



**AUTHOR(S):**

**TITLE:**

**YEAR:**

**Publisher citation:**

**OpenAIR citation:**

**Publisher copyright statement:**

This is the \_\_\_\_\_ version of a work originally published by \_\_\_\_\_  
(ISBN \_\_\_\_\_; eISBN \_\_\_\_\_; ISSN \_\_\_\_\_).

**OpenAIR takedown statement:**

Section 6 of the "Repository policy for OpenAIR @ RGU" (available from <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/staff-and-current-students/library/library-policies/repository-policies>) provides guidance on the criteria under which RGU will consider withdrawing material from OpenAIR. If you believe that this item is subject to any of these criteria, or for any other reason should not be held on OpenAIR, then please contact [openair-help@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:openair-help@rgu.ac.uk) with the details of the item and the nature of your complaint.

This publication is distributed under a CC \_\_\_\_\_ license.

\_\_\_\_\_

## **PRACTICE LEARNING: CHALLENGING NEOLIBERALISM IN A TURBULENT WORLD**

**Dr Linda Harms Smith**  
**Robert Gordon University**  
[l.h.smith@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:l.h.smith@rgu.ac.uk)

**Prof Iain Ferguson**  
**University of the West of Scotland**  
[iain.ferguson@uws.ac.uk](mailto:iain.ferguson@uws.ac.uk)

### **INTRODUCTION**

The turmoil, struggle, deepening poverty and inequality in which the world finds itself requires a responsive social work practice, theory and education. However, the current era of neoliberalism, 'post-welfare capitalism' and external socio-political pressures (Ioakimidis et al, 2014), increasingly suppresses social work's mandate of working for social justice and social change (Yazbek, 2014, Sewpaul, 2013). The reconceptualisation of social work in a context of rampant wealth accumulation and deepening poverty has led to the need for more orthodox social work assumptions and theories to be challenged (Ioakimidis et al, 2014; Sewpaul, 2014; Harms Smith, 2013).

This crisis around 'neoliberal social work' has furthermore meant that a new radicalism and a new 'audience' for radical social work has emerged (Reisch and Andrews, 2014; Garret, 2009; Ferguson and Woodward, 2009). Current social work writing abounds with descriptions of appropriate and relevant responses to this turbulent context (Ferguson and Lavalette, 2013; Stubbs and Maglajlic, 2012; Ioakimidis, 2015;). However, how social work students are prepared for such practice settings from within increasingly neo-liberal social work practice contexts requires interrogation.

Practice learning in unconventional practice settings of activism, social justice advocacy work, overtly political organisations and social movements, offers opportunities for critical conscientisation and reconceptualisation of social work in the current context.

In an earlier paper, we have argued that while more appropriate and radical social work knowledge content seems to be offered in present day curricula, practice learning which would provide the experiential learning and praxis for social work students, is not always adequately provided. Further, the past decades of neo-liberalism has led to difficulty for qualifying-level social work programmes to promote and ensure social justice alignment (Fenton, 2014).

There is therefore a need for the development of innovative ways to educate social work students for engagement with more radical, social justice and social change-oriented practice. These may occur through the use of specifically selected

pedagogical practices such as 'activist pedagogy' (Preston and Jordan, 2014) and through anti-oppressive and conscientisation methodologies (Askeland and Payne, 2006; Smith, 2008). Further and more importantly, practice learning opportunities should be offered that expose students to more progressive, radical, politicized practice contexts. These settings should offer context-appropriate interventions that resist the individualist neo-liberal ideologies of traditional frameworks.

International exchange programmes in the 'developing world' for students from more affluent societies have often been seen to offer such learning experiences, especially for the enhancement of cross-cultural learning and anti-oppressive practice (Schwartz et al, 2015). It is argued here however, that practice learning experiences in more progressive and radical contexts offer important opportunities for social work in situations of inequality and oppression, social change, conflict and social turbulence.

### **RECONCEPTUALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK IN A TURBULENT WORLD**

Ioakimidis et al (2014, p.290) call for the reconceptualisation of social work in a post-welfare capitalist environment and argue that there is a need in the new social work landscape to examine the foundation of social work as "broader structural changes in society and consequent challenges within the profession operate in a dialectic relationship, which dynamically forms the material and theoretical foundation of a social work reconceptualization."

