounded helpers'.

My work does not discuss theories of motivation from a performance management position, but considers what inspires women and influences them to study and work in social work from a moral and value base perspective. I want to find out if and *why* these women want to 'make a difference' in other people's lives. The slogans 'to make a difference' or 'to be the difference' (CWDC 2009) have been used in the advertising campaigns for social workers in recent years, hence the title of my thesis. Likewise, the theme of making a difference is exemplified for me in '*The Star Thrower*' by Loren Eiseley (1979), as it encapsulates my personal and professional philosophy. I deliberated as to whether other social workers might have a similar attitude. Indeed, I

found confirmation of how women are making differences today, with numerous projects in the UK and abroad, in the book by Best and Hussey (2001) titled '*Women making a difference*'.

Consequently, I consider that my thesis to investigate women's motivational influences, from a historical and a current standpoint, offers an innovative contribution to the understanding of women's attraction to the social care profession. Furthermore, my aim is to find a contemporary perspective, and/or a common denominator which can inform current social work education.

1.2. Rationale – influences in arriving at the thesis

I possess over twenty years of professional experience in the field of social work and social work education, thus I consider myself to have gained sufficient professional expertise to explore and discuss issues pertinent to the thesis. Furthermore, there are two personal influences that directed me towards the thesis. Firstly, I have a personal passion for reading and researching in conjunction with a thirst for knowledge and understanding in a philosophical sense (making sense of my life, the life of others and the world around us). Secondly, I have a disposition which questions established conventions, and my curious and somewhat rebellious thinking sympathises with political activism, feminist thinking and feminist epistemology.

Therefore I decided, to employ an emancipatory research approach which promotes social change. This is supported by Usher *et al.* (1997:191) who stated that emancipatory research rejects both: 'the idea of research being politically neutral and the view that its purpose is to simply find out about the world'. Consequently, I acknowledge that the position from which I am researching and writing, cannot be neutral either, as it is rooted in socio-economic, class, race and cultural privileges, thus enabling me to pursue my educational and academic development. The relevance of acknowledging socio-economic and cultural inequalities is also part of the emancipatory research process, in which researchers have 'an obligation to endeavour to emancipate oppressed groups, those who suffer from the greatest inequality and a lack of social justice' according to Usher *et al.* (1997:191).

Moreover, my awareness that my gender has had demerits in my professional development makes me believe that personally, as well as academically and professionally, I am hitting 'glass-ceilings' constructed by a patriarchal society. I feel, like many women before me, that I 'will need more exceptional qualities because of the

need to compensate for the gender bias' (Martin 2008:413). Hence, my interest in conducting my research from a feminist perspective with the aim of promoting the emancipatory research paradigm manifested itself, because I anticipate that many women feel the same way.

Indeed, my academic research interest and journey possibly started in 1989 when I wrote my dissertation at the end of my BA (Hons) in Social Pedagogy in Germany. I had familiarised myself with feminist literature and writers such as Maria Mies, a German sociologist, activist, feminist researcher and scholar. Mies discussed the role of women in societies, capitalist as well as developing countries such as India, prior to the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum. Mies (1988, 1998) gained international recognition owing to her concept of the 'housewifisation of work' which debated the role and function of housework in capitalist and patriarchal systems. Moreover, Mies received international acknowledgement because of her feminist research approach of 'grassroots democracy' (see Mies' chapter *Towards a methodology for feminist research*, in Bowles and Duelli-Klein 1983).

My Master of Arts in Education of the University of Southampton dissertation on female adult learners and the importance of family support, continued my research focus on women. The MA (Ed) research inspired me to investigate within the parameters of auto/biography, sociology and educational studies. Similar to Middleton (1993:62), I reason, that my PhD thesis and research interest did not just start with my BA or MA, but that it had been 'lingering about' for many years. What is more, I have developed a 'passion' (Middleton 1993:63) for research, and in particular feminist epistemology. Therefore, the focus of my PhD thesis is to investigate female social work students and women social workers, because I consider social work a gendered profession. Through my research, and the writing of the thesis, I envisage giving women a voice (David 2003). My work illuminates and examines the historical and current socio-political context of social work and the role women play within the profession as well as the function of women within society.

A further motivation for the thesis surfaced through my professional work and my engagement in the assessment of potentially 'failing' social work students. My research interest was originally instigated by the fact that I was called upon by the collaborating university as an independent 'second opinion' social work practice teacher to assess students who were at risk of failing their practice placements in social work. My role entailed assessing and investigating the causes which led to the potential failure, and to gather evidence from everyone involved in the placement. In some of the assessments it became apparent to me, that the social work student was not 'suitable'

or 'fit' for social work practice, because of unresolved personal and often traumatic childhood or adulthood experiences. Childhood sexual abuse, physical and emotional abuse through witnessing domestic violence, general repeated sexism, or co-dependency issues re-emerged and interfered with some of the students' abilities to practice, in a professional and responsible manner, in the work with clients/ service users. I classify these students as 'wounded helpers' or 'wounded healers' (Brandon 1976; Charon 2006; Frank 1995), in the sense that their motivation and ambition to study social work is rooted, consciously or subconsciously, in their own lived experience. This interfered and led to unwanted and unprofessional, even 'dangerous', transference in the work with clients/ service users. In contrast, the 'wounded helper' can be a valuable source of life experiences (see Brandon 1976) which cannot be read in books nor taught at university, as discussed later on. Indeed, the 'wounded helper' equally inspired or fuelled the fight for social reform, and therefore, the classification of 'social justice fighter' (Adams *et al.* 2002; Thompson 2002) is not to be understood as an exclusive opposite. Both classifications are discussed in the chapters to follow, through the review of literature and the research project itself. In addition, the term of 'social justice repairer' is explored in the light of the socio-political function of social work.

These explanations of *how* I arrived at the thesis still might not offer sufficient insight or justification as to *why* I decided on the topic. Merrill and West (2009:99) wrote that 'researchers rarely explain how and why they chose a topic', because of the traditional imperative in the academy to distance self and subjectivity from research in the name of 'impartial science'. Accordingly, I follow Simpson's (1996:6) advice to research students: 'they [the research students] should be asked to use their own experiences and translate these into data, as an essential starting point for establishing central sociological concepts'. Thus, the thesis reflects my thinking, and the texts are evaluated and interpreted from a perspective based upon my personal and professional experiences and expertise. Consequently, I am writing myself into the text and become part of the research journey; thus, I am corresponding to the 'autobiographical self in research' (Plummer 2001:214). Besides, I intend to be *present* in the writing, unlike in research where the authors are an 'absent present', and 'science maintains its own fiction as a practice without practitioners' (Usher *et al.* 1997:219).

Hitherto, as an independent researcher (non-funded) I render no such claims of scientific impartiality; - yet, who is to say that funded research is truly non-biased or scientifically 'neutral'? On the contrary, my auto/biographical approach presents the motivation that engages me with the research topic and process. The questions I asked myself, of which I may at first have been unclear, then became integral to choosing the

research topic. Thus, my research entails 'story telling', following the 'narrative rules' as discussed by Usher *et al.* (1997:223) who defined 'the researcher as an active story teller of plausible tales of discovery'. Furthermore, they maintained that 'narratives are authorised by means of a readership and re-authorised by the readers themselves, acting as writers in the production of further texts, through the process of citation' (Usher *et al.* 1997:223). Therefore, my methodological approach to use auto/biography, as well as the biographies of other women, facilitates the production and discussion of texts which tell stories about lives which presents authenticity, and possibly offers new discoveries.

Moreover, the selection of the research participants, and the questions asked, contribute not only to an understanding of motivational factors, it also shapes my 'engagement with the other' (Merrill and West 2009:101). This reflexive process between the researcher and the research participants generates new knowledge and understanding not just about the research topic or the participants but also about me, the researcher. Merrill and West (2009:99) described this process as follows:

As researchers we seek, through experience, to understand how others live and make sense of their lives; and our own too. Maybe we seek answers inside ourselves and experience can be a source of data and a means to understand and empathise better with the other but also ourselves.

Likewise, Usher *et al.* (1997: 216) defined the researcher as a 'sense-making agent', someone who is involved in the development and production of knowledge and has an understanding about the researched and the world. Indeed, they considered the research enquiry as a process of '(self-) understanding', requiring the researcher to develop an 'understanding of research as reflective practice' (Usher *et al.* 1997: 217). Thus, in the following section I explore 'pieces' of my personal and professional life which I consider relevant to the thesis, and are deemed to assist the process of understanding. Besides, the autobiographical account serves to provide evidence of my reflective practice as a researcher.

Consequently, as an autobiographical researcher, I deliberately decided to write in the first person throughout the dissertation, the aim being, that my work is viewed as 'real' and authentic for the reader. I want the reader to get to know me through this method of writing as it offers transparency of me as the researcher and the research process. However, I also realise that this mode of writing makes me vulnerable as my views and positions are exposed in a one-way process, as I do not know whether the reader approves of my approach, or believes and trusts my research findings. Actually, I recognise that the power-imbalance, implicit in the research process itself, with regard to the participants of my research equally applies to me. I am exposed to the power-imbalance from the reader's position whilst I am writing from an

autobiographical perspective. Yet, I feel encouraged to utilise an autobiographical approach to voice my views on the subject matter, because, as Heaney (1980:43 cited Hunt 1997:169) stated, 'finding a voice means that you can get your own feelings into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them.' Furthermore, Hunt (1997) reminded me that through auto/biographical writing I not only make myself heard, but it also enables me to give the participants of my research a voice. Consequently, to re-dress the power-imbalance, I need to engage with autobiographical material and emotions from past and present.

1.3. 'Pieces of me': the autobiographical journey of a social worker

I consider it important to state that I am German and English is my second language. Even though I have been living and working in England since 1995, and I 'think' (the use of words) in English whilst writing the thesis, my philosophical and political thought processes were shaped in the thirty years that I lived, studied and worked in Germany. Kramsch (2004) discussed how speakers of different languages 'think' (the line of reasoning) differently when they speak or write, and how they have different cultural worldviews. Therefore, some of my thought processes and views in this thesis are still very much connected with my Germanic roots. This renders my work at times to be 'amusing' for the (British) reader, but I anticipate that the authenticity of my work might 'enchant' the reader. It is expected that my thesis is judged for its merits and innovative ideas, rather than for its errors in syntax and style.

Inspired by Harman's (2008) 'Pieces of me' I created my personal pictorial life story (illustration 1.3.1. on the next page) which denotes interesting themes, family and political influences emerging, as well as the impact of the *Zeitgeist*, which led me to 'active citizenship' (Martin 2008).

The 'pieces of me' and my life story symbolise my life journey from when I was born in Düsseldorf, Germany. I received a 'classic' education including: reading Goethe and Shakespeare, learning foreign languages, the arts, music and ballet classes. During my teenage years I became politically active and participated in anti-cruise missiles protests, anti-nuclear power demonstrations and other political actions together with my friends. My political engagement with left-wing and Green Party campaigners continued during my student years at university where I was introduced to feminist theory and action. In my mid-twenties I learned to scuba dive and even trained to instructor level. Since early childhood I had been fascinated by Jacques Cousteau's underwater films.

Pieces of me - My life story themes: Education, Peace Protest, Social Justice, Travel/Move, Education [Inspired by Harriet Harman (2008) 'Pieces of me']



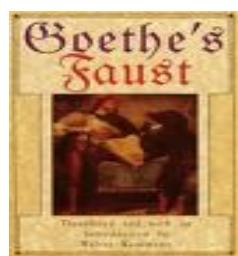
1965 Francisca
born in Germany



Rudolf Steiner



Bildungsbürgertum



Goethe



Shakespeare



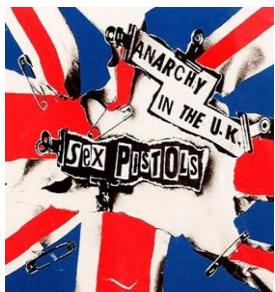
Ballet



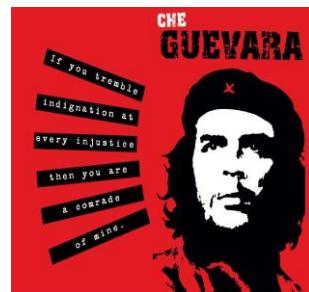
Arts



Oster Friedensmärsche
(Easter Peace Marches)



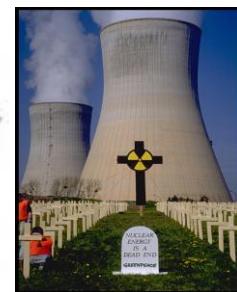
1980's Music



Che: If you tremble indignation at every
injustice then you are a comrade of mine.



Politics



GREENPEACE
(Nuclear energy is a dead end)



1995 Teaching Scuba Diving



Travelling



1996/7 Moving to the UK



2003onwards Teaching & Studying: Female learners(MAED) & Female social workers biographies(PhD)



* * *

I enjoyed travelling and diving around the world, where I met my (now ex) husband and moved with him to England a few weeks before my thirtieth birthday. We had no children, and even though I have been divorced for some years now, I have remained in England because I built a professional career here. Encouraged by the positive teaching experiences I had whilst teaching scuba diving students, I undertook teacher training for Higher Education (HE) alongside my social work position in England. I taught for many years in addition to my main employment as a social worker. In 2009 an opportunity arose and since then I have been solely engaged in teaching for a number of HE institutions. Looking back, I think I have 'inherited' my family's value with regard to the importance of education and the transmission of educational principles which I am passing on to my students.

I undertook the 'pieces of me' exercise to provide an autobiographical perspective in my work. Also, I considered the option of using some form of pictorial illustration as part of the research methodology with the participants. I completed the questionnaire that I designed for my research participants (appendix 3) to further present my thesis and research with autobiographical authenticity. The questionnaire investigates the motivational factors which influenced women's decisions to become a social worker. Consequently, as an 'autobiographical researcher', I have to ask myself the questions as to my motivations to study social work. As part of my autobiographical journey, I reflect on my family, social, cultural and environmental influences which possibly impacted on and inspired my choice of study and professional career. Therefore, I consider it necessary to expand on my grandparents' influences on my development, as I believe them to have been pivotal in my moral and personal development.

I consider my cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) rooted in my grandparents' transmission of an educational value base associated with the German proverb 'Wissen ist Macht' (Knowledge is power). The proverb is founded on Francis Bacon's quote: "For knowledge, too, itself is power." However, I am not interested in 'power' in an oppressive or political sense, but rather in 'knowledge' in the form of an education. For a woman like me to 'make it in the world', knowledge is the only power available. My family believed that I should be able to be 'independent' and be able to look after myself, thus not having to rely on a man as a provider (the same values were transmitted to Maria Mies by her parents; see Mies 2010). My family considered that through receiving an education and obtaining a professional qualification it would enable me to live an independent life. Yet, I have learnt that even though independence facilitates confidence, and that I do not have to rely on anyone, I still felt it to be a very hard and lonely struggle. I found it difficult to take the stereotypical role of a 'subservient wife' whilst married, because being an only child and having a

professional career I have always been able to look after myself. I found that men were attracted to my independence, but at the same time they felt intimidated and have tried to drive me into submission.

My family was not wealthy, but rich in culture and education chiefly influenced by my maternal grandparents. They could be classified as belonging to the *Bildungsbürgertum* (humanist academics/ educated middle-class/ middle-class intellectuals), in the sense that they absorbed and transmitted educational values and principles. The generations before my grandparents all had 'titles' and financial means, but nobility had been abolished in 1919 through the Weimar Constitution. In addition, my grandparents' families had lost all their 'wealth' through two world wars and all that was left was their wealth of knowledge and educational attainment. Even though my grandparents and parents were not university graduates, they read and wrote poetry as well as studied great literature (from Goethe to Shakespeare) and philosophy (from Plato to Kant). They also enjoyed singing, played classical instruments, listened to classical music and frequently attended the opera house and the theatre in my home town of Düsseldorf. My grandparents guided me on travels around Europe, opening my eyes and my mind to new countries and different cultures; thus they evoked my curiosity for the world and the people living in it. I believe that the travelling shaped my cultural awareness and contributed to my acceptance and tolerance of others.

My grandmother, Irma, was a violinist, poetry writer and novelist before WWII. She was an only child and born in Düsseldorf, but her father came originally from Flanders (Belgium/Dutch region). He had been a conductor and his wife was a violinist in the orchestra at the opera in Düsseldorf. My grandmother was a pacifist and during WWII she rejected work in the factories which produced military equipment. Instead she was deployed to work as a Red Cross nurse at Düsseldorf central train station where all the injured soldiers arrived back from the front. My grandmother was a pen pal to my grandfather during the war, because, like many other nurses, she had been encouraged to morally support the men at the front through writing letters. My grandparents found that they shared the same views of the world, politics and religion. They married in 1943, when my grandmother was already thirty years old and my grandfather was thirteen years her senior.

My grandfather, Hugo, was a photographer and painter before WWII. He was born the eldest of eight children in what is today known as Lodz in Poland, but at his time it was part of Germany and known as Litzmannstadt. His father was a German missionary and, after the death of my grandfather's mother, his father married a Polish woman, and they had two more children together. My grandfather, a religiously inspired

pacifist, refused to participate in Hitler's war and was consequently deported to a concentration camp. However, my grandfather was extremely lucky to have escaped the gas chambers. Owing to his ability to speak three languages (German, Russian and Polish), which he had learnt in school, he was able to 'volunteer' as a translator and a paramedic on the Eastern front. His education had helped him save his life. There he witnessed horrific human tragedies, injuries and deaths which haunted him in nightmares until he died in 1983, a month short of his eighty-third birthday.

It is of relevance to continue to briefly describe my maternal grandparents' biographies, as my grandparents were a major influence in my life. I lived with my grandparents, my mother and my ex-stepfather in the same house until both my grandparents died in the nineteen-eighties. I regard my grandparents as being responsible for my educational and moral development, because they explained the world to me, as well as reading to me, and telling me stories. Hence, they facilitated my *Bildung* (philosophy and education are linked in manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation).

I was an only child and I do not know who my father is. My mother was a teenage parent and she gained a qualification (as an ergotherapist) later in life when she was in her mid-thirties, after finally succeeding in divorcing my violent and alcoholic ex-stepfather. I realised, even though my grandparents were extremely supportive of me, they did not do the same for their daughter, my mother. Instead, they invested all their efforts into my mother's older brother, who is a professor, has three PhDs and manages his own education institution for 'Integrative Gestalotherapy'. My education was chiefly directed by my grandparents and my uncle, who encouraged my learning, and took me to ballet, theatre and operatic performances from an early age.

Equally, my political interest was nurtured by my grandparents' political activism against war, the nuclear bomb and other pertinent political issues. I was taken to religious conventions, where political issues were critically debated, political events and other peaceful political protest rallies such as the Oster Friedensmärsche (Easter Peace Marches). My grandparents were vegetarians, also opposed to smoking, drinking and drug-taking, based on their religious beliefs and life philosophy. They were followers of Rudolph Steiner's anthroposophy and, like him, they were *Rosenkreuzer* (Rosicrucian). Furthermore, they were Protestants and Lutherans as well as *Nazoräer* (Nazarenes = followers of Jesus from Nazareth). My name patron is Saint Francis of Assisi who lived by the examples of Jesus from Nazareth and was a great animal lover. Despite this, my grandparents were open-minded and neither religious nor political fanatics or 'purists', but free-spirited, which I believe to have inherited. Moreover, like

Dorothee Sölle (a leading German 'political' theologian during the student movement), my grandparents were of the firm belief that:

[...] theological contemplation without any political consequences is tantamount to hypocrisy. Therefore, every theological statement must also be a political one [...] (Sölle 1999:7 cited Mies 2010:121).

Even though I was brought up with a belief in God and I attended a Catholic primary school, I was not directed into any specific religious or spiritual belief system. I would describe myself as an atheist, a pacifist and a politically conscious humanitarian. What is more, I believe that this open-minded upbringing has influenced my selective, and yet holistic, approach to reading, research, writing and teaching, which also often transmits a political statement.

My grandfather was a great 'story-teller'. He would always invent stories for me, creating the endless tales about a group of dogs who lived in the imaginary town of Wundeln ('Die Hunde von Wundeln'). These dogs would always help each other, went travelling and lived through adventures, but they also had to do ordinary everyday tasks, such as cleaning the dishes or making beds. For example when my grandparents and I travelled or went for long hikes in the countryside, my grandfather would tell me tales of the dogs for hours so that I would not get tired or complain about the walking. I once walked for 30 kilometers in a day at the age of four and a half years, and I was awarded a gold medal for being the youngest participant to have completed the walk at the annual Deutscher Wandertag (German hiking/ rambling day). On other occasions, when I had to wash the dishes or make the beds, my grandfather would tell me stories, because the *Hunde von Wundeln* would have to do it too.



My grandfather Hugo with our cat Peter and I with our Airedale Terriers Cora and Asta.

Dogs always had a great significance in my life, even today. My grandfather took to breeding dogs during the first ten years of my life. I loved our dogs and I learnt to walk whilst holding on to the collar of our breeding bitch Asta, an Airedale Terrier. The breed originated from Yorkshire, and Airedale Terriers were very popular during both World Wars as rescue dogs. They were also used by the police force before being replaced by German Shepherds. Airedale Terriers also make good family pets, and my grandfather took to breeding the dogs, because it was a beneficial source of income for our family.

The reason for mentioning my grandfather's story telling is the thought that it might have inspired my interest in other people's stories and, therefore, maybe in social work with its narrative approach. I guess, my grandfather's story telling might also have influenced my interest in auto/ biography. Originally I was supposed to study medicine, preferably psychiatry, because my uncle decided that was a respectable profession. Yet, I abandoned medical studies after three semesters as it did not suit me. Instead I enrolled on the social pedagogy programme, together with my boyfriend at the time. The lecturers were very politically minded and I enjoyed the discussions as it also fitted my political activism at the time. I became a member of the newly established Green Party, as well as Greenpeace. I was very idealistic as a student and was convinced that I could change the world and the social welfare system.

Looking back at my education, I still value education and believe that, through education, people can change their lives. Thus, it was fascinating to learn that many of the early pioneers of social work had an educational element in their work. However, I recently contemplated the 'miseducation of women' as discussed by Tooley (2002). I questioned as to whether the fight by feminists for equal opportunities has actually made women's lives better or worse (see the discussion in my Master's dissertation). Tooley (2002:18) stated that all that women wanted was 'for men to recognise and acknowledge their independence and not for women to be more independent'. According to Tooley (2002:10) feminism caused a 'backlash' and disintegrated families and affected divorce rates. I somewhat agree with Tooley (2002), because I sometimes wonder what my life would be like had I been educated in a more gender stereotypical way, and if I had had a family of my own. Instead, like Maria Mies (2010:84), I *thought* that I wanted to be 'free to do whatever I wanted without having to be bound by a husband and family'. I am not sure anymore.

I have always worked and been financially independent, thus I have been able to support myself. As a social worker I had the opportunity to work in many different areas, with children and adults alike, such as: education welfare officer; facilitator for therapeutic self-help groups and assistant researcher within this programme; welfare benefit advisor for an independent charity; assistant manager of an independent living scheme for adults with learning disability and challenging behaviour and their key worker; family centre manager and children's centre manager. I have been teaching in HE since 2003, lecturing in Early Years Care and Education as well as in Social Work.

Concluding this brief autobiographical journey, it could be argued that my 'sozialisation' (Berger and Luckmann 1967) influenced my conscious and unconscious

decisions internalised during childhood and youth, thus determining my education and my career path. My socialisation constructed and underpinned my moral development which internalised the norms and the values from my grandparents. Indeed, it strengthened my decisions and interactions with others, as well as my view of the world. Furthermore, my grandparents nurtured and fostered my resilience, thus they enabled me to bounce back from the adversities of life which has helped me to navigate difficulties throughout my childhood and adult life. Research by Newman (2004) found, that the presence of at least one unconditionally supportive significant adult fosters resilience in children.

Addressing the question as to whether I am a 'social justice fighter' or 'wounded helper', I would argue that I am 75% a social justice fighter because of environmental and family influences. In addition, I would describe myself as 25% a wounded helper, because of the impact of domestic violence inflicted on my mother and me by my ex-stepfather. This experience definitely affected my feminist thinking. Therefore, social work seemed to me an authentic profession, because I can utilise my experiences in supporting people to make a difference in their own lives.

1.4. Real life stories: social justice fighter versus wounded helper

'We can't just read up on real life experience' - Do you think I'd know the first thing about how hard your life has been, how you feel, who you are, because I read Oliver Twist? Does that encapsulate you? Personally, I don't give a shit about all that, because you know what, I can't learn anything from you, I can't read in some fuckin' book. Unless you want to talk about you, who you are. Then I'm fascinated. I'm in. But you don't want to do that do you sport? You're terrified of what you might say. Your move, chief. ('Sean' played by Robin Williams in the movie 'Good Will Hunting' 1997)

As Sean pointed out, we cannot substitute reading about life in a book for real life experiences. Real life stories shape the becoming of a social worker, who wants to make a difference, perhaps grounded upon a social justice paradigm or based on their own life experiences. My personal and professional view is that we all strive to make differences in our own lives, or that of others, that is what makes us human, distinguishing us from animals. Hence, we are striving for careers, establishing families and having children, writing books or dissertations, making movies, building empires, or wanting to help others. Making a difference and leaving our mark in our private lives, professional careers, society, or politics is, in my experience, what we humans endeavour to do.

This prompts the question of motivation, what drives us, or makes us 'tick', or triggers this innate or socially constructed desire to give meaning to our lives. According to traditional psychoanalytic beliefs, all of what and who we are stems back to our early childhood experiences (Westen 1998). This notion that 'all life histories have their origins in early childhood' was also supported by Sartre, according to Denzin (1989:65). He argued that, contained in Sartre's assumptions, was the concept implied that everyone's story must begin with the 'individual's prehistory' and within this prehistory 'there will be an event that indelibly shapes the life of the person' (Denzin 1989:65). This event, or turning point which Denzin (1989) called 'epiphany', was acknowledged as influencing peoples' decision making process by a number of authors (Merrill and West 2009; Plummer 2001; Roberts 2002). Evidence for the relevance of personal history and life experience as a motivational factor in students' decision to enter social work was found in research studies by Parker and Merrylees (2002) as well as Stevens *et al.* (2012) and are discussed later.

The question as to what extent early childhood events and experiences shape conscious or subconscious decision making processes, directs me back to the psychoanalytic theory. This theory can possibly offer explanations as to why someone, who survived traumatic childhood experiences, would repress, dissociate, or be in denial of the abuse, but then commenced a profession that aims to prevent abuse, or assist others to survive traumatic experiences. The wounded helper notion could be one reason that motivated a person to train as a social worker. Equally, another motivational factor could be the notion for social justice which might have inspired social workers to fight for change of existing inequalities in society. As stated earlier, these classifications are not exclusive opposites (Adams *et al.* 2002; Thompson 2002), and possibly come together in their value base. The moral value base of social workers, who could be categorised as social justice fighters, was often rooted either in religious, political or altruistic belief systems. I reasoned that both positions, the wounded helper and the social justice fighter, aspire to make a difference. Historically, social work has taken a progressive position as exemplified in the vision statement about the key purpose of social work:

Social work is a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers 2001)

Thus, I want to explore what motivated female social workers in their decision to study social work. There were probably a variety of reasons, trigger points, epiphanies, or life experiences in childhood or adulthood, which might have motivated women to become social workers. It is these biographies I investigate from the early pioneers to current social workers.

1.5. Preview of the chapters to follow

In chapter two I explore the emergence of social work as a profession in Britain in the context of the social and historical background. Social movements and developments in the context of the socio-political circumstance, which shaped the welfare system in Britain today, are evaluated and discussed. Robert Owen's (1913) '*A new view of society*' and his political influences were pivotal in the changes to the old Elizabethan Poor Law from 1601. The socio-economic impact of the Industrial Revolution during the nineteenth century and the suffrage movement instigated permanent changes within the social class structure and changes in the professional roles of women. The role of women in shaping social work, social policy, social work training and education is discussed in this chapter.

In chapter three I briefly review the biographies and work of early pioneers in social work, over four hundred years, with particular emphasis on Britain. The focus is on the contributions women made to society and social work as a developing profession. Even though I am German, and the reader might expect biographies of German women who have contributed to the development of the social work profession, I keep the focus on British women, with the exception of two American women, who influenced British social work. The reason being, that there was little cultural and professional exchange between German and British social work education. Germany was largely influenced by developments from America after World War II with regard to social work training and education.

Therefore, I analysed and reviewed early pioneers' backgrounds and devised a summarising table (3.3.1.) which shows their family and marital status, financial means, work commitment and possible motivations or inspirations to help others less fortunate than themselves. The demographics are utilised further in my small-scale research project in an attempt to compare the data with women social workers today and to ascertain whether there are common denominators, or if comparisons are incongruent, considering the different historical contexts .

In chapter four I review and examine the literature with regard to the roles women take in the social work profession in the light of the socio-political function of social work within society today. I question women's motivations to become social workers, and whether social work is a 'natural calling' for women (Awasthi 2006), is discussed. Motivational factors and social workers' attitudes are appraised, and compared to findings from national and international research studies (Parker and Merrylees 2002, Redmond *et al.* 2008, Stevens *et al.* 2012). Also, society's perception of social workers and the public image of social work are discussed. Deconstructing gender specific issues, as well as ethnicity, in relationship to social work, forms another important point in my argument.

In chapter five I reflect on my role as a woman researcher in researching other women, scrutinising the pertinence of reflexivity and intersubjectivity in my auto/ biographical and feminist research methodology. It demonstrates that I have given it much thought, and taken my proposed research paradigm seriously, in preparation for the appropriate approaches to my research which investigates women. Thus, this chapter is considered as the foundation for the following chapter which justifies the methodology and research tools utilised.

Chapter six is concerned with the investigation of appropriate research methodologies for my small-scale qualitative research project, with the aim of selecting the most suitable methods for my thesis. The selection of research tools, such as focus groups, questionnaires and interviews are not mutually exclusive, and aim to produce holistic understanding. They are chosen to illuminate the complexity of the thesis and are conducted from a feminist researcher paradigm. Furthermore, considerations are given to ethical issues and implications beyond the expected mentioning of confidentiality and informed consent by participants. Indeed, I discuss the intrinsic ethical dilemma of interpreting biographical and narrative materials.

Chapter seven presents and analyses the findings from my research project and discusses its merits in the context of the examination of the literature from the previous chapters. I assess and evaluate, as to whether the categories of 'social justice fighter' and 'wounded helper' can be seen as exclusive motivational factors in women's decisions to become social workers, or if they overlap, and if new or different categories emerge. Furthermore, questions are asked as to whether the motivational factors of the early pioneers of social work, as portrayed in chapter three, can be classified in the same manner as social justice fighters or wounded helpers. Thus, I give consideration to the fact that the socio-political and historical contexts for women in society has altered over the past four hundred years.

Chapter eight draws conclusions from my research journey and reflects on the achievements and limitations of my thesis. The new discoveries are aimed at informing social work education and recommendations are made to the collaborating university, thus providing ideas for the recruitment and training of social workers, as well as the development of the curriculum. Indeed, further areas of research are identified that might enhance the understanding of social work education.

1.6. Summary

This introductory chapter provided the rationale as to why and how I arrived at the thesis, inspired by my personal journey as well as through my work with social work students. The categories of social justice fighter and wounded helper were introduced and are further exemplified through the biographies of the early pioneers of social work and through my research project with female social workers and students. Statements were made that social work is a gendered profession and this is further substantiated in the chapters to follow.

Chapter 2

The social and historical background to the development of the social work profession

"What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." - Jane Goodall

2.1. Introduction

For this chapter I have examined the historical roots and the emergence of social work as a profession on an international level centred around a review of the literature. However, due to the substantial volume of the materials available the main focus concentrates on the United Kingdom (UK). Yet, comparisons and parallel developments to the United States of America (USA) are discussed, because both countries had significant influences on each other. Moreover, this has further relevance because in the later chapters discussions include not only women pioneers of social work from the UK but also from the USA.

2.2. The emergence of social work

Social Work emerged as a professional activity during the late nineteenth century in the USA and in European countries. Its roots lie in early social welfare activities, charity organisations and the settlement house movement (Glasby 1999; Payne 2005, Roof 1972). It was only in the nineteenth century that considerable changes and improvements for the poor and disadvantaged members of society could be seen in British society. These changes were driven by philanthropists, humanitarians, religiously inspired men and women, who set out to transform the working and living conditions of the disenfranchised.

Prior to the nineteenth century, social welfare and charitable attitudes were commended by the Church and the establishment of almshouses in England commenced as early as the eleventh century (Rengasamy 2010). In addition, people of wealth were expected to help the poor by means of donations and almsgiving.

Spain was the first country to introduce a State organised registration of the poor, whereas the English Poor Law was not introduced until the seventeenth century. The Elizabethan Poor Law (1601) remained the legislative framework for two hundred years and was also adapted by America (Axinn and Stern 2007). The Poor Law made a distinction between the 'deserving poor', such as orphans, old or disabled and the 'undeserving poor', such as beggars and vagrants (Payne 2005). Thus introducing ambiguous assessment criteria about who was not only eligible but also 'deserved' help, support, charitable donations, or state welfare.

In the seventeenth century, the Law of Settlement and Removal was introduced in Britain. Other European countries and the USA soon followed this example, requiring evidence of residency from the poor and disabled in order to establish 'eligibility' for charity (Payne 2005). Moreover, the legislation enabled an assessment of the cause and route that led a person into poverty. The relevance of settlement and residency is still an assessment criterion today for the eligibility of welfare benefits. Furthermore, the assessment judged the person's inability to earn their own livelihood by evaluating and considering the person's reasons or ability to change their state of destitution (Payne 2005). However, neither the Poor Law, nor the Law of Settlement were able to eliminate poverty, because as Rengasamy (2010) argues, the purpose of the legislation was not to alleviate poverty, but to control the poor and in particular the beggars. The element of control and surveillance within society, as well as the role social work occupies in exercising and maintaining control (Wrennall 2010), is discussed later.

2.3. A new vision for society

At the end of the seventeenth century the first Workhouses were introduced in Bristol and the concept was adopted throughout Britain and some European countries. The purposes of the Workhouse were to keep the poor, old, disabled and children off the street, thus reducing the authorities' duty to pay for the poor. Anybody refusing to enter the workhouse would have been denied all aid from the authorities, which in turn enabled private business owners and manufacturers to acquire cheap labourers in exchange for offering the poor accommodation and food in the workhouses. In essence, this was a disguised form of slavery and exploitation, rather than a welfare concern and a charitable attitude by those in charge of ruling the country's economy. The oppressive and discriminatory establishments of workhouses were abolished one hundred years later through the Gilbert Act (1782), and instead of workhouses, the poor were granted support in

their own homes (Young and Ashton 1956). However, some workhouses and almshouses still remained despite the abolition, but only for the non-abled bodied poor (orphans, disabled or old) who could not work and had nowhere to live.

In 1813 Robert Owen published *A New View of Society* which was based upon his experiences in managing the New Lanark Mill in Scotland. The publication outlined a socialist and revolutionary view of improving the environment for the poorest in society and resulted in the Factory Act 1819 (Rengasamy 2010). At the New Lanark Mill, which Owen managed and part-owned, he established support services for the improvement of workers' homes. This also included regular checks on the welfare of the workers' children as well as establishing the first childcare for the workers' children from the age of four years and formalised schooling for children from the age of seven years (Roof 1972).

Around the same time, the Scottish preacher and mathematician Thomas Chalmers undertook his own philanthropic work for the poorest in Glasgow. He organised and trained volunteers to meet with the disadvantaged families individually and to offer encouragement and training to the poor, thus enabling them to escape poverty. Chalmers also established Sabbath schools for children for a small fee. Through educating children and training poor families he assisted them in becoming financially independent. Needless to say, even though Chalmers' actions were laudable, they also saved his parish financial outgoings (Roxborogh 1999). The point I am trying to make with the examples of Owen and Chalmers is that although their humanitarian and welfare actions were well received and driven by altruistic motivations, at the time they also had to consider the socio-economic factors and their financial interests.

Owen continued his mission for a change of society by proposing changes to the Elizabethan Poor Law (1601), and was instrumental in advising the New Poor Law Act of 1834. The New Poor Law redefined the eligibility criteria for receiving public assistance, based on the premise that a person should never receive as much as the lowest-paid worker (Rengasamy 2010). However, these criteria, possibly well-intended, did not eradicate the poverty problem, but increased it as Charles Booth (1840-1916) evidenced in his social research statistics (Roake 2004). Booth's research was used as the source to petition for the reform of the Poor Law by the Fabian Society in 1894. The reform plea acknowledged the good intentions of the legislation, but highlighted that little had changed since 1834. The figures quoted were of concern as they projected a very depressing picture of the times:

THE Poor Law was established to relieve and diminish poverty. It was the most humane of our institutions in its origin: in its administration it is so harsh and humiliating that most self-respecting workers prefer starvation, and some prefer death, to accepting the relief it offers. The harshness might be justified if our industrial system were such as to secure to every reasonably thrifty person the means of providing for old age and misfortune without the aid of the Poor Law. But as a matter of fact, low wages and precarious employment make it difficult for the laboring class to live even in the humblest decency, and utterly impossible for them to save. Each day in the year over 970,000 persons in the United Kingdom are driven to accept relief as paupers. [...] In London alone there was in 1893 an average of 59,901 indoor and 47,472 outdoor paupers, over 210,000 separate individuals falling for longer or shorter periods into this condition in the course of the year. [...] Poor Law administration, since 1834, has aimed at abolishing pauperism by deliberately increasing the miseries of poverty. By making public relief dishonorable, and disfranchising the receiver, it has reduced the number of applicants; but it has done nothing to root out destitution, and it has not relieved the Poor Rate. [...] No sufficient care is taken to ensure that the destitute children of whom the State takes charge shall be reared as efficient and self-respecting citizens. (Fabian Society 1894 original text, cited Fabian Society 2008)

The Fabian Society's plea also addressed the issue of child poverty and pointed out that the New Poor Law from 1834 offered very little protection for children. Even though Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885) had reformed industrialised labour conditions in 1840, decreeing that children were only allowed to work ten hours a day, this was still child exploitation. Yet in 1842 legislation enforced that child labour was illegal under the age of ten years and that childhood required protection (Roof 1972). In 1846 Mary Carpenter (1807-1877) opened reformatory schools for young offenders. She believed that correcting behaviour would be more successful, rather than punishment with imprisonment, which in her view would only have led to a life destined for crime. Mary Carpenter's exemplary work was instrumental to the legislative changes for young offenders in Britain in 1854, shaping the current probation system (Smith 2010). The Children's Charter was introduced in 1889 which, for the first time, set out to prevent cruelty against children, including statutory guidance on the employment of children and the outlawing of begging.

2.4. The German model

Following Owen's idea of the home visiting services, Octavia Hill set out in London in 1864, assisted by a network of all female volunteers, to replicate and refine the support services for the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society. The home visiting schemes had already successfully been established in Germany,

such as the 'Rauhe Haus' near Hamburg in 1839, or the Wuppertal-Elberfeld model of 'Hausarmenpflege' in 1852 (Wendt 2008). The 'Elberfeld Model' of 'Hausarmenpflege' (home care for the poor) targeted the poorest of the factory town workers in Wuppertal-Elberfeld not only through home visits, but also by 'assessing their needs within fourteen days, to allocate help and support appropriately' (Wendt 2008:329). These welfare developments need to be understood in the context of civil unrest in Germany in 1848, at a time of the rise of socialist ideas; namely Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (incidentally Engels was born in Wuppertal). Similar to Owen, Engels was involved in running a cotton mill business in Wuppertal-Barmen and later the family's business in Manchester. The 'Elberfeld Model' was an approach to social welfare which could be seen as the first form of so called 'case work' and 'assessment of need'; approaches and common practice seen in all areas of modern social work today (Wendt 2008). From an economic perspective, it was probably money and help well spent because, if the impoverished workers received support and were 'pacified', then they were most likely to be more productive in the factories. Thus, the ambivalent role of social work to 'adjust' members of society so they become useful and productive is a function inherent in social work.

Furthermore, the German model of 'Wohltätigkeitsorganisationen' (charity organisations) came into force in Germany in 1853, which led to the development and establishment of the charity organisation movement in Europe and later in America (Axinn and Stern 2007). Octavia Hill was instrumental in co-founding the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in Britain and Ireland in 1869 alongside Helen Bosanquet. They set out to co-ordinate and organise what appeared to be a 'random' and uncoordinated approach to charity giving, without any examination of needs or means (Smith 2008; Smith 2009).

According to Young and Ashton (1956) the charitable work was not only unfair, but the workers were often not trained, had no guidance, nor assessment criteria or frameworks that would assist them to accurately and fairly identify need:

[...] some good-hearted, somewhat sentimental workers all too often were taken in by apparent distress that they tended to give relief as a matter of course. [...] It was said, for instance, that some churches competed with each other in gifts of soup and food tickets, in order to increase their congregations; [...] (Young and Ashton 1956:93)

The concept of the COS was grounded upon the idea of 'self-help', rather than endless charity donations, which would keep the poor dependent on donations by the state, or from charity organisations and generous altruists. Instead, the poor would be encouraged to use the help and assistance provided to improve their

living conditions and keep themselves free from destitution (Roof 1972). The COS's view was, that charities should be working in an organised and co-ordinated way, to utilise and distribute resources effectively and fairly amongst those in need (Smith 2009). Thus, the COS aimed not only to make the welfare system more transparent and fairer, but to be able to lobby for the needs of the poor. The principle of advocacy still underpins the social work profession today (GSCC 2002). However, both past and present debates focus around 'eligibility' criteria or 'thresholds' as to whether a person 'deserves' assistance and support from the local authority.

2.5. The American connection

In America, the COS movement was equally pivotal in the shift from a benevolent charitable domain to a more unified approach to charitable work, and to the establishment of a social work profession (Axinn and Stern 2007). As in the rest of Europe, women had been undertaking the majority of welfare and social work tasks. However, with the reorganisation of charitable organisations 'women's special fitness for charity work' (Tice 1998:2) was questioned. Pascoe (1990 cited Tice 1998) notes this shift and a change of 'moral authority' from benevolent women to a predominantly male authority of professionally trained experts. In particular case recording was seen as an area of male expertise, due to the male dominance in the traditional fields of medicine, psychiatry (Timms 1964), psychology and sociology, where men had claimed to apply objective, scientific observational notes or case studies. Whereas, according to Tice (1998:50), charity or social workers were seen and judged to be 'subjective and feminine'.

Conversely, Walton (1975) criticised the development and organisation of the COS, because without the provision of social security or insurance, the COS exercised social control over the poor and disenfranchised members of society. The element of social control and surveillance (Wrennall 2010) through social work, is still a heated subject of controversy that is discussed later. The German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) introduced the first national health insurance system in Germany in 1883 and a social security scheme in 1889. The health insurance and social security frameworks assisted the social surveillance of the population, as Bismarck's motivation was predominately driven by economic factors more than charitable ideas. Bismarck understood that a well looked after workforce would operate to maximum productivity, and could be competitive against other

countries, whilst diminishing the influence of radical socialist and communist political competitors (Wendt 2008).

In America a social insurance system only came into force in 1935 after the Great Depression of 1929. Whereas in Britain, it was not until 1911 that the National Insurance Act was passed and 1948 saw the establishment of the National Health Service (NHS). William Beveridge's (1879-1963) reports and visions of a better society were instrumental in the creation of the NHS, as he believed that socio-economic problems could be regulated through legislation, thus creating social justice (Timmins 2001). The underlying causes of poverty were researched by Beatrice Webb (1858-1943) who, after briefly volunteering for the COS, realised that the issues needed to be addressed through large-scale political actions. Webb believed that charitable and private philanthropy alone was ineffective in eradicating poverty, because 'something-for-nothing' charity merely exacerbated poverty (Davis 2004:2).

Beatrice Webb investigated and researched the structural nature of poverty to gain a scientific understanding, which enabled her to diagnose the social and socio-economic factors causing and contributing to poverty. Consequently, Beatrice and her husband Sidney Webb dedicated their work to political ideas, research reports and publications. They were both actively involved with politics and influential in the shaping of significant legislation such as the Education Act of 1902. The Webbs' vision of a better society promoted socialist ideas and the development of co-operatives as a new model for society rather than capitalism (Davis 2004). Beveridge initially worked as a researcher with the Webbs in their combined quest for a fairer and just society. The Webbs later appointed Beveridge as the director of the London School of Economics, which they had established in 1895 (LSE 2011).

2.6. Ladies' work

Considering socio-economic factors and political issues, Walton (1975) attributed the rise of the social work profession to the changes of society in Britain due to the Industrial Revolution, an increased population and urbanisation during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century. This in turn saw both a rise in prosperity and a growth in poverty. According to Flora (1987:XII), the answer to the social problems generated by the industrialisation led to the 'invention' of the welfare state:

The modern welfare state is a European invention - in the same way as the nation state, mass democracy, and industrial capitalism. It was born as an answer to problems created by capitalist industrialization; it was driven by the democratic class struggle; and it followed in the footsteps of the nation state.

Moreover, the traditional pre-existing class-divisions, with their inherent volatile nature of power and oppression, saw a change during this time. Rising industrialisation and urbanisation enabled the rise of a middle-class which negotiated the bureaucracy and management between the ruling classes and the underprivileged. Charitable work, having been administered in a non-bureaucratic and disarranged manner depending on the compassionate upper-class benefactor, now became an organised, accessible and accountable activity. It created a niche and an opportunity for a new profession of social work to emerge, which attracted mainly middle-class women and generated a new 'career opportunity for women' (Walton 1975:2).

The census data for England and Wales in 1851 showed there were more single women than men, which led Steinbach (2004:266) to speculate that those single women needed not only an occupation, but 'paid employment and leading fulfilling lives'. Further consultation of census data for England and Wales in 1861 and 1871 indicated that there was still an excess in the ratio of women to men with an increase in the number of spinsters and widows. There was an immense rise of 'gentle-women independent or annuitant from 87,429 in 1861 to 143,385 in 1871' (Walton 1975:12). This data could be seen as an explanation as to why women had possibly more time and sometimes the financial means available to dedicate themselves to charitable work. Additionally, some unmarried women needed to be able to financially support themselves, thus charitable, care and welfare work seemed a suitable option. Through the emergence of the COS, charitable work was already seen as ladies' work, even though many of them had a somewhat superficial rather than a comprehensive understanding of poverty (Davis 2004; Smith 2009).

Correspondingly, considering the 1891 census data for England and Wales, it revealed that women outnumbered men in occupations such as 'sick nurse / midwife/ invalid attendant' with 99% of women being so employed (Walton 1975:12). Furthermore, in the category of 'general hospital and institution services' 68% of employees were women, rising to 74% in the education sector (Walton 1975:12). It is unsurprising that social work emerged somehow as an amalgamation of caring for the sick and education of the poor.

Alongside the shift and changes of social class structure, due to industrialisation, there emerged the suffrage and women's movement. Early feminists in the eighteenth century such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), who came from a financially privileged family background, fought for women's rights. She only addressed middle-class women, because she viewed the aristocracy as 'useless' and the poor 'not worthy' (Taylor 2007). Whereas, Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928), who came from a less privileged background and was raised in a politically active family, thought of her fight for women's rights as allied to principles of compassion for the poor, disadvantaged and oppressed in society (Pugh 2002).

2.7. Women shaping social work

Social work as a profession developed into an organised charitable and welfare volunteer workforce that was committed to help the poor and disadvantaged. Significantly, Octavia Hill (1838-1912) led the social housing initiative and Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936) headed the settlement movement in Britain to provide better housing for the poorer members of society. In America similar housing and settlement movements were fronted by Jane Addams (1869-1935) and Mary Ellen Richmond (1861-1928). However, their client base mainly comprised of immigrants who wanted to learn the language and find work, hence they were possibly more likely to engage and more motivated to change their destitute state. Notably, Mary Ellen Richmond was the first trained and qualified female social worker in America. Her practical work and research focussed on the circumstances that led to poverty, whilst considering the social-environmental factors contributing to oppression. Consequently, Richmond developed the idea of 'social justice' which gained her recognition within critical social work education until today. The first trained social worker in Britain was Mary Stewart (1863-1925) whose training was funded by the COS.

It might of interest to note the social positioning and recognition of the women who shaped social work. Barnett came from a privileged background and was appointed CBE (1917) and DBE (1924). Similarly, Addams who also came from a privileged background was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1931); whereas Hill, Richmond and Stewart were not awarded the same prominent degree of public recognition, which might be due to the fact that their social positioning was rated as middle-class. Thus, it could be speculated, they were not as sociably respectable as Barnett and Addams.

The other notable British woman, Beatrice Webb (1858-1943), made major contributions to social research, social politics, social work education and was the co-founder of the London School of Economics (LSE). Even though well connected, Webb was conceivably too controversial in her political thinking and actions, favouring socialist and communist ideals; thus was possibly not granted 'official' honours like Barnett.

An important development in progressive education related to improving the condition of the poor and distressed was the first University Settlement House, Toynbee Hall in London in 1884. The idea of educating the poor, with the aim of inspiring those from disadvantaged backgrounds to construct better life prospects for themselves, was piloted by Henrietta and her husband Samuel Barnett. After a visit to Toynbee Hall, Jane Addams felt inspired to replicate a similar model with Hull House in Chicago in 1889, which she founded together with her partner Ellen Gates Starr (1859-1940). The idea behind the settlement houses was to close the gap between the classes, with the intention of creating a cross-class community, in which the educated and privileged could support the uneducated. Thus, the less privileged could learn how to create a more independent life. The Barnetts explained:

[...] we found that the gifts so given did not make the poor any richer, but served to perpetuate poverty [...] a system of relief which, ignorantly cherished by the poor, meant ruin to their possibilities of living an independent and satisfying life [...] remedy must be one which shall be practicable and shall not affect the sense of independence. (Barnett and Barnett 1888 cited Smith 2007)

The notion to promote independence, rather than dependency, and to empower people, is still a core value in social work education today (GSCC 2002). The first school for social workers was established in New York in 1898, offering a one year training programme for volunteers and the 'friendly visitors' to the poor. The term 'social worker' was coined by educator Simon Pattern in 1900 and applied to friendly visitors and settlement volunteers in America. He and Mary Ellen Richmond debated as to whether the social worker's role should be advocacy or the delivery of individualised social services (Rengasamy 2009). A debate that is still ongoing within social work today.

2.8. Social work education and policy

“Rerum cognoscere causas”

(“To understand the causes of things” – London School of Economics’ motto)

In Britain social work education was first facilitated through the COS from as early as 1890; keeping in mind that the education of women was still politically and societally a contentious topic (Robinson 2009). However, a decade later, social work became an academic profession, first offered by the London School of Economics (LSE) founded by the Webbs, who joined forces with the University of London in 1900. The first degrees were awarded from 1902 to men and women alike (Walton 1975). Mary Stewart (1862-1925) was the first trained female hospital almoner (medical social worker) by the COS. In 1903 Stewart founded the Hospital Almoner Association which, through decades of growth and development, would establish itself as the professional body for social work, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). Since 1909, the University of Birmingham is the oldest British university that consistently offers a programme for social workers. In the beginning of social work, the University of Birmingham recruited from the settlement volunteers and friendly visitors (Davis 2008; Glasby 1999), and as in America, the faculty was initially situated within the school of philanthropy. The study of social work was in the past, and still is today, a combined study of theory and practice, and similar to nursing, both professions were and still are to a great extent occupied by women. However, it needs to be noted that predominantly women from financially secure backgrounds were able to afford to pay the university fees (Walton 1975).

In 1917 Geraldine Maitland Aves (1898-1986) was influential in shaping social work training, social policy and the welfare system within local authorities and later in the voluntary sector in Britain (Willmott 2004). Little is known about Geraldine Maitland Aves’ friend, Sibyl Clement Brown (1899-1993), Britain’s first psychiatric social worker when she qualified in 1927. Brown undertook her training in America, funded by the COS, and gathered most of her knowledge from American research and academic advances (Timms 1964). Brown was instrumental in professionalising psychiatric social work in Britain and replicated the approaches from America which ‘furthered British psychiatric social work and child guidance’ (Stewart 2006:78).

It is interesting to note, that social work training and education moved from the charitable sector to academic schools influenced by local authority policy makers.

This created an invisible divide between statutory (state/local authority) and the voluntary/ private/ independent (VPI) sector agencies within the field of social work. Inherent in social work is the dichotomy of power, control and oppression from socio-economic forces versus the powerless and disadvantaged groups or classes in society. It is the making of personal tragedies into a political issue. Hence, there are competing schools of thought within social work education: from radical and critical social work rooted in a political and social justice position, reproaching the socio-economic systems, and environmental factors that lead individuals into poverty and dependency on charity or welfare; - to a more traditional orthodox medical model of adjustment or treatment of pathogenic individuals, favoured by local authorities.

In both sectors (statutory and VPI), systems of 'needs assessment' are in place with the intention to deliver fair and equal services, rather than personal biased or unwarranted and unequal charity as prevalent in the early days of philanthropic social work.

2.9. Summary

Having briefly reviewed the emergence of the social work profession over the past few hundred years, some core values and motivating factors seem to transpire which, on first impression, seem to be benevolent but potentially contain contentious and controversial issues.

There appears to be a dichotomy between the ambition to make a difference in individual lives through helping disadvantaged members of society by philanthropically motivated and privileged private individuals, versus the possibly well-intentioned but adjusting elements of state interventions and control.

The emergence and development of social work cannot be seen without the historical and socio-political implications as social work is the product of internal capitalistic contradictions, as well as, the political context and the real societal environment (Vassilis 2005).

The other relevant factor towards the end of the nineteenth century was the emerging changes of women's roles, positions and the access to education and employment. Combined possibly with the momentum of the suffrage movement, more education and work opportunities for women arose, thus enabling women to follow a professional career path (Martin 2008).

CHAPTER 3

Early pioneers in welfare and social work – Women making a difference

"Women have made up half the human race but you could never tell that by the books that historians write." (Arthur Schlessinger)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the biographies of women who have been early pioneers in the field of social work in Britain. In addition, brief attention is given to some women who were early pioneers in America. The biographies I have chosen are based upon two criteria: firstly, women who have made a difference in other people's lives through their altruistic and humanitarian work; secondly, women who were influential in shaping the social work profession today in areas such as, hospital social work, probation, fostering and adoption, home visiting, individual's assessment of need and charity or service allocations. I have read and researched primary and secondary sources of information and have been searching for women of note, and studied some of their published diaries. I was also able to obtain anecdotal evidence from people who remembered the women's legacy of charitable work. These informants were kind enough to correspond with me via email (Dykes 2011, appendix 4).

Moreover, I appraised the early pioneers' social status, cultural class, ethnicity, financial means and their inspirations, or aspirations, to help others. I compiled this information in a summarising table (3.3.1.) at the end of the chapter. The data is later used to assess and compare the early pioneers' records with the socio-economic facts obtained from my research participants. Thus, I envisage creating a different perspective and contributing to generating new knowledge about women's backgrounds in relation to their involvement in charitable and social work over the centuries. What is more, I attempt to categorise the early pioneers as social justice fighters and/or wounded helpers, to ascertain whether there are possible parallels and traditions in motivation to social workers today.

3.2. Women's biographies in the historical emergence of charitable and social welfare work – The early pioneers

I reviewed the biographies of some remarkable and notable women, because they were early pioneers in the emergence of what we would today call social work.

They all left a legacy or made an impact on people's lives, society and/or influenced social reforms, but I had a difficult choice of who to include. I decided to focus on the women who made a difference in a social work related context, rather than women who contributed to feminist accomplishments. Nevertheless, I include two major feminist thinkers and activists, Mary Wollstonecraft and Emmeline Pankhurst, who inspired other women and made a difference to their lives and work, as they both fought for the education of women.

Also, I studied some less well-known women's biographies, because I wanted to make their lives and work 'visible'. As Gray (2009) asserted, women were often 'invisible' and they were denied the public role which helped to make them visible to historians. Hence, most memoirs and auto/ biographies have been written by, for and about men. The one way of women expressing themselves, and possibly earning a living, was through writing novels and fiction, because there was a growing literary market for women authors in the eighteenth century (Taylor 2007). Most historical evidence of the real everyday life of women only survived in the form of census data, or where women (or their husbands) had a significant role in society.

Further historical evidence was preserved of women whose life histories were deemed 'notable', or where women had been in a position, either owing to their social class or financial means, to write about their own lives, according to Gray (2009). These accounts were either about women of nobility or religious relevance, or records which showed them as victims of injustice or social prejudice, i.e. witch hunts. Various women left some of their life's accounts in ways such as diaries, cook books, or account books, which provided a window into their lives at the time. Only a few women wrote their autobiographies or secured the publication of their diaries. However, during the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, women gained more social recognition and made their views and voices heard, as was evident in the suffrage movement. Importantly, some women were actively involved in modelling and influencing social welfare policy and practice, thus leaving their life stories for history, which are included in my review.

I can only appraise these women's biographies succinctly, even though each of them deserves their own chapter in their own right. For the purpose of my inquiry, I focus on concise summaries of how these women made a difference in people's lives through their philanthropic actions and charitable workings. According to Martin (2008:414), it was seen as the moral imperative for many women to dedicate themselves to: 'a life subordinated to the well-being of the state was *the means of self-realisation*' [italics in original text]. This expectation was irrespective of whether women were judged to be 'too subjective and feminine' (Tice 1998:50) for any other work; - or, as Walton (1975) stated, that women were perceived best suited for charitable or social work. This view of the women's role in society was further supported and documented in Steinbach's (2004) social and historical study of women in England.

I wanted to find out what motivated these women, and if their intentions would classify them as social reformists who were fighting for social justice or wounded helpers, the categories I use for the women social workers and students in my research project. The questions were as to whether these women acted in altruistic and humanitarian ways because they purely wanted to help those who were less fortunate or disadvantaged; - or as to whether their motivations were founded in a political or feminist paradigm and they wanted to make a difference to the social care and welfare system and shape policy making (social justice fighters?). Next, the historical journey of these biographies of 'remarkable women' who were early pioneers over the past four hundred years is presented in a chronological order, in an attempt to visualise the emergence of a more professional role for women in social care.

3.2.1. Lady Lucy Reynell of Forde (1578-1652)

This journey of women's biographies starts with a less well-known, but remarkable, philanthropic woman of nobility and faith, Lady Lucy Reynell of Forde. She was the daughter of a wealthy London Goldsmith and married Sir Richard Reynell, a Devon lawyer, around 1600. They had one daughter. After the death of her husband, Lady Reynell founded a hospital house in Newton Abbott in 1638. She undertook charitable work to help the sick and



poor, and was known for her sewing work particularly for the poor and needy. She also founded four almshouses known as the '*Lady Lucy Reynell Clergy Widows houses*' which were built in Newton Abbot in 1640. These were intended to accommodate four widows of preaching ministers, who were left poor and without a house of their own (Gray 2009). Lady Reynell's work and deeds were motivated and inspired by her religion and she made a difference in the lives of the poor and sick. She was one of the first documented women, I could find, who undertook, what would be called today, hospital social work.

3.2.2. Rachel Countess of Bath (1613-1680)

Another less well-known woman was the religiously motivated and affluent Rachel Countess of Bath, the fifth daughter of Francis Fane, Earl of Westmorland. She married Henry Bourchier, Earl of Bath at the age of 25. After his death in 1654 she re-married Lionel, Earl of Middlesex, but obtained a royal warrant in 1660 to retain her precedence as 'Countess of Bath'. Rachel Countess of Bath was childless, but she was devoted to help children and she paid two teachers to teach disadvantaged children to read and write.



According to Gray (2009:12), she was 'parent to more than a thousand children', and at least ten children were raised in her household. She cared for children from the age of three months until adulthood, ensuring they all had a good education, or would get work, to enable them to gain independence. Rachel Countess of Bath found her inspirations in her religious beliefs. Also, her socio-economic position enabled her to devote herself to charity. She made a difference in the lives of the many children she looked after. Her work could be related to the fostering and adoption services in social work today, as well as early education of children and young people. According to Gray (2009:12), her memorial noted: "*in domestic, civil and religious affairs she had a genius exceeding that of a man*".

It is interesting to note, that a woman was not judged by her good deeds alone, but would be compared to a man to emphasise her greatness. (Besides, I was left wondering how 'genius' was measured in this context?!)

Principally, these concise biographies indicate that the two women portrayed were religiously motivated in their well-meaning, charitable and philanthropic actions. They neither appeared to have a political agenda for social justice or social

reformism, or a personal agenda of being 'wounded helpers'. Their deeds were humanitarian and mostly conforming to the women's role and position held within society at the time. However, they both fulfilled early social work roles and functions and I chose their examples to illustrate that this kind of work was often carried out by many other women, but they appear not to be mentioned in the books of history from that time. The end of the eighteenth century saw a gradual shift in women participating and presenting themselves in society, as well as expressing themselves in the literary market; thus more accounts are available to research.

3.2.3. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)

Expressing her views and questioning the role and position of women in society through her writings, was London-born Mary Wollstonecraft. She was the first major thinker and writer to advance the rights of women in society, and she could be classified as a social justice fighter. However, Mary could also partly fit the 'wounded helper' category. She grew up in a household of domestic violence inflicted by her alcoholic father, who brought the family close to the poverty line. This also might have compounded her motivation to change the rights and roles of women in society. Mary did not receive a formal education, like men at the time, but was self-taught. She subsequently dedicated her first political activities advocating for the education of women, alongside the 'Bluestockings' (Robinson 2009). Mary and her sisters opened a school for girls in 1784, and she also published her book *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) addressing the disparity of educational opportunities (Taylor 2007). However, Mary's private life was complicated and existed in contrast to her ideals, as publicised in her book *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). The book was seen as revolutionary because of statements such as the following:



"... it is time to effect a revolution in female manners - time to restore to them their lost dignity ... It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners." (Wollstonecraft 1792, cited Taylor 2007).

Mary's dignity was shattered when she not only had an illegitimate child in 1794, but pretended to be married to the father, Gilbert Imlay, who had left her. Mary struggled with the moral scandal which drove her to attempt suicide on two occasions. Mary regained her dignity when she met William Godwin by whom she

fell pregnant and subsequently married. She died weeks after giving birth to her second child in 1797. Even though society at the time did not approve of Mary's private lifestyle choices, nonetheless her revolutionary political ideas were pivotal in women's fight for emancipation and laying the foundations for many feminist thinkers and activists. Her ideas are still taught in social work education today. Yet, Mary only intended to reach and address middle-class women, because she viewed the aristocracy as useless and she did not support the rights of the poor. In fact, Mary suggested in her national plan for education that after the age of nine, poor children, except for those who were brilliant, should be separated from the rich and taught in different schools (Taylor 2007). Whereas, a hundred years later, Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1943) expressed great compassion for the poor, the disadvantaged and the oppressed in society as she fought for the rights and an education for all women, regardless of class (Pugh 2002).

3.2.4. Elizabeth Gurney Fry (1780-1845)

A true devotee to the education of the poor and the marginalised, was renowned philanthropist, social justice fighter and reformist Elizabeth Gurney Fry. She grew up in a wealthy Quaker family in Norfolk and was the fourth out of twelve children. Her mother Betsy died when Elizabeth was only twelve years old. Yet, at the young age of only seventeen, Elizabeth organised a primary school for poor children in her own home. Elizabeth married Joseph Fry, a wealthy Quaker, when she was twenty years old and they had eleven children together. In 1813 Elizabeth visited the London Newgate prison and was shocked by the inhumane conditions in which women and children were imprisoned. Consequently, and despite a busy family life and her religious commitments, Elizabeth became a pro-active reformer of prisons by fighting for the improvement of (mental) health and sanitary conditions. She also focussed on the moral improvement of prisoners through personal contact visits, education and work (De Haan 2007).

As education had always been an important part of Elizabeth's personal and religious life. With the permission of the prison authorities she was first to set up a school for the prisoners' children. Thereafter, she organised basic education and paid employment, under strict supervision, for the female prisoners. Through her work Elizabeth showed the authorities that transformation and reformation of prisoners was possible. Elizabeth first established a voluntary committee of



women, who worked with the prisoners, the *Ladies' Association for the Reformation of the Female Prisoners* in 1817; followed by founding the first nationwide women's organisation, the *British Ladies' Society for Promoting the Reformation of Female Prisoners* in 1821 (De Haan 2007). Elizabeth and her volunteers not only worked directly with the prisoners, but also with their families. Thus, the first probation service was established with the aim of assisting the clients to settle back into the communities.

According to De Haan (2007), Elizabeth's religious attitudes and compassion were constructed around the principle that prisoners were human beings. Therefore, she reasoned, they should be treated with kindness and justice, instead of neglect and cruelty. Elizabeth's approach to working in particular with female prisoners was deemed successful and through the collaboration with her brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton, the criminal law saw revision, resulting in the improvement of British prison conditions. Elizabeth's reformist approach was adopted in many other countries and she became known as 'the angel of the prisons' (De Haan 2007). Elizabeth's work was inspired by her religion and she certainly made a difference to women and children in the prisons during her lifetime. Above all, her reformist work left an impact on social policy beyond her death.

The spirit of social justice, and reforming existing systems, spread into the nineteenth century and saw more radical actions by women. They made their positions known publicly through the suffrage movement and through a number of social reformists' achievements in the fields of education, housing, probation, nursing and health. Women's groups, such as 'The Ladies of Langham Place', were dedicated to education, employment, property and marital law by the mid nineteenth century (Rendall 2007).

3.2.5. Mary Carpenter (1807-1877)

Following Fry's work, but on a less grand scale, possibly due to the different social class and connections, was Mary Carpenter. She was a religious and feminist social reformist with similar motivations to Fry. Mary was born in Exeter, the daughter of a Unitarian minister, who taught her in his school. She went on to work as a governess on



the Isle of Wight in 1827. Two years later in Bristol, together with her mother, she opened a small school for girls. Mary was appalled by the living conditions in some of the poorest areas of Bristol and, in 1835, she founded a 'Working and Visiting Society' to help and support the poor through education, thus enabling them to improve their life situations. Furthermore, in 1846, Mary opened a 'ragged school' in the slums of Bristol, focussing on helping the more 'difficult' youngsters who showed criminal behaviours (Smith 2010).

Mary was a true humanitarian and she believed that through love and compassion, joined with discipline, clear guidance and education, those difficult youngsters and criminal offenders could be reformed and transformed into decent members of society. Mary's unusual and unorthodox approach of working with youngsters in an educational, rather than penal manner, although critically observed by the authorities at the time, gained her recognition influencing some of the probation work today (Young and Ashton 1956). Mary was a supporter of the movement for the education of girls and women and had a private sympathy for the suffrage movement, but never became publicly or politically involved. She was concerned that it would jeopardise her reform scheme for the education and penal systems (Smith 2010). Mary's work was motivated by her religion and she helped to make differences to many disadvantaged young people's lives. Although never married, at the age of fifty-one Mary adopted a five year old girl, Rosanna.

3.2.6. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

The next pioneer, a woman who undertook remarkable work even during war times, is Florence Nightingale. She gained world-wide recognition for her outstanding work and contribution to the field of nursing. Her work is still recognised in nursing and social work education today. Florence was made a member of the Order of Merit by the King in 1907, the first woman to be so honoured.



Florence and her older sister were born in Italy to wealthy upper-class English parents, William and Mary. Florence was the cousin of the well-known feminist and educationalist Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891), an active member of 'The Ladies of Langham Place' (Rendall 2007), who campaigned for the emancipation of women through educational and business equality. Florence believed from an early age, that God had called her to be a nurse, which was a

profession not usually desired, or expected, for a woman of her class (Bostridge 2008). Her achievements are all the more impressive when they are considered against the background of social restraints imposed on women in Victorian England. However, her father was a firm believer in education, and he supported Florence financially throughout her life, thus enabling her to accomplish her nursing career. In addition, Florence also had a keen interest in, and aptitude for, mathematics and statistical graphs, which influenced the world of medicine and science as she developed what are today known as 'pie-charts' (Bostridge 2008).

Florence was the founder of the first secular nursing school in London in 1860, and she also was pivotal in the sanitary reforms. In 1883 Florence was the first recipient of The Royal Red Cross Medal for her work in the Crimea War at Scutari Hospital where she tended to injured and sick soldiers (Boyd 1982). Florence's busy working life and her dedication to nursing left her unmarried. She had no children of her own, but showed her love and compassion in her humanitarian and altruistic works which influenced nursing, midwifery, medical and sanitary reforms until today. One of Florence's greatest achievements was to raise nursing to the level of a respectable profession for women.