Social work knowledge and practice frequently finds itself reconceptualised, as it is shaped by both the context in which it is practiced (Gray and Webb, 2013; Reisch, 2013; Ferguson and Woodward, 2008), as well as by the ideological positions of those practicing and directing it (Carey, 2013; Harms Smith, 2013; Therborn, 1980).

Although historically and from its inception, social work was "dominated by an ideology of individualism, which sought explanations of poverty in the character of the individual rather than in social or economic structures" (Ferguson, 2008, p. 90), there arose an opposition to this to this harsh ideology. There was a sense among social workers that "there needed to be a fundamental reform of the existing political order" (Powell, 2001, p. 27). A more radical practice became evident in the USA, especially in the Settlement movement, where direct help was provided as well as campaigning around issues of child labour and working hours occurred. Social workers involved themselves in social movements of the period, trade unionism feminism and pacifist movements (Reisch, 2004). The movements "undermined prevailing notions of social work practice...(and) used tactics like strikes and boycotts, and displayed open sympathy for allied left-wing causes" (Reisch and Andrews, 2002, p. 79).

The importance of social work knowledge responding to the context in which it finds itself is therefore also true today. The turbulent world in which social work practice occurs is one that requires very different knowledge and practice forms

than the neo-liberal individualized, status-quo maintenance which forms the basis for present day social work (Lavalette, 2011; Payne, 2005; Finn and Jacobson, 2003).

These alternative forms of practice are slowly starting to emerge, According to Ferguson et al (2005) in a collection of writing about social work globally, few countries had escaped the pressures of neo- liberal globalization, such as the growing dominance of care management approaches in a social care market (Harris, 2005) or the consequences of the imposition of crippling structural adjustment programmes, such as in countries like Argentina (Alayon and Grassi, 2004). Many examples exist internationally, of the constraints imposed by neo-liberal economic policies (Yazbeck, 2014; Sewpaul and Holscher, 2004). However, the past few years have also shown that many new ways of doing social work have emerged. People have been helped by social workers to resist structural oppressions, challenge injustices and increase their levels of political power (Cuskelly, 2013; Ferguson and Lavalette, 2006; Healy, 2005).

According to Ioakimidis (2015, p. 7), “reluctance to engage with the issue of socio-political and armed conflict could be seen as a part of a diachronic ambivalence of social work towards politically contentious issues.” It is necessary, therefore, to offer students practice opportunities which expose them to practice that facilitates learning around social justice and radical, progressive perspectives.

Perusing current social work writing provides ample insight into, and findings about, social work practice around oppressive structural and turbulent contexts, such as in the following examples from studies across the world:

- Stubbs and Maglajlic (2012, p. 1174) argue that, in South East Europe, there is a need “for a longer-term engagement in war and post-war communities, based on practices that build alliances between social workers, community activists and service users”;
- Social work with Palestinian women on “empowerment as resistance” was felt to highlight the need for “alternative ways of understanding empowerment that... recapture some of the original associations the term had with power and resistance” (Kuttub, 2010, p. 247);
- In Greece, Spain and Portugal the current economic crisis was seen to have “generated a profound (re)politicization of social workers” leading to a “redefinition of the core values and principles of social work” (Ioakimidis, 2014, p.285);
- In South Africa, during the time of the 2012 police ‘Marikana Massacre’ of 34 protesting mineworkers, social workers were called upon to intervene at a community level around collective trauma as well as to advocate at a structural and political level around social injustice and violations of human rights (Smith and Alexander, 2013);
- It has been argued that in conflict zones such as Northern Ireland, Palestine and Israel, the consciousness of “social workers, agencies and policies about issues in a world which is increasingly afflicted by violent political conflict” should be raised with recommendations for “Support, education and training

for social workers which transcend national contexts and further international research in this important area” (Ramon, 2006, p. 435);

- In Palestine, where youth of Ramallah have been living in “dehumanizing and abnormal conditions”, it has been argued that individualized notions of resilience and social work intervention, as developed in predominantly Western settings, have been over-emphasised to the detriment of the “local idiom of communal care and support” (Nguyen-Gillham et al, 2008, p. 291);
- Also in Palestine, in work in refugee camps with traumatized and terrorized young people, projects have been identified which successfully used advocacy and rights based approaches leading Lavalette (2015, p.33) to argue that “social work may be enriched by ‘popular’ forms of social work that originate outside of the profession’s self-imposed boundaries”
- Also In South Africa, in the context of recent xenophobic violence, social workers have been called upon to “actively and constructively address those socio-economic factors that contribute to such violence and dislocation” (Sewpaul, 2015, p.21).

Many further examples of a responsive and progressive social work resisting neo-liberalism and working for social change and social justice, can be found in work in Columbia, Beirut, Greece, Sri-Lanka, Cyprus, Canada (Lavalette and Ioakimidis, 2011), Somalia, Rwanda and South Africa (Sewpaul, 2015).

## **SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE LEARNING**

Social justice is acknowledged as a foundational value of social work (Midgely, 2007; Gray and Webb, 2013). The examples given above suggest that, in the current global context, educators should attempt to construct knowledge and practice learning opportunities for students which are rooted in ethics of social justice and which better prepare them to respond actively to issues of oppression, poverty and inequality. For example in South Africa, curricula have increasingly come to include content on social justice and critical, radical and progressive social work, approaches which are directly responsive to structural oppressions and injustices (Harms Smith, 2013). There has similarly been a greater shift towards the inclusion of locally contextualised and indigenous knowledge content (Hochfeld, et al, 2009; Gray, Coates and Yellow Bird, 2008; Thabede, 2008; Sewpaul and Jones, 2004).

Effective and emancipatory practice requires that practice learning situations should reflect the demands of the ‘real’ world. The restructuring of curricula to prepare students for challenges around social justice (Healy and Wairire, 2014), requires a concomitant change in the approach to practice learning. Social work practice must be connected to “the areas of oppression, discrimination and disadvantage” and must fight “with, and on behalf of, service users” (Fenton, 2014, p.330).

Although social work education adheres to general global standards (Sewpaul and Jones, 2004), practice-learning requirements vary from country to country. In England, for example, students are required to practice in at least two distinct service delivery models, one of which must be a statutory setting. In South Africa,

one of the requirements is that students should be involved in settings with conditions, which allow for the analysis of systematic oppressions experienced by service users (Spolander et al, 2011). Social work education and practice learning also includes attention to all three levels of intervention at the micro, meso and macro levels (case, group and community work)

Most social work educational settings encourage personal reflection. However, this reflection does not always extend to processes of reflexivity (D’Cruz et al 2007), which as a process of action and reflection leads to praxis and engagement with oppressive dynamics and structural injustice (Freire, 1972). Such reflexivity which leads to critical conscientisation, contributes to the formation of a responsive social worker, committed to acting on these social dynamics (Smith, 2008). Reflexivity allows for the assumptions of formal theories to be critically questioned and “addresses the multiple interrelations between power and knowledge, and acknowledges the inclusion of self in the process of knowledge creation in social work practice” (Man Lam et al, 2007, p. 91). This need for reflexivity as a means to the development of appropriate social work practice is acknowledged extensively (Askeland and Payne, 2006; Gray and Webb, 2013; Lishman, 2007; Ledwith, 2001).

Furthermore, learning should be responsive to the structural dynamics of increasingly unjust and turbulent societies. Wayne et al (2010, p. 334) argue that all pedagogies must adjust to changes in society and to evolving norms of practice and they cite Schulman (2005) who is concerned about “the phenomenon of ‘pedagogical inertia— that is, maintaining the status quo simply because nothing deflects [a way of doing things into] . . . another direction”.

## **PRACTICE PLACEMENTS FOR PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL WORK LEARNING**

We have previously reported on how student fieldwork placements in Johannesburg within progressive or non-traditional placement settings, “including campaigning social movements and welfare organisations working at the sharp end of South African society” (Ferguson and Smith, 2012, p. 979), appeared to facilitate the development of a more radical social work practice, better able to address the structural oppression, inequality and poverty experienced by people in South Africa. The organizations at which final year students at a South African University were placed included: the Anti-Privatisation Forum<sup>1</sup>, a radical anti-capitalist campaigning organization; Khulumani<sup>2</sup>, a progressive organization with its focus on the unfinished work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and intervening with families of those who disappeared during the apartheid regime; the Reproductive Health Research Unit<sup>3</sup> with a progressive gender focus; and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation<sup>4</sup> with its work with survivors of torture and work with ex-combatants who had been involved in the military struggle against apartheid and

---

<sup>1</sup> The Anti-privatisation Form dissolved in 2012. For further reading about its dissolution, see McKinley (2012) <http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/1197>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.khulumani.net>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wrhi.ac.za/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.csvr.org.za>

were subsequently unsupported by the post-apartheid state. Since the original study in 2009, further placements have been used, such as the Centre for Applied Legal Studies<sup>5</sup>, a university based law, human rights and social justice organization; the Socio-Economic Rights Institute<sup>6</sup>, involved in important constitutional law and socio-economic rights activism and the Jesuit Refugee Services<sup>7</sup>, working with asylum seekers and refugees.