3.2.7. Josephine Butler (1828-1906)

Approaching health, hygiene and educational issues from a different perspective, and for the benefits of poor 'working women', was Josephine Butler. She was born the fourth daughter, and the seventh child, of John Grey in Northumberland. He was an internationally respected agricultural expert and cousin of Lord Charles Grey, the reformist British Prime Minister (Walkowitz 2006).

Josephine's father campaigned against slavery which influenced her moral thinking and ignited her love for justice and social compassion. She married George Butler, an Oxford tutor, in 1852 and they both shared the same concerns for fairness and social reform. They had four children, but sadly lost the youngest daughter Evangeline Mary (1859-1864), after the child's fatal fall from the banister at the top of their stairs. Josephine was traumatised following the loss of her daughter, but after the family's move to Liverpool in the same year, she pushed herself into working with vulnerable



women. Josephine was hoping to meet and to work with people who led even more unhappy lives than her own, according to Walkowitz (2006).

Josephine visited the workhouses and rescued many young girls by finding them homes, and she even took them into her own home. She set up her own refuge and workshop where women could earn enough money to support themselves.

Josephine was compassionate in her fight for the rights for poor women and prostitutes, as well as children. She fought against the 'Contagious Diseases Acts' (CDA) 1864, 1866 and 1869, as the Acts deprived poor women of their legal rights.

Moreover, Josephine questioned and challenged men's right to sexual access to prostitutes, and her interpretation of prostitution was 'abuse or exploitation of one sex by another' (Boyd 1982). Josephine achieved major changes to social and legal reforms and succeeded in repealing the CDA, at a time when women did not even have the right to vote. Thus, her work has contributed to the work with prostitutes and vulnerable girls in the field of social work today, such as free condoms and street work projects (more so in Europe and America than in Britain), to promote safer working conditions.

Furthermore, Josephine actively fought for women to gain access to Higher Education, and she co-founded the 'North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women' (Robinson 2009:39). In 1868 she published her first pamphlet, *The Education and Employment of Women*. This was the first of ninety books and pamphlets she published over the following forty years, in which she appealed for women's right to enter Higher Education (Walkowitz 2006); a privilege which women take for granted today. Josephine was not only a passionate Christian, but also a vehement feminist and social reformer, who made a difference to the lives of disadvantaged women and their children.

3.2.8. Emily (1836-1922) and Caroline (1837-1918) Skinner

A dissimilar, more business-like, approach to health and well-being of women working in business was taken by the sisters Emily and Caroline Skinner. They were born in Darlington, near Durham and lived in Stoke-on-Tees, before moving to Devon in 1878. The Skinner sisters opened *The Hotel of Rest for Women In Business* in Babbacombe, Devon,



which operated from 1878 to 1971 (well beyond their deaths), because Emily and Caroline had gained international recognition for their contributions to the welfare and health of women in business (Gray 2009). Similar schemes run by state, private or charitable organisations, are still operated worldwide today. The hotel was intended to benefit the low-paid shop girls, and for the welfare of business or working women from London, to enable them to escape the stressful working and living conditions of the city. Single women working in the trade could stay for a holiday and relax, because the sisters thought that a break and a rest from work would prevent illness and help to improve the lives of working girls and women. One could argue that, to a certain degree, this type of provision was fulfilling a 'social repair' function within a capitalist society.

However, the idea of nurturing and promoting health rather than having to fight or cure diseases, such as stress, was later explored further by Antonovsky (1979), who developed his theory of salutogenesis (Latin: *salus* = health and the Greek: *genesis* = origin). Recognising the importance of prevention and early intervention rather than cure, is a core aspect in social work today, and has been affirmed in the Children Act 2004. Promoting health, even though in a business-like approach, Emily and Caroline's work for the welfare of working women started with one cottage to accommodate six women and by 1900 they had established lodgings for up to one hundred women. Around five to six hundred women from working backgrounds, such as shop assistants, dressmakers, clerks and teachers, visited and stayed for two to three weeks a year; the women either paid themselves or were sponsored by their employers (Gray 2009). Emily and Caroline were financially supported in the development of their enterprise by nobility, and they also gained public support through the media. The *Girl's Own Paper* described the sisters as 'gentlewomen of independent fortune and high culture who devoted their lives to the poor' (Gray 2009:92).

The Skinner sisters might not have been radical or politically motivated social justice fighters, but in the context of the times and the working conditions for women, they certainly supported the cause of feminism by providing services for women. I could not locate any positive evidence of the sisters' active link or involvement with 'The Ladies of Langham Place', but it could be assumed that Emily and Caroline were aware of their public agenda and petitions fighting for women's right to own property, business, access employment and education. I formulate this assumption, because of publications such as the *Girl's Own Paper* having featured their business. Emily and Caroline never married and had no children.

3.2.9. Dames Agnes Weston (1840-1918) and Sophia Wintz (1847-1929)

The next two ladies also operated mainly in the West Country, and their legacy and charitable heritage is still alive to this day. Dame Agnes Weston and Dame Sophia Wintz were known as 'The sailor's friends'.

They have partly laid the foundations for the welfare work assumed by social workers for service men and women in the forces today. Equally, their example of offering 'teetotal' temporary accommodation, can be found in drug- and alcohol-free residential provisions, managed by social workers, for recovering addicts.



Dame Agnes Weston, better known as 'Aggie' in her work, was born in London, the daughter of a wealthy barrister, Charles Weston. Her inheritance gave her the independence to pursue her own course in life which she dedicated to charitable work (Kennerley 2008). Religion was central to Aggie's life and led her to missionary work. She initially worked for soldiers in Bath, but when she moved to Plymouth in 1872, she changed her focus to charitable work for sailors, inspired and supported by her friend and partner Sophia Wintz. Little is known about Sophia, who was born in Switzerland. After her father's death, when she was still a child, her mother moved to England, where Sophia's younger brother joined the Royal Navy (Gray 2009). It was Sophia who enabled Aggie to provide charitable services to the sailors, because, in the beginning, she opened the kitchen of her family home to serve tea, biscuits and hot soups to the sailors in Plymouth. Their work became publicly known, and in 1895, Queen Victoria endorsed any accommodation to be used for the rest of sailors, by permitting the use of Royal Sailor's Rest (RSR), to be given to the whole institution (Royal Naval Museum Library, 2004). Aggie and Sophia later opened several 'Royal Sailors' Rests', and the RSR, a Christian charity, is still successfully operating today, over 130 years later (RSR 2010).

My correspondence (appendix 4) with Godfrey Dykes, a retired Royal Navy Warrant Officer, now in his seventies, revealed his recollection about the legacy of the RSR. He pointed out that Aggie and Sophia received support from 'other Christian ladies' who enabled the charitable work:

"[...] other Christian ladies who befriended, and bettered the moral lot of Royal Sailor's from the mid-19th century right through to my time in the navy in the 1950's. These were of the Duchess of Albany, Sarah Robinson

and Sophia Wintz. Both Sarah and the Duchess built establishments in and around the Portsmouth areas, and Aggie came to Portsmouth having already made her name with the Royal Sailor's Rest [RSR] {with Sophia} in Devonport which we Royal Sailors always called "GUZZ". She built a RSR in Portsmouth which started with a modest property offering 20 beds and grew [by buying-up adjacent properties] to 600 beds by the beginning of WW2. Sadly it was totally destroyed by bombs but Aggie was able to take over the Duchess of Albany's building which she eventually renamed RSR from the original Soldier's and Sailor's Home. By this time the Duchess had died." (Godfrey Dykes 13th April 2011)

I found Dykes' statements confirmed in Sadden's (2001) writings, who documented that Sarah Robinson converted a pub into a Soldiers' Institute in Portsmouth in 1874. Like Aggie Weston's Sailors' Rest, it would provide sailors with a place to stay. This type of accommodation for sailors would keep them safe not only from drink and prostitutes, but also from 'land sharks' who were 'conmen to relieve the sailors of their earnings' (Sadden 2001:115). Robinson's and Weston's work was funded by charitable donations from nobility and wealthy people, as mentioned by Godfrey. Correspondingly, Sadden (2001:115) added the names of the Earl of Shaftesbury and Florence Nightingale. In another email Dykes expanded further about the Christian ladies, asserting that they, and anyone who would preach temperance, were not well received from businesses that otherwise would profit from naval stations:

"... the Christian Ladies I have mentioned. There were also Christian men who did good and similar things, and all [men and women] made themselves VERY UNPOPULAR especially with the pub owners and the prostitutes of the naval bases. For perhaps obvious reasons (meaning that ladies throughout history are the recognised "home makers") the names of the men are hardly known!" (Godfrey Dykes 14th April 2011)

I thought it was interesting to note, how Dykes points out the role of women, and ladies in particular, who had the historically established position of 'home makers'. Therefore, I concluded, it was 'acceptable' for ladies to work with people below their class (sailors in this case) in a charitable way, because the women would offer the sailors some homely comforts through the RSR. Moreover, as Walton (1975:13) pointed out, women were not only seen as 'home makers', but also as the 'experts' in domestic management and caring for others. Certainly unmarried women from middle- or upper-class backgrounds would have dedicated themselves to charitable work as endorsed by Queen Victoria, according to Dykes' email:

"It is very touching to visit the grave of Aggie and Sophia [buried together] in a Devonport cemetery, and their unmarried status, led Queen Victoria (it is said and recorded)* to comment on the wisdom of encouraging unmarried women to carry out such work." (Godfrey Dykes 15th April 2011) [* see Sadden 2001:116]



Above, Aggie was pictured surrounded by sailors, also known as 'Bluejackets', in a newspaper (around 1896-1898), and the caption read:

Miss Agnes Weston - The "Mother" of the British Bluejackets.
Her bright and cheerful disposition has won its way to the hearts of the Sailors whom she has helped so much, and her unostentatious kindness commands their affectionate respect.

Aggie and Sophia were from reputable backgrounds and had financial freedom, they never married and had no children. Their humanitarian and religiously motivated work for others was greatly appreciated by the sailors and the Navy as an organisation. Evidently, Aggie was made Dame and was buried with full Naval honours and she is remembered as a 'philanthropist and temperance activist' (Moseley 2007).

Sophia left the public stage and publications to Aggie, who wrote '*Monthly letters*' which were circulated to every naval ship. Aggie also published the magazine '*Ashore and Afloat*', which is still in print today! Aggie wrote her biography '*My life among the Blue Jackets*' (1909), which is still in print and distributed in the United Kingdom and in America. Sophia and Aggie remained lifelong friends and partners, and Sophia continued Aggie's work until she died, eleven years after Aggie. Sophia was also appointed Dame and given a full naval funeral and buried in Dame Agnes Weston's grave, in Devonport, Plymouth. Aggie wrote about Sophia:

'...of all the friendships hers will rank first, she has kept this great work going, and has steadily obscured herself to give me the first place. Hers' has been a grand life indeed.' (Weston 1917, cited Gray 2009:107)

3.2.10. 'Victorian crisis of faith'

Unlike the appraisal of the previous biographies, which all displayed a connection between the religious beliefs and the humanitarian and altruistic practice of these women, the following biographies appeared to indicate a shift in motivational dynamism. I consider that the emergence of the Christian Socialist movement indicated a shift in the 'Victorian crisis of faith' and was constructed by the tensions between religion and science (Darwinism). Thus, the shift permitted religion and faith to become more of a private matter and moved social science into the foreground.

The next three British women's biographies illustrate the evidence of their motivational energies being enthused by ideals for social justice and reformism. Hence, these women are generally well-known in social welfare and social work education, as they were influential and pivotal in making and achieving changes through their social reformist work. Octavia Hill (1838-1912), Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936) and Beatrice Webb (1858-1943) were interconnected through their charitable work with the poor, and their socio-political engagement in the same circle of friends and acquaintances, or through their family relations. They focussed their work in particular around the issues of housing and education for the poor and the disadvantaged members of society. As discussed earlier, poverty caused increasing problems during times of industrialisation and urbanisation.

The home visiting service for factory workers had originally been established by Robert Owen. Following Owen's idea women like Octavia Hill and Henrietta Barnett went further, by facilitating social housing and education opportunities for the poor. They organised volunteer visiting schemes through the Charity Organisation Society (COS) with the aim of formalising the support of tenants. Moreover, by means of education, they hoped to enable the poor to break away from their disadvantaged positions in society (Smith 2009). It was interesting to note that these volunteer schemes consisted in the large majority of women. In particular middle-class women appeared to feel compelled by moral duty to assist and improve the life conditions for the poor in a social work-like approach. The role of women was seen as most suitable for this type of work during Victorian times, and Henrietta Barnett expressed the role as: 'women's distinct moral gifts as peace makers capable of diffusing class war' (Koven 2004:1024).

Beatrice Webb was only briefly involved in the COS and the volunteer scheme, as she chose to focus her work on the conditions and the structural nature of poverty

from a research and academic perspective. This enabled her to speak with authority, whilst presenting a more reformist and policy making position, which influenced social work and social policy even today. Another common denominator (apart from the COS) was that all three women, Hill, Barnett and Webb, were connected with the Fabian Society. The society was founded in 1883/4 as a socialist debating group concerned with eradicating poverty. Their mission, supported by the social research led by Charles Booth (Webb's cousin), influenced and shaped social politics and reforms at the time.

Co-incidentally perhaps, but I thought of interest, Hill, Barnett and Webb had in common that they were each the eighth child. Also, none of them had children of their own, but all of them were concerned about the welfare of children, and the children's prospects of exiting the poverty trap.

3.2.11. Octavia Hill (1838-1912)

Octavia Hill, unlike Barnett and Webb, had actually experienced poverty first-hand herself. She was born the eighth daughter of James Hill, a corn merchant and banker, and Caroline Southwood Smith, the third wife of James Hill. Octavia's mother was an educationalist and the daughter of Dr. Thomas Southwood Smith, the pioneer of the sanitary reforms (Darley 2008). Octavia's father suffered a nervous breakdown after his



bankruptcy in 1840 and disappeared in the same year. Octavia's mother was left with five small daughters, no financial means, and she had to turn to her father for moral and financial support. In many respects Dr Thomas Southwood Smith became a surrogate father to her children, according to Darley (2008). Octavia would have been influenced by both, her mother's work and interest in progressive educational ideas, as well as her grandfather's experience in working at the London Hospital in the East End, which possibly motivated Octavia to help the poorest in society.

Furthermore, Octavia was pivotal in the education of women. Her friendship with John Ruskin (1819 -1900) enabled her to become involved in teaching women 'for occupations wherein they could be helpful to the less fortunate members of their own sex' (Darley 2008). Octavia's interest in the education and the rights of

women brought her into contact with Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891), and she supported the missions of 'The Ladies of Langham Place'. Octavia believed, similar to Josephine Butler, Henrietta Barnett and Florence Nightingale, that the model of the family and the ideal of the home should underlie all charitable work (Boyd 1982). Octavia encouraged Ruskin to invest in her social housing scheme for the poor, and offered him a five per cent return during 1864-1877 (Darley 2008). At the age of twenty-six, Octavia set out to offer housing and support services to the poorest and disadvantaged members of society. Assisted by a network of all-female volunteers, she headed a rent collection and home visiting service scheme.

Octavia's concept behind the scheme, similar to Owen, was centred around building relationships with tenants, who were people dependent on casual or seasonal work. She and her volunteers collected the rent weekly whilst ensuring that the families, in particular the children, were well. Octavia was always available for her tenants if there were personal problems to be resolved and her housing scheme grew successful; as did the number of Octavia's volunteers for rent collection and the investors of the scheme (Smith 2008). Amid her group of volunteers and rent collectors were Henrietta Barnett, Emma Cons, Beatrice Webb and her sister Katherine Courtney, who moved on to continue their own work in other parts of London (Boyd 1982). Octavia saw the social housing and home visiting scheme as a woman's task:

This house management is specially a task for ladies. It depends on watchful supervision with regard to detail, but it is nonetheless based on the great laws which govern good human life, called—somewhat dully—principles. (Octavia Hill 1902, ed. Whelan 1998:119)

Also, Octavia was instrumental in co-founding the COS in Britain and Ireland in 1869, alongside Helen Bosanquet. The intention was to co-ordinate and organise what appeared to be an inept approach to charity giving, without any appraisal of the means of those in need (Smith 2008; Smith 2009). However, reading Octavia's writings left me wondering, if or what has really changed since her speech in 1902:

Some of us have an uneasy sense of the great advantages we ourselves have had, and we give with careless, or lavish, hand to ease our own feelings. And what is the effect of these ill-considered gifts? Of this misplaced indulgence? Believe me, you who have never watched its effect on the houses which it influences, it is deadly. It is the cause of a steady deterioration of character pitiable to watch. The drunkard is enabled to drink, the idle to idle and to bet. The uncertainty of the gifts upsets all attempt at plan; life becomes a lottery. Where do you think we find the least attempt at home life in London, and the

most vice and drink? Not in the acres of poor houses in the entirely poor districts of East and South London, not in the darkest and most crowded courts, but in Notting Hill, close to the well-to-do classes. There the beggar is made and kept a beggar, there the public houses swarm with people spending their easily-got shillings, there the furnished lodging, paid for night by night, takes the place of the settled and thrifty house. The neighbourhood of the rich, the would-be charitable, makes the poverty which strikes the eye. (Octavia Hill 1902, ed Whelan 1998:118)

In the light of the current political debate about the reduction of benefits, and the review of the current welfare system, politicians, civil servants, and those in charge should perhaps read Octavia's observations and learn from it. Despite her critique of charitable practices, Octavia was a very passionate and enthusiastic person, as is evident in her essays and letters. She wrote her evaluative thoughts about how to manage the social housing situation to the satisfaction of both the landlord and the tenant, offering the following guidance and advice:

Take but one family under your care, watch its struggles, sympathise with its efforts, advise as to the health, education, preparation for work of its younger members, encourage thrift, stimulate the energy of those who compose it, and you shall see growth instead of deterioration, order succeed disorder, industry reap its quiet but sure reward. (Octavia Hill 1902, ed. Whelan 1998:118)

Octavia and her sister Miranda were the moving force behind the development of social housing, yet they were also pro-active in the promotion of green and open spaces for the poor in London. The sisters established playgrounds and organised outings to the countryside for poor children. Moreover, in 1895 Octavia became one of the co-founders of the National Trust, because she was concerned about the impact of industrialisation and increasing urbanisation. The purpose of the Trust was to act as a guardian for the nation in the acquisition and protection of threatened coastline, countryside and buildings (Clayton 1993). Octavia was fond of children and wanted to give them the opportunities to escape the over-crowded urban spaces, thus she endeavoured to enable them to leave poverty behind through education.

Octavia had been engaged, but her fiancée died and she was left childless. She became a 'model social worker', driven by compassion, possibly fuelled by her own experiences of poverty and loss. Hence, she probably qualified for both of my categories of the 'wounded healer' and the 'social justice fighter'.

3.2.12. Dame Henrietta Octavia Weston Barnett (1851-1936)

Dame Henrietta Octavia Weston Barnett was born in Surrey, the eighth daughter of Alexander William Rowland, who made his money in the oil industry. She was raised by her father, because her mother Henrietta Monica Margaretta Ditges, who was German, died shortly after giving birth (Watkins 2005). Henrietta, orphaned aged eighteen after the death of her father, was left with the responsibility of care and the legal guardian to her sister, who had suffered brain-damage (Koven 2004).



Even though assigned her father's substantial inheritance, Henrietta went to work with Octavia Hill where she met her husband, Samuel Augustus Barnett. They married in 1873 and they had no children. The Barnetts were committed to proactively working with and supporting the poor in the community where they were living, London's Whitechapel area. They started a primary school, led adult education classes, organised concerts, opened a lending library, held flower shows, and facilitated a support group for young mothers (Watkins 2005).

Henrietta also worked with prostitutes, as there were an estimated 2,000 working in the Whitechapel area alone. Unlike Josephine Butler, Henrietta did not get involved in social-political or feminist movements; instead, she focussed on helping the poor and deprived children. Henrietta was aware of, and was appalled by, the conditions and the practices in the 'Poor Law Children District Schools', also known as 'Barrack Schools' (Watkins 2005), and her reformist work, in conjunction with the Fabian Society, led to policy changes in the education system and legislation.

The Fabian Society's 1894 reform plea raised the issue of the educational reforms for the school systems at the time:

I.—Improved Education for Children.

Over 50,000 children in England alone are in the charge of the Poor Law authorities. Their treatment is condemned by the fact that many of them grow up to lead pauper lives. They should not be taught in Poor Law "barrack" schools, but in the public elementary schools. They should not under any circumstances live in workhouses, but should be boarded-out in the country. (Fabian Society 1894 original text, cited Fabian Society 2008)

At first inspired by her work with Octavia Hill, Henrietta's compassion for children led her to continue organising excursions to the countryside for them. More importantly, in 1877, she became pivotal in setting up the County Holiday Fund, enabling poor city children to have a holiday. Furthermore, she founded the State Children's Association in 1896, since she had expressed her concerns for the welfare of the children looked after and brought up by the state. Henrietta saw that the real problem was the inhumane crowding of children in the Barrack Schools, and she suggested home foster placements and public schools instead. Henrietta published an article '*The Home or the Barrack for the Children of the State*' (1894 cited Watkins 2005) in the same year as the Fabian Society had issued its reform plea for the improvement of children's education. As a result of their campaigning a new Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools was established, which saw Henrietta as the first woman ever to be appointed to a Government committee (Koven 2004).

Together, Henrietta and Samuel became advocates in their mission that education would create social change and enable the poor to leave their underprivileged and disadvantaged lives. Their mission led them to establish the University Settlement in London (Toynbee Hall) in 1884. The idea of the settlements was to close the gap between the classes, and to establish residencies for university men in the poor areas, with the aim of cross-class friendships, education, recreation and community life. Unlike Octavia Hill, Henrietta and Samuel believed that other, more radical and long-term solutions were required, rather than simply helping the poor to find employment and social housing. Instead, through living together in the university settlements, the classes could benefit by learning from each other. The theory behind it was, that the affluent academics could educate and be role models for the poor. In return, the poor, not blessed with financial wealth, but rich in life experiences, should utilise these to help themselves, rather than relying on charity. The Barnetts' view was that 'remedy must be one which shall be practicable and shall not affect the sense of independence.' (Barnett and Barnett 1888 cited Smith 2007).

However, Henrietta was not content with the results, and realised that the settlements were not the answer to tackle the social division. Instead, in 1903, she engaged with another project to preserve Hampstead Heath for public enjoyment. Henrietta's vision was that the Hampstead Garden Suburb would become a new kind of 'organic' community where young, old, rich, poor, abled and disabled residents could share common religious or educational interests and enjoy the recreational spaces, allowing for a healthy life style (Smith 2007). However, the

project never achieved the social diversity Henrietta had hoped for. An all-girls school, founded in 1911 in Hampstead, was intended for girls from different backgrounds, and remains a diverse community. The school is selective based on the students' comparative levels of academic achievement:

The Henrietta Barnett School is a selective secondary school for girls with some of the highest standards and results in London and the UK. We are committed to developing each individual in the broadest sense and to encouraging understanding of religious and cultural diversity. Great emphasis is placed on social and moral education, encouraging mutual respect and understanding. A stimulating and happy learning environment encourages and challenges pupils to develop their own best academic and personal standards. The School aims to develop confident young women who know their own strengths, appreciate the needs of others and have the moral courage to stand up for their beliefs. It is the school's vision to prepare its pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. (Henrietta Barnett School's Prospectus and Aims, 2010).

After the death of her husband in 1913, Henrietta extended her work to support Barnett House at Oxford (named in memory of Samuel) which became, and remains, the centre for social work and social policy education. Henrietta was appointed CBE in 1917 and DBE in 1924 for her outstanding work and contributions.

3.2.13. (Martha) Beatrice Webb (1858-1943)

Leading the academic and social research aspect of charitable and emerging social work was Beatrice Webb who was born in 1858 in Gloucester. She was the eighth child (out of ten) to Richard Potter and Laurencina Heyworth (Davis 2004). Beatrice was inspired by her immediate and extended family members and educational mentors, who were all politically active in fighting for social reforms and social justice. Her approach to researching poverty,



and her findings of the causes of poverty, was influential during her time. Indeed, discussions in social politics and social work today, call for early intervention and prevention to combat child poverty.

In her diaries Beatrice wrote:

'believing that I could alter the conditions of human life for the better I began to love humanity' (Webb diary, 1 Jan 1901; ed. MacKenzie and MacKenzie, 2000)

Consequently, Beatrice devoted her life to philanthropy and social reformist work. She was close to her sister, Catherine Courtney (1847-1929), and they were the only children of the family, who remained childless. The sisters dedicated their work to social issues, as they shared the same political interests. Beatrice had worked briefly as a rent collector for her sister's social housing project, and she later assumed charitable work for the COS, as well as for Octavia Hill. Through her work Beatrice became friends with Octavia Hill and the Barnetts. During her volunteer work Beatrice had witnessed the conditions in which the poor lived and she felt appalled. She described them as:

'a constantly decomposing mass of human beings, few rising out of it but many dropping down dead, pressed out of existence in the struggle' (Webb diary, 8 March 1885; ed. MacKenzie and MacKenzie, 2000).

Subsequently, Beatrice became further interested in the underlying causes of poverty from a social science and academic perspective. Her interest was awakened by the opportunity to assist her cousin Charles Booth (1840-1916) who undertook an investigation into poverty of the slums of London in 1886, published in four volumes in 1889-1891 (Roake 2004). Contributors to the data of Booth's survey were the Barnetts, who used their observations from the settlements. Also, Octavia Hill submitted a chapter to Booth's publication on 'Block Housing', where she advocated the need for 'secure open space, ample light and good sanitary arrangements, with supervision to maintain standards' (Roake 2004). The findings and analysis of the poverty survey concerned those who were fighting for social reform, and the statistics were used in the plea for the reform of the New Poor Law of 1834 by the Fabian Society in 1894, as cited earlier.

Beatrice utilised observations made during her rent collection work, regarding the tenants' circumstances and the causes of their poverty, and she combined these with her findings from the poverty survey. She developed her own techniques of social research methodology established through observations and questionnaires; - these methodological tools are still used today in social research. Beatrice developed the method of 'social diagnosis' (Webb diary, 5 Nov 1883; ed. MacKenzie and MacKenzie 2000:38) which she thought should be used to address the socio-economic problem of poverty. Beatrice judged private philanthropy as 'largely ineffective in the face of poverty', and she rated the COS's work as a 'something-for-nothing' charity which merely exacerbated poverty (Davis 2004). She dedicated herself to social research and, on occasion, even went 'under-cover', working in the tailoring industry of London as part of Booth's poverty survey. Her first-hand experiences of the working conditions of the poor corroborated her opinion, that charity was not the answer, but that structural social changes were

required. Through her association and work with the Fabian Society Beatrice met and married Sidney Webb in 1892, which was rather late in life for a woman in Victorian times. Hitherto, Beatrice had been reluctant to enter the bond of marriage, as she confided in her diaries on many occasions (Webb - *Diaries*, ed. MacKenzie and MacKenzie 2000).

That same year her father died and left her a steady income, which enabled her to support herself and her husband Sidney. The Webbs dedicated their lives to research and politics which they shared with the same compassion, as evident in their numerous publications of research studies and books around the issues of poverty, the prison systems, the trade unions and co-operatives (Davis 2004).

A grant left to the Fabian Society was agreed by the members to be used to establish the London School of Economics (LSE), which was co-founded by Beatrice and Sidney Webb and her sister Catherine Courtney in 1895 (London School for Economics 2011). The combination of Charles Booth's research about poverty, and the Webbs' theories and publications about socio-economic topics, were applied and taught at the LSE. The aim of the LSE was to teach political economy from a reformist and socialist perspective, constructed upon Beatrice's concept of 'social diagnosis', rather than random and unsystematic approaches of philanthropy. Beatrice trained and educated charity workers to gain a better understanding, not only of the causes of poverty, but she also suggested new and co-operative forms of work (Davis 2004).

The combined works by both Webbs' empirical sociology formed the blueprint for the British welfare state and influenced social work training and education. Consequently, Beatrice can be seen as a social justice fighter who wanted to make a difference. However, she was not able to acknowledge her fundamental influences, as evident in the reflective writings in her diaries about her role and position, not only as a woman in society, but also from an economic perspective. The content of her diaries indicated that Beatrice diminished, not only her contributions to theory and research, but also the value of her research work:

'[...] if I had been a man, self-respect, family pressure and the public opinion of my class would have pushed me into a money making profession; as a mere woman I could carve out a career of disinterested research'. (Webb 1926 "*My Apprenticeship*", cited LSE 2011)

Beatrice was aware of the gender differences and discriminations in society, but she did not join the suffrage movement. Also, she felt that being allowed to vote would not make a difference in the work or pay conditions for women and, therefore, the movement was just a tokenistic exploit.

3.2.14. Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928)

Whereas, Emmeline Pankhurst, a dedicated feminist and also a member of the Fabian Society, became the leading figure in the fight for social justice for the rights of women. Unlike Mary Wollstonecraft nearly one hundred years earlier, Emmeline felt great compassion for the disadvantaged, the poor and the oppressed in society. The reason for her compassion was possibly because of her personal experiences of financial hardship and her family's political activism against inequalities. Emmeline was born in Manchester, the eldest of ten children, and was influenced by her father, Robert Goulden. He came from a family with radical political beliefs and he took part in the campaigns against slavery, similar to Josephine Butler. Equally influential in Emmeline's life was her mother, Sophia, a passionate feminist who started taking her daughter to suffrage meetings from the age of fourteen (Pugh 2002). Aged twenty-one, Emmeline married the radical lawyer and women's rights supporter, Dr Richard Marsden Pankhurst, and they had five children one of whom died, aged only four, due to ill-health in 1898 (Purvis 2010).



Emmeline became a radical feminist, fighting for women's rights to be equal to men; however, disheartened with politicians, she joined forces with her three daughters to establish the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903 (Pugh 2002). Later, she became concerned with the predicament of so-called 'war babies', children born to single mothers, whose fathers were on the front lines during WWI. Subsequently, Emmeline opened an adoption home at Campden Hill, but she was criticised for offering relief to parents of children born out of wedlock (Purvis 2010). Her work has contributed to the adoption and fostering work that social work is concerned with today.

Emmeline was passionate about the welfare of children, because she had seen their misery first-hand as a Poor Law Guardian. Having raised her own children, at the age of fifty-seven, Emmeline adopted four girls; even though she had no steady income, she did possess compassion.

3.2.15. Jane Addams (1860-1935)

The American activist Jane Addams was involved in all of the social and political areas discussed so far, because she was a radical feminist, who fought for emancipation, addressed the social housing issues of the poor, and advocated for children. Jane was a pioneer social worker, pivotal in shaping American social welfare reforms and social work education. She was a social researcher who *lived* the situated knowledge and the standpoint paradigm. Above all, Jane was a passionate pacifist, and for her work she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1913.



Jane Addams & Ellen Starr

Jane was born, the eighth of nine children, into the Quaker family of politician and successful mill owner, John Addams. Her mother died when Jane was only two years old. She was later accompanied by her step-mother on her visit to the British settlement houses founded by the Barnetts (Hamington 2010). Despite Jane's privileged social position, her upbringing and education, she felt true compassion for people less fortunate than herself, who were living in disenfranchised and disempowered communities.

Jane set out to replicate the settlement and friendly visitors' schemes, but she operated from within, rather than adopting the external model of charitable support from the outside, as practiced in Britain. Having established the settlement of Hull House in Chicago in 1889 together with her friend Ellen Starr (1859-1940), Jane, unlike other charitable philanthropists in Britain, lived *with* her work. Jane never considered herself as a charity worker nor did she want Hull House to be perceived as charity. She wrote: "I am always sorry to have Hull House regarded as philanthropy" (Jane Addams 1893 cited Hamington 2010). Consequently, she occupied the same dwellings of the settlement housing project, and, by doing so, was part of the real life community. This enabled Jane to learn from real people in real life situations which equipped her to be a 'situated knower' and a genuine advocate. Jane's observations, her lived experiences, writings and many publications about the human conditions and the social dynamics derived from her own experience. Hull House and the settlement programme became the 'incubator' for social projects which represented and

responded to the needs of the people and the community in the American pragmatist tradition (Hamington 2010).

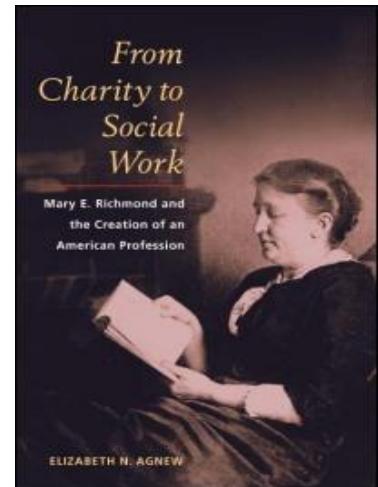
It could be argued, that Jane's work laid the foundations for a new way of sociological research which was later refined and known as the Chicago School. Also her approach to the ways of communal living and learning from each other can be seen replicated in many residential social work (social pedagogy) settings that work with marginalised children, young people, physical and/or learning disability, mental health, or mixed age generations; - more so in projects in America and in Europe than in Britain. Thus, when Jane wrote or talked about public health issues, single mothers, women or child labourers, prostitutes, race issues, or first and second generation immigrants, she employed first-hand knowledge and understanding gained from her own social interactions and research findings (Franklin 1986). Moreover, Jane would always include the people she talked about, or advocated for, and encouraged them to speak up for themselves to give the accounts authenticity and this portrayed genuine concern by real people. Jane was well read and conversant with numerous theorists, and in an eclectic manner, she developed her own ideas about social ethics positioned on the notion, that knowledge is indeed 'situated'. This became evident in her feminist standpoint perspective which derived from her knowledge of oppressed positions in society, such as from women's experiences which influenced feminist research and epistemology (Franklin 1986).

Jane was well-respected through her active work for social reform and the suffrage movement. Inspired by Tolstoy's pacifism, Jane gained even more respect and publicity through her peace movement, which earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 1913. She was only the second woman, after Berta von Suttner (1905), to be awarded the prestigious honour (Nobel Prize 2010). Throughout her life, Jane was determined 'to make a difference in the world', and she did so by challenging existing power structures and fighting for social justice. Jane left a worldwide legacy, not only for feminists and pacifists, but through her progressive social work theory and praxis, which were taught at my university in Germany.

3.2.16. Mary Ellen Richmond (1861-1928)

The other influential American woman who gained worldwide recognition, even though not with the high profile or to the extent of Jane Addams, within the field of social work theory, education and practice, was Mary Ellen Richmond.

Born in Baltimore, Mary Ellen was orphaned aged four. She was raised by her feminist grandmother and two aunts, who would have influenced Mary Ellen's thinking (Franklin 1986). Mary Ellen worked as a friendly visiting volunteer and fundraiser for the American equivalent of the COS. After being trained as the first social worker in America, Mary Ellen realised that, the approaches taken by the COS to help the individual poor would not achieve any positive change for their life situation. This was the same realisation that Jane Addams had reached, but unlike Jane, Mary Ellen chose her professional direction to specialise in social research and social work training and education. She defined the role of a charitable welfare worker, who she termed 'friendly visitor', in her first book *Friendly visiting among the poor*:



The term "friendly visitor" does not apply to one who aimlessly visits the poor for a little while, without making any effort to improve their condition permanently or to be a real friend to them. (Richmond, 1899:v)

Mary Ellen's social research and publications pioneered and professionalised the 'case work' approach, combined with the 'person-in-environment' concept in social work, which is still applied today (Agnew 2004). Mary Ellen used the method of 'social diagnosis' to focus on the individual in their environment, whereas the Webbs interpreted the function of 'social diagnosis' as a methodological approach, and scientific application to social research and study.

Mary Ellen successively modernised the unsystematic and disorganised charitable work of philanthropists and was pivotal in shaping social work as a profession (Agnew 2004). Thus, she instigated a paradigm shift from 'moral certainty to rational inquiry in social work practice' (Franklin 1986: 504). Mary Ellen agreed with Jane Addams' approach to work with the communities to achieve long-term change. Like Jane, she thought that poverty was not the individual's failure, but that social-environmental factors determined their life situations and societal status.

Mary Ellen created a pictorial circle diagram, or what is known today as the Ecomap, to illustrate the ecosystem perspective (Meyer and Mattaini 2002: 3) which has been further developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). As a result, she gave 'case work' a tool for 'social diagnosis' to demonstrate the interconnected, multi-layered, complex reality and the reciprocal influences between the individual and their environment. Hence Mary Ellen asserted, that a social diagnosis of the

individual's case cannot be approached from an isolated assessment. She believed, that to achieve change, the socio-environmental factors of the ecosystem had to be taken into consideration:

Social diagnosis, then, may be described as the attempt to make as exact a definition as possible of the situation and personality of a human being in some social need—of his situation and personality, that is, in relation to the other human beings upon whom he in any way depends or who depend upon him and, in relation to the social institutions of the community (Mary Richmond, 1917, p. 357 cited Hiersteiner and Peterson 1999:147).

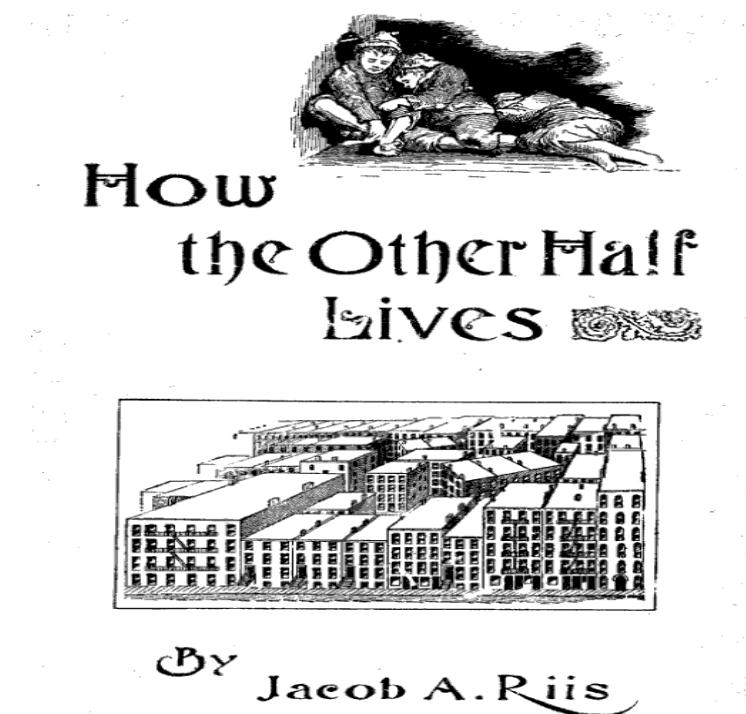
Mary Ellen's books *Social diagnosis* (1917) and *What is social casework?* (1922) constructed the foundations for the scientific development of professional social work today. She has been described as the founding mother of social casework (Agnew 2004). Her appointment as the director of the charity department of the Russell Sage Foundation in New York in 1909, enabled her to publish her social research observations and the case studies based upon her work with the COS. She also instigated an extensive research study, involving nine hundred and eighty-five widows, which provided her with salient information and insight into the issues of poverty and deprivation. Mary Ellen's search for the causes of poverty and social exclusion in the interaction between an individual and their environment, and her concept of social diagnosis combined with social case work, gave social researchers a holistic tool (Hiersteiner and Peterson 1999). Additionally, her work gave the disenfranchised and marginalised of society a voice.

Mary Ellen's work was highly influential in America, furthermore it also gained international recognition, and shaped social work education and practice. She never married and had no children. She was dedicated to her work and motivated by her belief in social justice.

It might be worth noting at this point, that the main differences between America and Britain during that time were possibly that the poorest people from Britain migrated to America, in particular the Irish after the Potato Famine. Also, religious dissidents from Europe were looking for a new beginning in the New World. As in Britain, America had undergone an expansion of industrialisation and urbanisation, but was not as advanced as Britain in dealing with problems such as sanitation or housing. It could be speculated that the great pressures, arising from dealing with the growing numbers of social problems in America, highlighted the urgency to find workable solutions. The destitute reality was brought to the attention of the American public by Jacob Riis' (1890) publication '*How the other half lives*'. The book documented his observations and supported by photos it

evidenced the living conditions of the poorest in New York City. Also, Riis' prose exemplified that New York had a greater volume of problems than London at that time in history:

It is said that nowhere in the world are so many people crowded together on a square mile as here. [...] These are samples of the packing of the population that has run up the record here to the rate of three hundred and thirty thousand per square mile. The densest crowding of Old London, I pointed out before, never got beyond a hundred and seventy-five thousand (Riis 1890, chapter 10, paragraph 2)



Cover page of Jacob Riis' (1890) publication '*How the other half lives*'



Picture from Jacob Riis' (1890) publication '*How the other half lives*'

This might have been the reason why America, rather than Britain, quickly became a leader in addressing the problems more radically in intellectual debates on a theoretical and academical level. Another reason for the progressive advances, as asserted by Stewart (2006:78), was the approach by a number of American scholars who examined:

[...] the dynamics of the relationship between philanthropy and public policy formation this, once again, [that] has been largely neglected in British historical writing on the development of social welfare. [...] Less problematically, perhaps, these scholars also point out that the original religious impetus behind much American philanthropic activity overseas had, [...], given way to a 'secularized emphasis on uplift through science and technology'; or, as another scholar has put it, to place 'the health-care, education, and social-service professions on a scientific, non-sectarian basis'.

3.2.17. Mary Stewart (1862/3-1925)

Returning to the development of social work training and education, the relevant biographies in Britain led me to Mary Stewart, who in 1895 was the first social worker qualified by the COS. Little is known about Mary. She was probably born in London, and possibly not from a privileged background (Baraclough 2008). She never married and had no children of her own. Mary gained recognition when she trained as the first hospital almoner (medical social worker) with the COS, because she piloted a new system of



categorising, assessing and sign-posting medical need and treatment of patients at the Royal Free Hospital in London. Her work pioneered and established what is known today as Hospital Social Services, which has since developed all over the world (Baraclough 2008). In 1903 Mary was one of seven almoners who convened a committee meeting of hospital almoners which consequently founded the Hospital Almoners' Association. Subsequently, over decades, this association developed into the professional body of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). Mary can be classified as a social reformist, probably more by default rather than conviction; - or as Bell (1964: 27, cited Baraclough 2008) speculated: 'Mary belonged to that generation of Victorian women, to whom the opportunity of education had appeared as a glorious adventure'.

3.2.18. Dame Geraldine Maitland Aves (1898-1986)

The last notable woman I examined was born just at the end of the nineteenth century. Dame Geraldine Maitland Aves was born in Hertfordshire, the eldest daughter of Ernest Harry Aves, a social investigator with Charles Booth. He later became the chair-person of the Trade Board which regulated the minimum wage, which had been instigated by the Webbs. Geraldine's mother, Eva Mary Maitland, was the daughter of the well-known suffragist and educationist Emma Knox



(1844-1923), who was one of the first female members of the London school board (London Metropolitan University 2007). Even though her maternal grandmother, Emma, had a great influence on Geraldine's life, she refused to join the Women's Suffrage Society as she believed that women should work *with* men (Willmott 2004).

In the year of her father's death in 1917, Geraldine attended Newnham College at Cambridge and became president of the Women's University Settlement Society (Barnetts' legacy). There she made the decision that she wanted to work with people (Willmott 2004). It could be argued that Geraldine was influenced by the *Zeitgeist* as much as the personal circles, connections and acquaintances she had encountered during that time of social welfare reforms. Geraldine first worked for the local authority and, in 1941, was seconded to work for the Ministry of Health and was responsible for the evacuation of children. She was in charge of overall wartime welfare services, and during that time she also had the task of co-ordinating the recruitment and training of social workers. Geraldine's overall contributions during the war merited her an OBE in 1946 and CBE in 1963 (London Metropolitan University 2007).

Not one to be idle, after her retirement from the Local Authority in 1963, Geraldine dedicated her time to the voluntary sector of social work. She was also instrumental in developing and reforming social services, the voluntary sector, social work training and education. For her enormous achievements, in particular with the establishment of The Volunteer Centre, Geraldine was made a Dame of the British Empire in 1977 (London Gazette 1976). She never married and had no children, but she was always concerned about children's welfare, like so many of the remarkable women before her. Willmott (2004:2) speculated that Geraldine

'was one of that band of educated single women who looked for personal fulfilment in a professional career and devoted their life to the common good.' Geraldine was not a social justice fighter, but certainly a major social reformer, whose career was facilitated by the socio-economic circumstances of capitalist and wartime induced poverty and human calamities. The government was forced to address these social problems, which saw the rise of new legislative frameworks that required governing or policing. Consequently, this aided the development of social work as a profession, particularly for women:

There was a growth in social workers employed across diverse fields during the 1920s as an increasing number of state agencies were established to provide health and welfare services. The training role of Universities as well as the role of social workers themselves was given more official acknowledgement and encouragement. Although the majority of social workers, overwhelmingly women, remained unpaid at this time there was an increase in the numbers who were being trained and paid for their work. (Davis 2008:4)

3.3. Four hundred years of remarkable women making a difference

This concludes the succinct journey over four hundred years of notable and remarkable women's biographies, who were early pioneers in the field of social work. They made a difference in other people's lives through their humanitarian work based on compassion and commitment. In particular, they helped children, even though most of them did not have children of their own, as shown in the following table that I devised. I summarised in the table (3.3.1.) the women reviewed who lived between the sixteenth and twentieth century. They conducted philanthropic work over a period of 400 years, before the birth of the social work profession at the dawn of the twentieth century. In the table I recapitulated and illustrated the women's social backgrounds, their motivational factors, and the influence they had on the current social welfare systems in the United Kingdom.

Table 3.3.1: Early Pioneers

Name	Married ✓	Children of their own ✓	Money ✓	Their Work / Commitment	Motivation/ Inspiration (WH=wounded helper)
Lady Lucy Reynell (1578-1652)	✓	✓ 1 daughter	✓	Hospital work with poor	Religion
Rachel Countess of Bath (1613-1680)	✓	Brought up hundreds of disadvantaged children	✓	Educating the poor & fostering children	Religion (WH: unhappy marriage and separation from husband)
Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)	✓	✓ 2 daughters (1 illegitimate)		Women's Rights and Education for girls and women	Social reformist, Feminist (WH: domestic violent & drunken father. She suffered depression and twice attempted suicide)
Elizabeth Gurney Fry (1780-1845)	✓	✓ 11 children of her own	✓	Education of the poor; Prisoner visiting scheme and Probation services	Religion, Social reformist
Mary Carpenter (1807-1877)		Adopted a child		Education of the poor; reformative schooling for youth offenders	Religion, Social reformist
Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)			✓	Nursing and midwifery	Religion, Social reformist, Feminist
Josephine Butler (1828-1906)	✓	✓ 4 children, but lost youngest daughter	✓	Working with prostitutes & fighting for HE for women	Religion, Social reformist, Feminist (WH: lost a child and suffered depression)
Caroline (1837-1913) and Emily (1836-1922) Skinner (sisters)			✓ ✓	Rest & health & welfare for the city's working girls and women	Business enterprise for the welfare of working women (social repairer???)
Dames Agnes Weston (1840-1918) and Dame Sophia Wintz (1847-1929)			✓ ✓	Sailors' Rest - naval welfare and dry houses	Religion (WH: Sophia lost her father in childhood)
Octavia Hill (1838-1912)				Housing & friendly visitor scheme to the poor	Social reformist (Religion) (WH: father suffered nervous breakdown and left family)
Dame Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936)	✓		✓	Housing & education bridging the gap between poor & rich	Social reformist (Religion) (WH: mother died when she was 8 years. She was left to look after her disabled sister)
Beatrice Webb (1858-1943)	✓		✓	Visitor scheme. Research about poverty	Social Reformist; Social Justice Fighter; Social Christian
Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)	✓	✓ 5 children, but 1 died aged four. Adopted 4 girls		Women's Rights, education of women. Fostering and adoption of children	Social reformist, Feminist (WH: lost a child)
Jane Addams (1860-1935) Nobel Peace Prize. (American)			✓	Housing & education bridging the gap between poor & rich in Chicago. Communal living that promotes educational values and independence	Social Christian; Social Reformist; Social Justice Fighter (WH: Jane's mother died when Jane was only 2 years old)
Mary Ellen Richmond (1861-1928) (American)				Friendly Visitor scheme and first trained Social Worker in USA. Case work praxis	Social reformist; Social Christian (WH: orphaned aged 4 years)
Mary Stewart (1863-1925)				Hospital Social Worker and the first trained Social Worker in UK	Social reformist
Dame Geraldine Maitland Aves (1898-1986)			✓	Recruitment and training of social workers. Education of social workers	Social reformist; Social Christian (WH ?: her father died when she was 19 years old)
Total number of women: 19	8	5	13	The poor, sick, prisons, homeless, children, education, etc.	From religion to social reformists to feminists= 13 women. Wounded Helpers? = 10 women ?

Out of the nineteen women portrayed, eight were married (42%), and five had children of their own (26%). Thirteen of the women had financial means (68%) and were affluent or independent. Most of the women had been educated and were of advantageous social status. Therefore, these women would have been expected by society to dedicate themselves to those less fortunate. This was further corroborated by Steinbach's (2004) review of the social roles taken by women in England, because the women who undertook charitable and political work came chiefly from upper-class and white ethnic background. Furthermore, Walton (1975:11) stated that 'wives of successful husbands often spent their time in supporting good causes and visiting the poor'. Also, Martin (2008:414) verified the 'moral imperative' and societal expectation of women to undertake humanitarian work. In addition to their financial means to dedicate their lives to philanthropic work or social altruism, the majority of these women were either raised within or actively practiced their religious beliefs, which determined their charitable efforts.

Nearly all of the women portrayed did intentionally fight for social reform of existing systems, and possibly for social justice. I am aware that the two categories are not necessarily the same. The women's work influenced politics and policy making, as well as changes to social welfare practices. Also, some of the women developed theoretical and academic, or research relevant methods and approaches which have influenced social work education. My findings revealed that the majority of the women were motivated by their religious beliefs in one form or another, as after the Victorian crisis of faith most referred to themselves as Social Christians. However, only a few saw themselves as feminists or became actively involved in the suffrage movement; but then again, I presumed that the emancipatory *Zeitgeist* would have influenced their thinking, view of the world (*Weltanschauung*), and their working. Maybe not purposely, but all of the women reviewed showed degrees of civil courage or 'active citizenship' (Martin 2008), in my opinion. Their efforts were often progressive, reformative and outside the stereotypical expectations of women by society; such as the right of women to enter education and to vote, the right of the poor and sick to be looked after, or influencing and changing legislation. [I consider civil courage as a female quality that requires more personal and moral determination than the male's ways of initiating change or solving problems through destructive acts of warfare.]

Intriguingly, I also came to realise after my review of the biographies, that ten of the women (52%) had experienced some form of personal trauma, hardship, loss, bereavement, or were left with caring responsibility for family members. Therefore, I thought that I could hypothetically categorise these as 'wounded helpers'.

It was of interest to note, that all of the women were concerned with the welfare of children, but only five of the women had children of their own: Lady Lucy Reynell, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Gurney Fry, Josephine Butler and Emmeline Pankhurst. In addition, Emmeline Pankhurst adopted four children after her own children had grown up. Rachel Countess of Bath looked after thousands of children (Gray 2009:12) and raised ten children in her own home. Mary Carpenter adopted a child, even though she was unmarried. I hypothesised after the review of the biographies, as to whether the high percentage of unmarried women, and women with no children, ignited a basic instinctive and biological need to seek fulfillment through humanitarian work. Conversely, I was left to speculate, as to whether social altruism was, or still is, the only option for educated and independent women to find their place in a patriarchal society? I found resonance in Florence Nightingale's question:

Why have women passion, intellect, moral activity – these three – and a place in society where no one of the three can be exercised? (Florence Nightingale)

I wondered whether Florence Nightingale would have been satisfied to know, that passionate and intelligent women have found a place in society today through professions such as social work, nursing, childcare, teaching, or early years education. All of these occupations are very much gendered professions where the majority of work is delivered by women. The reasons why women chose, or were made to choose, these professions, could be theorised from the one-dimensional biological nature-nurture perspective that women are more compassionate or better at 'caring' for others than men. However, I believe the answer to be more complex and entrenched in patriarchal societies.

3.3 Summary

I reviewed the biographies of these remarkable and noteworthy women, which revealed that the majority of them were from financially privileged backgrounds, unmarried and also childless. Half of the women had experienced some form of trauma in their lives but dedicated their lives and works to fight for social justice for the disadvantaged members of society. The early pioneers appeared to be predominately religiously motivated, whereas there seemed to be a shift towards social reformism and social Christianity in the past two hundred years. It is of interest when I compare these findings with the data from my research participants in chapter seven. However, I have to exercise caution as to whether or not the proposed categories of wounded helper and social justice fighter actually

are transferrable over the centuries, as socio-economic and historical contexts have changed for women. Thus, I have to take into consideration that women today, their position in society, and the options available to them, are experiencing a different world and society, than the civilisations the early pioneers were living in.

More importantly, the point I wanted to make when I set out to investigate the biographies and the work of those remarkable women, was to illustrate that they laid the foundations of all areas of social work today:

- supporting the poor and disadvantaged has led to countless (religious and non-religious) charity organisations, as well as the establishment of the state welfare system;
- housing issues are addressed through social housing;
- helping the sick led to nursing and hospital social work;
- probation and reform of the youth offending system;
- discrimination against women has steered towards emancipation and safeguarding (women's outreach workers, e.g. for prostitutes or victims of domestic violence);
- exploitation of children has resulted in protective laws as well as fostering arrangements for looked-after-children.

All of these areas are now core services and integral parts of social work education, policy and practice in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, women have been a major force in founding and shaping the nascent profession of social work and been instrumental in establishing and delivering social work education. Yet, in the early history of social welfare, men were more likely to be paid for their professional work, whereas women were expected to operate as unpaid volunteers (Dressel 1987 cited Sakamoto *et al.* 2008). Indeed, even though social work has been termed 'a women's profession' and a 'female dominated' profession, at the same time it is a 'male dominated' profession, because men are placed in decision making positions on a strategic level in organisations and in academia today (Sakamoto *et al.* 2008:38).

CHAPTER 4

Women in social work today

[...] we see the roots of women's oppression not only in the general problems of a capitalist society, but also in the very nature and implications of gender. In other words, we live in a world that is not only capitalist but also *patriarchal*. [italics in original text] (Brook and Davis, 1985:xiii)

4.1. Introduction

The emergence of social work and the role of women, within the historical context as reviewed in the previous chapters, indicated some parallels in the oppression of women in a patriarchal society together with women's compassion and commitment to help others who are even more oppressed or disadvantaged than themselves.

This chapter discusses the role of social work in today's society with the position, responsibilities and functions women occupy in social work. Questions are asked as to whether social work is meant to 'make a difference' (Myers and Cree 2008) in people's lives or whether social workers can 'be the difference' (CWDC 2009, advertisement and recruitment campaign), and how this relates to women's motivation to engage with the social work profession. An excellent collection of examples of recent projects across the UK, which are led by women, is provided in Best and Hussey's (2001) book '*Women making a difference*'.

Brook and Davis (1985:xiii) recognised the nature of social work as a 'caring profession' and identified the roots in the power dynamics of patriarchy, as illustrated in the quote above. Furthermore, it could be argued that women were allocated subordinate positions (Martin 2008) to concentrate their efforts in restoring peace in the wake of the destructive patriarchal prerogatives of wars. Thus, women's efforts were concentrated to restore justice to counter-balance the patriarchal accumulation of socio-economic successes acquired through the process of industrialisation and through capitalism that was created by the exploitation of the oppressed members of society. The 'second-class status' of women within social work education and the inequity in the academy, based on international research, was discussed by Sakamoto *et al.* (2008).

4.2. The individual versus society?

Scholarly and political debates around and within social work have equally praised and criticised the adjustment and restorative functions social work takes within society (Skidmore *et al.* 1997). Those functions remain chiefly undertaken by women. However, the somehow idealistic, but faithful to its roots, the current definition states the key purpose of social work is to be:

[...] a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment. (International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), 2001).

Maybe that is one of possibly many reasons why social work has become a niche profession for women, because the definition emphasises a commitment to social change and to the solving of human problems. However, there are more strands to social work, as Asquith *et al.* (2005) demonstrated when they concluded that there is still a lack of clarity about what constitutes social work and the professional identity of social workers. They found that:

There is wide agreement about the basic values of social work. Based on the inherent worth and dignity of all people, social work should promote the rights to individual self-determination and participation in society. Social workers should challenge discrimination, recognise diversity, and work to overcome social exclusion. These values are substantially constant across different societies throughout the history of social work. What is distinct about social work is the approach that locates the person in the context of his or her life as a whole (Asquith *et al.* 2005:2).

This definition portrays the function of social work similar to the IASSW and the IFSW (2001) statement above. Moreover, it also incorporates most of the welfare activities and positions that many of the reviewed women's biographies became involved with. However, in post-war (WWII) Britain, social work initially took a bureaucratic, institutionalised and scientific approach which saw the social worker as 'the expert' in solving other people's problems. Yet, the 'expert' approach (the medical model) did not necessarily achieve the desired results, as the individual was not really involved in, or made part of, any change. A move in recent years towards 'constructive social work' (Parton and O'Byrne 2000) has shifted the power-imbalance, thereby encouraging the individual to be 'the expert' of their own life circumstances (the social model). Thus, emphasis is placed on the individual, and the role of social workers defined to assist the individual to achieve change within the social environment and community context. Constructive social

work became concerned with individuals being able to address their perceived problems, or situations they find themselves in, and through 'narratives' (Milner 2001; Parton and O'Byrne 2000) discover the solutions to change. The theory suggests those individuals are more likely to succeed in changing their life circumstances, once they recognise their problems and identify solutions which are suitable and achievable for them. Furthermore, Rutten, *et al.* (2010) discussed that the narrative turn in the human and social science impacted on the rhetoric in social work, because they recognise the relevance of symbols in the construction and interpretation of the individual's reality through narratives. Thus, the use of narratives in the social work encounter is a technique which requires social workers to be reflective practitioners (Schön 1983). As Taylor (2006:204, cited Rutten, *et al.* 2010) asserted it also requires social work education to teach critical self-awareness and learn from other disciplines about the rhetoric of communication. She declared:

[...] social work practitioners, educators and academics need to employ a reflexive approach to their knowledge in order to achieve a critical awareness of their own processes and products (Taylor 2006:192, cited Rutten, *et al.* 2010).

The narrative approach in social work places the individual not only in context, but also perceives the individual as a product of constructed reality from a person-centred perspective (Rogers 1951). Moreover, connections to Ricoeur's theory of identity construction appear pertinent:

The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character. (Ricoeur 1990 cited Dauenhauer 2011:13)

Elements of this person-centred and holistic approach, that takes into consideration the environmental factors of the individual, were noticeable in Jane Addams' approach. Whereas, Hill, Barnett, and Webb adopted the prescriptive expert or task-centred approach (medical model).

4.3. Meeting social need: women's function in the creation of human and social capital

It appears that social work has moved away from its charitable roots of helping the poor and building communities. Apparently, in America 40% of social workers

operate in private practice serving the middle-classes, according to Specht and Courtney (1994). This trend was further confirmed by Weiss *et al.* (2002 cited Redmond *et al.* 2008), who studied the professional preferences of social work students in Israel and America, and found that the students would rather work in private practice, thereby seeking distance from the most disadvantaged groups of society. The reason behind this shift, according to Specht and Courtney (1994:5), is that even though Americans like to support charitable causes, they do not wish to be 'reminded of the persistent failures' of their society or their welfare systems with a 'chronically dependent population'. Instead of unsuccessful state intervention Americans were encouraged to apply self-help solutions and revitalise community spirit. Thus, by utilising human and social capital (Coleman 1988, Field 2008, Putnam 2000) they could help and support each other to overcome social inequalities.

Similarities can be detected in the UK today, with the Prime Minister's launch of the "Big Society" (Cameron 2010). Accordingly, Mr Cameron hoped to empower communities by asking people to engage in charitable work, voluntarily for the greater good of society. 'Home Start' (2011), for example, is a volunteer visiting scheme to families similar to the 'friendly visitors' of the COS. It could be argued that we are going back in time rather than moving forward with social care and the state welfare. I contemplated as to whether Mr Cameron has misunderstood the theoretical construct behind the value and capacity of human and social capital (Coleman 1988, Field 2008, Putnam 2000), because it is unlikely to compensate for the short-falls or persistent failures of dysfunctionality in social politics and the decline of the welfare state.

In contrast to America, social work in Britain has and continues to focus on children, mentally ill and socially-disadvantaged people as opposed to the chronically ill and the elderly (Weiss *et al.* 2002 cited Redmond *et al.* 2008). Even though local authorities commission services to the private sector, there is barely a market for individuals paying privately for a social worker in the UK. Welfare and social work developed progressively over several centuries in Britain, advanced by humanists, philanthropists, and especially women. They devoted their time, aptitudes with compassion to helping the underprivileged and thus began to lay down the foundation for the emergence and development of social work as a profession. Initially their activities and achievements centred on the restoration of impaired capacity, the provision of individual and social resources, as well as the prevention of 'social dysfunction' (Skidmore *et al.* 1997). Similarly, Stevenson (1976) emphasised the social function of social work needing to be seen in the

context of social developments and influences that created economic and social problems by industrialised society. Hence, she maintained that social work:

[...] is inextricably bound up with the prevailing attitudes of the society which requires its services. [...] however [...] considerable moral conflicts may arise for the social worker in reconciling the needs and demands of different elements in society' (Stevenson 1976:123).

Hitherto, this perception was stated by Walton (1975:187), who additionally highlighted the fact that men remain in charge of decision making:

The selflessness of many women's motivation for social work had led to a situation in which they had been used unthinkingly in a man's world to meet many social needs. [...] Whilst social work was linked in the public mind with being a women's profession there were limits to its growth, and a dependence upon sympathetic men in responsible positions.

The role of women within society, throughout history, has always been intrinsically linked to socio-economic factors, but women have been largely unappreciated for their vital role within society. This observation was supported by Mies' (1988) concept of the 'housewifisation of work' and further corroborated by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:174) affirmation that: 'the role that women play [...] within the household as well as outside of it, is always devalued if not dismissed'. Nonetheless, women are the backbone of society, from home makers and child-bearers to working on farms and in factories, when men enter into wars or built financial empires. Quintessentially, women are the 'social and human capital' (Coleman 1988; Field 2008; Putnam 2000) on which our society is built, and without women society would not fully function. I am aware that my line of argument could be turned around in favour of men.

However, the case I am making is to emphasise the relevance of women to society with the focus on social welfare contributions. Moreover, I want to illustrate the roles and functions women occupy in the creation of social and human capital within society. Coleman (1988:96) argued that a person's actions are shaped, as well as constrained, by the 'social context' and thus deemed of importance in the functioning of society as well as the economy. Coleman's (1988) argument can be interpreted to mean that women were available and thought of as most suitable to attend to the sick or poor of society. Through women's charitable and humanitarian actions to help the underprivileged or oppressed of society, women have utilised their 'human capital' (Coleman 1988:98). Women's skills and capabilities constructed new and different ways, thus shaping and changing their roles and responsibilities within society. However, women's liberation remains a struggle in a society which is ruled by men and where decisions are essentially

made by men, because of 'the fundamental asymmetry between men and women' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:174). Besides, Nussbaum's (2011) concept of capabilities raises the question as to whether women are given access to the same opportunities in society as men. She argues that if a person does not have the 'freedom to choose' their options based on their abilities, consequently they are deprived basic social justice to exercise their capabilities within a patriarchal ruled society (Nussbaum 2011).

Furthermore, women's functions in society could be defined as the 'social capital' (Coleman 1988:99), because they have become a 'source' to draw on to fulfill social welfare functions. This notion is sustained by Field (2008:65) who stated that, particularly in deprived communities 'women are generally expected to serve as care-givers' to their families and in their close-knit communities; consequently providing the social welfare state with a source of human and social capital. Indeed, Coleman (1988:116) emphasised 'the importance of social capital in the creation of human capital', because human capital cannot be viewed in isolation and considerations about the importance and value of social capital along with other environmental, contextual and societal influences needed to be rendered in a 'reciprocal interchange'. In addition, Coleman (1988:100) reasoned that social capital changes the relations among people who facilitate actions. It could be further argued, that women can be seen as 'change agents' in the light of the social and welfare reforms they have facilitated over the centuries.

The relevance of social capital has been discussed by Putnam (2000), identifying the interconnectedness between the individual and the communities for the welfare of the whole of a nation's socio-economic growth and development. Additionally, he identified the importance and value of education and he concluded that '[...] educated people are more engaged with the community [...] and [...] more education means more participation' (Putnam 2000:187). This statement can be verified in the sense that all the women reviewed in the previous chapter were 'educated' women. They participated through their actions in society and facilitated reforms for the benefit of the less educated or less active members of society. Moreover, those women had been equally pivotal in organising services within communities and generated educational and academic advances.

Coleman (1988), Field (2008) and Putnam's (2000) theories are very positive models of achieving change and transforming societies, but somewhat idealistic or limited when viewed in the light of cultural differences. For example in America there is, generally speaking, a much stronger community sense and a "can do"

mentality or attitude. Whereas in the United Kingdom people very much prefer to 'mind their own business' and rely more upon local and central government to resolve problems, so do not wish to get involved. Considering these cultural differences between America and the United Kingdom, the 'lack of community spirit and social connectedness' might impact on the social capital and can potentially create 'inequality or antisocial behaviour', according to Field (2008).

Adding another dimension to the discussion is Bourdieu's (1984) 'cultural capital' theory and the 'transmission of cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1984:23). The cultural transmission of educational values, combined with financial resources to access education or pursue a professional career, often remains connected with a person's social origins, social status and class. The level of education often determines the availability, preparedness or disposition to participate and to contribute to society. Cultural and educational inequalities thus can lead to inequalities in society.

Cultural capital could be further discussed with regard to gender or race and the 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:170) inherent in patriarchal societies. It could be argued that women in a dominant patriarchal society are subjectified and stereotyped through the process of education and the resources available to them. Therefore, they are predisposed to act in the caring role, or undertake charitable work, as in the case of the early pioneers. Furthermore, taking the aspect of race into the cultural capital discussion might raise questions with regard to the dominance of white ethnicity within the field of social work. Social work education and the 'ethnic knowledge' (Lewis 1997:232) is only used as 'capital' within social work when there is a need to engage with service users from a non-white culture. Consequently, Devine-Eller (2005:22; referring to Bourdieu) deduced that within social work:

... race and ethnicity as crucial components of habitus [...] mediate actors' abilities to bring their cultural capital to bear in ways that are advantageous to them in a given field.

4.4. The changing face of social work

Social work was and still is very much grounded in social sciences, but also connected to philanthropy and humanistic science, anchored by the moral scrutiny of society's value. The secularisation from religiously driven charitable work to a

more social science orientated profession was argued by Halmos (1970 cited Walton 1975:262) who proclaimed that 'social work is a moral force gradually superseding that of religion'. Moreover, Martin (2008:414) mentioned that the 'moral imperative of compassion and benevolence' related to the 'Religion of Humanity' as devised by Auguste Comte. This dogma offered 'an ethical substitute for traditional Christianity' and promoted 'positive social action' and 'active citizenship', according to Martin (2008:414). This moral code can be identified in the core values of social work as cited earlier (IASSW and IFSW 2001), where the social worker is very much needed to support those affected by poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion (Asquith *et al.* 2005). The development of social work was supported by social movements, some of them rooted in religious belief systems, and others established on a conviction of social justice. The social movements initiated changes and reforms in conditions for the poor, the sick, children, women, and the elderly within society as discussed earlier. The emphasis on helping people that live in deprived, oppressed and disadvantage positions has remained the same, although the theoretical frameworks and practical approaches have changed, thus generating a debate within academia.

Thompson (2002:711) discussed the impact and relevance of 'social movements that have influenced the sociological debate' and the functions of social justice within social work. He accredited the sociological perspective in social work to an emancipatory practice which challenged discrimination and oppression in pursuit of social justice: 'thereby throwing the inherent social work tensions between care and control into sharp relief' (Thompson 2002:712). Without social movements for social justice there would not be any social change, Thompson (2002) concluded. Furthermore, Ferguson and Woodward (2009) discussed the importance and the power that collectivist approaches can carry in order to achieve change. They saw the Settlement Movement as a principal example that offered 'an alternative of sorts to the individualised, victim-blaming approach practiced by the COS' (Ferguson and Woodward 2009:132). Moreover, the dynamics between social movement and social change can be deemed as intrinsically interlinked, because changes in society can either be instigated by social movements, or social movements can form as a reaction to 'burning' socio-political issues that are relevant (or prevalent at the time) to achieve social justice. Consequently, it could be argued that social work and the theories underpinning it remain in constant flux. Current social work theory, policy and practice have increasingly retreated from a person-centred (Rogers 1951) approach, or individual contacts and direct work with individuals (Ferguson 2001), to a more task-centred and bureaucratic ICT dominated case management function

(Wrennall 2010). This may be partly due to the current socio-economic climate, but also influenced by the change of government in 2010 with the new political agenda of the 'Big Society'.

The changing nature of social work was discussed by Cree (2009:20) who stated that social work as a profession has 'changed beyond recognition as jobs which social work students trained for twenty years ago no longer exist'. New job roles and responsibilities have been created to cater for the changing demands of society. Furthermore, agencies that provided those welfare services have changed and continue to change, not just depending on demand but, as we currently experience in a climate of socio-economic calamity, due to budget restraints. In particular agencies from the voluntary, independent and private sector are affected and have to cease services due to financial and funding cuts. These reductions in funding for social work services has without doubt had an impact on those living in poverty and other disenfranchised members of society.

Cree (2009) drew parallels to the American system and administration of social work where social work service providers created a division between purchaser and provider of welfare functions. Increasing control of public spending, intensifying systems of regulation and inspection, with a centralised control of social work and social workers, has changed the parameters of social work. The purchaser-provider split is perceived as the main challenge and possible hindrance to 'developing community-based and collectivist approaches in social work', according to Ferguson and Woodward (2009:139). Yet, the emerging and rising dissatisfaction in the social work profession could be employed as an opportunity to undertake community based approaches.

The tension between the care and the control function of social work, as discussed in social work literature, features the dichotomy of the individual versus the society with the notion about the fragmentation of society towards an individualisation (Ferguson 2001; Ferguson and Woodward 2009; Thompson 2002; Wrennall 2010). Furthermore, this tension raised questions as to whether social work has increasingly moved away from its roots, or whether social workers can challenge the discriminations inherent in this arising conflict (Asquith *et al.* 2005). Nonetheless, Cree (2009) maintained that the changes social work has been subjected to, neither has, nor will, alter the central function and purpose of social work.

Another aspect that required consideration in the debate regarding the development of the social work profession is the changed perception by society of

social workers. Historically, people who undertook charitable, social care and welfare tasks would customarily been seen as benevolent, kind, generous and compassionate humanitarians who helped the sick, the poor, the helpless, the disadvantaged or the disenfranchised and marginalised members of society. However, this view seems to have altered in the recent past, due to high profile cases, where social services were involved in, or aware of, instances of children suffering abuse, yet did not intervene early enough to protect these children and prevent their deaths.

The most prominent cases in recent years were Victoria Climbié's death in 2000 and Baby Peter's death in 2007. In both cases, the public blame was laid at the doorstep of the social services departments and their social workers, even though other professionals, such as paediatricians and the police, had knowledge of the children, but not acted upon any child protection concerns. There is no doubt about the insufficiencies of the social workers in both cases; however, it is the media and the prejudicial publicity which has vilified social work and not questioned the responsibility of the other professionals involved with the same vigilance. The reports and recommendations by Lord Laming (2003, 2009) and Professor Elaine Munro (DfE 2011) outlined the mistakes that were made. However, Laming (2003, 2009) recommended tighter bureaucracy, whereas Munro (DfE 2011), together with Wrennall (2010), criticised the over-bureaucratised surveillance and ICT reliant systems that actually fail human beings because of the lack of personal face-to-face contact. There is certainly some truth in the critique by Munro (DfE 2011) and Wrennall (2010), because, if personal attention had been given to the children and attempts been pursued to actually see or speak to Victoria or Peter, professionals might have realised that these children were suffering abuse.

Respectively, Munro (DfE 2011), Laming (2009) and the Social Work Task Force (2009) all agree that social workers are undervalued. Thus, the question for social work education is not only how to 'boost morale', but also how the diverse demands, changes and challenges can be adhered to in line with social work value systems and the professional 'Code of practice' (GSCC 2002). Social work cannot be seen as either a purely academic science, nor as a bureaucratic exercise of 'ticking boxes', or meeting targets. Instead social work needs to be comprehended in its historical, socio-economic, political and cultural contexts which include characteristics of the particular country and the welfare regime with its traditions of welfare systems, according to Hämäläinen (2008).

Like social workers, police and health professionals are front-line workforce, but it appears that social workers bear the brunt when things go wrong. It seems that social workers are not much appreciated by society as the following caricature illustrates:

Reproduced from *Modern Social Work Practice* by Mark Doel and Steven M. Shardlow, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2005

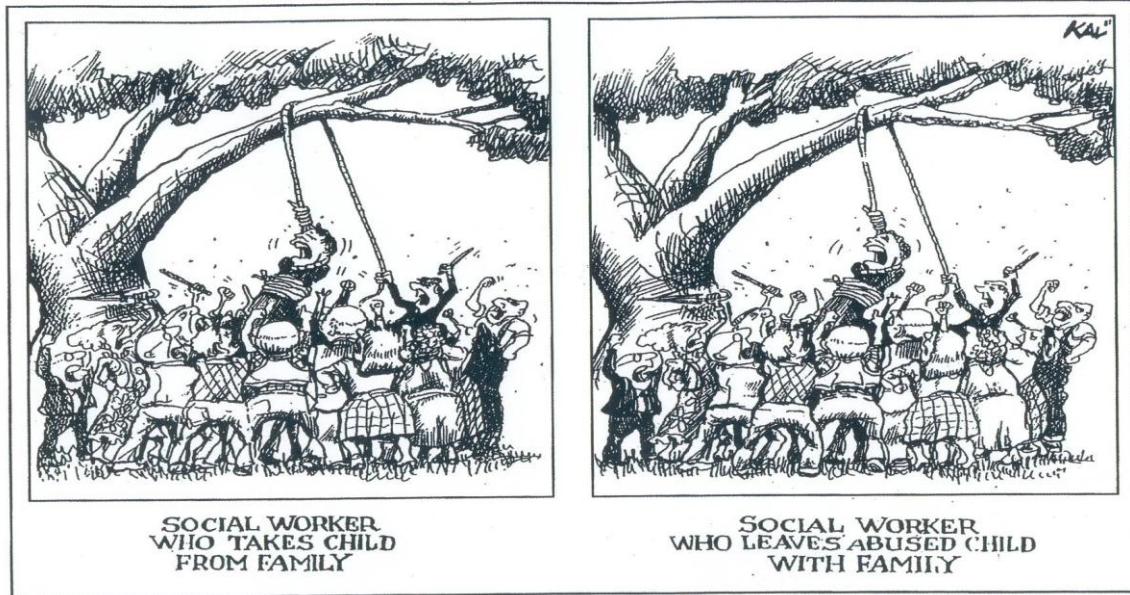


Figure 13.1 'The social worker cannot win?' by Kevin Kallaughar

The pertinence of the context of cultural norms and expectations in correlation to responding to child abuse cases was evidenced in an international study of seven countries conducted by Madrid *et al.* (2002). They found, depending on the cultural expectations and norms of a country that social work involvement would either be expected, or not even be considered, depending on the meeting of a country's thresholds granting intervention (Madrid *et al.* 2002). However, in the UK, according to Weiss *et al.* (2002 cited Redmond *et al.* 2008), child welfare and child protection is high on the priority of many social work entrants, yet children's social services are the ones that have given rise to adverse publicity. Consequently, the UK government commissioned reports and investigations into how to reform the social work workforce (Social Work Task Force 2009). A discussion was held in the House of Commons with regard to social worker training and education in order to safeguard children:

When social workers are poorly trained - lacking in knowledge, skills, or experience - or left unsupported in highly pressured situations, children's lives are put in danger. Intellectual ability, personal resilience, and good supervision are not important because they bring more prestige to the profession or more job satisfaction to the individual. These things are

important because they are needed when analysing potential risks to children, dealing professionally with obstructive parents, and reflecting on whether the right decisions are being made at the right times. (House of Commons 2009:3).

The relevance of supervision is pertinent, but equally of importance are the dynamics and the values of a personal and professional 'conversation' within social work teams, according to White (1997). An ethnography research study by White (1997) into the communication and information transmission between social workers highlighted the uniqueness of 'talk and text' in social worker's oral and written reporting which is central to inter-agency working and information sharing. White (1997) investigated the construction and implications of moral accounts and decision making processes and the discursive dynamics of the spoken and written account of the assessment processes in social work, with the particular impact on child protection and safeguarding. The neglect of 'talk and text' in theoretical writings and the presuppositions imposed by politics or empirical studies, according to White (1997), obscured the diverse possibilities within social work experience and expertise. Thus, the skilful rhetorical work which goes into the maintenance of certain institutional realities is neglected, White (1997) concluded.

Summarising, the literature conveyed that traditionally social work was concerned about the welfare of children, with the aim to protect, educate and support children. Even though each country has its unique problems and challenges to overcome and attend to, there appears a common denominator within all social welfare systems; - explicitly, that the majority of the social welfare work is delivered by women. I considered the discussed concepts and approaches of social work relevant in relation to the argument of social positioning of women within the social work workforce. This resumed the focus on the role of women in social work and their motivations for entering the profession.

4.5. Women dominating the social work encounter – is social work a 'natural calling' for women?

I reviewed and questioned the motivational factors regarding the reasons for women's involvement in charitable work in the past. My next question was why women chose to study and commit themselves to the profession of social work today. I hoped to find some more answers and possible corresponding similarities through my small-scale research investigation. Reviewing the research and the literature about women in social work today necessitated considering the areas of

work and categories social workers get involved with. This might render explanations why there is a high percentage of women working in the field.

Similarly, Payne (2006) characterised social work into three approaches:

- the therapeutic views
- the social order views
- the transformational views

Dominelli (2009:3) suggested that social work could be categorised into three approaches:

- the therapeutic helping approach
- the ‘maintenance’ approach
- the emancipatory approach.

Considering the above social work categories, it appeared apparent that their activities and purposes of social work consider implications for welfare provision in society. Thus investigating why women want to work as social workers, could be overlaid with the other theoretical notions mentioned before, that of the ‘wounded helper’, ‘social justice repairer’, or ‘social justice fighter’. Having explored the historical and current purposes of social work and having reviewed the biographies of women who undertook any of these three functions, clear parallels can be seen to Dominelli (2009) and Payne’s (2006) categories.

However, the early pioneers’ motivations to engage in charitable and welfare work might have been rooted in helping others, but their efforts also need to be seen in context of the times. Charitable work was often the only option for middle-class women to escape their monotonous middle-class lives and venture out, not just for humanitarian but also ‘selfish reasons’, according to Cree and Myers (2008:24). Furthermore, their privileged position would have allowed these women not only the economic advantage but also the cultural advantage, thus enabling them to access education and undertake ‘humanitarian tasks’.

Henceforth, statements such as ‘women find social work a natural calling’ (Awasthi 2006) seem one-dimensional, or conversely that social work is something ‘for women to do in their free time’ (Awasthi 2006) seems despicably condescending. However, these statements are not surprising, considering the historical roots of social work and the view about women in society which is still often conveyed in academic literature today. Yet, social work can accomplish an empowering option for women who are caring and compassionate about others by awarding them

professional accreditation and recognition that offers the opportunity to gain financial independence. The 'financial reward and status' was given as one of the reasons and motivational factors to embark on a career in social work, alongside the notions of 'personal stimulation and growth' and 'to help others', as reported by Parker and Merrylees (2002:106). However, a recent study (Stevens *et al.* 2012) of 3,000 students in England found that their motivation was primarily based on altruistic rather than career factors.

Founded upon my professional experience, I am aware that, unlike the early pioneers of social work, the majority of female social workers or students today do not come from financially privileged nor religious backgrounds. Furthermore, I noticed that the majority of female social workers are not married, and some are single parents from working or middle-class backgrounds. However, a similarity with the early pioneers can be seen in their desire or motivation to help others, or maybe even themselves (Parker and Merrylees 2002, Redmond *et al.* 2008, Stevens *et al.* 2012). Moreover, it appears that social work policy is still shaped by professionals from a relatively middle-class or privileged position (Ferguson 2001), thus creating inequalities between social workers and their clients/ service users. What is more, there is a prevalence of gender bias within the middle-class itself, according to Martin (2008). Additionally, professional social work intervention is still more in line with 'adjustment' to society and social order, rather than empowerment, as claimed by Thompson (2002). Further substantiated evidence, focussed on comparing my information gathered about the early pioneers, with my research findings about social work students and social work professionals, is analysed and presented in chapter seven.

Social work and social work education, unlike other professions such as medicine, was and is not a typically male dominated profession. The moral and value base of social work is charity and philanthropy, with women taking a role in caring for others or 'reaching out to those despised by the general community' (Walton 1975:15). Moreover, Ferguson (2001:53) described that social workers need to be skilled in how to 'develop nurturing relationships with clients', which is often associated with the female personality trait. Similarly, Milner (2001) discussed the role of women in social work and the attributes and attitudes of their caring, nurturing and empathic abilities which she perceived as a particularly valuable source in her work with other women (clients). This notion is not a revelation, considering that not only the majority of social work is delivered by women and at the same time the majority of clients or service users are women and children.

This led Davis and Brook (1985:3) to conclude that on both sides 'women

dominate the social work encounter'. Yet, McPhail (2004 cited Sakamoto *et al.* 2008:38) termed social work a 'female majority, male dominated profession', referring to the facts that men not women are placed in strategic and decision-making positions.

Ferguson (2001:51) acknowledged that mothers are 'the single most important source' of referrals and the main person in the social work process of engagement. However, he challenged the female dominance in the social work profession, and asserted that:

[...] social work is only now beginning to shed its almost exclusive focus on women/mothers and to understand the changing nature of masculinity and start to engage with the challenges of working with men. (Ferguson 2001:53)

Nevertheless, surveying the figures from the Office for National Statistics, the NHS and the General Social Care Council (GSCC is the governing professional body for social work) they conveyed that the majority of students and qualified social workers are in fact women. Next, I examine some of the current statistical and demographical data, which is discussed later, when I seek to compare past and present demographics with the data from the participants of my research.

4.6. Gender and ethnicity in social work

In Britain there was a substantial decline of women in social welfare work from initially 60% in 1921, down to 48% in 1961 as indicated by the census data from those years (Walton 1975:190). However, according to Davis (2009 cited Arnot 2009), during the inter-war years in particular, social work was chosen by women as a career for life, like teaching or nursing. Many women never married, because the First World War had created a shortage of eligible men. It was also true to say that women teachers were generally prohibited from marrying (Newsom 1948:149 cited Littlewood 1989:183). Hence, the decline of women entering or working in the social work profession in the 1960s can be contributed to 'the reconstruction of family life' in post-war Britain (Brook and Davis 1985:15). Thus, women resumed their traditional stereotypical gender roles where women stayed at home and looked after the family. The number of women in social work did not increase again until the creation of local authority social services departments in the 1970s. Combined with a strong Women's movement around the same time, 'women reclaimed professional social work positions again' (Brook and Davis 1985:24).

However, gender matters remained an 'add on' and women's issues were not an integral part of the social work curriculum (McPhail 2008:45).

The tendency of near enough equal gender distribution of social work students as well as employed social workers has changed significantly over recent decades. This was confirmed by Davis (2009 cited Arnot 2009) who stated that 'women always come into the profession in greater numbers'. This was further evidenced in the GSCC's (2009) report, testifying that the gender distribution for England showed that the number of women increased from 80% of the social work students in 2004 to 84% in 2009. Whereas the data provided by the NHS (2011) for England, displayed a slight decrease of women working as social workers in Social Services Departments (SSD) from 81% in 2000 to 80% in 2010. The variation between the GSCC and the NHS (2011) data might be owed to either the fact that social work staff numbers in England decreased by nearly 10% between 2000 and 2010; or, the figures could differ due to the fact that the NHS data only referred to local authority staff and did not account for the private, voluntary, independent, and charitable sectors of social work, which form robust employers for social workers.

The examination of the NHS (2011) data with regard to the positions occupied by men in comparison to women working in SSD revealed, not surprisingly, that women presented the highest percentage of SSD staff working at the frontline of services with 83%. Whereas the highest percentage of men working in SSD were found in strategic positions, with 26% in 2010. The move of men towards higher professional positions was predictable from the GSCC's (2009) statistics, because proportionally more men enrolled on higher degree and master programmes than women. Not unexpectedly, the figures for the workforce disclosed that only 47% of the women, compared to 72% of the men, were working full-time in SSD (NHS 2011). Men working full-time might be part of the reason why the senior ranks in the social work profession are predominately occupied by men, even though social work was developed, and is applied in practice, by women in the majority. Recent research by Stevens *et al.* (2012:30) established that female social work students rated altruistic motivations higher than male students who assigned 'higher priority to career reasons'. This, they argue, could be the reason for the 'differential career progression within social work, with men being overrepresented in social work management' (Stevens *et al.* (2012:30)). Conversely, Williams (1992 cited Sakamoto *et al.* 2008:38) found, that men in the social work profession are more likely to experience what he termed the 'glass escalator'; whereas women are used to hit a 'glass ceiling' in their professional and career development.

Furthermore, Dominelli and McLeod (1989:15 cited Kirwan 1994:137) stated that, as a profession, social work 'reflects the common patriarchal pattern of women making up the base of the pyramid, with men occupying the summit'. Consequently, Kirwan (1994:138) exposed that even though women represent the majority of the workforce in social work, they have traditionally not been the 'resource holders'. She quoted Grimwood and Popplestone (1993: 27 cited Kirwan 1994:138) that 'men, as managers, have control over resources, including women workers'. This notion was further supported by Harlow (1998), who investigated the over-representation of men in the management of social services departments. Equally, White (2000) discussed the 'interface' between women social workers' experiences within statutory social work. Considering women's position in society, historically and still today, it is correspondingly reflected in the gendering order within the social work profession. Furthermore, combined with the fact that more women work part-time, or job-share than men, it is no surprise that men dominate managerial and policy making positions.

Women's disadvantaged position in the profession is an extension of women's disadvantaged position in the occupational order generally. The profession reflects the patriarchal social order in that the power within the profession is held by men and the 'careface' work is done by women. (Kirwan 1994:153)

Moreover, Kirwan (1994) debated that in addition to gender disparities within social work, there were further implications with regard to ethnic inequalities. She argued that, both gender and ethnicity together, added a horizontal segregation to the existing vertical segregation with limiting career progression opportunities in particular for women of black ethnic origin (Kirwan 1994). The notion of ethnic discrimination and inequality within the social work profession was discussed further by Lewis (1997) in her PhD thesis *Living the differences: ethnicity, gender and social work*. She described the changes during the 1980s, when 'immigrants' became re-labelled as 'ethnic minorities', and legislative changes required employers to offer 'equal opportunities' thus opening opportunities for black women to enter the social work profession (Lewis 1997). However, after the initial recruitment of 'black' social workers during the 1990s it was reported, according to Lewis (1997:323), that:

[...] black social workers were often viewed as a problem rather than an asset, and that black women seldom achieved managerial positions because of pervasive racism and sexism.

This exemplified not only the ethnic discrepancy concerned with regard to the exclusion to managerial opportunities of female and male social workers from black ethnic origin, but also implied assumption that 'black' social workers would be better suited to work with 'black' clients/ service users, based upon their cultural and ethnic heritage:

This articulation suggested that the management of those black families who could be defined as pathological or 'in need' required a specific 'ethnic' knowledge and in this way a space for the entry of black women into qualified social work was created. (Lewis 1997:2)

Nevertheless, this dichotomy of 'occupational situatedness' and 'ethnic knowledge' can actually be beneficial to the clients/service users, because as Lewis (1997) discovered during the interviews with black female social workers, they value their 'black experience' and were valued by their clients/service users.

It is precisely the ontological or foundational status of their collective 'experience' which confirms the importance of employing black women social workers in Social Services Departments. This 'experience' is said to produce an understanding, or form of knowledge, about the dynamics of racism (and class) and oppression both historically and contemporarily, which much of the client base will be familiar with. 'Experience' becomes the connective tissue binding social workers and clients and it is this which is vital for Social Services Departments. Their employment is an occupational and professional necessity based on a perspective of 'who feels it knows it'. (Lewis 1997:321)

Scrutinising current demographics for social work in terms of ethnicity, it became apparent that historically, and today, there is a 'White British' ethnic dominance in social work student numbers as well as professional social workers. According to the GSCC (2009), between 2000 and 2009 saw an 8% increase of students defining themselves as being from a Black and minority ethnic (BME) group. Whereas, the number of students defining themselves as 'White British' decreased from 78% in 2000, to around 70% students in 2009 (GSCC 2009). This trend was similar to the reported figures from the NHS (2011) that indicated a 2% increase of the BME group and a decrease of 'White British' ethnic origins of social services staff, from 85% in 2005 down to 83% in 2010. Correspondingly, male BME workers are underrepresented in management positions in social work (Skills for Care 2008 cited Stevens *et al.* 2012:31).

Additionally, and again not surprisingly, the statistics revealed, that the majority of social work students and social workers considered themselves as 'not disabled' or 'not having a disability'. Only 10% of social work students reported that they thought themselves to have some kind of disability with dyslexia (around 3 to 4% of all) as the most frequently reported disability (GSCC 2009). These figures for disability remained a constant figure over the years, according to the GSCC (2009). I could not locate any reported figures about staff with disabilities from the NHS to compare these with the GSCC data, but I would presume that the figures mirror the percentages.

The last statistics which I considered to be of relevance to my research, enabling me to compare and to contrast trends, were the starting ages of social work students embarking on their study at university. Before 2003 only one or two per cent of students enrolled on the social work study before the age of twenty, because of the regulation requiring the minimum age of twenty-three for qualified social workers. However, since the removal of this age restriction in the academic year of 2003/4 the proportion of students in this age group has risen steadily to 14% (GSCC 2009). This was further reflected in a reduction of the mean age of students entering social work study programmes from 33.6 to 30.7 years of age (GSCC 2009).

4.7. Motivation and self-awareness: the professional social worker

Having appraised some of the demographic data, it remains an unbroken tradition that the social work profession is dominated by women. In addition, it also needs to be acknowledged that the majority of staff within social work education have historically been, and are still today, predominately women lecturers (Kirwan 1994, Walton 1975).

The question with regard to the influences that prompts social work as a career choice for women was explored and international research for the social work and care profession from the United Kingdom, America, New Zealand and Australia, often produced similar results, according to Parker and Merrylees (2002). The different research studies reviewed by Parker and Merrylees (2002) indicated that the career choice to enter the social work profession was often influenced by prior experience of emotional and sometimes traumatic events within the family or close environment, as well as a sense of idealism and altruism. This is corroborated by Stevens *et al.*'s (2012:29) research, who found that 'personal experiences were often given as a reason for wanting to help others'. Therefore, Stevens *et al.* (2012) recommend that personal history should be explored with students to identify the benefits for social work education. Furthermore, Parker and Merrylees (2002) reasoned, using biographical interviews prior to commencement of study would be vital to ensure that students realise why they want to study social work, and also what possible personal unresolved issues they might bring with them. Otherwise, Parker and Merrylees (2002) argued, there are latent ethical implications and potential danger of transference of unsolved problems as unconscious motivational factors. Conscious and deliberate decisions

to study social work, based on personal biographical or family experience, can be a motivating factor to make situations better for others. This idealism to promote change is often an intrinsic factor. Parker and Merrylees (2002) found that, students who had experienced feelings of powerlessness due to labelling and judgement by other professionals in their (family) lives, felt strongly compelled to train as social workers. Those students wanted to be able to achieve change from within, as noticeably expressed by this student's quote: "to get rid of crap social workers and to take simple steps to make a difference" (cited Parker and Merrylees 2002:111). This notion was similarly echoed in Davis' (2009 cited Arnot 2009) testimonial about why students enrol on social work courses: 'they are not in it for the money or the glory. They're deeply concerned, angry in some cases, about inequality and injustice.' This was further confirmed by Stevens *et al.* (2012:23 and also see table in appendix 17) who found that students are in social work, because they want to help others and wish to tackle injustice and inequalities above career prospects, with over a third of students considering social work an 'especially suitable career' because of their life experiences.

These, either negative and/or positive, experiences influencing people to study social work could potentially make these students the 'wounded helper' and/or the 'social justice fighter'. Even though these categories are not exclusive, they might even complement each other. Furthermore, these categories could 'qualify' a professional social worker in the sense: '*who feels it knows it*', as discussed by Lewis (1997:321) with regard to race. This was exemplified in David Brandon's (1941-2001) family experiences which influenced his professional choices. Brandon gave the 'wounded helper' phrase credit, in the sense that he actually *knew* what it felt like to be a client/service user. As mentioned before, this is a valuable experience that cannot be read in books or studied at university. Smith (2006) commended Brandon's seminal contribution to social work and in particular the understanding of mental health problems and homelessness. Brandon had experienced both problems, and therefore was able to draw upon his experiences when he later practiced as a psychiatric social worker. Brandon was involved with charities such as Mind and Centrepoint, and he set up Britain's first homeless women's shelter in Soho (Smith 2006). Brandon's case is a very good example of how he initially became drawn into difficult life situations due to his dysfunctional family background. Nonetheless, Brandon was able to overcome his adverse life circumstances which not only motivated him to initiate changes in social work, but also made him a compassionate and empathic 'expert'. Brandon's book (1976) *Zen in the art of helping* gained worldwide popularity, and one of the core messages about compassion explains his philosophy:

Compassion is an unpopular word nowadays. It points towards commitment, involvement, caring, love and generosity of heart. [...] However, compassion lies at the heart of all helping; without it relationships between people are like dry leaves in the wind. (Brandon 1976:48)

Corresponding to Brandon's instance, it needed to be acknowledged how relevant and influencing biographical experience is in creating an evident connection between biography and the choices to enter certain professions, which often can be influenced through family history. This notion was further supported by Chamberlayne *et al.* (2000:7):

We make our own history but not under conditions of our own choosing, and we need to understand these conditions of action more if our future making of our own history is to produce outcomes closer to our intentions and projects.

Yet, the historical family and biographical background can be beneficial for the professional relationship with clients/service users; because if the social worker has had experiences similar to those of the clients/ service users, then they show potentially higher levels of empathy or understanding to the clients/service users' situation. Thus, the social worker might use their transferable empathy and compassion to assist clients/ service users to overcome or change their predicament. Considering that within social work, similar to counselling, there are no 'tools' to do the job, apart from the professionals themselves. They are the sounding board, as well as the initiator and facilitator or advocate, enabling clients/service users to address their problems. Thus, the professional relationship can empower clients/service users to change their life situations and to overcome the obstacles that hindered them to fully participate in society.

Therefore, professionals in the social work and care profession need to have a sound self-awareness and the ability to be 'reflective practitioners' (Schön 1983). Furthermore, an awareness of reflexivity within the practitioner and client/service user professional relationship is essential. The concept of reflexivity as a praxis model was advised by Freire (1970), because he considered that men and women should reflect on their actions within their world in order to transform it. Consequently, previous life experience and emotional literacy in social work can be considered as a necessary 'tool' to enable a reflexive common ground that resonates the issues of the clients/service users. Thus, permitting the 'new importance of social work' to facilitate 'self-actualisation and healing', according to Ferguson (2001:49). The significance, and yet the potential ethical dilemma, of biography and personal history of the social worker, that can enhance or hinder a

social work encounter, requires awareness, reflection and reflexivity prior to or during the course of study. Moreover, social workers need to constantly readdress their personal history through self-reflection, and most importantly through supervision of their work, as highlighted by Munro (DfE 2011). Equally, Redmond *et al.* (2008) identified supervision as the main form of support available to social workers, which also assists the job satisfaction and reduces stress levels. Reduced stress levels enhanced social workers 'subjective well-being', as found in the research by Graham and Shier (2010). Furthermore, supervision, conducted frequently and performed correctly, should be a reflective exercise which could also reduce stress levels and enhance well-being (Graham and Shier 2010).

The social worker's self-awareness was even more challenged since narrative approaches, life story work, or biography work became central elements of social work practice (Rutten *et al.* 2010). Similarly, Milner (2001:49) acknowledged that the social worker may not be 'neutral' and especially in the work with women clients/service users who for example disclosed abuse, a 'sympathetic receiving of a disclosure' is vital for a successful process. However, she cautioned that biography and narrative approaches must not assume that the experiences of women social workers 'of being a woman are the same as service users' (Milner 2001:66). Furthermore, a narrative approach has been used in medicine to gain a better understanding of the patient's illness or disease that included the exploration of their historical and biographical background. Thus, investigating the development, as well as coping with the illness or disease was explored, because 'narrative skills enable one person to receive and understand the stories told by another' (Charon 2006:3). It could be argued that the central skills for social workers, apart from empathy and compassion, are active listening skills, communication and negotiation skills. These qualities and skills are expected and required of women whilst bringing up a family. Hence, stereotypically-speaking, women appear to be most suitable for the social work occupation; - or as mentioned earlier in Henrietta Barnett's words that women have the moral gift as 'peace makers' (Koven 2004:1024).

Another interesting rationalisation why women are possibly best suited for social work, not only as 'peace makers' but also as 'rescuers', could be drawn from Cournoyer (2008). He examined the triangular communication patterns which appear within family systems and that are often mirrored in the social worker and client/service user relationship. Cournoyer (2008) made reference to Karpman's (1968, 1971) theory of the 'drama triangle' in families, groups or communities, within which the roles of Persecutor/ Villain, Victim and Rescuer are allocated.

Karpman's (1968, 1971 cited Cournoyer 2008) theory suggested, that the social worker will take the Rescuer's role in helping and supporting the Victim (i.e. abused child) against the Persecutor/Villain. Another variation was considered by Karpman (1968, 1971 cited Cournoyer 2008), where the client/service user is the Villain (i.e. using drugs or crime), and society needs to be rescued from them with the help of the social work profession.

It could be speculated that the field of social care and social work is a suitable area where women can take the role of 'rescuer' or 'peace maker' for two or more reasons. Firstly, women are more likely to have experienced being a 'victim' or experienced 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Therefore, women can be empathic and might feel the need to 'rescue' others, thus fitting the category of the 'wounded helper'. Secondly, women are often able to communicate and engage better, or are more proficient at negotiating efficiently, due to emotional literacy skills. Thirdly, all the other high-ranking 'rescuer' roles in society (war, politics and science) are customarily occupied by men. Therefore, women found a professional 'niche' to act as rescuers, protectors or peace makers to the disadvantaged, marginalised and disenfranchised members of society.

4.8. Social workers' attitudes – fit for practice?

My earlier discussions revealed that the main area of concern, and work of the early pioneers and current social workers in the UK, has traditionally been with regard to child welfare and child protection. This might further explain why women are attracted and motivated to work in social work.

However, research by Redmond *et al.* (2008) drew attention to changes in attitudes and perceptions of social work students over the course of study. Redmond *et al.* (2008) found, that many students came initially into social work with the wish to work in child protection or child welfare, but at the end of the study they were reluctant to continue working in that field. The research discovered, that 87% of the students had gained experiences in child welfare and protection in their practice placements, but all students highlighted the risk involved and the need for supportive supervision in that particular area of social work (Redmond *et al.* 2008:879). The imperative of good supervision and access to support for social workers was highlighted in Graham and Shier's (2010:1562) study as 'key to their perceived SWB' (subjective well-being). According to Redmond *et al.* (2008), negative attitudes to social work in child protection gave rise for concerns in

particular for employers, because Children's Services have experienced high staff turnover:

International data show that difficulties in retention of social workers in child protection and welfare settings is of chronic proportions, citing high caseloads, lack of support and weak leadership among the main reasons for staff attrition. [...] and above all, the need for strong and clear supervision to address social work retention problems [...] (Redmond *et al.* 2008:879)

In contrast, research by Graham and Shier (2010) argued, that in the literature too much emphasis is focussing on the negative aspects within social work, such as burnout or staff turnover. Whereas, their research on the 'subjective well-being' (SWB) of social workers in Canada found, that there was a correlation between the cohesion of personal and professional value bases which contributed to job satisfaction and SWB in connection with overall life satisfaction (Graham and Shier 2010). An interesting aspect of their findings conveyed that 'how pursuing the social justice component of the profession improved [...] work-related SWB' as well as that the profession 'can positively contribute to a social problem' (Graham and Shier 2010:1558, 1559).

Moreover, the research findings insinuated that an individual's level to 'construct meaning' for professional practices, as well as in their personal lives, was often associated with 'an entire way of being and relating to the world' (Graham and Shier 2010:1565, 1566). Even though not explicitly stated by Graham and Shier (2010), apart from the fact that the majority of research participants were women, I wondered if these attributions to SWB are typically female. Thus, when encountering the, at times rather harsh realities of social work with its lack of resources and lack of supervision, women might be more inclined to leave the profession.

Nonetheless, the fact remained, that high staff turnover is a reality in social service departments, and this is further mirrored in the student retention rates in universities. As Tickle (2010) reported, universities' failure rates would be higher, were it not for financial penalties imposed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Even though the student application numbers were seen to have risen, but nearly one in seven social work students in England failed to complete their study course, according to the General Social Care Council (GSCC 2010 cited McGregor 2010).

However, a spokesperson from the GSCC (2010 cited McGregor 2010) claimed that these figures are 'no different from other professions, which see year-on-year, an average 18% withdrawal rate'. The reasons for non-completion were stated to be

illness, maternity leave or the failure to achieve the academic requirements, according to McGregor's (2010) report. Again, not surprising are the reasons for withdrawal, considering that the majority of students are women, therefore a higher pregnancy rate would be expected in comparison to other degree studies (i.e. engineering). Also, when it comes to caring for family members, again in the majority of cases, women are most likely to take over these caring responsibilities. Supporting findings by Brown (2008) concluded that, because of the fact that the majority of social work students were women, universities needed to offer flexible programmes that allow for students with dependants.

Another aspect highlighted by Brown (2008), which possibly affects retention figures, were students with additional learning support needs. Whereas, Kirwan (1994:137) questioned the importance of equal opportunity, and argued that social work education, with the focus on students' practice issues, were ignoring the fact that social work training and the profession continues to oppress women and the female workforce.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to know, how many students realised themselves that social work was not what they expected it to be; or how many students, who are not suitable for the profession, were being made to withdraw from the course. Yet, according to Tickle (2010), universities are being accused of apparently pushing poorly performing students through social work degree courses for financial reasons. The poor performance attribution was usually in connection to their academic achievements, rather than their practice performance. This was evidenced in the statement made by a university lecturer in discussion with Tickle (2010:1):

"Social work training is absolutely not about recruiting "good-hearted people who can't string a sentence together", he says. But he adds: "I know some brilliant social workers who got a third at university."

Conversely, the report by the House of Commons (2009:29), actually made recommendations to universities, that they should ensure offering places to 'experienced applicants who lack an academic background but whose personal attributes would be valuable assets to the profession'. Equally, my professional concerns are principally focussed on the personal, rather than academic, 'fit to practice' aspect of social work, as debated in the House of Commons (2009) report, the Social Work Task Force (2009) report, and the Munro (DfE 2011) report. The report by the House of Commons (2009:34) stated, that 'penalties for student attrition in the higher education funding regime encourage universities to keep students who are unfit for practice'. This worry is further highlighted by Tickle's

(2010:1) quote of a social work practice assessor who stated that "It sometimes feels that it is impossible to fail a student."

These accounts were of concern to me, because the initial impetus to write my dissertation was prompted by my involvement in assessing potentially failing students, in my capacity as a second-opinion social work practice teacher, for the cooperating university. The majority of those thought to be failing students had personal and emotional residue issues which overshadowed their ability to work safely with other vulnerable members of society. Thus, based upon my professional assessment, recommendations to fail or withdraw the students had to be advised to the university's panel. This type of assessment, and the decision as to whether a person is 'fit for practice', in line with the safeguarding of vulnerable service users, is not a one-dimensional linear decision that can be assessed at entry level to the study. Consequently, the House of Commons' (2009:11) report summarised that:

Children's lives are put at risk when those who have responsibility for protecting the most vulnerable are not adequately prepared for the task or supported in performing it. The quality of entrants to the social work profession, the knowledge and skills imparted to them in their training, and the supervision and further development they have access to once in employment are all vital to keeping children safe.

Furthermore, the House of Commons' (2009:31) recommendations for universities were: to assess the 'personal qualities' of social work applicants, through the involvement of clients/ service users and employers, as part of the selection process; thus, to assist identifying those candidates with the potential to be effective social workers, not just 'successful students'. Concluding, the 'importance of supervision' was highlighted, as well as a 'pre-study placement' was another suggestion for 'standard practices' (House of Commons 2009:31).

The pre-study placement has been a mandatory requirement in other European countries for many decades, as I recall when I embarked on the social work study in the mid-1980s in Germany. Furthermore, the Social Work Task Force (2009:7) stipulated, that a balance should be found between 'academic and personal skills', when testing and interviewing social work applicants. Needless to add, that there is no guarantee that applicants with the desired 'personal attitudes' are appropriately recruited and selected. Firstly, students can withhold the true account of their biographical experience and their motivation to enter the study. Secondly, students may be unaware of their underlying issues which may hinder or distort the social work encounter. Thirdly, as discussed earlier, the biographical

history may actually be invaluable for the successful engagement with clients/service users in the social work psycho-dynamic interactions.

The motivational factor of wanting to help others, met by the reality of the potentially emotionally challenging nature of social work, was reported in an interview with a new graduate by the GSCC (2010), who gave the following testimony:

"I chose to do a Masters in Social Work because I felt that it was the most effective way in which I could make a direct and positive difference in other peoples' lives. [...] I learnt that as a social worker you are constantly challenged to contain emotions and carry uncertainties, whilst maintaining a positive attitude and a solution-focussed approach. [...]

It is a vocation that requires profound dedication and deep-rooted values. Therefore, social work students should reflect on their own values and on what they expect from their practice. I believe that reflexivity is the cornerstone of best practice. In fact, I keep my own reflective journal on a daily basis. Without reflection and proactive enquiry into our own values, there will be no room for empathy, and no room for effective social work practice."

I consider this quote by a female graduate summarised some of the main aspects and propositions that have been discussed, such as the notion of social work being a vocation, inextricably linked to personal values as well as the necessity of reflection. The principle, that the professional social work value base was often interlinked with the personal value base of social workers and contributed to their 'subjective well-being', was observed in Graham and Shier's (2010) research. The motivational factors and the underlying values of social work students and qualified social workers were tested in my small-scale research project, and the findings are discussed, and compared to the discoveries from the literature reviewed in a later chapter.

4.9. Summary – women making a difference

The early pioneers of social work demographics, compared to data about women social workers today, indicated different, yet similar, motivations over hundreds of years. There appeared to be an indication of a common theme with regard to the wounded helper or the social justice fighter paradigm. Furthermore, it appeared that the welfare and protection of children was a pertinent and central part of social work practice over the centuries. Considerations were assumed to the potential relatedness of social work having evolved as a gendered profession, dominated by women and the subsequent attention on child welfare as a

'instinctive' or stereotypical affair, governed by men in political positions that required women to negotiate restorative functions.

The importance of scrutinising the recruitment and selection of suitable applicants for social work study, with particular reference to 'personal qualities' and a sound value base was illustrated. The consequential implications for social work training and education is further discussed later, as it appears that not only women 'dominate' the social work encounter, but also women are in the majority in academia. Yet, women are less likely to be found in managerial positions in social work or in academia, as corroborated by Sakamoto *et al.* (2008:38) international study that found: 'Consistent patterns of female faculty being less likely than men to be tenured and for women to be more numerous at the lowest rank of academia.'

Next, the following chapter considers women researching women and the implications for the feminist researcher in preparation to justify suitable methodological approaches for undertaking my small-scale research.

CHAPTER 5

Women researching women – The feminist researcher

Feminist researchers seek to make visible the lived experiences of women and the research and writing process within social science generally and within feminist social science in particular. [...] surveying the principles of feminist research methodologies, posits reflexivity as a feminist issue [...] The experience of oppression due to sexism, to which both researcher and researched are subjected, can create a unique type of insight and an ability to decipher 'official' explanations and grasp gender relations and their mechanisms (Fonow and Cook 1991:1). These insights teach us not only about gender relations, but also about society as a whole. (Lentin 1994:1)

5.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the research methodologies for the thesis and justifies my feminist grounded theory approach that reflects on my reflexivity as a researcher within the research process. Starting from a feminist viewpoint, and combining it with the auto/biographical and interpretative approach, I discuss the intersubjectivity and reflexivity implied in the research process. Whereas the next chapter is going to discuss and justify the actual research tools selected for my research project, but first I considered it pertinent to evidence the rigour of my feminist researcher position.

5.2. Feminist Research

My interest in feminism and feminist grounded research methodology derives from having been a student in the mid-eighties in Germany. I was drawn to feminist thinking and ideology due to my political interest and activism, as well as the *Zeitgeist* during the period in Germany and within academia. In my degree studies I read the works of the German sociologist Maria Mies (1988, 1998) who asserted that women, not men, are best equipped to undertake research for women. Mies (2010:154) reflected on her approach to research and stated that the traditional methods of empirical social research 'with its false claim to objectivity' would not acknowledge the importance of 'partiality and solidarity with those afflicted', which she considered pertinent in her feminist research methods. Upholding this position, feminist researchers like Holloway

(2000b:170) asserted that 'it needs women to investigate women's experiences'.

Corroborating this view further, Van Manen (1990:12), a male Dutch academic, wrote:

[...] to understand what it means to be a woman in our present age is also to understand the pressures of the meaning structures that have come to restrict, widen, or question the nature and ground of womanhood.

Therefore, I felt privileged, as well as entitled, to investigate women social workers from a feminist standpoint. Consequently, I viewed this as pertinent not only owing to my gender, but also due to being a female social worker and social work practice teacher to social work students. Thus, these experiences provide me with the necessary personal and professional understanding of the subject matter and equipped me to undertake the research. My methodology for this research inquiry was rooted in a feminist grounded paradigm from a phenomenological standpoint (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Stanley 2000). It was anticipated, that through the application of strategies which aspired to illuminate the motivational factors and probable epiphanies (Denzin 1989), to find answers to my thesis why women choose social work as their profession.

My reasons for employing a feminist research methodology paradigm were manifold. The obvious reason was that, being female, I focussed on investigating women's views from a female's perspective. In line with the feminist paradigm, I wanted to give women a 'voice' (David 2003). Thus articulating my ideas in an auto/ biographical approach as discussed by Stanley (1990, 1992, 2000). Moreover though, as feminists argued, 'women's experiences had been appropriated, reconceptualized in androcentric terms, and entered into the record as scientific data' (Middleton 1993:66). Thus, to address this inequality within academia and traditional research, I felt compelled to enquire for myself, by challenging the orthodox thinking and counter-balance it from a feminist perspective. Indeed, I identified with Usher *et al.*'s (1997:217) definition which defines 'the enquiring self as one who is engaged in a variety of exchanges [...] as a process of (self-) understanding.'

Furthermore, during my Masters studies at the University of Southampton, I re-discovered my feminist roots and values that were entrenched in the parameters of feminist epistemology. Accordingly, I located my preferred research perspective from the feminist viewpoint, which I had occupied many years before whilst studying for my BA honours degree in Social Pedagogy in Germany. However, it appears that there is not a unified definition of what constitutes feminist research, as there seems to be an array of approaches within the feminist research communities, according to Lentin (1994) and Weiner (1998). However, I sustain my position with Brayton's (1997) notion, that feminist research is unique, because of the motives and common interests of

extending feminist knowledge which is brought to the research process. Yet, Morgan (1981:100) argued that the feminist emphasis on 'the personal' and the characterisation of sociological rationality are not necessarily irreconcilable. He acknowledged that:

[...] There is a lot of work to be done in exploring the relationships between various forms of social knowledge such as personal experience, fictional representations and sociological enquiry.

Wolf (1996 cited Brayton 1997) stated, that feminist research has its limits and imperfections; however, the feminist research approach is an emancipatory and authentic method to investigate human lives and behaviours. Indeed, I consider feminist epistemology and scholarship, which is founded on a wide range of theories drawn from sociology, pedagogy, philosophy, and psychology, offers a holistic approach in researching women's lives. These theories, sustaining the search for feminist knowledge creation, have been widely published across the continents from Germany to America, Australia and the United Kingdom (Alcoff 1991; Bowles and Duelli Klein 1983; Brayton 1997; Burman *et al.* 1996; David 2003; Grasswick 2006; Hayes and Flannery 2000; Kramarae and Spender 1993; Lentin 1994; Maynard and Purvis 1994; Merrill and West 2009; Mies 1988, 1998; Middleton 1993; Reinhartz 1992; Richardson and Robinson 1993; Roberts 1991; Stanley 1990, 1992, 2000; Weiner 1998; - to name a few).

Another aspect which influenced my decision to embrace feminist grounded research methodology was located in the core of my values which questions existing traditional scientific and male-dominated research methods and interpretation of findings, exposing potential gender-bias. I found this distrust of mine confirmed by Brayton (1997), who asserted that traditional patriarchal values and beliefs in social science research imprinted male bias into the research methods and processes; thus establishing how research is executed and how data and findings are interpreted. It is part of my personal definition and identity as a woman, and part of my political and cultural background, which led me to feminism and feminist approaches to research, challenging the implicit traditional male perspective and methodology. Feminist research methodology values subjectivity and personal experiences, which is often the preferred choice of feminist epistemology. Thus, I reasoned, by undertaking a 'qualitative inquiry' (Denzin 1989) into women social workers and social work students, it provided more flexibility through the commitment to qualitative research methods, which enabled me to investigate the subjective, personal and professional experiences of these women.

Feminists like Reinharz (1992) considered feminism and feminist research as a perspective rather than a method which enables feminists to explore multiple methods and approaches. Feminist methods are concerned with practical, political and ethical matters in undertaking research (Maynard and Purvis 1994). Weiner (1998) argued that there is not 'one' inclusive feminist research method or unified agreement as to the procedures or processes. Nevertheless, it can be argued, feminist research methods have equal validity to traditional scientific and often androcentric research strategies, because established research techniques and theories are applied in relation to the collection and interpretation of data. Feminist research methodologies generate and test theory that pursues an interest in women's lives; - not simply as victims of male oppression and exploitation, but also celebrating women's strength and successes from a feminist perspective. Thus, feminist epistemology is affected by the role of gender in the production of knowledge and 'how the norms and practices of knowledge production affect the lives of women and are implicated in systems of oppression', according to Grasswick (2006:1)

Considering that my research focussed on investigating participants' subjective experiences, emotions, memories, epiphanies and motivations, I reasoned that this best can be achieved through biographical qualitative research methods. The qualitative inquiry (Denzin 1989) explored female social workers' values, attitudes and motivational ambitions through semi-structured questionnaires. Moreover, interviews supported the biographical research methodology with the aim of giving women a voice (David 2003). What is more, the qualitative approach generates an understanding of women in context (Erben 1998). Consequently meaning structures are created (Van Manen 1990). Corroborating these positions, Reinharz (1992: 244) stated, that:

Feminist interview and oral history research enables us to hear women's experiences; feminist case studies [...] let us understand women in their contexts

Furthermore, Stanley (1990) highlighted the relative insignificance of 'how' to the significant 'what' research is aiming to investigate or focussed on. My research was concerned with the subjective experience of women and why they enter the social work profession. Therefore, my feminist research methodology concentrated on the 'what' and the context, as discussed by Stanley (1990), rather than the empirical how.

Another characteristic of feminist research which appeared most suitable for my pursuit, was that it had been termed 'standpoint research' (Harding 1993,1998; Olesen 2000). According to Harding (1993,1998) standpoint theory asserts that knowledge is socially situated. This position was further supported by Anderson (1995, 2010), who

emphasised that the core of feminist epistemology is the 'situated knower', and the feminist researcher distinguishes how gender situates 'knowing subjects'. Grasswick (2006) corroborated other feminist researchers' views (Anderson 1995, 2010; Alcoff and Potter 1993; Harding 1993), but she added that there are potential consequences of breaking down the traditional distinction between ethics and epistemology. The feminist researcher still has to take responsibility and be accountable for her research, according to Grasswick (2006). Campbell (2007) also acknowledged feminists' criticism, that epistemology traditionally conveys bias against women and standards of impartiality, as it renders salient knowledge possessed by women. However, he perceived this as a 'paradox within feminist moral epistemology, since it appears to reject the ideal of impartiality on the ground that it is not itself impartial.' (Campbell 2007:2). Consequently, I had to address this paradox and ambiguity by clarifying my standpoint which is not intended to be that of a single-minded researcher who blindly disputes the androcentric tendencies of traditional scientific research. Instead I aspire to constructively contribute to the knowledge creation in an inclusive, rather than exclusive manner. I acknowledge that this appears to be a contradiction, as I focussed my research on female social workers, entailing an exclusion of men. Indeed, my research was inclusive, as women were invited to participate (appendix 5) regardless of their race, age, culture, ethnicity, faith, religion, sexual preference, political orientation, social class, social status, or disability.

However much I intended to be non-biased, impartial, anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory, and aimed for objectivity in my pursuit of finding the 'truth', I concur with the statement made by Galileo Galilei:

All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them.

Since I declared an open and honest approach to my research and realistically addressed that I was not able to meet the expectations of Campbell (2007) to solve the paradox. Instead, I had to adjust the sails, as William Arthur Ward advised us realists:

The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.

My adjustment accommodated a balance between the feminist paradigm, and not turning to 'oppositional politics with the oppression of others as male researchers conducted their research' (Rowbotham 1983 cited Milner 2001:64). Instead, my approach has been made transparent in my selection of methods whilst creating new knowledge through reflexivity. David (2003) highlighted the importance of reflexivity, because 'the personal is political' and vice versa. Hence, I considered it essential to

evidence my awareness of my identity as part of the wider social change and transformation, because as Giddens (1996 cited David 2003:172) highlighted we have to be 'constantly vigilant and reflecting upon our approaches to our subjectivity'.

5.3. Reflexivity

Reflexivity can be understood as a process which 'relocates the self in research' and positions the researcher as a 'sense-making agent' (Usher *et al.* 1997:216). Thus, establishing an emancipatory research approach, based upon grounded theory as defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967 cited Plummer 2001:164) which places me, the researcher, on the same level as the researched. I aimed to counteract this latent oppression through self-reflexivity, as it is an essential element of feminist research. This was supported by Roberts (2002:78, 172) who stated that feminist research and analysis emphasises the importance of the 'reflexive aspect', and requires 'self-monitoring'. It could be argued that 'we are what we study'; meaning I had to reflect upon, and acknowledge my personal aims and objectives. The process of self-reflexivity can lead to unavoidable bias, consequently becoming part of the research process and findings. Also, I needed to consider the specific circumstances in which I was writing which could have affected what I wrote. Moreover, I had to ask myself how and what I wrote may have affected who I became in the process of writing (Richardson 1997).

Furthermore, Lentin (1994) highlighted that feminist epistemology not only constituted a feminist way of knowing, but the ontology through being a feminist within the world. Hence, through reciprocal sharing of knowledge between the feminist researcher and women researched, who are all living in a patriarchal world, those women became collaborators in the research process. Consequently, I needed to be aware that this could resonate in my research, thus it was essential to exercise reflexivity within the research process. The women social workers were invited to provide feedback which influenced the research process, as well as me the researcher. Accordingly, I characterised myself as an 'enquiring feminist' (Stanley and Wise 1990); and exercised reflexivity, as well as 'self-reflexivity' (Plummer 2001:120). Thus, I made myself accessible to the participants, and encouraged them to contact me via traditional postal mail and email communications. I offered 'an openness of intent and a reflexive monitoring' (Roberts 2002:78) as an integral and important aspect of my auto/biographical research practice. Engaging the research participants, through an open, honest, mutual understanding and dialogue, placed me as a 'reflective practitioner'

(Schön 1983). The position of a reflective practitioner corresponded to Usher *et al.*'s (1997:217) description of the 'questioning practitioner' and related to my 'own understanding of research as reflective practice'.

This discussion is evidence of my reflexivity as I debated my involvement, views and standpoints that potentially resulted in ambiguity which undoubtedly influenced my research. This may leave the reader in a state of ambivalence, because the reader has to decide which side to take and what to make of my research. Nevertheless, the reflexivity within my research was two-fold; firstly from a personal perspective and an epistemological position. My personal reflexivity was founded upon my awareness of my personal and professional experiences, values, interests and interpretations, as a woman as well as a social worker; thus, influencing the research process. Secondly, I had to reflect and evaluate how the researched and the research process may have affected and transformed me, as a person, and influenced the research (Willig 2008). The American author Greg Anderson encapsulated this academic predicament in a simplistic but comprehensive sense, that:

The relationships we have with the world are largely determined by the relationships we have with ourselves.

The importance of self-reflection and academic reflection within the research process and the reflective interaction, in particular in educational contexts, was pioneered by Dewey (1933 cited Smith 2001). Dewey's reflective paradigm influenced other theorists such as Schön (1983), Kolb (1984) and Brookfield (1988), who are all relevant, as those reflective approaches are still taught and applied in social work education today. Practising Schön's (1983) axiom of the 'reflective practitioner' through the application of reflective models and reflective thinking in my practice, as exercised in social work practice teaching, has assisted me to be aware of my 'known-to-me' assumptions. Whereas according to Willig (2008), epistemological reflexivity, prompts the researcher to reflect on assumptions and preconceived ideas, which could influence or guide the researcher. Thus, the researcher is advised by Willig (2008), to be aware of the implications of such suppositions for the findings from the research. My skills of critical self-reflection and critical self-consciousness, combined with the critical appraisal of the literature and findings from my research were assessed and the reflexive developments examined in relation to my thesis. Consequently, in this discussion I expounded how I may have influenced the research, as well as how the researched and the research process might have influenced me. This is evaluated further in the conclusion chapter.

The importance and relevance of a reflective and reflexive approach which presents transparency of me, the researcher, and the research process, has been recommended by many authors (Cosslett *et al.* 2000; Denzin 1989; Olesen 2000; Roberts 2002; Roberts 1981; Rowbotham's (1983 cited Milner 2001); Stanley 1990, 1992, 2000; Van Manen 1990, Wengraf 2001). All of whom drew attention to the need for the high degree of reflexivity required from the researcher, and the recognition of how feminist researchers must not 'objectify' the women they research. Contrary to traditional male dominated research methodology, feminist standpoint research should strive for participation of the 'subjects' in the research inquiry process. Indeed, 'conceptualisation' of the context in which the 'subjects' are researched needs to be considered, as well as the position and standpoint of the researcher has to be accounted for (David 2003; Erben 1998; Olesen 2000; Reinhartz 1992). My stance in employing a feminist epistemological approach was grounded upon my social work values and principles which oppose any form of oppression and discrimination. This position was further supported by Bowles and Duelli-Klein's (1983:95) statement about feminist research that:

[...] allows for women studying women in an interactive process without the artificial object/ subject split between researcher and researched [...] will end the exploitation of women as research objectives.

I endeavoured to apply a non-oppressive and non-discriminatory style in the wording of the questionnaires, and in particular in the interview process. The purpose was to allow and encourage the participants to write and speak freely, without interruption, as well as accepting their chosen level of depth in their statements. The anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory postulate is the foundation of the social work values and the professional conduct such as the Code of Practices (GSCC 2002). These principles developed my professional praxis and influenced my professional and personal identity. My approach to 'praxis' relates to Freire's (1986) recommendations: to reflect on, and to critically analyse, the conditions and context of the individual's actions. Moreover, the social interactions during the research process also needed to be taken into account. Consequently, through reflection and critical analysis I intentionally elected to be a non-oppressive researcher who did not want to exploit the research subjects/participants. Similar to Freire's (1986) definition, also Carr and Kemmis (1986:144) explained that critical praxis:

[...] requires an integration of theory and practice as reflective and practical moments in a dialectic process of reflection, enlightenment and political struggle carried out by groups for the purpose of their own emancipation.

Consequently, my location as a researcher and female social worker endorsed an emancipatory approach and a commitment to social justice and social change

(Dominelli 2009). Through the process of critical consciousness, as discussed in my thesis, combined with the findings from my research, my intention is focussed on enhancing social work education. Similarly, Spence (1997:72 cited Cosslett *et al.* 2000) wrote that self-reflection requires the researcher:

[...] to be able to bring to consciousness some of their own reactions, defences, and transferences through which the material brought up by others stirs emotional material of their own.

Furthermore, I am conversant with the implications of Thompson's (2006) PCS model that identifies three main areas where oppression and discrimination is most likely to occur in human interactions: on a personal, cultural or structural (PCS) level. Through reflective practice, a person can be aware of the three levels, and therefore work in a non-oppressively and non-discriminatory manner. However, Thompson (2006) admitted that this might be difficult at the structural level at which a person might have limited influence on or access to. Bringing this argument back to my research process and reflexivity, I exercised vigilance with regard to the potential personal (assumptions), the cultural (stereotypes), and the structural (research process) context of my research, so that it did not become detrimental to my research participants. Equally, within the research process, I had to be aware that I did not become a casualty of PCS oppression or discrimination.

Another salient matter raised by Alcoff and Potter (1993) was the question of power-imbalance and the locus of control within the research process. The imbalance of power remains similarly present in feminist research, as it is in male dominated research, because of the privileged position of the researcher as the knowledge seeker and creator, according to Alcoff and Potter (1993). However, I too felt vulnerable and exposed to the readers and appraisers (male or female alike) of my thesis, which added another dimension of power-imbalance to the research process. Thus, the locus of control has shifted away from me, but simultaneously placed internal and external pressure on me. Yet, I did not want to become over-rationalistic, because as Merrill and West (2009:181) counselled, 'reflexivity easily becomes defensive, a way of 'policing' ourselves, to fit the norms of prevailing academic orthodoxies.'

5.4. Feminist research methodology and auto/biography

An important characteristic of feminist auto/biography writing, as distinguished by Stanley (1992:255), is the self-conscious and self-confident writing which creates interconnectedness between reading and writing, and consequently between the writer

and the reader. Stanley (1990, 1992, 2000) who used the term auto/biography as one, considered that there was no 'formal' distinction between the terms autobiography and biography, but she demanded from feminists who write auto/biography that they 'put into practice feminist principles'. Reflexivity, self-reflection, self-consciousness, combined with the notion of social justice and social change from a feminist perspective have led me to auto/biography as a method where my writing focussed on creating this interconnectedness. Indeed, Nadel (1984 cited Frank 1997:87) differentiated between 'detachment, analysis and participation' of the researcher when writing biographical accounts and depending on the position taken, it creates very different texts.

The research thesis I chose was constructed on a synthesis of analysis and participation, thus reflecting my 'personal attachment' (David 2003:154) to the research process and its participants. Thus, I developed the thesis to produce more subjective and qualitative accounts. Even so I was aware that feminist research 'too often is read as bias by men' (David 2003:145; Milner 2001). Nonetheless, I intended to gain more credibility for my research by allowing other women to voice their views and perspectives through the biographical method. Conversely, I had to be aware that feminist standpoint theory and research contains the risk of relativism, and this raises issues of misinterpretation, validity, and transferability. This risk was to be expected, because of the obvious differences between women and their individual experiences, which are not necessarily the same as mine. While my research investigation focussed on female social workers, its aim was not generalisation or transferability of the findings or results, but instead to portray the women's lived experiences. Therefore, in answer to Olesen's (2000:224) question of: 'how truth claims can be settled?'; - I would argue that truth is what we make of it.

The debate about the scientific nature of truth, and the dominance of male ideology, has shaped past and present research discourses. The significance of gender in research was raised by feminist academics, who challenged the 'naïve conflation of male subjectivity and human identity' (Merrill and West 2009:39). Indeed, feminist methodology and its research objectives, according to Reinhartz (1979 cited Bowles and Duelli Klein 1983:172), are about the

[...] development of understanding through grounded concepts and descriptions' and the presentation format is in 'stories, descriptions with emergent concepts; including documentation of process of discovery.

I decided on this method, because I wanted to find out how women social workers and social work students came to choose the profession. This was to be achieved through

the process of enquiry about their motivational influences and listening to their (life) stories and biographies, which included personal information. Indeed Erben (1998:8) asserted that biographical research 'must involve the continual examination of the interplay of family, primary group, community and socio-economic factors.' Thus, I anticipated to discover and portray the subjects' experience of (life) events as a result and to compare these to the early pioneers. However, I had to be aware of what Plummer (2001:101) wrote about the 'technology of self', which suggested that the writing of the women's life stories did not become 'one of the means through which power is dispersed'. It felt improbable to claim that my research had 'enabled the empowerment of oppressed people' (Alcoff 1991) if I spoke for them. Instead I explored further as to how biography could empower or appropriate research subjects (Bornat and Walmsley 2008), by enabling them to speak for themselves. Nevertheless, I aspired to keep a balance between anti-oppressive research practice through listening to women's views and voices (David 2003), which may or may not have made them feel empowered.

As a feminist researcher, I had to characterise my social location and 'social identity' (Ardovini-Brooker 2002:5), as it undoubtedly influenced what was known. Hence my autobiographical narrative was inter-woven in the text, because it shaped what is known, or what I know. Thus, I recognised and acknowledged that not all perspectives are equally valid.

The specific social location of the knower is important to research because it shapes what is known and what is not known. (Ardovini-Brooker 2002:4)

At the same time, I had to be attentive to, and avoid, the transference of my views. I reminded myself of the position that not all women, and certainly not all women social workers, are the same. Nor did I assume, that they all come from the same (social, economic, cultural, ethnic) background, with the same motivation, and the same values. I also had to be aware, that I am a social worker who researches other social workers, thus not allowing myself to generalise or draw unsubstantiated conclusions, as cautioned by Milner (2001). The advice to women who research other women, by Brayton (1997:12), suggested that:

Feminist research cannot speak for all women, but can provide new knowledge grounded in the realities of women's experiences and actively enact structural changes in the social world.

Accordingly, I considered an approach that utilises biography and women's stories as a qualitative research methodology, because it provided me with an insight into lives as they are, and the way they are narrated at a certain time in a certain location. The

biographical information provided by the research participants was subjective and although they were authentic accounts, they remained open to new, or re-interpretation, depending on the context (Erben 1998; Reinhartz 1992). Thus, these accounts of women's life stories became 'contextualised' biographies, depending on the situation, the audience, the mood, and the researcher who listened to, and evaluated, these accounts. In addition, as the researcher, I may have focussed only on a certain aspect of the biography, or been presented with only one version of the story, which may differ within the context of another day. Also, the stories of a life can vary, appearing more poignant, depending on the circumstances under which they are shared with others, at a certain moment in time and placed in a specific context. Consequently, auto/biographical recounting is always contextualised and has to be recognised as such. This directly relates to the question Holloway and Jefferson (2000a:3) raised: 'just how to escape the 'hermeneutic circle' (Denzin 1989:141), and the concept that there is no end to the interpretative process?'

Indeed, findings have to be understood as an opportunity given by others to share their life stories and lived experience (Van Manen 1990) with the investigating academic, who tirelessly is searching for answers about themselves and other human beings. Additionally, Holloway and Jefferson (2000a:3) questioned: 'who are we [the researchers] to know any better than the participants when it is, after all their lives?'.

Having exerted and justified the reasons, as well as the contradictions, embedded in a feminist grounded standpoint theory approach in a transparent and reflexive manner, led me to the next intersection. Auto/biography, according to Stanley and Wise (1983,1990 cited David 2003:101), is to be understood as follows:

Feminist social researchers should start from their personal standpoint [...] taking into account personal experiences [... and] autobiographical accounts.

Consequently, I selected the approach of auto/biography, because it can assist in constructing meaning, a sense of identities and narratives, of professional choices or social constructs of women social workers. Moreover, because auto/biography starts from the researcher herself, it therefore appeared to be the most honest and authentic approach. At the same time, this open and transparent approach made me, as the researcher, potentially vulnerable, because of the intersubjective dynamics between the reader and me, the author. The reader of my thesis will 'know all about me' which I found corroborated by Stanley (2000:41):

The approach of auto/biography proposes that 'what you know is what and who you are', and, correspondingly, that 'you are what is known about you'.

In view of the fact that part of my thesis investigates the hypothesis around the social justice element of social work, the social context and the socially constructed reality, I anticipated to uncover the voices of women through the auto/biographical and hermeneutic methods that bring about change. Thus, exposing:

[.....] the operation of power and to bring about social justice as domination and repression act to prevent the full existential realization of individual and social freedoms. (Habermas 1979:14 cited Cohen *et al.* 2007:28)

Exercising my social freedom in my capacity as an 'enquiring feminist', I distinguished myself from the dominant traditional research methods. Instead, I centred interpretations of the world based upon women's experiences and their experiential positions. Therefore, auto/ biography predicated a different approach for my research quest as it was 'concerned with the details of particular lives' (Stanley 1992:242, 243). Indeed, like Middleton (1993:67) suggested, I did not want 'to write in a way that would alienate the women from their own stories', but instead remained 'enriching to the women'.

Another aspect pertinent to feminist auto/biography, according to Stanley (1992:247), is that it can be more clearly distinguished as 'feminist', as it provides a different and 'unconventional' form of writing that challenges boundaries. Whereas feminist biography, according to Stanley (1992:249), can often be as conventional as non-feminist biographies, due to the collection and presentation of evidence and facts that may restrict feminist influences or challenges. I applied an 'unconventional' form of presenting my work, which I achieved by including autobiographical text. However, the overall format of thesis and the biographical accounts of my research participants and the evaluation of the findings still followed the 'conventional' forms of presenting academic work.

5.5. Auto/biography

Auto/biography is obviously not exclusively used in research by feminist researchers, but for me it implied the identification of the significance to reflectivity and reflexivity in the research process. Thus, my arguments for the thesis have been supported by the feminist paradigm, implying a political standpoint with the underlying notion of social justice. The choice of my thesis epitomises my personal and political autobiographical position, indicating a qualitative and 'subjective' perspective in the investigation of other women social workers. My line of reasoning directed me towards the

auto/biographical method which, according to Merrill and West (2009), had to 'fend' its position within the academic research communities. Hence, auto/biography appeared most suitable in discovering meaning about me as the researcher, my research participants, as well as the social work profession in a historical and contemporary context.

Biography and autobiography appear as a key frame through which we wrestle with diverse issues of meaning, power and politics, and try to understand history and selfhood. (Merrill and West 2009:38)

Having rendered explicitly my paradigm and my standpoint as a feminist social justice fighter, I chose an auto/biographical paradigm in accordance with Merrill and West's (2009) statement above. Indeed, it corresponded to Roberts (1998:112), who described the role of including the 'researcher's own biography in research'. He called it a 'double movement' and, he argued, that this can be interpreted 'as an attempt to stand back from my life while at the same time engage with it.' (Roberts 1998:110). Whilst writing my thesis, it became increasingly apparent to me that I was undertaking a 'double movement' (Roberts 1998:110), because I told my story that included my decisions, motives and interpretation of the circumstances, i.e. how my grandparents influenced my development and my thinking.

Thus, I began to appreciate, that there were parallels between auto/ biography and reflexivity, requiring a high degree of insight, self-knowledge and reflection. Indeed, Becker (1967:239) identified that it is impossible to undertake research that is 'uncontaminated by personal and political sympathies'. This left me with the dilemma of how to achieve my aim to maintain a non-biased position, but at the same time allowing women to tell their stories, thus it engaged me in a hermeneutic double movement through the process of interpretation. However, Hammersley (2001) argued that Becker's (1967) position often had been misinterpreted in the sense that social research could not be objective. Instead, Hammersley (2001) claimed, that Becker (1967) nonetheless believed that rigorous and systematic research predictably contained political implications. Even though, I concur with Bornat and Walmsley's (2008) position that the biography method can be empowering, it requires an appropriation that is conducted in a top-down or bottom-up approach. Therefore they concluded that research projects have their own biography (Bornat and Walmsley 2008).

In this sense, I became aware that my socio-politically influenced motivations may have political implications for social work education. Hence, I appreciated Erben's (1996:159) statement that the 'biographical method is an educative exercise',

incorporating principles of knowledge creation and analysis, as well as the 'development in the moral reasoning of the researcher'. Consequently, my 'consciousness' as the interpreter of the biographical accounts (Erben 1996:160), provided by my research participants, was challenged, as I had to reflect on my moral reasoning and engage with the hermeneutical investigation of women social worker's lives. Equally, I had to examine my moral reasoning as a female social worker who carried out research and interpreted the biographical accounts of other women social workers, as the process possibly was influenced by my personal and professional autobiographical perspective.

Furthermore, identifying biography as the interaction between the research participants, the author of the biographical research and the audience, as well as the 'ideological environment' (Merrill and West 2009:39), thus positioned further emphasis on the significance on my personal location and context. Having asserted my autobiographical stimulus in the introduction to this thesis, I established my location and became a 'subject matter' of my own research, as stated by Ardvini-Brooker (2002:9):

In other words, the researcher herself becomes a subject matter in the research. She must take into account her personal experiences as part of the research process.