Services and activities of the various organizations providing more radical and progressive student practice learning placements include:

---

- advocacy work around human rights violations, homelessness and unconstitutional evictions (SERI);
  - community work and therapeutic work with ex-combatants and their children (CSVV);
  - working with Zimbabwean women survivors of torture (JRS);
  - participatory action research and campaigning for the right to electricity in townships (APF);
  - a media project aimed at helping people in rural areas to express and publicise their needs (CSVV);
  - campaigning work with people who had experienced torture or the loss or disappearance of relatives under the apartheid regime but whose suffering and loss had not been recognised by the Truth and Reconciliation set up after 1994 (Khulumani);
  - counseling and advocacy work around issues of HIV and AIDS, including educational work with sex workers from other parts of Africa;
  - working with victims of trauma at both an individual and a community level; an informal settlement area in Soweto around housing (CALS);
  - trauma counseling with families of victims of the Marikana Massacre; women's empowerment work with communities of the platinum belt during the miners' strike (SERI).
- 

Such 'alternative placements' for progressive learning, offer a range of learning opportunities such as development of critical consciousness; political awareness; competencies in mobilization, organization and social action; application of community work processes; application and understanding of social justice principles; and the development of understanding of structural dimensions to problems. .

Traditional placements such as statutory child protection or criminal justice placements, non-governmental organisations in the field of substance abuse, community development projects may offer useful learning opportunities in generic social work, including some community work. However, it is generally the more progressive, human rights or social justice organisations that offer social work

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.wits.ac.za/law/cals>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.seri-sa.org>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.jrssaf.org/>

students valuable learning experiences in collective social action and structural contexts.

The selection of placements such as these could be based on criteria derived from the learning needs of the students involved, the knowledge and reconceptualisation project of the learning institution as well as the needs of the agency or setting itself. Broadly speaking, the following settings may be suitable.

### **Socio-Economic and Human Rights Campaigning Organizations**

Organisations that form around socio-political concerns, may offer students excellent exposure to social action processes, knowledge development around socio-political issues and to the organizational and mobilization skills required for community work. Non-governmental organizations in the area of socio-economic rights work are one suggestion, as they make significant contributions to political life and to political change in developing countries (Clarke, 1998). Students could receive valuable learning opportunities in promoting socio-economic and health rights claims in situations where human rights violations are present, such as in the case of the Treatment Action Campaign (TUC) and its struggle for universal HIV/AIDS treatment (Heywood, 2005). This may happen via litigation, negotiation in appropriate forums or through confrontational campaigning. These serve an important function in shaping the legal and political context of a society. Social work students therefore learn the importance of advocacy, lobbying and mobilization as social work strategies.

### **Non-Governmental Agencies or Settings, which attract funding from sources outside of the formal state or business sector**

Such agencies are freer to pursue context relevant practice as they are not constrained by the regulations and limitations frequently imposed by funders on the nature of their work. This allows them to pursue more radical strategies, which may challenge structural oppression and the status quo (Ferguson and Smith 2012). Such organisations, having the freedom to practice in context appropriate ways and in accordance with expressed needs of communities, allow students opportunities to explore and develop a full range of social work practice responses.

### **Social Movements**

According to Barker et al (2013, p.4), social movements are a form of “contentious politics which demonstrate the agency of participants through collective action. It is this collective action which makes social change possible, specifically in relation to issues of class and power.

The collective focus and social justice aspect of social work has receded dramatically in the past few years (Ferguson, 2008) and there seem to be fewer learning opportunities in traditional practice settings for such exposure. Social work writing has increasingly drawn on the work of social movements to develop theory for its own community organization and advocacy theory and the work of social



movements have proven to offer important insights for social work (Barker, Johnson and Lavalette, 2001; Smith, 2015).

### **Organisations with an overtly Political Dimension**

These placements are concerned with challenging state policies and of powerful private corporations. All social work is political in that it is shaped by ideologies and power configurations, while social workers bring their own political worldviews to the task, whether consciously or otherwise (Ramon, 2008; Ferguson, 2008). Social workers are also increasingly being called on to take on active political roles and to increase their participation in political activities (Servio, 2014; Mmatli, 2008) and such placements offer learning and knowledge development opportunities for such competencies. In more repressive societies, social workers are called upon to take a political stand. Current and historical examples include for example practice in Apartheid South Africa or in settings where Human Rights violations occur, such as mentioned earlier in this chapter. In this way, social work students have access to learning about anti-oppressive practice, environmental and social justice work.