My social as well as cultural location and my education influenced my knowledge and the direction of my inquiry. Equally, I gave consideration to the fact that biographical research 'remains a site of struggle over what it is to know and represent subjects' (Merrill and West 2009:39). Indeed, I was aware of Alcoff's (1991) discourse about '*The problem of speaking for others*', which raised the question as to whether we can actually speak for others or only for ourselves. As addressed earlier, Jane Addams had solved this problem by always including the people she talked about, or advocated for, as she encouraged them to speak up for themselves to give their accounts authenticity. Thus, attention needs to be given to the location of where one speaks from, because it affects what is said or heard and it will influence the interpretation, according to Alcoff (1991). Correspondingly, Bornat and Walmsley (2008:12) discussed the claims of empowerment which biographical research is often associated with, but they cautioned 'that claims to speak for others or to provide a voice are only at one end of a continuum which locks into professional interests'. Contrasting though, Bornat and Walmsley (2008) acknowledged that other authors have highlighted the enlightening and change agent element of biographical approaches in research, but they stated their reservation and maintained that it has its limitations as a method.

Nonetheless, taking all the different views into account, I reasoned that I had to take a position. Hence I deduced, that the auto/biography approach was the most suitable method for my research investigation. Even though I did not use any of the commonly suggested documents such as diaries, but instead I utilised the biographies of women's lived experience (Van Manen 1990). Thus, the 'personal experience stories' were deemed to be suitable for the biographical method as stated by Denzin's (1989:7), who defined the 'Biographical Method' as:

[...] the studied use and collection of life documents [...] These documents will include autobiographies, biographies, diaries, letters, obituaries, life histories, life stories, personal experience stories, oral histories, and personal histories.

Combined with Erben's (1998:9) statement below, I felt encouraged to use autobiographical as well as biographical research methodology in a small research sample. I justified this position, because my main concern was the meaning (Merrill and West 2009) and the 'verstehen' of life narratives of women social workers.

[...] biographical investigation cannot be proposed, it can nevertheless be suggested, *especially in relation to research involving the in-depth study of small populations*, that a combination of *verstehen* hermeneutics and grounded theory suggest itself as a highly fruitful research procedure. (Erben 1998:9) [italics in original text]

Moreover, Erben (1996:160) had noted that a hermeneutical method is often employed in understanding 'the narratives of lives and selves'. I understood this notion further supported by Cohen *et al.*'s (2007:27) definition:

Hermeneutics focuses on interpretation and language; it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants, echoing the *verstehen* approaches of Weber and premised on the view that reality is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1967). [italics in original text]

Thus, my objective was to gain insight into the intentions of human behaviours and social facts in the pursuit of meaning, thought to be achieved through the use of qualitative methods of data collection. This approach was pursued to clarify socially constructed realities and create new knowledge.

A further aspect, when researching biographies and other peoples 'lived experience', according to Van Manen (1990) as well as Roberts (2002), is that the researcher needs to be engaged with the subject of research. Accordingly, the researcher is required to have a personal interest in the participants, and a genuine concern for the understanding of the participants' issues should be displayed. Similarly, Frank (1997:87) wrote about 'engaged biography', which is grounded in 'a personal and intense relationship between biographer and subject'. Correspondingly, Stanley

(1992:127) referred to auto/ biography rather than solely biography, because she saw it as a 'fluid interaction' between the writer of another person's biography and the autobiographical influences from the writer of someone else's lived experiences. Indeed, Danaher and Briad (2005:229) highlighted, that the interpretation of someone else's lived experience can potentially distort the meaning of a narrative, and because of this weakness, the researcher might be tempted 'to import "colour" where none exists'. Consequently the researcher, according to Grele (1991:xx cited Roberts 2002:104), has 'an obligation to give a careful consideration of what is told and why it is given'. Thus, I had to consciously acknowledge that there is an inevitable 'hierarchical nature of interpretation' as emphasised by Roberts (2002:104).

Reflecting on these issues, I attended to the fact, that the interpretation of biographical accounts, like in any other form of research, required some common understanding of the research subject area and the participants. In addition, it necessitated passion and enthusiasm within the researcher, often rooted in the researcher's personal, social, cultural, professional, political or academic interest. This was corroborated by David's (2003:154) notion of 'personal attachment' to the research process and its participants, as mentioned earlier. Indeed, my 'personal attachment', as well as personal 'lived experience', as a female social worker evoked the passion to find out more about other women social workers in the profession. Through auto/biography, I discovered common lived experiences and new ones, but I had to be vigilant not to get lost, or overly engrossed, in the text. Consequently, I regularly measured the overall design of my thesis and maintained the focus on the significant parts of my findings in relation to the overall work, as recommended by Van Manen (1990). Also, Stanley (1992:244) warned that auto/biography is not 'a kind of paracetamol for analytical ills, but rather as producing a focus and a set of tools', assisting the researcher in the process of illuminating lives and constructing new knowledge. Summarising my understanding, auto/ biography is not a method that can explain or remedy the entirety of human lives and behaviours, but it can offer a 'deepened appreciation of the unknowable' (Ricoeur 1988 cited Erben 1998:12).

5.6. Intersubjectivity

Employing auto/biography, in particular from a feminist standpoint approach, I was mindful of the fact, that within reflexivity and the intersubjective relationship with my research participants, it would not guarantee the claim of academic 'objectivity' in producing new knowledge. Even though Merrill and West (2009:99) maintained that

auto/biography offers a salient resource in ‘making sense of others’ experience’, owing to the component of ‘self and subjectivity’. Indeed, they emphasised the importance of the researcher’s self-knowledge with regard to reflectivity and reflexivity, as discussed earlier. Additionally, they expressed the relevance of intersubjectivity:

Yet working more auto/biographically, and valuing subjectivity and intersubjectivity, can ask a lot of researchers, including self-knowledge. (Merrill and West 2009:99)

Merrill and West’s (2009) book is testimony to auto/biographical writing in the context of intersubjectivity, intertwining traditional academic forms and conventions of writing with autobiographical text, thus creating an intersubjective interconnectedness with the reader. Conversely, Stanley (1992:255) wrote, that the self-conscious feminist auto/biographical researcher can create ‘an interconnectedness’ between the researched, the author, the reader and writer; thus intersubjectivity is required. Similarly, Cosslett *et al.* (2000:2) explained the need for the researcher to be aware of the relationship with the researched, as the new knowledge creation is not just simply ‘there’, but produced through the intersubjectivity correlation and the situatedness in social contexts. As a female researcher from a white, middle-class background and in a professional social work teaching position in higher education, I came from a privileged situation based on my cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). Consequently, my situated knowing shaped and influenced the connections and dynamics within the research process. The majority of the researched women social workers and students came from similar backgrounds, thus the auto/biographical method facilitated and created an ‘intersubjectively shared meaning’ (Gagnier 1991:58 cited Cosslett *et al.* 2000:242).

However, this is not to say that we all had the same family or cultural and professional experiences, let alone the same motivational influences or epiphanies, which made us chose the social work profession. Indeed, I left the field of social work as an active field worker years ago and moved on. Over the past years, I progressed and worked in management and my involvement and contribution to social work shifted to teaching, assessment and supervision of social work students. In addition, social work education has changed over the years and certainly differs in the United Kingdom from when I studied in Germany in the late 1980s. What is more, the political and historical context was different and has changed since then in Germany. Equally, over the past thirty years, changes occurred in the UK. Nevertheless, my thesis aimed at exploring the motivational factors as to why women enter the social work profession, not so much at their current practice. Nonetheless, I calculated to find this ‘intersubjectively shared

meaning' (Gagnier 1991:58 cited Cosslett *et al.* 2000:242) in the process of enquiring about my research participants' motivations, and their position with regard to social work, and as to whether they were likely to fit the categories of social justice fighter or wounded healer/helper. Based upon my assumption that race or country of origin may be irrelevant when it comes to the choice of profession, it was anticipated that some more basic or fundamental human aptitudes, or values, guide the individual's professional choice. This was anticipated to be true, when focusing on a profession such as social work, which has at its core human relationships and intersubjectivity.

An interesting position offered by Madison (2001), discussed intersubjectivity from a therapeutic perspective and in the light of human development. He acknowledged the authenticity of human life experience as 'we begin life intersubjectively and gradually discover ourselves through others'; and he continued that through 'intersubjectivity [we] sustain our ability to relate to the world' (Madison 2001:6). Therefore, the balance between subject and object, the discovery of the known and the unknown within ourselves, as well as the world around us, from a phenomenological perspective, rendered auto/ biography an appropriate method for my thesis. Phenomenology and intersubjectivity are related in so far as the individual's (life/or lived) experiences are valued in a subjective manner; equally, both assist in the formation of objectivity in the research process. This is explained by Van Manen (1990:54), who argued that 'the phenomenologist knows that one's own experiences are also the possible experience of others'. Thus, through dialogue and interpretation, I anticipated achieving an 'intersubjectively shared meaning' as stated by Gagnier (1991:58 cited Cosslett *et al.* 2000:242). Employing auto/ biography, thus creating the interaction and dynamics of intersubjectivity, which could facilitate the shared experience of one's own and lived experiences with others. Consequently, through the process of sharing experiences the personal becomes political, according to David (2003). However, Madison (2001:10) asked:

If we work phenomenologically, we want to clarify our own and our client's understandings but do we want to contradict our lived experience in order to adhere to a theory of intersubjectivity?

On the contrary, my work did not 'adhere' to any theory rigidly, but utilised the theoretical frameworks which assisted in supporting my claims and academic credentials. I reasoned that human behaviour can never be completely explained, nor will it entirely follow the rules of 'theory', but theory benefits as an aid to assist in gaining knowledge and understanding of human behaviours. What is more, humans are 'active creators of their worlds as well as being created by them', according to Merrill and West (2009:130). Consequently, it could be argued that intersubjectivity is

a vital ingredient in exploring human behaviour or motivation. Indeed, Merrill and West (2009:182) asserted, that the challenge of the research process is about striking a balance between intersubjectivity and detachment through:

A capacity to listen combines with the capacity to think; awareness of the other interacts with considering how we- as a therapist or researcher – might be feeling.

Thus the researcher has to have insight and self-knowledge, hence I explained my reflective and reflexive role as a researcher earlier. Additionally, I maintained that the choice of my thesis and inquiry had a professional, as well as personal agenda, and was therefore ‘not a neutral process’ (Esterberg 2002 cited Merrill and West 2009:99). My choice was a conscious and deliberate one, as I wanted to be ‘engaged with the topic’ (Merrill and West 2009:99). In addition, I was investigating to form a ‘personal attachment’ (David 2003:154). It thereby enabled me to bring an ‘emphatic understanding’ (Van Manen 1990:15) to the research process.

My axiom was to apply the auto/biography method intersubjectively, combined with a feminist epistemology, which was informed by an anti-oppressive approach. Thus, I gave women in social work a voice as my concern was focussed on ‘inclusion and particularly for dialogue between different voice-conversations’ (Parker 1998:117). Accordingly, mutual trust, openness and transparency of the research study were paramount as I planned for interconnectedness by using an auto/ biographical approach. I found, like Parker (1998:118), that:

The purpose of this kind of auto/biography is to narrate an edited version of one’s life which focuses especially upon articulation and explanation of what it means to each individual... [and] ... we should acknowledge the authority of experience and try to maintain authentic relationships with others.

Moreover, Van Manen (1990:62) raised the fundamental question as to why we collect data of other people’s lived experience in the first place; and his explanation was, that: ‘We gather other people’s experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves.’ This statement summarised my original impetus for the thesis, because I sought to explore the motivations of women entering the social work profession. What was more, I wanted to gain an understanding which could offer a valuable contribution to social work training and education.

5.7. The role of the researcher in the research process

I think that it has become evident, throughout the discussion in this chapter, as to where I considered my roles and responsibilities as a researcher. This remained of further relevance as I was the sole researcher. I identified my role as the researcher within the researcher process two-fold: firstly, I took a feminist position within an educational, as well as sociological, context of my research in the investigation of female social work students and qualified women social workers and their motivational influences. Secondly, I evidenced a high level of reflexivity, because I, the researcher, am also a female social worker and, in addition, a social work practice educator. Roberts (1981:16) pointed out, that feminists have stressed the need for 'a reflexive sociology in which the sociologist takes her own experiences seriously and incorporates them into her work'. I followed her advice and incorporated it throughout my thesis through critical reflection. Helen Roberts' (1981) emphasis is still current as discussed by Brian Roberts (2002:13), who stated the importance of the 'collaborative and reflexive role of the researcher'. However, he cautioned that the researcher needs to assess the amount of personal life that should be entered in the text (Roberts 2002). Indeed, he further speculated as to whether 'we are witnessing an important social shift [...] in which the 'biographical' is given a fuller 'authenticity'.' (Roberts 2002:170). Additionally, this in turn could give the research process and its participants an emotional and human stance which should not be seen as a hindrance to the research. Instead, it should be explored and reflected upon through 'reflexive monitoring' of the researcher's own practice and self-involvement (Roberts 2002:172).

Furthermore, the 'human' aspect of the researcher, as highlighted by Stanley and Wise (1990), was inherent in my research, because of the genuine human nature and my interest in the participants of my research. Hence, I defined my role as a human being interacting with the participants in a non-artificial or experimental context.

We insist that the presence of the researcher, as an ordinary human being with the usual complement of human attributes, can't be avoided. Because of this we must devise research of a kind which can utilize this presence, rather than pretend that it does not happen. (Stanley and Wise 1990:150)

I was able to apply the 'human' approach within the research process in particular with the facilitation of the focus groups and personal face-to-face interviews, through non-formalised procedures, and more importantly with a sense of humour and personal warmth. Equally, I applied the human approach by introducing myself to each of the social work student cohorts, explaining briefly my research before handing out the questionnaires with further information for the participants (see participant

information sheet, in appendix 1.6). I also invited the students to email me (appendix 1.2-1.4 and 6) from their (anonymous) student email accounts with their questions, comments or suggestions. Thus, I positioned a human face and a voice to my research, thanking them in advance for their interest and participation. Thereby, I acknowledged their time, efforts and contributions, making them feel valued and important.

Furthermore, I contacted previous students of mine who were by now qualified and working in the field. I felt confident that they would co-operate as we had good professional experiences from working together in the past. Plummer (1983:95 cited Middleton 1993:70) believed that the personal and human contact is:

[...] central to this view is the uniqueness of the person and the situation, the importance of empathy and the embodiment of "non-possessive warmth" in the interviewer.

Indeed, the interview process and dynamics could be further compared to a non-directive and non-intrusive type of counselling approach. Similar to a therapeutic approach, the interview required insight and intersubjectivity, because the inner locations of the interviewee and the interviewer facilitated an attempt to understand people. Whilst asking participants questions, I evoked memories and emotions, not only in the interviewee but equally within myself, finding resonance in my own experiences. These may well have influenced the interview questions and process. On the other hand, had I only asked questions in search of validating my own preconceived ideas and experiences, I would have created a barrier between myself and the research participants. Thus, my ideas would have remained theoretical constructs, rather than authentic accounts of people's lives and biographies. However, Madison (2001) took the view that, in order to be able to validate ideas, the researcher needed to have experienced what the other person is sharing, otherwise the intersubjectivity is 'inauthentic'.

Conversely, Oakley (1981:30) critiqued the interviewing method as a contradiction in terms for feminists, arguing that traditionally the interview process was seen as a 'one-way process'. She continued by declaring that the interviewee was 'objectified' by the 'male-dominated and male-prescribed' procedural method of the interview process, due to a 'masculine model of sociology and society' (Oakley 1981:30). However, since Oakley's writings, increasingly feminist literature influenced, re-shaped and re-defined research methodologies which consider the quality of the interview dynamics. This was evident in current debates about the use of qualitative and biographical methods within social research, such as Merrill and West (2009). They acknowledged the

'situatedness', the personal background and the experiences of the researcher as an important quality within the research process, because:

[...] the personality, background, situation as well as the conceptual frame of the researcher always and inevitably shape the way people tell their stories, and how these are interpreted (West 2001:35 cited Merrill and West 2009:101)

This meant for me, that I needed to inform the participants of my research about myself, as well as about the purpose and process of the research. This was accomplished through face-to-face contact with the focus group and handing out the questionnaires in person. Moreover, within the interview process I accommodated a human intersubjective social relationship building approach; accordingly I invited the interview participants to engage in dialogue with me. Furthermore, the shift in the interview processes to a more person-centred approach within social research today, and in particular in narrative research, was further acknowledged by Andrews *et al.* (2008). They stated, that some narrative researchers utilised the approach to 'understand how personal lives traverse social change' (Andrews *et al.* 2008:4). This appeared relevant to my research as I asked the question as to whether social workers want to make a difference or a change in people's lives. Besides, I expected investigating how their motivations compared to the reformist and humanitarian work by the early pioneers of social work.

Recapitulating, I defined my role as researcher to be that of a reflective academic scholar. I trust to have evidenced this position through the discussion about my reflexivity within the research process. Nonetheless, the analysis and interpretation of the participants' biographical information, created by their responses from the focus group, questionnaires or interviews may be tainted by my personal bias and interest for the research. Thus, utilising the freedom and confines of interpretive biography, I focussed on reducing the potential social, academic or intellectualising bias through reflexivity (Plummer 2001:208).

5.8. Summary

I discussed the feminist research approach and its centrality with regard to subjectivity, intersubjectivity and qualitative hermeneutical paradigm in order to explore individual lives and give women a voice (David 2003) in my thesis. Furthermore, I considered the values of auto/biography as a different form of writing (Richardson 1997; Stanley 1990, 1992, 2000) and the relationship to feminist auto/biography writing from an intersubjective perspective. I established that auto/biography can assist with exploring

boundaries and relationships between the autobiographical self and others. Furthermore, I considered Merrill and West's (2009:99) reflection, that traditionally and historically the often 'powerful imperative in the academy to distance self and subjectivity from the academic project in the name of good and impartial science' derived from the exclusion of a subjective and non-scientific method, such as auto/biography. Thus, through discussing the role of the researcher, I affirmed my position with regard to the feminist paradigm, and the importance of reflexivity in the research process. I acknowledged Alcoff's (1991) position that it is impossible to speak for others, without talking about them at the same time. The ethical dilemma and implications of speaking for or about others' personal experiences, and telling their stories, is discussed in more depth in the ethics section of the next chapter, which discusses the research instruments chosen for my research.

CHAPTER 6

Methodology

To avoid becoming the object of the problems that you take as your object, you must retrace the history of the *emergence* of these problems, of their progressive constitution, i.e., of the collective work, oftentimes accomplished through competition and struggle, that proved necessary to make such and such issues to be known and recognized [...] as *legitimate problems*, problems that are avowable, publishable, public, official [italics in original text] (Bourdieu, 1992, in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 238).

6.1. Introduction

The findings from the reviewed and discussed literature in the previous chapters conveyed my endeavours to trace the emergence of social work as a profession and the role women have taken. Thus, having recognised the potential issues I reflected and discussed my position as a feminist researcher, and now this chapter justifies the research instruments that I employed in my small-scale research project. The themes which transpired from the literature reviewed, have undoubtedly influenced the planning for my methodology, because I became curious as to whether the motivational factors have remained the same, or changed, for women who chose to enter the social care profession. Questions formed as to whether their motivation to help others, and possibly wanting 'to make a difference', is inspired by an epiphany, and/ or as to whether they see themselves as 'social justice fighters', 'wounded helper', or 'altruistic humanitarian' (Parker and Merrylees 2002; Redmond *et al.* 2008; Stevens *et al.* 2012). Therefore, to extract the information and collect the data from the research participants, I decided to use a mixed-method approach which samples the motivations and experiences from four different cohorts in a 'longitudinal cross-sectional' approach (Cohen *et al.* 2007:213). The use of a variety of methods aims to assist in overcoming the limitations of any one method and allows for multiple perspectives to be presented (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003).

Emphasis will be placed on ethical implications when undertaking research and the potential ethical dilemmas that are inherent. Following Socrates' philosophy on ethics, I evidence my conscious awareness about my moral beliefs and the implications for ethical conduct within this chapter.

6.2. Research methodology: 'in search for a method'

This chapter expounds the methodologies applied for the research project, examining my hypothesis as to whether female social workers and social work students want to make a difference, or be the difference, in clients/ service users' lives. Their motivations for, and expectations of, the social work professional is explored through semi-structured focus groups, structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the aim of informing and assisting social work education. Just as I learnt from my grandparents not to believe or trust just one dogma in a purist way, I prefer to select suitable methods to aid in the pursuit of finding an all-encompassing answer to my thesis. Moreover, explanations are offered as to *how* the participants were selected, and *why* I elected a particular approach in the selection process over other possible routes (Skeggs 1995:4). Thus, a debate and a rationale is provided for my research paradigm of a mixed-method approach in the light of the qualitative versus quantitative debates within social science and sociological research communities (see: Armitage 2007; Brannen 2005; Chamberlayne *et al.* 2000). Likewise, the relevance of rigour in qualitative research (Mays and Pope 1996) is argued and substantiated with regard to my research project.

I position my research within the grounded theory as defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967 cited Plummer 2001:164), because my research 'moves around' my chosen research questions and sampling findings as they emerge. Thus, I structured the questions alongside theoretical frameworks, until my new findings emerged. This approach was based upon my position from within the social work profession, which qualifies me to be a 'situated knower' with 'situated knowledge' (Alcoff 1991; Anderson 2010; Bornat and Walmsley 2008; David 2003; Grasswick 2006; Olsen 2000; Roberts 1981; Stanley 1992, 2000; Stanley and Wise 1990). Henceforth, I identified my personal location within the research process and recognised my situated knowledge as a researcher, as recommended by Cosslett *et al.* (2000). Indeed, I followed Skeggs' (1995:4) suggestion, that 'the researcher in her social position should ask herself autobiographical questions, and ask herself about the research process', such as why I chose this area of research. The summarised answers to Skeggs' (1995:4) questions were for me: I am a social worker and a social work practice teacher, as well as a feminist, whose aim it is to link her research and the findings to social worker education.

Furthermore, a rationale is offered to reasons and decisions I have made concerning the methodology, with regard to ethical considerations and potential dilemmas. I recognised that the gathering of not only quantitative data, but also

personal and biographical information of qualitative nature contains potential ethical issues. Further ethical implications had to be considered, because I am the sole researcher and, therefore, my research could be deemed as biased.

6.3. Ethical considerations

At the beginning of my research proposal, I submitted an ethics proposal application, following the ethics and governance protocol and procedures of the University of Southampton, which was approved (appendix 1). In addition, I familiarised myself with the ethics protocols and codes of both the British Sociological Association (BSA 2002 and 2004) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011). Ethics in research is a contentious topic, as Middleton (1993:74) pointed out that: 'for those being researched [it] is an intervention into someone's life'. This view was further supported by Cohen *et al.* (2007), who discussed the intrusion into the respondent's life when using questionnaires. Hence, they suggested, that researchers have to consider the welfare of the research participants at all times, and the conditions when interviewing individuals, to harness ethical dilemmas in accordance with the BERA (2011) guidance (see Cohen *et al.* 2007, chapter 2).

During the course of the ethics proposal application to the University of Southampton for my research, I recognised the importance transparency places on the research process for the participants. Their voluntary involvement and the informed consent offered the participants anonymity as well as confidentiality, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Human Rights Act (1998). Consideration of the ethical implications and constraints for all involved, made me reconsider and review my original research ideas. The research proposal included: focus groups, questionnaires and interviews for social work students and qualified social workers. The participants were informed that all recorded information would be transcribed and emailed or posted to them for approval, thus ensuring transparency and honesty of the research process.

Furthermore, Cohen *et al.* (2007:51) described the ethical dilemma a researcher is confronted with, which they perceived to be positioned in 'striking a balance between the professional scientific expectations and the demands in their pursuit to establish truthful data and facts'. Equally, a balance is required to service the research community by remaining truthful to the research participants and to value their rights (BERA 2011). I can truthfully make the statement, that to the best

of my knowledge and intentions, none of the researched have intentionally or unintentionally been physically or mentally harmed in the process of my research. I decided to make this explicit declaration, because of my German nationality and my awareness of the historical events in Germany during World War II. The concerns of potential harm to research participants, and the ethical implications, became a major controversial issue within research communities after Adolf Hitler used humans in grotesque and destructive 'medical' experiments. The researched had no freedom of choice, nor were they given information, about the horrific experiments they were subjected to. Consequently, one of the outcomes of the Nuremberg Military Tribunals after World War II was the establishment of the Nuremberg Code (1947). Since it came into force, the Code has to be used by researchers and they are required to consider the 'cost/benefit ratio' of their pursuit. Thus, any research should contribute to the good of society and avoid physical and mental suffering of participants:

The degree of risk to be taken should never exceed that determined by the humanitarian importance of the problem to be solved by the experiment.
(Nuremberg Code 1947:point 6.)

Clearly, the Nuremberg Code (1947) and subsequently the World Medical Association's 'Principles for those in Research and Experimentation' (WMA 1954), were consolidated in the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) with the primary focus on medical experiments and research with humans. Whereas research in an educational context, by nature, is generally less intrusive physically, but still contains latent potential for emotional harm, the British Education Research Association developed a code of practice (BERA 2011).

Consequently, throughout the research study, I have adhered to the ethical protocols and codes of practice as stipulated by the British Education Research Association (2011) and the University of Southampton, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Human Rights Act (1989). Thereafter, participants were given the freedom of informed consent and the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. Alongside this I adopted BERA's (2011:4) recommendations that the researcher should:

[...] weigh up all the aspects of the process of conducting educational research [...] and [...] reach an ethically acceptable position in which their actions are considered justifiable and sound.

Importantly, all social research should follow the principles that 'the risks to subjects must be outweighed by potential benefits' (Farrell 2005:168; Plummer 2001:226). Indeed, Plummer (2001:227) added: 'to live an ethical life is a process

of decision making in situations, drawing from culture and history, and not a pattern of just “following rules”. Although, Singer (1993:172) made the case for ethics to be *practical*:

Ethics is practical, or it is not really ethical. We cannot be content with an ethics that is unsuited to the rough-and-tumble of everyday life.

Subsequently, I considered that the relative benefits of my research outweighed the risk of participation, as evident in my discussions about reflexivity, intersubjectivity and the ethical implications. I have discussed and evidenced that I take responsibility for my actions, so that my research participants feel informed, respected and safe throughout the research process. However, I recognised that even though I had no deliberate intention of ‘harming’ the research participants, I could not prevent or regulate the consequences of the possibility of some of my questions evoking memories which could be disturbing or worrying for the participants. Still, these uncontrollable effects are part of the ‘researcher’s ethical dilemma’, according to Roberts (2002:104).

Indeed, in order to avoid ethical dilemmas as far as possible, I followed the research ethics and ‘rules’ to comply with the ethical procedures. Furthermore, I established control over the logistical margins, i.e. by a) keeping all data, texts and the concluding findings anonymous; and b) by storing all information in a confidential way and in a secure place on a password protected computer. Moreover, I informed the research participants about the aims and objectives of my research that contained transparency and an ‘overt’ research approach (Cohen *et al.* 2007). Thus facilitating an informed choice as to whether they wished to participate in my research project. Additionally, the informed consent form allowed participants the option to withdraw from the research at any time (appendix 1.7). Furthermore, confidentiality was maintained not only from the researcher’s side but also from the participants’ side, because the samples were potentially easy to identify and recognised due to the small sample size. This was of importance, in particular in the light of my proposal to disseminate the findings to the wider research communities, and to the local university in which the research participants study or work. Yet, the dissemination of the findings, even though anonymous, remained dependent on the participants’ consent. Plummer (2001) deliberated issues of confidentiality in relation to authenticity and as to whether a researcher can guarantee total confidentiality even after having changed names or intimate details. He asked:

Just how far one can go in such modifications without making a nonsense of the goal of some kind of authenticity, becomes a key point.

Nevertheless, such blanket guarantees of confidentiality are rarely enough to prevent a dedicated pursuer of identity tracking down the original subject. (Plummer 2001: 217)

I deliberated at length over the various options of conducting my research so that it was ethically and morally sound, and conformed to research guidelines (BERA 2011), whilst applying a qualitative paradigm to obtain life stories, narratives and oral texts through the interviews, or possibly via email.

Murray and Sixsmith (2002 cited Parker 2008:76) acknowledged that nowadays data collection for qualitative studies utilise 'e-methodologies', such as the use of e-surveys or emails. At first I thought of these methods as a convenient option, as most of the potential participants live at least forty miles away from me. Indeed, I anticipated that by communicating via email, participants would have more time for thought and reflection when completing the questionnaire. Moreover, I expected that it might offer the opportunity to follow up some further thoughts from the participants in an interview-like or reflective diary style approach. The time and reflection factor was an important consideration, I realised, because of the feedback I received from my 'pilot' questionnaire that was sent out to a former social work colleague (appendix 2). However, I also came to realise that emails might throw up further ethical concerns with regard to confidentiality, if participants used their private email.

Even though I had initially planned to utilise email, I reconsidered, due to Houghton's *et al.* (2003 cited Parker 2008:75) findings, that the response rate to email was significantly lower (22%) than the traditional postal equivalent (58%). Furthermore, I had contemplated the use of a web-based e-survey tool to collect data for the questionnaires, i.e. SurveyMonkey (2010), which offers a high degree of confidentiality and the participants can remain anonymous. However, I dismissed this idea, because Leece *et al.* (2006 cited Parker 2008:75) discovered, that 'personalised cover letters increased the response rate for traditional mail-based surveys but not for email surveys'.

Indeed, I decided to take part in an online research survey from another student at the University of Southampton who used SurveyMonkey (2010). Thus, I experienced first-hand what it felt like to participate in an online research survey, before potentially asking my research participants to contribute to a similar exercise. My evaluation of this particular online survey was that as a research tool I found it easy to use, self-explanatory and convenient. Yet, it offered only limited choices to answer some of the questions, in particular when I wanted to clarify, expand or explain some of my answers further. Consequently, I decided that the

online survey tool would be limiting, and hence unsuitable for the purpose of my questionnaire, as it could restrict participants' responses to the qualitative questions. Moreover, the e-survey made me feel too detached from the research process, and I did not feel valued or appreciated. Subsequently, I reflected upon how my research participants might feel, in particular when considering that I was asking some personal and thought provoking questions.

Conversely, I considered potential ethical and moral implications with the use of e-surveys, because the research participants might have felt that I only 'used' them for the personal and professional narcissistic pursuit of my thesis. Therefore, I considered it ethically correct to give the participants of my research the opportunity to 'put a face' to the researcher who was asking the questions. Indeed, a more personal approach appeared more suited, based upon my commitment to grounded theory, and the hermeneutic approach to knowledge creation through a reflexive and reflective praxis axiom. Nonetheless, the qualitative and personal approach has its own moral and ethical implications as discussed by Plummer (2001:205ff), who pointed out that the researcher could take 'different roles'. What is more, this also highlights the potential power-imbalance which could leave the research participants feel exploited, due to the 'hierarchical nature of interpretation' (Roberts 2002:104), in particular of oral history. Indeed, Plummer (2001:216) raised questions about the 'ownership and intellectual rights' of the research findings which are constructed from another person's account and as to who 'gains or profits' from it. This renders necessary further considerations, because once the work is published, it becomes the researcher's work, even though the ultimate ownership still resides with the researched.

I recognised further challenges whilst considering the ethical and moral implications. As Plummer (2001:218ff) stated, the researcher has to decide how much can, or should, be reported back, literally, of the personal and confidential information the research participants shared with the researcher. Furthermore, I needed to decide as to whether I could, or should, make scientific and academic allowances for selecting certain information, leaving out other details, without falsifying or misinterpreting the findings, and potentially misrepresenting the researched. As a reflective practitioner and reflexive researcher I acknowledge that 'research is not a neutral process' (Esterberg 2002 cited Merrill and West 2009:99). Whilst Merrill and West (2009:103) highlighted the danger of bias: 'the researcher only wants to see or hear the material that presents the need however unconsciously'. Like Plummer (2001:78) stated, research can be 'messy', Merrill

and West (2009:103) agreed and added that it can also be 'profound' at the same time. Moreover, Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) classification of bias into categories of social, academic and intellectualising bias, can be viewed as a challenge; but they suggested that bias can be addressed through reflexivity. Yet, I noticed that neither political nor personal bias were listed as separate categories by Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992). However, I would consider these additional categories as a potential influence in the research process and even more so in the interpretation of research findings, thus causing further ethical inferences.

Lastly, another ethical position as discussed by Harrison (2002), considered that writing biographies could be compared to taking photographs, because the person whose photograph was taken was not in control of the image as to whether they liked it, or not, and what would happen to that photograph. Thus, the same scenario could apply to the person whose biographical account has been written and the person might not like the 'image' that has been portrayed. Therefore, the participants of my research were given the opportunity to be in control of what was written about them. Hence, reflexivity, intersubjectivity and access for participants to my written work was considered a vital and ethical part of my research process.

This discussion about my ethical considerations and the dilemmas therein, laid the foundations for the selection of the research participants as well as the justification of methods and research tools that were considered most suitable for the thesis.

6.4. The research participants

In my decision to research the lives of female social work students, I decided to take advantage of my association with a local university, thus applying 'convenience sampling' (Cohen *et al.* 2007:113), inviting students to participate in my research. In addition, the sample of qualified women social workers who were recruited was based on previous contacts while they were students with me. Both groups were invited to voluntarily participate in the exploration of their motivations and their expectations for studying and entering the profession of social work. I planned for a minimum number of ten social work students and ten qualified social workers to participate which I considered enhancing the credibility of my research. Nonetheless, since the research study focussed on the qualitative aspects of the findings, I was not overly concerned about the final sample size.

The reason behind the selection of an heterogenic sample (Cohen *et al.* 2007:105) of all female research participants, was based on the grounded theory paradigm as much as by the fact that the majority of social workers are women. According to the General Social Care Council (GSCC 2007), women account for 85% of students as well as employed social workers. The exclusion of male research participants was not intended to be discriminatory. Indeed, I made the decision to focus on women, because of the fact that the overwhelming percentage in social work training and employment are women; and because of my feminist research paradigm. As mentioned before, there was no discrimination applied with regard to the women selected for my research study concerning their age, race, culture, faith, religion, political or sexual orientation, (dis-)abilities and other diverse or distinct features. However, it needs to be noted that the rural Southwest region I drew my research samples from consists of a population with over 90% of white ethnic origins. Therefore, the majority of my research participants were expected to come from a predominately white ethnic background. I return to this point further on, as I consider it to be of significance with regard to the representativeness of the research samples.

Moreover, I was quite confident that the research participants would engage, because part of social work education and training is created around their ability to become reflective practitioners. Therefore, I envisaged that the selected research participants were likely to co-operate, as they would not consider the questions asked as overly intrusive. In their social work studies they have to consider ethnicity, gender, race, class, values, oppression, power-relationships and professional identity in all of their assignments as well as in their reflective supervisions. Students are expected by the universities to reflect on personal and professional values and experiences during their social work education and post-qualifying training.

Meanwhile, I made a conscious decision about the selection of my research participants and sample size in the light of my qualitative research paradigm and grounded theory, by purposefully or theoretically selecting the samples. The decision was encouraged by Erben's (1998:5) statement that 'the sample must correspond to the overall aims of the study'. This view was further supported by Creswell (1998:118 cited Merrill and West 2009:108) who specified that participants should be chosen 'on their ability to contribute to an evolving theory'. Moreover, Mason (1996:93 cited Merrill and West 2009:108) highlighted that those to be researched should be selected 'on the basis of their relevance' to the

research question, and that participants should assist the researcher in developing, testing and explaining the thesis.

Consequently, having considered the above, I was looking for research participants who could provide 'quality of experience and insight' (Merrill and West 2009:104), rather than becoming overly preoccupied or defensive with regard to the issue of the generalisability of my research. The selection of research participants, as discussed further by Plummer (2001:133), highlights that qualitative research approaches should focus more on the 'information rich' individual research subject, rather than a large and representative sample size. Indeed, Plummer (2001:134) raised the question as to whether a researcher should seek out 'ordinary people', 'strangers, outsiders and marginalised people', or 'looking for the right person' with suitable attributes. Plummer (2001:136) further considered practical issues such as availability, accessibility, time and motivation to participate important, as well as the participants' ability to articulate themselves:

[...] informants who are overly intellectual and overly abstract are of less value than those who talk about their experience in the raw (Plummer 2001:136)

In search for my research participants I considered Plummer's (2001) thoughts and recommendations about the selection of participants based on availability and accessibility from my position. Hence, I determined to recruit and work in cooperation with the local university and previous students known to me. My aim was to find 'information rich' individuals, who voluntarily agreed to participate in my study, rather than to worry over what would constitute the 'ideal sample size'. Thus, I chose quality over quantity for my research to gain insight into the lives of (student) social workers:

Good biographical research in the main is not about numbers per se but the power of description, analysis, insight and theoretical sophistication. (Merrill and West 2009:105)

The student samples were selected and recruited from the university's first year social work students, at the beginning of their study on the basis of voluntary participation and informed consent (appendix 1.7). My original plan was to follow the female student cohort over their three year course of study, and to contact them again at two further points during their study. My intention was to gain a 'longitudinal and developmental perspective' (Cohen *et al.* 2007:211) for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating changes in attitudes. However, after deliberation on the advantages and disadvantages of a longitudinal cohort study, I changed my original research design to a 'longitudinal cross-section study' (Cohen

et al. 2007:213) of three different cohorts from each year group. My rationale was partly scientific and partly personal, because the time and effort to follow one cohort of students over the course of three years did not seem to justify the purpose of my thesis. In addition, the task of data collection, the potential volume of data, the evaluation and analysis over a three year period of time for a sole researcher, appeared to create an unrealistic and unmanageable task.

Clearly, the advantages of a longitudinal cohort study first appeared logical, as it implied that I could follow the developmental aspects of human behaviours and attitudes studied over time within one social work student cohort. However, Cohen *et al.* (2007:214) highlighted, that longitudinal studies carry the 'risk of attrition' and 'participant retention', as well as concerns over comparability of data and validity. Moreover, according to Gorard (2001:86 cited Cohen *et al.* 2007:214) long-term studies face 'a threat of internal validity' which stems from the need 'to test and retest the same individuals', and they were likely to suffer from control effects. Cohen *et al.* (2007:214) further elaborated the potential concern that the researched may just respond in a conditioned and 'self-fulfilling prophecy' mode after the initial questionnaires or interviews. Participants may either wish to please the researcher or unconsciously desire to give answers that they think the researcher wants to hear. Those characteristics can pose a risk to longitudinal, cohort or trend studies and consequently may affect the results, according to Robson (1993:128 cited Cohen *et al.* 2007:216).

These reasons convinced me that there would be limited advantage from following one specific social work student cohort, when I could legitimately save time by applying a cross-sectional design across three different year groups of female social work students (year 1, year 2, year 3). Therefore, my research would still, theoretically speaking, qualify as a longitudinal research design. I concluded that I would still collect sufficient data which would provide substantial information to gain insight in potential changes of motivation and attitudes of the students as their study progressed.

Another reason for deciding on a cross-sectional longitudinal research design was, I anticipated that the participants would be more willing to contribute and to co-operate. Since it required less commitment in comparison to a three year study, the students would be less likely to suffer from control effects or attrition. The case for willing volunteers was supported by Merrill and West (2009:107) who asserted that:

One person who volunteers willingly to tell their life story can be preferable to any number who are reluctant: better one enthusiast than an army of press-ganged!

Consequently, I predicted consistently higher numbers of participants from each of the year groups, which alleviated my concern for drop-out of participants, or fatigue, if they found my research overly time consuming. Hence, inviting participants from different year groups to partake in the study only once, would keep the researched curious and interested, possibly resulting in more information provided from a larger sample size. Correspondingly, a larger sample size could bring greater authenticity and validity to the research. The motivation to participate was proven to be a vital factor, as evident in the 'pilot' questionnaire, because of the time commitment with regard to the quality and the depth of the responses.

Additionally, the intention of engaging newly qualified women social workers in the research enquiry arose from my presumption that their motivation and expectations might have altered, once they practiced as professionals. Indeed, it provided me with a long-term perspective to compare and contrast the findings, thus offering opportunities to evaluate continuing developments, changes in attitudes, transformation of values, or belief systems. The objective for undertaking a longitudinal study combining prospective as well as retrospective elements, to investigate and analyse 'social phenomena' (Cohen *et al.* 2007:212), appeared the most suitable method for my qualitative and biographical research investigation.

As mentioned earlier, the rural county in which the research project was to be conducted, has a predominately white population. This was mirrored in the students, of whom more than 90% are from white ethnic backgrounds. The reason I return to this fact is to illustrate further limitations which impacted on the generalisability of the findings from the research. Considering ethnicity within my thesis is evidence of my awareness as well as the appreciation of the diversity in society, but moreover exemplifies that my research has to be seen in context of the participants' ethnicity and environments. In comparison, students from urban and more ethnically diverse universities, i.e. inner-city London or Birmingham, are more likely to come from a wider range of ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, they might also study for different reasons; - for example, they might have been sent from abroad by their families to study in the UK. Indeed, the students' cultural values and belief systems and motivations for, or expectations of, studying or

working in social work, might be very different according to where and how they grew up, or in which country they worked before coming to the UK.

The reason why this is particularly relevant to social work is, that other countries and different cultures have varying expectations and thresholds for social work intervention (Hämäläinen 2008). This was evident in the earlier mentioned international study by Madrid *et al.* (2002) of social workers responses and interventions to a case study of suspected child abuse and neglect, where the cultural or societal expectations and norms determined social work involvement. Concluding, the study by Madrid *et al.* (2002) supported my hypothesis that, in addition to personal values, cultural norms, societal expectations and values are at the core of social work professionalism.

Consequently, attention needed to be placed on who the research participants were, where they came from, and why they intended to become social workers. I wanted to learn about the participants' backgrounds and what influenced their motivations, expectations and values which influenced their career decision towards social work. My contemplations about cultural awareness found further support in 'The cultural locus of stories', as discussed by Denzin (1989:73), who further pointed out that those stories have interpretative limitations due to bias from both involved, the teller and the listener (keeping in mind that I am German). Moreover, Erben (1996:172) also wrote about the necessity to recognise the 'cultural texts' and 'complex social identity' when employing the biographical method; - similar to Bourdieu (1984). Erben (1996:172) continued, that the objective is to gain insight not only into individual lives, but also 'into the nature and meaning of society' and therefore concluded, that what 'is at stake is not the scale of the research but the *purpose*' [italics in original text].

Therein, I found my justification for a qualitative research position which values individual and subjective accounts and authenticity (Roberts 2002:170), embedded in cultural and societal margins, rather than quantitative 'number-crunching'. Thus, in the pursuit of scientifically proven and proclaimed objectivity, I discussed my awareness of the implied bias and parameters of the thesis. Conversely, I still had to adhere to academic conventions, comply with ethical protocols and procedures, to safeguard and protect not only the research participants, but also myself. Consequently, I addressed the issue of power-imbalance within the research process, acknowledged my professional and academic responsibility, and the ethical issues implicit within the research.

6.5. Methods of data collection

The ethical implications were considered and implemented throughout the planning and design of suitable research methods. Consequently, all research tools for the data collection were used in conjunction with the participant information form, the topic guidance and the participation consent forms, as approved by the research ethics committee of the University of Southampton (appendix 1). Furthermore, the research participants of the focus groups, as well as the interviewees, were provided with the transcripts for their approval and consideration, as to whether I could utilise the data with their permission for the sole purpose of the thesis. All research instruments were delivered and handled anonymously and confidentially, to ensure that the research participants were not identifiable. This was further re-iterated in personal face-to-face contacts, such as the focus groups and interviews, where the participants were informed again that they could decide which questions they wished to answer, and that they could terminate the research process at any time.

I set out 'in search for a method' (Denzin 1989) that would allow and justify how best to 'document lives' (Plummer 2001) of women social workers and social work students. Thus, the intention was to focus the investigation towards their motivational factors and turning points or 'epiphanies' (Denzin 1989) in entering the social work profession. Concurrently, I considered 'practical ethics' (Singer 1993:172), time constraints and issues of access to participants. Consequently, I had to plan for suitable tools of data collection which would provide me with salient information to analyse and evaluate, in an academically sound and accepted manner, for the purpose of my thesis. Based upon these factors, I approached my research inquiry with a selection of methods of data collection to achieve triangulation (Cohen *et al.* 2007). Triangulation can be achieved through a mixed-method approach (Olsen 2004), thus endeavouring academic rigour and credibility, as well as a holistic perspective in answer to my thesis. I considered that a purist approach by using only one method, might not provide me with the salient answers to my thesis. My approach to capture the kaleidoscopic experiences of women social workers and social work students through gathering evidence by means of triangulation, was founded upon three elements.

Firstly, I started out in chapter one with my autobiographical account as a woman social worker, assuming that other female social workers and female student social workers may have similar or different motivations and experiences which led them to choose the social work profession. Secondly, I reviewed the literature

around historical connections, examples and biographies of women who acted in a social work role, to the modern day locations of women social workers in a current socio-economic and political context. I introduced the classification of social workers in the roles of either 'social justice fighters' or 'wounded helpers', and the implied assumption, that their intentions are to make, or be, a difference. I also included secondary data for the review of the literature, as it added 'value to contextualisation of existing research data, framing and assisting the conceptualisation and new knowledge building' (Brannen 2005:23).

Thirdly, I considered a variation of methods, with both qualitative and quantitative elements included, to gain a more holistic view of my research enquiry. Thus, the use of triangulation gained validation, because as Cohen *et al.* (2007:141) pointed out: 'the 'exclusive reliance on one method, [...] may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality being investigated.'

This view supported my plans of using a focus group, questionnaires and interviews, all of which contained qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, although I was aware that the application of a multi-method or mixed-method approach has attracted controversy within scientific and academic research communities for many years (see Armitage 2007; Brannen 2005; or Chamberlayne *et al.* 2000). However, the advantages highlighted in these discussions appeared to be most suitable in my pursuit to gain a fuller perspective in relation to my thesis.

Moreover, as stated before, I sought to acquire a holistic perspective of my research participants, and considered that in particular biographical data cannot be solely gathered through a single method approach, as it would confine the kaleidoscopic experiences of human life.

How can the richness of individual lives be captured by the objective methods and statistical analyses of developmental research? [...] the answer is simple "It cannot be captured at all!" (Josephs [no year] cited Greene and Hogan 2005:4)

Concluding, a single method approach of data collection that derived from solely quantitative and statistical data appeared limiting, and therefore neither suitable nor appropriate for achieving the anticipated research outcomes. Equally, solely qualitative and phenomenological data collection techniques, such as observation of the research participants, were disregarded, because it would not have been conducive to answer my research questions, nor would it have been an appropriate or practical approach for gathering data. Following, the three methods of data collection I decided on are discussed and justified. For practical reasons and due

to time constrain, I did not plan to use the pictorial ‘pieces of me’ exercise, even though it might have produced very interesting information.

6.5.1. Focus groups

Focus groups can be used either as a method in their own right or as a complement to other methods, and are especially suited for triangulation and validity checking (Morgan 1987). Moreover, focus groups are a qualitative method of data collection which enables the researcher and the research participants to gain an introduction and an overview into the topic of the research study. Thus, through the facilitation of a group discussion, created around general themes, data is generated (Bloor *et al.* 2001). Starting my data collection research journey with a focus group of year one social work students created a backdrop which enabled me to focus, narrow down and design further research instruments for subsequent larger samples. Hence, the focus group outcomes influenced the design of the questionnaire distributed to the larger sample in order to investigate the research questions more widely. Therefore, I prepared only a few initial and prompting questions for the focus group about their motivations, values and expectations of the social work profession to get the discussion within the group started (appendix 1.1). The focus group was designed as a testing ground at the exploratory stage of my research to assist in the concrete formulation of my ideas for the questionnaires and subsequent interviews. I chose the focus group approach as a suitable method, because of its inter-active and participatory nature. Furthermore, I considered that the power-imbalance within the research process would be reduced (Morgan and Krueger 1993). Indeed, it was anticipated that it would encourage the participants’ involvement from the beginning and invite them to shape some of the processes of the research (Czarniawska 2004). I was unable to plan for exact numbers, because of the voluntary aspect and the time restraint which necessitated the focus group having to be conducted either at lunch time or at the end of the lecturing day for the students. The selection of the participants was left to chance, depending upon who would be available or willing to turn up. Therefore, the focus group constituted a randomly recruited convenience sample. I also planned, as a backup, to facilitate the focus group twice, if not enough participants partook the first time around, in order to gather sufficient data.

Consequently, I had to be well-organised and plan for different scenarios, to be able to moderate the focus groups successfully (Litosseliti 2003). I organised pens, paper, post-it notes and flipchart paper for the students to record their thoughts

and discussion points. I offered the option to use drawing instead of writing, to accommodate the different learning styles in which students might prefer to express themselves. Also, with the permission of the participants, I set up a voice recording device and took additional notes. The planning took into consideration the possibility of more than one person speaking during the discussion. Hence, I wanted to ensure that I would be able to capture as much of the discussion as possible. I contemplated video-taping the focus group, but decided against it, as it can be seen as too intimidating for participants. Besides, I intended to keep the power-imbalance of the research process as anti-oppressive as possible, and instead utilise the *synergy* of the group (Kitzinger 1994). I expected my input, the moderation and facilitation of the focus group to be minimal, so to avoid participants responding in a desired way which may aim to satisfy my research work (Morgan 1997). This would not only be unethical but also distort the outcomes.

Furthermore, I was aware that potentially some of the outcomes would be unethical or biased on the grounds that the participants may respond in a manner which could be viewed as a 'social desirability response', which may not reflect their true beliefs and values (Greene and Hogan 2005; MacDonald and Ho 1998). Another aspect, beside the desirability factor, which required consideration, was that participants might not feel safe to share some information or their true thoughts, feelings or beliefs with other group members. Therefore, I invited the participants to also complete a questionnaire (appendix 5) later on in the research process. In addition, the questionnaire offered another opportunity to indicate as to whether they would like to participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher.

Finally, I was aware that focus groups have limitations to such an extent that participants might develop 'groupthink' (Janis 1972), which could lead them to think and answer in a confirmative and unanimous manner which might override their true or alternative beliefs to that of the group. However, I considered that the group of social work students in year one, within the first weeks of their study, would not have formed into a sufficiently coherent group. Thus, because they often come from diverse backgrounds and with different life experiences, they would not yet have developed 'groupthink'. Hence, I deliberately planned the focus groups at the beginning of their studies within the first month, so to avoid the group dynamics which could lead to conformity and cohesion, or groupthink. The two focus groups were attended by a total of ten participants, and the transcripts were handed back to the participants for their approval.

6.5.2. Questionnaires

I designed structured questionnaires which would counter-balance any possible issues of group conformity or cohesion, as well as to reduce socially desirable outcomes which might have influenced the focus group data. The questionnaires offered both quantitative and qualitative questions, with the opportunity to gather non-biased data due to the anonymous character of questionnaires and confidential distribution. I considered this of particular importance, because some of the qualitative questions asked the participants about their personal values and motivations. I assumed that some participants would not wish to discuss or disclose some of their answers in a focus group or in an interview.

Initially, I developed a pilot questionnaire, because, similar to the purpose of a focus group, I wanted to test the rigour of my questions (Cohen *et al.* 2007). As Miller (1997 cited Merrill and West 2009:101) argued, not only does 'the choice of a topic reflect our own autobiography but so too do our research questions'. Hence, I piloted my questionnaire to test that the questions were relevant and suitable for other social workers. The participant for the pilot questionnaire was a former social work colleague, who qualified in the nineteen-eighties, and she agreed to test the questionnaire for me. Her feedback was positive overall, with further suggestions for improvement. She concluded that the questions were very 'thought provoking and took her back in time' (appendix 2).

I developed three different variations of the same questionnaire with a core of questions, but made slight alterations depending on the year group of students, or the qualified social workers (appendix 1.2 to 1.4). I wanted to gain a cross-sectional longitudinal perspective (Cohen *et al.* 2007:217) from first year, to second and third year female social work students as well as qualified women social workers working in the field, to gauge any potential changes in attitudes, expectations, perceptions or values. All questionnaires had the same standard set of questions, such as demographical data, motivations and values. However, the questionnaires for the second and third year female students had additional questions in relation to their practice experiences from their social work placements, undertaken in year two and three of their studies.

The recruitment of the participants for completing the questionnaires by the social work students across all three year groups was again left to random selection, based upon voluntary commitment. The only obvious criterion was that they had to be female in accordance with my research thesis. Whereas the selection of the qualified women social workers was 'purposive sampling' (Cohen *et al.* 2007:115),

because I had access to social work students, who I previously had worked with. Furthermore, I projected to be able to recruit possibly five volunteers for the interviews, based upon an 'opportunistic sampling approach' (Merrill and West 2009:107).

I used the questionnaires for the female social work students and the qualified female social workers with the intention to identify themes which could be investigated further in a face-to-face semi-structured interview. By using the combination of questionnaires and interviews I endeavoured to gain greater 'verstehen' (Erben 1998:9) and meaning of women's motivational factors to enter, or work, in the social work profession. Initially, I had a large volume of questions, which I thought to be relevant with regard to my thesis. However, I narrowed these down, because I realised that I had to be open-minded and flexible to allow participants to express themselves.

It is essential not to construct too many questions [...] nor being overly prescriptive and rigid may blind the researcher [...] need some structure alongside flexibility as new questions emerge from the research (Merrill and West 2009:102)

The first six questions of all the questionnaires (appendix 1.2 to 1.4) were intended to collect demographical and socio-economic data about the participants' background, which would enable a comparison between women entering/ working in social work today, and the early pioneers as reviewed in chapter three. However, the one question I sensed as causing potential apprehension from the participants, was about their relationship status, because societal norms and expectations have changed over the past two centuries. Thus, 'social classifications', where women were classified in relation to their husband's occupation (Roberts 1981:172), have changed. Nevertheless, participants might not wish to disclose their relationship preferences or status, which was obviously left to their discretion to answer, or any of the other questions, as stated at the beginning of the questionnaires. Conversely, I had to query the relevance of the question with regard to my thesis, but I felt compelled to ask, because my professional and academic experience told me that it might reveal itself to be relevant. Hence, I did not want to lose the opportunity of asking the question, because of its relevance to the comparison of data from the historical biographies of early pioneers in social care positions with women social workers today. Furthermore, I believed this question to be relevant in the context of Woodward and Chisholm's (1981:172) survey of women graduates which were predominately of white, middle-class and married backgrounds. Although I anticipated my research participants possibly living in non-married relationships, or to be single, and possibly from less 'privileged'

backgrounds than the participants in the Woodward and Chisholm study (1981:181).

As discussed earlier in the ethical consideration section of this chapter, I contemplated the use of SurveyMonkey for the questionnaires, to offer students anonymity, but decided against it as I considered it as unsuitable for the qualitative aspects of the research. Instead, I preferred the personal contact (Leece *et al.* 2006 cited Parker 2008) and my introduction to the students. Nevertheless, I preserved anonymity and confidentiality by leaving the questionnaires, including the topic guide, the participant information, and a self-addressed-stamped envelope for the students to take away if they elected to participate. I also reiterated that they should not mention any names.

Conversely, I have to acknowledge that the purposive sample of the qualified social workers infringed my earlier ethical statement, because I did contact them via email. Yet, I considered the ethics of data collection via email, as discussed by Parker (2008). I realised that even though the use of email may contribute 'in levelling the power relationship in research', it also raised concerns in relation to anonymity (Van Selm and Jankowski, 2006 cited Parker 2008:80). However, I reasoned, that it would be permissible for me to contact my previous students via email, because there existed no power relationship, as they no longer had any educational or work relationships with me. Nonetheless, I re-iterated to the selected participants, that the completion of the questionnaires was voluntary; and once completed they should print off the questionnaire, then post it back, rather than email it back, so that confidentiality could be maintained.

A total of seventy-five questionnaires were randomly distributed to female volunteers across three year groups of students (twenty per year group). The qualified social workers (fifteen) were targeted based on contact details available to me. However, I realised a mistake I made far too late, because I forgot to set and state a specific return date for the questionnaires, which might have contributed to a low return rate.

6.5.3. Interviews

The selection of interview participants from the student social worker cohorts and the qualified social workers was based upon their voluntary commitment, aimed at gathering more in-depth biographical information, and to gain a holistic

perspective. Thus, ascertaining data about their personal or professional motivational factors, their values and as to whether their aspiration was founded upon making a difference in people's lives. The biographical approach, as a method, allows 'the informant to produce a storied presentation of lived experience that connected them as individuals to their social contexts', as Parker and Merrylees (2002:108) pointed out. Furthermore, through the application of the biographical approach I wanted to discover whether the participants would categorise themselves as social 'justice fighters' or 'wounded helper/ healers' or 'social repairers', because the personal and social meanings are a 'basis of action [that] has gained greater prominence', according to Chamberlayne *et al.* (2000:1).

I perceived the biographical questions as more difficult to ask in both, the focus group and the questionnaires, because I expected that the biographical questions might be seen to be of a private nature. Whereas, in the interview situation, I sensed, that I was able to achieve the relevant answers through 'prompting' questions. Thus, I gained greater knowledge, understanding and opportunity to gather understanding of the interviewees' motivational factors entering the profession based upon their biographical histories. The participants were given the topic guide (appendix 1.10), the participant information sheet (appendix 1.6) and the consent form (appendix 1.7) in advance of the interview, thus providing them with an insight into my research. Moreover, it enabled the participants to ask any further questions about the research's purpose and process. The venue chosen for the interviews was in a quiet and confidential room within the collaborating university's facilities.

I chose a semi-structured questioning approach to the interview with the purpose of allowing participants to explore their motivations in a largely unguided manner to gain qualitative data. Yet, I still had to direct some of the prompting questions in order to stay within the remits and aims of my thesis. Middleton (1993:70) acknowledged that an 'interview can't be non-directive'. Hence, my interpretation of an interview was, that it is a dialogue between individuals which is usually following a theme or topic, established and agreed between the interviewer and interviewee. Moreover, Becker (1967:245) proclaimed that, 'there is no position from which sociological research can be done that is not biased in one way or another'. However, I aimed for a balanced and fair conduct of the research process through the application of a feminist approach. Thus, I treated the interviewees as participating women, on an equal level to me, with the intent to reduce the power-imbalance as much as potentially possible.

During the face-to-face interview, I invited the interviewees to ask questions not purely for clarification purposes, but also to give them an opportunity to understand the context of the interview. Furthermore, I thought to re-assure the participants that although their viewpoints or positions were unique, they might also have been experienced or voiced by others. This aimed to encourage participants to be more at ease and confident in sharing their biographical information or telling their life story of how they arrived at that point in their life.

The importance of extending the interviewer to interviewee encounter into a more 'broadly-based social relationship' was highlighted by Oakley (1981:31), thus presenting a two-way process rather than a one-way data collection exercise. The dynamic and the outcomes of these two-way inter-actions can only flourish in a face-to-face interview; thus, providing salient and valuable information and a sub-text that cannot be achieved to the same level of depth through surveys or questionnaires alone. The stories told by my interviewees of their professional journey included autobiographical details and revealed potential empathic connections which could possibly be linked to my autobiographical context facilitating an atmosphere of trust and openness. The gathered information allowed me to utilise the participants' life narratives, and apply an interpretative biographical qualitative research method approach. The information would be correlated to the early pioneers' data as well as my autobiographical account.

From a different perspective, but still relevant to my research, I considered Charon's (2006:4) 'narrative medicine' approach, which refers to the use of narratives as a diagnostic tool. Narrative medicine is aimed to uncover clues which are embedded in the patient's story telling of their illnesses. This proved to be of importance in making connections to the autobiographical background of the patient in relationship to the current illness (Charon 2006). Moreover, even though the listener will be moved by the patients' accounts, it will leave ambiguity and uncertainty to the full extent of what has been talked about, according to Charon (2006). Thus, similar to the interview process, the listener of these 'narrative medicine' biography accounts has to interpret and clarify the meaning, before indicating an understanding through the awareness of his/her response. What this implied in my understanding was, that the researcher not only has a selective view and an agenda they might consciously or subconsciously follow; but what is more, it shaped and influenced the responses given or questions asked. As a result the interpretation of such life narratives is subjective and influenced by the researcher's interpretation.

Indeed, the same could be said about other research methods such as observations, because everything a researcher observes or hears is open to interpretation. The only authentic account can come from the observed articulating their own actions. Nevertheless, researchers can never be sure, if the researched are actually giving factual accounts or display genuine behaviour and convey reality in a truthful manner, or as to whether they deliberately or unknowingly try to please the researcher.

6.6. The dilemma of finding the truth

Do you want the truth or something beautiful? (Paloma Faith 2009)

The dilemma of truth in the research process is a controversial topic of many discourses, regardless of quantitative or qualitative research paradigms. Kaufmann (1968:46) sceptically questioned the truth about the truth and as to whether it is just an obligation to lie:

We still do not know where the urge for truth comes from; for as yet we have heard only of the obligation imposed by society that it should exist: to be truthful means using the customary metaphors - in moral terms, the obligation to lie according to fixed convention, to lie herd-like in a style obligatory for all [...]

Furthermore, Foucault (1980:66 cited Middleton 1993:66) elaborated about 'the truth and power relationships within the research process', which he thought to be more prevalent in an interview or focus groups than gathering data through questionnaires or surveys. The focus for my enquiry was on the quality with regard to the reality of the accounts by the individual life narratives, and not as to whether they were telling the truth. I reasoned that an exclusive quantitative and statistical method alone, would not guarantee truthful data that reflects participants' reality, because it would not permit qualitative elements that offer a degree of authenticity which in my research I regard as a measure of truth. Heikkinen *et al.* (2000:3) argued that narrative truth floats between the reality of what is known and the fiction of the unknown; thus something is true if the 'meaning content corresponds with reality'. As an auto/ biographical researcher trying to discover and produce new knowledge I have to balance what is known (sameness) with the unknown (otherness).

The narrative needs to be connected with the reader's previous experiences, and other significant narratives, which are being told and retold in our society. Therefore, a good story can be situated in the space between sameness and otherness. (Heikkinen *et al.* 2000:13)

Indeed, the complexity and richness of the lives of participants is often 'not to be found on the surface, but in how it is lived, in the person's experiences and reactions to the world' (Greene and Hogan 2005:4). Hence, I selected qualitative methods of data collection, such as interviews, in order to gain a holistic view of individuals' life experiences and motivational factors. This could not be obtained through statistical quantitative data alone, since statistics serve to obliterate individuality. However, Greene and Hogan (2005:5) advised, that the nature of any personal experience will 'always in part be inaccessible to an outsider'.

Consequently, the researcher has to accept this as the fundamental premise. Therefore, it could be said that the inaccessibility of experience might be assumed to be total, if experience is seen as essentially private. On the other hand, I argue that experience is socially mediated and therefore a shared experience (Merrill and West 2009) and presents truth. Furthermore, Wengraf (2001:112) took the position that the preferred form of a narrative interview design should be characterised by 'a more minimalistic intervention' and 'the interviewer should learn to listen'. Additionally, the 'value of silence' as discussed by Van Manen (1990:122), and the positive use of silence in the interview process, recognises the fact that a more reflective response might emerge, rather than trying to fill the silence with new questions or comments by the interviewer.

Considering these divergent notions, the limitations of interviews and narrative autobiography become obvious, because experiences are subjective, being based upon the individual's selective memory of the whole experience. Therefore, qualitative research has developed into an interpretative area where two sides (the researcher and the researched) present their interpretation of events or experiences. Firstly, the side of the person who recounts events in a reflective mental and emotional process filters and interprets these events. Secondly, as part of an effort to communicate the events to the researcher, the researcher in turn attempts to understand the original experience through interpretation based upon their own experiences. Consequently, Denzin (1989:23) questioned as to whether 'truth' can be found in the process of interpretative biography, because the use of language distorts autobiographical accounts. Yet, Heikkinen *et al.* (2000) conceived that truth is the link which connects the reality of the world and language. The dialectic process of intersubjectivity, which induces interdependence in the social interactions between people, facilitates the concrete

encounter between self and others. Thus, a shared existential meaning which forms a connection emerges. This dichotomy was further conveyed by Madison (2001:11) who stated that:

Intersubjectivity certainly challenges the everyday sense of having one's own 'pure' experience, of being a self-contained and defined subject standing back from and perceiving a world of objects and others.

This 'pure' experience and the perception of ourselves and the world around us in the relationship between intersubjectivity and finding the truth through the research process, is further challenged by the interpretations of experiences obstructed by the selectiveness of the human memory and what constitutes truth. The full range of feelings and motivations are discriminated at all times by the memory, and within this intersubjective process, which might not always correspond to the truth. Asking participants what their motivations were to become social workers and what their life experiences were up to this point, has most likely been distorted by their memory. This was illustrated by Greene and Hogan (2005:6) who elaborated further on mechanisms, such as denial and dissociation, resulting in 'forgetting' events, and they cautioned that:

People can report on their motivations and emotions only to the extent that they are aware of them and only in the manner that they have come to interpret them. People are prone also to all sorts of bias in reporting their views and experiences to others.

Moreover, Sayer (2004:174) drew attention to the 'tricks of memory' which can lead to confusing or mixing up events and experiences over time, and 'weaving them all together into a seamless recollection of a coherent self making [...] the stuff of which autobiographies are made'. This links back to Solomon's (1946:3) question at the beginning of my thesis, 'Is the memory to be trusted?', and as to whether we clearly remember experiences thus to record them truthfully in our memory. Similarly, Roberts (2002:172) contributed to the debate with regard to the reliability of memory, because of its 'fallibility' in being a reliable source of information for past experiences, and that other sources of data collection could minimise this methodological dilemma.

Within my research project, consideration was given to the fact that the research participants' recall of their motivations and experiences might not only be 'tricked' by their memory, but may also have led their responses to be biased and tainted by their selective memory on an unconscious level. Moreover, their responses might not be 'truthful', but be biased, due to the inherent human desire to present oneself in a socially acceptable way, or respondents might aspire to 'social

desirability' (Greene and Hogan 2005:7). Thus, social desirability can influence qualitative as well as quantitative research results. Indeed, MacDonald and Ho (1998) found, that the 'social desirability' factor can be prevalent in some participants of research, as they may have a tendency to present answers which reflect a socially desirable response, although they may not necessarily represent their true beliefs. Subsequently, MacDonald and Ho (1998) trialled phrasing questions in the third person rather than the first person in an attempt to minimise social desirability response. MacDonald and Ho (1998) recommended that, if researchers use statements phrased in the first person, procedures to control for social desirability response bias need to be incorporated into the research design. I found this advice difficult to incorporate in my research, in particular for the interview process, because it created an unnatural distance between the research participants and the researcher. Furthermore, I thought that it might jeopardise, even contradict, the purpose and value of the autobiographical data collection through the otherwise more personalised approach of a face-to-face interview.

Lastly, I considered another ethical dilemma with finding the truth and realising that there were situations when the truth needed to be told. I also had to be aware, in the face-to-face interview, that I did not 'open a can of worms' (metaphorically speaking). My concerns were that the person I interviewed might disclose too much private information and become upset. This could lead to an ethical dilemma, as to whether I should remain focussed on my interview questions, or show empathy and care for the interviewee. These were scenarios which were more likely to occur in the method of interviewing, than in any other method of researching human beings and their social behaviours (Kaufman 1968). Hence, Merrill and West (2009:111) advised the researcher to be mindful that 'the telling of life stories and the memories it may evoke can be painful, intimate and deeply emotional'. This indicates that qualitative methods of research have ethical implications, as much as scientific or medical experiments, which should abstain from causing physical and emotional harm to the individual (BERA 2011). Conversely to these views, sometimes the 'can of worms' needs to be opened, so that an individual can move on with their life, or others can be safeguarded from their influences. This is illustrated by the following example.

I attended a presentation for the promotion of a training programme, aimed at survivors of domestic violence and abuse, where a member of the audience asked the facilitator precisely the question "*Aren't you worried that you open a can of worms? You are not a trained therapist.*" The speaker replied that they firstly make

it very clear to the survivors that they are not therapists, but facilitators of this programme for survivors. Secondly, they are aware that participants are likely to share too much, or very painful, information and details. But, the speaker continued:

“We cannot keep the lid on the can of worms and let them fester away and pollute or poison the person who survived domestic abuse as it will continue and effect their mental health, or even worse spills over to their children.”