### **Services around Violence and Trauma**

Social workers, regardless of where they may practice, may find themselves working in situations of conflict and trauma, such as in the context of war, post-war, xenophobia, natural disasters and conflict. Traditional social work placements do not generally offer learning opportunities in this regard. Organisations which are specifically set up to respond in such situations (such as those mentioned as well as international relief organisations) offer services to people traumatized psychologically and collectively. Social workers are often critically positioned and are able to form part of an intervention team, to offer support, counseling and community interventions in such contexts. Placements in such organisations would therefore offer students first-hand experience in trauma intervention at individual and collective level,

### **Community work, community development and activist organizations**

Social workers, in their commitment to social justice, may also often find themselves involved in community based, activist organizations in their personal capacity. Such organizations may offer valuable insights and learnings for more formal social work and tend to rely on community work principles such as democratic participation, social justice principles, empowerment, consciousness raising and action in small groups (Ife, 2013). The nature of more traditional, conventional settings, often prevents workers from practicing community work due to ideological, knowledge and managerial constraints. Such placements therefore conscientise students about the need and nature of successful community work. Ferguson and Smith (2012), argue that students are able to learn skills such as planning, lobbying, organizing, liaising and advocacy in such contexts.

## **CHALLENGES**

Such placements may however give rise to a number of challenges (Ferguson and Smith, 2012). These challenges may be found in the context of learning itself and the relatively undefined role of the social worker, supervision and guidance of the student by a supervisor external to the setting, contextual issues such as lack of resources as well as the trauma and emotional distress associated with the exposure to the realities of severe deprivation and poverty

### **‘Culture shock’ and emotional trauma**

In the earlier study we found that students had experienced what could be termed ‘culture shock’, where students coming from more affluent communities are frequently confronted with extreme levels of poverty and the lived realities of people with whom they work. While this may be particularly true in more progressive and social justice/human rights based organisations, practice contexts in situation of extreme inequality and poverty arising from socio-economic realities such as those found in South Africa are ubiquitous. The ongoing trauma of individuals and communities living in war, conflict and severe poverty, is difficult for students and these experiences are often unpredictable and difficult to know how to react to. Secondary and vicarious trauma is therefore a consequence for the students involved (Figley, 2002). Students therefore need to engage in reflexive practice and supportive supervision to be enabled to work through the emotional distress that they experience through their involvement in such contexts.

### **Lack of resources and helplessness**

The lack of resources and the immense difficulties experienced by service users and community members such as ex-combatants, people evicted without alternative places to live and citizens in war and conflict situations, is clearly evident in practice. Agencies trying to work in such contexts are often unable to assist with even the most basic needs. Students working in such situations may experience frustration at what they see as their own inability to make a difference in people’s lives. Many non-governmental and third sector organizations such as those rendering services in countries facing severe deprivation, poverty and conflict, may face difficulties around funding and resources (Ferguson and Smith, 2012; Lavalette and Ioakimidis, 2011; Sewpaul, 2015).

### **Slow pace of community processes**

A further challenge and frustration for students may relate to the slow pace of community work and the difficulties of engaging local people in community action. These included for example, having to travel long distances to community meetings in rural settings at the weekend, a general lack of community participation. Students would therefore need to be encouraged to retain a more positive outlook and understand that community work is a process and that it takes lots of time and they needed to be patient. The importance of community work principles of working

according to the pace and process of local people is evident in such situations (Ife, 2005).

### **Practicing social work in secondary settings**

Secondary settings by definition do not focus primarily on the psychosocial or social work aspect of their work. The role of the social worker may be unclear or poorly defined. This may result in work allocation that may be regarded as 'non-social work tasks' and the absence of a social work role model. This means that students placed in such settings should be professionally confident and show initiative in developing their own role as a student social worker. The role of the supervisor therefore becomes even more important in supporting the student in this aspect of their work.

Furthermore, where there is no social worker available to act as supervisor or practice teacher, an 'external supervisor' would need to perform that role. It is clear however that these organisations found the role of student social workers to be valuable and in some cases even led to the consideration of formal employment of social workers in the future.