The point made with this example was, that there existed a potential risk that, through interviewing social work students and social workers, I might be faced with the ethical dilemma that they divulge too much information about themselves or service users they work with. This either would be beyond my professional skills or may alert me to get other professionals involved. However, as this was a risk I was aware of, I had informed the interviewees at the start of an interview, that even though I assured them of confidentiality, I had a professional and ethical duty to disclose information to professional third parties if I thought that the interviewee, or another person, was at risk of significant harm. Besides, it was important to consider the potential benefits for the community of service users, because the ‘opening of a can of worms’ in the course of an interview might cause the social worker or student to become aware of their issues and potential shortfalls which might affect their practice and the work with service users. This scenario can open up the opportunity to address matters of their personal, emotional or mental health and well-being, as well as that of the service users. Thus, through reflective practice of the social worker or student, together with my awareness and my professional skills I can direct them to review and consider their reasons and motivations of working in social work. In conclusion, I judged that the benefit of the interviews and the overall research process and methods of data collection was greater than the latent risks involved.

6.7. The research plan

I discussed the ethical issues inherent in research, and explained the selection of the participants, the design of the methods, and my role as the researcher. Next are outlined the timescales and resources that I planned for the overall research process, because Cohen *et al.* (2007:78ff) emphasised the importance of ‘planning for educational research’.

Figure 6.7.1.: Research Plan

Activity	Resources	By whom	When
Research and reading around the topic of the thesis	Library, e-journals, e-books, internet. Attending lectures	Francisca Veale	October 2009 - October 2011
Design of: focus group questions; semi-structured questionnaires for year 1, 2, 3 and qualified social workers and the interview proposal	Research of topic and how to develop and design the research instruments Discussions with supervisor.	Francisca Veale	May 2010
Governance application for ethical approval to Soton (University of Southampton)	Application and submission form	Francisca Veale	June 2010, revised July, August 2010
Approval for research to go ahead	Soton Ethics Committee	Soton	September 2010
Letter to Bournemouth University (BU) with ethical approval	Soton approval copy	Francisca Veale	September 2010
Arrange with BU tutor student focus group session(s)	Email/telephone	Francisca Veale and BU tutors	September 2010
Pilot questionnaire	1 pilot questionnaire	Francisca Veale	October 2010
Year 1 students focus group	2 focus groups: total of 10 students	Francisca Veale	October 2010
Writing up transcripts from the taped focus group discussion	Recordings and written notes	Francisca Veale	December 2010
Thank you letter to focus group participants incl. the transcripts from discussion	10 copies of letters and scripts	Francisca Veale	March 2011
Year 1 students questionnaire	20 questionnaires distributed	Francisca Veale	March 2011
Year 2 students questionnaire	20 questionnaires distributed	Francisca Veale	March 2011
Questionnaire to recently qualified social workers	15 questionnaires distributed	Francisca Veale	April 2011
Year 3 students questionnaire	20 questionnaires distributed	Francisca Veale	May 2011
Interviews	4 Volunteers	Francisca Veale	August 2011
VIVA upgrade	Panel organised by Michael Erben	Michael Erben	October 2011
Thank you letter to interviewees incl. the transcripts for approval	4 copies of letters and scripts	Francisca Veale	October 2011
Analysis and evaluation of all data	Focus group, questionnaires, interviews	Francisca Veale	November 2011
Thank you letter to all participants with summary of key findings	Email & letters via BU tutor(s)	Francisca Veale	January 2011

Planning for research is vital, in order to be able to review, evaluate and plan again, in an organised and structured approach. Thus, evidence of accountability, professionalism and academic rigour is provided which is of particular relevance

for qualitative research (Mays and Pope 1996). There were some minor variations to the original timescales as proposed for the ethics approval (appendix 1 - protocol), because of the arrangements with the collaborating university.

Furthermore, my personal time constraints and professional work commitments asked for some minor changes to the original plan. The table 6.7.1. presents the amended version. Summarising the table above with regard to the planning of my methodology and the research tools for data collection, I took the advice of piloting my questionnaire as discussed by Merrill and West (2009:97), who recommended a 'critical friend' to assist in piloting research. Thus, I emailed the pilot questionnaire to a former colleague and friend who had agreed to test the questionnaire for me.

Following, I planned for a focus group with year one social work students at the beginning of their study. I was able to recruit ten participants who had to be allocated over two weeks to get sufficient student numbers. The tape recordings and written notes were transcribed and distributed to the participants for their approval. Later in the academic term 2010/2011, I distributed twenty semi-structured questionnaires to each of the three social work student year groups, totalling sixty questionnaires, and a further fifteen to qualified social workers. Thus, totalling seventy-five questionnaires distributed across four different cohorts. The questionnaires included an invitation to the participants to contact me if they wished to take part in a face-to-face semi-structured interview. Only four qualified social workers responded and agreed to an interview, but none of the students did. As stated earlier, all participants were provided with the participant information sheet, a topic guide and, in addition, the participant consent form for the focus group and interview participants.

The data collected provided specific statistical data such as age, gender, ethnicity and relationship status, as well as qualitative data about the motivational factors as to why the participants entered the study of social work, or are working in the field. The analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the data collected was planned for the autumn term 2011. A summary of the findings of my research will be circulated to the research participants via the university tutor(s) together with a letter thanking them for having taken part in my study.

6.8. Summary

This chapter rationalised and justified the methods selected for my thesis and was based upon the previous chapter which discussed my feminist grounded theory approach and my reflexivity within the research process. The selection of the research participants was justified, and the different methods of data collection discussed, also with the latent limitations and the ethical implications. Within my feminist research paradigm I incorporated traditional scientific research methodologies and moderated the conventional hard-line division of the qualitative versus quantitative use of methods from a critical perspective. This was supported by Oakley (1981) who argued, that it has to be recognised that the epistemological goal of feminist research methodology is similar to the social science approach in the creation of new knowledge. The following chapter presents the findings from my research project and compares, contrasts and analyses my findings, in the context of the findings from the biographies of the early pioneers as summarised in the table 3.3.1. in chapter three.

I admit that I might have been at times over-defensive and overly eager to justify my approaches and methods, but this was due to my academic consciousness alerting me that for a PhD it is germane to provide work which is relevant and recognised by academics in the field. Or maybe I was worried like Arnold (1976:19 cited Spender 1981:192), who experienced that some women had known even before they had begun to write that: 'you have to preprogram your mind to work from male values or you might as well save your pencil for the grocery list'. Nonetheless, I hope to have addressed 'legitimate problems that are avowable' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:238) and my thesis can withstand the rigour of academic scrutiny.

The following chapter presents, analyses and discusses the findings from my research and refers back to the literature discussed in previous chapters.

CHAPTER 7

Presentation, analysis and discussion of findings

Feminist theory - of all kinds - is to be based on, or anyway touch base with, the variety of real life stories women provide about themselves. (Lugones and Spelman, 1990:21 cited Brayton 1997:1)

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews from my small-scale research project. The transcripts of the two focus groups can be found in the appendices 7 and 8. The summaries of each of the questionnaires from the three social work student cohorts and the qualified social workers are in the appendices 9 to 12. The transcripts of the four interviews with one of year two and two of year three social work students, who just completed their study at the time of interview, as well as one qualified and practicing social worker, are located in the appendices 13 to 16.

The findings are analysed and discussed in the context of my hypothesis as to whether social work is a female dominated profession due to the early socialisation of women into a caring role by their families and/or patriarchal society. The motivation for women, in particular, to study social work may also, or may not, be rooted within significant childhood experiences, thus potentially making them wounded helpers or social justice fighters. The research participants' succinct life stories open a small window into their 'narrative identity' (Ricoeur 1990 cited Dauenhauer 2011:13) which portray their journeys leading them to social work. Yet, I was aware that the research participants were unlikely to reveal the whole history of their lives to me, because as the researcher I am a stranger to them.

Roberts (2002:46) suggested that life stories should be 'left to speak for themselves with little apparent editing and interpretation'. However, as I undertook a mixed-method approach, some of the findings are of a quantitative nature and can be summarised, i.e. in form of tables and by graphical illustration. The qualitative data is organised, where possible in themes, and supported by direct quotes from the research participants to 'speak for themselves'. Reference is made, as applicable, to national statistics (GSCC 2009) and other related research (Parker and Merrylees 2002,

Stevens *et al.* 2012), as well as the information from the biographies of the early pioneers. At the end of this chapter I draw summarising conclusions from the findings, across the different methods of data collection, thus illuminating and offering an insight into women's motivations to engage with social work.

7.2. Presentation, analysis and discussion of the data from the focus groups, questionnaires, and interviews

Firstly, a brief overview of the return figures is provided, which is a statistical representation of the participants. Secondly, I report on the findings for each of the methods of data collection and connections are made to findings from the literature discussed in earlier chapters.

I invited all female students from the first year of the social work cohort to take part in one or more focus groups. Out of 50 year 1 students, 46 were female (92%) and a total of 10 took part in the two focus groups (22%). I regarded the number of focus group participants as sufficient to assess whether the questions of my research and the thesis were suitable and appropriate. Also, I was satisfied with the attendance of 22% of female students from the year 1 student cohort, considering that the participants gave up their lunch break for the focus groups.

In addition, twenty questionnaires were handed out to female students in each of the three student year groups, and a further 15 questionnaires were distributed to qualified female social workers. From the total of 75 questionnaires, 16 were returned (21%). I had hoped for a higher return rate, but realised only at a later point that I had made the mistake of not including a specific return date. The low return could be attributed to the fact that the questionnaire was quite lengthy, as pointed out by the participant of the pilot questionnaire (appendix 2). Also, the students, most likely, prioritised their academic work over the completion of a voluntary questionnaire for an unknown researcher, and the omission of a specific return date. Four women (5%) volunteered for the interviews, one of them a year 2 student, two year 3 students, and one a qualified social worker.

The table below illustrates the total number of students per year group and the breakdown into male and female students, as well as displaying the return rates of questionnaires in numbers and percentages, which includes the qualified social workers:

Table 7.2.: Statistical breakdown of returned questionnaires:

Academic year 2010/11	Total number of social work students	Number of Males	Male %	Number of Females	Female %	Focus groups Number (%)	Questionnaires return Number and % Overall and out of 20
Year 1	50	4	8%	46	92%	10 (22%)	5 / 11% / 25%
Year 2	45	6	14%	39	86%		2 / 5% / 10%
Year 3	54	9	17%	45	83%		5 / 11% / 25%
Qualified social worker	15 contacted	n/a	n/a	15	n/a	n/a	4 out of 15 = 26%
TOTAL return							16 out of 75 = 21%

7.2.1. The findings from the focus groups

According to my research plan (figure 6.7.1.), I first facilitated two focus groups to test the potential merit of my thesis and my research investigation, as well as to consider any further aspects which would need to be included in the research. Two focus groups were conducted, with a new cohort of social work students, at the beginning of their studies over two consecutive weeks. A total of ten volunteers participated in the just under one hour sessions, during their lunch breaks at university.

Eight out of ten participants from the focus groups completed some additional questions anonymously (appendix 7), relevant to their age, ethnicity, relationship status, children, additional learning needs, social-class background and their parental occupations. This volunteered information revealed the focus groups participants' age range from 25 to 46 years, with the mean age of 29.5 years. This is actually below the mean age of 30.7 years for students entering social work study programmes, as listed by the GSCC (2009). All participants stated that they considered themselves of white British ethnicity, which is higher than the reported figure by the GSCC (2009) of 70% white British students in social work programmes. Two participants of the focus groups stated, that they had additional learning needs (both dyslexia). In addition, one of them suffers from Multiple Sclerosis (aged 40 years) and the other one has also dyspraxia (aged 45 years).

Three respondents stated that they were married with children (38%, - given that eight responses equals 100%), one single with two children, the other 50% stated they were in cohabitating relationships. Half of the respondents classified themselves as working class and the other half as middle class. One of the respondents (29 years of age), stated that she grew up in foster care, looked after by the Local Authority; she also completed a questionnaire (Q 1.3.). Another respondent (45 years of age), grew up

with her grand-parents. One respondent stated that one of her parents is a social worker. Another respondent gave her mother's occupation as psychiatric nurse.

For the facilitation of the focus groups I had prepared five questions (appendix 1.1.) which I aimed to address in the otherwise non-directive discussion forum. In the following, I summarise a selection of the statements made by the participants which appeared significant to my thesis. The first question to the focus groups was to discuss what motivated them to study social work. The motivations were varied and difficult to categorise, but I could make out four main categories which are based on my hypothesis.

Table 7.2.1.1. Focus group motivation versus the researcher's suggested categories

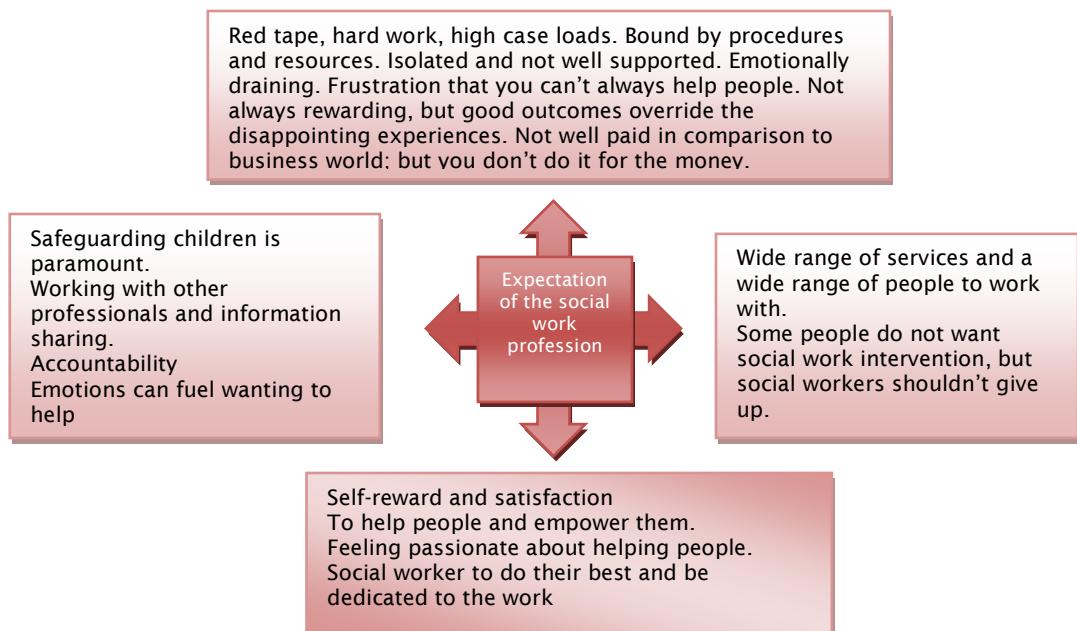
Focus group members' motivation	Suggested categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Parent/s were social workers and wanting the same job satisfaction ✚ Parent/s were foster parents ✚ Parent/s run social care provision for learning disability 	Career, but possibly also wounded helper in a positive sense that they 'know' about the issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Was brought up in the care system by local authority and wants to be a voice/advocate for others in similar situation ✚ Been through tough times and hopes to pass on coping skills ✚ Life experiences, which can enable to help others 	Wanting to make difference and social justice fighter as well as wounded helper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Humanity ✚ Doing a worthwhile job ✚ Wanting to make a difference ✚ Helping underrepresented groups in society ✚ Advocacy and helping people ✚ Caring gene ✚ To give people a voice ✚ Working with children 	Making a difference and social justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Better paid job ✚ Interesting job ✚ Wanting to be 'qualified' and gain professional recognition ✚ Career progression having worked in social care and expand knowledge and practice ✚ Career change from a different profession to a more rewarding one 	Career and financial incentive

It appears that the suggested categories I have been trying to establish, are overlapping and cannot be clearly distinguished. Some of the motivations to study social work, as stated by the focus group members from year 1, appear to have an element of some kind of prior experience. This appears either to be rooted in experiences they had as children through family members working in a social care related profession, or their personal experience of the care system, or general life

experiences. Thus, they felt suitable to help and support other people to cope with the adversities and challenges of life. I judged that these students 'know' about the profession, and might fit the category of the wounded helper (approximate 40%). This figure can be compared to Stevens *et al.*'s (2012:23, and see appendix 17) online survey across three first year cohorts, which averages to 35,6% of respondents who stated that they felt especially suitable for social work because of their life experiences. All participants of my focus groups could be seen as social justice fighters, as all of them want to improve situations for others. This compares to Stevens *et al.*'s (2012:23, and see appendix 17) results that 70,3% of respondents wishing to tackle injustice and inequalities in society and 88,6% wanting to help individuals to improve the quality of their lives. The participants of my focus groups expressed wanting to make a difference in other people's lives and to serve as an advocate for these people who do not have a voice. One respondent stated she chose to study, because of humanitarian reasons and made reference to her religious belief. Some saw social work as a career choice which could not only make a difference in the life of other people, but considered it an interesting job, carrying a professional recognition and financial rewards (approximate 50%). Stevens *et al.*'s (2012:23, and see appendix 17) figures are not that dissimilar, but they asked two separate questions, if students saw social work as a good career prospect (58,3%) and a well-paid job (26%). In addition, one student in my focus groups claimed that her big 'caring gene' made her suitable for social work.

When asked about their expectations of the social work profession, the focus group members were very much aware of the challenges, as illustrated:

Figure 7.2.1.2. Expectation of the social work profession



Again it was difficult to categorise the themes that emerged from this discussion with the two focus groups. However, I judged that the overriding expectation was, that even though social work is not the best paid profession in relation to the responsibilities it carries, the job satisfaction by helping other people counterbalances the potential negative realities. Furthermore, it is impossible to document the passion the students expressed during the focus group discussions. Their statements by far outweigh the summarised words in figure 7.2.1.2.

It was interesting to note that the groups had differing lengths of discussion around the question of their value base. Whereas the first focus group (appendix 7) only gave text-book-like answers, the second group discussed in depth their value base, relating it to examples from their life and work experiences (appendix 8). The to-be-expected answers were, i.e.: a social worker has to be person-centred, non-judgmental, accept and not label the people they work with. One student made a significant statement about empowering people which is very much embedded in the social work value base:

"I think the big one for me is around empowering people to do stuff for themselves. You can give somebody the tools to change that makes things better for them that's really a crucial thing rather than being prepared to do it for them. Then they don't learn any kind of thing for themselves anyway."
(appendix 8)

Some group members acknowledged that it might be difficult at times when their personal feelings, views or religious beliefs might not agree with the values of the service user/client. Others stated that the value base was often influenced by their own upbringing, and through reflecting upon their values it might change. One group member also pointed out that the Church undertakes a lot of work similar to social work (appendix 7).

A group member in the second focus group said that she did not know what the term 'values' meant. After a brief discussion, she summarised: *"So, values are our foundations?"* (appendix 8), which I thought to be a very suitable definition. Another student used the term 'values' in the sense of *"what we believe in"* (similar to *"our foundations"*), and she expressed how her values had altered by acknowledging that children have greater abilities than generally recognised:

"I think I got this growing understanding and belief that children can do so much more and are so much more capable than we allow them to be or give them credit for. I believe in children's ability. Not letting them do stuff or making decisions, when actually children can do themselves..." (appendix 8)

Lively discussions took place in both focus groups around the question of how they thought society viewed the social work profession. The overwhelming agreement was

that society's view was influenced by the negative press and media coverage social workers receive, by not sharing any positive life changing stories with the public. Another misconception the focus group members considered, was that people think of social workers only in the context of: "*they remove children*" and social workers being "*interfering busy-bodies*" (appendix 7). While there was no public recognition of the support available and offered by social workers. Students also mentioned that they had been called "*trainee child-snatcher*", or been labelled as "*hippies*" (appendix 8). Apparently, the public questions why someone actually wants to understand some of the people and problems social workers deal with, perceiving that they "*must be part of the drug culture*" themselves (appendix 8).

In contrast, students felt that the public has become more sympathetic towards social workers, because recently the media started portraying the pressures and workloads social workers have to manage (appendix 7). Interestingly, one student stated that her father had never met a social worker (appendix 8). This was further accentuated by another student's statement, which said that her friends and family essentially had no idea what a social worker does:

"When I mentioned to my friends that I'm going to be a social worker, a big majority of them asked, what does a social workers do? They might have a negative opinion, but very few people out there, unless they have been involved in the system somehow, 'know' what a social worker does." (appendix 8)

A very valid point was made by the first focus group, that the public does not know what a social worker 'looks like', because other professionals such as the police or nurses wear uniforms and are distinguishable and positively recognisable. They felt that social workers need to change the public's perception and break down barriers by being more visible in the communities and promoting a positive image, i.e. to speak in schools (appendix 7). At the same time, they felt that the government does not assist in creating and promoting a professional identity for social workers, unlike in the case of education or health professionals. The reason might be, because social work operates across the two professions of education and health. Also, what is concerning, is the fact that other closely related professionals, i.e. from the health sector, are not really aware of what social workers do, and/or they have preconceived negative notions, as exemplified by the next two students' accounts from the second focus group (appendix 8):

Figure 7.2.1.3. Anecdotal views expressed by health professionals about social workers



Significantly, some students pointed out that all these misconceptions and judgements about social workers were rooted in people's fears, because of general ignorance of the social work profession. A student captured it by saying: *"If people don't know something, then they are scared of it"*, which was further supported by another student's comment: *"People's fears stem from their ignorance"* (appendix 8).

Closing this discussion point, an opposing and encouraging testimony was given by a student about other people's perception of the social work profession, which essentially corroborates the previous statements, because the 'lady' actually 'knows' what she is talking about:

"A lady I know who adopts children said to me, it's one of the best jobs [social work] to do, because working with social service. It's the best job and a lot of satisfaction you can get out of it. You gonna enjoy it and gonna be alright with it." (appendix 8)

Finally, there was only sufficient time to discuss the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers' (2001) key purpose of social work mission statement with the first focus group; - to remind the reader:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

The students gave varied responses; some of them would like to be seen as change agents, and the mission statement represents what social workers should strive for in their professional work. Conversely, others felt that this mission statement made social workers look like 'miracle workers' aiming to achieve the unachievable. They asked '*how are we gonna do it all?*' and they concluded that social workers cannot do it without the government and "*the power from above*" (appendix 7).

7.2.2. Findings from the questionnaires

According to my research plan, I first conducted a pilot of the proposed questionnaire which was completed by a former social work colleague (appendix 2). Her feedback suggested that it had been a “*very interesting and thought provoking exercise*”, and she suggested that people would have to be motivated to take the time to complete the questionnaire. It took her 45 minutes to complete; consequently she thought it to be “*quite extensive*”. However, she commented that the questions were clear and did not overlap. She concluded: “*I found it interesting to do – took me back 30 years to a younger idealistic person!!!*” I considered the pilot participant’s comments with regard to the complexity of the questions and the time commitment required from the participants. Also, I took some of the suggestion on board and made some minor changes to the questions, as suggested by her. Still, considering all of the questions relevant, and wanting as much information as possible from participants, I reasoned that, having gained their attention, they might not be too concerned about the time spent for the completion of the questionnaire. Yet, had I reduced the questions, I doubted that I would have received sufficient and relevant information contributing to my thesis. Thus, I could have potentially wasted participants’ and my time and effort.

In an attempt to reduce the questions, as well as consciously examining my personal value base, I too completed the questionnaire (appendix 3). I found it a difficult task, most likely due to me being biased as a researcher. As discussed earlier, my choice of topic and research questions was influenced by my autobiography (see Miller 1997 cited Merrill and West 2009:101). The other reason for completing the questionnaire myself was my attempt to take the research participants’ perspective, as I compared the completion of a more ‘traditional’ questionnaire to an online e-survey, as discussed in the previous chapter (6.5.2.). Furthermore, by completing my own questionnaire, I wanted to be truthful to the autobiographical approach, as well as following my reflective practitioner axiom (Schön 1983). Indeed, this exercise assisted me in the writing of my autobiographical account in chapter one (1.3.). I also realised that my professional and personal development, as well as my value base, were rooted in the influence my grandparents had in the transmission of educational values (Bourdieu 1984) and my socialization (Berger and Luckmann 1967).

Comparing the pilot and my answers, I noted that even though we come from different countries (pilot from the UK, myself from Germany), experienced different social work education (UK used to be vocational and Germany consisting of a four year degree study in the 1980’s) and different family backgrounds, there are notable similarities in

our value base; such as believing in the good of people and wanting to help people to reach their potential.

Next, I present and analyse the findings from the 16 returned questionnaires. I linked the respondents to their cohort and the numbers used to references are, for example year 1.1., which corresponds to respondent 1 from the student year group 1. The abbreviation QSW is used for Qualified Social Worker, and again they are numbered, i.e. QSW 1. Below, the table 7.2.1 provides a summarised breakdown of the quantitative data, such as age, ethnicity, relationship status, children, additional learning needs and class backgrounds of the respondents. As far as is possible and applicable, the demographics are compared to national statistics, as well as to the information available about the early pioneers of social work. Later on, I evaluate the responses to the qualitative questions.

Table 7.2.2.1. Questionnaire breakdown by numbers, ages, ethnicity of participants:

Cohort returns:	Age (average/mean)	Ethnicity	Single	In a relationship	Children	Additional learning needs	Class (working/middle)
Year 1 = 5	34.4 / 29 years	100% white British	60%	40%	60%	20%	40% W 40% M 20% not stated
Year 2 = 2	25 years	50% white British 50% mixed Asian-White	50%	50%	50%	50%	50% W 50% M
Year 3 = 5	33.6 / 34 years	80% white British / 20% white European	60%	40%	60%	0%	20% W 80% M
Qualified social workers = 4	35.25 / 37 years	100% white British	0%	100%	75%	25%	50% W 50% M
TOTAL figures of returned 16 questionnaires	33.18 / 32.5 years	94% white British / European	44%	56%	62%	19% with dyslexia	38% W 56% M 6% none

Evaluating the demographic information of the 16 respondents from the returned questionnaires, it indicated an average age of 33.18 years and a mean age of 32.5 years. However, I am aware that this figure is not representative of the overall cohorts, and that it is purely applicable to the small number of respondents. The students entering social work studies are generally in their late twenties and, as identified by the GSCC (2009) figures discussed earlier.

Whereas the percentage of respondents from a white ethic origin with 94% is proportionally higher than the 70% of students (GSCC 2009) and 83% of social services staff (NHS 2011) data for the rest of the country. The reason why the local West Country university has a higher percentage of students from a white ethnic background is possibly due to the low level of ethnic diversity in the region, as discussed earlier.

I noticed far too late, that I had missed out asking the participants whether they would describe themselves as disabled. I only asked about additional learning needs, which shows my (subconscious) assumptions and bias, not having worked with a disabled student. I had only experienced working with students with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia. The number of participants in my small scale research was considerably higher with 19% of the women stating that they had dyslexia, compared to the national figures of only around three to four percentage (GSCC 2009). Again, the discrepancy in the figures can be attributed to the small sample size which is not necessarily representative of the overall cohort sizes and compositions.

The figures from the questionnaires further conveyed that 44% of respondents described themselves as single, whereas 56% confirmed that they were in a relationship, and 62% of all the women stated that they had children. It might be of interest to note that the qualified social workers were all in relationships and the majority had children (75%). This could be attributed to the fact that these women were settled not only in their chosen career path, but also with regard to their family arrangements. Compared to the demographical information about the early pioneers of social work, it showed that 58% of them were single and 42% were married and only 26% of the women had children of their own (see table 3.3.1.).

It can be reasoned that the historical and socio-political circumstances during the time of the early pioneers cannot be compared to modern day women social workers or students. As discussed earlier, in previous centuries, it was commonly expected of single women, and in particular those from affluent backgrounds, to dedicate their time to charitable work. Whereas, married women with children would have been expected to look after their family first, before dedicating time to charitable work. Furthermore, social work was not in existence as a career, and women were not engaged in a paid capacity to undertake social welfare work. In comparison to the nursing profession, earlier career and employment opportunities were available for women in supporting the medical and health sector in past centuries. An interesting challenge was presented to my research participants with the question about their social class background. 38% of the women described themselves as working class and

56% as deriving from a middle class background. Only one respondent (6%) chose not to answer this question.

In comparison, the data about the early pioneers showed 68% were affluent and independent women, but as mentioned before, it would have been expected from these women to dedicate their time and use their financial means and societal status to undertake humanitarian work (see Martin 2008, Steinbach 2004, Walton 1975). Still, even though socio-economic and political positioning for women has changed in the past hundred years, it could be claimed that women are still dominating humanitarian work in the social care sector. Furthermore, I would maintain that the gender division in society and in the employment market has not changed at large. The only difference being that women are to be found in paid employment, yet they are still undervalued considering the often low pay in the social care sector. In addition, women today are expected to contribute to the family income, thus it is not necessarily out of choices that they work in social care. Whereas the early pioneers, who had the financial means, had a partial choice if and how much they wanted to undertake charitable and voluntary work. Consequently, I have come to realise that in fact the motivational factors of the early pioneers compared to current social workers and students are not comparable, due to different historical and socio-economic environments and factors.

Returning to the questionnaires and my endeavour to ascertain what might have inspired or motivated women to study social work, I thought to find answers to my hypothesis as to whether they suited the social justice fighter or the wounded helper categories. Comparison to the early pioneers was again difficult, due to limited information available to me about their motivation, which I can only speculate about or try to deduct from their biographies and other secondary sources.

In answer to the question as to whether respondents had family members or friends who were social workers, two stated they had a father or mother who was a social worker, and two further respondents stated that they had a friend and a distant relative working in the field. Thus, it could be deducted that 75% of respondents were not influenced by a family member or friend when it came to choosing the social work study. Only one respondent (year 1.1.) stated that her father is a social worker, who enjoys his job, and she already knew a lot about the profession through him. She further stated that she had been brought up with similar social work values. Whereas another respondent (year 3.2.), whose mother is a social worker, stated that she thought her mother's profession had not influenced her choice to study social work:

"I don't believe I have been exposed to any particular influences from my mother to become involved in the same field of work, however I have probably inherited an interest in a similar field of work as we have similar views. Our experiences, both prior to and during training have been very different."

However, I should add, that this student was also one of the interviewees (1), and we discussed whether her mother had an influence on her with regard to her decision to study social work. She agreed that her and her mother's views and values were very similar, and therefore social work became possibly the obvious choice.

All of the students responded that they had prior experience in the field of caring before embarking on the social work study, which is not only one of the entry criteria, but would also suggest that they most likely had an idea what social work is. Of interest to me were the answers to the question number 9 (10 for the QSW) '*How did you get there?*', because it gave me an idea as to whether the participants might fit into my proposed categories of 'social justice fighter' or 'wounded helper'; and/or if they had the humanitarian motivation to make a difference. Interestingly, the responses were more varied and not as definite as I had expected.

Five respondents (31%) stated that they wanted to make a difference in people's lives, or make a positive contribution to society. One said she wanted to be "*the voice for those who need it*" (year 2.1.). Out of these five respondents, one (year 1.3.) had been brought up in Local Authority care. Another one (QSW 4.) had been bullied as a child. In addition, a couple of respondents illuminated the fact that they either had a traumatic personal experience (year 2.2.), or a "*personal history*" (year 3.3.), but they made no connections to their choice and subject of study.

50% of the respondents stated that they saw social work as a way to gain a qualification and a good career path with employment prospects. Out of these, two implied personal experience (either childhood trauma or contact with social workers), and another two added, in the same sentences, that they wanted to help people and make a difference. It could be argued, that behind these answers, there might be motivational factors associated with the 'social justice fighter' and the 'wounded helper', when looking for a suitable career path and employment opportunity in social work. Again these findings are not dissimilar to Stevens *et al.*'s (2012:23) figures.

Investigating the motivational factors further with question 10 (11 for QSW), the answers further substantiated that half of the respondents were looking for a professional qualification and career, with the "*desire for professional status*" (year 1.4.). Others stated their wish "*to secure greater future stability*" (year 3.3.), and "*earn*

a decent income" (QSW 2.). However, one respondent made an explicit statement that she is "*not motivated by money!*", but loves working with people and feels it is one of her strengths (year 1.1.). Incidentally, this is the student whose father is a social worker, whereas the student, whose mother is a social worker, referred to her career choice as "*a pragmatic choice as I thought there was an increased likelihood of obtaining work at the end of these studies*" (year 3.2.).

The answers are comparable to Parker and Merrylees's (2002:106) reported findings, that 'financial reward and status' was one of the reported reasons and motivational factors to embark on social work as a career, as well as the notion of wanting 'to help others'. Correspondingly, Davis (2009 cited Arnot 2009:2) reported that students study social work, because 'they are not in it for the money or the glory', but that that they are concerned about inequality and injustice. Similarly, Stevens *et al.*'s (2012) research confirmed that altruistic motivations in social work students ranked higher than career factors (see appendix 17).

Indeed, half (50%) of the answers revealed that respondents in my research were motivated by altruistic factors, such as: "*helping to create positive change*" (year 3.1.), "*wanting to make a difference in people's lives*" (QSW 3), and "*contribute to the welfare of people, especially to help and support them*" (QSW 2). The last comment was made by the same person, who also expected to earn a decent income, which shows that the motivations for choosing social work as a profession are not exclusive, but often multi-faceted. Some other responses appeared to evidence a correlation between the personal experiences and the reasons for choosing social work:

"Recognising inequality of opportunity in society. Social justice, poor experience regarding adult/care/health and education regarding [disabled] son." (year 3.5.)

"Personal/family experiences involving social workers made me motivated because I wanted to be a better one than they were! Also the bursary contributed to my motivation!" (QSW 1)

The last quote about personal experience was also echoed in the research by Parker and Merrylees (2002) and Stevens *et al.* (2012), both studies conveyed that students choosing social work were often motivated by prior experience of emotional or traumatic events within the family or close environment, as well as a sense of idealism and altruism. This perception was further exemplified in one respondent's answers, as she revealed much detail about her childhood and personal history, and stated that she chose social work: "*to improve myself in terms of qualifications*" as well as "*social standing*" (year 2.2.). She explained how she felt inspired by her stepfather's determination to return to study as a mature student and follow a career path, as she

too is a mature student, aged 29 years with two children (year 2.2). Yet, more intriguingly she described some of her “*relevant life experiences*”; one was the traumatic birth of her first born child. Further on, she described some of her personal childhood trauma, which she did not recognise as having influenced her motivation to study social work:

“I guess I have had some relevant life experiences although I am not sure how/ if they affect my motivation to study – these are my parents very acrimonious divorce and custody battle, lots of emotional abuse I guess, having to record their arguments for their solicitors, being paid to misbehave/ verbally abuse the other parent, some DV [domestic violence] between them, problems with my siblings being difficult teenagers, social services involved with one of them (sessional work, trying to keep him out of trouble), another sibling with undiagnosed but quite evident mental health problems, another one with diagnosed mental health problems who changes in their needs, real dad has diagnosis of bi-polar but don’t speak to him anymore. My Mum always took a role in our close knit street of an agony aunt, often having the other mums sat in our kitchen listening to their problems and my mum looking after their kids when they had crises. I think this led me to having a similar role in my own friendships from an early age and I guess this is something I see the SW role as a continuation of.” (year 2.2)

In fact I realised, whilst reading the respondent’s accounts, that she most likely suited the ‘wounded helper’ category, and similar to Brandon (1976) had experienced traumatic life events that most likely motivated her to put them to good use in the social work profession. Furthermore, the conscious decisions to study social work, based on a person’s experience, can be the motivation to improve situations for others. As Parker and Merrylees (2002) confirmed, that students who had experienced feelings of powerlessness in their (family) lives, often were motivated to train as social workers and do things right where others had failed them in the past. Furthermore, Gilligan (2007 cited Stevens *et al.* 2012:18) implied that students’ motivations, perceptions and expectations are determined by ‘internalised ways of seeing the world, which have become increasingly individualistic’.

Thus, the motivation to study social work and enter the caring profession is not a career choice which is all about financial reward, as one of the year 1 respondents stated earlier. This appears obvious to most respondents as they identified their expectations (question 11), acknowledging that the social work profession “*will be stressful/challenging/busy/frustrating, but also extremely interesting and rewarding at times*” (year 1.1.). Yet, positive expectations were mentioned, such as “*the satisfaction of making a small difference which can have a big impact.*” (year 2.1.). Another aspect was expressed by a respondent, who aspires to prove that “*there are workers that care. To make a difference*” (year 1.5.). Correspondingly, realistic and

idealistic comments were made, often in the same sentence, which could be considered to carry an element of the ‘social justice’ notion:

“I have expectation of huge challenges, thus stress. However, I look forward to creating positive change witnessing success, helping others to help themselves.” (year 3.1.)

A different aspect was highlighted by two respondents who stated they preferred “hands on” direct contact with service users/clients to management tasks (year 2.2. and year 3.5.).

The answers by the social work students with regard to their potential apprehensions (question 12) were all very negative. Many stated that it would be hard work with a heavy case load, high levels of responsibility, limited resources and not enough time to spend with the service users/clients. Also, a concern with regard to public abuse and verbal abuse from clients was mentioned, because of the possibly difficult decisions social workers have to make *“that can have a serious impact on the service user.”* (year 2.1.)

Remarkably, the expectations (question 12 QSW) by those who are already practising in social work were very similar to the students:

“It would be hard work, rewarding at times and distressing at others but a worthwhile career that would enable me to make a living whilst at the same time help others to make positive change.” (QSW 4.)

However, some of them appeared less satisfied with the reality of social work, as only one (25%) stated that her expectations had been met (question 13 QSW). Whereas another social worker (25%) stated, that her expectations had not been met, because *“there is a lot of paperwork/ form filling and not much contact with people”* (QSW 3). The other 50% of qualified social workers stated that they were ‘not sure’ as to whether their expectations had been met. One of the ‘not sure’ answers was owing to the fact that the person had not yet had the opportunity to work in the field since she had qualified, because of family circumstances which required her to care for her ill husband. The other ‘not sure’ answer appeared to have some underlying personal issues in my opinion, and I was left wondering whether her expectations of the social work profession were realistic in the first instance:

“Not sure. Not as much as I had hoped and I am in some ways disappointed. I now believe it is our everyday interactions with any person that make a difference no matter what we are doing. Everybody needs love and everybody hurts at times no matter what their background. SW [social work] is one way of meeting the needs of a particular group of people. However I fear it only skims the surface and cannot meet the needs of deep heart issues. [...] I feel SW’s are

so stretched and burdened themselves they are unable to offer true empathy and are in danger of becoming machinelike in order to cope.” (QSW 2).

Interestingly, the same person responded to the next question (question 14 QSW), if not social work what other profession they would have chosen, that she was uncertain as to whether or not she had made the right career choice:

“I would have been better suited to engineering due to the way my mind works. However there are instances in SW where these skills are very useful such as with planning and organising actions.” (QSW 2).

Whereas the answers from the social work students to the same question (number 13), listed social care related fields, such as youth work, teaching, probation, nursing, occupational health, mental health, psychology and counselling. One surprising answer supported by an explanation, stated *“Animal management helping to create positive change (similar reasons!)”* (year 3.1.). At this point, I wondered if it could be argued that these are all caring professions where women possibly dominate the employment statistics. Yet, the professions listed by the students also have high numbers of men working in the field. This generates the question as to whether women fulfill their ‘natural calling’ (Awasthi 2006), or society’s (school, family and career advisors) stereotypical role expectations when choosing a profession.

In answers to the question, as to how society views social workers, the response was unanimous in the sense that they saw the media vilifying social workers, and the generally negative perception of the profession. However, one respondent offered a very interesting and more in depth answer, highlighting that there is possibly a class divide in perception and depiction of social workers:

“I think there is a bit of a class divide from what I have experienced. I think working class people and people who are possibly or likely in need of services (especially children and families) see SW’s as interfering, and like to split up families. Possibly this is due to their insecurity or lack of power ‘against’ a social worker. Other people, who are more professionally trained generally see social workers as hard workers who do a job they couldn’t do themselves. Sometimes people are slightly in awe of SW’s in this respect. I think the media play a part in these views. I feel that people who have been in receipt of services usually do not see social workers positively and feel let down by them.” (year 2.2.)

I felt compelled to agree with this view, because it is mainly the sensationalist tabloids, which generate a public witch hunt, whereas more credible papers or programmes, such as BBC television documentaries, are usually more realistic and present a better balanced critique of the social work profession.

I consider it of great concern that the public opinion in the main is quite negative towards social workers, in particular considering that most social workers have laudable values and motivations in wanting to help others and make a positive difference. The responses by the students and social workers to the question about their values (question 16; 17 QSW) were all very commendable and paralleled the social work value base as stated in the Code of Practice by the professional body (GSCC 2002); - similar to the focus groups. The answers ranged from: respect, dignity, equality, honesty, choice, fairness, integrity, non-judgemental, empathy, empowerment, social justice, believing in people, being kind and helpful, promoting independence, treating everyone as an individual, to several respondents expressing "*treat people how I would like to be treated*". Unexpectedly for me, one student answered that her personal values were "*the ten commandments*" (year 3.2.). Another respondent stated "*I believe in unconditional positive regard [...] I have another name for it, I call it forgiveness*" (QSW 2). This was further substantiated by the statement about the roots of her values (question 18 QSW): "*I have experienced forgiveness (lifetime story) and so value it immensely. It is part of my faith.*" (QSW 2). Both respondents share a Christian faith foundation.

Indeed, the answers given by the students to the question about what they thought to be the roots of their values (question 17) were of significance, as most respondents made reference to their personal negative experience of having been bullied, badly treated, or lied to in the past. These negative experiences influenced their value statements, of treating others better than they had been treated. This was epitomised in the following answer:

"I guess being treated or witnessing emotionally abusive acts when I was younger and in a relationship breakdown as a younger adult has given me the experience of being treated unfairly, or taken advantage of or not protected so perhaps this has guided me here.

My Mum's influence of being an agony aunt has influenced my value of helping people, and my experience of doing this and being taken advantage of has influenced my thoughts about having clearer boundaries and not being exploited." (year 2.2.)

Some answers alluded to positive family values or social experiences which influenced the respondents' current values, such as: "*spending time with people who made me feel valued and independent*" (QSW 3). In contrast, one respondent stated that the roots of her values were founded in her parents' "*hypocrisy and snobbery*" and her own "*miserable private education*", but she expressed that because of her 'privileged' upbringing and education, she wanted "*to put it to good use by advocating for less articulated*" (year 3.5).

When I asked for reasons why the participants chose to become social workers, they were able to tick more than one option. I ranked the answers in descending order of percentage and not in the order they appeared in the questionnaires (see appendix 9 to 12). Summarising, I produced the table (7.2.2.2) below:

Table 7.2.2.2. Reasons for becoming a social worker:

Q: 18 (students) / 19 (QSW). Which of the following statements captures your reason(s) for being/becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	QSW	Total
“I want to make a difference in peoples’ lives.”	4	0	3	4	11 = 69%
“I want to improve outcomes for children”	3	1	3	3	10 = 63%
“I want to stand-up/fight for justice in society and support the underprivileged.”	2	1	2	3	8 = 50%
“I want to challenge discrimination and oppression.”	3	1	1	3	8 = 50%
“I want a challenging and exciting job.”	2	1	2	1	6 = 38%
“I want to save children and/or adults from abuse.”	2	0	1	2	5 = 31%
“I’m a good role model and people can learn from me.”	4	0	0	0	4 = 25%
“I want to be the difference in peoples’ lives.”	1	0	1	1	3 = 19%
“I want to help others so they don’t have to go through what I’ve experienced.”	1	1	0	1	3 = 19%
“I’m passionate about wanting to change the world.”	0	0	0	2	2 = 13%
“I couldn’t get a job, so that’s why I enrolled on a university course.”	0	0	0	0	0 = 0%
Total number of respondents:	5	2	5	4	16 = 100%

Analysing the summarised figures in the table above produced a number of reasons why the women wanted to engage in social work. The highest number of respondents (69%) stated that they wished to make a difference in people’s lives. This compares to 88,6% in Stevens *et al.*’s (2012:23) study (see appendix 17). Next, 63% of the respondents to my questionnaire declared that they want to improve outcomes for children. One respondent’s additional comment showed some detailed insight as she related the reasons back to her personal experiences. She also explained the balancing act of helping children in her neighbourhood without ostracising herself, because of the fact that she will be a qualified social worker soon:

“It is upsetting to see children being treated badly in society, and in my work and in some of my experiences as a child. Additionally I think it is worth pointing out that I live in a predominantly council house area (I own my house so I am choosing to live here), in this area I tend to see quite a bit of not good enough parenting and whilst I can’t go reporting everyone to social services, as they would probably know it was me and they’d put a brick through my window etc, I do tend to do quite a bit for these children, be it inviting them to my kids parties or putting on street events or activities, taking them for days out etc and this experience of improving outcomes for children has encouraged me to continue with my job as I can see that is something that I am good at and something that gives me personal satisfaction. Someone in ‘Friends’ said there is no such thing as an altruistic act and I think this is true for me!” (year 2.2.)

Half of the respondents asserted that they wanted to stand up and fight for justice in society and support underprivileged members of society, as one person commented: "*I believe strongly in equality.*" (year 1.1.), and another declared: "*I am a humanitarian.*" (year 3.5.). This figure would be matched by 50% of students wishing to tackle injustice and inequality in Stevens *et al.*'s (2012:23) survey.

One respondent explained further in her answer to my question, that she felt guilty about her previous ignorance of social problems:

"I have only recently understood the injustice that exists: I grew up under Thatcher government and I feel shame and guilt that as an educated, privileged person I never troubled to understand others, less-privileged lives. It was easier to remain ignorant." (year 1.4.)

Also, 50% responded that they wanted to challenge discrimination and oppression.

Hypothetically, combining my last two figures could be interpreted that the majority of the respondents are 'social justice fighters'. However, it appears that overall the respondents were quite realistic in their endeavours, because only two of them (13%) declared that they were passionate to "change the world". Interestingly, the two answers came from the qualified social workers, one who, at the time, was 21 years of age and the other 46 years of age, but no further explanations were provided.

Astonishingly, four out of five from the year 1 student cohort considered themselves as 'good role models' and that people could learn from them. One additional comment was of interest, as it also conveys an element of wanting to give something back to society:

"Don't know if I am a good role model, but I believe I have certain capabilities and skills which I want to put to good use. Some of these attributes are personal to me: my energy, determination, some I have been taught/learnt from experience in my business career (organisation, achieving things within organisational constraints, communication skills, negotiation skills); some I have arrived at through life experience, e.g. having children, I know how difficult this can be. ALL THIS, I want to put to good use, I especially like the thought of using the skills which 'business' spent a lot of money training me in, to help the disadvantaged in society". (year 1.4.)

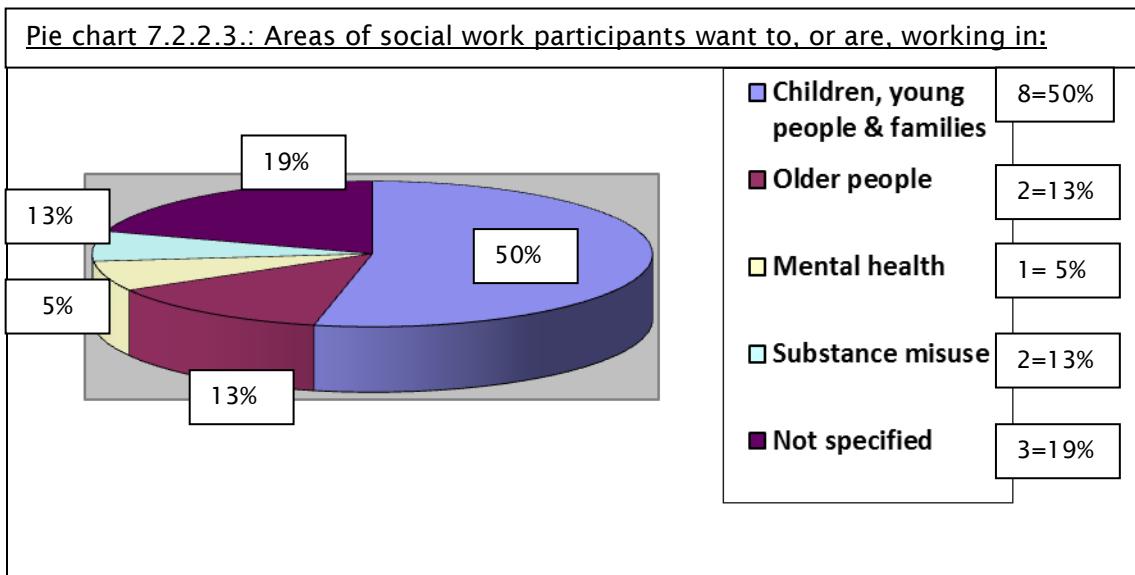
Whereas no one from the other cohorts selected this answer, thus the overall response rate accounted for only 25%. I wondered what might have changed during the course of study that the participants no longer saw themselves as good role models, but I could not find a plausible answer.

Also, I was surprised that only 38% of the respondents stated that they wanted a challenging and exciting job, because some of their earlier answers conveyed that they were aware of the challenges within the social work profession. I had to ask myself

whether the combination of words I had chosen (challenging and exciting) were not suitable terms to use in this context about social work. However, from a social work practice teacher's position, I was pleased to note that none of the respondents had chosen social work just because they could not get a job. Hence I concluded that the choice of study was deliberate rather than 'accidental', which could be seen as motivation and commitment to the field of work.

Thus, my assumption that social workers 'care' about other people appeared supported by a number of statements from the participants about what 'a good social worker should do'. This was evident in the statement by one student, that social workers should: "*genuinely care about interventions and people they are working with.*" (year 1.2.). This genuine care could be related to Brandon's (1976:48) notion of 'compassion' which he described as at 'the heart of all helping'. Similarly, another respondent concluded: "*A good social worker will genuinely care about people and have the gumption to do something about it.*" (QSW 2). This statement carries both, the notions of care and the courage for 'positive social action' or 'active citizenship' (Martin 2008:414) to affect social change and social justice, in my interpretation of 'gumption'. What is more, the majority of respondents expressed the desire to be seen as a competent, trustworthy, truthful, approachable and compassionate professional person who offers "*a glimmer of hope*" (QSW 1) to service users. Another answer combined the notion of care and enabling people to learn: "*I like to help people learn from experience. I am patient, I don't give up and I care.*" (QSW4).

Not surprisingly, most of the respondents described their personal attitudes and attributes (question 21/ number 22 QSW) as reliability, conscientiousness, good listeners and problem solvers who like to work with people and advocate for them. What alarmed me was that no one ticked the last option 'I like to be in charge and take responsibility'. Arguably, I would have expected that social workers are taking responsibility and are in charge of their professional work with others. However, I can only assume that the respondents interpreted this statement as describing someone who likes being a manager, or is potentially in a position of power. Therefore I deduced, that the respondents possibly misunderstood it to be a negative statement, containing a notion of oppression. Consequently, they did not identify with the statement from a more positive perspective in relation to their professional accountability. This possible misunderstanding was clarified for me by the explanation from one respondent who stated that she did "*not need to be in charge to take responsibility*" (QSW 1). Next, I wanted to find out which area of social work the participants would be interested to work in:



The pie chart above illustrates the areas of social work the participants are currently working in, or wish to work in once qualified. Not surprisingly 50% of social workers and students favour working with children, young people and families. This tendency was paralleled in the national statistics of social service staff (NHS 2011) and supported by Weiss *et al.* (2002 cited Redmond *et al.* 2008), who reported that child welfare and child protection is high on the priority of many social work entrants.

I asked the year 2 and 3 students some additional questions with regard to their placement experiences in social work and as to whether their values and beliefs had been challenged and/or changed from their initial impetus to engage with the social work profession. Most respondents stated that they did not think that their values had changed. However, they identified that their overall awareness about service users/clients and the profession with the challenges implied, made an impact on their learning and understanding. The changes appeared to be with regard to their personal growth, as evident in statements such as:

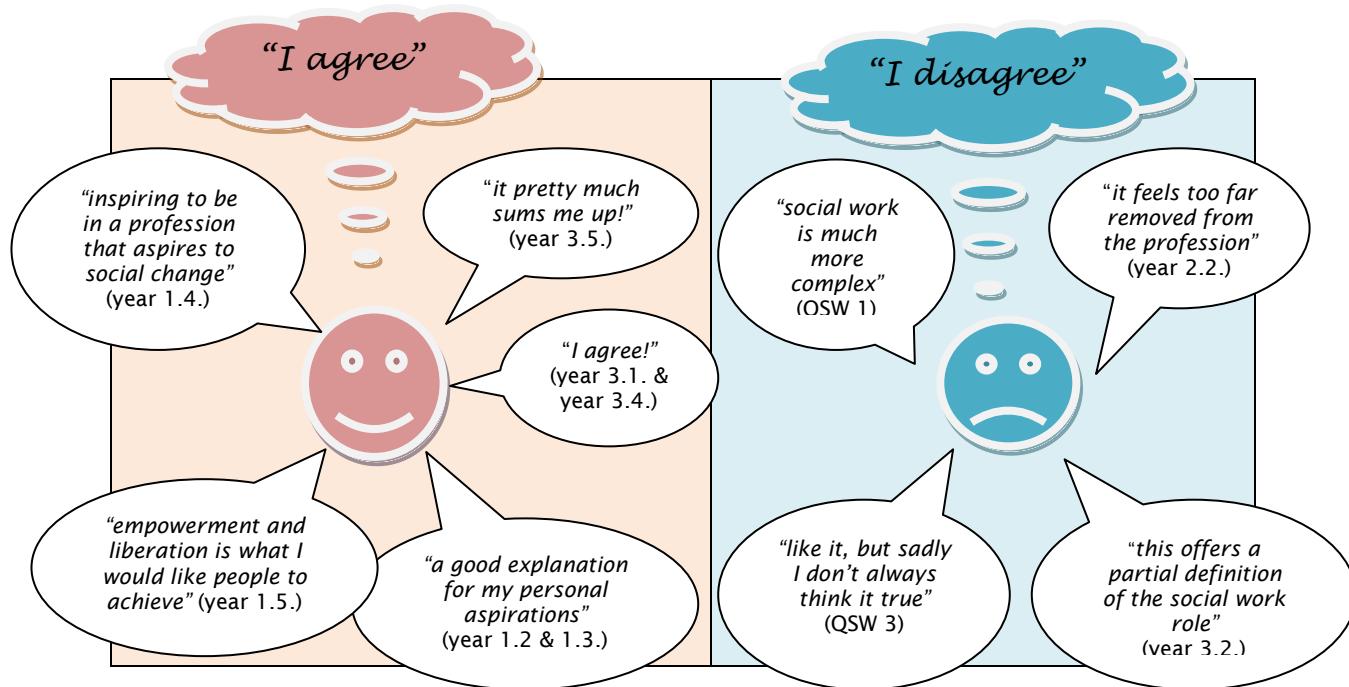
- ② *"I have learnt to be less judgmental."* (year 2.2., aged 29 years)
- ② *"I changed a lot personally and am more confident"* (year 2.1., aged 21 years)
- ② *"I've become so much more aware of myself and have learnt stuff about myself I never knew. I now speak up more and challenge and fight for what I and the service user believe in. before I would not have."* (year 3.1., aged 22 years)
- ② *"I have developed a greater awareness of my own values"* (year 3.2., aged 22 years)
- ② *"I thought about how my own understanding might impact on any judgement and actions in order to prevent me being oppressive. I identified societal structures and the impact media portrayal of women has on female self-belief"*

and gender power relations, exploring behaviour, language, body language, identity and more.” (QSW 4, aged 46 years)

The statements can be related back to Parker and Merrylees' (2002:106) reported findings that students engage with social work, because they are looking for 'personal stimulation and growth'. This further corresponds to Stevens *et al.* (2012) who found that the intrinsic motivational factors of students wishing to help others were often linked to the relevance of personal life experience that would make them suitable for a career in social work. It could further be argued that the experience of personal growth might have transformed students' values. I make this assertion, because looking at the ages of the respondents, it could be assumed that the younger participants are still developing. Thus, the respondents might have progressed towards a 'new identity within a new meaning perspective' (Mezirow 1978:8).

Similarly, the last comment from the recently qualified social worker, a mature student who has not been able to commence employment in social work due to care responsibilities within the family, provided an answer that considered societal and media influences as well as the role of women within society. Thus, this person has progressed from her personal and individual position to a perspective which understands social work in a more holistic context within society and the impact on service users. This interpretation can be correlated to the study by Stevens *et al.* (2012:30), because they found that older students 'were more likely to indicate motivations related to altruistic factors' with individualistic altruism (helping the individual) as the first and societal altruism (tackling injustice and inequalities in society) as the fourth most common goal.

Considering that the social work students potentially experienced personal growth, and possibly a transformation of their personal values and perspectives, I anticipated controversial answers, when inviting the participants to comment on the statement of the purpose of social work by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001). The answers were divided from total agreement (approximate 69%) to critical comments from five respondents (31%). Some of the responses are shown in the illustration on the next page:



Notably, the more positive views were expressed by year 1 students, whereas more critical perspectives were articulated by year 2 and 3 students. None of the qualified social workers fully agreed with the statement of purpose. Indeed, a more complex and critical comment was made by a qualified social worker, who mentioned her Christian faith in previous answers:

"Social work originated with faith groups reaching out to people. The mention of a person's spiritual well-being is scarcely mentioned in today's SW literature. The wording in the description to me is mechanical and lacks heart. I feel we miss the simple expressions such as words like love, peace, unity, forgiveness which are at the root of all life's issues." (QSW 2)

I found this response noteworthy to highlight, because it reminded me of the beginnings of my research. Social work and care tasks were initially undertaken by humanitarians and philanthropists, who in the majority, came from religiously motivated backgrounds. This was discussed in chapter two with regard to the historical emergence of social work and further exemplified by some of the biographies from the early pioneers in chapter three. The qualified social worker's statement above could be further correlated to Halmos' (1970 cited Walton 1975:262) assertion, that 'social work is a moral force gradually superseding that of religion'. Further evidence of the compelling connection between religion and social work today can be found in the examples by charitable and voluntary social care projects by numerous ecumenical faith groups from across the world and the UK which were documented in Best and Hussey's (2001) book titled '*Women making a difference*'.

Indeed, the aspect of 'spiritual well-being' as mentioned by the qualified social worker (QSW 2), is neglected in social work literature. However, Brandon's (1976) *Zen in the art of helping* offered a spiritual approach to social work. Furthermore, Graham and Shier's (2010) research into what they called 'subjective well-being' can be associated with spirituality in the sense that what people chose to believe in and how they construct meaning for their lives by the way they interpret the world around them. As mentioned before, Graham and Shier (2010:1566) found that subjective well-being is connected to meaningful construction for personal lives and professional practices as a 'way of being related to the world'. Thus, it could be argued that the constructive approach in social work (Parton and O'Byrne 2000) has possibly taken the place of religion and spirituality.

In an attempt to summarise, what I understood as the respondents' motivations to study social work, I concluded that there were combinations of reasons. Interpreting the data, it became noticeable that the reasons ranged from personal experiences, which could be categorised as 'wounded helpers' (approximate 44%) to the notion of those wanting to help others, who could be labelled as 'social justice fighters' (approximate 100%). Interestingly, approximately 6% made a connection to their Christian upbringing or beliefs that impacted on their value base and possibly on their professional career choice. Furthermore, approximately 38% of respondents saw social work as a professional career choice for financial reasons. Throughout, I related my findings back to, and compared them with, the findings from the literature as discussed in earlier chapters.

7.2.3. Findings from the interviews

I had invited all 75 targeted potential research participants in the focus groups and through the questionnaires to voluntarily attend an interview with me (see introduction paragraph on all the questionnaires in appendix 1.1. to 1.4.). However, only four responded and agreed to participate in the interview. The four women I interviewed were: one year 2 social work student, two year 3 students and one social worker who qualified in 2008. All of them were known to me, because I acted in the past as their independent off-site social work practice teacher whilst they were on social work placements. Each of the interviews lasted approximately one hour and they were tape-recorded. The interviewees were sent the transcripts (appendix 13 to 16) for their approval. Two of the interviewees, both year 3 students (* see table 7.2.3.1.), had also completed the questionnaire (Q) prior to the interview.

The table below summarises the interview participants' demographical data, showing that their ages ranged between 22 and 39 years of age, which generated the average age as 32.25 years. They are all of white British origin. Half of them are married and classified their backgrounds as working class, whereas the others are cohabitating and stated to be from middle-class backgrounds. Three of the interviewees have children. One interviewee stated to have dyslexia.

Even though, the interview participants were by no means representative of all female social workers or students, their demographical data mirrored the national statistics, as discussed earlier.

Table 7.2.3.1: Interviewee data

Interviewee	Age (years)	Ethnicity	Relationship status	Children	Social class
1. Year 3 student * (Q3.2.)	22	White British	Cohabitating	none	Middle
2. Qualified social worker	32	White British	Cohabitating	1 child	Middle
3. Year 2 student - with additional learning needs	39	White British	Married	2 children	Working
4. Year 3 student * (Q3.3.)	34	White British	Married	2 children (and 1 step-child)	Working

For the purpose of analysing the contents of the interviews, I organised the responses from the interviewees by questions and themes. I wanted to be able to evaluate whether there are similarities and/or differences in their motivations to study and work in social work, rather than simply summarising and repeating what the individual had said.

The first question asked was about their educational journey and how, or why, they decided to study social work. Three of the interviewees stated that they had been interested in related professional areas, such as psychology, sociology, youth work, or counselling. One of them (interviewee 2), gained a degree in psychology first and worked for around eight years (not as a psychologist, but in a social work assistant position), before studying for a social work degree. One of the reasons for wanting to become qualified, she stated as:

"I wanted to get more of a sense of having control over the case, because the role I was taking was very much get fed cases and the case leader is the social worker and you are guided in your decisions, although they listen to you, they are not really. So I wanted to have more control and progress. So the natural progression seemed to be the take the social work degree." (interviewee 2)

Whereas interviewee 1 went into studying social work straight after A levels, because she reasoned that she would be more likely to get a job in social work. Interviewee 4 initially undertook a counselling course, because she was interested in "*the whole of*

people" and later worked as a youth worker, before becoming a social work assistant. She described herself as an "*accidental social worker*" (interviewee 4), due to encouragement by other social workers within the team. While interviewee 3 stated, that she "*always wanted to become a social worker*", describing herself as a "*people orientated person*". However, due to family commitments and caring responsibilities towards her parents, and later towards her own children, she had to wait until her late thirties to study social work, because "*there never seemed the right time!*" (interviewee 3).

The next question, concerning what experiences had influenced their professional move into social work, interviewee 3 explained further that her parents had been foster parents, and she grew up with her "*foster brothers*" from the age of four years old. She had learned what social work could be like, as she got to know some of the social workers. But she noticed a change over the years when social workers had less and less time for visits and support. Her reasons for becoming a social worker are based on her experiences and she stated:

"It was because I knew what they [fostered children] had been through, and because I could see their side of it, I wanted to try and do something about it. That's what made me want to be a social worker, because I wanted to be there for children who were not being heard and listening to their views, because I did find that they weren't listened to, it was more the parents' view, at that time." (interviewee 3)

She further explained that, prior to having recently started to study social work, she had worked in various jobs from administrative work to direct care and support work with the elderly, children with autism, in schools with children with dyslexia, and adults with learning disability. Interviewee 3 stated, she came to realise that she found the work in social care enjoyable and "*very rewarding*".

Similarly, interviewees 1 and 4 both stated that they enjoyed working with people, based on their professional work experiences in the field, and this was their reason for studying social work. Correspondingly, interviewee 2 had prior work experience in the field of social care, which motivated her to become a social worker, as it felt "*professionally a natural progression*". However, she noticed changes in attitudes and behaviours from service users/ clients towards her since working as a qualified social worker. Also, she found that she actually had less direct contact with families than when she was a social work assistant. Moreover, she felt that "*there is a real risk that the social worker becomes a very demonised person by the professionals and the families as well, because you have to make the harder decisions.*" (interviewee 2). She was referring to court cases and child protection work where the social worker's "*role is as a protector*" of the children's safety and well-being. Yet, having to potentially

remove children from their families, she felt: "*It's almost as if you are damned if you do, and damned if you don't.*"(interviewee 2). Intriguingly, this is exactly the notion of the cartoon by Kevin Kallaugher '*The social worker cannot win?*' when it comes to the protection and removal of children (see chapter 4.4.). Another interesting aspect, interviewee 2 mentioned in her statement is, what she called the role as '*protector*', which can be linked back to Karpman's (1968,1971 cited Cournoyer 2008) Drama Triangle where the social worker takes the '*Rescuer*' role in protecting children (see chapter 4.7.). Interviewee 2 also realised that not only the families, but other professionals and society, do not value or appreciate the social worker's role to protect children. She concluded that social work can be a thankless job:

"I would honestly say you have to learn to be personally not liked. [...] You have to be the person who is not liked and willing to sit in that meeting and to say it, and that's not just by the families. The professionals click together and they collude with the families sometimes. They like to be the liked person by the family which used to annoy me. [...]

You have to protect that child and what people seem to forget is you have to make decisions which are hard and very distressing for a parent but there is blame on you. You have had to remove that child because such and such has happened. For some reason, you have become, I sometimes felt, the bad person because you have removed that child. Because somehow x, y and z happened but they see the parent crying, they see you have had to remove the child for the child's best interests. It's a thankless job really.[continues]

People read in the news, and see it, but if social workers weren't there doing their job then lots of children would be horrifically abused. I think they forget that social workers have to do the most invasive actions." (interviewee 2)

The reason I went into more detail with this interviewee's answer is because she qualified as a social worker as recently as 2008, and already sounds moderately disillusioned with the reality of social work. What I found of interest was that she had been working in the social care field for many years prior to studying social work. She decided to become a qualified social worker, because she wanted more control over the cases she was working with, but once she qualified she came to realise that having the control and making these hard decisions turned out to be a very lonely and thankless job.

The next question asked was as to whether the interviewees themselves had been in the position of a service user/client involving social work intervention. Interviewees 1 and 2 had not received any services from a social worker in the past, but interviewee 3 had experienced indirect contact, due to the fact that her parents were fostering. Whereas interviewee 4 had personal contact with social workers, from the position where she, as a child, did not feel listened to by the social worker; and she "*would strive to not be like him*". Interviewee 4 acknowledged bringing some of her past

experiences to her current social work role made her realise how difficult it can be to make the right professional judgement:

"I now know in hindsight, and actually I guess it kind of gives you that confidence knowing that kind of personal experience that sometimes you have to step away from the emotive part of what you deal with on a day to day basis you know to deal with the facts. These are the facts, and it's having confidence in your decision-making." (interviewee 4)

Furthermore, she acknowledged that the social worker made the right decision at the time, even though they, as children, did not feel their views were taken into consideration. However, from her position today, as an adult and about to become a qualified social worker, she stated that she can appreciate that the right decisions were made. It could be argued that, similar to Brandon (1976), the personal experience of social work intervention enabled interviewee 4 to take a more empathic perspective in her work with service users/clients.

Interestingly, interviewee 3 pointed out that she felt it important that social workers have an emphatic understanding of what the clients/service users' circumstances are. She explained, that in the case of one of her foster brothers, the social workers possibly lacked this. Her foster brother, of black ethnic origin, was placed with a white British foster family in a predominately white community, and had been allocated a social worker of white ethnic origin. She continued that her foster brother also experienced racism and discrimination living within a predominately white community. Consequently, interviewee 3 felt, that if her foster brother would have had a social worker from a non-white ethnic background and a broader cultural awareness, he might have received greater understanding and support: *"If he had a social worker from a different ethnic background s/he might have stood up for that particular person [referring to her foster brother]."*

I felt it important to share the interviewee's view, because it can be linked back to Lewis' (1997) findings that black clients/ service users value and prefer to work with black social workers. Their 'collective experience' of racism produces a shared knowledge and understanding, which develops into the 'connective tissue binding social workers and clients' (Lewis 1997:321).

Next, I asked the interviewees whether studying and practicing social work had influenced or transformed their lives, because Mezirow (1978:7) found that a 'transformation of meaning perspectives' develops in post-compulsory education which assists in the interpretation of our lives. Similar to the answers from the questionnaires, the testimonies from the interviewees indicated a 'perspective transformation' in the sense that becoming a social worker resulted in 'consciousness

raising' and the finding of a 'new identity within a new meaning perspective' (Mezirow 1978:8). Evidence of this transformation can be found on different levels in each of the interviewees' responses. The youngest of the interviewees (22 years) stated that having studied social work had become part of her identity:

"It has completely changed me, because you are part of it and you develop a professional identity during your training. [...] You are aware of your personal values [...] what you believe in, why you want to be in the job as a social worker and it becomes part of who you are." (interviewee 1)

Interestingly, this statement supports the recommendation by a student who studied for her Masters in social work, as she stated that social work requires 'profound dedication and deep rooted values' and, therefore, students should reflect on their values, because without the reflection into personal values, there would be 'no room for empathy' or 'effective social work practice' (GSCC 2010, see citation chapter 4.8.)

Interviewee 2 stated that social work influenced her life, by opening her eyes to 'the system'; and she came to realise her capacity, her abilities and that she had to *"toughen up very quickly"*. Whereas interviewee 3 made the discovery, through having had a social work placement at a women's refuge, that there is still a social class division. In her experience, coming from a working class background, she felt that society does not focus on the middle class as the ones that cause or have problems. She noticed, and was concerned, that middle class women were reluctant to access social work support, because of the stigma attached, i.e. in cases of domestic violence.

More fundamentally, interviewee 4 stated that social work had completely changed her life and had an impact on friendships and relationships, because she had changed as a person. Interviewee 4 thought of herself as a 'social justice fighter' before she started social work training, because she was helping all her friends with their problems. However, she came to realise through her social work studies that she was actually very controlling in her friendships, almost like a *"parent"*. Yet, it could be argued that interviewee 4 was probably more of a 'wounded helper', based on her previous life experience, when she had not much control over her own life as a child. Interviewee 4 felt she gained confidence and independence in her adult life, and therefore has been able to establish more appropriate 'adult relationships' with her friends (she made reference to the Transactional Analysis theory). Interviewee 4 also realised that her professional roles, from previously having worked as a youth worker, to becoming a qualified social worker, were very different. As a youth worker she believed that she had to *"rescue"* the children and young people she was working with, whereas she now understands that social work is not about 'rescuing' people. Again, this position can be linked to Karpman's (1968,1971 cited Cournoyer 2008) Drama Triangle where the

social worker takes the 'Rescuer' role in protecting children (see chapter 4.7.). This is similar to the notion of the social worker in the role of the "*protector*" as mentioned before by interviewee 2.

Question six asked the interviewees what their expectation is or was of what constitutes social work. It became apparent that even though with the very best intentions of wanting to help and support people, these were met by the reality of prescriptive thresholds of intervention, limited resources and budgets in social work. This was exemplified by the statement of interviewee 1 who had only just qualified at the point of the interview. At the start of her studies, she expected:

"to be able to be in a position where I could bring about change in a positive way. Where I could promote the welfare of service users through my work, but I think that has changed..." (interviewee 1)

She continued that her experiences in her placements made her realise that the managers in statutory services are overstretched, have limited financial and human resources. Thus, social workers often have to sign-post to other services in the hope that they can support families. This change in social work to an administrative task and a purchaser-provider split was found confirmed by Cree (2009), as discussed earlier in chapter 4.4. Pessimistically, interviewee 1 concluded:

"So effectively at the end of the day you might not be doing anything other than making a visit and making them [service users] aware that you are aware, that's it. I find that difficult in a number of ways. The fact that I feel that I haven't actually brought about any improvements to that family. I feel as if I haven't safeguarded or protected the welfare of the people I have worked with, and personally I find it embarrassing.....Very frustrating." (interviewee 1)

Similarly, interviewee 2 sounded disillusioned, even though she believed that she did not enter the profession "*blind*", as she had worked for many years in the field of social work. However, she too placed blame of the unsatisfactory working conditions on the service managers in the local authority who make the final decisions. She stated: *"I felt powerless, which is weird, because you are in such a powerful position."* (interviewee 2). Ironically, her motivation to study social work was to gain more control over the cases she was working with, as stated in her reply to question one (appendix 14). Correspondingly, interviewee 3 expressed her concerns that due to the current financial predicament many social care providers have reduced their budgets, resources and service provision. However, interviewee 3 stated that, ideally her expectations of social work are that she would like to bring about change to people who use services.

A different perspective was offered by interviewee 4, who had just qualified at the point of the interview, but had already had years of youth work and counselling experience prior to her social work study. She stated that she initially believed that as a social worker she would be able to “*rescue people*”, but her expectations changed during the course of study when she realised that social work was much more complex. She concluded: “*I thought I knew so much and actually knew so little*” (interviewee 4).

Interestingly, none of the interviewees made reference to the potential emotional challenges of social work reality, as described earlier in the reflection by a student undertaking her Masters in social work (GSCC 2010, see quote in chapter 4.8.).

Question seven then asked whether the interviewees’ expectation had been met, and most of them referred back to their answers from the previous question. Then again, interviewee 4 stated that “*this social work stuff is really interesting*”, but at the same time questioned: “*how can I, you know, build on that, and how can I make a difference?*”. She concluded:

“*I can be really critical about making a difference, because actually you can't always. You can't always make a difference for people and even if you try to make a difference for a child who's to say that that's the right thing that you can do.*” (interviewee 4)

Question eight asked the interviewees what they saw as the challenges in social work. Interviewee 1 referred back to the lack of resources and that she felt just like a sign-posting service. Interviewee 2 referred back to her feeling of being powerless as a social worker, in particular when working with other professionals or when undertaking court case work; whereas interviewee 3 saw the challenges in keeping a balance between building relationships with service users and maintaining professional boundaries. Interviewee 4 described the challenge as a social worker like “*getting on this treadmill*” and not questioning or reflecting on professional practice in supervision, because there is no time or resources to do so. She identified that social work training actually does not prepare newly qualified social workers for ‘the reality’ of social work:

“*You have the expectation that's set out in the course, you're going to have this wonderful supervision, resources might be a juggle, but it'll be fine, you'll achieve it. You have these ideals and sometimes the reality isn't like that and I think that can be quite a shock to newly qualified social workers, who are fresh out of university.*” (interviewee 4)

In question nine, I asked the interviewees about their motivations for their professional choices, if it was a career progression or change, or whether it was for financial reasons. Additionally, I wanted to know if their motivations were inspired by wanting to help others and whether they saw themselves as 'social justice fighters' or 'wounded helpers'. Not surprisingly, unanimously the interviewees stated that they did not choose social work for 'the money'. For interviewees 2 and 4 who had worked in the social care field before, it was partly a natural career progression, even though the increase of their salaries would only be minimal. All the interviewees agreed that they set out wanting to help other people and 'make a difference'. Interviewee 1 and 3 described themselves as social justice fighters, whereas the other two interviewees did not answer this part of the question. I believe that this was not necessarily intentional, but because I made the mistake of asking a 'double-question', I possibly confused the respondents. Also, I speculate that they might have thought that they had answered my hypothesis through their answers to the previous questions. However, interviewee 4 added later, that she considered herself as a social justice fighter, because "*what I want to fight is discrimination and oppression*".

I devised the table 7.2.3.2.in an attempt to summarise and categorise the four interviewees' motivations for becoming social workers:

Table 7.2.3.2: Interviewees' motivation

Interviewees 'motivations'	Social worker contact	Wounde d helper	Social justice	Religion	Caree r
1	(✓)		✓	✓	✓
2		✓	✓		✓
3	✓		✓		✓
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

However, it became apparent that a summarising comparison was more complicated and less conclusive than I had anticipated, because the interviewees contact with social workers were ranging from parents being a social worker, or undertaking fostering to being subjected to social service intervention in childhood. Only interviewee 4 could be classified as a wounded helper, whereas interviewee 2 made reference to her difficult relationship with her mother appearing to have had an impact on her. Two of the interviewees had been raised with, or were still practicing, Christian values. Yet, whatever the interviewees' motivations were to embark on social work as a career path,

I interpreted that they all considered themselves as social justice fighters in so far as they want to challenge discrimination and make a difference in people's lives.

Lastly, the final question invited the interviewees' views regarding the fact that the majority of social workers are women. They unanimously, regardless of their age, felt that society stereotypes women as caring and that women are socialised to be caring and empathetic, as expressed by interviewee 4:

"I think there's that constructed view that women [...] go into this caring role and this empathetic role and for men it's not so much."

Even though, social work is not seen as a typical male profession, interviewee 3 felt that society's views are slowly changing and more men are entering the social work profession. Yet, interviewee 2 found that the men on her social work course found it difficult, because social work is a female dominated profession. Interestingly, interviewee 2 offered another perspective which had not been acknowledged as such before. She stated that many female social workers are strong willed and independent women who have feminist views, which she felt might deter men to study social work:

"The views of the female social workers are often very strong willed feminist views and I myself I'm very independent..... sometimes the personality traits of social workers and feminism that go together."

On the surface, it appeared that the perceptions offered by the interviewees, why women dominate the social work profession, are contradictory. On one side they seem to accept that women take the subordinated position of caring for others as allocated by society, which mirrors Dominelli and McLeod's (1989:15 cited Kirwan 1994:137) view that social work 'reflects the common patriarchal pattern' in society. Even though some interviewees saw a change in social work, because of more men entering the profession, but the fact is that most men are occupying managerial positions, as confirmed by the GSCC (2009) and NHS (2011) data (see chapter 4.6.). Consequently, men are in charge of financial and human resources, including women social workers and decision making processes, as confirmed by the literature reviewed in chapter four (Dominelli and McLeod 1989; Grimwood and Popplestone 1993; Harlow 1998; Kirwan 1994; White 2000).

In contrast, as interviewee 2 suggested, women in social work are often strong-willed women and hold feminist views, which appears paradoxical considering the position of women in society just discussed. However, it could be argued that social work offers a professional niche for feminists and independent or strong-willed women, who 'reclaimed social work' supported by a strong Women's movement in the 1970s (Brook and Davis 1985:24). Furthermore, it could be argued, because women 'dominate the

social work encounter on both sides' (Davis and Brook 1985:3), it is more appropriate that women social workers work with women clients/service users.

Whilst evaluating the information from the interviews, I noticed that I did not ask the interviewees explicitly about their values, which I did with all the other cohorts. The reason was that I had initially assumed that all interviewees would be recruited from the questionnaire participants; thus, I did not want to ask the same question twice. However, only two of the interviewees also had completed the questionnaire, which enabled connections between answers.

7.3. Review and discussion of the summarised findings

The findings across the four cohorts of research participants, from social work students to qualified social workers, supplied a wealth of information owing to the mixed-method approach I applied, which selected the use of focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. Even though the total number of participants was relatively small, and is not representative of all female social work students and women social workers, I conclude that the information offers some noteworthy insight into their backgrounds and motivations. Furthermore, it became apparent that a number of the outcomes from my research could be related back to corresponding findings from research and literature, as highlighted throughout the discussions of the findings in this chapter. Summarising the participation figures, I found that:

Figure 7.3.1.: Summary of participation

- Out of 149 students across the three year groups from the collaborating university 130 were female = 87%. The national figure is 84% (GSCC 2009)
- Out of 130 female students, 60 were offered the questionnaire = 46%
- Out of 60 questionnaires, 12 were returned = 20%
- Out of 46 female year 1 students, 10 took part in focus groups = 22%
- Out of 15 qualified social workers, 4 returned the questionnaire = 31%
- Out of 75 invites to an interview, 4 women took part = 5%
- Out of 75 invited women to participate in the different forms of data collection a total of 27 individuals took part = 36%
(of those 27, three participated in more than one form of data collection)

Overall, I consider the participation rates for the focus groups (22%) and the questionnaires (20%) as satisfactory. Whereas, partaking in the interviews (5%) was considerably lower. Nevertheless, it only confirms my rationale for applying a mixed-

method approach of data collection as a suitable and appropriate method, because across the different methods of data collection I achieved an overall 36% participation rate. Indeed, the benefits of applying a mixed-method approach appears further confirmed by the fact that out of the 27 participants only three chose two forms of data collection. One focus group participant also completed the questionnaire, and two women who completed the questionnaire also took part in an interview. Still, I had anticipated that all focus group participants would complete the questionnaire, and that a higher number of respondents from the questionnaire would volunteer for an interview. Thus, it confirms that one method of data collection alone might not suit all participants, whereas various methods might address the different learning styles or preferred modes of participation for individuals, thus producing a more holistic research outcome.

Providing that the 27 individuals total 100%, I have summarised the women's demographical information, and have also attempted to correspond their motivations in the table below. I must admit that I had to project some of the data with regard to the classifications of social justice fighter or wounded helper. I realised that these categories were not always explicitly extractable from the answers, and the categories are not exclusive, but can coincide:

Table 7.3.2: Summary of data across cohorts

Data from 27 individuals across the 3 modes of data collection:	Focus groups	Questionnaires	Interviews	TOTAL
Age: average/ mean	33,5 / 29,5	33,18/32,5	32,25/33	33 / 32
White British ethnicity	100%	94%	100%	98%
ALN: dyslexia	25%	19%	25%	23%
Single	12%	44%	0%	19%
Married/ or in relationship	88%	56%	100%	81%
Children	50%	62%	75%	62%
Middle class	50%	56%*	50%	52%
Working class	50%	38%*	50%	46%
Wounded helper	40%	63%	50%	51%
Social justice fighter	100%	100%	100%	100%
Career	50%	75%	100%	75%
Religion	10%	16%	50%	25%

* 6% did not answer the question of social class

As stated before, I am aware that my data is not representative of, or transferable to, all social work students or social workers. However, the data is authentic and therefore valid for the cohorts of research participants. The total figures are confirmed overall by my professional experience of working with social work students over nearly a decade. Some of the figures consolidate my experience of working with female students, i.e. that a high percentage of the women have children and they often have to balance their study and care responsibilities. Even though the women might be in a relationship, but it is often expected that they are the ones who have to work around childcare arrangements, alongside a full-time study programme. Not having the opportunity to investigate this issue further within my thesis, it is certainly another aspect that would benefit from future research.

It was of interest to note that over half of the participants described themselves as middle-class, because I would have predicted a higher percentage of working-class women to study social work based on my experience. However, I realise that my assumptions possibly contained two dilemmas: firstly, the historical division between social classes is no longer applicable, as more people work in the so-called service industry, which is not comparable to the traditional factory worker, who would be classified as working class. Secondly, there appears to be an unbroken tradition of middle and upper-class women who feel compelled to work in the social care field and want to 'give back' or help others less privileged. This was exemplified in the statement by a student that she felt, because of her 'privileged' upbringing and education, she wanted "*to put it to good use by advocating for those who are less articulate*" (year 3.5).

Indeed, I deduce that the motivation to study social work is not necessarily linked to social class or status, but ingrained in people's life experience. Hence, I recognise that my imposed categories of wounded helper or social justice fighter become subordinate. It appeared from the qualitative data, that the motivations to engage with social work was often rooted in the participants' positive and/or negative experiences of social work, such as parents working in the profession, or parents professionally fostering other children. The women's individual experiences ranged from: having been bullied at school, or manipulated by parents during their divorce, witnessing domestic violence and other forms of emotional abuse; to having been looked after and raised by the Local Authority. The overwhelming majority of participants stated that their motivation to work in social work was based on their desire to help other people, to make a difference in people's life, or advocate for the underrepresented groups in society. One participant stated that she had 'a very big caring gene' (appendix 8). Past experience often influences the choice of a profession, and as

Parker and Merrylees (2002) reported, students who chose social work were often motivated by prior experience from within their family. This appears to be a constant feature in the field of social care and welfare work, because when I investigated the biographies of the early pioneers, many of the women seemed to have been influenced by their family. The women had either politically active parents or family members, who fought on behalf of the underprivileged, impoverished and disadvantaged members of society; or they had experienced personal and emotional hardship themselves. I reflected back to the beginning of my thesis and to Solomon's (1946:3) question as to whether the life story of an individual has 'its origin in the distant past.... [or as to whether] ... we start our pilgrimage conditioned by patterns already engrained'. I feel persuaded to conclude that most social workers were unlikely to have chosen social work as an 'accidental' career path, because most of my research participants appear aware of their motivations and the possible connections to their personal lives. I found my view substantiated by Stevens *et al.* (2012:29), because they found that some students' personal experiences with social workers motivated them, 'either to be a better social worker or because of positive experiences with a social worker they had encountered.'

It could be further speculated that, because of the participants' personal, positive or negative, childhood experiences, they prefer to work with and protect children. Over half of the participants stated that they wanted to work with children and improve outcomes for children. I found this trend supported by the national statistics of social service staff (NHS 2011), and other research studies (Weiss *et al.* 2002 cited Redmond *et al.* 2008; Stevens *et al.* 2012) reporting that child welfare and child protection is of high importance for many social work entrants. Again there appears to be a tradition in the field of social work and welfare which could be linked back to the early pioneers of social work, because all of the women were concerned with the welfare of children. The emphasis on protecting children and promoting their welfare is further evidenced in legislation such as the enhancement of the Children Act in the last century and the introduction of the United Nation Convention of the Rights of the Child. Even today, the legislation for the protection and the rights of vulnerable adults is still not as comprehensive as that for children. Likewise, the data from my research suggested that only about a third of the participants wanted to work with adults, i.e. older people, in mental health or with substance misuse clients.

I am aware that I cannot compare the data from my current research project with the data I gathered and evaluated from the biographies of the early pioneers of social work, because of the different historical, political and socio-economic context. Furthermore, the patriarchal division of gender in society placed women in a

subordinate position for centuries, because women were only able to vote, own their own property, or were permitted to enter universities since the turn of the last century. Indeed, the early pioneers of social work did not have the same career choices as women today, because the work in the field of social welfare was a primarily 'voluntarily' and unpaid occupation for women who were otherwise financially secure. Social work only became a recognised profession and could be trained or studied for by women, at the beginning of the last century. Therefore, from the sample of early pioneers in social work reviewed in chapter three, only Mary Ellen Richmond, Mary Stewart and Geraldine Maitland had the opportunity to choose social work as a career. They were some of the first women who studied social work as an academic and professional career. This explains the low figure of 16% in the table (7.3.3.) below, because in contrast the other early pioneers, whose biographies I reviewed, were not social work trained or qualified.

Nonetheless, I set out to investigate whether there was a building of a tradition and a consequent continuation of women working in the field of social care. Concluding, I attempt a comparison table of the early pioneers' data with my research data as displayed below:

Table 7.3.3.: Comparison of early pioneers and my research data

Female data	Early pioneers (19 women)	My research data (27 individuals)
Ethnicity	100% White British	98% white British/European
Married/in relationship	36%	81%
Not married/single	64%	19%
Children	23%	62%
No children	77%	38%
Money/middle class	73%	52%
No money/working class	28%	46%
Wounded helper*	50%	51%
Social justice fighter*	60%	100%
Religious motivation*	40%	25%
Career	16%	75%
Additional learning needs/ dyslexia	No data found	23%

**more than one option was possible, hence the total accumulates to over 100%*

Not surprisingly, and as argued before, no definite assessment of the data and information appraised can be made due to the socio-economic, political and historical changes of environments and opportunities in which women live and work. Hence, the main difference in the data appears to be in the relationship status, women having children, their social class, and the influence of religion in women's motivation to engage in social welfare work.

7.4. Summary

In conclusion, this chapter analysed and discussed the findings from my research with female social work students and women social workers. The findings and discussions highlighted numerous areas that were confirmed in the literature and relevant national statistics. I evaluated whether my proposed categories of social justice fighter and wounded helper were applicable in the cases of the research participants, and I found that the categories were inevitably not exclusive. Thus, it reinforced my view that people's lives and motivations are far more complex and cannot simplistically be fitted into categories or reduced to 'labels'.

Yet, the data was convincing in so far as the majority of the participants wanted to make a positive difference in other people's lives, and believed social work to be the most suitable career path for their endeavour.

Furthermore, I transferred the challenge to compare, contrast and discuss the findings from my review of the biographies of the early pioneers of social work to the data gathered from my research. Even though I had to acknowledge that lives, environments and opportunities for women have changed throughout history; nonetheless, there appears to be an unbroken continuation of women's motivation in wanting to 'help' others. Consequently, the development and establishment of social work as a professional route for women was led by the early pioneers, thus offering a professional career path for both the social justice fighter and the wounded helper.

Following on, the last chapter reviews my research journey and how my findings can be utilised for the education of social work students today.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion and future recommendations

Knowing is not enough, we must apply.

Willing is not enough, we must do.

(Johan Wolfgang von Goethe)

8.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews my research journey and examines whether I have found new knowledge which can contribute to social work education and curriculum development. My hypothesis was based on my experience that social work is dominated by a female workforce, because of the patriarchal structures in society which capitalises on the female caring abilities (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Brook and Davis 1985; Coleman 1988; Field 2008; Martin 2008; Mies 1988, 1998; Nussbaum 2011; Putnam 2000). Furthermore, I explored women's 'fabric of life' (Lesem cited Solomon 1946:v) and what the motivational factors might be for women to engage with social work (Parker and Merrylees 2002, Redmond *et al.* 2008, Stevens *et al.* 2012). I investigated not only why women might want to make a difference in other people's lives, but also whether they could be categorised as either 'social justice fighters' (Adams *et al.* 2002; Thompson 2002) or 'wounded helpers' (Brandon 1976; Frank 1995). Justification was provided for my choice of an auto/biographical approach for my research which utilised a mixed-method approach from a feminist and emancipatory perspective (Denzin 1989, Erben 1998, Mies 1988/1998, Plummer 2001, Stanley 1992, Usher *et al.* 1997).

8.2. Reflections on my research journey

Acknowledging the above quote by Goethe, I employed a critical and reflective approach to my thesis, including reviews of what is already known in the literature, followed by the practical application of my research to validate my thesis. Through the application of an auto/biographical research approach I engaged in the self-reflexive process of reflecting on my personal and professional experiences. Furthermore, I facilitated a discussion about the ethical implications for the research from a feminist perspective with the focus on women's experiences, as

discussed in chapters five and six. As much as I set out to be scientifically objective as could be expected from a reputable researcher, I did not want to substitute my own perspective and experiences with the findings from the research or the views of the research participants, because this would have constituted 'the fallacy of objectivism' (Denzin 1978:10 cited Plummer 2001:37). Accordingly, I considered Roberts' (1981:xvi) recommendation that the feminist researcher should 'critically re-examine socially constructed notions of [...] scholarship and rationality', rather than simply 'rejecting academic and scientific rationality' through the application of a quantitative and a qualitative research methodology. The rationale for undertaking research with only female participants was argued in chapter five. The justification for the decision was based on the fact of the dominant female gender distribution within the profession, and also on the fundamentally different realities, and nature of experiences, of men and women. Woodward and Chisholm (1981 cited Roberts 1981:173) reasoned that the different life experiences 'could be explained in terms of social structural distribution of power and resources, differences in socialisation' which I discussed in chapter four with regard to the role and positions of women in society, in social work and within academia.

Consequently, and to assist the academic scholarship and scientific rigour of my thesis and the research process, I applied Brookfield's (1988) four-step reflective model [assumption analysis; contextual awareness; imaginative speculation; reflective scepticism] to assist the evaluation, analysing, reconsidering and questioning of my work. I wanted to test and analyse my assumptions about women in social work which were based on my professional experience as a social worker and social work practice teacher. Thus, I had to substantiate my awareness of contextual (Brookfield 1988) knowledge and understanding of the historical and social construct, and the reality of social work today. Subsequently, in order to gain a salient understanding and to aid my research quest, I first reviewed the literature with regard to the historical emergence of social work to its current professional status in the UK. Then, I utilised an auto/biographical approach that focussed on women in social work. I started with the evaluation of my professional development, which also provided the rationale for my interest in investigating women in the field of social care. This led me to the study of women's biographies, because I wanted to make them 'visible', as women have essentially been 'invisible by historians' (Gray 2009:3). The biographies reviewed were of women who I considered to be the early pioneers of social work, and who had made a difference, not only to other people's lives, but also assisted in shaping social work as a profession and its establishment in academia. I appraised the

early pioneers' demographical data and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as the possible motivational influences that led them to undertake charitable work, which I summarised in table 3.3.1. Next, I designed research instruments to examine the socio-economic backgrounds and the motivation of female social work students and qualified social workers today, with the intention to compare these with the early pioneers and to ascertain whether there are any parallels or perpetuations in women's tradition to 'help' make a difference. I collated the information and findings from the participants of my research under similar categories as the ones used for the early pioneers and summarised the demographical and motivational data in table 7.3.2. Finally, I drew together all the information available to me in a condensed table (7.3.3.) which compared the data from the early pioneers with that of the participants from research.

In my 'imaginative speculation' (Brookfield 1988) I reflected on predictable factors which influence women's motivation to engage with social work and contemplated new or alternative ways of thinking. Some predictable motivational factors for women to engage in social work ranged from caring about those who are disadvantaged in society, to personal experiences (positive as well as negative) within the field of social care. I discussed the advantages and disadvantages of embarking on a career based on personal experiences as exemplified by Brandon (1976). Alternative ways of thinking with regard to the curriculum of social work education are suggested in the recommendations at the end of this chapter.

It became apparent to me during the process of the research and the evaluation of the findings, both from the literature and from my project, that direct comparisons between the early pioneers and women in social work today are in fact inconceivable due to the changed historical and economical environments in which women are socialised and operate. I came to recognise, that my attempts to 'categorise' women's motivations and social classification was in parts too simplistic. Instead, further research is needed to investigate 'the realities of women's lives' (Roberts 1981:xix) and how they live their lives to gain a greater insight. Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that the literature reviewed about the early pioneers and the findings from my research could not comprehend the realities and richness of their lives. Nonetheless, I found recurring themes that 'confront a particular issue' (Plummer 2001:26), such as the continuing structural oppression of women in society and within a gendered profession. Therefore, I conclude that structural oppression against women continues to exist, restricting their freedom to exercise their decisions of how to live their lives or their choices

of career path and progressions. Women's capabilities, worldwide, are still limited by the options available to them (Nussbaum 2011).

Also, 'reflective scepticism' (Brookfield 1988) made me question if I read and researched a far too complex topic, with its multi-facetted issues, and as to whether I found any new or universal truths that could offer new positions for social work education. I argued that my definition of 'truth' is recounted in the narratives of the research participants' lives and their realities. The main focus of my work discussed women studying or working in social work, but I did not investigate those who are delivering social work training and education in any depth. Nor did I explore Martha Nussbaum's capabilities and human development approach, or her concept of social justice, to the extent it could have been applicable to my thesis. A more profound study of her work would possibly have enhanced my thesis beyond my preferred reading of the German sociologist and feminist Maria Mies, whose work I grew up with during my academic studies and who has greatly influenced my thinking.

8.3. "What's new?"

Research can be a source of surprise and of profound learning. The researcher's self, as constantly stated, is always present: doing research is a journey for the researcher as much as for the researched. (Merrill and West 2009:111)

When I set out to research for my thesis, I believed it relevant to review the emergence of social work as a profession as well as examining exemplary biographies of women who had been early pioneers in shaping social work as a discipline. One could question why I did not focus solely on social work education today, but I deemed it would have provided an incomplete representation of the inherent structural forces which renders social work a female dominated profession. I further argued, that even though socio-economic and political factors have changed for women over the centuries, in so far that they have access to the academy and paid career choices; but patriarchal and structural oppression has only changed insignificantly for women.

The innovative approach of my thesis investigated the socio-economic status and family composition of women, as well as their possible motivational interests which appear to make the field of social work appealing to women in particular, in history and today. In conclusion, I found that social class and socio-economic status used to be a predictable indicator in previous centuries that women would

dedicate their time to charitable and welfare work; in particular if they were childless. Whereas, today women regardless of class, status or family composition will chose social work as a career, because it is a professional option available to all women. The prospect of a relatively well-paid job was a deciding motivational factor for many students to enrol on the social work programme.

The outcomes from my investigation with regard to women's motivation, based on my imposed categories of 'social justice fighter' or 'wounded helper', were less conclusive. The reason is possibly two-fold: firstly, the historical and biographical information available to me required interpretation of secondary sources and texts; secondly, the participants of my research study did identify with the concept of social justice, but did not necessarily label themselves as wounded helpers. Again, through the process of interpretation of what was revealed by the participants, i.e. comments that they had negative experiences in the past, I established that some of them potentially would qualify for the wounded helper category. Another aspect which came to light was that, in past centuries, many of the women's biographies reviewed revealed religion-inspired motivation to help disadvantaged members of society; whereas only a small minority of participants in my research referred to their Christian belief as a motivational factor to help others and subsequently study social work. Yet, some of the participants claimed to be humanitarians. This was consolidated by the fact that the majority agreed with the mission statement and the value base of social work, which I consider not that dissimilar to Christian ideals. Still, regardless of their motivation, I found that the majority of women wanted to make a difference in other people's lives. The notion of wanting to have a positive impact on others is strongly linked to a moral belief system and value base, as confirmed earlier by the testimonial of a Masters student who stated that social work 'is a vocation that requires profound dedication and deep-rooted values' (GSCC 2010, see 4.8).

In completing my thesis, I had hoped to find more conclusive and more generalisable answers, but I came to realise that human lives cannot be simplified. Indeed, human development needs to be evaluated based on the individual's sozialisation (Berger and Luckman 1967) and viewed in an Ecological Systems theory model (Bronfenbrenner 1979, originating from Mary Ellen Richmond's *person-in-environment* concept, or also known as Ecomaps), as well as in the context of structurally oppressive influences (Adams *et al.* 2009; Bourdieu 1984, Mies 1988, Nussbaum 2011, Thompson 2006). Furthermore, Mills (1970 cited Plummer 2001:6) suggested that the life of an individual needs to be examined with a 'triple concern' in mind on biography, history and social structures. This is

further corroborated by Plummer's (2001:7) notion that the individual cannot be seen in isolation, but human life and experience needs to be seen 'as a fluctual praxis'. Therefore in my attempt to look at the thesis from a historical, sociological and auto/biographical approach, the mixed-method enabled a holistic perspective, because the methods chosen were not mutually exclusive, but the selection was deemed suitable in the pursuit to learn about women's lives in a more comprehensive manner. Consequently, I conclude that my findings have reaffirmed, that childhood and life experiences influence our educational development and professional choices, which I found further confirmed in other research studies (Parker and Merrylees 2002, Redmond *et al.* 2008, Stevens *et al.* 2012).

I acknowledge, that my findings are not offering a categorical answer to why women chose social work and whether they are social justice fighters or wounded helpers. However, based on the review of the literature and my own research findings, it can be propositioned that the majority of women chose social work, aiming to make a positive contribution and a difference to other people's lives. The women seem to 'care' about others, and in particular about children. Often based on their personal experiences, women appeared either motivated to engage in 'positive social action' (Martin 2008:414) and therefore fight for social justice, and/or they do not wish others to suffer like they did (wounded helpers). Despite my initial criticism, based on my professional assessment of potentially failing students who presented 'wounded helper' indicators, which made me sceptical as to whether they were suitable for social work practice, I consider their motivations more valuable now than when I started my thesis. I came to appreciate that negative or traumatic experience can also be a valuable source of empathy and knowledge which cannot be taught. However, I recommend that a rigorous selection process in the admission of social work students to the study and a reflective practitioner axiom are paramount. This is essential in order to safeguard vulnerable children and adults from social workers who are potentially working on their personal agenda rather than to the benefit of the service users/clients.

Furthermore, based on the findings of my research, and compared with research studies on a similar topic (Parker and Merrylees 2002, Redmond *et al.* 2008, Stevens *et al.* 2012), it appears that the main motivational drives for social workers today are not solely based on the paradigm of social justice or wounded helper, but that the financial aspects and career opportunities are as important. Indeed, it needs to be acknowledged that a majority of women chose social work as a career path into a reasonably well-paid job. However, I argued that there are potentially

better-paid professions available to women within the social care and education sector, such as teaching. Consequently, if it is not about the financial remuneration, as confirmed by some of the research participants' comments, then this leads me to suspect that other motivational factors contribute to women's decision to engage with social work. I suspect that the social work value base which implies humanistic, ethical and moral principles, similar to religious belief systems (Halmos 1970 cited Walton 1975; Martin 2008), indicate a stronger influence on the motivation and decision to become a social worker, than otherwise acknowledged in the literature. An aspect which has not been well researched, nor given much attention to, in current social work literature and education.

Lastly, all participants of my research agreed, that the public opinion of the social work profession is in general very negative. Again, that in itself is not a new finding, but it is an important point which requires being addressed not just at government level, but should be incorporated in social work education. 'The levels of support for and image of social work, including any gendered image of the profession' (Stevens *et al.* 2012:17) are important to be considered by universities as well as employers for the recruitment and retention for the social work profession.

8.4. Recommendations for social worker education

The challenge is to continue to search for new and better topics, methodologies and strategies which will liberate women and, perhaps more than that, to challenge us to be feminists first in our research efforts. (Weston, 1988:149)

In conclusion, my recommendations for social work education are directed at various levels, political and academia. With regard to the recruitment and selection of social work entrants, a thorough examination of the applicants' motivations and their values should be applied, regardless of their gender. The motivation for entering a care profession is more important than for example why somebody chooses to study engineering, because social workers, similar to psychotherapist and psychologists, interact very closely with individuals and can have a major impact on their lives. This recommendation is also supported by Parker and Merrylees (2002) who suggested the use of biographical interviews, prior to the start of the study, to address personal issues, thus to identify ethical issues which might lead to transference. Indeed, I believe it is vital to acknowledge and understand students' motivations and values,

because the value base of social work is built on passionate humanitarian and moral imperatives. As Stevens *et al.* (2012:31) argued, students and social workers' motivations are often linked to their personality and therefore 'basic altruistic motivation contains an essentially moral element, in the extent to which it suggests a certain moral character'. Therefore, social work entrants' personality, motivation and values need to be discussed within the social work curriculum, because 'the complex interaction between abstract ethics underpinning professional practice' and 'the reality of social work practice and the motivations and values of individual students' (Stevens *et al.* 2012:31) needs to be explored.

Consequently, I suggest that the curriculum should engage social work students with reflective and analytical process of their lives, i.e. to engage in counselling or therapeutic sessions, as customary in other European countries, and required of the study for psychology or psychotherapy. Thus any latent emotional and/or traumatic issues which might potentially lead to detrimental transference in the social worker's interaction with service users/clients could be addressed and worked with. The necessity to reflect and examine personal values was confirmed by the Masters students' statement (GSCC 2010, see 4.8) that:

"Without reflection and proactive enquiry into our own values, there will be no room for empathy, and no room for effective social work practice."

Indeed, Stevens *et al.* (2012:32) emphasise the importance, as well as the benefits, of including student self-reflection in the curriculum to aid the understanding of their motivations, because their personal history and life experience 'influence motivations to be a social worker directly and indirectly'. Also, the process of reflection can be beneficial for students to assimilate their personal experience with theoretical and practical learning (Christie & Weeks, 1998 cited Stevens *et al.* 2012:32). Moreover, Rutten *et al.* (2010) suggested the use of narrative in social work education as a means to facilitate and assist the process of reflection.

In addition, social work students' motivation could be explored with the aid of Pink's (2005) 'Drive' model of motivation, which is divided into three elements: Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose. Pink (2005) believes that money is often not the motivator for people to work, but having a *purpose* is. The purpose is the desire to do things in service of something larger than ourselves, which correlates to empathy, emotional intelligence and the use of narratives. Thus, Pink (2005) claims, life skills often provide predictors of success with study and work. Hence, using narratives to explore social work entrants' motivation could illuminate their life experiences from a personal

perspective, as well as clarify their professional aspirations and stipulate reflection on what 'drives' them to enter the profession, based on the values they bring to it.

Above all else, the unequal gender distribution within social work requires addressing at various levels. Firstly, the government needs to make the social work profession more appealing to men and promote the need of positive male role models in the recruitment campaign, but that would also require a review of the current financial remuneration structures. However, more importantly, I believe that universities should recruit more male lecturers, which in turn might encourage more male students to enter the profession. It could be argued that the feminist movement, which built a strong foundation within the social work profession, might have had a detrimental impact on the image of social work as a career path for men. Also, the social work curriculum should incorporate gender topics and issues which show men and women as equally valued. I realise that this might sound contradictory to my otherwise feminist standpoint taken throughout the thesis. However, I do believe that women cannot change their position in society without involving men in the process; - this has been my critique on the feminist movement since my early involvement as a politically active teenager, and later as a student, where some divisions of the women's movement insisted that men should be excluded from the feminist debate. I found this position mirrored by Geraldine Maitland's view that women should work *with* men (Willmott 2004), as highlighted earlier in chapter three.

Furthermore, it needs to be acknowledged that not only women can claim to be 'victims' of oppression, but there are also a number of men who experience oppression, abuse and discrimination. For example, issues of men as victims of domestic violence, or domestic violence in gay or lesbian relationships are not included on the social work education agenda. Therefore, the curriculum should take a more balanced approach to gender issues and bring it into the discussion with students and in the academy, and return to its 'true mission of social justice' (Hiersteiner and Peterson 1999:144). Social work is a profession that focusses on social and economic justice, consequently gender issues need to be addressed. As McPhail (2008:45) highlighted: 'gender is one of the social axes that regulates the distribution of power and resources'. Accordingly, McPhail (2008:33) called for a more comprehensive understanding of gender and a 're-gendering' of the social work curriculum, because it should acknowledge 'that men have a gender, too'. She argued that methods for teaching need to integrate 'critical gender consciousness' in order to understand masculinity and femininity as well as transgender issues in social work realities and society (McPhail 2008:33).

On an anecdotal and observational level, I found that there were more male lecturers and more male students in Germany than in England. I presume this is linked to the different historical developments and political implementation of the social welfare systems and the establishment of social work as a profession as briefly discussed in chapter two. Furthermore, I speculate that the different cultural norms and stereotypical expectations are responsible for the more equal gender distribution in the profession in Germany. Although, this would require further international research to ascertain as to whether different countries have different perceptions or expectations with regard to gender-typical professions; and/or different pay structures. Indeed, comparative international research could further illuminate different countries' value considerations and moral understanding attributed to the roles for men and women, in respect to caring as a profession. For example, in many European countries it is custom and expected that women care for their elderly parents or relatives, thus making them stereotypically predispositioned to enter the caring professions. Whereas in other cultures it is expected that the eldest son looks after his parents. My limited observations noted that there are more male social work students from African and Asian countries than of European heritage. Indeed, I would argue that all men, regardless of culture, race or sexual orientation, *potentially* have the same capabilities to care for others as women do. Yet, men's 'potentials' are not nurtured by parents/carers who still raise their children in a stereotypical manner, nor is there sufficient support and encouragement for men to engage with the social care profession in most patriarchal societies. Again, further research would be required to validate my unsubstantiated opinion.

My final recommendation addresses the public image of social workers and social work as a profession. I know from my personal experience that people often pitied me for being a social worker, because I 'must see awful things'. Similar comments were made to some of the students by relatives and colleagues, as exemplified by a focus group participant, who was told that she was 'mad' to study social work, and questioned why she did not go for nursing instead. I agree with one explanation offered by a focus group participant, that the public 'fears' social workers because they actually have no idea what social workers do. Therefore, they suggested that government, as well as universities and social workers themselves, should be more pro-active in providing a clear illustration of their work and actively promote a positive professional image. For example social workers or social work students should be more 'visible' by going to schools or to public meetings, like nurses or the police, to educate the public about the role and responsibilities of social workers. I believe this idea could be incorporated effortlessly into the social work curriculum. Furthermore, the professional governing body ought to become more pro-active in publishing positive success stories of social

work interventions thereby providing a balance to, or counteracting the ‘witch hunt’ of social workers in the tabloids. Again, universities should take an active role in assigning social work students to write and report on positive social work placement experiences which could be circulated in the media. As Johnson, the chief executive of the Social Care Association stated: “Social workers have this absolute motivation to help people [...] but the profession can only operate effectively with public approval.” (The Guardian 2009).

8.5. Summary – the end

If we’re not prepared to be wrong, you’ll never come up with anything original.
(Sir Ken Robinson 2010)

This brings my research, reading and discussions to an end for the time being. I admit that I may have been mistaken with regard to some of my initial preconceived ideas about women’s motivation to engage with social work, but hope to have come up with some new or original ideas for social work education. My rationale and motivational ‘drive’ (Pink 2005) for undertaking the thesis allowed me autonomy in the research and evaluation of a topic which kept me engaged not only with the desire to master a very ambitious project, but also with the purpose of improving my professional social work teaching as well as for the greater purpose of making recommendations for social work education and curriculum development. I hope to have raised and altered awareness, even though the conditions in which women live, study and work might not change. My ‘research project has its own biography’ (Bornat and Walmsley 2008:12), and through the auto/biography approach I was able to research my life, the life of other women and to reflect and investigate our motivations to make a difference. I realised that I am no longer alone and that there are others who will be ‘star throwers’..... *

Total word count: 80.013

(including all citations from the literature and quotes from the research participants)

EPILOGUE

"On a point of land, I found the star thrower. . .

I spoke once briefly.

"I understand," I said. "Call me another thrower."

Only then I allowed myself to think, He is not alone any longer.

After us, there will be others . . . *

(The Star Thrower by Loren Eiseley 1979:181)



*If you can just make a difference to ONE **

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APPENDIX 1

Mrs Francisca Christina Veale
 School of Education
 University of Southampton
 University Road
 Highfield
 Southampton
 SO17 1BJ

RGO Ref: 7602

18 October 2010

Dear Mrs Veale

Project Title 'Making a Difference or Being the Difference': Female Social Workers' Lives and Identities – A Biographical study

This is to confirm the University of Southampton is prepared to act as Research Sponsor for this study, and the work detailed in the protocol/study outline will be covered by the University of Southampton insurance programme.

As the sponsor's representative for the University this office is tasked with:

1. Ensuring the researcher has obtained the necessary approvals for the study
2. Monitoring the conduct of the study
3. Registering and resolving any complaints arising from the study

As the researcher you are responsible for the conduct of the study and you are expected to:

1. Ensure the study is conducted as described in the protocol/study outline approved by this office
2. Advise this office of any change to the protocol, methodology, study documents, research team, participant numbers or start/end date of the study
3. Report to this office as soon as possible any concern, complaint or adverse event arising from the study

Failure to do any of the above may invalidate the insurance agreement and/or affect sponsorship of your study i.e. suspension or even withdrawal.

On receipt of this letter you may commence your research but please be aware other approvals may be required by the host organisation if your research takes place outside the University. It is your responsibility to check with the host organisation and obtain the appropriate approvals before recruitment is underway in that location.

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success for your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Prude'.

Dr Martina Prude
 Head of Research Governance

Tel: 023 8059 5058
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APPENDIX 1.1.

***'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study***

Focus Group Social Work Students Year 1: Plan & Themes

The focus group is planned to last 45-60 minutes and will be, with your permission, tape recorded. A transcript of the group discussion will be produced and sent for approval to all participants, before any of the information will be analysed for the purpose of the researcher's thesis.

You are asked to summarise the discussion points from your group(s) on flip chart papers which will be collected and kept by the researcher, with your permission, for analysis and evaluation so as to contribute to the research findings.

The focus group discussion points are suggested around the follow themes:

- *Why do you want to become a social worker? - Discuss your motivations.*
- *What are your expectations of the social work profession?*
- *How would you describe your value base? - Give examples.*
- *How do you perceive society views of the social work profession?*
- According to the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001), the key purpose of social work is to be:

" ... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

- ⇒ *How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations?*
- ⇒ *Do you think any of these points in this statement are controversial? If so, why?*

You may also wish to raise or discuss further points after the event; - this could be any 'after thoughts' or issues you did not want to share in a group situation; - these can be emailed anonymously (via university student email) or via traditional mail to the researcher's address. Also, if you wish to voluntarily complete a questionnaire and/or take part in an individual interview, please contact the researcher either via mail or email:

Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT 4 9XR. - Email:
francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

APPENDIX 1.2.

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Social Work Student Questionnaire Year 1

Please complete all questions if possible. You can write as much as you like, because all the boxes expand as you write. Once completed, please print and post to the researcher's address:

Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT 4 9XR. - Email:
francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your university email address, so I can contact you. Optional, your email address:.....

1. Your Age:	2. Your Ethnicity:	3. Your relationship status & children:
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe:		
5. How would you describe your social class background?		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations?		
<p>Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.</p>		
<p>7. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state his/her relationship to you:</p>		
<p>If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please explain your answer</p>		
<p>8. Have you got relevant prior qualifications or prior experience of working in the field of social care and health with service users (children, young people, adults, families, old people, or other groups)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state</p>		
<p>9. <i>'How did you get here?' - What prompted or influenced your decision to embark on this social work course?</i></p>		

<p>10. What were/are your motivations to study social work?</p>
<p>11. What are your expectations for your career in social work?</p>
<p>12. What concerns or apprehensions do you have about becoming a qualified social worker, if any? Please explain...</p>
<p>13. If not social work, what other profession or occupation would you choose and why?</p>
<p>14. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Please explain ...</p>
<p>15. How in general do you think society views the social work profession? Please explain...</p>
<p>16. What are your personal values and why?</p>
<p>17. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:</p>
<p>18. Which of the following statements captures your reason for becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." Because..... <input type="checkbox"/> "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." Because..... <input type="checkbox"/> "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because..... <input type="checkbox"/> "I couldn't decide what to study and social work seemed like an OK option." Because</p>

- "I want to stand-up/fight for the injustice in society and support the underprivileged." Because.....
- "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." Because.....
- "I'm passionate to change the world." Because.....
- "I want to improve outcomes for children." Because.....
- "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." Because.....
- "I'm a good role model and people can learn from me." Because.....
- "I want a challenging and exciting job." Because.....
- "I couldn't get a job, that's why I enrolled on a university course."
- Any other reason or comments and why?

19. Please describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do.....

20. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

21. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are?

(you can tick more than one option)

- I like working with people
- I don't like paperwork
- I don't like being stuck in an office
- I'm reliable
- I'm conscientious
- I like to listen to peoples' life experiences
- I'm a good listener
- I want to do what's right
- I like to problem solve
- I like to support and advocate for people

I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statement or comments you think is relevant? Please state and explain why?

22. List the area(s) of social work you are interested in and for each explain why?

23. The key purpose of social work was described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations? Please explain.....

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

Yes No

Please explain why:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your input is appreciated.

APPENDIX 1.3.***'Making a difference or Being the difference'*****Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study****Social Work Student Questionnaire Year 2 or Year 3 (please delete as appropriate)**

Please complete all questions if possible. You can write as much as you like, because all the boxes expand as you write. Once completed, please print and post to the researcher's address:

Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT4 9XR. - Email:

francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your university email address, so I can contact you. Optional, your email address:.....

1. Your Age:	2. Your Ethnicity:	3. Your relationship status & children:
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe:		
5. How would you describe your social class background?		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations?		
<p>Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.</p>		
<p>7. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state his/her relationship to you:</p> <p>If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please explain your answer</p>		
<p>8. Have you got relevant prior qualifications or prior experience of working in the field of social care and health with service users (children, young people, adults, families, old people, or other groups)?</p>		

No

Yes, please state

9. *'How did you get here? - What prompted or influenced your decision to embark on this social work course?*

10. *What were/are your motivations to study social work?*

11. *What are your expectations for your career in social work?*

12. *What concerns or apprehensions do you have about becoming a qualified social worker, if any? Please explain...*

13. *If not social work, what other profession or occupation would you choose and why?*

14. *Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)*

Family

Friends

Colleagues

Advertising

Other -

Please explain ...

15. *How in general do you think society views the social work profession?*

Please explain...

16. *What are your personal values and why?*

17. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:

18. Which of the following statements captures your reason for becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?

- "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." Because.....
- "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." Because.....
- "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because.....
- "I couldn't decide what to study and social work seemed like an OK option." Because
- "I want to stand-up/fight for the injustice in society and support the underprivileged." Because.....
- "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." Because.....
- "I'm passionate to change the world." Because.....
- "I want to improve outcomes for children." Because.....
- "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." Because.....
- "I'm a good role model and people can learn from me." Because.....
- "I want a challenging and exciting job." Because.....
- "I couldn't get a job, that's why I enrolled on a university course."
- Any other reason or comments and why?

19. Please describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do.....

20. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

21. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are?

(you can tick more than one option)

- I like working with people
- I don't like paperwork
- I don't like being stuck in an office
- I'm reliable
- I'm conscientious
- I like to listen to peoples' life experiences
- I'm a good listener
- I want to do what's right
- I like to problem solve
- I like to support and advocate for people
- I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statement or comments you think is relevant? Please state and explain why?

22. List the area(s) of social work you are interested in and for each explain why?

23. The key purpose of social work was described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations?
Please explain.....

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

Yes No

Please explain why:

24. Having completed your practice placement(s) as a student social worker, what were your most significant experiences?

25. Please describe one positive experience and why it was positive for you,

.... and one not so positive experience. Why wasn't it as positive as you would have wished?

26. How much have you enjoyed your placement on a scale from 1 - 10?

Not at all ☹ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Much ☺

Please explain why...

27. Were your expectations of what constitutes social work met?

Yes How and why?

No Why not?

Not sure Why?

28. What has been your learning with regard to your own values, belief systems and expectations? Please explain.....

29. Were your personal values and beliefs challenged during your placements?

No Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer further ...

30. Has your view of the social work profession changed?

No Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer further.....

31. Please add anything else you would like to share about your social work practice experience?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your input is very much appreciated!

APPENDIX 1.4.***'Making a difference or Being the difference'*****Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study****Qualified Social Worker Questionnaire**

Please complete all questions if possible. You can write as much as you like, because all the boxes expand as you write. Once completed, please print and post to the researcher's address:

Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT 4 9XR. - Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your email address, so I can contact you. Optional email address:.....

1. Your Age:	2. Your Ethnicity:	3. Your relationship status & children:
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe:		
5. How would you describe your social class background?		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations?		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Year social work qualification gained:		
8. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state his/her relationship to you:		
If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		
Please explain your answer		

9. Before you studied and became a qualified social worker, what were your prior qualifications (or experience in the field of social care and health)?

Please explain...

10. How did you get here? - What prompted or influenced your decision to become a social worker?

11. What was your motivation to study social work?

12. What were your expectations of social work?

13. Have your expectations been met?

No Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer ...

14. If not social work, then what other occupation would you choose and why?

15. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)

Family Friends Colleagues Advertising
 Other -

Please explain ...

16. How in general do you think society views the social work profession?

Please explain...

17. What are your personal values, and why?

18. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:

19. Which of the following statements captures your reason(s) for being/ becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?

"I want to make a difference in peoples' lives."

Because.....

"I want to be the difference in peoples' lives."

Because.....

"I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because.....

"I want to stand-up/fight for justice in society and support the underprivileged." Because.....

"I want to challenge discrimination and oppression."

Because...

"I'm passionate about wanting to change the world."

Because.....

"I wasn't sure of what I wanted to study."

Because...

"I want to improve outcomes for children."

Because.....

"I want to save children and/or adults from abuse."

Because.....

"I'm a good role model and people can learn from me."

Because.....

"I want a challenging and exciting job."

Because.....

"I couldn't get a job, so that's why I enrolled on a university course."

Any other statement or comments you wish to make. Please explain:

20. Describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do?

21. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

22. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? You can tick more than one option:

- I like working with people
- I don't like paperwork
- I don't like being confined in an office
- I'm reliable
- I'm conscientious
- I like to listen to peoples' life experiences
- I'm a good listener
- I want to do what's right
- I like to problem solve
- I like to support and advocate for people
- I like to be in charge and take responsibility

<p>Any other statements or comments you wish to make? Please explain...</p>
<p>23. What area of social work are you currently working in and explain why?</p>
<p>24. The key purpose of social work is described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:</p> <p><i>"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."</i></p> <p>How does this statement relate to you and your professional experience? Please explain.....</p> <p>Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Please explain why:</p>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your input is much appreciated!

APPENDIX 1.5.

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Interview questions for all volunteer participants

The interview is planned for half an hour and with your permission will be tape-recorded. A transcript of the interview will be produced by the researcher and sent to you for your approval before any of the information and data will be evaluated and analysed for the purpose of the thesis. Your name will not be mentioned or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

For further background to the research, please refer to the Topic Guide.

- ⇒ *Primary question: Tell me about ...! How, what*
- ⇒ *Secondary question: What was it like...?Explain.....*
- ⇒ *Probes: How did it feel....?Describe.....*

1. *What was your educational journey up to this point? (How did you get here?)*
2. *What experiences influenced your professional move into social work?*
3. *Have you or your family had any experience or contact with social workers?*
4. *How were these experiences?*
5. *How has becoming a social worker influenced (transformed) your life?*
6. *What is/was your expectation of what social work is?*
7. *Have your expectations been met?*
8. *What are the challenges of social work for you, and why?*
9. *What are the motivators for your professional choice?*
 - *Career progression/change, money, helping others, social justice, wounded helper*
10. *Why do you think that the majority of social workers are women?*

Points I want to consider:

'epiphany' (Denzin 1989) and 'narrative turns' (Plummer 2001)

'wounded helper/healer' (Charon, 2006; Brandon, 1976, 2001; Frank, 1995)

'social justice fighter' (Adams *et al.* 2002; Thompson, 2002)

APPENDIX 1.6.**1. Participant Information Sheet**

(Version 4)

School of Education

Study Title: '***Making a difference or Being the difference***'

Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Researcher: Francisca C. Veale

Ethics number: 7602

Please read this information carefully in conjunction with the Topic Guide before deciding to take part in this research.

If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

The researcher is a qualified social worker involved in social work education in her capacity as an independent off-site practice teacher. She is currently undertaking her PhD studies and for the purpose of the doctorate thesis aims to explore the kaleidoscope (in the sense of '*a series of changing phases or events*') of female social workers' identities, biographies, life experiences, life journeys, or attitudes, and how these influence each individual's decision to become a social worker. The researcher's hypothesis is that we all want to make differences in our own lives, or that of others. This prompts the question of motivation, or what 'drives' us, or make us 'tick', or what event in our lives 'triggered' this innate or socially constructed desire to give meaning to our lives, hence studying to become a social worker. What motivates women in particular to train and work as social worker? Do they want to make or be the difference? What are/were their biographical journeys to get to this professional choice?

All female social work students from all three year groups at Bournemouth University will be invited to participate as well as a selected group of newly qualified female social workers who have been working in the field for no more than five years. The researcher aims to gain an insight and understanding into biographies, personal or professional developmental factors or trends over a period of time of social work education and practice to be able to detect any potential changes in attitudes and motivational reasons.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen by what is known as a convenience sample, meaning, the ease of accessibility for the researcher. The researcher's interest is focussed on female social work students and newly qualified women social workers who have qualified in the past five years. Participation is voluntary, based on your informed consent, and you can withdraw at anytime without having to give any reason(s).

What will happen to me if I take part?

Social Work Students (during academic year 2010-2011):

Year 1 students will be invited to participate in a focus group and also to complete a questionnaire at the beginning of your social work studies in October 2010. Volunteers will be invited to participate in individual interviews during the academic year. All information will be confidential and anonymous.

Year 2 and 3 students will be invited to complete a questionnaire and volunteers will be invited to participate in individual interviews during the academic year. All information will be confidential and anonymous.

Qualified Social Workers:

A questionnaire will be distributed to recently qualified social workers, who have been working in the field for up to five years. Volunteers are invited to participate in individual interviews. All information will be confidential and anonymous.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

There is no financial remuneration, reward or benefit, nor any academic compensation. However, on a personal or professional level you might gain greater insight and it might assist you in becoming a more reflective practitioner. The results will be disseminated to enhance social work training and education. So your participation is hoped to be for the greater good of social work.

Are there any risks involved?

There is no planned risk, because you will not be intentionally put at risk physically or psychologically by the researcher. All you are asked is to voluntarily complete an anonymous questionnaire and/ or interview.

Will my participation be confidential?

The researcher adheres to the Data Protection Act (1989) and the University of Southampton and Bournemouth's policies and procedures with regard to data protection and confidentiality. Data will be collected from the focus group discussion, questionnaires and where agreed from interviews. Whilst collecting the data confidentiality and anonymity will be adhered to by not using names of the participants. Where participants have agreed to further correspondence they will be encouraged to do so via traditional mail or their anonymous university email and not to disclose their names. Interview participants' names will not be disclosed. Information from the focus group, questionnaires and interviews will be transferred anonymous onto electronic data collection information spreadsheets. All data will be stored on a password protected computer, to which the researcher has sole access, and the original data will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis. The summarised and analysed data presented in the thesis will be anonymous so that individual participants will not be identifiable.

What happens if I change my mind?

All participants have the right to withdraw at any stage without having to give any reasons. There will be no consequences to your student or employment status. The researcher's study is an independent study and your withdrawal or non-participation has no effect on you or your educational institution or your employer.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, please contact,
The School of Education, Professor Melanie Nind, Chair Ethics Committee; or the Research Governance Office, University of Southampton, B37/4055, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ, or email to rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

The researcher is a sole researcher; therefore there is no research team; therefore, your university tutors or employers are not party to the research and will not be able to answer any questions you may have. If you are in doubt or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher directly: Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, Dorset, DT 4 9XR or Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk
Or contact the researcher's supervisor at the Southampton of University: Dr Gill Clarke MBE, Biography and Education Research Group, School of Education, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1BJ, Email: gmc@soton.ac.uk, Tel. 02380 592977

APPENDIX 1.7.**7. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**
(Version 4)

Study title:

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Researcher name: Francisca C. Veale

Study reference:

Ethics reference: RGO 7602

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet (version 3) and /or Topic Guide and had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used anonymously and confidentially for the purpose of this study.

I agree that the focus group discuss and/or the individual interview can be tape-recorded and agree for my data to be used anonymously and confidentially for the purpose of this study.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without consequences.

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Name of Researcher (print name) - **Francisca C. Veale**

Signature of Researcher.....Date.....

APPENDIX 1.8.**8. Focus Group Topic Guide**

(Version 4)

Study Title:

'Making a difference or Being the difference'

Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Researcher: Francisca C. Veale

Ethics number: RGO 7602

This Focus Group Topic Guide should be read in conjunction with the Participant Information Sheet and a Participant Consent Form needs to have been signed.
1. Outline of topic for the Focus Group

The researcher's hypothesis is that we all want to make differences in our own lives, or that of others. To test the thesis the researcher wants to find out more about social workers' and student social workers' motivation and expectations of social work, or what event in their lives 'triggered' this innate or socially constructed desire to give meaning to our lives. What motivates women in particular to train and work as social workers by wanting to make or be the difference? What is their value base?

2. Objectives

The aim of this focus group is to gather more qualitative information in addition to the structured questionnaire. The topic guide is based on the questions and themes for the group discuss, to gather a variety of views and responses in relation to the thesis.

3. Introduction - 5 minutes

- Thank you for taking part, and checking that the participants are still happy to take part
- Timeframe of no more than 45 minutes for focus group discussions
- Introduction of researcher
- Aim and purpose of research
- Audio tape-recording as a memory aid and to avoid writing, which might distract
- Participants are encouraged to note down discussion points on flip chart paper
- No right or wrong answers, all statements are welcome and helpful
- Permission to terminate focus group at any stage
- Re-iterate confidentiality
- Check that group members are comfortable with arrangements
- Any questions

4. Focus Group – 45 minutes

See focus group themes and questions, Appendix 1 of proposal

5. Post-group debrief – 5 minutes

- Summarise discussion points
- What happens next, i.e. write up transcript by researcher for approval by participants
- Is there anything else participant wishes to add or ask?
- Thank you for participation!

APPENDIX 1.9.**School of Education****9. Questionnaire Topic Guide**

(Version 4)

Study Title:

'Making a difference or Being the difference'

Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Researcher: Francisca C. Veale

Ethics number: RGO 7602

This Questionnaire Topic Guide should be read in conjunction with the Participant Information Sheet and a Participant Consent Form needs to have been signed.

1. Outline of topic for questionnaire

The researcher's hypothesis is that we all want to make differences in our own lives, or that of others. To test the thesis the researcher wants to find out more about social workers' and student social workers' motivation and expectations of social work, or what event in their lives 'triggered' this innate or socially constructed desire to give meaning to our lives. What motivates women in particular to train and work as social workers by wanting to make or be the difference? What is their value base?

2. Objectives

The aim of this questionnaire is to gather qualitative information through a structured questionnaire. The topic guide is based on the questions in relation to the researcher's thesis.

3. Introduction via tutor(s) and via email

- Thank you for taking part
- Timeframe for completion of questionnaire is around 30-45 minutes
- Introduction of researcher
- Aim and purpose of research
- No right or wrong answers, all statements are welcome and helpful
- Permission to withdraw at any stage
- Re-iterate confidentiality
- Any questions can be emailed or posted to researcher at any stage

4. Questionnaires

See questionnaires, Appendices 2- 4 of proposal

5. Post-questionnaire debrief

- Researcher to summarise key findings and circulate to participants
- Is there anything else participant wishes to add or ask?
- Thank you letter to participants for participation!

APPENDIX 1.10.**10. Interview Topic Guide**

(Version 4)

Study Title:

'Making a difference or Being the difference'

Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Researcher: Francisca C. Veale

Ethics number: RGO 7602

This Interview Topic Guide should be read in conjunction with the Participant Information Sheet and a Participant Consent Form needs to have been signed.

1. Outline of topic for interview

The researcher's hypothesis is that we all want to make differences in our own lives, or that of others. To test the thesis the researcher wants to find out more about social workers' and student social workers' motivation and expectations of social work, or what event in their lives 'triggered' this innate or socially constructed desire to give meaning to our lives. What motivates women in particular to train and work as social workers by wanting to make or be the difference? What is their value base?

2. Objectives

The aim of this more in depth interview is to gather more qualitative information in addition to the structured questionnaire. The topic guide is based on the questions, although the scope is to gather more detailed responses in relation to the thesis.

3. Introduction - 5 minutes

- Thank you for taking part, and checking that participant is still happy to be interviewed
- Timeframe of no more than 45 minutes
- Introduction of researcher
- Aim and purpose of research
- Audio tape-recording as a memory aid and to avoid writing, which might distract
- No right or wrong answers, all statements are welcome and helpful
- Permission to terminate interview at any stage
- Re-iterate confidentiality
- Check that interviewee is comfortable with arrangements
- Any questions

4. Interview - 30 minutes

See interview questions, Appendix 5 of proposal

5. Post-interview debrief - 5 minutes

- Summarise discussion points,
- What happens next, i.e. write up transcript by researcher for approval by participants
- Is there anything else participant wishes to add or ask?
- Thank you for participation!

APPENDIX 1.11.**11. University Tutor Confidentiality Form**
(Version 4)

Study Title: '***Making a difference or Being the difference***'
 Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Researcher: Francisca C. Veale

Ethics number: RGO 7602

What is the research about?

The researcher is a qualified social worker involved in social work education in her capacity as an independent off-site practice teacher. She is currently undertaking her PhD and for the purpose of the doctorate thesis aims to explore the kaleidoscope (in the sense of '*a series of changing phases or events*') of female social workers' identities, biographies, life experiences, life journeys, or attitudes, and how these influence each individual's decision to become a social worker. The researcher's hypothesis is that we all want to make differences in our own lives, or that of others. This prompts the question of motivation, or what 'drives' us, or make us 'tick', or what event in our lives 'triggered' this innate or socially constructed desire to give meaning to our lives, hence studying to become a social worker. What motivates women in particular to train and work as social worker? Do they want to make or be the difference? What are/were their biographical journeys to get to this professional choice?

All female social work students from all three year groups at Bournemouth University will be invited to participate as well as a selected group of newly qualified female social workers who have been working in the field for no more than five years. The researcher aims to gain an insight and understanding into biographies, personal or professional developmental factors or trends over a period of time of social work education and practice to be able to detect any potential changes in attitudes and motivational reasons

Where can I get more information?

The researcher is a sole researcher; therefore there is no research team; therefore, if you are in doubt or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher directly: Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, Dorset, DT 4 9XR or Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Or contact the researcher's supervisor at the Southampton of University: Dr Gill Clarke MBE, Biography and Education Research Group, School of Education, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1BJ, Email: gmc@soton.ac.uk, Tel. 02380 592977

Confidentiality Statement and Agreement

I understand and agree that I shall not disclose any information that students discuss or disclose in relation to this research study to any other uninvolved party.

Name of university staff/tutor.....

Signature

Name of researcher: **Francisca C. Veale**

Signature Date:

APPENDIX 2

***'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities - A biographical study***

PILOT**Qualified Social Worker Questionnaire**

Please complete all questions if possible. You can write as much as you like, because all the boxes expand as you write. Once completed, please print and post to the researcher's address: Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT 4 9XR. - Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk. Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol. However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your email address, so I can contact you. Optional email address:

1. Your Age: 51	2. Your Ethnicity: British	3. Your relationship status & children: Married one daughter
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) NO Please state/describe:		
5. How would you describe your social class background? Middle. Tricky question, some people might struggle with how to answer this or find it intrusive.		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations? Mother a social worker, father worked for Milk Marketing Board		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Year social work qualification gained: 1983		
8. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state his/her relationship to you: mother, husband and several friend. If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		
Please explain your answer I heard a lot about social work from my mother and her colleagues as I was growing up so the profession felt very familiar to me and seemed a natural career choice later in life.		
9. Before you studied and became a qualified social worker, what were your prior qualifications (or experience in the field of social care and health)? Please explain... I worked in a bank for a year in a clerical position on leaving school, then Sociology degree and following that a year as a social work trainee before undertaking vocational training.		

10. *How did you get here?* - What prompted or influenced your decision to become a social worker?

As above - was familiar with the job from my mother being a social worker; always fascinated by people and relationships; worked in a bank after school and was totally bored by lack of human interaction in the job and this confirmed that I wanted a job that involved meaningful; interaction with people.

11. What was your motivation to study social work?

Started Sociology at degree level and in final year applied for social work trainee post, so social work study came later. At time, decision was influenced by fact that trainee social worker schemes were on offer and that meant I could gain vocational qualification and get paid to train and study.

12. What were your expectations of social work?

Wanted to help people, make a difference, do something meaningful, use and develop interpersonal skills.

13. Have your expectations been met?

No Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer ...

To some extent. At outset of my career in 1980's it felt there was more scope to do good preventative work, less restrictive practices, no computer work and minimal admin - majority of time spent with clients. This changed over the years with more focus on crisis oriented work, more admin, less client time, less job satisfaction and the profession increasingly reviled in media.

14. If not social work, then what other occupation would you choose and why?

Probably would have done Psychology degree and gone straight into mental health as psychologist/ therapist.

(This is an interesting question!)

15. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)

Family Friends Colleagues Advertising
 Other -

Please explain ...

See above - family links led to familiarity with the profession, during study I was inspired by some really enthusiastic tutors on the course and later, after qualifying, met colleagues some of whom were inspirational.

16. How in general do you think society views the social work profession?

Please explain...

Negatively - either don't intervene early enough or intervene too much, especially in work of children's services. Very lately there has been something of an attempt by previous government to address this but only because morale is so low and so many people leaving the profession

(Good question!)

17. What are your personal values, and why?

Everyone should have the support to realise their potential in whatever way seems valid

to them. A society should be judged by how it cares for its most vulnerable members. (Found this really hard to answer!! -especially "why" - I think the "why" to really covered by the next question)

18. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:
Sense of inequalities at primary/secondary school related to class and education and socio economic factors.
(could questions 17 and 18 be combined?)

19. Which of the following statements captures your reason(s) for being/ becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?

"I want to make a difference in peoples' lives."

Because I wanted to help people and make life better for them - and felt I could.

"I want to be the difference in peoples' lives."

Because.....

"I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because.....

"I want to stand-up/fight for justice in society and support the underprivileged." Because.....

"I want to challenge discrimination and oppression."

Because...

"I'm passionate about wanting to change the world."

Because.....

"I wasn't sure of what I wanted to study."

Because...

"I want to improve outcomes for children."

Because.....

"I want to save children and/or adults from abuse."

Because.....

"I 'm a good role model and people can learn from me."

Because.....

"I want a challenging and exciting job."

Because.....

"I couldn't get a job, so that's why I enrolled on a university course."

Any other statement or comments you wish to make. Please explain:

(Again - quite interesting and thought-provoking questions.)

20. Describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do?

Empower, advocate, increase choice and opportunity. Safeguarding where necessary and appropriate.

21. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

As someone with integrity, as a facilitator, enabler.

22. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? You can tick more than one option:

I like working with people

- I don't like paperwork (these are 'non-values' - bit tricky to use these)
- I don't like being confined in an office (these are 'non-values' - bit tricky to use these)
- I'm reliable
- I'm conscientious

I like to listen to peoples' life experiences

I'm a good listener

- I want to do what's right

I like to problem solve

- I like to support and advocate for people
- I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statements or comments you wish to make? Please explain...

23. What area of social work are you currently working in and explain why?

Mental health - where my real interests lie at this point in my life - more in therapy than social work.

24. The key purpose of social work is described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional experience? Please explain.....

I would have believed this more strongly when I started in social work - I am no longer convinced that social work is an agent of social change - the economy seems far more influential especially of late.

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

Yes No Please explain why:

First part of statement seems very idealistic in today's political climate - nice idea, but much of the time I think the reality is more about stressed, undervalued workers with limited resources trying to support an ever-growing class of disenfranchised people. (Interesting - hadn't read the statement before. Sounds like something out of the 1960's and not very reflective of what's going on today!)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your input is much appreciated!