### **Relationships with other social work agencies**

More radical or progressive placement organisations may have tenuous relationships with more traditional welfare organisations. In placements for example in the legal and rights-based advocacy field, students' positioning around issues involving social workers in more traditional and established social work agencies may lead to tension and/or ethical dilemmas. In some instances for example, placement organizations may be engaged in human rights litigation in respect of evictions, housing and specific families' rights, while other social work agencies may be working with local authorities who may be seen as 'the enemy'. Students may find themselves involved in social action and protest activities, where the plans of a campaigning organization working for the protection of people's rights, may include lobbying, mobilizing and being willing to break the law by proceeding with protest action which may have been deemed to be an illegal gathering. In cases such as this, the student would need to be assisted by the supervisor and the University to make decisions about their own participation and safety.

## **LESSONS AND CAUTIONS**

Although the examples discussed in this chapter cannot be generalized to all contexts, there are nevertheless, lessons "for those seeking to develop forms of social work education better able to equip the practitioners of the future to address the structural realities that shape the lives of clients across the globe." (Ferguson and Smith, 2012, p. 989).

Firstly, as stated earlier in this chapter, reflexivity is important. In community work generally and in placements such as these specifically, in which processes of critical

conscientisation are pursued, among the participants of projects as well as within the practitioner themselves, such self-reflection is vital for an appropriate praxis (Freire, 1972; Fook, 2007).

Second, the theoretical underpinnings of students' knowledge must provide them with the conceptual and analytical tools to make sense of the political and economic realities of the context in which they find themselves. Such contexts are unique and find expression in different ways. For example in South Africa, this would mean the post-colonial and post-apartheid context, structural oppression and racial and class based social stratification. In the context of South East Europe, the realities of post-war conflict and breakdown in community relationships would require social work involvement in that regard. In the case of many European countries, the context of increasing austerity, deepening poverty and issues around migration and refugees would require understanding. The integration of theory and practice must therefore be ensured, for students to be equipped for such analysis and understanding.

Third, both students and the practice settings need considerable preparatory work for an understanding and agreement about what the role of the student should be. Similarly, there needs to be ongoing support for both the student and the organization. The role of the practice teacher or supervisor is therefore even more important than in a setting where there are social workers to act as professional role models.

Students should be specifically selected for placement in such progressive and non-traditional settings. They should be willing to be politically engaged and have initiative in constructing their role in the organization. The fact that such placements may initially have little understanding of what to expect from social workers and students, may prove difficult for the students concerned.

## **Conclusion**

Practice learning as a pedagogical imperative for social work education also contributes to the development of its theory. The need for the reconceptualisation of social work for current turbulent times may therefore benefit from reflection on new practice learning contexts and non-traditional placements and the radical discourse which arises through these experiences. As social work grapples with its own reconceptualization and definition, individualist-reformist social work approaches focussing on status quo maintenance, remediation and development and that fail to address issues of structural inequality are increasingly irrelevant and lacking in legitimacy (Sewpaul, 2013; Ferguson, 2008).

Traditional placements frequently offer little scope for social justice work, campaigning, social action, community work, political engagement and radical interventions. They tend to operate within uncritical neo-liberal ideological frameworks of and discourses of individualism and blaming the poor. However, utilizing progressive, non-traditional placements offers renewed hope for social work. The contexts of turmoil that social workers encounter, if engaged with in a

progressive and radical manner, may very well serve to help shape a new social work. As stated aptly by Iokomidis et al (2014, p. 297), “ It is our contention that the same conditions, which have pushed mainstream social work to the brink of extinction, might as well act as a catalyst for the radical reconceptualization of the profession”

---

## REFERENCES

- Alayon, N. and E. Grassi (2004) ‘Neo-liberalism in Argentina: Towards a Different Practice’, in I. Ferguson , M. Lavalette and B. Whitmore (eds) *Globalisation, Global Justice and Social Work*, pp. 23-40. London: Taylor and Francis .
- Askeland, G. A. and Payne, M. (2006). Social work education’s cultural hegemony. *International social work*. 49(6): 731-743
- Atherton, C. and Bolland, K. (2002). Postmodernism: A dangerous illusion for social work. *International social work*. 45(4): 421-433
- Barker, C., Johnson, A. and Lavalette, M. (2001). *Leadership and social movements*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Carey, M. (2013). Social work, ideology, discourse and the limits of post-hegemony. *Journal of Social Work* May 2013 vol. 13 no. 3 248-266
- Clarke, G. (1998). Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World, *Political Studies*, 46(1):36-52
- Cuskelly, K. (2013). Social work and the struggle for social justice in Ireland. *Critical and Radical Social Work*, 1(1):125-130
- D’Cruz, J., Gillingham, P. and Melendez, S. (2007). Reflexivity, its meanings and relevance for Social Work: A Critical Review of the Literature. *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(1): 73-90
- Fenton, J. (2014). Can social work education meet the neo-liberal challenge head on? *Critical and Radical social work*. 2(3):321-334
- Ferguson , I., Lavalette, M. and Whitmore, B. (eds) (2004). *Globalisation, Global Justice and Social Work*, pp. 23-40. London: Taylor and Francis .
- Ferguson, I. (2008). *Reclaiming social work*. London: Sage
- Ferguson, I. and Woodward, R. (2009). *Radical social work in practice*. Bristol: Policy Press

- Ferguson, I. and Smith, L. (2012). Education for change: Student placements in campaigning organisations and social movements in South Africa. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42(5): 974-994
- Ferguson, I. and Lavalette, M. (2006). Globalisation and global justice: Towards a social work of resistance. *International Social Work*, 49(3): 309-318
- Ferguson, I. and Lavalette, M. (2013). Crisis, austerity and the future(s) of social work in the UK. *Critical and radical social work*, (1(1):95-110
- Figley, C.R. (2002). *Treating compassion fatigue*. Sussex: Brunner-Routledge
- Finn, J.L. and Jacobson, M. (2003). Just practice: steps toward a new social work paradigm. *Journal of social work education*. 39(1). Council for social work education
- Fook, J. (2007). Reflective practice and critical reflection. In Lishman, J (Ed). (2007). *Handbook for practice learning in social work and social care*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Pp.363-375
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (translated by Myra Bergman Ramos). New York: The Seabury Press.
- Garret, P.M. (2009). Marx and modernization: Reading capital as social critique and inspiration for social work resistance to neoliberalism. *Journal of Social Work*, 9(2): 199-121
- Gray, M. Coates, J. and Yellow Bird, M. (Ed) (2008). *Indigenous social work around the world: Towards culturally relevant education and practice*. England: Ashgate
- Gray, M. and Webb, S. (Eds) (2013). *Social work theories and methods*. London: Sage
- Harms Smith, L. (2013). *Social Work Education: Critical Imperatives for social change*. *University of the Witwatersrand*. PhD Thesis
- Harms Smith, L. (2015). What should social work learn from 'the fire of social movements that burns at the heart of society'? *Critical and Radical Social Work Journal* 3(1): 19-34
- Harris, J. (2004). Globalisation, neo-liberal managerialism and UK social work. In: Ferguson, M. Lavalette and E. Whitmore. (Eds)(2004). *Globalisation, Global Justice and Social work*, London, Routledge
- Healy L.M. and Wairire GG. (2014). Educating for the Global Agenda: Internationally relevant conceptual frameworks and knowledge for social work education. *International Social Work*. 2014, 57(3):235-247.

- Healy, K. (2005). *Social work theories in context: Creating frameworks for practice*, Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Heywood, M. (2005). Shaping, making and breaking the law in the campaign for a national HIV/AIDS treatment plan. In Jones, P. and Stokke, K. (2005). *Democratising development: The politics of socio-economic rights in South Africa*. Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Hochfeld, T., Selipsky, L., Mupedziswa, R. Chitereka, C. (2009). *Developmental social work education in Southern and East Africa*. Johannesburg: Centre for Social development in Africa
- Ife, J. (2013). *Community work in an uncertain world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ioakimidis, V. (2011). *Social work in extremis*. Bristol, Policy Press. pp.65-80
- Ioakimidis, V (2015). The two faces of Janus; Rethinking social work in the context of conflict. *Social Dialogue* 2(10).
- Ioakimidis, V., Cruz Santos, C. and Herrer, I.M. (2014). Reconceptualizing social work in times of crisis: An examination of the cases of Greece, Spain and Portugal *International Social Work* Vol. 57(4) 285–300
- Kuttab, E. (2010). Empowerment as Resistance: Conceptualizing Palestinian women's empowerment. *Development* 53, 247-253
- Lavalette, M. (2015). Palestinian refugees and popular social work. *Social Dialogue*. April 2015
- Lavalette, M. (2011). *Radical social work today: Social work at the crossroads*. Bristol: Policy Press
- Lavalette, M. and Ioakimidis, V. (2011), *Social Work in Extremis, Lessons for Social Work Internationally*, Policy Press, Bristol.
- Ledwith, M. (2001). Community work as critical pedagogy: re-envisioning Freire and Gramsci. *Community Development Journal*. 36(3): 171-182
- Lishman, J. (Ed) (2007). *Handbook for practice learning in social work and social care: Knowledge and Theory*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Man Lam, C., Wong, H and Fong Leung, T.T. (2007). An Unfinished Reflexive Journey: Social Work Students' Reflection on their Placement Experiences. *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(1): 91-105
- Matli, T. (2008). Political activism as a social work strategy in Africa. *International*