Pilot participant's addition comments:

"Francisca, generally very interesting and thought provoking exercise - it's quite extensive and took me 45 minutes to do, so people would need to be motivated to take the time to do it. Questions clear, didn't overlap each other. I found it interesting to do - took me back 30 years to a younger idealistic person!!!"

APPENDIX 3

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Qualified Social Worker Questionnaire completed by:

Francisca Veale - the researcher

1. Your Age: 45	2. Your Ethnicity: White other (German)	3. Your relationship status & children: Divorced, single and no children
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) NO, but English as second language Please state/describe: Lower middle -class (economically, but with high educational values)		
5. How would you describe your social class background? Lower middle -class (economically, but with high educational values)		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations? Mother first secretary and later in life trained as ergotherapist. Father not known.		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Year social work qualification gained: 1990 in Germany		
8. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state his/her relationship to you: my boyfriend at the time was studying social work (social pedagogy) and I enrolled on the same study. If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please explain your answer But the political stance of social work/social pedagogy at the time suited my vocational aspirations		
9. Before you studied and became a qualified social worker, what were your prior qualifications (or experience in the field of social care and health)? Please explain... I had initially studied medicine for 3 term and worked in a hospital doing wake night shifts. I also had worked with children and young people who had educational problems.		
10. <i>How did you get here?</i> - What prompted or influenced your decision to become a social worker? I wanted to change the world and do social justices, fight for the 'underdogs' of capitalist exploitation. I was active in political movements, such as Greenpeace, the green Party, No Pasaran (anti-American movement to support the exploited		

<p>population of El Salvador and Nicaragua) and I'd read Paulo Freire and felt that social pedagogy would be a profession where I could exercise my political belief system of social justice. Several of my political friends were social workers.</p>	
<p>11. What was your motivation to study social work? The notion of social justice</p>	
<p>12. What were your expectations of social work? To change the inequities in society and fight capitalist exploitation and promote fairer life chances and opportunities for those who disadvantaged by the system, and giving them a voice.</p>	
<p>13. Have your expectations been met? No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please explain your answer ... Some social work positions were more suited to empower service users than others. In particular, when I was working for the independent, voluntary and private sector, I felt I was helping people most and made a difference in their lives. But when I worked for the local authority/statutory sector, I felt very restricted and felt often that I let people down due to red tape and policy.</p>	
<p>14. If not social work, then what other occupation would you choose and why? Originally, I wanted to be a teacher, political correspondent or lawyer.</p>	
<p>15. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Please explain ... Only my grandparents thought I was studying the right profession. My mother had no view, and her brother/my uncle was deeply disappointed that I dropped the study of medicine. Obviously my friends, who were already studying social work, encouraged me. Once I started the social pedagogy studies, I was met with really interesting and enthusiastic lecturer that were inspiring and inspirational.</p>	
<p>16. How in general do you think society views the social work profession? Please explain... I personally, often was confronted with comments, such as: 'Couldn't you study a proper subject' Or in a patronising tone: 'Oh, that must be so rewarding, dear.' Overall, I have had more negative responses than positive responses and been called all sorts of names from 'busy body' to 'do gooder' and that I should mind my own business and stop interfering. In general, I believe that social workers always get the blame when something goes wrong and a child dies. Whereas, the medical profession or police very rarely are blamed by society or the media. Society values the medical and law enforcing professions more than social work, which is further reflected in the pay and general status.</p>	

17. What are your personal values, and why?

I believe in the 'good' in people and I want to help people to reach their potential and be in charge of their own life. I see myself as a humanist and pacifist and I know I'm idealistic, but certainly not naïve. I have a strong sense of what constitutes social justice and socio-economic inequalities. I respect other people for what they are and who they are, culturally speaking, as long as they do not harm others (people or animals!).

18. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:

My grandparents' political views and their Christian-humanist beliefs and deeds.

19. Which of the following statements captures your reason(s) for being/ becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?

- "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." *Because I to help fight inequalities and give the underprivileged a voice*
- "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." *Because I want to be a role model and inspire others to help others*
- "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." *Because with the right support people can bounce back from the adversities lives thrown at them. I know!*
- "I want to stand-up/fight for justice in society and support the underprivileged." *Because everybody deserves a second chance and a better lives and should not be exploited by the few in power.*
- "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." *Because I have a strong sense of justice.*
- "I'm passionate about wanting to change the world." *Because I want world peace and a better, healthier, greener future for the generations that come after me.*
- "I wasn't sure of what I wanted to study." *Because...*
- "I want to improve outcomes for children." *Because they need best possible chances in life*
- "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." *Because if they can't protect themselves then social workers (police, nurses, etc) have a duty to protect them*
- "I 'm a good role model and people can learn from me." *Because that's what my staff and students have said about me, that I'm fair in decision making and supportive as well as listen to them or opposing views.*
- "I want a challenging and exciting job." *Because, I like to tackle challenges:-)*
 - "I couldn't get a job, so that's why I enrolled on a university course."

Any other statement or comments you wish to make. Please explain:

20. Describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do?

Active listening skills, positive attitudes, empathy, friendly, non-judgemental, non-oppressive, knowledge of legislation, rights and responsibilities. Empower people and not make them depending. Teach and encourage them to change their lives for themselves (self-help).

21. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

All of the above. A person that cared about them.

22. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? You can tick more than one option:

I like working with people

I don't like paperwork (*I don't mind to a certain extent, because I know that evidence is important*)

I don't like being confined in an office

I'm reliable

I'm conscientious

I like to listen to peoples' life experiences

I'm a good listener

I want to do what's right

I like to problem solve

I like to support and advocate for people

I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statements or comments you wish to make? Please explain...

23. What area of social work are you currently working in and explain why?

I'm a social work practice teacher. My last social work position was that of a Children's Centre manager. I worked with children, young people and adults in Germany and England for the independent and voluntary sector as well as the statutory sector.

24. The key purpose of social work is described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional experience? Please

explain.....

I realise that this a very idealist mission statement, however, if you don't place your ideas and visions high then you might not achieve anything.

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

Yes No

Please explain why:

Yes and no. I think social work needs to have this political implication, but I know that social work reality often is miles away from that mission statement. And that's why social work has a high student and employee fluctuation rate and burn-out of the best and most idealistic social workers, because they realise what an impossible task social work is due to structural oppression and systems.

APPENDIX 4**Email correspondence with Godfrey [Jeff] Dykes 2011**

From: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk
To: godfreydykes@msn.com
Subject: RE: Aggie Weston
Date: Fri, 15 Apr 2011 11:00:41 +0000

Hello Jeff

thank you very much for the further information and in particular the book tip! I've ordered it from ebay;-)

I was also particularly interested in your statement about the Christian Ladies and men being VERY UNPOPULAR with other businesses such as pubs and prostitutes;-), which like you said for 'obvious' reasons is not really surprising;-). And thinking about it further how you stated that women were/are seen as the home makers and in a sense it was I suppose 'acceptable' that two unmarried women like Aggie and Sophia would be able (financially) and suitable (status & connections) to offer 'homes' (accommodation and food) for the navy boys based on their religious mission.

The most amazing thing I found was that the RSR is still going strong after 150 years and Aggies books are still sold today in UK and USA.

Truly remarkable work! - I say 'remarkable', because I first read about Aggie and Sophia in Todd Gray's (2009) book "Remarkable women of Devon", which inspired me to research further into women's biographies who left legacies because of their remarkable, humanitarian and altruistic workings.

Again, many thanks for all the information you supplied me with; very much appreciated!!!

With kindest regards

Francisca

From: godfreydykes@msn.com
To: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk
Subject: RE: Aggie Weston
Date: Thu, 14 Apr 2011 11:07:37 +0100

Hello Francisca and thanks for your email.

It is quite possible that the picture on my site of Aggie with "her boy's" was taken in Malta, in the winter months [October to April] when we changed from white uniforms into blue [and warmer] uniforms. As I recall, it came from the Army and Navy [whatever??] dating from 1896 to 1898 period.

Thanks for the information on one, Martin Mowlem, an ex Ganges boy or junior? I joined in 1953 as a boy [I am day's away from being 73] but in 1956 the title 'boy' was changed to 'junior', and whilst officially it didn't make the slightest bit of difference [a 15 year old boy vis-a-vis a 15 year old junior] a junior was somehow looked down upon almost as though he were a second-class trainee sailor. In any one year, HMS Ganges trained up to 2000 youngsters with 200 joining every 6 weeks to replace 200 going off to sea to their first ship's. Seaman Boy's did 12 months at Ganges, whereas Communication Boy's did 15 months - I was one of the latter. For these reasons, it is highly improbable that I would know Martin but thanks for the reference anyway.

Just as a long-shot, if you are able, try and source the book "**Portsmouth - In Defence of the Realm**" by John Sadden {2001}, ISBN 1 86077 165 3, Published by Phillimore & Co Limited of Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex, for there, in Chapter 13, you will see a succinct over-view of the Christian Ladies I have mentioned. There were also Christian men who did good and similar things, and all [men and women] made themselves VERY UNPOPULAR especially with the pub owners and the prostitutes of the naval bases. For perhaps obvious reasons [meaning that ladies throughout history are the recognised "home makers"] the names of the men are hardly known!

Good luck and my warm regards.

Godfrey [Jeff] Dykes

From: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk
 To: godfreydykes@msn.com
 Subject: RE: Aggie Weston
 Date: Thu, 14 Apr 2011 09:11:54 +0000

Hello Jeff

thank you very much for your swift response! Yes, I found the picture on your website and thought it was taken in Malta or on the way out to Malta. I've had a look at the Gazette but can't find the picture in their archives. Not to worry about, was a good try.

Friendly enough, whilst I was browsing your very interesting webpages, I came across a page of Ganges, and an old friend of mine served on it, so I forwarded the info to him. You might or might not know him: Martin (Mo) Mowlem, he will be 70 this autumn.

Anyhow, yes thank you for pointing out that Sophia Wintz was involved with Aggie setting up the RSR, which I've researched and read all about, but I hadn't found or made the links to the other Christian ladies you mentioned, which I will incorporate in my writings.

I very much appreciate your information.

Many thanks again and kind regards

Francisca Veale

From: godfreydykes@msn.com
 To: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk
 Subject: RE: Aggie Weston
 Date: Wed, 13 Apr 2011 17:16:34 +0100

Hello. I write so many pages about the Royal Navy that at first I wondered where you got that picture from. However, after site searches on my sites, I found it on my MALTA IN THE 19TH CENTURY page on www.godfreydykes.info

I have others pictures of Aggie, and somewhere in my archives, stored away for posterity in my loft and no longer easy to get to, those of other Christian ladies who befriended, and bettered the moral lot of Royal Sailor's from the mid 19th century right through to my time in the navy in the 1950's. These were of the Duchess of Albany, Sarah Robinson and Sophia Wintz. Both Sarah and the Duchess built establishments in and around the Portsmouth areas, and Aggie came to Portsmouth having already made her name with the Royal Sailor's Rest [RSR] {with Sophia} in Devonport which we Royal Sailors always called "GUZZ". She built a RSR in Portsmouth which started with a modest property offering 20 beds and grew [by buying-up

adjacent properties] to 600 beds by the beginning of WW2. Sadly it was totally destroyed by bombs but Aggie was able to take over the Duchess of Albany's building which she eventually renamed RSR from the original Soldier's and Sailor's Home. By this time the Duchess had died.

I wrote that story quite a few years ago now, possibly in 2003/4 when I did a great of my research in the Reference Library of Portsmouth's public library in Guildhall Square. We left Hampshire in 2007 to live in a more peaceful environment in sleepy old Suffolk so I no longer have easy access. Anyway, that picture you refer to almost certainly comes from the Victorian/Edwardian Magazine called the Army and Navy Gazette? [the last word I am not sure about now and it could be Pictorial].

Best of luck with your research and eventually for the award of your PhD.

Sincerely

Godfrey [Jeff] Dykes

From: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk
 To: godfreydykes@msn.com
 Subject: Aggie Weston
 Date: Wed, 13 Apr 2011 15:06:39 +0000

Dear Sir

I'm undertaking some research for my PhD and would like to know the source (name of newspaper, date) of the attached picture which I found on your website.
 Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Francisca Veale



'Miss Agnes Weston - The "Mother" of the British Bluejackets'
 "Her bright and cheerful disposition has won its way to the hearts of the Sailors whom she has helped so much, and her unostentatious kindness commands their affectionate respect."

Picture courtesy of Godfrey Dykes website:

<http://www.godfreydykes.info/Malta%20Last%20years%20of%20Queen%20Victoria%20First%20years%20of%20King%20Edward.htm> Possibly taken from the Army and Navy Gazette: Journal of the Militia and Volunteer Forces, London

APPENDIX 5

Francisca Veale
Harbour Point
11 Dowman Place
Weymouth
DT4 9XR

Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Dear social work students,

Re: Questionnaires

I would like to invite you to participate in an exciting research project which I'm currently undertaking with female social work students. I'm investigating female social workers' motivations wanting to become a social worker, and the title of my research is:

'Making a difference or Being the difference' Female social workers' lives and identities - A biographical study'.

I would very much appreciate if you could assist me in my pursuit by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire to me in the self-addressed and stamped envelope.

In addition and for your information, I've enclosed a participant information sheet and topic guide to give you an idea what my research is all about.

Your time and efforts are very much appreciated. Should you prefer an electronic copy, please do not hesitate contacting me: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Please do not hesitate contacting me if you have any further questions which will be handled in a confidential manner.

With kind regards and many thanks!

Yours sincerely

Francisca Veale

APPENDIX 6

Francisca Veale
Harbour Point
11 Dowman Place
Weymouth
DT4 9XR

Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

Dear focus group participant,

Re: PhD Research

I would like to thank you very much for participating in my research project that investigates female social workers' motivations wanting to become or being a social worker, titled: *'Making a difference or Being the difference' Female social workers' lives and identities - A biographical study.*

Your time, efforts and support through participating in the focus group has been very helpful. I very much appreciate your openness and I feel privileged and I am grateful to you that you trusted me with your personal biographical information.

I have written up the notes from the focus group for your information, please see enclosed. Please accept my apologies that it took longer than proposed to get these back to you. As you can see no personal details or names have been mentioned and the information will be dealt with in a confidential manner as outlined in the participant information sheet.

Furthermore, I would like to invite you to complete the enclosed questionnaire, which is the second phase of my research and post it back to me in the self-addressed and stamped envelope. Your time and efforts are very much appreciated. Should you prefer an electronic copy, please do not hesitate contacting me: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk

With kind regards and many thanks!

Yours sincerely

Francisca Veale

APPENDIX 7

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

Focus group participants' data

Dear focus group participant,

Please could you be so helpful and complete the few questions below for me, which will assist me with the analysis of information and comparison to local and national statistics? I obviously will respect if you do not wish to do so. However, the information is all anonymous and as no names are being used, it will be all confidential.

Please place all the completed forms back into the one envelope provided and return to Mel or myself.

Many thanks for your cooperation!!!!

Best wishes

Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT4 9XR. - Email:
francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk.

1. Your Age:	2. Your Ethnicity:	3. Your relationship status & children:
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Please state/describe:		
5. How would you describe your social class background?		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations?		
Additional comments:		

Tuesday 5th October 2010 Focus Group notes:

The university tutor signed the confidentiality form (appendix1.11) and left the room.

The Focus Group was attended by 4 female participants of white ethnic origin approx 20-29 years of age all in year one of their social work degree study. Potentially more students were interested according to the students present, but could not make it for a variety of reasons. However, participants suggested that they would 'spread the word' and maybe another focus group session could be arranged at different date or time.

The researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of my thesis and the overall research project and plan, as outlined in the Participant information sheet, and to check the understanding and allow questions by participants. The researcher reiterated the issue of confidentiality and anonymity.

The researcher clarified if all participants had received and read the Participant information Sheet, the Topic Guide, the Consent form and the Plan with themes for focus group discussion. Participants confirmed that they received and read all the information and signed the Consent form.

The researcher checked again that participants were in agreement with the discussion being tape recorded, which no one objected to. – However, the researcher didn't press the recording button correctly, and therefore had to rely on her hand-written notes solely, which are transcribed below.

We all sat around a table and paper and pens were provided for participants to write down any discussion points if they wanted to. The discussion that followed was very lively and entirely lead by the participants, who did not include the researcher directly into their discussion, therefore the researcher sat back and took additional notes. The session lasted a total of 65 minutes.

Summary of the discussion, as recorded by the researcher:**Question: Why do you want to become a social worker? – Discuss your motivations.**

The first participant (P1) stated that her motivations were based on her experiences, because her parents were foster parents to other children and she grew up with these children. She has worked in an autistic school and loved working with the pupils and she stated she is a 'people person' and social work seemed to be the right profession for her.

P2: stated she worked with male prisoners and liked her job, but felt she had more to give. A careers adviser suggested social work to her.

P3: stated that she had been brought up within the care system and had very poor education provision. Her motivation is to be an advocate for young people and work within the youth justice system.

P4: stated her father owns a farm and provides services to adults with learning disabilities where she grew up. She has worked in a variety of Health & Social Care areas: hospital, hostel, residential settings, where she has met 'good' and 'bad' social workers. She also had worked in church youth groups and feels that the church does a lot of good social work related work. She stated, she wants to make a difference to people and enhance other people's lives, as she feels that she had been fortunate enough to have had a good life.

Question: What are your expectations of the social work profession?

Too much paperwork and red tape. A wide range of service user groups to work with. (P1) They would expect any social worker to do their best and be dedicated to the work and service users. Social work is hard work and not always rewarding, but good outcomes with service users would hopefully override the negative or disappointing outcomes. (P2) Some people might not want help from social workers, but social workers should not give up and keep pushing, and letting service users know that a social worker is there for them. (P4)

Social workers don't have power to remove a child if they worried a child is in danger; but maybe since 'Baby P' social workers are more cautious. Decisions need to be defensible and accountability. (P2) Also, social workers have to rely on other professionals, i.e. education, health. It's important to share information and communicate to do the best for a child and to get a holistic picture. However, multi-agency working is often a barrier. (P3)

Question: How would you describe your value base? – Give examples.

Acceptance and not 'labelling' people for who they are (P3). Non-judgemental, which can be hard if one doesn't agree with service users' values. Not to impose own feelings, views, culture or religious beliefs on anybody else. (P3) Allow people to express themselves. Sometimes it might help in building a trusting working relationship with service users if social workers shares or introduces own value base. Value base is often based on own upbringing. However, as learning new things and new situations one reflects on own values and they might change (P1).

Question: How do you perceive society views of the social work profession?

Society's views are really bad due to media. People think of social workers as 'removing children' and people don't know about the 'support' available from social workers. There is a stigma attached to social work, in particular where children have been in the care of the Local Authority, i.e. care home, or service users with disabilities have been 'hidden away' from public life.

Media doesn't portrait the good or success stories where social workers had positive life-changing impact on service users lives.

Depending on person's experience with social workers that influences people's expectations. Media only focuses on the weakest link (social workers) whereas GP and other professionals are not negatively portrait in the press.

'Interfering busy-body' and hippy image.

Media and technology bring abuse cases more to the forefront, even though it has been happening for centuries. Past 5 years changes in society's view about social workers and a bit more positively, i.e. through advertising 'Being the difference', and through word of mouth.

Service providers would not necessarily tell that they are social workers, as service users wouldn't engage, but service users would change their view afterwards about social workers more positively.

Shouldn't social workers make themselves more known or more accessible in society for people to realise that SW are 'normal' people. What does a social worker look like? Police and nurses can be recognised by their uniforms and social workers are not positively 'recognisable'.

Social workers don't help themselves either, whereas other professionals, i.e. health professionals or police introduce themselves in schools to 'break down barriers'.

Everybody has a low point in their life, i.e. post-natal depression and need help, and if social workers would promote themselves more positively in public than they would be easier approachable. Social workers should be more out in the communities to change public perception. The government doesn't help to promote social workers identity, as often somewhere between education and health.

Social workers are often the ones who have to bring bad news, whereas health professionals usually have positive (healing) impact on people's lives, and social workers often don't have positive impact.

Public more sympathetic with social workers as information about social workers' caseloads they have to deal with are published in the media. Frontline services with heavy case load and struggle, and the public starts feeling sorry for social workers. Lack of communication and partnership working between agencies doesn't help.

According to the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001), the key purpose of social work is to be:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

Question: How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations? And: Do you think any of these points in this statement are controversial? If so, why?

Would like to promote social change and empowerment and want to be seen this way as social worker. Well-being that what social workers should be about from children to older people. Wanting to achieve the statement's mission.

Social workers should go into schools, like other professionals and change people's perceptions.

There are many areas of social workers one could work in. the statement makes us look like 'miracle workers'. You have to do it all. How are we gonna do it all? Certain parts of the statement wants to 'aspire to'. Can promote statement but can't do it without the government and policy and power from above.

Clarification of getting people who are excluded back integrated in society.

Social workers should be easily accessible within communities where they are needed, instead of hiding away in offices. People don't trust somebody they have never met before.

Some people don't want to be 'liberated' or included, i.e. gypsy communities. Would they be judged and who are we to judge them/ at the same time they should have access to health and education. Human Rights, values and beliefs. Everybody should have right to access services. Also the church does a lot of good work similar to social work (P4)

Society dictates what's normal and acceptable. What is normal? Service users' rights versus looking at those who 'drain' the system and know how to work the system.

[Researcher's notes: interesting discussion about who should and who shouldn't access service and SW and resources.... ADP AOP and Values??!!]

The discussion came to a natural end. The researcher summarised and thanked the participants. They stated they hoped that I found what they had to say useful. P4 apologised about comments about gypsies and didn't want to be seen judgemental. ('Don't judge me'). Discussions like this appear to make people question their own views.

Reflections by me, the researcher:

Whilst typing up my written notes the next day, it became very apparent to me that whilst I took notes, I was already 'interpreting' what was said by the way of selecting what I wrote down and what words I used. What had I heard, what had I written, and what was actually said? And what was the meaning and intend of what was said by participants?? It was unfortunate that I didn't operate the tape recorder correctly, because it would have been interesting to listen to the tape recording and see if it all makes sense or if I have changed meanings and sense altogether????

APPENDIX 8**Tuesday 12th October 2010 Focus Group discussion notes:**

The Focus Group was attended by 6 female participants of white ethnic origin appearance and approx. 20-29 years of age all in year one of their social work degree study. This was the second group of focus group participants; the first was attended by 4 students the previous week.

The researcher introduced herself and explained the purpose of the thesis and the overall research project and plan, as outlined in the Participant information sheet, and to check the understanding and allow questions by participants. The researcher reiterated the issue of confidentiality and anonymity.

The researcher clarified if all participants had received and read the Participant information Sheet, the Topic Guide, the Consent form and the Plan with themes for focus group discussion. Participants all confirmed that they received and read all the information and signed the Consent form.

The researcher checked again that participants were in agreement with the discussion being tape recorded, which no one objected to.

We all sat around a table with paper and pens were provided for participants to write down any discussion points if they wanted to. The discussion that followed was very lively and entirely lead by the participants, who did not include the researcher directly into their discussion, therefore the researcher sat back and took additional notes. The session lasted a total of 45 minutes.

Verbatim of the discussion:**Question: Why do you want to become a social worker? – Discuss your motivations.**

Participant 1: *For two reasons, one more high level than the other. It seems to me that it is a job that is really varied and I know that from my previous experience that I like lots of variety, lots of doing with people. The thought of having to sit all day in the same office and sitting down would be killing me. I like variety in my work. The second more important is more fundamental, that is around helping people. Even if it is just a little bit. I don't think I have a naïve expectation that I can change the world. My voluntary experiences show that even doing something quite small and what seems quite trivial to me can just make such a difference. Even if everything else is still pretty awful that little thing makes it a tiny bit less awful.*

P2 *I think my caring gene is quite big. I've always been in care work and I always have enjoyed it. I rather do that than work with machines. I believe that you pay it forward and it kind of comes back to you when I've been in hard situations and have given me coping mechanisms that I think might help for the future to help other people. I think that life experience is so important, that if you have been through the ringer with certain situations than you are in a position to help other people that are in the same position or in similar positions that you have been in. Anyway, I think humanity should all care about each other as a matter of fact. But sadly, it doesn't go on all the time in all places. Doesn't it? I kind of want to put my two-penny-worth in and kind of will make a difference.*

P3: *I do want to make a difference. It is my motivation, I do believe that there are some group within society that aren't perhaps represented as much as others or need more direction or need a bit more time spent with them. I just wanna help them. Challenge perhaps ways things are done and trying to enhance people's life through questioning*

my own life and what I've learnt here and make that big difference. And a bit 'shallow': I also like the idea to go in my car and I love chatting to people.

P4: I think my motivation came from when I worked in mental health for a couple of years and I really enjoyed it and I think we had social work students on placement where I worked and so I was speaking to them hearing about what they were doing and want to expand my knowledge and guess wanting to improve my practice by understanding more. Social work seemed a way to learn more and expand my horizon, and also better pay than just being a support worker. Am I very honest?! Although, I love the job and love the variety and being able to go out and do different things and dip my toe into each areas, but I just want to learn more.

P5: I think, initially, my motivation came from my mum who is a social worker and quite catching and seeing the job satisfaction she is getting. I want that. I want enjoying what I'm doing and feel I'm doing something worthwhile. I used to be a support worker and whilst I enjoyed that I felt, if I was slightly higher up that would be more that I can do that its quite important to me to give voice to people maybe for whatever circumstances can't necessarily speak out for themselves or find it difficult to. So I think people who are in a position to do that could possibly do that and that would be me.

P6 As long as I can remember, I always wanted to work with children and like work with people. And always wanted to make a difference I've worked with people with learning disability and children with SEN and I just want to push that extra mile and help change people's life and help them to give a voice and basically make their life more enjoyable and have that better understanding of them.

P1: I want to be a "qualified" social worker. Something that somebody said, I what to be "the" person and it's not about being in power, but I want to have that professional recognition that I've done it, I'm qualified and professional.

P4 and P 5: If you are not qualified you can try as much as possible but someone will say to you haven't got the piece of paper you haven't got that recognition, you need that piece of paper you need to proof that you can do that . Without that you have no right to challenge or make the difference or implement change. It is about power and it is important to be in charge and have responsibility and without the power you can't make the difference you want to make.

P1 Power is not a matrix it's a useful tool to be in charge

P2 "to kick ass"

Question: What are your expectations of the social work profession? - Discuss

- *I think it's really hard, I did this safeguarding on Saturday we were shown that video where a 12 year old girl was prostituted by her father and it was really grim and halve of us were in tears afterwards . And I was thinking, "oh my god what am I doing?" because I'm gonna be going and working with this. And it was quite a timely reminder that finding all these lectures really interesting and stimulating, but it was actually reminder for me that this profession I'm going into can be grim and humbling. It makes me even feel inside remembering watching this video.*
- *I have another one and that is about pay. I actually have worked in business before and I was a well-paid middle manager with BA. And I know this is not a well paid job. My expectations is not that is well paid*

- Yes that is a good point. You wouldn't do this if you wanted to be a millionaire.
- No, you don't do it for the money.
- Satisfaction. Self-reward. Personal reward.
- I want to help people to empower themselves.
- What will you get out of it? Do you feel better because you have done it?
- Yes, it feels good to let somebody know that they can be in a better position than they are in and they don't have to put up with the shit that is dealt them they can get out of it, they can get help or help themselves to get out of it. Sorry about the terminology.
- I expect quite a bit of frustration, if I see my mum, she maybe has the power to help people but in some circumstances can't and that is very, very frustrating.
- You are bound by procedures and resources, red tape.
- We could end up feeling quite isolated as well and not very well supported. But I have an expectation that that might change by the time we are qualified. Well, they bought in after the Baby P that they making it four years and they setting up the national college for social work. I guess I've the expectations that it may not always be the supervision, but I'm hoping that will change if we are all better supervised and have a better support network then my expectation is that we can all be better social workers.
- And it works in nursing, doesn't it?
- There needs to be supervision, I mean, basically, we are gonna be doing the same kind of thing like counsellors and psychologists we gonna hear that crap people have gotta have to put up with and then we gonna take it home with us and like it will be playing on our minds and we're not gonna be able to sleep. There must be something or somewhere for us for us...
- Like a team manager....
- It can be really emotional
- It can be really emotionally draining and frustrating....
- Yes, I think you do sort of adapt. I remember, when I first started my job now, I find it really hard listening to things that people go through. But you end up almost like learning to separate yourself from it, I think. My expectation is to become even more emotionally detached. Which isn't good.
- Over time you wonder risk becoming de-sensitised
- Nothing shocks me know, a lot of what my clients tell me.
- I'm quite envious. I'm still trying to get over this video I saw. I kind of hope, I find it helpful and you do say that you do get used to it. Because, oh my god if I'm feeling like this all the time and this might not be for me. But actually by the end of the evening I'm glad that I'm doing this, because I was thinking, I gonna prosecute the bastard.
- The emotions can fuel wanting to help and I don't feel upset about things. I do feel really passionate about what's 'wrong' and I want to do this and I can do

that. Obviously my role now is very limiting but as a social worker I'm hoping to do more. I wouldn't feel I can't do anything, or feeling helpless.

Question: How would you describe your value base? – Give examples.

➤ P2: *I don't know what that means?*

The researcher explains about social work value base, i.e. to challenge discrimination and oppression. To advocate for service users, etc.

➤ *Challenge everything!*

➤ *Nothing is black and white about social work.*

➤ *I got one specific around children, I think I got this growing understanding and belief that children can do so much more and are so much more capable than we allow them to be or give them credit for. I believe in children's ability. Not letting them do stuff or making decisions, when actually children can do themselves... giving them a voice.....I really struggle with that; - think about prison, where just don't tell their children that daddy has gone to prison. Because they know. They'll find out.*

➤ *It's much better to that daddy is not just gone away and can't be bothered to contact them.....*

➤ *And nobody told them and the thing is they know. Like in their subconscious they know and they know that that's not right. Because their antenna kind of they suss it out.*

➤ *I think the big one for me is around empowering people to do stuff for themselves, because it's quite easy when you sometimes think it's easy to know best almost. But you don't. You can give somebody the tools to change that makes things better for them that's really a crucial thing rather than being prepared to do it for them. Then they don't learn any kind of thing for themselves anyway.*

The researcher talks about empowerment through the 'strength' approach in social work.

➤ *I think similarly to being person-centred is to me the most important thing. I've worked in places where I've seen people living lives which weren't person-centred, they were more institutionalised and I think that's really, really, really sad. When I think about how my life is really, really person-centred but they don't have the same opportunity like I. So to remembering to act in such as way is really important to me*

The researcher agrees that person-centred is an important value, hence important to realise what is one's value base.

➤ *So, values are our foundation?*

Question: How do you perceive society views of the social work profession?

➤ *They are obviously negative, but I've to say, based on my personal experience when I mentioned to quite a few of my friends that I'm going to be a social worker, a big majority of them actually said, what does a social workers do? They might have a negative opinion, but very few people out there, unless they have been involved in the system somehow, 'know' what a social worker does.*

➤ *My dad grew up and never met a social worker.*

- The media just portrait the negative side, they never like say that "oh that's happened to the child and has been helped and now their live is been better". They only have that bad side of it, things that slip through the system and they never have that positive side of it all.
- But they never explain either what could and what the social worker's role is and what potentially could have happened. Just like the Daily Mail do things, they just sensationalise everything, you know and it's builds up this really bad image and after a while the damage is done. Take away the layers and that is the basis of a social worker. You can't really do it, can't you?
- But I think there is not enough knowledge out there, personally.
- Perception of massive workload that social workers are stressed and overloaded with all the case loads.
- I've been called a "trainee child snatcher"
- I think people's attitude is quite ignorant, because if you ask somebody, they will probably tell you that the buck stops with the social worker and that is the case. They will always put the blame at social workers, and it's just down to one, but this a ridiculous ideas that it's all down to one person, but people think that, So, the easy to blame somebody.
- I was telling people at work, I work for the community mental health team and one of the nurses said "oh, couldn't you get into nursing?" ... really sarcastic. And another nurse said "oh you are going to PC [meaning: political correct] school then, are you?" That's all the nurses talking, but they were probably all joking, because we all work nicely together. It's sort of funny, of how the slightest bit of difference or value by people from the medical side, people from the social work side.
- People just told me that I was mad. You must be absolutely mad. And if a friend's husband tells me one more time that he is very, very 'worried about me', I'm gonna thumb him! He's so patronising, he's a GP and I think he has this that he says "I'm very, very worried about you, very, very worried". And I say I'm fine. And there's something, and I don't know even what he's worried about, really.
- Your mental state?
- Yes, my mental state, the work load, the grimness of it all. I really don't know.
- Do you get ask if you are strong enough?
- If I'm strong enough? Yes actually. You have to be really, really strong to be a social worker
- Yes. A lady, I know, who adopts children, and she said to me it's one of the best jobs to do, because she goes through it all and working with social service. It's the best job and a lot of satisfaction you can get out of it. You gonna enjoy it and gonna be alright with it.
- Yes, you get to this point with your emotions where you just can get to flip between your emotions and somebody else's emotions.
- There is also another side to it. When we were all standing outside the other week and we all had a bit of a joke, it's like a bit of a uniform for social workers: flip-flops, long skirts, beads and scarfs ... we are seen as hippies ... people's

perception is: why do you want to understand, so if you want to understand you must be part of the drug culture, or something like that.

The researcher stated the point that other professionals like nurses or police, they don't get that kind of comments, and they potentially work with the same service user groups.

- *Yes, taking the mental health team, we all have the exact same role and the nurses having the same role like social workers, and we all called mental health practitioners. Whereas nurses are acceptable, they are angel, they have a uniform, people can identify, and they can quantify what they do; nurses take blood, they take temperature and they have an actually quantifiable purpose.*
- *And they don't have statutory power. They don't have a law, oh they might have laws, but not like social worker has to be governed and has to have the legal powers.*
- *But under the mental health act that you have to detain, if that person is a danger to themselves or society that you then have to put forward that they need to be looked after? I'm not sure about it*
- *Isn't it the social worker that can be responsible, I read...?*

The researcher clarified legal guardianship and personalisation. The researcher agreed with group's comments that none of us are actually look like hippies or fit the image. But no one in the street would know that we are social workers, because we are not wearing an identifiable uniform like many other professionals.

- *It's to do with people's fear, because they don't know what a social worker does and they have a fear, because if people don't know something, then they are scared of it.*
- *Yes, that's a really good point about the fear and I think people's views need to be challenged and need to be addressed, because otherwise you are not getting away from stereotypical view that all social workers want to do is keeping children away from their parents.*
- *That's such a stereotype view, because not all social workers work with children.*
- *That's not the only area we work, but all we want to do is take away children according to society.*
- *Watching the Panorama last week they were saying that putting children with foster parents is actually a last resort. They actually try to put them with family members, but people don't realise that.*

The researcher stated that the focus group from the previous week suggested that social workers should go to schools so that children are not frightened of social workers.

- *I'm actually doing that at the moment with a social worker; going around to year 10 at school talking about mental health. We managed to talk to them in personal, social and health education lessons.*
- The researcher comments that this is not actually the same, as they are talking about mental health issues and not clarifying or breaking down barriers about perception that social workers take away children.

- *Parents probably wouldn't like a social worker to talk to children and writing to school and school would be worried that they upset the parents and so on!?*
- *But perhaps the social services need a press office to put out the good we do*
- *Yes we do, the thing is, people's fears stems from their ignorance and if you address their ignorance and talking about social workers then they wouldn't have a need to be afraid.*
- *But if they only read that social workers failed this and failed to spot the child and so on. People are, however much they know, they are just stuck with what they think.*
- *Yes, we are the 'badies' and there is no balance with Panorama, and with the press only the negative stuff comes out, so that's all people got to go by.*
- *And really doesn't help, like the press and Panorama if they always portrait social workers in a bad light, they miss that and they miss that and it doesn't help social workers.*
- *I haven't even seen the recent one, but in the past about social workers it's always, always about negatives and that they missed this and that.*
- *Yes, the one negative story out of ten is always talked about, but they should show more positive stories and freely available.*
- *But surely, if somebody wanted to find out they sure could, but you have to put the effort in to find out. Whereas if you only look at the papers, you only read the negatives and they can't be bothered to read anything else, and they got the negatives and that's that and they got their opinion. So it's very ill-informed opinion.*
- *The university and we really need a press office and really good communications and talk about the positive stories and undercut people's opinion about the profession and help to change opinion. More positive stories should be published*
- *But people like bad news to make their life not feel so crab and feel better and they like to hear all that bad stuff that happens to others. The media plays to it and they make it worse with all their sensationalism.*
- *Yes, if you have a bad experience you tell people and it stays but if you have something good happening you don't tell as many and they don't remember.*

The discussion came to an end due to time constraints, and the last point couldn't be discussed. The researcher summarised some of the points and thanked the participants of the focus group. Thank you all.

Francisca Veale

APPENDIX 9

***'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study***

SUMMARY of 5 returned: Social Work Student Questionnaire Year 1
Their answers are in RED

Please complete all questions if possible. Once completed, please put in the envelope provided. Please feel free to continue to write your answers on the back of the page, should you want more space.

Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your university email address, so I can contact you. Optional, your email address:.....

1. Your Age: (1.-5.) 22, 28, 29, 44, 49	2. Your Ethnicity: 5 x White British	3. Your relationship status & children: 2x single, 1x single with 2 children, 2x married with 1 and 3 children
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe: 1 with dyslexia and dyspraxia		
5. How would you describe your social class background? 2x working class, 2x middle class, 1 did not state		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations? 3. & 5. Cleaner and husband dock worker; care taker (working class) 2. & 4. Teacher with wife homemaker; electrician/lecturer with wife ward clerk in hospital (middle class) 1. The student that did not state her own class, noted her parents were support worker and social worker		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker? 4 x No 1x Yes, please state his/her relationship to you: father is social worker		
<p>If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No 1x Yes Please explain your answer: 1. My father enjoys his job and I know a lot about it from him. I have been brought up with similar social work values.</p>		
8. Have you got relevant prior qualifications or prior experience of working in the field of social care and health with service users (children, young people, adults, families, old people, or other groups)?		
<p><input type="checkbox"/> No 5 x Yes, please state</p> <p>1. with young people/ adults and children with disabilities 2. I hold an NVQ in caring for children and young people. I worked for 3 years in</p>		

<p>residential settings with children with challenging behaviour. For the past 3 years I have worked for Social Services in the looked after children team.</p> <p>3. I have done much voluntary work with youth offending services and have spent last 4 years volunteering with a lady with learning difficulties.</p> <p>4. Home Start volunteer and Open University course in Social Care</p> <p>5. Fostered and worked for Social Services in admin and as resource worker</p>
<p>9. <i>'How did you get here?' - What prompted or influenced your decision to embark on this social work course?</i></p> <p>1. My work in social care because I have seen good and bad experiences of social workers and so I want to be a good one and make a difference in people's lives as much as possible with the limited time/money/resources that are in social services.</p> <p>2. I originally started studying the social work course in 2000, however, left after 2 years due to personal problems. After leaving my previous university I built up experience through working in the above fields which is where I gained my qualification. I am a seconded student through the local authority as I applied to complete my degree.</p> <p>3. I was brought up in local authority care and am concerned with the amount of looked after children involved in the criminal justice system, I would like to make a difference in this area.</p> <p>4. OU course was very interesting. Started as a way of keeping my brain active (being at home with 3 young children) and found I wanted to put it into practice. Media attention on social workers, although mainly negative, gave me an insight into the job, and made me want to do it myself. Desire for a career change.</p> <p>5. I know, I could do a good job and wanted to realise my potential. Didn't want a dead end job.</p>
<p>10. <i>What were/are your motivations to study social work?</i></p> <p>1. My dad is a social worker and so have always been exposed to the job. I love working with people and feel it is one of my strength. Having worked in the social care field, I know the importance of good social workers and I'm not motivated by money!!</p> <p>2. I have always wanted to work within the field and through building up experience, my passion and interest has grown. From my current position as a family support worker I wanted autonomy within my professional role.</p> <p>3. Personal life experiences</p> <p>4. Recognition of needing BA as entry qualification. Desire for professional status.</p> <p>5. When my daughter reaches 16, I will be qualified and in a position to go back to work full-time with a career I interested in doing.</p>
<p>11. <i>What are your expectations for your career in social work?</i></p> <p>1. It will be stressful/challenging/busy/frustrating, but also extremely interesting and rewarding at times</p> <p>2. Continued learning, gaining experience and knowledge in different areas of social work.</p> <p>3. I expect it to be trying and hard work, but equally rewarding.</p> <p>4. Varied. Pressurised. Frustrating. Seems to be in 'flux' (Munro, College of SW, ect).</p> <p>5. To show there are workers that care. To make a difference.</p>

<p>12. What concerns or apprehensions do you have about becoming a qualified social worker, if any? Please explain...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not having enough time with the service users. Too much paperwork. Too many cases to be able to spend time on them 2. The case load and expectations of me. 3. No answer 4. Lack of adequate supervision as a beginner. Being upset by people's personal difficulties, e.g. especially children. 5. One concern about working with children in case of mistakes. What resources are available to perform the job well.
<p>13. If not social work, what other profession or occupation would you choose and why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching, youth work, working with children with disabilities 2. Probation work, working with young offenders, continue working with looked after children, because these are all areas of interest to me. 3. NHS/hospital management??? But as I write it, I'm actually not that keen!! 4. Too old to start in a new profession where age restrictions apply.
<p>14. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)</p> <p>3 x Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friends 1x Colleagues 1x Advertising (4.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Please explain ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jobs available 2. Most of my inspiration came from personal experiences and I am self-motivated, however my secondment was encouraged by my manager. 3. Family and friends were either dubious or silent.
<p>15. How in general do you think society views the social work profession? - Please explain...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negatively, you only hear the bad in the press! 2. The general public have a negative view of social work due to media coverage, however, I have not directly experienced negative opinions when talking with members of society. 3. Negatively, the press influences society's view of social services, there is much emphasis upon the mistakes social workers make and minimal press releases concerning success stories. 4. Media portrayal is very negative. Impression given is one of incompetence, bureaucracy at all levels. Insufficient resources to do the job. A thankless task. 5. I think it gets a bad press, but most people know they are here to help.
<p>16. What are your personal values and why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect, dignity, equality (where appropriate). 2. Treating everyone as an individual. Treat others how I would like to be treated. Openness and honesty. Keep boundaries, however be myself. 3. Honesty, I have struggled in the past with dishonest people and believe that being honest, however difficult, is always the best. 4. Choice. Fairness. Commitment, do what you say you are going to. Equality, we are all better off if this exists. 5. Honesty, open minded, integrity, non-judgemental. Treat people how I would like to

<p>be treated.</p> <p>17. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:</p> <p>1. My family and experience at school (i.e. being bullied) 2. Seeing people being bullied in school. People being dishonest and being lied to. Negative consequences of people over stepping boundaries. 3. No answer 4. As the eldest child I was expected to help. I have been fortunate to have choices, because of family I was born into. Reading, studying over last 10 years and having children, makes me want the world we live in to be a better, more fair place. 5. Been treated badly in the past and lied to. Honesty is important to me. My parents were decent and hard-working people who cared.</p>
<p>18. Which of the following statements captures your reason for becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?</p> <p>4x "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." Because 1.I'm passionate that everyone should have opportunities and second chances. 4.i know even the mall things can make a difference. 5. I care about people. 1x "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." Because..... 1x "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because I wish I had someone to help me at those difficult times <input type="checkbox"/> "I couldn't decide what to study and social work seemed like an OK option." Because 2x "I want to stand-up/fight for the injustice in society and support the underprivileged." Because 1.I believe strongly in equality. 4. I have only recently understood the injustice that exists: I grew up under Thatcher government and I feel shame and guilt that as an educated, privileged person I never troubled to understand others, less-privileged lives. It was easier to remain ignorant. 3x "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." Because 1. It's the only way changes will be made. 5. We have to learn to live and respect diversity and enjoy it. <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm passionate to change the world." Because..... 3x "I want to improve outcomes for children." Because 5.They are our future. 2X "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." Because..... 4x "I'm a good role model and people can learn from me." Because 4. Don't know if I am a good role model; but I believe I have certain capabilities and skills which I want to put to good use. Some of these attributes are personal to me: my energy, determination, some I have been taught/learnt from experience in my business career (organisation, achieving things within organisational constraints, communication skills, negotiation skills); some I have arrived at through life experience, e.g. having children, I know how difficult this can be. ALL THIS, I want to put to good use, I especially like the thought of using the skills which 'business' I spent a lot of money training me in, to help the disadvantaged in society. 5. I'm fun as well as realistic. 2x "I want a challenging and exciting job." Because 4. I enjoy challenge and I get bored easily. I welcome variety and the unexpected <input type="checkbox"/> "I couldn't get a job, that's why I enrolled on a university course." <input type="checkbox"/> Any other reason or comments and why?</p>

19. Please describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do.....

1. Don't make promises they can't keep. Get things done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Listen to the view of the service users. Spend time with service users. Be organised and keep records up-to-date. Follow through. Passionate working with people and promoting their rights and independence.
2. Be honest, apply themselves to service users. Be prepared and knowledgeable. Be dedicated and not easily stressed. Genuinely care about the interventions and people they are working with.
3. Have unconditional positive regard for those they work with and strive to empower/support and enable change in the lives they are involved.
4. Listen, my current Home Start family has given me detailed insight into the value of this. Fight for the people they are working with. Be able to handle the conflict inherent in the role, e.g. care versus control.
5. Honest, non-judgemental, be critically thinking and think outside the box. A good listener, reliable and dependable. Do what they say. Be anti-oppressive, have values of own that apply to GSCC.

20. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

1. To have a good sense of humour, trustworthy, reliable, effective, a good listener, approachable.
2. As helpful to them. Honest and open. Approachable. Positive influence to their lives. Knowledgeable and up-to-date with their situation and information which would help them. Good communicator.
3. I would like to be perceived as supportive and realistic. It is also important for me to be seen as approachable.
4. Honest professional, e.g. phone back when you say you will. Know the practical stuff. Respectful of them.
5. Approachable, friendly, reliable, honest and there to facilitate.

21. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? (you can tick multiple options)

4x I like working with people
 1x I don't like paperwork, But I understand it is an essential element of social work
 3x I don't like being stuck in an office
 5x I'm reliable
 3x I'm conscientious
 4x I like to listen to peoples' life experiences
 4x I'm a good listener
 4x I want to do what's right
 1x I like to problem solve
 2x I like to support and advocate for people
 I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statement or comments you think is relevant? Please state and explain why?

22. List the area(s) of social work you are interested in, and for each, explain why?

1. Young people and children (have experience in this area)
2. Looked after children where my experience is and I enjoy it. Mental health general area of interest. Sex offenders, as I don't understand it and would like to.
3. Youth justice, I believe there are many vulnerable children caught up in the criminal justice system and would like to be an advocate for them. Leaving care, I believe this is a really difficult transition and would like to support people in the area.
4. Really not sure
5. Older people, there is a lot to learn from them. They tend to get overlooked and marginalised.

23. The key purpose of social work was described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations? Please explain.....

2. I totally agree with this statement and feel it is a good explanation for my personal aspirations. I feel this is a very nice statement for what is a very difficult and challenging profession
3. I think this is a good statement and does relate to my professional aspirations.
4. It refers to theory, I like the intellectual matched with the practical problem solving. I find it inspiring to be in a profession that aspires to social change. I have no illusions about changing the world, but I believe 'small' things to make a difference.
5. empowerment and liberation is what I would like people to achieve.

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

2 x Yes 2 x No

Please explain why:

4. Yes, I think some service users would take issue with the 'liberation' part.
5. Yes, 'intervenes' is controversial it sounds like its compulsory, that there is no alternative. I have seen better definitions.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Much appreciated!

Francisca Veale

APPENDIX 10

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities - A biographical study

SUMMARY of 2 returned: Social Work Student Questionnaire Year 2
Their answers are in RED

Please complete all questions if possible. Once completed, please place in the envelope provided.

Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your university email address, so I can contact you. Optional, your email address:.....

1.Your Age: 21 29	2. Your Ethnicity: 1.Mixed Asian-white 2.White British	3. Your relationship status & children: 1. single 2. in relationship and 2 children aged 7 and 9
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe: 1. Dyslexia 2. Difficulties with writing for sustained periods, due to bone abnormality		
5. How would you describe your social class background? 1. Middle class 2. Born working class, parents worked in factory/pub, rented council house		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations? 1.IT manager for Cannon and wife head chef at a school with special education needs 2. Father worked in factory, unskilled labour (packing things). Mother worked in a playschool for a few years, unqualified, like you could in those days while your kids were at playschool, worked in bar/pub/social club as barmaid for all the years.		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state his/her relationship to you: distant cousin (1.)		
If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please explain your answer		
8. Have you got relevant prior qualifications or prior experience of working in the field of social care and health with service users (children, young people, adults, families, old people, or other groups)? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, please state 1. Yes, experience with children with extreme mental and /or physical disabilities at school.		

2. Yes, I worked as a registered childminder and childcare (2-3). As a social work assistant in children's social care for 7 years. Worked as agency worker in hostels for young people for 6 months. Worked as supported lodgings provider for vulnerable people for 4,5 years. Qualified early years practitioner, and A levels in Sociology and Psychology. worker

9. *'How did you get here? - What prompted or influenced your decision to embark on this social work course?*

1. Wanting to be the voice for those who need it, to be able to better the well-being, I saw the course at the college.

2. I decided to work as childminder to spent more time with my first born (this desire was influenced majorly by a traumatic birth experience with him). I am a person who is interested in learning and making the most of myself, so when I started childminding, I also decided to train in this area with the Open University. I completed a level 4 course in early years practice and other course in working with children and families and then had my second child. When my second child was about 6 months old I decided to start looking for part-time employment and found myself leaning towards the child welfare type jobs rather than child care jobs. I applied for and began a post as a social work assistant (SWA), a job which I thoroughly enjoyed. After a year or so it became apparent that there was a route to becoming a SW with the employer who offered secondments, but this for some reason was not something I put a lot of thought unto until few years later when another SWA colleague began to show interest in it which made me think about it more. I decided to wait until my children were of school age, before applying (another year or two down the line). I then applied for secondment and was offered it, then applied to uni and the rest they say is history.....

10. *What were/are your motivations to study social work?*

1. My interests ae those of social work, e.g. psychology, sociology. Also I know my learning will never stop in this area, which is what I want.

2. I think a desire to continue helping children to live happier and safer lives, influenced by some of the issues I had come across in my SWA job. Also my motivation to improve myself in terms of qualifications (wanting to keep up with friends from grammar school), and life chances in terms of income and I guess respect and social standing. I wanted my children to have someone to look up to and a parent who has a career which I think will encourage them in life. It is worth mentioning that my parents mentioned in question 5 and 6 separated and my mum remarried a man who, early on in their relationship decided to go to uni as a mature student (he wasn't that old, he was in his late 20's, he was her toy-boy!) to study for a career in IT. After this he started a well paid job and has moved around and been promoted for work to the extent that he is now very high up for a large multi-national company. He is product manager for Asia and South Pacific branches of this company. So I guess this is something that has inspired me to have a proper career, I remember him telling me when I started a job for a call centre after completing my A-levels that it was my choice, but that he thought I would become bored as I was too clever. I did become bored!

I guess I have had some relevant life experiences although I am not sure how/if they affect my motivation to study - these are my parents very acrimonious divorce and custody battle, lots of emotional abuse, I guess, having to record

their arguments for their solicitors, being paid to misbehave/ verbally abuse the other parent, some DV between them, problems with my siblings being difficult teenagers, social services involved with one of them (sessonal work, trying to keep him out of trouble), another sibling with undiagnosed but quite evident mental health problems, another one with diagnosed mental health problems, who changes in their needs, real dad has diagnosis of bi=polar, but don't speak to him anymore. My mum always took her role in our close knit street of an agony aunt, often having the other mums sat in our kitchen listening to their problems and my mum looking after their kids when they had crisis. I think this led me to having a similar role in my own friendships from an early age and I guess this is something I see the SW role as a continuation of.

11. What are your expectations for your career in social work?

1. A lot of hard work and negative assumptions, but also the satisfaction of making a small difference which can have a big impact.
2. I haven't thought much about this yet, I am just trying to get the course done. I am seconded so I have a job as a SW already, it will be in children's services but I do not get a choice of team. If I had a choice I think I would choose child protection as I used to work in that team when it also had a child in need cases and I know a lot of the people in the team. I like familiarity. I know the type of work and feel that I would be competent and therefore confident which is important to me. I might like to be a senior practitioner as long as I kept myself in 'real' practice in some way, perhaps by still doing supported lodgings. The need to maintain direct contact with people is important. I don't think I would like to be a team manager, that seems to be too much responsibility and stress for not a lot of money from what I have seen. I have put some thought into changing fields at some point in the future, maybe mental health or substance misuse, or offending, but not for a few years until I feel more confident.

12. What concerns or apprehensions do you have about becoming a qualified social worker, if any? Please explain...

1. The verbal abuse from clients and public. And making difficult decisions that can have a serious impact on the service user.
2. I don't think I have any because I have experienced the type of work, I am used to balancing the workload, manage cases, liaising with other professionals etc. so I don't think I have any major concerns.

13. If not social work, what other profession or occupation would you choose and why?

1. Occupational therapy, because it's interesting.
2. I had thought about teaching but concluded that it would be too ridged for me, which now seems crazy given all the procedures in SW with children but I felt it would constrain me too much and I would not be very good at focussing on only one aspect (i.e. education) of a person. I am too interested in everything!

<p>14. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising</p> <p>x Other - Please explain college tutor (1.)</p> <p>2.I inspired myself, I think with a bit of family influence for a proper career of whatever sort. The experience of working in social work, so you could also say that was colleagues although there was no colleague that I was particularly in awe of or who inspired me especially.</p>
<p>15. How in general do you think society views the social work profession? Please explain...</p> <p>1. Negative, incompetent, baby snatchers, break up families.</p> <p>2. I think there is a bit of a class divide from what I have experienced. I think working class people and people who are possibly or likely in need of services (especially children and families), see SWs as interfering, and like to split up families. Possibly this is due to their insecurity or lack of power 'against' a social worker. Other people, who are more professionally trained, generally see social workers as hard workers who do a job they couldn't do themselves. Sometimes people are slightly in awe of SWs in this respect. I think the media play a part in these views. I feel that people who have been in receipt of services usually do not see SW positively and feel let down by them.</p>
<p>16. What are your personal values and why?</p> <p>1. To not judge or stereotype people as this will hinder conversations with people.</p> <p>2. My personal values are to treat other people well, to treat them as I would like to be treated, because I would not like the thought upsetting people. To be honest with people and not to make up lies or be manipulative or vindictive as this can be very damaging. To not exploit or take advantage of people, or their kindness as this is a position which makes people feel frustrated and 'knocked down'. To do things to help if I can, be it in your job, or community, friendships etc. but to have boundaries with this so as to be taken advantage of. To stand by people and to stand by your beliefs but still respecting others beliefs. Protecting people that need protection.</p>
<p>17. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:</p> <p>1. A multi-cultural background.</p> <p>2. I guess being treated or witnessing emotionally abusive acts when I was younger and in a relationship breakdown as a younger adult has given me experience of being treated unfairly, or taken advantage of or not protected so perhaps this has guided me here. My mum's influence of being an agony aunt has influenced my value of helping people and my experience of doing this and being taken advantage of has influenced my thoughts about having clearer boundaries and being exploited.</p>

18. Which of the following statements captures your reason for becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?

- "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." Because.....
- "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." Because.....
- 1x** "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because **1. I understand what it's like**
- "I couldn't decide what to study and social work seemed like an OK option." Because
- 1x** "I want to stand-up/fight for the injustice in society and support the underprivileged." Because **some people don't have the voice to stand up**
- 1x** "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." Because **it's unfair**
- "I'm passionate to change the world." Because.....
- 1x** "I want to improve outcomes for children." Because **2. it is upsetting to see children being treated badly in society, and in my work and in some of my experiences as a child. Additionally I think it is worth pointing out that I live in a predominantly council house area (I own my house so I am choosing to live here), in this area I tend to see quite a bit of not good enough parenting and whilst I can't go reporting everyone to social services, as they would probably know it was me and they'd put a brick through my window, etc., I do tend to do quite a bit for these children, be it inviting them to my kids parties or putting on street events or activities, taking them for days out ect. And this experience of improving outcomes for children has encouraged me to continue with my job as I can see that is something that I am good at and something that gives me personal satisfaction. Someone in 'Friends' (tv series) said there is no such thing as an altruistic act and I think this is true for me!**
- "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." Because.....
- "I'm a good role model and people can learn from me." Because.....
- 1x** "I want a challenging and exciting job." Because **I like to learn new things every day.**
- "I couldn't get a job, that's why I enrolled on a university course."
- Any other reason or comments and why?

19. Please describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do.....

1. Empower, empathise, listen, be honest, give their best and stick to their word.
2. Listen to people. Do what they say they will do. Think outside the box. Ask people what they want to happen. Be honest and realistic with their employers and service users. Make their service users feel confident in their abilities or integrity as a social worker.

20. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

1. Someone that understands and will try to help them in the best way possible, without over-stepping boundaries and confidentiality.
2. Caring, helpful, not too pushy unless necessary, helping them to come to their own conclusions, warm, non-judgemental I would like them to be pleased to see me. Not like all the others social workers!

21. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? (you can tick multiple options)

2x I like working with people
 I don't like paperwork
1x I don't like being stuck in an office
1x I'm reliable
 I'm conscientious
2x I like to listen to peoples' life experiences
1x I'm a good listener
1x I want to do what's right
1x I like to problem solve
2x I like to support and advocate for people
 I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statement or comments you think is relevant? Please state and explain why?

22. List the area(s) of social work you are interested in and, for each, explain why?

1. Drugs and alcohol abuse for people experience. Brain-injury, because I enjoyed working there.
2. Children and families - previous experience and motivations as explained previously. Mental health (MH) - curiosity, wanting to know more and understand more. Substance use for the same reasons as MH. Offending - a desire to be able to turn things around, the experience of seeing the good in the 'bad kids' on my estate and in my supported lodging experience.

23. The key purpose of social work was described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations?

Please explain.....

1. I prefer to think that social work is flexible and is different for every service user.
2. I think straight away it feels too far removed from the profession, doesn't mention people enough, should be all about people. Sounds like we are trying to big ourselves up!

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

1x Yes **1x** No

Please explain why:

1. Yes, social work involves lots of things and is not limited to those specific things.

24. Having completed your practice placement(s) as a student social worker, what were your most significant experiences?

1. Listening to the service user's perspective and communication.
 2. Being exploited by practice supervisor. Not being given much to do.

25. Please describe one positive experience and why it was positive for you,
 1. Watching one service user regain language, learning to walk again and many other things, because it showed me that our intervention was helping.
 2. Meeting nice colleagues. Sorry nothing practice related!

.... and one not so positive experience. Why wasn't it as positive as you would have wished?

1. Telling a service user he could not attend a group, because he was under the influence. It was hard, because he needed the help from the group in order to stop drinking.
2. Not being given much work by my practice supervisor, not being at all challenged in the work I did have. Not being supported.

26. How much have you enjoyed your placement on a scale from 1 - 10?

Not at all ☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Much ☺

Please explain why...

1. Learnt lots, fits my interest and likes. Worked well with clients. 9 ☺
2. See above. I enjoyed being able to chill out for a while and get my uni done whilst 'at work' so I had more free time outside of uni life. I did not enjoy the placement experience, the service user group, the office environment, the politics of the agency, the judgemental attitudes, etc. 2 ☺

27. Were your expectations of what constitutes social work met?

Yes How and why?

No 2x Why not?

1. Was not as formal as expected. Was more informal, personal and friendly.
2. It was not a proper social work placement, the agency did not understand the role of social workers and the profession's value and beliefs. The agency did not appear to see social workers in a positive light.

Not sure Why?

28. What has been your learning with regard to your own values, belief systems and expectations? Please explain.....

1. I am more aware of my own status, where I fit in and who I am. I listen more and don't judge or stereotype people in the way I used to.
2. I have learnt to be less judgemental, this is an ongoing process but this is the main piece of learning from having learnt about social exclusion, homelessness etc. on the course. I have put a lot of thought into empowering people and how I have or have not done this in the past and why. My need to be more boundaried and assertive is something I have learnt.

29. Were your personal values and beliefs challenged during your placements?

No Yes **1x** Not sure **1x**

Please explain your answer further ...

1. Not sure, I was open when entering the setting as I knew nothing about it. I changed a lot personally and am more confident, but my values did not really change.
2. Yes, boundaries and assertiveness, exploitation etc. my need to develop this.

30. Has your view of the social work profession changed?

No **2x** Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer further.....

1. I expected that a voluntary agency would be different to a strict statutory position.
2. Because I did not have any experience of it on my placement, did not meet or speak to a single social worker throughout the placement, except for practice teacher.

31. Please add anything else you would like to share about your social work practice experience?

2. The placement should be in the social work field not whatever the uni can find. It is an important experience for many students, vitally important for some students without prior experience and the tutors should think about this. The placement should meet the values of the social work profession, although some negative experiences can inform practice.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Much appreciated! Francisca Veale

APPENDIX 11

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities - A biographical study

SUMMARY of 5 returned: Social Work Student Questionnaire Year 3**Their answers are in RED**

Please complete all questions if possible. Once completed, please place in the envelope provided.

Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol.

However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your university email address, so I can contact you. Optional, your email address:.....

1. Your Age: (1.-5.) 22, 22, 34, 38, 52	2. Your Ethnicity: 4x White British 1x White European (5.)	3. Your relationship status & children: 2x single and no children (1.&2.) 2x married with children (3.&4.) 1x single, 5 children 2 still at home (5.)
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe: None		
5. How would you describe your social class background? 1. middle working class 2. do not believe in describing people or myself in terms of class (this person is also interviewee No.1) 3. working class (this person is also interviewee No.4) 4. & 5. middle class		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations? 1. father self-employed labourer, mother beautician 2. father engineer, mother social worker 3. various unqualified positions, e.g. nursing auxiliary, commercial cleaners 4. father prison officer, mother NNEB nursery nurse. [Also were foster parents; see Q22.] 5. father surgeon (USA) mother university librarian		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker? 4x No 1x Yes, please state his/her relationship to you: 2. mother		
If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you? 1x No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please explain your answer		
2. I don't believe I have been exposed to any particular influences from my mother to become involved in the same field of work, however I have probably inherited an interest in similar field of work as we have similar views. Our experiences, both prior to and during training have been very different. [It needs to be noted that her mother came to social work as a mature student, after having raised two children, therefore mother and		

daughter's experiences would have been different! FV]

8. Have you got relevant prior qualifications or prior experience of working in the field of social care and health with service users (children, young people, adults, families, old people, or other groups)?

No 5 x Yes, please state

1. OCR national extended diploma in health, social care and early years. Work in drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Work in school for children with learning disability.
2. Working with older people as a carer.
3. Experience in voluntary and statutory young people's services.
4. Children, parents, education (higher level teaching assistant).
5. My eldest son is severely disabled. 4 years teaching assistant. 8 years family support worker (parenting assessment). Psychodynamic counsellor.

9. *'How did you get here?' - What prompted or influenced your decision to embark on this social work course?*

1. Prior experience through my college course prompted my application for a social work degree, because I had a clear view and experience of how such a career/job can make a difference to people's lives.
2. While undertaking my A levels I withdrew half way through my Art A level having obtained as AS level and commenced psychology A instead. This combined with A level studies in sociology and English promoted my interest in taking a degree in either a psychology or sociology related field. The decision to embark on my social work training was in part a pragmatic choice as I thought there was an increased likelihood of obtaining work at the end of these studies.
3. Personal history, reflection and development of counselling skills initially. Journey evolved rather than having an intended goal.
4. Employment prospects! I realised I wanted to further my career aspirations and didn't wish to become a teacher.
5. Natural progression, secondment from family support team (local authority). Family life settled, good care plan for disabled son.

10. What were/are your motivations to study social work?

1. The diverse nature of social work, the feeling of success through helping to create positive change.
2. As above
3. Improve knowledge and qualifications to secure greater future stability.

<p>4. Holistic interest in the children at the school where I worked (rather than a narrow educational focus).</p> <p>5. Recognising inequality of opportunity in society. Social justice, poor experience regarding adult care/ health and education regarding son.</p>	
<p>11. What are your expectations for your career in social work?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have expectation of huge challenges, thus stress. However, I look forward to creating positive change witnessing success, helping other to help themselves. 2. I would like to be effective in the role, promote the welfare of service users and to be able to make a difference. 3. To do the best I can whatever the future holds. I don't have any great plans but will make the most of every opportunity. 4. Currently unsure, initially I felt that I would work with children and families. However, I am currently working where my final placement was, adult substance misuse. (I have really enjoyed working with this service user group). 5. Having come to social work quite late in my life and just hope to be a competent practitioner. I'm not hugely ambitious. I like hands on rather than management. 	
<p>12. What concerns or apprehensions do you have about becoming a qualified social worker, if any? Please explain...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High case loads, creating stress and managing stress. Feeling incompetent as a newly qualified social worker. 2. Job cuts, not being adequately supported as a newly qualified practitioner. 3. Balancing work and family life, being resilient to the demands social work can bring. 4. The ability for me to find part-time employment in this job climate as I need to be able to balance my career with family life and childcare responsibilities. 5. Level of responsibility and limited resources. 	
<p>13. If not social work, what other profession or occupation would you choose and why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animal management helping to create positive change (similar reasons!) 2. Something within psychological area. 3. I like working with people, talking to individuals and learning about what makes them tick - psychology or similar. 4. Anything typically 'caring'. People focussed 5. No answer. 	
<p>14. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising</p> <p>2x Other - Please explain ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My college tutor really opened my eyes to social work and inspired me to pursue it. 2. All of the above 3. Combination of family, friends and colleagues. 4. Family, friends and colleagues 5. manager 	

<p>15. How in general do you think society views the social work profession? Please explain...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I believe that there is a lot of negative press surrounding social work creating a negative view. However, those who have experienced, witnessed and have an understanding of good social work practice appreciate it. 2. Society vilifies social worker either for perceived inaction or over action. For example not removing children at risk, or for removing children at risk. The wider facets of social work are not acknowledged. 3. I think society views social work negatively given media portrayal and a general lack of knowledge about what social workers do. 4. Very narrow negative perception of social work as 'taking children from their homes/families'. 5. Stereotyped: politically correct. Left-wing feminists. Ineffective. Unpleasant work
<p>16. What are your personal values and why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loyalty, honesty, empathy, empowerment. 2. To treat people with respect. To be truthful. To act with integrity. The ten commandments.* 3. I would like to think I treat people as I would like to be treated. People make assumptions about people so often without knowing anything about their personal history, lives, views.* 4. Person-centred and holistic 5. Equality of opportunity, equality of social justice, openness, freedom of information/press. Radical progressive Republican . <p><i>*respondent number 2 and 3 were interviewees. Both were brought up and are practicing Christians. FV</i></p>
<p>17. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel I have always been a caring individual wanting to help others and putting others first. 2. Inherited and learned through family values. 3. Very possibly views and assumptions made about me in the past and the development of my own sense of self through life experience. 4. Family influence and mother's values in particular. 5. Hypocrisy and snobbery of my parents/ miserable private education. Class divisions (1960/70) rigid attitudes. I've always been a 'thinker' and 'questioner' and champion of the underdog. I had a 'privileged' upbringing and education and want to put it to good use by advocating for less articulate.
<p>18. Which of the following statements captures your reason for becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?</p> <p>3x "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." Because 2. I believe that everybody deserves equality. 4. I feel that I have the ability and skills to empower people to identify their personal strength and achieve their own change.</p> <p>1x "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." Because 2. I believe that everybody deserves equality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because.....</p>

"I couldn't decide what to study and social work seemed like an OK option." Because.....

2x "I want to stand-up/fight for the injustice in society and support the underprivileged." Because...**5. I am a humanitarian**

1x "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." Because **2.I believe in equality of opportunity.**

"I'm passionate to change the world." Because.....

3x "I want to improve outcomes for children." Because **2.Children deserve positive outcomes like those outlined in the Every Child Matters.**

1x "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." Because **2.tehy should not be experiencing this**

"I'm a good role model and people can learn from me." Because.....

2x "I want a challenging and exciting job." Because **2.this would be most rewarding. 4. I feel I have outgrown my previous employment.**

"I couldn't get a job, that's why I enrolled on a university course."

Any other reason or comments and why?

Because.....