*Social Work*. May 2008 51: 297-310

Midgley, J. (2007). Perspectives on globalization, social justice and welfare. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 34(2), 17-36.

Mullaley, B. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). (2006) *The new structural social work: Ideology, theory and practice*. Oxford University Press

Nguyen-Gillham, V., Giacaman, R., Naser, G. and Boyce, W. (2008). Normalising the abnormal: Palestinian youth and the contradictions of resilience in protracted conflict. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 16, (3): 291–298

Payne, M. (2004). Knowledge bases and knowledge biases in Social Work. *Journal of Social Work*, 1(2): 133-146

Payne, M. (2005). *Modern social work theory*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Powell, F. (2001). *The politics of social work*, London: Sage

Preston, S. and Jordan, A. (2014). Resisting neoliberalism from within the academy: subversion through an activist pedagogy. *Social work education*, 33(4):502-518

Ramon, S. Campbell, J., Lindsay, J. and McCrystal, P. and Baidoun, N. (2006). The Impact of Political Conflict on Social Work: Experiences from Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine *British Journal of Social Work* Volume 36, Issue 3 Pp. 435-450

Reisch, M. and Andrews, J. (2002). *The road not taken: a history of radical social work in the United States*. Philadelphia: Brunner Routledge

Reisch, M. (2004). American exceptionalism and critical social work: A retrospective and prospective analysis. In: I. Ferguson, M. Lavalette and E. Whitmore. (Eds)(2004). *Globalisation, Global Justice and Social work*, London, Routledge

Servio, M. (2014). The Latin American reconceptualisation movement. *Critical and Radical Social Work*. 2(2):193-201

Sewpaul, V. (2015). Alien demons: Xenophobia and violence in South Africa. *Social Dialogue*, April 2015.

Sewpaul, V and Jones, D. (2004). Global standards for the education and training of the social work profession. Retrieved from [http://www.iassw-aiets.org/en/About\\_IASSW/GlobalStandards.pdf](http://www.iassw-aiets.org/en/About_IASSW/GlobalStandards.pdf) on 22 November 2014

Sewpaul, V. (2013). Neoliberalism and social work in South Africa. *Critical and Radical Social Work Journal*, 1(1):15-30



Sewpaul, V. and Holscher, D. (2004). *Social work in times of neo-liberalism*. Durban: UKZN press.

Smith, L. (2008). South African social work education: Critical imperatives for social change in the post-apartheid and post-colonial context. *International Social Work* May 2008 51: 371-383

Smith, L. and Alexander, P. (2013). Marikana massacre: explosive anger. *Critical and Radical Social Work Journal*. 1(1):131-132

Stubbs, P. and Maglajlic, R.A. (2012). Negotiating the Transnational Politics of Social Work in Post-Conflict and Transition Contexts: Reflections from South-East Europe *British Journal of Social Work* (2012) 42, 1174–1191

Schwartz, K, Kreitzer, L., Barlow, C., MacDonald, L. (2015). *A Sherpa in my backpack: a guide to international social work practicum exchanges and study abroad programmes*. Ontario, Canada: De Sitter Publications

Spolander, G. Pullen-Sansfacon, A., Brown, M., Engelbrecht, L. (2011). Social work education in Canada, England and South Africa: A critical comparison of undergraduate programmes. *International Social Work* 54(6): 816-831

Thabede, D. (2008). The African worldview as a basis for practice in the helping professions. *Social Work* 44(3):233-245

Therborn, G. (1980). *The ideology of power and power of ideology*. London: Verso Books

Wayne, J., Raskin, M. and Bogo, M. (2010). Field education as the signature pedagogy of social work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 46(3) (Fall 2010): 237-339

Yazbek, M.C. (2014). Changes in capitalism and challenges to social work: a view from Brazil. *Critical and Radical Social Work*, 2(3):275-286