1. I believe everyone deserves an equal opportunity in life.

3. There are some situations that are not easily changed and social work is very much part of a wider group of people (family, professional friends, etc) wanting to improve outcomes for children. I don't think it's the actions of one particular person. My experiences can't inform me what other people feel experiencing similar circumstances but they may help to understand what they might be affected by.

19. Please describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do.....

1. Be needs-led rather than resource led, be empathic, to empower individuals, create opportunities, encourage independence, minimise harm and create scenarios in which individuals can help themselves.

2. Probably should do the job to the best of their ability, but a 'good' social worker should: have a crystal ball, be able to do absolutely everything, question and challenge government and local policy, work additional hours with no extra pay, put up with crap supervision, keep children safe, challenge expert opinion, understand different experts view-points in order to know when this is at fault, never expect a lunch break, work for the joy of the job, etc....

3. See themselves as part of a multi-agency team working to improve outcomes for children. Be able to act responsibly to protect children when improvement cannot be made or children need to be protected as part of this team and statutory obligation.

4. Be reliable, consistent and thoughtful to have up-to-date knowledge in order to inform people accurately of ways which they may achieve positive change and outcomes.

5. Listen to service users' stories, they are the experts on themselves. Never 'assume' or hypothesise, evidence based practice. Know the relevant legislation, stay current, read and research. Know your agency policy, don't 'guess. Use supervision wisely, casework.

<p>20. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not superior, but as an equal an advocate someone to listen and to guide and support. A positive role model, to create well-being. Unbiased. 2. As competent, trustworthy, compassionate and truthful 3. As much as possible otherwise what's the point? 4. Reliable, consistent and person-centred and realistic. 5. Fair, professional, 'does what she says she will do'.
<p>21. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? (you can tick multiple options)</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5x I like working with people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1x I don't like paperwork <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2x I don't like being stuck in an office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4x I'm reliable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4x I'm conscientious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3x I like to listen to peoples' life experiences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5x I'm a good listener <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1x I want to do what's right <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1x I like to problem solve <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3x I like to support and advocate for people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1x I like to be in charge and take responsibility </p> <p>Any other statement or comments you think is relevant? Please state and explain why?</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2.I agree to all of the above! 5. I'm interested in people and how they relate to each other, their community and society. I can engage with <u>anyone</u>, I find a way ! </p>
<p>22. List the area(s) of social work you are interested in and, for each, explain why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Substance misuse - the diversity of this area really appeals to me. Previous experience has really reinforced an interest in this area of work! 2. Preventative work as this is proactive opposed to being reactive. 3. Children or mental health. I find both fields interesting and challenging. 4. Children and families/fostering. My parents fostered children when I was younger and has always interested me. Drug and alcohol misuse. Really enjoyed my final placement. 5. Children and families, and what goes wrong, esp. teenager (boys). I'm interested in the changing role of the 'male' in society, does it???
<p>23. The key purpose of social work was described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">" ... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."</p> <p>How does this statement relate to you and your professional aspirations? Please explain.....</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I agree with this statement because I believe social work resolves around promoting and creating well-being, the other aspects of this statement enforce

this.

2. This offers a partial definition of the social work role.
3. I understand what this statement is saying, however I imagine freedom fighters and socially constructed views of oppression are underlying the jargon used here.
4. I fully agree and can see that it fits within area of substance misuse.
5. I think it pretty much sums me up!

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

3x Yes 1x No

Please explain why:

2. Yes. Parts of this statement make little sense.
3. Yes. I think it's no wonder the public have a negative, woolly image of social work! This means absolutely nothing to anybody who isn't a social worker.
5. Yes. To seek 'social change' suggests that change is needed. The statement also alludes to oppression and calls for 'liberation'.

24. Having completed your practice placement(s) as a student social worker, what were your most significant experiences?

1. Both experiences were significant as I learnt so much from both. Positive and negative ways of practice were revealed to me, I learnt from both placements.
2. Being able to complete the work expected.
3. Learning the foundations of why I do what I do and questioning established routines to get a better understanding of the social work system.
4. The 'power' of the state when working within child protection (placement 1). The importance of multi-agency working and the third sector (final placement).
5. Seeing legislation, policy, theory being practiced and using it 'unwittingly' to begin with, but by reflecting in supervision and using practice log, able to identify what I was doing in practice.

25. Please describe one positive experience and why it was positive for you,

1. Supporting a service user with learning disability who I saw as very isolated, but through working with her, I helped and supported her in getting a voluntary work placement 1 day a week and also did travel training with her in aid of this. She now travels to and from work independently.
2. Receiving positive feedback from all the service users with whom I worked whilst on placements.
3. Supervision, integrating practice experience with knowledge of theory.
4. Facilitating a 'your rights' workshop. It was great to be part of such an empowering exercise.
5. My first core assessment being used as an exemplar for the rest of the team.

.... and one not so positive experience. Why wasn't it as positive as you would have wished?

1. A service user I worked with who had an alcohol addiction. She had been through the service so many times, and had various detox in which she was unsuccessful. Eventually she was denied any more inpatient detox. However, community detox were harder due to added temptations. I struggled with this as funding for her was cut. I wish I could have worked with her longer and I felt anger due to how she was being oppressed with cuts to her funding. I fought this battle for her all

throughout my placement until unfortunately my time was up and my caseload passed onto another worker. This also filled me with sadness and a sense of dissatisfaction due to having no success when I longed and worked so hard for the treatment she received to work, I tried all avenues even when some became blocked.

2. Being poor and having to maintain a clapped out car which frequently broke down.
3. Nothing
4. Explaining to a parent why I recommended that her children needed further social service intervention when she hoped the case would be closed.
5. Working with housing. Southmark ruling creates tension. Difficult legislation to work with and lack of resources, weak support services. Able to identify need but unable to meet it.

26. How much have you enjoyed your placement on a scale from 1 - 10?

Not at all ☺ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very Much ☺

Please explain why...

1. I enjoyed both placement experiences equally, as I have taken away a vast amount of knowledge, skills and confidence. I feel I could have enjoyed the experience more without added stress of uni workload, however I feel it did make me think more thus prompted a lot of my learning. 8 ☺
2. First placement 6 ☺ and second placement 10 ☺, because I felt as though I was given more responsibility and the work experience was more varied.
3. I enjoyed the placement experience. I felt very much supported by practice teacher and work based supervisor and the team. I remained in contact with people from my substantive post more than last year's placement and I created time for myself. All of which helped! 10 ☺
4. I enjoyed it more than I initially thought I would, especially as I gained a 3rd sector perspective. 7 ☺☺
5. I chose R&A [referral and assessment children's services] as the ultimate challenge for me. I am organised, meticulous and like predictability. I knew I had to get out of my comfort zone to develop as a practitioner. I needed to learn to be creative, deal with the 'unexpected', adapt to any situation and retain my integrity/professionalism. against ALL THE ODD, I just loved it! Liberating. Applied for a job and GOT IT! 10+ ☺

27. Were your expectations of what constitutes social work met?

Yes 4x How and why? No 1x Why not? Not sure Why?

1. No, there is so much more to social work than I ever expected.
2. Yes, because I had an awareness of what was expected.
3. Yes, previous experience in childcare team.
4. Yes, I enjoyed interaction with service users and using motivational interviewing to help inspire change.
5. Opportunity to engage, assess. Key issues, identify need/or not. Empowering individuals to manage their difficulties (with support) without being directive regarding support. Protect, identify when this is the remit, actioning this.

28. What has been your learning with regard to your own values, belief systems and expectations? Please explain.....

1. I have learnt a lot in regards to empathy, and having patience. Treating people as individuals, to empower, strive and advocate for people. Be there. To take appropriate risks, to challenge both others and the system.
2. I've learnt that I have embarked on a journey of lifelong learning.
3. My confidence and ability to organise my priorities has really increased this year. I recognise I was very often the least of my priorities.
4. More aware of the impact that my personal identity has on service users.
5. In team (placement) reinforced/consolidated rather and beliefs and find that largely the same as other social workers in team. So 'sense of belonging' - really comfortable expressing myself regarding beliefs, values, life experiences. I learnt that I 'think' like a social worker.

29. Were your personal values and beliefs challenged during your placements?

2x No 3x Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer further ...

1. Yes, I've become so much more aware of myself and have learnt stuff about myself I never knew. I am aware of any oppressive tendencies and stereotypes I have or did have. I now speak up more and challenge and fight for what I and the service user believe in. before I would not have.
2. No, not changed, however I have developed a greater awareness of my own values
3. Yes, I had the opportunity to work with different families all experiencing Domestic Violence in various forms. This challenged and stretched my experience and knowledge, focussing my thoughts on the experiences of children being witness to DV and personal reflection of this.
4. Yes, working with drug dealers.
5. No, except for Royal Wedding! Team split on Royalist/Republican!

30. Has your view of the social work profession changed?

2x No 3x Yes Not sure

Please explain your answer further.....

1. Yes, I appreciate it a lot more because I have had an insight into the diverse and complex world of social work.
2. Yes, Because I have developed a greater awareness of how varied the profession is.
3. No, I already have experience being part of a social work team, however I suspect my view of the social work profession may change during my newly qualified year as the demands and pressures increasingly change.
4. Yes, I am now aware of the diverse role and the many different fields of social work.

31. Please add anything else you would like to share about your social work practice experience?

1. A continuous learning curve, I have learnt that I can never know it all, social work is so diverse and complex that everyday is a new experiences, challenges and knowledge.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Much appreciated! Francisca Veale

APPENDIX 12

'Making a difference or Being the difference'
Female social workers' lives and identities – A biographical study

SUMMARY of 4 returned Qualified Social Worker Questionnaire Their answers are in RED

Please complete all questions if possible. You can write as much as you like, because all the boxes expand as you write. Once completed, please print and post to the researcher's address: Francisca Veale, 11 Dowman Place, Weymouth, DT4 9XR. - Email: francisca.veale@hotmail.co.uk. Please do not write your name or other names that can identify you, because all information needs to be anonymous in order to comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Ethical Protocol. However, if you are interested in participating voluntarily in an interview, please state your email address, so I can contact you. Optional email address:.....

1. Your Age: 21, 35, 39, 46	2. Your Ethnicity: 4x White British	3. Your relationship status & children: 1. Common law wife no children 2. Married + Three children 3. Co-habiting and 2 children (was a teenage parent) 4. Married 3 children
4. Do you have any additional learning needs? (e.g. Dyslexia) Please state/describe: 3x No. 1x Yes (no3.)		
5. How would you describe your social class background? 1. working/middle class 2. and 3. Working 4. middle class but parents were from working class		
6. What are/were your parents'/carers' occupations? 1. Paramedic. Auxiliary nurse 2. Various and unemployed 3. Engineer 4. Father was engineer, Mother was Senior Manager of one of most successful sixth form colleges in England		
Answers to Questions 1-6: These questions and your responses will enable me to compare current female social workers' demographical information with that of women social workers in the past two centuries.		
7. Year social work qualification gained: 1. 2010 2. 2004 3. 2009 4. 2010		

8. Do you have a relative or friend of your family who is a social worker?

3x No 1x Yes, please state his/her relationship to you: friend

If so, have their accounts of their professional experiences influenced you? No
 1x Yes

Please explain your answer

4. Yes. Helped friend to develop mother (parent nowadays) and toddler group for able and disabled children in order to raise awareness of disability 1992

9. Before you studied and became a qualified social worker, what were your prior qualifications (or experience in the field of social care and health)?

Please explain...

1. I passed all my GCSEs and A levels then went straight to University to study social work. During my education (aged 18+) I have worked in a nursing home and a home for people with learning disabilities.

2. Work as a preschool leader and varied voluntary work with young people in a church setting/ a diploma in health and social care

3. Health care support worker (nursing)

4. Had previously studied part-time with OU and gained a degree in Psychology, while raising my family I had been a carer of person with physical disabilities and older people with mental health problems. My first job on leaving school was an account collection clerk with local electricity board and I spent a great deal of time working with families experiencing hardship to develop agreements and prevent their supplies being disconnected. I regularly liaised with local social services if I believed children were in need or at risk.

10. How did you get here? - What prompted or influenced your decision to become a social worker?

1. Always had an interest in people, personal experiences during childhood and teenage years prompted me to look further into social work as a potential career path

2. I believed social work would be an honourable way to spend my life helping people and this would be a good career to pursue rather than the alternatives that I may have in hind sight been more suited to in terms of my natural skills.

3. Wanting to gain a professional qualification, not in nursing, but in the caring profession.

4. Many things - parents/learned values. Study of psychology I have always been interested in people. Being bullied as a child has made me want to fight for social justice for others experiencing discrimination. Have worked with older people and others with disability I have been horrified by the way others have treated them. Want to make a positive contribution to society and enable others to do the same.

11. What was your motivation to study social work?

1. Personal/family experiences involving social workers made me motivated because I wanted to be a better one than they were! Also the bursary contributed to motivation!
2. I wanted to seek a career whereby I could earn a decent income and contribute to the welfare of people especially to help and support them.
3. Wanting 'to make a difference' in people's lives.
4. My children - they are the future - I want to show them everyone deserves respect and that no matter how small they can make a difference. I wanted to develop a career for myself

12. What were your expectations of social work?

1. I did not have much knowledge about what social workers actually did before I joined the course. But I suppose the media influenced my opinion that it was a hard job.
2. That lives would be improved as a consequence of social work intervention.
3. Working with individuals to help them achieve the best outcomes possible.
4. It would be hard work, rewarding at times and distressing at others but a worthwhile career that would enable me to make a living whilst at the same time help others to make positive change.

13. Have your expectations been met?

No **1x** Yes **1x** Not sure **2x**

Please explain your answer ...

1. Yes. It has proved to be a challenging course, and I can see through contact with social workers that it is indeed a hard career but also a very rewarding one
2. Not sure. Not as much as I had hoped and I am in some ways disappointed. I now believe it is our everyday interactions with any person that make a difference no matter what we are doing. Everybody needs love and everybody hurts at times no matter what their background. SW is one way of meeting the needs of a particular group of people. However I fear it only skims the surface and cannot meet the needs of deep heart issues. I feel SW's are so stretched and burdened themselves they are unable to offer true empathy and are in danger of becoming machinelike in order to cope.
3. No. There is a lot of paperwork/form filling and not much contact with people.
4. Not sure. I am not yet making a living as I haven't started work. There are two reasons for this, family illness and caring responsibilities have demanded time,

and jobs for newly qualified social workers are few and far between at this time. When I do secure employment I think cuts in budgets/resources will make the job harder and more distressing than I at first envisaged but at the same time I think the more you put into something the more you get out of it so I still believe it will be the rewarding career I am looking for.

14. If not social work, then what other occupation would you choose and why?

1. I have a keen interest in mental health, so a career in psychology or mental health services of some kind
2. I would have been better suited to engineering due to the way my mind works. However there are instances in SW where these skills are very useful such as with planning and organising actions.
3. Qualified nurse - working with individuals all the time
4. counselling

15. Who inspired or encouraged you to study social work? (Tick all boxes that apply.)

Family Friends Colleagues Advertising
 Other -

Please explain ...

1. Family, friends and teachers at school supported me in my decision.
2. None of the above. I chose it for myself as it seemed a natural progression to what I was already involved with.
3. Friends and advertising
4. Other: People have been surprised by my decision to be a social worker, many have tried to dissuade me, my inspiration has come from things/situations/people I have encountered in my life, too many to recall individually.

16. How in general do you think society views the social work profession?

Please explain...

1. I think there are some people who see the good that social workers do, however generally I think there is a negative perception of social workers shared among people in society.
2. Social work is not viewed well by society in my experience. However we do live within a blame culture in the UK so is this to be expected?
3. Negatively, there is a very view of the social work profession. I believe this is due to publicity - press and tv coverage.
4. Media coverage has a lot to answer for, social work/social workers are viewed so negatively it takes courage to speak up and be proud of what you do, this was something I expected but have been surprised by the extent of it.

17. What are your personal values, and why?

1. On what?? I suppose generally I feel that people should treat others as they would wish to be treated, everyone should have equal opportunities and the right to live their life the way they want to.
2. I believe in unconditional positive regard as without it no-one stands a chance. We have all messed up at times. I have another name for it, I call it forgiveness.
3. Believing in people. Being kind and helpful promoting independence.
4. Always treat other people in a way you would want to be treated yourself

18. Try to think back: What are the roots of your values? Please explain:

1. A lot come from values shared by parents, grandparents, the area I live, my schooling, everything that has shaped me as a person has affected my values.
2. I have experienced forgiveness (lifetime story) and so value it immensely. It is part of my faith.
3. Spending time with people who made me feel valued and independent.
4. Life experience/learned behaviour/conscious choice never to treat others in ways I have not liked being treated myself.

19. Which of the following statements captures your reason(s) for being/ becoming a social worker? You can tick more than one statement. And please explain why?

4x "I want to make a difference in peoples' lives." Because 1. Everyone deserves the right to live the way they want to, but some people may need help achieving this. 2. We didn't all get the same chances in life and everybody needs somebody who cares. 3. I believe everyone has the right to a 'good' life

1x "I want to be the difference in peoples' lives." Because.....

1x "I want to help others so they don't have to go through what I've experienced." Because.....

3x "I want to stand-up/fight for justice in society and support the underprivileged." Because 1. Some people cannot help the way their life has turned out, and everyone should be given the same opportunities no matter what their social status is. 3. Someone has to.

3x "I want to challenge discrimination and oppression." Because 1. as above...3. as above

2x "I'm passionate about wanting to change the world." Because 1. Not the world - but more realistically work with the way the world is and challenge any injustice which arises from this.

"I wasn't sure of what I wanted to study." Because...

3x "I want to improve outcomes for children." Because 1. Children are vulnerable and

susceptible to abuse/change. Children should not have to worry about things (to an extent) and enjoy a happy childhood. 3. society sometimes lets them down.

2x "I want to save children and/or adults from abuse." Because 1. they may not be able to do it themselves

"I'm a good role model and people can learn from me." Because.....

1x "I want a challenging and exciting job." Because 1. I like to be able to come home and feel as though I have done a good days work

"I couldn't get a job, so that's why I enrolled on a university course."

Any other statement or comments you wish to make. Please explain:

3.I want to provide people with confidence to have a voice.

20. Describe in your own words what a 'good' social worker should do?

1. Listen to the service user, accept their goals, empower them to achieve those goals, but also to be realistic about the extent to which the service user can change within a given period of time - and to work with all the restraints they may face in order to achieve realistic and beneficial outcomes.

2. A good social worker will genuinely care about people and have the gumption to do something about it.

3. Empower individuals to achieve the best outcomes possible for them.

4. Show respect, not act judgementally, be sensitive, listen, gather as much information as possible from multiple sources to gain the most holistic understanding of a situation possible, be practical, be confident, have knowledge, research/explore in order to gather information, be aware things are rarely as they seem and base practice on evidence, be reflective, be patient, be creative, empower, enable others to problem solve and make informed decisions, practice according to the law, safeguard, intervene to protect from significant harm, fight for social justice, advocate for others, value diversity, practice anti-oppressively, build on strengths, try to work with service users, be able to challenge beliefs in order to achieve best outcomes, use supervision, work with other professionals, maintain trust, maintain boundaries, be approachable.

21. As a social worker, how would you like to be seen by service users?

1. Approachable, a good listener, non judgemental, able to help if I can, a glimmer of hope.

2. Not as a Social Worker!

3. Reliable, honest effective and useful.

4. I would like to be seen as a person who cares, as a person who can be trusted, someone who is approachable, someone who listens and is not judgemental, a

person who is reliable and honest. As I would respect a service user I would like the respect to be mutual. I would like a service user to see me as a person it is worth contacting, I have heard people say I wouldn't even bother contacting the social workers because they are a waste of time!!!!

22. What do you perceive your personal attitudes and attributes are? You can tick more than one option:

3x I like working with people

2x I don't like paperwork

3x I don't like being confined in an office

3x I'm reliable

3x I'm conscientious

3x I like to listen to peoples' life experiences

3x I'm a good listener 3. Or at least try to be ☺

3x I want to do what's right 3. For the individual not for me (not always possible)

2x I like to problem solve

2x I like to support and advocate for people

I like to be in charge and take responsibility

Any other statements or comments you wish to make? Please explain...

1. All, except the last one, as I do not need to be in charge to take responsibility.

2. There are times when I like these and do them well and when I hate them or loose the motivation to do them because of stress or frustration.

4. I like to help people learn from their experiences. I am patient, I don't give up and I care

23. What area of social work are you currently working in and explain why?

1. Mental health

2. I am in Education social work because I wanted to work with young people who struggle with education for whatever reason. School can be a very difficult place to be for some young people.

3. Transition team. I was moved into this post due to staff restructuring. I will start a job in the older person's team with AMHP [Approved Mental Health Professional] training in September 2011.

4. I am not yet employed but I truly believe I could suit any area of social work, there is always overlap and I have worked with young and old in my life. I have enjoyed both. I just like people.

24. The key purpose of social work is described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers (2001) as:

"... a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environment."

How does this statement relate to you and your professional experience? Please explain.....

1. It is a good starting base, however social work is so much more complex than the definition suggests.
2. Social work originated with faith groups reaching out to people. The mention of a person's spiritual well-being is scarcely mentioned in today's SW literature. The wording in the description to me is mechanical and lacks heart. I feel we miss the simple expressions such as words like love, peace, unity, forgiveness which are at the root of all life's issues.
3. I like this statement but sadly I don't always think it true. There are lots of people in society who want to access services but do not meet threshold
4. I have chosen my role as a Women's Safety Worker as an example of practice to be related to this statement. - I hope to promote change in society's attitudes with regard to domestic violence and what constitutes an equal partnership between people. My work with women who had been abused involved working with women in a therapeutic counselling way that enabled them to solve their own problems by realising their situation and making informed choices about what was right and wrong and what they could do to improve their situation and keep themselves safe. Many of the women had low self esteem, some had mental health problems (i.e. depression, PTSD, were self-medicating with drugs and alcohol, self harming), many cared for their partners or displayed protective behaviour). Realising their situation was often liberating, beliefs were challenged/behaviour was re learned, I enabled women to regain self worth and regain control over their own lives. I based my practice on research, challenging my own beliefs and reflecting on my own practice/actions (I am a woman in my forties who has been married for almost 25 years), I thought about how my own understanding might impact on any judgements and actions in order to prevent me behaving oppressively . I identified societal structures and the impact media portrayal of women has on female self belief and gender power relations, exploring behaviour, language, body language identity and more.

Do you think any points of this statement are controversial?

3 x Yes 1 x No Please explain why:

1. Yes. It may promote empowerment and liberation but the systems social workers have to work within limit the extent to which this can be achieved.

2. No. They are academic by an academic for an academic. There are likely to be many non-academics' who are far more proficient in the art of caring and helping (dare I say loving) others but would struggle to get through the training.

3. Yes. As above.

4. Yes. It is suggested this Statement describes the key purposes of social work. It states the purpose of social work is '*problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being*'. Indicates everybody wants their problems solved, wants to be empowered and liberated. Some do not. Assumption is oppressive.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your input is much appreciated!

APPENDIX 13**INTERVIEWEE 1 on 05/08/2011**

1. *Interviewer (FV): What was your educational journey up to this point? (How did you get here?)*

Interviewee (LB): Following GCSE's I went and studied A Levels at College. I did Sociology, Psychology, English and Art A Levels. Through my first year I did Art, English and Sociology and decided to drop Art in the second year then I picked up Psychology in the second year and for that reason I had to spend the next year at College to finish off psychology as that is what I was really interested in and changed my mind and went for A Level as well as that is what I wanted to do as I had a real interest in Psychology.

FV: What interested you about Psychology in particular?

LB: Just shows how the mind works and learning about everything in humans and why we are they way we are really. Everything about it fascinated me and during that time, because I was only doing 1 A Level in the final year I also worked as a care assistant in an old person's residential unit. At this point I wasn't entirely sure as to what I was going to study at University. It was a decision between psychology and social work. I came across social workers during my time as a care assistant in the old person's unit and became quite involved then. It was really a pragmatic choice that with social work as well because I thought with psychology I wouldn't necessarily end up with a job at the end of it. I was interested in both, I liked the idea of psychology and also social work and at the end it was really a decision of what I was going to do and I really needed a job and wanted a social work degree. So I went to Southampton and studied social work.

2. *FV: What experiences influenced your professional move into social work?*

LB: Almost all my work entirely, in terms of experience was the year with the elderly and had professional experience rather than personal. It was that year for me and also the educational, the psychology, the interest in people and I knew at that point that I wanted to work with people, from my work with the elderly I was clear that that was what I wanted to do.

3. *FV: Have you or your family had any experience or contact with social workers?*

LB: No, none that I know of.

4. *FV: How were these experiences?*

N/A

5. *FV: How has becoming a social worker influenced (transformed) your life?*

LB: It has become part of my identity, who I am and it's what I associate with now. It has completely changed me because you are part of it and you develop a professional identity during your training. That's not something I thought I had before.

FV: Can you give me an example because that is quite interesting? Can you explain how you are different now to three years ago? What has changed?

LB: Because you are aware that you are a social worker you always have that identity. I guess it changes you in different ways. It's very hard to explain. You become very aware of your personal values, through the years you develop a sense of who you are yourself, what your personal values are, what you believe in, why you want to be in the job as a social worker and it becomes part of who you are and your awareness of yourself completely changes. Obviously you change as a person, because you develop more skills in different knowledge and confidence and that changes who you are and how you behave. I am a lot more confident now than three years ago, be a lot more able to approach and be assertive towards people now than I ever could be before. If there have been instances where I have seen something that I know is wrong I can't just step away from that because I'm not at work and ignore it. I can't ignore it. It becomes part of who you are.

FV: It's similar for the police and nurses etc. They have a Code of practice and value base.

LB: Definitely, I agree, it becomes part of who you are. Actually I've done work before and that is how it happens. I don't associate myself with that, even as a care assistant it wasn't something that I thought that is who I am and necessarily thought what my personal beliefs are and I don't think I have particularly changed during that period of time but now three years in social work has changed me completely.

FV: What has changed?

LB: Through the University time it is reflection and you are encouraged to reflect on who you are and personal values and you develop through that time and encouraged in what you are doing. With the care assistant it wasn't like that, it was more you have a job, get on with it and there wasn't any encouragement or motivation to think what you could do to improve your practice. I didn't feel as if I had that. Occasionally you could get to be a senior care assistant if you had been there six or seven years but you were not encouraged to work towards. You would probably be offered it one day if someone left and you would be asked but not encouraged.

6. FV: What is/was your expectation of what social work is?

LB: I expected to be able to be in a position where I could bring about change in a positive way. Where I could promote the welfare of service users through my work, but I think that has changed but at that point that was my expectations of it. It has changed because, yes I still think that part of it is true but I have developed a much wider understanding of what social work is and what it covers. There are so many different areas that you can be in, in social work, and it's still classed as social work. There are varied roles that social work covers, and that is how my expectations of it has changed because the differences of it through different agencies are incredible even those doing the same job. I have worked in two separate child care teams and the differences in which they work is incredible. There is a massive difference even though they are doing the same job. They are meant to be doing the same job but the way in which they do it is very different.

FV: Why is that?

LB: A number of things, management maybe, the difference in managers. Or just the way people approach different tasks, and yes it has a lot to do with management and the way teams are managed. They are given a task to complete and how it's down to how they choose to complete them. Thresholds are different between the teams. It shouldn't be, but they are, very much so.

Something in one team could be completely ignored and considered not to meet the threshold and probably not be referred, not accepted as a referral. Whereas the other team would have done a lot of work on that case, I find it very bizarre. Incredible really, the difference between two teams.

FV: Are your expectations to bring about change and promote the welfare of service users, still the same?

LB: That is still what I want to do, and it would still be my aim. Whether or not I feel the challenges to that, there are barriers in being successful but that would still be my ultimate goal that I would want to achieve by the work that I do. Basically one of the biggest factors is lack of resources and money and obviously that is one of the thresholds and as a result of that, an example is the team that has the highest threshold I personally felt that, as newly qualified, I'm in a way as a signposting agency. I've not felt that I have had the opportunity to bring about much change. In a way it's as if you are in seeing a family, noticing what is wrong, or part of what is wrong but you are not able to act on that. You then refer to other agencies, who might be voluntary, and might not engage with that service. So effectively at the end of the day you might not be doing anything other than making a visit and making them aware that you are aware, that's it. I find that difficult in a number of ways. The fact that I feel that I haven't actually brought about any improvements to that family. I feel as if I haven't safeguarded or protected the welfare of the people I have worked with, and personally I find it embarrassing. You are talking to other agencies and trying to refer and it comes across as if you are not doing anything. Actually you haven't got the time to do anything. You are told by management that you are not allowed to do anything. You may go to your manager and say you have this really brilliant plan which I think needs to be put in place for this family, or I wouldn't refer to this place because if you do it means we would have to stay involved, and I don't want us to have to stay involved. We haven't got the resources to stay involved so I refer to this place instead. Actually I thought that place would be better but I'm not allowed to do that because of lack of resources. Very frustrating. It's not something that I feel I have changed in 3 years. I feel as if I am in administration and signposting.

7. *FV: Have your expectations been met?* - Was answered above
8. *FV: What are the challenges of social work for you, and why?* - Was answered above
9. *FV: What are the motivators for your professional choice?*
 - *Career progression/change, money*
 - *Helping others (social justice fighter and/or wounded helper?)*

LB: Not financial in any way to be honest. I was aware that it was a poorly paid profession before I chose to go into it. Not necessarily always but that wasn't one of my motivations for doing it. It was more a case of my personal choice for wanting to do that job really.

I certainly wouldn't be the wounded helper, so I guess it would be further the other way towards the social justice side. I believe in equal opportunities and that is another reason why I find that the thresholds are so different in different locations, and very frustrating to have the equal opportunity. You are better off with a child in one area

than another, and that shouldn't be the case. You should put up with some form of abuse in one area but shouldn't have to put up with it in another. Some elements don't have to be standardised across counties but certainly thresholds need to be.

10. FV: Why do you think that the majority of social workers are women?

LB: A lot to do with the fact that it is a caring profession and you are socialised from a young age, as a female, to be caring, and that's the way things are. In school there are certain classes that are boy subjects and girl subjects and you are looked at strange if you go into mechanics as a female because that isn't considered normal. That is still the way it is even in the 21st century, it is the way it was for me in school. Perhaps you will get a couple of females on a course which is considered predominantly a male course, you have that option. You won't get teachers saying you can't go on a course because you are female Look at the toys you are given when you are small, you are given pushchairs and dollies as a girl, and cars if you are a boy. Not sure if it is a British way of thinking. I think if I had asked for something different I would have been given it. I have personal experience of a nephew whose father would be quite angry if he picks up a doll. He is told no that is not for you and also anything pink. He is told no, you have the blue one, not the pink one. I'm not saying that is true of all fathers but it still happens, it's very much the way it is. As a female you have it placed upon you that you are a caring person. If you have a choice of a boy or girl to leave a child with, it will probably be the girl you would choose.

FV: Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with me and your time! I'll email the script to you for your approval.

END

APPENDIX 14**INTERVIEWEE 2 on 01/09/2011**

1. *Interviewer (FV): What was your educational journey up to this point? (How did you get here?)*

Interviewee AS: Before I did my social work degree I had done a psychological degree and I always questioned going down the psychological route, or the social work route and then I took a job in working with children with autism and then went into a residential children's home and naturally the social work progressed from there really. Just looking after children took me along that route more naturally. I enjoyed that area and obviously with social work you get more contact with children and that is what I enjoy.

FV: Did you use your psychology degree in your work with autistic children

AS: I did my degree straight after my A Levels and after my degree my main aims, I felt, were all academic and no hands-on. So the school of autism was purely a learning support role but it was hands on contact which I really enjoyed actually and then because I had done lots of work round learning disabilities and autism I wanted to work with emotional and behavioural problems and that is why I took the job in Bournemouth. It was completely different because the Bournemouth school was a village area, very rural but that was good experience. Then I went to Bournemouth which is a completely different environment again.

FV: So you did the psychology work then got interested into social work

AS: I was employed at the time as a residential social work assistant, I think that is what they called it. It's different now. I was employed through them and the home that I worked in closed down, but the manager set up a team looking at preventative work and using the solution focus to training, so she trained that particular team when she was running the pilot in solution focus brief therapy looking at going into families. They were only working with families from children services so you could only be referred from a child care social worker into that special team. It was like a family support worker role but doing the solution focus looking at change. It wasn't directly therapeutic work, like in caring, but earlier intervention work. I did that for quite a long time. Probably about 8 years I stayed in that team, and through that I wanted to get more of a sense of having control over the case because the role I was taking was very much you get fed and the case leader is the social worker and you are guided and your decisions, although they are listened to, they are not really. So I wanted to have more control and progress. So the natural progression seemed to be to take the social work degree. So I applied, to be seconded through my employer, to take the social work degree so they seconded me and I did the degree through them. I was in my late 20s when I started the degree. I wouldn't have wanted to do the degree straight from my A levels. Now you can do your degree straight from college, I can't see how they can do it to be honest. That is my own personal opinion. I would drown in that environment. I think the fact that I had worked and done a different degree, or some of it different. Social work is just too heavy ended career. I couldn't have done it. Personally to me, I couldn't have done it. Particularly in certain areas of social work, it's too heavy, too much to cope with, that's just me myself. If I had even looked at it after doing my A levels, you had to be 21, so although it was there I think you had to have a diploma so I wouldn't have been able to do it straight away anyway. Even now, looking back I wouldn't have wanted to do it, it's just too much. I take my hat off to them, I don't know how they do it, but I wouldn't have wanted it.

2. FV: What experiences influenced your professional move into social work? - you sort of answered that already?

AS: Yes, kind of answered. The caring aspect did influence me it went from one aspect to another and the area of child care, I suppose. I started off with the job with the Bournemouth school and then that naturally led to getting jobs more interesting. You develop skills and knowledge and do in-house training. My knowledge built up and it progressed to stay in the child care area. It felt like professionally a natural progression to do the social work degree. Hindsight has lots of benefits not to be a social worker sometimes simply because the level of contact with the actual young person and the families increase. I have a lot more contact with people particularly when I qualified and did the child care role and social worker. My contact with the children I felt that direct contact really reduced. I felt you became more a policeman for children almost. When I was unqualified I didn't feel like that at all, but once qualified I did and that was a bit of a culture shock for me. When unqualified more contact with service user's children and they view you very differently as well. Even though you are involved with social services, I mean I was still employed by social services but the titles and the roles and how people perceive you and how they almost let you in to their kind of home environment, I found that just immense. It's almost like overnight you are deemed as very different and viewed as very different and it was an extra barrier to break down.

From my point of view, I think that in the teams, it was almost like, and there is a real risk of the social worker becomes a very demonised person by the professionals and the families as well because you have to make the harder decisions. In conferences, for example, you have to have to list off all the concerns you have, especially the initial conference. That's very distressing with the families sitting there and having to listen and you are the one having to say it and although you are being honest it's very hard. Whereas before you were supporting them now, although you are still supporting them, you're protecting that child and your role is as a protector. It's almost as if you are damned if you do and damned if you don't.

I struggled because I thought that once I qualified I would have my cases, and I remember thinking of all the faults that as a social worker you get so frustrated, and why do they make those decisions. I realise that the particular role placements you have the complexities of a court case now. That is immense, and hard to get your head round that system. You have a lot more of safeguarding. A child in need is a very, very different scenario. I think my strengths is more with child in need, if I'm honest, rather than doing the court work. But again that is a very punitive area of work and it's whether it fits really. It's a very hard job. I would honestly say you have to learn to be personally not liked. I think my personality, and I have learned this over the last years. I struggled with that. You have to be the person who is not liked and willing to sit in that meeting and to say it, and that's not just by the families. The professionals click together and they collude with the families sometimes. They like to be the liked person by the family which used to annoy me. I used to come back actually when I had done my core group meeting and my supervisor was very good really. She used to say that the core group is supposed to be everyone working together with the best interests. It's not just the social worker, that's not the point. Sometimes people literally just sit back, physically, and leave it to you in the sense that you're going to pass this message, or they wait until the family leave and then tell you some information which should have been openly said in front of the family. Because they don't want to be dealing with that or the person giving that news they tell you and you have to address it. That I struggled with.

I have really struggled over the last couple of years because it is particularly the child I'm concerned about and I didn't feel it when I did my initial placement in adult physical disability. I never felt that way. You are seen as the provider, the helper but you are helping in children services. You have to protect that child and what people seem to forget is you have to make decisions which are hard and very distressing for a

parent but there is blame on you. You have had to remove that child because such and such has happened. For some reason, you have become, I sometimes felt, the bad person because you have removed that child. Because somehow x, y and z happened but they see the parent crying, they see you have had to remove the child for the child's best interests. It's a thankless job really.

People read in the news, and see it, but if social workers weren't there doing their job then lots of children would be horrifically abused. I think they forget that social workers have to do the most invasive actions.

3. *FV: Have you or your family had any experience or contact with social workers?* AS: No

4. *FV: How were these experiences?* N/A

5. *FV: How has becoming a social worker influenced (transformed) your life?*

AS: I think in one sense it's opened my eyes to, if I think personally, from a personality wise, there is a kind of you have to toughen up very quickly. That I struggled with, because you know I said about you have to learn to be the person who is not liked, or giving that bad news, I think the sense with me and I still find it now sometimes you still have to do it, you can't be liked, you can't be liked by everyone. So you have to accept that and carry on. I think that, whereas before you were a people pleaser. I've had to learn you can't possibly do that, you can't, that always ends in pain, that's been a hard thing for me. I think it's opened my eyes to the system and also made me more aware of myself definitely in what my capacities are what my abilities are. Like I said, I now know my personality trait is not meant for court social work. I don't regret doing it because I would have never known and I have to say that the time I did the child care I never learned so much in such a short space of time. It does ground you for so so much. If I look at the different types of social workers in the team I did it in. One was very good at court she was almost legal, I felt she was almost solicitor in her approach to work was very structured, very matter of fact. She was almost legal way of looking at things, very kind hearted but very tough and structured and the relationship with the families was to do the court with her best interest, which is totally right for the child. She had the most number of complaints, not because she was doing anything wrong, it was because she wasn't messing around she was saying this is what's going to happen and if you don't do this. That's when I learned that wasn't for me.

That's something I have learned and had to get to grips with. My willingness sometimes got mixed with confusion. Rather than actually saying it and yes they might shout and not be happy but you've told them a directive and actually some families that I've spoken to since and even now have said well actually just tell me, and that's not just necessarily me. You hear families say, if someone had just told me this is what your views were and this is what you wanted, then at least I would know. She is good at this is what I think and this is what the action is going to be. Sometimes I look, my practice is a bit woolly for some families and a bit confused.

Also child care is something I wouldn't completely rule out but it's something I would do when my own child grows up and that's purely about time and expectations on you and I think this is across the board. The time to complete the work and cover everything and also when you get a child protection enquiry or concern you have to deal with it and I spent a lot of hours over and above my direct hours and some people say by doing that you are hiding a problem and you are. But if I don't do it it's my head if I don't do it. I think it takes you away, it took me away from my own child because once I didn't get back in time for his nativity play. I missed the beginning of it because something had come in and you have to deal with it. You can't just say it's twenty past five, I'm sorry I have to go now I'll deal with it tomorrow. That's another thing I think people don't understand about social child work, yes you have a cut off time at twenty past five but if something comes in at quarter past five you can't not deal with it. It has to be dealt with. I've always got this sense of yes my time might finish at such and

such a time but there's always that something come in at the end of the day. Yes, it could be just a simple phone call out of hours but often it's not, it's a lot more complicated, especially if coming in at that time. So from my point of view of having a child in my own life that's not a job I can do to the best of my ability and I was often quite distracted at home thinking about it. Have I done this, it's not the best thing for my own child. My senior, who qualified later on in life, said that she would not have wanted to do the child care role while she had her children. So for me it's not completely ruled out and I think I would go back to it a completely different social worker in one sense. I have learned you have to be direct you have to be very black and white really and to do court work you have to be very clear because of giving evidence as well. If you haven't been clear you will stumble in giving evidence that will be picked up. My own child was about 3 years old when I started social work, he was quite young. The degree also takes your time away. One thing I will say about Jack, my son, I will promote that he will see that I am learning still. He looks back now, all my books are spare and I think it's healthy for them to see you doing it. I suppose it's a matter of preference but I'm glad he saw that and he talks about it as well. It may inspire him to go on, it's all about learning and it's interesting. I found it really interesting so I think that is positive, I personally don't think it's a negative thing.

6. FV: What is/was your expectation of what social work is?

AS: I never went in blind in the sense that it wasn't going to be hard I think that was an age thing. Talking to other people who went in at 18 and qualified at 21, I don't think they realised that going into child care how complex and how difficult it is. I always knew it was going to be hard but I don't think, I suppose if I'm honest, I realised. I didn't realise, even though you are a social worker, how much you don't have control over it. It's still the local authority service manager that makes the final decisions. If they don't agree with your decisions, you've got a battle there. That's another thing. I feel that yes you are the social worker but the period of time I did the child care I never felt quite so in charge and sometimes, I can't explain, I felt powerless which is weird because you are in such a powerful position. You've got so many people wanting things from you, demanding expectations of you. That surprised me and how isolating it can be. I'm not blaming individual people, I think the team as a whole have tried to work it out. You've got your little desk and your computer and files and you just have to get on with it. It is hard.

7. FV: Have your expectations been met?

AS: I found, particularly in court as well, this used to absolutely frustrate me with social work when I talk about being powerless. You're the one that has had all the contact with the family, you know that child. You have solicitors, guardians, psychologists they have perhaps seen the child once, twice and they give their opinions in court. That frustrates me because, particularly if you have removed that child, you've built up this whole knowledge of that case which is massive. There was one particular case that I really got to grips with and it gets very frustrating because you think, actually no, how can you truly know a clear picture of this family or this situation. That's where it used to bother me because you are deemed I suppose within court almost as a psychologist or a psychiatrist is deemed as a professional I suppose. That used to aggravate me. They do a lot of the donkey work so to speak I think, the leg work, they are always in there and always having to work with these families. I found that really difficult.

8. FV: What are the challenges of social work for you, and why? - Was answered above

9. FV: What are the motivators for your professional choice?

- *Career progression/change, money*
- *Helping others (social justice fighter and/or wounded helper?)*

AS: It definitely wasn't money. It's not a profession you would choose for that. I think there was an actual career and I knew an area I wanted to go into was a sort of social,

emotional, psychological area caring profession so it was a natural career progression. For me in a sense of, I like the area, I've looked after children and I think from my point of view it is a section of society that are very, very disadvantaged. Often I think society looks at children and goes ah, particularly with babies and little children and then they grow up. For example children can become a bit more abusive a bit more challenging and if a child has all these problems and then they become an adult and it becomes very harsh for them. We forget about what has gone on in the past and I think, we almost, the impact of your childhood particularly and we are now looking at attachment is huge. I think we underestimate it and the people seem to love the cute cuddly baby stage and as that child grows up they forget about the fact that it doesn't become less appealing to people, particularly when you grow up into adult. If you look at the prison population, I don't know what the recent figures are but, 76% at one time or another had been in care at some point. That speaks volumes. You have to do the work, the basic attachments so much important, but you have to do that work because that's the result I think. You can't, and I think we still haven't got to grips with that and how important attachments are.

10. FV: Why do you think that the majority of social workers are women?

AS: It's huge isn't it? I don't know, I mean I think it's going to become more, I think males, my view is that more males will go into the profession as it becomes more court orientated. It is becoming a lot more court orientated. I wonder whether that's to do with the idea of a male being more powerful, I don't believe that. There's that vision isn't there of more powerful roles. I think social work is going to change, in my view. It's a caring thing and women do seem to go into more caring professions. That's what I partly think, it's a more feminine, there's feminism, and some men feel, I know the men on my course (there was only 4 and only 1 eventually completed the course). They found it very hard, because it was so female dominated, to be in that environment. The views of the female social workers are often very strong willed feminist views and I myself I'm very independent. I hope to think I am and not reliant on men. You get a group but there's something about sometimes the personality traits of social workers and feminism that go together. It's amazing and that's just my view and my experience. It's linked about that sort of independence. If you look at social work as well lots of it is about domestic violence and women and decisions they make of men and the dominant man controlling. That's just it, I don't know there's something in it about feminist knowledge.

But, if you're looking at it from a feminist, I've got certain feminist views, and quite sometimes irritating to others. I think if you look at a social workers job it is about kind of standing, fighting for someone, well encouraging people to kind of change and if you're looking at particularly at women some of it is about kind of making the right choice in relationships, prioritising your child's needs over a man's needs. I don't know, there's a real sense of, I always felt sometimes that you're fighting against males sometimes within social work particularly when there's so much domestic violence. It's about moving the man out of the house and I don't know whether that's about, I know when you start social work training you don't think like that, but there is, my beliefs are quite strong and you shouldn't put your own needs first, but you should follow the needs of the child.

I've always been independent, but that's linked to my mum. She was very strict in the sense of don't become dominant, don't become reliant sorry, on a male. I know that's right in the expectations of my mum and I've always been very much like I won't be reliant on a male. It's a point maybe where it's a bit irritating at times. For goodness sake it's not a dominance thing, it's just something I'm saying or want to do for you. I'm very much, no I have to do things myself and I think that was about the career aspect as well. You have to know that I can fund myself really. That's my personal view.

FV: Thank you very much for your openness and your time! I'll email the script to you for your approval.

END

APPENDIX 15**INTERVIEWEE 3 on 07/09/2011***1. Interviewer (FV): What was your educational journey up to this point? (How did you get here?)*

Interviewee TJ: As far back as I can remember I always wanted to become a social worker but what really happened was that I took my CSE's at school and then went forward to do my NNEB but I must be honest it was difficult because my mum had a large family, and dad. So it was, the way things were, you would leave school at 16 and get a job so you could pay your way at home. So that's what I had to do but I did get my NNEB but didn't take it up and went into work. I then had my children and then had to wait for the right time to take my social work degree, but there never seemed the right time! In the end, because there are medical problems within my family, I always made sure I was there for them. Then later on I was going to go for it, then I had another little one. So everything was put on hold again, and because I had been out of education for so long I felt that I would not be able to undertake a degree as I didn't have the knowledge and I wouldn't be able to manage it academically. In the end I bumped into an old friend who said she was undertaking her nursing degree. At school, and I don't mean this in an awful way, I felt that I did just as well in the classroom so I thought, yes maybe I can do this, and she gave me that 'umph' to have a go. So then I went and took my access course and passed that and carried on and applied to 3 universities, and decided to go to the one. So that was my journey really. But in employment I always went from office to care. I did admin work then back and forth to reception but it was always 'people' orientated.

2. FV: What experiences influenced your professional move into social work?

TJ: Firstly it started because I always wanted to do social work because my mum was a foster parent, that's where it all stemmed from. It was seeing different severities children had been through and I have to be honest, I did get to know a few of the social workers. I was still living at home through to my 30s because my mum started fostering when I was 4 years old. In the beginning, because that is what I found there was a lot of change from when I first got to know social workers. I'm not saying it's the social workers fault but in the beginning the social worker did visit more. They had more time and I found with my mum, and with me, they were more approachable and a lot more relaxed. But I did find that as time went on there wasn't as much support as mum initially had. There wasn't as many frequent visits and you could see the change but it was just talking to them and because I had always been brought up with my foster brothers and I'm very close to them. It was because I knew what they had been through and because I could see their side of it, I wanted to try and do something about it. That's what made me want to be a social worker because I wanted to be there for children who were not being heard and listening to their views because I did find that they weren't listened to, it was more the parents view, at that time. Things have changed now, luckily, but at that time the children were the children and that's what made me want to try and alter things. Then I went into care work, working with the older person, which I enjoyed but then I found, for me, there were situations that came up and there were prejudices against them because of their age. When someone was ill, medically things were not met and that was what upset me and I just felt that it was totally wrong. I think everyone has the right to medical provision so then I went back to admin work again. I have worked a lot in schools with some severely dyslexic so I actually went in and helped in both dyslexic and mainstream schools. I did this voluntary then later on went on to work with people with learning disabilities. I found this work very rewarding and really did enjoy working but sometimes when you say it is rewarding it seems as if it is the wrong word to say because, I can't explain what I

mean really. The point is that I might still go that avenue because I did enjoy it, and another thing as well, I have heard that there aren't very many social workers working in that area. I was surprised because before I took the job on I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know if they would accept me because a lot of them had autism and don't like change. I did take quite a bit of time but they were happy in the end with me and I was a key worker. Through that they did ask me to become an officer and I was very pleased that I had decided to work in that area and disappointed in myself thinking, why didn't I do that before, because it was something I really enjoyed.

3. FV: Have you or your family had any experience or contact with social workers?

TJ: Already answered.

4. FV: How were these experiences?

TJ: Like I said, I do feel that in the earlier days the children were not listened to enough, it went more by what the adults said but on the other hand I do feel that the social workers had more time and could do more visits. They could then assess the children more in the home setting and that was really important. I did see a change when having experience with one from a child then becoming a young person and then an adult, because my mum was made a ward of court with one of my brothers. There is then the difficulty of a different cultural background and it also depends on where you live, i.e. town/city/rural. I do feel it wasn't appropriate it was very difficult because he couldn't be with his parents. He always wanted to be white and when he was younger he would try to wash himself off to try to get rid of his colour. Psychologically this is not good. Then growing up, when we went into local shops, he was always kept an eye on, a lot of prejudice, on the buses, going to school he wanted to be accepted. He became the clown of the class just to be accepted.

FV: do you think it was the wrong choice of foster placement for a male of non-white ethnic background by social services?

TJ: I do think so, yes. In the end he got in with the wrong crowd and started taking drugs and then mental health issues manifested, but they always said it was underlying. So in that case it was wrong. I have also had positive experiences with social services from the beginning and it was sad that all this happened and I think that was why it made me look the other way where my parents needed the support, and didn't get it. I think they felt that as long as he was being looked after then that was alright, but he ended up with real mental health issues and is still in a unit now. My parents really went through a lot and definitely did not get the support they needed. The point is, every social worker is different and they could have had a different helper and things could have turned out differently because everyone is different. If he had had a social worker from a different ethnic background he/she might have stood up for that particular person. The trouble also was that they kept changing workers. Years ago you would end up with the same social worker for a few years and that is where I think the breakdown occurred because they kept changing all the time, no stability. That didn't help.

5. FV: How has becoming a social worker influenced (transformed) your life?

TJ: So far done 2 years of social work study, had a placement and now going into year 3. Thinking back, things have changed academically because I have proved to myself that I can do it. Another thing was that I didn't realise the relevance of theories, I did tend to pooh pooh them for quite a while! In the end though they were helpful to me and I have realised the relevance with the theories. Another interesting thing was studying the laws, which I didn't realise and the legislations. So academically it has

been really, really good. I'm not saying everyone has got some prejudice, of course they haven't, but they have in some shape or form but that was another reason I wanted to do social work because I came from a working class background, even though my mum said we are middle class my dad is working class. I class myself as working class, and there is still prejudice there. You see it in every day life, where maybe someone's garden is scruffy, not well maintained, they will say 'something's going on there', well maybe there could be but it doesn't mean there is. I know people who are on school committees, live in a big house, but where are their children? 2 years old, out on the street with a 5 year old brother or sister. It's not safe they shouldn't be doing that but they do things like that. Society don't look so much on the middle classes and they don't see sometimes what goes on and I think from working in a refuge, I'm hoping that middle class women do get support from their family or have got the money to help themselves, and I hope they do. You do not see many middle class women coming into a refuge so I'm hoping perhaps they are getting the support they need, and that has worried me. It was quite strange because I was thinking this and then I got a phone call from someone in that class and I was hoping she might come into the refuge but she was nearly there then decided not to, but I think it was the stigma she was worried about from her family. I just hope she got the support she needed, that's what worries me. It goes on in every class, that's what I'm saying, but sometimes I feel, and I heard something that really shocked me. I actually heard someone say that someone's garden was really messy, that's the one you have to be careful of! It's not just those, you could be wrong, yes you could be right but it could be anyone. You can't be blinkered it could be anyone.

6. FV: What is/was your expectation of what social work is?

TJ: I did realise, in a rosy world, what I would like. I would like to make change definitely, but the point is there are people above that are limiting you to what you can do. Another thing is the funding and resources. I knew there was always funding and resource problems but in the time since I have started my degree it has definitely worsened. I am really concerned about the way things are going. All the preventative work which has been built up and working is now getting taken away. It's just going to be such a worry because everyone is going to be in a crisis situation. So yes, definitely since I started, such a huge change and my expectation has changed from the beginning. It's definitely worsened, but I hope it turns around!

7. FV: Have your expectations been met? - Was answered above

8. FV: What are the challenges of social work for you, and why?

TJ: It's ever so hard to get a professional relationship, you have to keep it in your head that you have to be professional, there are boundaries. It's very easy to get too involved, and I do have to think about that quite a lot and I do find that challenging.

People can relate to you more, and open up to you more, if you haven't got the boundary over you. Sometimes because of the boundaries they don't open up as much because there was one comment, when my placement was made, and I stood back and the service user could tell that I was concerned about what she had said. She said, I think that I can talk to you, you're the same as me, which is fine but then she said but you are still very professional and I thought I have got to be careful here. It is difficult because you do have to keep that professional boundary. That is what I have to keep in my head and find challenging.

9. FV: What are the motivators for your professional choice?

- *Career progression/change, money*
- *Helping others (social justice fighter and/or wounded helper?)*

TJ: Basically it is helping others but social justice as well. The money was secondary, I just thought that if I could become a social worker maybe I could help with more change. That's what I was hoping but in the roles that I had I didn't have enough clout basically. Also, no power, because I was only an assistant but that will hopefully change when I am a fully qualified social worker!

10. FV: Why do you think that the majority of social workers are women?

TJ: Socially it has always been that the woman is the carer even if the woman has, these days got a job. They are expected to sort out child care even if they are working full time, and they have always been the carer. To be honest even as children they relate more to the mother, and go to mum more, but I do feel that there is a change and more men are becoming social workers now. That is because society's view is slowly changing, and another thing with a man there is a feeling that they have to be macho, have a macho job or a managerial job or be in a top position. It was never looked upon that a male should not be in a caring role, they were frowned upon but now society is changing and it is becoming more open and acceptable. I do think it is wrong but it is still very true. If you have children, are working full time and earning it is just expected to sort out the children.

FV: Thank you very much for your time! I'll email the script to you for your approval.

END

APPENDIX 16**INTERVIEWEE 4 on 07/09/2011***1. Interviewer (FV): What was your educational journey up to this point? (How did you get here?)*

Interviewee MC: I think it just happened! I didn't plan for it as I started doing a counselling course and needed to find a voluntary placement to practice my counselling skills. Then I was taken on as a youth worker in an advice and information centre for young people. Then I developed some relationships with other people, including a couple of social workers who encouraged me, over a period of time, to come and do some community resource work, some session work with young people. It has evolved from there really over about 10 years I guess. I do feel like an 'accidental social worker'! I have this philosophy that people say to me, I don't know what to do with my life. It's actually about building on something. Millennium volunteers had this catchphrase - build on what you're into. That, for me, is very much what I have always done, this has always interested me - focussing on the whole people and counselling skills and those kinds of relationships. That's what I have built on, they are my values, I guess. It's hard to put into a nutshell, my values, but I think it's about treating other people as you want to be treated. I suppose it's a bit of a cliché but we all come from different backgrounds and different circumstances and people make judgements about people all the time. I guess I've experienced some of those judgements along the way and I don't think you can ever make assumptions about people. Whatever you think you know about someone there is always those other dimensions to it that you are not aware of. You can never fully understand someone and therefore you can't make those judgements. Those core beliefs, like Rogers, and the conditions, about treating people with empathy and non-judgemental are important to me.

2. FV: What experiences influenced your professional move into social work?

I think it's probably part of that evolving journey which started with trying to find out more about myself and work through my self-experiences and have that understanding. Then that moved onto actually 'what can I do' because these are things that I like, these are my values. I really enjoyed working with young people and their families as a community resource worker. Then I thought what else can I do, what's the next challenge? That was when I applied for a social workers assistant post and then I got the bug then and thought yes, this is really what I like. I like the challenges that social work brings. I like working with people and I like the unexpected I guess. Yes, I really enjoyed it and yes that's what motivated me I guess to strive for it.

3. FV: Have you or your family had any experience or contact with social workers?

MC: Yes, as a child we had a social worker and I think I would strive to not be like him - my memories of him are quite interesting!

FV: Would part of your motivation be that you would like to become a better social worker than him?

MC: I wouldn't have said that. I think I bring into social work some of my past experiences and things that I can identify with, but that's not what motivated me to do what I am doing.

I think in our situation the social worker didn't listen but actually it was for the right reasons, then it comes back to your own experiences then, it has given me a better understanding of some of the difficulties children experience when they're dealing with issues with parents and then dealing with the whole scariness of social workers and how all those relationships can kind of conflict with one another. Then I can kind of identify now doing the social work role, how difficult it was for the social worker then to make a judgement, which actually went against the child's view, but actually it was totally the right one. I now know in hindsight, and actually I guess it kind of gives you that confidence knowing that kind of personal experience that sometimes you have to step away from the emotive part of what you deal with on a day to day basis you know to deal with the facts. These are the facts, and it's having confidence in your decision-making.

4. FV: How were these experiences?

MC: Already answered.

5. FV: How has becoming a social worker influenced (transformed) your life?

MC: I, umm don't know yet! - I think it's completely changed my life actually, I think it's completely umm, I think there were struggles in the beginning with some of my friendships and relationships because I changed. Also, I think I got quite caught up with the fact that it was just me that was changing but actually it was some of my friendships that were changing. Our children were getting older and they were having new experiences and things but I think the whole way I deal with things and I think I probably was a life-sorter before I did some of the training and everything. If my friends had a problem it was ok let's deal with it like this, this and this and actually I think that was probably quite aggressive in actually thinking that I could change things and this is when I had a bit of a problem when you think about social justice fighters or wounded helper. I found it really difficult to identify with either of those because I think I was actually a social justice fighter before I did the training and actually now I've done the training it's helped me think about things from other perspectives and actually how aggressive I used to be probably towards some of my friends and actually how, ok let's sort it this way and this way because I've learned to be very independent and sort things out for myself. I think I almost channelled some of that into my friendships, which was actually very controlling. I learned not to be that way and actually what's happened now is that although those relationships have changed, and I've changed, those relationships are now beginning to become much stronger because it's like you know transactional analysis. It's almost like I was being the parent and my friends were the children now it's more an adult relationship. Now equals.

I don't need to control things as much now as much as I used to because as much as I self-reflected, on myself, and how I view things other people have responsibility to do that and manage themselves and actually its not for me to kind of cross those boundaries really. I think it's learning those, actually some people just want to talk to you, and off-load to you rather than you sort out their problems and I think in social work it's sometimes, yes you're listening to somebody and you do have to come up with a plan at the end. Actually there is a limit to how far you can sort it and you don't have to internalise everybody's problems in order to meet their needs. They've got their own way of managing things and handling things, does that make sense?

I do think that's fair to say and I think also it's in the job roles as well being a youth worker and a community resource worker is very different to being a social worker because in both of those roles you are almost doing the rescuing because you are

building that relationship with that child. You're not always aware of the context around the child, the family situation and other things that are going on. You only know what's happening in that relationship with the child. Whereas a social worker, you don't know it all, but you have a wider scope of what's happening, and again that kind of job, that change in job role is quite different.

It's just my opinion, but there are other people that I know in social work who have come from a similar background that I have and a lot of them have changed in the social work role but there are a couple that I can think of who are still very much, although they are qualified social workers, are very much in that youth work role and struggle with some of those changes. As you mentioned earlier about the rescuing thing, they have had real difficulty in adjusting to that. So, yes, yes!

6. FV: What is/was your expectation of what social work is?

MC: I think it was very much about how my youth work role was. I think it was that you kind of rescue people, make things better and being quite dominant in some ways. Actually it's not like that but that's how I thought social work would be like and almost, I guess it's that constructed view of social work isn't it, with the flowery dresses and the sandals. I thought it was so much more woolly and actually I've now found I loved doing the youth work stuff, it gave me the foundation for doing what I do now. It really built my experience and I've loved that part of it. I would never criticise it but actually in some ways youth work is so contained that actually you don't always get the bigger picture of why you do what you do. Doing the social work course has given the opportunity to explore more about how humans work and co-operate with one another and build relationships. Yes, it's that recognition of how things actually work and why you do what you do and actually what you're here for and that is to protect children, isn't it? Or you feel that you are in and sometimes it's accepting that you can't change things and, therefore, this is what you need to do next. I guess in some respects the youth work part of it is almost like a sticking plaster. It's a very necessary element of how young people can be supported but sometimes you've got to do something else to make sure children are protected and that's where legislation and everything else comes into play. Actually, I thought I knew so much and actually knew so little.

7. FV: Have your expectations been met?

MC: Yes I think they have, in fact beyond to be honest. I think because I really didn't have an idea of what social work was I am probably an accidental social worker!! It really was about this stuff really interests me and really fascinates me and I think I was really selfish actually because I've learnt so much about myself a sorted so much stuff out, that I needed to sort out, which I hadn't done before but it's then, that it's doing that and recognising it and even beyond that, and actually thinking ok I'm doing all of this and this social work stuff is really interesting but how can I you know build on that and how can I make a difference?

FV: Make a difference to what?

MC: I say that really carefully because actually I don't mean, ... I can be really critical about making a difference because actually you can't always, you can't always make a difference for people and even if you try to make a difference for a child who's to say that that's the right thing that you can do. Actually in social work you're very often making decisions as part of a team. Yes, it's your name that's on that piece of paper but it's not just you with the power and you know, this is what's going to happen. You've still got to have things that prove, or get a decision made as part of a wider team, oh I've lost my train of thought a bit really.

There are so many kinds of layers to things and I remember when I was doing my placement last year, in the prison, and the attitude of people initially when I went in. Then as soon as I got my belt with my keys I suddenly became referred to as Ma'am and I had this respect and this authority. I've seen it happen because I'm a real people watcher. I could sit in a street all day and just watch people, because I just find people's reactions and how they deal with things really interesting. I've seen people who become qualified as social workers and they take on this kind of powerful authoritative position. Social workers have got authority, I know that, but it's how you deal with it and it's how you kind of it's taking into account the wider picture that actually it's not just you. You work as part of a team and there are people that you are answerable to as part of your organisation, society, family, legislation. It's everything, and I hadn't appreciated that about social work when I started. I knew I'd get there in the end!

8. FV: What are the challenges of social work for you, and why?

MC: I was a social work assistant for about 4, no I guess it was more 5 or 6 years and you kind of you do the job, and I know the social work assistant role is kind of evolving at the time as well but there were things that I was doing that I had almost not questioned anymore because it almost became normal. I think one of the challenges to future social work is kind of like, ok this is another thing we've got to deal with or that's similar to that so let's do it and treat it in the same way. It's almost like getting on this treadmill of actually just dealing with the same thing over and over again and forgetting to question why we're doing it. Forgetting to think about other implications and forgetting to look at families as individuals and I think that is something that is severely lacking in supervision actually. I think it's going to be good that some of the kind of reflection in supervision is going to continue in your qualified year, but I know the realities of actually supervision in the big wide world, you're not asking those questions. In some of my personal experiences, with professionals, as a service user I would hate to be communicating to families, as I've been communicated with, by professionals, and I think you just have constantly to reflect on what you are doing.

I do think one of the downsides of the social work course, is it doesn't always make you aware of the reality. I think when you come into it as a social work assistant you've got a bit more of an idea of how it works in the real world but if you're coming straight out of university, and haven't got that experience, you almost come into social work quite blinkered. You have the expectation that's set out in the course, you're going to have this wonderful supervision, resources might be a juggle but it'll be fine you'll achieve it. You have these ideals and sometimes the reality isn't like that and I think that can be quite a shock to newly qualified social workers who are fresh out of university.

9. FV: What are the motivators for your professional choice?

- *Career progression/change, money*
- *Helping others (social justice fighter and/or wounded helper?)*

MC: I think, no it's definitely not money because actually there's not a lot of difference between my wage now and when I qualified. I recognise that there will be future financial implications but no I've never been particularly interested in money. I'd say career progression not because I have high expectations that I'm going to achieve management but because actually having a job, which I enjoy, and is challenging and will stretch me for the next 40 years, or I've probably not got that long! It's really important to me because I would struggle in an environment where I didn't enjoy my

job and I like the variation that social work brings. Yet underlying all that there is that kind of yes, of course I would like to help people and make things, you know, a little bit better. I say that cautiously because actually there are times you can't make things better and that's been the difference between the before and after.

10. FV: Why do you think that the majority of social workers are women?

MC: I think it's the ingrained society of how women are brought up, how girls are brought up and how boys are brought up. Our society has inflicted kind of a view of how boys and girls should be and along with that I think there's that constructive view that women, it's ok for them to go into this caring role and this empathetic role and for men it's not so much. I take real issue with it and it's quite personal for me at the moment because my teenage son has just taken his options for his GCSE's and he, I know I'm biased but, is the most gentle, caring teenage boy I've ever met. He's compassionate, and for a teenager, and other people have said that for a teenage boy I think that is unusual. He was quite keen on doing a health and social care course and he was all out for it until he told some of his male friends. He was then put off the idea because that's a girl's course, yes there was peer pressure. So yes, I know that is a very real element of things and it's still how society views male nurses, female doctors. Society has people in stereotypical roles and I think as much as people have tried to change that, it's still very real.

FV: Could I ask you an additional question, please? I'm aware that you mentioned previously that you are a Christian. Is there a link between this and your professional choice? Or does it influence it?

MC: There's absolutely no connection at all, I don't believe. I'm not religious, I'm a Christian and personally I don't like religion because I think that's very traditional and I think for me I have a relationship with God yes, but there have been times when I've had to work through. I have my beliefs, my views and other people have theirs and as long as we respect one another then that's ok. Before I did the counselling courses, which started me off, I had actually, the reason I went on to that course is because I had done this 9 month post abortion counselling, which was a Christian thing and actually I didn't go by their philosophy, or their views. I felt it was extremely judgemental and prejudiced and, don't get me wrong, I know it says in the Bible 'do not commit murder, blaadi bla' and it's my belief. However, how dare anybody make a view about what a woman should do, and I couldn't deal with that so I refused to be part of that any further because I just felt that for me those kind of judgements that religion brings, that's not who I want to be and that's not what I believe God is. Does that kind of answer your question?

I think I probably am a social justice fighter because actually what I want to fight is discrimination and oppression which, again, I think religion brings. I think religion can be very oppressive and discriminative and I'm sorry but I'm not prepared to be a hypocrite and I think probably I guess I am probably in that category to a certain extent. I've had real battles with my youth pastor because I've been mentoring him since he started and he wrote his thesis on women. I've really had to challenge some of his views, and he would label me as a feminist as well and I wouldn't necessarily do that, however, there have been times when we have had some heated discussions about women's roles and how he treats women, or views women, in the Church. It's been an interesting few years.

FV: Thank you very much for your openness and your time! I'll email the script to you for your approval.

END

APPENDIX 17**Table 2.** 'All mentioned' motivations for choosing social work as a career (online survey, first year respondents)

	2004/5		2005/6		2006/7		<u>Average</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives	390	89	1235	91	691	86	88,6%
Interesting, stimulating work	318	73	1051	77	600	74	
Personal ability to get on with people	309	71	1008	74	589	73	
Wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society	297	68	990	73	566	70	70,3%
Variety of work day to day	287	66	934	69	533	66	
Good career prospects	220	50	784	58	540	67	58,3%
Working in a team	219	50	690	51	407	50	
High job satisfaction	188	43	670	49	400	50	35,6%
Especially suitable career for someone with life experiences like mine	159	36	510	37	273	34	
Being able to exercise individual responsibility for making my own decisions	148	34	491	36	319	40	
Encouragement from family or friends	126	29	409	30	250	31	
Opportunities for flexible working patterns	112	26	368	27	223	28	26%
Well paid jobs	93	21	368	27	241	30	
Total number of students ^a	437		1362		807		

^a Numbers and percentages do not sum because students were given the option of choosing more than one answer

(Stevens *et al.* 2012:23)

Original source:

Stevens, Martin; Moriarty, Jo; Manthorpe, Jill; Hussein, Shereen; Sharpe, Endellion; Orme, Joan; Mcyntyre, Gillian; Cavanagh, Kate; Green-Lister, Pam; Crisp, Beth R. 2012. Helping others or a rewarding career? Investigating student motivations to train as social workers in England. *Journal of Social Work*, Jan 2012, Vol. 12 Issue 1, p16-36

Please note:

I added the average figure at the end of the table. Francisca Veale